

Karin A. Gerster

PALESTINIAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Their Socio-Economic, Social and Political
Impact on Palestinian Society**



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Impact on Palestinian Society**

By: Karin A. Gerster

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The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the author and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of RLF.

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ACRONYMS

EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department
EU	European Union
FATAH	Palestinian National Liberation Movement
FG(s)	Focus Group(s)
GS	Gaza
HAMAS	Islamic Resistance Movement
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
JD	Jordanian Dinar
MAS	Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
oPt	occupied Palestinian territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian
PNGOs	Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
UNWRA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WB	West Bank

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Rounding to approximately 100% was necessary in some tables and graphs.

FOREWORD

“Civil society” is a contested concept. It is usually seen as a necessary factor for democratic development. Danger enters when civil society organizations serve as individual tools to implement the interests of foreign actors.

There is, especially in African countries due to their neo-colonial experience, abundant research and knowledge about the effects of foreign funding on civil society organizations such as political parties, trade unions and so on. In order to obtain and deploy donor funds, they “professionalize,” fragment their structures and engage in a rapid process of de-politicization. If they fail to do this, they will be unable to access these funds.

In the Arab world this process is generally younger, but Palestine is a perfect case for studying the socio-political effects of international „aid“ because of the high level of dependence on foreign funds by the government and civil society organizations. Country and society have been destroyed and fragmented by an external power and now other foreign powers seek to construct something different.

After 20 years of trying it is safe to state that, despite international support for “establishing a democratic Palestinian state alongside Israel,” this project has failed. Something else has also taken place: those political forces that have received foreign aid have become marginalized and pacified; society is now highly dependent on the influx of financial aid. At the same time, the professionalized civil society organizations, the so-called Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), continue to implement projects funded by foreign governments. NGOs in Palestine today are richer, better staffed and some have achieved a more important status than some political parties.

Under the pretext of strengthening democracy, through supporting NGOs, the actions of foreign donors have undermined the practice of democracy and its organizational structures have been diminished. The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, as an actor on the German political left, supports the development of understanding about this process as a necessary precondition for reversing it. Only a broadly organized and politically participating society will be able to define joint interests and priorities and achieve independence and freedom.

In my opinion, professional NGOs in Palestine can be part of this struggle in a context of foreign domination only if they work according to a consensus as to what constitutes the Palestinian national interest. By changing the paradigm for external support, internal and international solidarity in a broader sense can be achieved only through the joint efforts of the NGOs in cooperation with real political forces and leadership.

Peter Schäfer
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
Palestine Office
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Their Socio-Economic, Social and Political Impact on Palestinian Society

This report focuses on Palestinians who work in western-funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The report relies on quantitative sources with 1050 valid questionnaires from NGO employees in 128 NGOs in the West Bank and 75 NGOs in Gaza; and qualitative sources based on 6 focus groups interviews in West Bank and 6 in Gaza.

Data about personal backgrounds, working histories and working conditions, together with political backgrounds (past and present) of NGO employees will be analyzed in a context of how international aid influences:

1. The particular personal situation of NGO employees and
2. in an interconnected step, how international aid which is transferred to select PNGOs instead to the Palestinian Authority (PA), influences the development of Palestinian society as a whole.

Basic facts about NGO employees

Note: the basic facts are here briefly summarized. More detail regarding facts, backgrounds and correlations between several factors in the West Bank (WB) and in Gaza (GS) may be found in the relevant chapters.

Personal background

NGO employees can be characterized as follows:

57.5% are female and 42.5% male; 71% are between 17-37 years of age. The age group 26-37 years is most strongly represented with 48% of employees, followed by the age group 17-25 years with 23% of employees. 88% were born in Palestine and 82% (WB 74%, GS 96%) have a Palestinian passport. The permanent residence of employees in the NGO sector closely mirrors the Palestinian population in general: 76.5% urban, 16.5% rural and 7% living in a refugee camp.¹ Some 90% of NGO employees completed a higher education: (59% BA, 19% diploma, 12% MA and 1% PhD). 10% ended their education at primary, preparatory or secondary school level. 41% of NGO employees take

¹ PASSIA *Diary 2011*, urban 73.7%, rural 17% and camps 9.3% (PCBS), p. 329

part in improving their education and in training courses. For their attendance in training programs, 47% of employees are funded by NGOs and 46% pay for themselves. National and international foundations pay for 7% of NGO employees to attend such programs.

In private life there is a tendency among NGO-employees to marry later and to have fewer children. 42% of NGO employees in the West Bank send their children to private schools (including 8% who send some to private and some to governmental schools).

59% (WB 68%, GS 47%) of NGO employees have a partner who is working. The majority of NGO employees perceive their living standard and their wages to be above average.

NGO sector: working background of NGO employees

Motivation to work in an NGO

Responses by NGO employees to questions about their motivation for working in an NGO can be broadly classified under the headings economic, individual and political background.

27% of NGO employees acknowledged an economic motivation.

This breaks down into: 13% who stated their motive as seeking a “better income”, 12% who were seeking a “better position” (which is of course connected with a better income) and 2% who cited “better benefits”.

Individual: 23% of NGO employees stated “contributing something to society” and 18% “feeling more independent at work” as well as preferring to work in an open atmosphere between men and women.

In focus groups (FGs) a strong argument was working on a professional level. NGOs are offering the possibility of different work experience, acquiring skills (including through training courses) and a variety of work. All these factors support self-development and provide professional stability. Professional stability increases the chance of job security (long-term contracts or permanent contracts).

Economic / Political: for 25% of NGO employees, the work offered in the NGO was the only job available (WB 18% female, 17% male; GS 34% female, 30% male) “It is not a question of choice, you take what you get” (FG Gaza, male <30). 28% of NGO employees with Diploma, BA, MA and PhD believed they would only find work abroad or in the NGO sector.

Working contracts and level of income

The data show full time employment of 68% and part time employment of 32% in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). In the West Bank full time employment

is 84%; part time employment is 16%. In Gaza, compared to the West Bank, there is a tremendous difference between those in full time employment at 47% and part time employment at 53%.

Part time contracts are considered in Palestinian society to be “bad contracts”. In focus groups in the West Bank and in Gaza, employees explained “having a part-time contract means working full time for half of the salary.” Also in focus group interviews, men and women reported working without a written contract and for example below 500 NIS a month is a reality (FGs, female and male below 30 years). “Working without a written contract” is, according to Palestinian labor law possible and according to the law people would have the same protection as with a written contract. Reality is rather different.

57, 5 % of NGO employees with an income of \$600 (\$501-\$1000 and up) earn more than the average Palestinian income. According to PCBS April-June 2010, US\$ 600 (= NIS 2340) is the average monthly wage for a Palestinian employee.

Comparing West Bank and Gaza: 62% of Gazan NGO employees earn below the national monthly average in the oPt. Female Gazan NGO employees stand out statistically with 73% earning below \$500 a month, comparing to 34% of women in the West Bank.

Monthly average Palestinian wage versus ‘poverty line’

PCBS defines poverty between ‘deep poverty line’ and ‘relative poverty line’.

A standard household (two adults and four children) is defined as below the deep poverty line when its monthly budget to cover food, clothing and housing costs falls below 1870 NIS.

A standard household is below the relative poverty line when its monthly budget for food, clothing, housing, health care, transportation and housekeeping supplies is less than 2278 NIS.²

This implies that, if an NGO employee were the only breadwinner of a family and earned below \$500, he or she would be classified as living under the deep poverty line. NGO employees (who are also the only breadwinner of the family) and who earn \$600 are classified as living under the relative poverty line.

It is worth noting that earning the average Palestinian wage can also mean living under the relative poverty line.

Finding a job in the NGO sector

45% of NGO employees land a job through the help of friends (34.4%) and

2 MAS *Food security Bulletin, issue 5, Winter 2011*, p.6

relatives (10.4%). 23% of NGO employees profit from relations in previous work and 6% from doing voluntary work. There is a contradiction to the results of the focus group interviews where the majority (< 30 years) stated they found their job through voluntary work. Many feel (GS, female and male <30 years) that a good education is not enough to secure a job, "higher education and *wasta* are needed to get a job."³

For 46% of NGO employees, the current NGO is their very first place of work.

Working reality

In the oPt 37% of NGO employees have a contract for 1 year or less than 1 year. 10% of employees have a contract for more than 1 year and 13% have a permanent contract. 40% of NGO employees have no written contract at all.

Short term contracts may be extended. 31% of NGO employees have contracts lasting 1 year and below. 36% have been working in the same NGO for up to 5 years, 17% for up to 10 years and 17% for more than 10 years. The 31% with contracts of 1 year and < 1 year are identical with so called "newcomers": employees who start working after finishing their education or who come from other working sectors.

NGO-tracking – working in different NGOs⁴

For 46% of NGO employees the current employer is the first NGO they have worked in. We can conclude that 31% with contracts of 1 year and less are newcomers. They are employees who started working after finishing their education or having come from other sectors. 15% have already been longer than 1 year in the same NGO.

54% have moved by force or by chance internally in the NGO sector. 20% of employees had worked in one other NGO. 17% in 2 other NGOs and 17% of NGO employees had already worked in more than 2 other NGOs (some in up to 5 NGOs).

With more and varied working experience in NGOs the outlook for "a better chance" (better position, long term or permanent contract, higher salary etc.) increase.

NGO tracking by force or by chance Objective and personal reasons to leave or change former NGO

59% of NGO employees were forced to find another place of working because

³ Arabic *wasta* means using connections to get what you want.

⁴ The word 'tracking' is used in the sense of 'following a track' – having a goal in mind which one wants to reach.

their “contract finished” (22%), or because the “project was over” (31%) or the “previous institution closed” (6%). 8% of NGO employees changed their working place because of “other reasons”, mainly personal. 33% of NGO employees were able to land a better job in a different NGO.

NGO tracking combined with the fact that contracts are mainly short (without job security) creates a community. Moving from one job to another, NGO workers are always on the move to find another or a better job. Formal, professional working networks as well as informal networks strengthen this development. The admission ticket for the community is higher education and/or *wasta*. A requirement to stay in the NGO community with short term contracts is flexibility and further training. The practice of these qualities enables NGO employees to extend their contracts or to find another job. 59% are compelled to leave their current employment and 33% do so “by chance”

NGO employees – and their membership in political parties

Currently 24% (WB 23%, GS 24%) of NGO employees in western funded NGOs are members of political parties.⁵ They are divided into 53% Fatah, 18% PFLP, 11% People’s Party, 7% National Initiative, 4% Hamas and 7% others.⁶

Asking NGO employees for whom they voted, only 500 were willing to answer, 550 refused to answer. From the 500 who answered, the strongest vote with 55% of NGO employees was for Fatah followed by the PFLP at 12% then Hamas with 11%. 7% of NGO employees voted for the People’s party, 6% for the National Initiative (only in the WB not in the GS) and 9% for others.

Overall conclusions:

Note: the overall conclusions are given here in brief. A detailed discussion is in the relevant chapter and in chapter 4.

1. The NGO sector: neo-liberal restructured working sector

Types of NGO employees

The quantitative and also the qualitative research clearly showed that NGO employees are not a homogenous group. They offer a very differentiated picture depending on:

working conditions and contract level: short term employees, long term or permanent employees, project based employees. The subjects of our study can thus be classified into various working types:

5 Islamic NGOs were not focus of this study.

6 Under ‘others’ parties are subsidized with below 5%.

1. 'Precariat', (casual workers, insecure and exploited).⁷
2. 'Aspiring middle class' (NGO careerists: capturing those living middle class lifestyle or aspiring to this, i.e. through debt, status markers, have more security than 1-2 year contracts.
3. 'NGO elite' (NGO careerists and also NGO actors) mainly generation of first Intifada which set up the NGOs. They have the most privileges and retain a progressive self image and maybe even progressive norms despite the stratification and realities inside the NGOs.

In general NGO employees who remain with an employer for the long term or who have permanent jobs enjoy better career chances and are more likely to achieve executive positions compared with those on short term contracts and/or earning below US\$ 500.

Categorizing NGO employees from the NGO-elite, aspiring middle classes and the precariat in the occupied territories by wages, duration, and contractual terms of employment demonstrates a clear stratification of NGO employment. Early literature on NGOs has analyzed an ongoing process of institutionalization and professionalization of NGOs since the end of the eighties. One outcome of this is a high level of employment stratification in the NGO sector – with the older founding generation reaping the highest benefits in terms of income, job security and having spare time to undertake voluntary work outside their employment; the young aspiring middle class who make better money than the rest of the society but have more limited job security, and the final group, the poorly paid precariat who may be seen as an exploited labor caste in the NGO institutions. Most of these work in Gaza. This stratification shows that the economic logic of NGOs has increasingly come to resemble that of the private sector– in which there is a growing gap between a small elite of privileged workers with full rights and benefits and a growing group of insecure and exploited workers with limited contracts or no written contracts at all, with few if any benefits or rights. This demonstrates the changing social and political ethics of NGOs – how economic dynamics have profoundly distanced them in practice and structure from their stated ethic of social justice or egalitarianism.

2. NGO sector – a female gendered working field?

Participation of female employees in the NGO sector stands at 57.5% (WB 58%, GS 56%) compared with male participation at 42.5% (WB 42%, GS 44%).⁸

7 The origins of a body of work theorizing this new "precariat" can be traced back to French theorist Pierre Bourdieu who described precarity as a "new mode of dominance" resulting from restructuring of the economy that "forced workers into submission". Bourdieu argued that globalization and fragmentation of the labor market had created a new generalized and permanent state of insecurity for workers. The idea has been taken further by Guy Standing, whose recent book 2011 *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* argues that precarious workers now form a distinct social class with separate conditions and interests from other workers.

8 Also see comparison with the study of MAS 2007, *Mapping PNGOs in the WB and the GS*, page 43: 54.8% female and 45.2% male

The research data also show that the NGO sector offers work for the highly-educated and also for unmarried women.

Female participation in the NGO sector decreases with increasing age. The female presence is dominant in the age categories 17-25 years (female 65%, male 35%), 26-37 years (female 60%, male 40%) and 38-45 years (female 55%, male 45%). Male presence is dominated in the age group 46-55 years (male 58%, female 42%) and 55-74 years (male 73%, female 27%).

Bearing in mind that 40% of NGOs in this study are linked to women's organizations and that female participation in NGOs stands at 57.5%, no gender equality can be demonstrated: just 27% of women occupy administrative positions compared with 37% of men. Women are under-represented in higher positions and stand at the bottom of the wage scale, especially in Gaza.

3. Gaza – the last in line

The data clearly show how, in many respects, NGO employees in Gaza (especially women but also young men) are deeply disadvantaged compared to their West Bank counterparts. They are making less money; are more likely to have poor contracts (often working part-time) and their work in an NGO is more likely to be their first job. The reasons for the difference between the West Bank and Gaza are the differing natures of the ongoing occupation by the state of Israel. In Gaza a virtual siege locks inhabitants into a confined area, controlling borders, trade, imports and exports. This state measure of Israel is supported by the ongoing international boycott of the Hamas authorities. In December 2008 Israel embarked on 'Operation Cast Lead', a 23-day-long military attack on Gaza that left 1,400 Gazans dead and 100,000 of them homeless.⁹ These factors have brought about an ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

As already shown in previous studies, the international community is using aid as a fig leaf to disguise its lack of political engagement in the interests of the Palestinian people.¹⁰ In other words, the international community spoon-feeds the people of Gaza, allowing in enough goods to keep them alive but not enough for them to live in dignity and in a viable, sovereign state.

Unable to act decisively at a political level, donors have instead funneled large amounts of money through Gaza's NGOs into job creation projects since 2005.¹¹

9 World Bank (2009), *Palestinian Economic Prospects: Gaza Recovery and West Bank Revival*, Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, June 2009, p.8. Concerning about crisis, Gazans had also to cope with internal political conflicts between the Palestinian political movements Fatah and Hamas in 2007.

10 For example, Anne Le More (2008) *International Assistance to the Palestinians after Oslo. Political guilt, wasted money*.

11 It is difficult to find exact data about the budget for 'job creation programs'. For example the EU invested 2009: 13 mill. Euros in such programs. To get an idea about such programs and their aim, see for example: <http://www.ndc.ps/main.php?id=45>; <http://www.irpal.ps/irpal/news-120> and also <http://english.wafa.ps/?action=detail&id=13003>; www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201106083557.pdf In 2010: \$ 174 m. (30% of the total requested funds) were requested funds for 'cash for work and cash assistance, see <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011060654643.pdf>

It is important to note that many of these job creation schemes in Gaza focus on creating short term employment for young university graduates.¹²

The type of occupation in the West Bank differs, mainly because of international support for the Fatah PA. Here, money for job creation programs is funneled by donors through the PA and through municipalities.

4. Capturing human capital and long term dependency

80% of employees questioned asserted it would be more effective to support productive sectors such as agriculture, industry and sustainable development projects and education to build up an independent viable state, than to employ people in short-term contracts with limited long-term effect in the NGO sector.

NGOs offer attractive work opportunities to people for several reasons, among which are: a higher income than in the public and private sectors; training in professional skills; the chance to go abroad; an open minded working atmosphere or these are the only jobs available. This variety of motives explains employees' desire to stay in this sector. The ability to engage in 'NGO tracking', practicing 'NGO networking' to find another contract after the current one ends or to look for better paid jobs than the average Palestinian keep people working for NGOs.

Aid may be classified according to the results it achieves. It is worth considering the impact on Palestinian society of the work of NGOs. In 2004, Khalil Nakhleh distinguished the results of aid interventions "in terms of their 'developmental' impact: the reconstruction of physical infrastructures, and the enhancement of human, social and intellectual capabilities."¹³

If external aid is not reconstructing physical Palestine and second if external aid is not only playing a supportive role in enhancing human, social and intellectual capabilities and empowering ordinary Palestinian people – external aid will in the long run capture human capital through detracting educated individuals from working for example in more popular, community work, centers and organizations, in localities – and this leads to a long term dependency on aid with consequences in economic, political and cultural fields.

5. The NGO sector – stabilization for the ruling system Political subject

The NGO sector is a community in which 90% of employees have had a higher education. As mentioned above, NGO employees are not a homogeneous group. They offer a very differentiated picture depending on: First: Working conditions, contract level: short term employees, long term employees/ permanent

12 See also chapter 6 in Rema Hammami, Amal Syam (2010) *Who answers to Gazan women? An economic security and rights research*.

13 see also Khalil Nakhleh (2004), *The myth of Palestinian development*, p.213

employees, project-based employees and second: in connection with point one different working types:

1. 'Precariat', (casual workers, insecure and exploited).
2. 'Aspiring middle class' (NGO careerists). This category encompasses those living a middle class lifestyle or aspiring to this, perhaps by taking on debt to purchase status markers. Such employees have more security than those on a one to two-year contract.
3. 'NGO elite' (NGO careerists and also NGO actors). These belong to the generation of first Intifada and participated in setting up many NGOs. They have the most privileges and retain a progressive self image and maybe even progressive norms despite the stratification and realities inside the NGOs.

Part of this community, the 'aspiring middle class' and the 'NGO elite', can generate new jobs for the Palestinian population. Their ability to generate employment is also a tool to re-generate their own jobs and thus to support and perpetuate the NGO middle class and the NGO elite itself.

Hence external aid supports the internationally-accepted Fatah PA and allows them to co-opt their political clientele. Furthermore it supports the NGO sector, which is treated by donors as financially autonomous. The NGO sector co-opts parts of academia and is creating a new kind of middle class and a globalized elite.¹⁴ The consequence is that NGO employees clearly benefit from the political situation (Oslo accords, Israel colonial realities and PA neo-liberal politics in this process) by positioning themselves within it. This has the impact of stabilizing the ruling system of the PA.

14 We adopt the definition of a globalized elite by Hanafi and Tabar (2005) in their book *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite*, 1. referring to actors that are informed by global agendas, 2. distinguishing its position on the Middle East peace process, 3. describing it as an urban elite, since donor funding is concentrated in Palestinian cities and 4. seeing it as a professionalized elite.

1. INTRODUCTION

What does international aid given to the Palestinian people achieve for the individual citizen and for society as a whole?

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (PNGOs) play an important role in various social and economic spheres of Palestinian society. They are active in many fields such as human rights, democracy promotion, good governance and women's rights. They also support social services such as education, health, and special health care, rehabilitation services for people with special needs, agriculture, environmental services and youth programs.

According to statistics on PNGOs provided by the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) and the NGO Development Center, the number of PNGOs increased from 1,230 in 2004 to about 2,130 in 2009. In 2010 we estimate there were around 2,400 PNGOs.

The Oslo Agreements of 1993 sought to realize for the Palestinian population their hope for an independent, viable state. Additionally, since the 1995 Oslo II agreement, the West Bank has been divided into jurisdictions A, B and C. Area A (17.2%) came under the internal administrative responsibility of the Palestinian Authority. Area B (23.8%) remains under Israeli military rule; the PA, however, exercises responsibility here for services and civilian administration. Area C (59%) is completely under Israeli civil and military administration.¹⁵ The fragmentation between the West Bank and Gaza and the division between areas A, B and C makes working and maintaining unified operations difficult.

After Oslo in 1993, external aid increased and the NGO sector flourished. At the same time, donors started to change their broad-based solidarity contributions of the past into funds, usually with preconditions regarding their use, and provided support for development.¹⁶ During the same period, former popular-based, grass-roots initiatives underwent a process of institutionalization and professionalization, gaining official offices and paid, professional employees with appropriate educational backgrounds. The arrival of different donor funding criteria established a hierarchy and competition between NGOs to access funding. Professionalism was the key word to gain funding. Institutions and organizations that were unable or did not want to be "professional" were marginalized. New major trends in NGO work began to appear, such as "empowering" individuals, "advocacy" and "capacity building".

¹⁵ PASSIA *Diary 2011*, p. 338

¹⁶ See also Rex Brynen (2000) *A Very Political Economy. Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in the West Bank and Gaza*; Benoit Challand (2009) *Palestinian Civil Society. Foreign donor and the power to promote and exclude*; Hanafi, Sari & Tabar, Linda (2005) *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite. Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*.

In retrospect, the establishment of the PA, strictly circumscribed by the Oslo agreements, did not seek to build up governing structures for a future Palestinian state. Basically, the PA is responsible under limited self-rule for providing services and jobs for the non-refugee-population and security for Israel.

The electoral victory of Hamas in January 2006 was answered by the West with a boycott of the PA, newly headed by Hamas, and a tight blockade of Gaza by Israel. Internal disagreements between Hamas and Fatah (in which the West took a hand) resulted in June 2007 in an armed conflict from which Hamas benefited. PA President Abbas dismissed the Hamas-Fatah coalition, headed by Prime Minister Haniyeh and declared a state of emergency. Salam Fayyad was appointed as new Prime Minister for the West Bank. Since then, Hamas has been ruling in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank.

This brought about a change in the types of aid provided by Western donors: a reduction in development assistance and an increase in emergency aid for PNGOs. Aid for Islamic PNGOs and joint projects from Islamic and non-Islamic NGOs was stopped. PNGOs that ran no joint projects with Islamic religious organizations continued to receive Aid.

The "Fatah-PA" and the "Hamas-PA" continue to rely on different external donors. In the period between 1999 and 2008, external aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip increased from US\$ 516 million to 3.25 billion per year.¹⁷

60% of the budget of the PA (WB) is subsidized and maintained by the international community. 68% of the budget of PNGOs is funded by European Donor Country Grouping (including Europe Union, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), and European States. Also including Switzerland and European International Non-governmental organizations INGOs) and 4% by the USA.¹⁸ Overall, ten per cent of international aid to West Bank and Gaza is channeled through such civil society institutions.¹⁹ The local community seems to be rarely involved or unable to mobilize the needed funds.

During the period 1999 to 2008, external aid for PNGOs increased from US\$ 48 million to US\$ 257 million.²⁰ This has promoted great financial dependency on donor countries. Funding and fund raising has a double importance for the sustainability of PNGOs: by allowing them to maintain their services and to provide paid employment.

17 <http://www.ndc.ps/uploads/File/Researches/Tracking%20External%20Donor%20Funding.pdf> and also MAS / NGO Development Center 2009: *Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non- Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999-2008*, table 12, p.29 and also see Sara Roy 2011 'Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector';

18 MAS / NGO Development Center 2009: *ibid* p.33

19 MAS / NGO Development Center 2009: *ibid* p.29

20 <http://www.ndc.ps/uploads/File/Researches/Tracking%20External%20Donor%20Funding.pdf>

In 2010, the unemployment rate was estimated at 23%: in the West Bank 15% and in Gaza 39%. The employment rate for the public sector was 23% and 62.5% in the private sector. 10% of the Palestinian labor forces from West Bank and Gaza worked in Israel and settlements and 4% in other sectors.²¹

Concerning the Palestinian labor market, PNGOs provide around 10% of job opportunities in the Palestinian labor market. In general, when Palestinians talk about NGOs, they have external, western funded NGOs and their employees in mind. Among the general public, it is well known – or at least the rumor goes – that NGO employees are better paid than others, that they are born abroad, that they are young, professionalized and career-orientated, that they have a lot of key benefits compared to the average Palestinian, that they don't think politically anymore and work only in their own interest etc.²²

What does international aid given to the Palestinian people achieve - on the level of the individual citizen and on the level of society as a whole?

This paper builds on field research carried out in occupied Palestinian territories, between August 2010 and March 2011. In order to understand the ongoing changes in the NGO sector, we look inside the “black box NGO employee” in Palestinian NGOs which were mainly funded by western aid. Because quantitative personal data resources about PNGO employees are rarely available the hope was to find clues to clarify rumors and to discover answers.²³ The personal data of NGO employees are analyzed in a context of how international aid influences the particular personal situations of NGO employees and, by extension, how international aid which is transferred to selected PNGOs instead to the PA, influences the development of Palestinian society as a whole.

This research is based on a quantitative and qualitative study and provides data on personal backgrounds, working histories and careers, living standards, including salaries and also personal political attitudes in the past and present of a range of typical PNGO-employees (from service staff to directors) in the West Bank and in Gaza. It was done in cooperation with Birzeit University, Human Rights and Democracy Program, in the period August 2010 – March 2011, and is financed by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Ramallah.

The data will be presented in chapters 3 - 3.4, following by interim conclusions. A final chapter will analyze the impact, how international aid which is transferred to select PNGOs instead to the PA influences the development of Palestinian society as a whole.

21 See PASSIA *Diary 2011*, p.349

22 NGOs are known in public for offering better paid jobs and also in reality according to statistics on wage differentials, provided by MAS 2007

23 Focus of this research was not the objective and substantial results of PNGOs

Because of the great amount of data we received through the quantitative and qualitative study, answers could be found but at the same time they threw up new questions. This report does not pretend to present a complete analysis or a full interpretation of the data, which may be viewed and interpreted differently in varying contexts. The data should rather be seen as a basis to stimulate new critical questioning about social development in a neo-liberal environment.

Main issues addressed in the study:

1. The study aims to find out and analyze the ongoing changes in a society, which lives under extreme circumstances of occupation with three political actors in the field: Palestinians, Israelis, Internationals and a "peace process on hold".
2. What kind of NGO employee landscape exists in Palestine? NGO workers have already been observed and analyzed in the literature as middle class, depoliticized and de-radicalized, forming a globalized NGO elite.²⁴
3. The study will clarify the influence of Western aid, which get transferred to selected PNGOs, instead to the PA and can analyze the impact on an individual level of NGO employees and also the ongoing changes in Palestinian society.
4. Do subsidies in the NGO sector engender a pro-western clientele which supports PLO / Mahmoud Abbas politics?
5. Are external funded NGOs reducing the brain drain of academics by financing suitable jobs in the occupied territories?

Being mindful of the need to avoid unfounded generalizations, an important aim of this study is to support any assertions with quantitative data. New in this paper is the focus on how the NGO sector is affecting the current political arrangements in Palestine. In addition, the new collection of quantitative and qualitative data sheds light on working conditions under a neo liberal dispensation in the NGO sector and how this system supports the neo liberal politics of the PA and their political power.

24 See the critical literature of Hanafi, Sari & Tabar, Linda, Raja Khalidi & Sobhi Samour, Eileen Kuttub, Rema Hammami, Khalil Nakhleh, Lisa Taraki, Islah Jad, Leyla Bahmad, etc.

2. Methodology / research standards for the quantitative and qualitative field research

2.1 Operational definition of NGO

We used 3 main characteristics to define a Non-governmental Organization. An NGO must be:

1. independent, being institutionally separate from the government.
2. a non-profit-organization
3. officially recognized and have an administrative and financial system.

The methodology of this study is multi-staged, combining quantitative data followed by qualitative data obtained during field research using focus group interviews and involving different statistical data resources for comparison.

Data collection took place in four stages.

2.2 Quantitative research

Stage 1: Background preparation for quantitative field research

1. Reviewing local, Arabic and international literature on surveying PNGOs.
2. Preparation of the quantitative research questionnaire:

As the questionnaire is the basic tool of our quantitative study, we took time to develop the questionnaire to formulate the questions appropriately. The questionnaire was discussed in a workshop at Birzeit University.

The questionnaire was divided in 4 parts:

1. information about the NGO the person is working in and private information,
2. working history,
3. living standard and salary and
4. personal and political attitude in present, past and future.

A cross-reading by three experts in quantitative field research and familiar with

research on NGOs in Palestine followed, also a test-run in five different NGOs. The test run was important to check the contents of the questionnaire and to ensure that the language would be understandable to participants. The expert feedback was discussed and modified accordingly. The test run was also helpful in identifying problems a field worker might face.

Training of researchers at Birzeit University: Five fieldwork researchers for the West Bank were trained in workshops: contacting NGOs, conducting fieldwork, coding and data entry. Two fieldwork researchers from Gaza were unable to participate because of the closure.

Stage 2: Organizing the field work

In July 2010 the NGOs were selected. First NGOs were contacted by telephone, followed by a written invitation introducing the survey and asking for their support in the research.

Outline:

1. **Target group:** PNGO employees mainly in external, western funded NGOs.
2. **The governorates in West Bank and Gaza** were treated equally. West Bank is divided in North West Bank with Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem (Tubas), Salfit, Qalqilia, Central West Bank with Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Jericho and Jerusalem, South West Bank with Bethlehem and Hebron. Gaza is divided in North Gaza, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah.
3. **Coverage:** Five NGO fields – health, agriculture, women, human rights / peace education and youth.
4. **Location of the NGO:** urban, rural and refugee camps
5. **Size of NGO:** we classify NGOs with up to three employees as small, NGOs having from four to ten employees as middle-sized and NGOs with above 11 employees as large.
6. **Taken into account:** gender considerations

The questionnaires were delivered personal by a research team, consisted of a woman and a man. This method makes possible a personal contact between the people of the institution and the researchers. If necessary, open questions concerning the study could then be answered.

To maintain anonymity, each questionnaire was packed in an envelope with a stamp from Birzeit University on the back. If after answering the questions the envelope was properly closed, nobody could subsequently open the envelope without our noticing. The single envelopes were collected in a big envelope. After two days, or sometimes later, the completed questionnaires were collected by a research team.

Sample

A total of 203 NGOs were surveyed. 1099 questionnaires were received from 128 NGOs in the West Bank and from 75 NGOs in Gaza.

49 questionnaires had to be excluded for several reasons:

- some came from non-salaried volunteers
- some were returned unfilled without explanation.
- some were returned unfilled with an explanation. In this case, non-respondents gave the following reasons:
 - “no time to fill out the questionnaire”;
 - “the questions are too personal”;
 - “the subject is uninteresting”;
 - “the questionnaire helps the world spy on Palestinian people”; and
 - “lack of work experience makes answering the questions difficult”.

We sought to choose NGOs equally in the sectors of health, agriculture, women, human rights / peace education and youth. In some districts it was not possible to find NGOs meeting the requested criteria either because they did not exist or because suitable NGOs were unwilling to participate in the study. In this case, we tried to fill up the numbers of NGOs randomly until 15 NGOs per district were reached. Nevertheless, in some districts of the West Bank, the number of 15 NGOs could not be reached.

The following NGO fields were represented: Women 40%, Youth 32%, Health 30%, Agriculture 18%, Human Rights 6% and Peace Training 5%. The total is more than 100 since some NGOs work in more than one field.

Size of NGO / Number of employees:

1-3 employees: 7%, 4-7 employees: 25%, 8-20 employees: 32% and 21 and above employees: 30%, 6%: data missing.

PNGO quantitative survey

Six fieldworkers, four in the West Bank and two in Gaza distributed and collected questionnaires.

West Bank: from August 4. – September 15. 2010

Gaza: from August 18. – August 30. 2010

Summary of field work preparation

The issue of a unique PNGO list:

With all official PNGO lists, for example lists from the Ministry of Interior or PNGO-network, we faced the problem that they were not up-to-date or were incomplete.

Getting a documentation of supported NGOs by the EU from the Technical Assistance Office in Jerusalem was a long procedure which led nowhere. The EU itself officially committed (in their documents) to transparency seemed to be either unable or unwilling to pass on lists of supported NGOs in the period 2004-2010.

In 2006/2007, the United Nations published a two-volume *Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank 2006 and in Gaza 2007*. Even if the publication is now somewhat out-of-date, it is very helpful and detailed. Having being informed about the existence of this publication, however, it was impossible to get a printed version or an electronic copy from the United Nations Office in Jerusalem.

Easy to get and helpful in finding addresses of NGOs is the Palestinian Yellow Pages. The problem in this case was that the NGOs listed had often ceased to exist or their telephone number was out of order.

Summary of field work experience:

In general the research teams in West Bank and Gaza found an open and friendly atmosphere in working with the NGOs. The fact (mentioned by NGO-employees) that the University of Birzeit is a well respected institution, opened many doors. To sum up the experience of working in various districts, the district of Ramallah / Al-Bireh, Jericho and East Jerusalem presented the greatest difficulties: NGOs agreed at first to participate in the research and then decided against doing so or they returned questionnaires late (research assistants had to go two or three times to collect the questionnaires.)

Stage 3: Data coding and data entry

Data coding and data entry was done for the West Bank between September 20 and November 13, 2010 and for Gaza November between 3 And 15 December 2010.

The process of data coding and data entry was supervised by an expert in SPSS.

Data viewing

The first data analysis revealed a clear dataset without the need of a rerun. It showed the expected differences between the West Bank and Gaza, female and male and between age groups in connection with stable or unstable contracts. To deepen the analysis, we decided to follow up the quantitative research with

a phase of qualitative research based on focus groups (FGs). Building from an analysis of the quantitative data – main demographic and employment distinctions were uncovered that formed the framework for forming the various focus groups in which deeper and more targeted understanding of the dynamics and issues uncovered in the quantitative survey could be assessed.

2.3. Qualitative research

Stage 4: Preparation of Focus Group Interviews

In a qualitative research workshop at Birzeit University held on February 10, 2011 we discussed the results of the data. The data revealed obvious differences between respondents from the West Bank and Gaza, between female and male. There were differences based on the age (generation) of employees and differences in the types of contracts, in terms of job security and salary levels. The qualitative research consisted of six focus groups in the West Bank and six in Gaza.

For the West Bank:

1. female, age: 40 years and above in Birzeit (central WB)
2. male, age: 40 years and above, in Birzeit (central WB)
3. female, age 30 years and below, "bad contracts" in Nablus (North WB)
4. male, age 30 years and below, "bad contracts," in Nablus (North WB)
5. female, age 30 years and below, "good contracts," Bethlehem (South WB)
6. mal, age 30 years and below, "good contracts," Bethlehem (South WB)

For Gaza:

1. female, age: 40 years and above in Gaza City
2. male, age: 40 years and above, in Gaza City
3. female, age 30 years and below, "bad contracts" Khan Yunis
4. male, age 30 years and below, "bad contracts," Khan Yunis
5. female, age 30 years and below, "good contracts," Rafah
6. male, age 30 years and below, "good contracts," Rafah

"good contracts": no part time job, contract more than 1 year, permanent contract

"bad contracts": part time job, contract less than 1 year, or no written contract

Organization of the field work:

NGOs were telephoned and asked to participate and to send employees fitting the different categories to the focus groups (FGs).

In Gaza the focus groups were held from 19.-21 February 2011 and in the West Bank from 21 February - 3 March 2011.

In the West Bank we faced more difficulties in organizing the focus groups than in Gaza. For example, in our focus group female, 40 years and above, scheduled on 23 February 2011 in Ramallah, 6 women agreed to attend the meeting. An obligatory reminder by telephone followed the day before, but no women showed up for the focus group. This also happened with our focus group entitled male, 30 years and below with "good contracts" in Bethlehem. Only one man attended. In this case we changed our concept to in-depth, individual interviews and scheduled additional meetings for the two focus groups who failed to attend. It is interesting that participants in focus groups who had bad or poor contracts were more motivated to attend our sessions.

All focus groups were recorded; a transcription and an English translation were prepared.

Secondary Data Collection

The impact of external aid, which is transferred directly as wages or salaries, can be analyzed comparatively, where existing data concerning Palestinian society are available. Whenever necessary, the data sources to be used for comparison are referenced through the text. Pure sources were the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the Ministry of Planning and the Administrative Development database (MOP), major studies from Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), World Bank and other material in the form of the annual reports of other organizations.

3. Available cash - impact of international aid on the daily lives of NGO employees and on Palestinian society itself

Background information about the Palestinian Labor Market

The study was carried out between August 4, 2010 and March 3, 2011.

PCBS, Labor Force Survey Report Series, April-June 2010 estimated the labor force participation rate to be 41.5%.²⁵ In other words, 980,400 people of 15 years and above from a working age population of 2,365,000 comprised the Palestinian labor force. 58.5% or 1,384,600 people of working age remained outside the labor force. Reasons for being outside the labor force are mainly housekeeping (47.7%), studying or training (36.5%) and age or illness (10.1%).

Women's labor force participation in the formal labor force at 15.2% (WB 17.6%, GS 11%) is one of the lowest rates in the world. Women with higher education are represented at 43%. According to PCBS, 25% of the female labor force was unemployed in June 2010.

The rate of unemployment stood, according to PCBS, in June 2010 at 22.9%. The West Bank rate was 15.2% and that of Gaza 39.3%.²⁶ According to this study, the rate of unemployment in the age group 15-24 was the highest, especially among females at 47%. Paradoxically among women, the rate of unemployment increases with higher education, but decreases among men. Compared with the rate of unemployment in 2008, the rate in 2010 was significantly higher both for males and females. See Tables and Graphs 1, below.

25 PCBS Labor Force Report April-June 2010, Ramallah: <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/> The documentation about rate of unemployment differs. Also there is a normal quarterly changing unemployment rate through seasonal reasons between 23-28%.

26 See also data analysis in: *Checkpoints and Barriers: Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza. Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse*, February 2010. Document of the World Bank, Report No. 49699-GZ

Labour force unemployment by governorate and sex 2010-1999

governorate and sex	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Both Sexes												
North Gaza	38.5%	36.6%	39.2%	31.5%	39.0%	33.6%	36.6%	27.6%	36.9%	34.7%	16.3%	14.8%
Gaza	34.5%	34.5%	38.3%	25.1%	33.2%	26.7%	32.7%	27.7%	36.1%	32.4%	17.5%	13.3%
Dier Al-Balah	39.0%	35.2%	42.7%	32.3%	34.9%	35.0%	36.8%	31.4%	39.8%	34.1%	22.5%	22.5%
Khanyunis	44.7%	49.3%	46.9%	34.3%	36.0%	31.1%	38.2%	31.9%	38.3%	36.2%	20.4%	19.4%
Rafah	36.4%	38.4%	35.7%	28.5%	30.1%	29.0%	35.1%	28.1%	40.9%	34.4%	19.3%	19.2%
Total	37.8%	38.6%	40.6%	29.7%	34.8%	30.3%	35.3%	29.1%	37.9%	34.4%	18.9%	16.9%
Male												
North Gaza	34.9%	35.7%	39.8%	31.8%	39.7%	33.9%	37.5%	27.7%	38.6%	36.4%	17.4%	14.4%
Gaza	34.0%	33.6%	37.3%	23.7%	33.2%	25.5%	32.9%	27.7%	36.6%	33.7%	17.1%	12.4%
Dier Al-Balah	38.5%	32.1%	41.8%	33.6%	35.9%	33.6%	36.6%	31.1%	40.0%	34.4%	21.8%	22.1%
Khanyunis	41.5%	47.9%	47.9%	36.6%	36.2%	31.2%	39.6%	34.3%	39.6%	37.6%	21.5%	20.1%
Rafah	32.4%	36.8%	34.0%	27.7%	30.3%	28.8%	36.2%	29.1%	42.7%	35.2%	19.4%	19.8%
Total	36.2%	37.3%	40.2%	29.7%	35.1%	29.6%	35.8%	29.5%	38.9%	35.2%	18.9%	16.6%
Females												
North Gaza	42.2%	42.2%	36.0%	29.6%	32.8%	30.5%	29.8%	27.1%	21.1%	19.9%	12.4%	18.1%
Gaza	38.8%	39.3%	46.1%	38.0%	33.5%	37.4%	31.6%	32.0%	29.8%	18.4%	20.9%	21.8%
Dier Al-Balah	41.4%	46.6%	46.5%	25.9%	29.9%	41.2%	37.6%	32.9%	38.1%	32.3%	26.4%	25.6%
Khanyunis	64.0%	57.1%	41.7%	25.1%	34.5%	30.7%	27.3%	18.6%	24.0%	24.8%	15.3%	15.3%
Rafah	55.1%	46.0%	43.3%	31.6%	28.7%	29.9%	27.2%	20.7%	23.7%	28.6%	18.7%	15.3%
Total	47.8%	45.8%	42.8%	29.7%	32.2%	35.2%	31.4%	26.6%	28.0%	23.8%	18.7%	19.3%
Palestinian territories												
Both Sexes	23.7%	24.5%	26.6%	21.7%	23.7%	23.5%	26.8%	25.5%	31.2%	25.3%	14.3%	11.8%
Males	23.1%	24.1%	27.6%	22.3%	24.4%	23.8%	28.1%	26.8%	33.5%	27.1%	14.6%	11.6%
Females	26.8%	26.4%	24.2%	19.1%	20.5%	22.2%	20.0%	18.2%	17.0%	13.8%	12.4%	13.0%

Tables and Graphs 1: source: PCBS labor force survey, annual report 2010

3.1. Basic facts about NGO employees

3.1.1 Personal background

NGO employees can be characterized as follows:

57.5% are female and 42.5% male; 71% are aged 17-37 years. The age group 26-37 years has the highest representation with 48% of employees, followed by the age group 17-25 years with 23% employees. 88% were born in Palestine and 82% (WB 74% GS 96%) have a Palestinian passport. The permanent residence of employees in the NGO sector mirrors the Palestinian Population almost exactly: 76.5% urban, 16.5% rural and 7% refugee camp.²⁸ An higher education background is shared by 90% of NGO employees (59% BA, 19% Diploma, 12% MA and 1% PhD; primary, preparatory and secondary school education 10%) and 41% of NGO employees do take part in improving their education and in training courses. For their attendance in training programs, 47% of the employees are funded by the NGOs and 46% pay for themselves. National and international foundations pay for 7% of NGO employees to attend such programs.

In private life there is a tendency to postpone marriage and there is a tendency to have fewer children. Comparing the West Bank with Gaza, NGO employees in the West Bank tend to send their children to private schools. In the West Bank 42% (including 8% who send some to private and some to governmental schools) and in Gaza 14% (also including 8% who send some to private and some to governmental schools).

59% (WB 68% GS 47%) of NGO employees have a partner who is working. The majority of NGO employees perceive their living standard and their wages to be above average.

The following chapter presents this information in more detail.

3.1.2 Gender participation in the NGO sector

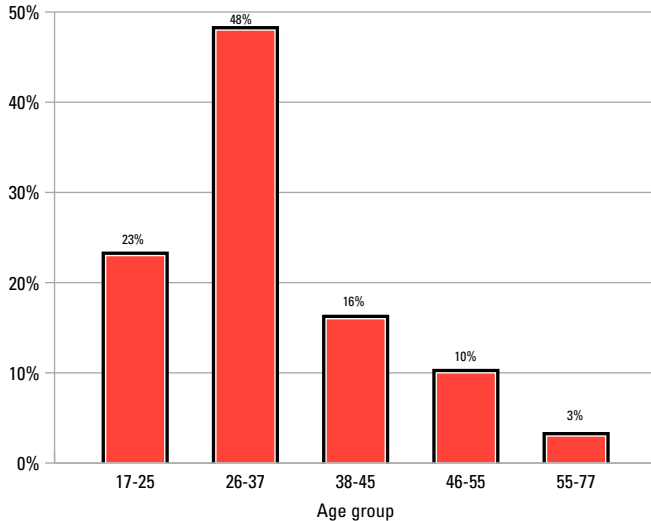
In the NGO sector most employees are women: 57.5% female (WB 58%, GS 56%) and 42.5% male (WB 42%, GS 44%) employees.²⁹

28 PASSIA *Diary 2011*, urban 73.7%, rural 17% and camps 9.3%, page 329.

29 Also see comparison with the study of MAS 2007, *Mapping PNGOs in the WB and the GS*, p. 43: 54.8% female and 45.2% male

3.1.3 NGO employment rate by age groups

NGO employment rate by age group



Tables and Graphs 2: NGO employment rate by age groups

The age group 26-37 years has the highest representation with 48% (WB 46%, GS 50%) of employees, followed by age group 17-25 years with 23% (WB 19%, GS 28%) of employees. These two age groups are often described in the literature as the second Intifada generation, born in the 'eighties. Members of the age group 38-45 years with 16% (WB 19%, GS 13%) and 46-55 years with 10% (WB 12%, GS 7%) and known as the first Intifada generation were born in the 'sixties and 'seventies.

We compared the age-group data of the West Bank and Gaza. In Gaza, the age group 17-25 years shows a clearly higher percentage with 28% than 19% in the West Bank. This difference can be explained through the special implementation of job creation programs through donors and also through the Hamas PA, mainly funneled through the NGO sector. 50% in Gaza and 46% in West Bank are in the age group 26-37 years. The age group 38-45 years may be considered a "transitional age group"; here the West Bank leads with 19% compared to 13% in Gaza. Those in the age group 46-55 years in the West Bank stood at 12% compared with 7% in Gaza. Membership of the age group 55-74 years is similar in the West Bank and Gaza with 4% in the West Bank and 2% in Gaza.

3.1.4 Place of birth / Nationality/ Passport

Popular perceptions in Palestinian society say that the majority of Palestinian NGO employees are born abroad or have a foreign passport. This assumption is not justifiable. 88.5% Palestinian NGO employees were born in the oPt. 9% were born in other Arab countries and 3% were born in USA/Europe. 82% (WB 74%, GS 96%) of Palestinian NGO employees have a Palestinian passport and 12% have a passport from "another country." "Another country" is divided into: other Arab countries (including Jordanian) 92%, Southern Africa (countries below the Sahara) 3%, North America 2% and Israeli document 3%.

3.1.5 Urban / Rural / Refugee Camp

Urban, rural, refugee camp

Palestinian NGO employees		
		Passia Data
Urban	76.5%	73.3%
Rural	16.5%	17.0%
Refugee Camp	7.1%	9.3%

Tables and Graphs 3: population distribution/ NGO employees/ Palestinians

The population distribution by place of residence in Palestine in 2010 was: 73.3% urban, 17% rural and 9.3% in refugee camps.³⁰ The permanent place of residence of employees in the NGO sector is practically identical with the Palestinian Population at large: 76.5% urban, 16.5% rural and 7.1% refugee camp.

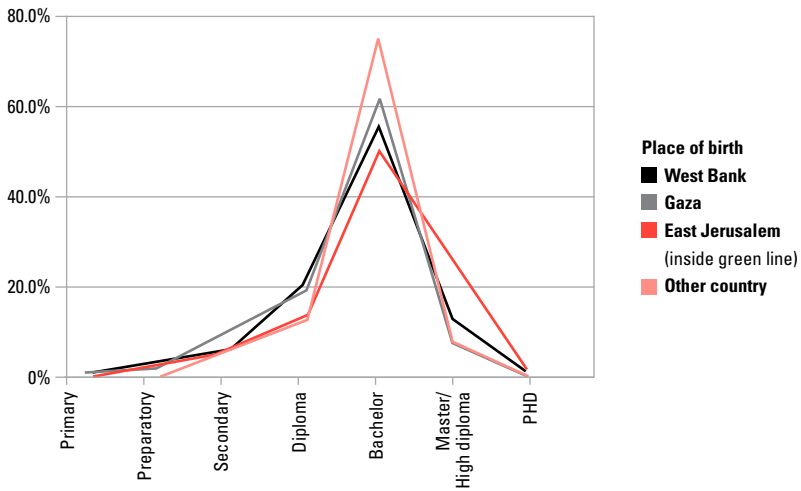
3.1.6 Level of Education

The majority of 59% NGO employees have a Bachelor's Degree. 19% of NGO employees have a two year Diploma and 12% a Master's degree. Primary, Preparatory and Secondary school education are represented with 10% and 1% have a PhD. 90% of NGO employees have had a higher education. The highest Bachelor's rate is found in the age group 17-25 at 70% and age group 26-37 at 65% compared to other age groups.

The place of birth has an influence on the level of education, see table no.4 below. The highest percent for a Bachelor's degree at 74% is among those who were born abroad, followed by Gaza 61%, West Bank 55% and East Jerusalem 50%.

30 PASSIA Diary 2011, PCBS Population Census and Press Release on International Population Day, July 2010

Level of education, place of birth



Tables and Graphs 4: level of education / place of birth

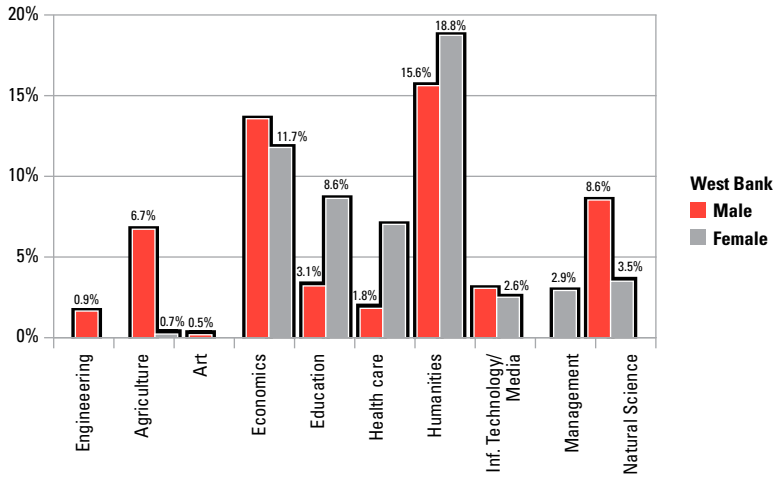
Students with academic degrees from abroad have better chances to get a job immediately after studying than students with a degree from Palestinian universities or from other Arab countries.³¹ Being the owner of a Jerusalem Identity Card or another non-Palestinian passport means better job opportunities for an administrative position.

The major field of study is dominated by humanities, economics and education with differences between the West Bank and Gaza (see Table and Graphs: 5, below).

A major study field does not necessarily determine the actual work of an NGO employee.

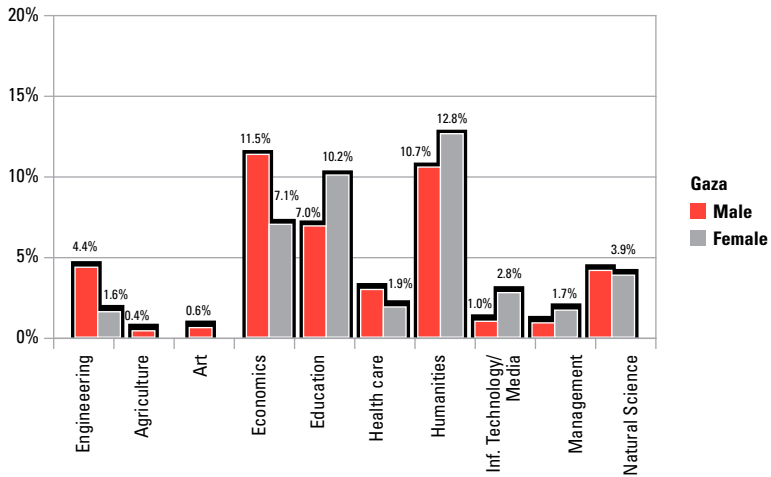
31 PCBS 2005, table 121/p.171

Major field of study/West Bank



Tables and Graphs 5: major field of study / West Bank

Major field of study/Gaza



Tables and Graphs 6: major field of study / Gaza

Concerning the West Bank and Gaza: women (64%) men (62%) in Gaza are higher presented with Bachelor degrees than their West Bank counterparts with female 57% and male 53%. In Diploma certificates women (22%, WB 23%, GS 21%) rank before men (14%, WB 15%, GS 13%). Men show a much higher percentage with Master’s degrees (17%, WB 20%, GS 13%) than women (7%, WB 10%, GS 4%). There are no great differences between Primary / Preparatory or Secondary in the two regions. PhDs are dominated by men. Women lead in the Bachelor’s category and in diploma degrees, while men preponderate among those with further academic education.

NGO employees / training courses / further education

Living and working in a fast changing world demands flexibility, advanced vocational training and familiarization with new methods and techniques. 41% of NGO employees (WB male: 48%, female 39%, Gaza male 46%, female: 39%) do take part in further education and training courses, 57% have so far not taken part in a training course.

Participation in training/educational programs

Are you joining of have you ever joined a training/educational programs						
Age group	17.25	26.37	38.45	46.55	55.74	Total
Yes count	110	178	61	50	5	404
% within	27.2%	44.1%	15.1%	12.4%	1.2%	100%
% within age group	50.5%	39.1%	39.6%	52.1%	16.7%	42.4%
% of total	11.5%	18.7%	6.4%	5.2%	5%	42.4%
No count	108	277	93	46	25	549
% within	19.7%	50.5%	16.9%	8.4%	4.6%	100%
% within age group	49.5%	60.9%	60.4%	47.9%	83.3%	57.6%
% of total	11.3%	29.1%	9.8%	4.8%	2.6%	57.6%

Tables and Graphs 7: participation in training / educational programs

The highest participation rate is in the age group 26-37 years at 44%, followed by age group 17-25 years at 27%, decreasing in the age group 38-45 years to 15 % and 12% in the age group 46-55 years.

Gender aspect:

Female employees show the same high interest in taking training courses if they have an academic degree or school education secondary and below. For males, as the level of education increases, the participation in courses increases. Looking at the type of work, administrators are in first place with 34% taking training

courses, then office employees 17%, trainer, supervisor 16%, coordinator 15%, researcher 6%, service employees 6% and others 6%. Training courses are mainly taken to improve computer skills 19%, education in health 18%, capacity building 13% and political awareness 12%.

The NGO as an institution itself pays in 47% of cases for training programs of their employees. 46% of the NGO employees pay for training courses themselves and 7% of NGO employees are funded by foundations.

3.1.7 Family status / Marital status

In Palestinian society 92% of females are married in the age between 15-29 years. 29% of women are married under 18 years.³² The median age at first marriage for females is 20.1 years and for males 25.4 years.³³ The fertility rate in 2010 was 4.2 births (WB: 3.8, GS 4.9 births)

Palestinian families have an average household size of 5.8 persons (WB 5.5, GS 6.4 persons) in 2010.

Concerning NGOs, 59% of NGO employees are married, 35% of NGO employees are single, 1% are separated, 2% divorced, and 1% widowed. (2% did not answer the question) For further analysis a recode was done of 'not married' and 'ever married': 64% of NGO employees were ever married (male 75%, female 56%) and 36% of NGO employees were not married (male 25%, female 44%).

Marital status Single, ever married

Sex cross tabulation			
	Male	Female	Total
Single			
Count	110	256	366
% within	25.2%	43.6%	35.7%
Ever married			
Count	327	331	658
% within	74.8%	56.4%	64.3%
Total			
Count	437	587	1024
% within	100%	100%	100%

Tables and Graphs 8: marital status: single / ever married

32 MAS *Economic and social monitor 22*, November 2010

33 PCBS *Statistic Yearbook 2010*

“Being single” under the aspect of gender / female

Marital status Age groups, Gender

Age groups	Female Single	Male Single
17-25	69%	83%
26-37	40%	22%
38-45	23%	1%
46-54	13%	0%
55-75	25%	0%

Tables and Graphs 9: marital status: age groups / single /gender

In our study we have slightly different age categories as shown above, 17-25 years and not 15-29 years. Comparisons have to be drawn carefully. If we compare these categories we find in the age group female 17-25 years, 69% are single and 31% are married. In the age group female 26-37 years, 40% are single and 60% are married.

In the age group 55-74 years: 25%, in the age group 38-45 years: 23% and in the age group 46-55 years: 13% are single. This indicates for female NGO employees a trend towards later marriage and / or the free choice to stay single. Being aware, that this result can be viewed either positively or negatively. Highly educated women with working experience are often above the average marriage age and this fact can also be a “burden” for women in Palestinian society who seek a partner. Studies show that, in general – and not only in Palestine, men tend to marry younger women who are less well educated as themselves.

Results of our focus groups show that young men (30 years and below) prefer that their sisters and wives work in the public and private sectors, because NGO work for women is not yet judged respectable at every level of society. By contrast, Rema Hammami and Amal Syam discovered in their study *Who answers to Gazan women. An economic security and rights research*. (2010), for which they undertook female focus groups in Gaza, that women working in NGOs are becoming more attractive on the ‘marriage market’, because they earn good wages in a desolate economical situation.

Conclusion: The NGO sector can be also seen as a working sector for highly educated, unmarried women

A more detailed analysis of gender roles and relations follows in chapter 3.3 ‘NGO sector- a female gendered working field?’

3.1.8 Working partner

Our data above showed, 64% of NGO employees are married and 36% are single. Married NGO employees were asked, if their partner was working or not and if the partner was working, in which sector?

Working partner

Working partner	Palestine	West Bank		Gaza			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Yes	59%	45%	90%	68%	28%	72%	47%
No	41%	55%	10%	32%	72%	28%	53%

Tables and Graphs 10: working partner

Working place of partner

Working sector	Palestine	West Bank		Gaza			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
NGO-sector	17%	29%	10%	16%	35%	13%	20%
GO-sector	45%	44%	37%	39%	40%	61%	54%
Private sector	38%	26%	54%	45%	25%	26%	26%

Tables and Graphs 11: working place of partner

In Gaza: 35% of men and 13% of women answered that their partner was working in the NGO sector. 40% male and 61% female employees had a partner working in the governmental sector. 25% male and 26% female employees had a partner working in the private sector. In Gaza, NGO men are more likely to have wives working in NGOs than their West Bank counterparts. Female NGO workers in Gaza tend to have husbands working in the government sector (the largest single employer in Gaza) compared with the West Bank where women tend to have spouses working in the private sector (the private sector in the West bank is larger than in Gaza).

61% of male partners are working in the governmental sector in Gaza. This is a fairly high percentage in comparison with 37% in the West Bank. In July 2007, Gaza fell under the control of Hamas whereas the West Bank continued to be administered by Fatah. The fact that employees of the “old Fatah governmental sector” in Gaza still get paid from the Fatah PA in the West Bank has to be taken into account. Also relevant here is that the public sector in Gaza is the largest employer. These factors help explain the high percentage of male partners working in the governmental sector.

Also to be considered is the possibility that, after the complete closure of Gaza,³⁴ the Hamas administration expanded working opportunities in the governmental sector to absorb unemployed men and women who had previously worked in Israel.

The research shows that it is relatively uncommon for both partners to be working in the NGO sector (bearing in mind that the NGO sector covers around 10% of the Palestinian labor force). The majority of partners work in the governmental or private sectors. As mentioned in the FGs in the West Bank and Gaza, the governmental sector seems to guarantee longer working contracts and therefore more job stability.

Results of focus group interviews concerning women show on one hand, the majority of women prefer to work in NGOs because the employment is interesting, diversified, and professional with an open working atmosphere and the possibility of a career. On the other hand, women mentioned preferences for the governmental sector because it seems to offer job security and more compatibility with family life (FGs, female < 30 years). The governmental sector offers working hours from 8am-3pm, a vacation, and a pension among other benefits.

Young men (FGs, male till 30 years) prefer their wives and sisters to work in the governmental sector, arguing that “in the NGO sector women are exposed to work which is in society not so well respected, for example fieldwork or working with men in one room.”³⁵ In FGs male > 40 years didn’t mention a preference, “Each woman should decide what she wants.”

3.1.9 Children

41.3% (WB 39.4%, GS 44.4%) of the Palestinian population is younger than 14 years.³⁶ 86% of NGO employees have children. 35% have one or two children, 39% have three or four children and 26% have more than four children. The birth rate in Palestine is closely connected to the marital status of women. The trend among women to marry later mirrors a tendency to bear children later in life. This often implies not having so many children.³⁷

Another string of argumentation heard was the modern notion of a nuclear family

34 see also *Checkpoint and Barriers: Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza. Gender Dimension of Economic Collapse*. February 2010, p. 31

35 See also Rema Hammami, Amal Syam *Who answers to Gazan Women*, chapter 6.3. Gender Norms and Job Searches

36 Age 15-29: 29.4%, Persons with the age 60 and above make 3 % of the total population. PCBS Migration survey in the Palestinian Territory 2010, Main results.

37 An average a Palestinian woman gives birth to 4.6 children and women in the age between 15-29 years have the highest contributing rate. (Economic and social monitor 22, Nov. 2010, see also slightly different numbers in the Statistical Yearbook 2011 by PCBS: total fertility rate lies by 4.2 births (WB 3.8, GS 4.9)

– a couple might have just one or two children who then would have a better chance of a good education.

3.1.10 Education of children

The Palestinian education system is based on Grades 1-10, followed by two years of secondary school. The first ten grades are divided into Preparation Stage (grades 1-4) and Empowerment Stage from grade (grades 5-10). After the tenth grade, an optional secondary education covers grades 11-12 with the school-leaving examination, *Tawjihi*. Only those who take the *Tawjihi* have the option of a general higher education.

Children in Palestine can go to governmental and private schools and if they are registered as refugees, they may attend UNWRA schools for the elementary cycle. Governmental and UNWRA schools are free; in private schools, fees are charged.

People send their children to private schools for several reasons:

-private schools have a better reputation for offering a quality education than do governmental schools

-religious aspect: an Islamic or Christian-orientated education is valued by some parents

-teachers rarely strike

-private schools offer foreign languages and trips abroad

Education of children

Type of school	Palestine	West Bank	Gaza
	Total	Total	Total
Paid	22%	34%	6%
Unpaid	44%	35%	55%
Mixed	8%	8%	8%
No school	26%	23%	31%

Tables and Graphs 12: education of children / type of school

In the West Bank and Gaza, 86% of NGO employees have children, 60% of them having school age children. Of those with school age children, 44% of NGO employees send their children to governmental and UNWRA schools and 22% to private schools. 8% send their children to both (mixed). There is a big difference between the West Bank and Gaza concerning “paid” and “free” schools. This difference depends on: 1. affordability and 2. infrastructure. (The Infrastructure

of private schools in Gaza is less developed.) In the West Bank: 34% of NGO employees send their children to private (paid) schools, 35% to unpaid (UNWRA schools 3%, governmental schools 32%) and 8% to both types of school.

In Gaza: 6% of NGO employees send their children to private schools, 55% to unpaid schools (UNWRA schools 40%, governmental schools 15%) and 8% to both types of school.

Education – University

A small percentage of NGO employees with children who are attending university educate them outside Palestine, mainly in other Arab countries.

While this field-work did not succeed in generating relevant data, future field work might concentrate on the question, if there is a difference between average Palestinians and elite-NGO leaders concerning where their children study.

Monthly expenditure on education

Education	Employee % of income	Up to 10 %	Up to 20 %	Up to 30 %	> 31 %
	35%	16%	9%	5%	6%

Tables and Graphs 13: percent of monthly wage spent on children’s education

35% of NGO employees spend money on school education. 16% spend 10% of their monthly wage on education, 9% acknowledged 20%, 5% spend 30% and 5% above 30% of their monthly wage on education. PCBS reported 2010 (April-June) that the average Palestinian monthly household’s expenditure on education (including personal care and recreational activities) is 27 JD / 147 NIS (general), 21 JD / 114 NIS (WB) , 16 JD / 87 NIS (Gaza). Our study result indicates that 35% of NGO employees invest more money into the education of their children than average Palestinians

3.1.11 Interim conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, if general, when Palestinians talk about NGO employees, it is well known – or at least the popular conception is – that NGO employees are better paid than others, that they are born abroad, that they are young, professionalized and career-orientated, that they have a lot of key benefits compared to the average Palestinian, that they don’t think politically anymore and work only in their own interest etc.

The research has shown so far:

- 71% of NGO employees are in the age between 17-37 years. PCBS stated 2010 that the highest unemployment rate was in the age group from 20-24 years at

39.4% (WB 24.9%, GS 66.6%).³⁸ In this sense, the NGO sector can be viewed as a job market for the young and highly educated: 90 % of the NGO employees have a higher education degree.

- The majority of 88% were born in Palestine and 82% of NGO employees hold a Palestinian passport. The concept that the majority were born abroad is thus incorrect. However it should be noted, being the owner of a Jerusalem ID or additional another non-Palestinian passport implies better job opportunities for those working in an administrative position.³⁹

- women at 57.5% form a substantial part of the work force in the NGO sector.

- the majority are urban, but this reflects Palestinian society as a whole

- seeking education (improving skills, taking training courses) was popular

- there was a tendency to later marriage

- there was a tendency to have fewer children

- in the West Bank as opposed to Gaza, there was a trend to educate children in private schools

- 59% of NGO employees has a working partner (WB: 68%, Gaza: 47 %,)

3.2 NGO sector: neo-liberal restructured working sector

Working reality of NGO employees

– working conditions, wages / living standard / controversial settings of voluntary work, - type of NGO employees

In June, 2010, the official unemployment rate was 23% (WB 15%, GS 39%), according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

The West Bank and Gaza are still occupied territories and suffer under the general closure and separation policy of Israel. The reality is a never ending economic crisis in the occupied territories with underdeveloped industry, an agriculture sector without development because of the reasons mentioned above and restricted access to natural resources. The Palestinian economy is dominated by services. The West Bank and Gaza depend totally on external help. Having a job in uncertain political and economic times means “having a future” (FG, male <30 years, GS and see also *World Bank Report No.: 49699-GZ, Checkpoints and Barriers*).

Where do Palestinian women and men find work?

38 Source: PASSIA *Diary 2011*, p.349

39 Note: if Palestinians have only a foreign passport and no residency status, they are less likely to be hired because employers fear that they might be unable to remain in the country.

PCBS undertakes regular labor force surveys (LFS) according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) methodology. Data on key labor market indicators: age, education, wage levels, sector and occupation of work are documented.

The NGO working sector, with approximately 10% of jobs for the Palestinian labor market, is categorized under ‘services and other branches’ (see table below).

Economic activity and sex

	Palestine	West Bank	Gaza
Both sexes			
Agriculture, fishing, forestry	14.9%	17.5%	12.3%
Mining, quarrying, manufacturing	12.1%	14.5%	4.6%
Construction	10.8%	14.1%	0.4%
Commerce, restaurants, hotels	19.8%	20.6%	17.0%
Transportation, storage, communication	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%
Services and other branches	38.2%	30.9%	61.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Males			
Agriculture, fishing, forestry	11.0%	11.6%	9.2%
Mining, quarrying, manufacturing	12.9%	15.4%	5.2%
Construction	13.4%	17.7%	0.4%
Commerce, restaurants, hotels	22.9%	24.0%	19.5%
Transportation, storage, communication	5.1%	5.1%	5.2%
Services and other branches	34.7%	26.2%	60.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Females			
Agriculture, fishing, forestry	30.7%	31.3%	28.0%
Mining, quarrying, manufacturing	9.2%	11.1%	1.1%
Construction	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%
Commerce, restaurants, hotels	7.1%	7.9%	3.7%
Transportation, storage, communication	0.5%	0.6%	0.0%
Services and other branches	52.1%	48.6%	67.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: PCBS 2008

Tables and Graphs 14: economic activity and gender

The following chapter analyzes the working realities of the NGO sector.

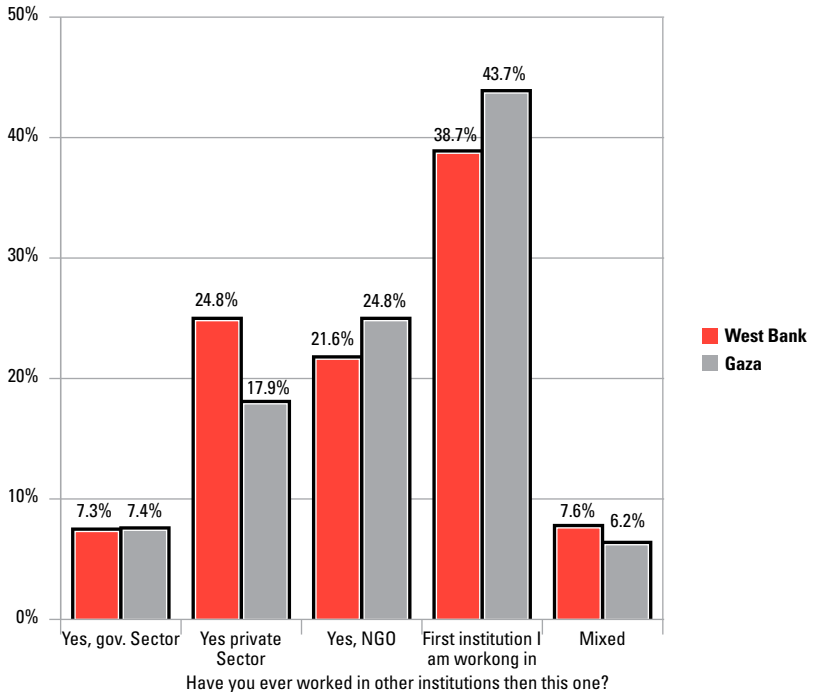
3.2.1 Personal working history

NGO employees are mainly in the age group 26-37 years (48%) and between 17-25 years (23%), born at the beginning of the 'eighties and known as the second Intifada generation.⁴⁰ The first Intifada generation, born in the 'sixties and seventies' – nowadays between 38-45 years – amounts to 16% and the age group between 46 and 55 years stands at 10%.

NGO employees between 38 and 55 years were often involved in establishing NGOs. Employees belonging to the second Intifada generation and with higher education generally find work after volunteering, going to interviews and /or by exploiting personal relations.

3.2.1.2 Moving in the NGO sector

Employees coming from other sectors



Tables and Graphs 15: moving in the NGO sector

40 The group 15-24 years is the age group with the highest unemployment rate: 42.5%. Age group 25-34 years: 28%, 35-44 years: 16.6% and 45-54 years: 18.2%. See *Economic and Social Monitor* 23, p.7

For 41% of NGO employees, the NGO in which they are currently working is their first place of work. 23% of employees have worked previously in NGOs. 22% of employees have moved from the private sector and 7% from the governmental sector into the NGO sector. 7% of employees have experience in more than one sector.

In Gaza, for 44% of NGO employees, their current workplace is their first, compared with 39% in the West Bank.

Considered by gender:

Among female NGO employees in Gaza, 48% are working in their very first job.

Among the same group in the West Bank, the figure is 41%.

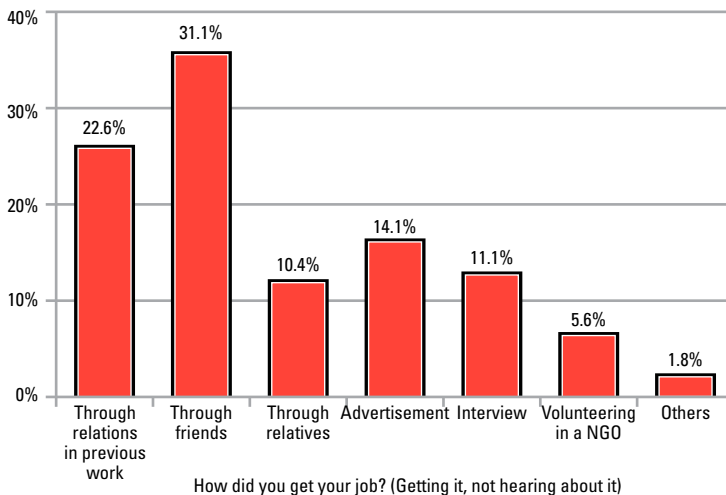
For 38% of male NGO employees in Gaza, their current job is their very first.

35% of male NGO employees in the West Bank are in their first job.

3.2.1.3 Ways to find a Job in the NGO sector

The governmental sector must publish their job offers in the public media. By contrast, NGOs, like the private sector, may publish their job offers in newspapers and/ or in the internet, but they are not obliged to do so.⁴¹

Possibilities to find a job in the NGO sector



Tables and Graphs 16: possibilities to find a job in the NGO sector

41 See MAS *Economic and Social monitor* 23, 2.4. Vacancy announcement.

Finding a job in the NGO sector

45% of NGO employees land a job through the help of friends (34.4%) and relatives (10.4%). This high percentage diminishes if NGO employees have already held one or two positions in the NGO sector. 23% of NGO employees make use of relationships formed in previous employment. Finding a job in this way increases with a longer previous employment history. 14% of NGO employees say they found work through public advertisements and 11% through a personal interview. 6% of NGO employees found work through doing voluntary work. There is a contradiction in the results of the focus group interviews where the majority (< 30 years) claimed they found their job through voluntary work. Many (GS, female and male <30 years) felt that a good education was not enough to secure a job, “[both] high education and *wasta* are needed to get a job.” The Arabic word *wasta* means using connections to get what you want.

3.2.1.4 Interim conclusion

In 2010, a typical NGO employee: has a higher education (90%), has volunteer experience in several institutions or NGOs and often uses connections to land a job in an NGO. For 41% of NGO employees, their current NGO is their first place of work. 23% of NGO employees have previously worked in an NGO.

3.2.2 Working facts

3.2.2.1 Type of job – full time / part time

Type of job: full time/part time

	Palestine	West Bank	Gaza
Type of job	Total	Total	Total
Full time	68%	84%	47%
Part time	32%	16%	53%

Tables and Graphs 17: type of job, full time / part time

The data show full time employment of 68% and part time employment of 32% in the occupied Palestinian territories. We need to differentiate between full time and part-time jobs. In the West Bank full time employment is 84%; part time employment is 16%. In Gaza, there is a remarkable difference between full time employment at 47% and part time employment at 53%.

3.2.2.2 Working contracts and level of income

NGOs must face the reality of short term projects, limited in time by donors and also specially developed short term employment programs for the oPt.

For example, between 2007 and 2009, the NGO development center received 6 million Euros to fund job creation projects in the West Bank and Gaza from the French Development Agency.

“The Job Creation Project in the West Bank and Gaza aims to alleviate the financial burdens of the poorest and most marginalized Palestinian families by financing temporary employment opportunities through the execution of infrastructure micro-projects and improving public assets operated by NGOs. Through this project, NDC expects to offer assistance to over 50 NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza, and create approximately 140,000 working man-days.”⁴²

Since 2006, international donors and agencies, as well the Hamas government increased the level of funding for social support, channeling these through NGOs and the public sector in order to relieve an ongoing humanitarian crisis. After the 2008-2009 Gaza war, both needs and funding intensified.

The majority of these part-timers or short termers in Gaza are beneficiaries of these job creation programs without having a long term perspective. Most jobs can be characterized as training or semi-voluntary.⁴³ The pro and contra of implementing such short term or part time contracts in the special situation of the Gazans will be not discussed at this point.

Part time contracts are considered in Palestinian society to be “bad contracts”. In focus groups in the West Bank and in Gaza, employees explained “having a part-time contract means working full time for half of the salary.” The impression of many NGO employees with part time work is of “having no rights.” Employers are said to be in a position “to force you to work more hours than part time, because you don’t want to lose your work” (FGs in WB&GS <30 years with ‘bad contracts’).

Working part time is mainly not a free choice. In the majority of cases, it is what job applicants get offered. Of employees questioned in Gaza, 84% are working according to their written or verbal contract part time because they have “no choice” (FGs male and female below 30 years, WB&GS). The economic situation in Gaza is forcing people to take any job that is available. Young employees are looking for work experience and better job conditions. For that a variety of different certificates of experience is needed. (GS, female < 30 years, ‘bad contracts’) In this sense, working part time can offer the opportunity to have more than one job and collect different and more working experience, which in the long run can

42 <http://www.ndc.ps/main.php?id=45>

43 see also the UNWRA report <http://www.unwra.org/userfiles/201106083557.pdf> and <http://www.irpal.ps/irpal/news-120>

make it easier to find a job with better conditions (also mentioned in FGs in GS <30 years with 'bad contracts').

NGO workers have adapted to the difficult reality that most contracts on offer are part time or temporary. Their proactive response has been to be continually on the look-out for employment with better conditions and taking what is on offer as soon as it is available – sometimes meaning they are working in one NGO before their contract with their previous employer has ended.

In contrast, women in the focus group female >40 in Gaza describe 'working experience' as an empty term, saying "we all go through an experience nightmare". They mean that long term work experience in a job, for example for 6-8 years, no longer has any value. Job applicants with many and varied certificates are preferred, even if the working or volunteer experience period amounts to no more than one month. Also mentioned was having to sign a contract offering a salary of \$800 and receiving \$150, without knowing where the rest of the money would go. This was mentioned more than once.⁴⁴

Also in focus groups, men and women reported working without a written contract and below 500 NIS a month (FG, female and male below 30 years). "Working without a written contract" is, according to Palestinian labor law, possible and according to the law people would have the same protection as with a written contract. The reality is rather different.

Two internal contradictions in retrospect:

1. Part time work in Gaza – "We don't have any part time contracts in Gaza. I am sure." (FG GS male >40 years)

The topic of part time or temporary jobs was discussed in 12 focus groups.

Eleven focus groups discussed the negative impact of part time jobs very enthusiastically. Focus groups below 30 years with "bad contracts" mentioned their hope, that through being able to talk about their bad working situations and conditions, these might be improved.

The results of one focus group (male > 40 years in GS) was in a complete contradiction to the quantitative results and to the results of the other 11 focus groups in the West Bank and in Gaza. All participants of this focus group (who were mostly NGO directors) denied that part time contracts existed in Gaza.

2. 40% of NGO employees have "no written contract"

In this research, over 60% of the PNGOs rely on external funding by the EC or other European countries. In general, external funded PNGOs have to write a

44 Only employees from one single NGO said that their NGO has a transparent policy of job sharing. One person signs a contract but two do the work and share of the salary. The others said they knew nothing about such schemes.

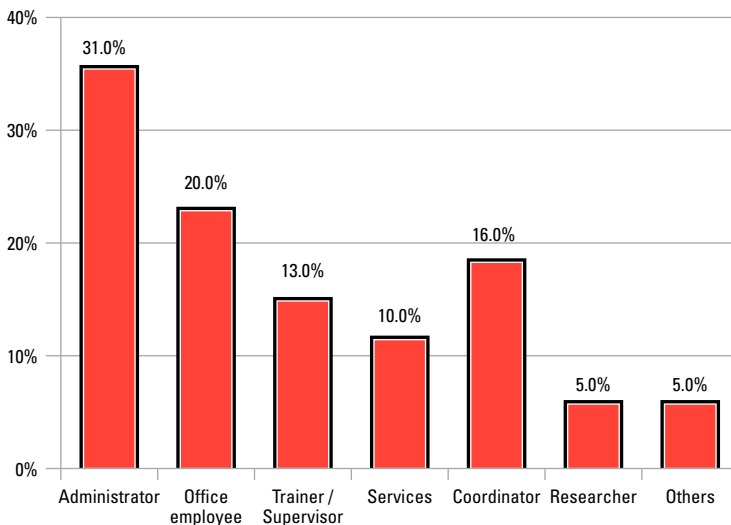
financial report, supported by a financial audit for their donors. In financial reports it is assumed that all employees working for a project and paid from its budget have a written contract. This formal, correct procedure is, however, not always followed.

As mentioned above through the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the NGO environment in Gaza differs from its West Bank counterpart. International donors and agencies, set up huge "job creation programs" which have been run and managed through NGOs in Gaza. NGOs are explicitly funded from donors to hire young people on short part time trainings schemes with no contracts, no guarantees and low salaries. This may explain the 43% of NGO employees "with no written" contract in Gaza comparing to 38% in the West Bank. In the West Bank 38% without a written contract under "normal" aid conditions is a very high percentage. In some cases in the West Bank and in Gaza NGOs may benefit from grants without being responsible for financial reports.

One might expect that these irregular working arrangements and precarious conditions should motivate trades unions to take active counter-measures.

3.2.2.3 Type of work

Type of work



Tables and Graphs 18: type of work

We classify as administrator those responsible for:

1. helping define the objectives, build a strategic plan and general policies for the institution, and participating in decision making
2. supervising the implementation of programs and following up the operational plan
3. working on proposals for the development of the administration and structure of the institution
4. supervising the preparation and the agenda, identifying annual vacancies in coordination with the appropriate authorities
5. overseeing the implementation of all procedures concerning employees' affairs
6. supervising the preparation and updating of job descriptions for all functions of the institution
7. overseeing the preparation of a training plan in all its aspects
8. supervising and reviewing preparation of the budget
9. supervision and auditing of annual reports
10. participating in management of knowledge

Gender aspect of job distribution:

Type of work: male/female

Type of work	Male	Female	Total
Administrator	37.2%	26.6%	31.2%
Office employee	15.2%	23.2%	19.8%
Trainer/Supervisor	11.3%	14.5%	13.2%
Services	10.2%	9.5%	9.8%
Coordinator	17.6%	15.2%	16.2%
Researcher	4.6%	4.8%	4.7%
Others	3.9%	6.1%	5.1%

Tables and Graphs 19: gender aspect of job distribution

Being aware that Women's NGOs (those with a main focus on women's matters) are represented in the study at 40% and female participation in NGOs is 57.5%, the sex ratio of administrative positions shows (at 37% male and 27% female) no gender equality. (For a more detailed discussion of this see chapter 3.3, NGO sector- a female gendered working field?)

20% of office employees work in NGOs, 24% in the West Bank and 13% in Gaza. The rate in the West Bank is 11% higher than in Gaza. In the West Bank being an office employee is a domain for women (30% female, 17% male). In Gaza it is nearly equal (14% female, 13% male).

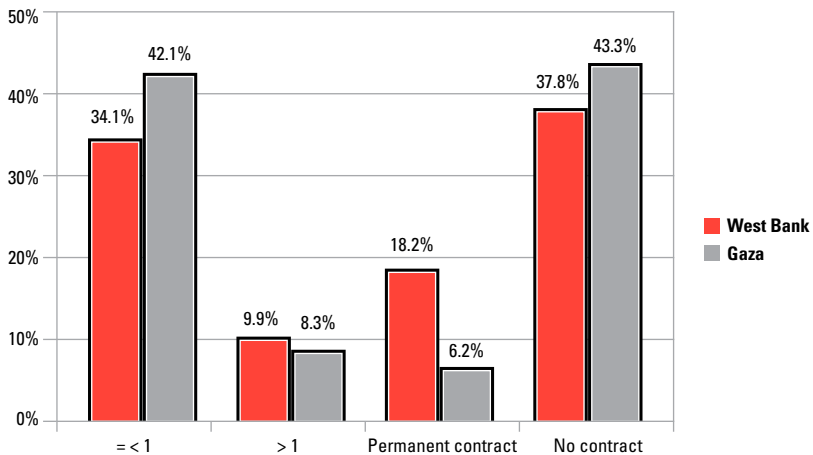
3.2.2.4 Types of contract / duration of contracts

In a globally-oriented world short term contracts for one year or less are fashionable in various working sectors. NGO employees have mainly short term contracts with a possibility of extension. This does not guarantee, however, the same working conditions (type of work, type of job, level of income etc.).

In the oPt 37% of NGO employees have a contract of 1 year or less. 10% of employees have a contract for more than 1 year and 13% have a permanent contract. 40% of NGO employees have no written contract at all.

See the differences between West Bank and Gaza in the table below.

Duration of written contract



Tables and Graphs 20: duration of contracts (including 'no written contract')

(=<1 means having a contract for 1 year or less, >1 means having a working contract more than 1 year in duration)

Duration of contract/age groups

Age group	17-25	26-37	38-45	46-55	55-74	Total
1 + < 1						
% within duration of contract	27.4%	50.1%	12.4%	7.7%	2.4%	100.0%
% within age group	45.4%	38.6%	27.5%	28.9%	36.4%	37.3%
% of total	10.2%	18.7%	4.6%	2.9%	9.0%	37.3%
> 1						
% within duration of contract	22.1%	48.8%	19.8%	8.1%	1.2%	100.0%
% within age group	9.3%	9.5%	11.1%	7.8%	4.5%	9.5%
% of total	2.1%	4.6%	1.9%	0.8%	0.1%	9.5%
Permanent contract						
% within duration of contract	10.0%	45.8%	20.0%	22.5%	1.7%	100.0%
% within age group	5.9%	12.5%	15.7%	30.0%	9.1%	13.2%
% of total	1.3%	6.0%	2.6%	3.0%	2.0%	13.2%
No contract						
% within duration of contract	22.2%	47.4%	19.2%	8.2%	3.0%	100.0%
% within age group	39.5%	39.3%	45.8%	33.3%	50.0%	40.1%
% of total	8.9%	19.0%	7.7%	3.3%	1.2%	40.1%
Total						
% within duration of contract	22.5%	48.4%	16.8%	9.9%	2.4%	100.0%
% within age group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Tables and Graphs 21: duration of contract / age groups

Duration of continuous contracts

Short term contracts in PNGOs can be extended. Looking at table and graphs 22, below; we see how long an NGO employee stays in the current NGO.

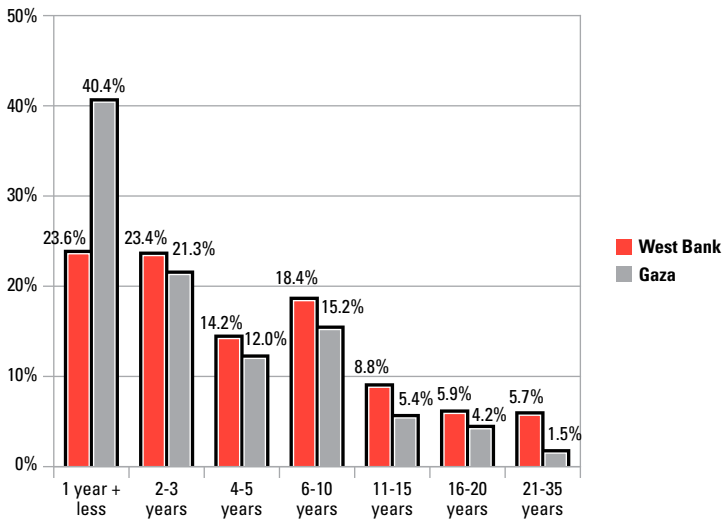
Duration of contracts in years in aNGO

Duration	Palestine
	Total
1 / < 1	31%
2-3 years	23%
4-5 years	13%
6-10 years	17%
11-15 years	8%
16-20 years	5%
21-35 years	4%

Tables and Graphs 22: duration of contracts in years in current NGO

As mentioned above, short term contracts may be extended. 31% of NGO employees have contracts lasting 1 year or less. 36% work in the same NGO for up to 5 years, 17% up to 10 years and 17% for more than 10 years. The 31% with contracts of 1 year or less are identical with so called new comers, employees who start work after finishing their education or who come from other working sectors. For differences between the West Bank and Gaza see Table and Graphs 23, below.

Duration of employment



Tables and Graphs 23: duration of contracts in years

This graphic shows clearly the difference between the West Bank and Gaza. Here we see the consequences of the donor policy of “job creation programs” in Gaza – the implementation of short term jobs with a working time of one year or less which leads to many workers dropping subsequently dropping out of the NGO sector.

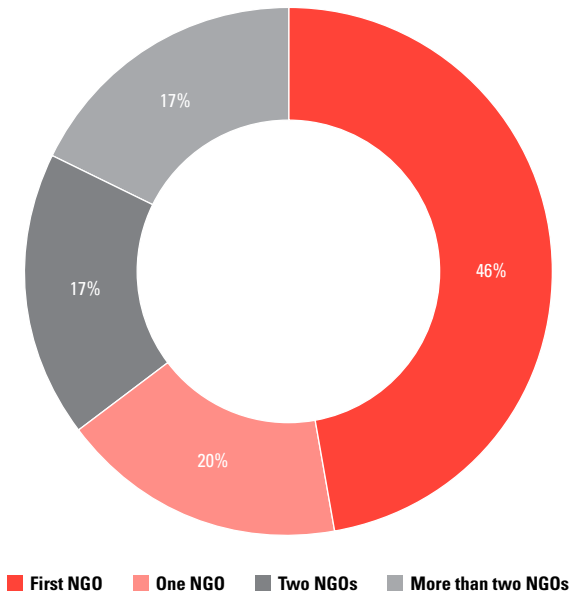
Short term contracts, even when extension is possible, do not provide job security. Human beings differ in their needs for stability in life. Some need more job security, some less. The factors of age and being responsible for a family also play a role.

In focus groups it was clearly mentioned that an unstable political situation and job insecurity lead to emigration especially among young people (FGs male <30

years). This is a phenomenon that has been increasing since the second Intifada. The PCBS Migration Survey in the Palestinian Territory found out, that in the period 2007-2009, 22,000 people emigrated. Not included are the families who emigrated together. The main reasons behind the desire to emigrate were: 39.3% wished to improve their living conditions, 15.2% found no job opportunities and 18.7% sought education and a chance to study. The significant difference in the distribution of main reasons behind the desire to emigrate between those in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip was the lack of security (13.8% in the Gaza Strip compared to 5.6% in the West Bank).⁴⁵

3.2.2.5 NGO tracking

Working in different NGOs



Tables and Graphs 24: working in different NGOs

For 46% of NGO employees the current employer was the first NGO they had worked for. If we compare Table & Graphs: 24 above, we conclude that, 31% with contracts of 1 year and less were newcomers: employees who started working

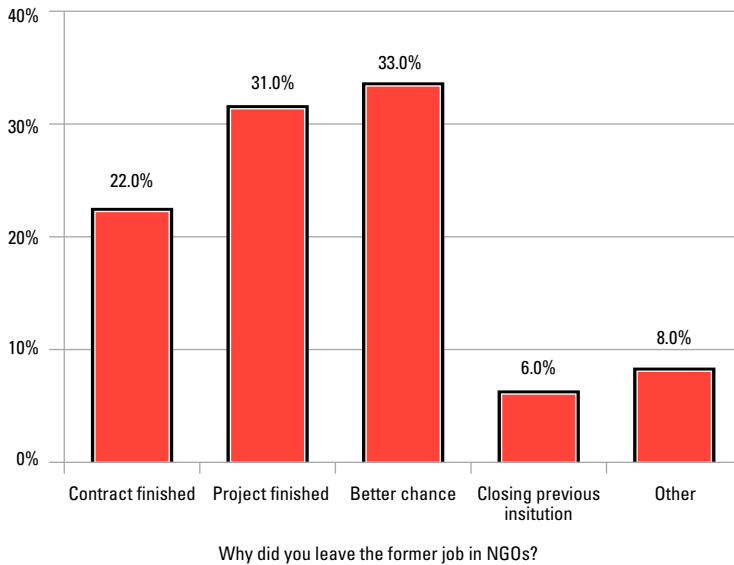
45 PCBS Migration Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Main Results

after having finished their education or having come from other sectors. 15% had already been longer than 1 year in the same NGO. 54% had moved by force or by chance internally in the NGO sector. 20% of employees had worked in one other NGO. 17% already worked in two other NGOs and 17% of NGO employees had already worked in more than two other NGOs (some in up to five). With more working experience in NGOs hopes for “a better chance” (better position, long term or permanent contract, higher salary etc.) increased.

3.2.2.6 NGO tracking by force or by chance⁴⁶

Objective and personal reasons to leave or change former NGO

Reasons to leave or change former NGO



Tables and Graphs 25: reasons to leave or change former NGO

⁴⁶ The word ‘tracking’ is used in the sense of ‘following a track’ ~ having a goal in mind, which you want to reach.

Objective and personal reasons to leave former NGO by gender / region: (Results quantitative survey)

Reasons to leave former NGO by gender/region

Reason	Palestine	West Bank			Gaza		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Contract finished	22%	24%	19%	21%	21%	28%	25%
Project finished	31%	24%	24%	24%	39%	42%	41%
NGO closed	6%	5%	7%	6%	7%	5%	6%
= by force	59%	53%	50%	51%	67%	72%	72%
Other (personal)	8%	24%	9%	9%	2%	8%	4%
Better chance	33%	38%	41%	40%	31%	24%	24%

Tables and Graphs 26: reasons to leave former NGO by region / gender

The reasons why NGO employees leave (or have to leave) their jobs, were clarified in various focus groups and are presented below in regard to:

- (1) the NGO employees,
- (2) the employers – the NGOs who describe why they offer part time contracts, short term projects, low paid jobs etc., and
- (3) the donors - whose investment decisions lead to this situation

1. Employees' reasons

An NGO employee faces one or more of the following situations (FG in WB & GS)

- The contract or project is finished;
- working conditions are bad;
- a better opportunity with a long term contract presents itself;
- an opportunity with a better position and income providing pension and insurance coverage becomes available;
- an opportunity occurs offering more experience in different fields;
- the employee finds a different job because he/she does not accept new working and payment conditions in the offer of a renewed contract; (typically, the current project finishes and another job is offered in a different project but with different working conditions)
- the employee seeks a job offering a better chance of improving personal skills and self development;
- changing for personal reasons "I want to change";
- changing because of not accepting the policy of the NGO

- gender aspect: familial and financial security may allow the employee to change (FG >40 years, GS)
 - changing as a result of being harassed at work

2. Employers' attitudes

NGO employer's actions may be considered under the following aspects:

- policy of the organization: to employ more people in the light of the high unemployment rate;
- employers create a competitive atmosphere, "to squeeze more out of people" (FGs, female and male < 30 years, GS);
- employers are sometimes corrupt (employees sign contracts with a salary of \$450 but receive only \$250 without an explanation. Nobody knows what happens to the rest of the money. (FGs, GS female and male, <30 years);

3. The donors - whose investment decisions lead to this situation

- Employees tend to look for new jobs while working on their current project.
- Employees leave the project before it ends.
- The two above mentioned points influence the success of a project. If a worker leaves before the project ends, somebody else must take the job over. Knowledge, time, and effectiveness are lost – and this influences the project outcome negatively.

Legitimate questions arise: If donors wish to support the building up of a functioning, viable and independent state, if they want "to take the jobless off the streets", why do they implement short term projects which bring little benefit rather than long-term projects to develop sustainability? Why do NGOs accept such conditions?

Tracking in an NGO-community

NGO tracking – the fact that contracts are mainly short (without job security) creates a community. Moving from one job to another, NGO workers are always on the run to find another or a better job. Formal, professional working networks as well as informal networks strengthen this development. The admission ticket for the community is post secondary education / a university degree and/or wasta. Requirements to stay in the NGO community with short term contracts are flexibility and further training.

Flexibility and training enable NGO employees to extend their contracts or to find another job if they are required to leave their current employment (59%) or because they have received a better job offer – "by chance" (33%).

Tables and Graphs: 22 above shows the duration of contracts in the current

working NGO. It reveals that 25% of employees stay between 6 and 15 years in the same NGO. Staying long term in an NGO or practicing NGO-tracking by necessity or because of a better opportunity, leads to a better knowledge of the aid business and the ability to use this know-how. Having the knowledge and ability to operate in the aid sector includes the power to create jobs (sometimes well- paid jobs) in a country with an unemployment rate between 23% and 28% in a desolate economy.

3.2.2.7 Motivation to work in an NGO

Responses by NGO employees to questions about their motivation for working in an NGO can be broadly sorted under the headings economic, individual and political background.

Economic (personal) is acknowledged by 27% of NGO employees because of “better income” 13%; “better position” (connected with a better income) 12% and “better benefits” 2%.

Economic (political): for 25% NGO employees, the offered work in the NGO was the only job available (WB 17% male, 18% women; GS 30% male, 34% female) “It is not a question of choice, you take what you get” (FGI Gaza, male <30).

28% of NGO employees with BC, Diploma and PhD would only find work abroad (14%) or in the NGO sector (14%). That indicates that western funded NGOs seem to prevent a drain of qualified employees and academic educated people.

Individual: 23% of NGO employees gave their reasons as “wishing to contribute something to society” and 18% felt “more independent at work” as well as “preferring to work in an open atmosphere between men and women”

In focus groups, a strong argument was working on a professional level. NGOs offer different work experience and the chance to acquire skills through training courses and the diversity of work experience. All these factors support self-development and provide professional stability. Professional stability increases the chance of achieving job security such as long-term contracts or permanent contracts not necessarily in the NGO sector.

Also mentioned were the importance of the geographical aspect: a working place near to home (7%) and the political personal aspect: working in an NGO does not imply or require support of the Palestinian Authority.

Individual working goals

NGO employees were asked to emphasize their individual goals. Most cited “supporting civil society” and “gaining money” in first position with 31%, “gaining skills and experiences” in second position and “helping to change society” in third position.

82% said they had achieved their individual goals, 18% suggested that, to achieve their goals, the NGOs needed to be improved. This would involve changing institutional strategy (35%) and the improvement of political (25%) and job security (19%).

3.2.2.8 Disadvantages of working in a PNGO

As disadvantages of working in a PNGO was mentioned by 52%: “not having a permanent job” (WB 43%, female 44%, male 40%; GS 64%, female 68%, male 60%) “working in short projects” by 33% (WB 29%, female 30%, male 28%; GS 38%, male 41%, female 30%), “not helping the people on the ground” 9% (WB 10%, female 11%, male 9%; GS 8%, male 10%, female 7%) and 6% others.

“Not having a permanent job” was cited by over half of NGO employees. Comparing the West Bank with Gaza: the Gaza’s NGO employees with 64%, (female 68% and male 60%) reflect the donors’ policy in Gaza of short term job creation programs without offering a long-term perspective (FG <30 years, male and female). Gaza’s women at 68% suffer from this situation the most compared to their West Bank female counterparts at 44%.

3.2.2.9 Interim conclusion

In the West Bank, 84% of jobs are full-time and 16% are part-time, in contrast with Gaza, where just 47% of jobs are full-time jobs and 53% part-time.

In the oPt 37% of NGO employees have contracts lasting 1 year or less. 10% have contracts more than 1 year and 13% have a permanent contract. 40% of NGO employees have no written contract at all. Attention must be drawn to the fact that for over 43% NGO employees in Gaza and 38% NGO employees in the West Bank, their NGO job is their first employment at all. 40% of NGO employees in the West Bank and Gaza are working without a written contract. Short term contracts in an NGO may be extended in the same NGO in another project. If this is not possible, employees often practice NGO tracking to get another job or to improve their job prospects. If finding another job in the NGO community is not possible, unemployment often follows.

Looking at wages and terms of employment, we notice a clear stratification of NGO employment in the oPts. We see a clear hierarchy: at the bottom remains a large group of NGO workers, typically low paid, with no job security, having short term contract or no written contract at all; then comes a ‘middle class’ and finally an elite with long-term contracts or permanent contracts and a level of income well above the Palestinian average.

This indicates a neo-liberal transformation in the NGO sector and shows that this sector is not immune to a globalized, neo-liberal restructuring process of the work force. This process is bringing about deleterious and precarious working

conditions. Short term projects (WB 51% and GS 72%), NGO employees are forced to leave their jobs because their contracts end or for other reasons, low paid jobs (<500\$ in WB 28%, GS 62%) etc. are increasing insecurity which demoralizes NGO workers who must work in such an environment and renders them too weak or docile to challenge their conditions.⁴⁷

3.2.3 Living standard – Wages and lifestyle

Basic information about household size, monthly expenditure and monthly income.⁴⁸

In 2010 the average Palestinian household size comprised 5.8 persons (WB: 5.6 persons, GS: 6.3 persons).⁴⁹ An average monthly wage amounted to 2.300 NIS (WB 2.600 NIS, GS 1.500) and for monthly household expenditures 4.700 NIS were needed in the WB and 3.420 NIS in the Gaza Strip (including rent).⁵⁰

3.2.3.1 Monthly salaries of Palestinian NGO employees

Being aware, how sensitive it is to talk about personal income and how difficult it would be to get an answer – we didn't offer in our questionnaire a blank space to fill in the monthly income. We took the advice of experienced Palestinian researchers and chose the classifications \$500 or less, \$501-\$1000, \$1001-\$1500 etc.

Monthly wage

In Us \$	Palestine		West Bank		Gaza		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
< 500	42.5%	20%	34%	28%	48%	73%	62%
501-1000	38%	47%	46%	46%	36%	21%	28%
1001-1500	12%	21%	11.5%	16%	11%	3%	6%
1501-2000	3%	5%	3%	4%	2%	1%	1%
2001-2500	2%	4%	3%	3%	0.5%	1%	1%
2501-3000	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0.4%	1%
3000-4000	1%	2%	1%	1%	0.7%	0.4%	1%
> 4000	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%			

Tables and Graphs 27: monthly wages of NGO employees

\$500=1950 NIS, \$1000=3900 NIS, \$1500=5850 NIS, \$2000=7800NIS

47 I would like to thank Rema Hammami and Linda Tabar for stressing this point in discussion with me.

48 Resources for comparative analysis use different currencies: JOD, NIS and US\$. In this research the currency used is NIS. Only monthly salaries of NGO employees are noted in US\$. The exchange rate of OANDA on June 30, 2010 has been used throughout: 1 JD = 5.44 NIS, 1 JD = 1.40 US\$, 1US\$= 3.88NIS source: <http://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/>

49 Source PASSIA *Diary 2011*, p.366

50 Source: PCBS June 2010: Average monthly wage is defined as the average of monthly wages from professionals and service.

57.5 % of NGO employees with an income of \$600 (\$501-\$1000 and up) earn more than the average Palestinian income. Analyzing the level of income, we have to consider the differentiation of a full time versus a part-time job and the differential rates of pay for each. The data show full time employment of 68% and part time employment of 32% in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the West Bank, full time employment is 84%; part time employment is 16%. In Gaza, there is a tremendous difference between full time employment at 47% and part time employment at 53%.

Gender aspect of monthly wages (without full time and part time division)

62% of NGO employees in Gaza earn \$500 or less compared with 28% in the West Bank. Women in Gaza have the lowest wages. 73% of them earn an income below \$500 compared to 48% of their male counterparts. In the West Bank, only 34% of women NGO employees earn below \$500 (a more detailed discussion will follow in chapter 'Gendered Working Field'). 46% of NGO employees in the West Bank earn between \$500 and \$1000 compared with 28% in Gaza. In the West Bank, male and female are represented at 47% and 46%. In Gaza, there is difference of 15% between males (36%) and females (21%) who earn between \$501 and \$1000.

16% in the West Bank earn \$1001-\$1500 in comparison to 6% of NGO employees in Gaza. Just 3% are women are at this income level in comparison to 11% for men. In the West Bank 21% are male and 11.5% female.

Salaries and satisfaction

Asking NGO employees if they are satisfied with their salaries, incentives and privileges which they get in return for their work: 27% were in agreement (5% strongly agreed, 22% agreed), 39% answered with 'to some extent' and 34% expressed dissatisfaction (10% strongly dissatisfied and 24% dissatisfied).

51% of NGO employees agreed with the opinion, that people who are working in NGOs "are getting good salaries" (45% agreed, 6% strongly agreed), 29% don't know and 21% disagreed (18% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed) If we look at the percentages above, we find the income percentages are reflected. 57.5% earn above \$500. With \$600 and above an NGO employees lies above the average Palestinian monthly wage. As we also know from above, if one breadwinner is in the family and he or she is earning the average Palestinian monthly wage, that means the family is in reality living under the relative poverty line (59% have a working partner, WB 68%, GS 47%).

Although many junior NGO workers live at or even below the relative poverty line, many view their income quite positively, perhaps comparing it with those who are in a worse situation. Why is this happening? Our study can not provide answers to this question – only further questions. Are people happy to have a job

at all? Perhaps, even if a wage is average and close to the relative poverty line – it may nonetheless amount to more than in other sectors and can help keep the employee's head above water.

3.2.3.2 Interim conclusion

If we follow PCBS standards for the Palestinian average monthly wage, NGO fulltime and part time employees with an income of \$600 and more are above the Palestinian average of \$600 = 2340 NIS. 66% of NGO employees are 'satisfied' or 'kind of satisfied' about their wages.

Note the differences between the West Bank and Gaza in this regard.

62% of Gazan NGO employees earn below the national monthly average in the oPt. Female Gazan NGO employees are losing out specifically, with 73% earning below \$500 a month compared to 34% of female workers in the West Bank. Overall, West Bank NGO workers make more than the national salary average.

A striking contradiction: PCBS defines poverty using the 'deep poverty line' and the 'relative poverty line'. The poverty definition is based on using the budget of a standard household of two adults and four children.

The deep poverty line is defined for a standard household as having a monthly budget below 1870 NIS to cover food, clothing and housing costs.

The relative poverty line is defined for a standard household as having a monthly budget below 2278 NIS to cover food, clothing, housing, health care, transport and housekeeping supplies.⁵¹

This implies that, if an NGO employee is the only family breadwinner and earns below \$500, that family is classified as living below the deep poverty line. An NGO employee earning \$600 who is the only breadwinner of the family is classified as living under the relative poverty line.⁵²

51 MAS *Food security Bulletin*, issue 5, Winter 2011, p.6

52 Thanks to Linda Tabar for the discussion to stress the point between income and poverty line.

For comparison see below

Table 1: Poverty levels in the OPT according to the old and new methodologies

Year	According to the old methodology				According to the new methodology			
	Poverty line (NIS)	Poverty Rates in OPT (%)	Poverty Rates in WB (%)	Poverty Rates in GS (%)	Poverty line (NIS)	Poverty Rates in OPT (%)	Poverty Rates in WB (%)	Poverty Rates in GS (%)
2005	2,143	29.5	22.3	43.7	1,907	24.3	24.3	28.4
2006	2,300	30.8	24	50.7	1,981	24	23.3	30
2007	2,362	30.3	19.1	51.8	2,017	31.2	22.3	49.5
2009	-	45.7	37.9	65.1	2,278	21.9	17	33.2

Source: Old methodology data (2003, 2006, 2007), different poverty reports, PCBS. New methodology data & data in 2009, PCBS, most important poverty features according to the new methodology, November 2010.

Tables and Graphs 28: poverty levels in the OPT (Source: MAS Bulletin, Issue 5, Winter 2011)

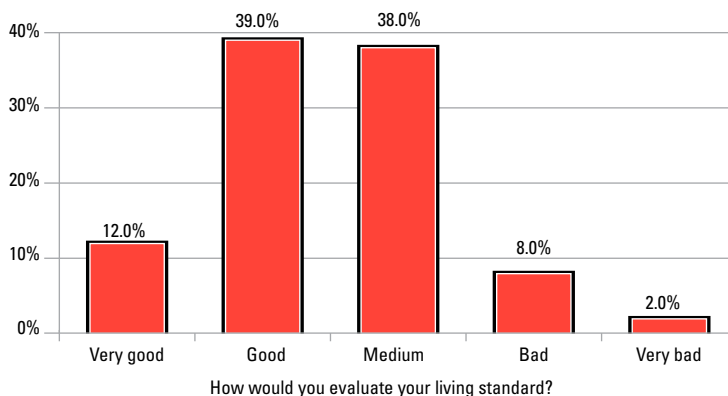
3.2.3.3 Living standard - Personal evaluation of NGO employees

Of NGO employees invited to evaluate their own living standard, 51% (WB 57%, GS 45%) described their living standard as good (very good and good), 38% (WB 46%, GS 42%) as medium and 10% (WB 9%, GS 13%) as bad (bad and very bad).

This result reflects more or less the 50% of NGO employees who are above the relative poverty line.

Living standard

Personal evaluation of NGO employees

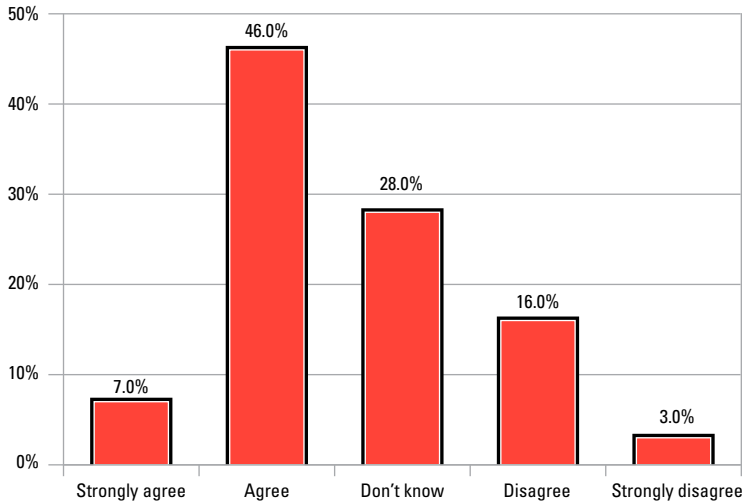


Tables and Graphs 29: personal evaluation of living standard

NGO employees in the West Bank are more satisfied with their living standard compared with their colleagues in Gaza. In Gaza, 46% of more male NGO employees consider their living standard to be medium than female NGO employees (39%). In Gaza 17% women and 7% men consider they have a bad standard of living. In comparison with the West Bank, 12% men and 7% women consider they have a bad standard of living.

Living standards above the Palestinian average

Asking NGO employees if they think working in a PNGO, their living standard is above average: 53% agreed, 28% did not know and 19% disagreed.



Do you think your living standard is better than other Palestinian because of working in the NGOs sector?

Tables and Graphs 30: living standard above the average?

3.2.3.4 Interim conclusion

Living standard – actual living standard and ‘perceived living standard’

53% of Palestinian NGO employees have the impression, based on their work in an NGO, that their living standard is better than it is. Basically the definition of living standards includes “a level of material comfort as measured by the goods, services, and luxuries available to an individual, group or nation.”⁵³ Nowadays

53 *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition copyright ©2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

living standard is not only measured by international or specific country codes, it is also measured by the life-styles of individuals or of a group they represent. The expression 'life-style' appeared in literature a generation ago and explains social values and behavior such as ways of living, attitudes towards education, mobility (traveling), cultural activities such as theatre and concerts, clothing, driving certain kinds of cars etc.

People are often willing to take loans to live a certain life-style.

One should note, however, that people in Palestine take out loans for several reasons: building work, wedding, education, cars etc. or because they are out of work and need funds to survive. They are not only used to achieve a particular life style.

It is notable that 32% of NGO employees are in the process of paying back personal loans and in addition 12% are paying back car loans. This must be also seen in the context of the neo-liberal policy of the World Bank and other donors, to implement special credit programs all over the oPt.⁵⁴ These special credit programs make the availability of credit, especially for young people much easier than it used to be. Also there have been especially good credit conditions for those who wish to invest in a new car in the West Bank. In the West Bank, 17% of NGO employees are paying back car loans in comparison to 4 % in Gaza.

It is too early to draw conclusions about any differences between NGO employees in other sectors regarding real and perceived living standards. There was no attempt to quantify information on additional benefits from working with an NGO. These can include: private use of an NGO car, special checkpoint passes, use of a mobile telephone, etc. It is also unclear if such privileges differ very much from those available in the private or public sectors. It is not yet clear if there an objective or merely a subjective difference between NGO employees and employees in other working sectors in this regard.

3.2.4 Controversial settings of voluntary work in the NGO sector

Volunteering in the light of changing times

Before Oslo in 1993, voluntary work was an essential part of NGOs, charitable organizations and popular committees as a meaning of fighting Israeli occupation and as contribution to support Palestinian society. Voluntary work began with the organization of various political parties. People did this work unpaid in addition to their work as pupils, students, employees, housewives etc. Because voluntary work was and remains an essential part of NGO-work, the study tries to shed light on the attitudes of NGO employees towards personal voluntary work.

54 See background and interesting political details in the article *Neoliberalism as Liberation: the Statehood Program and the Remaking of the Palestinian National Movement* by Raja Kahlidi and Sobhi Samour in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XL, No.2 (Winter 2011),

3.2.4.1 Who is volunteering?

31% of NGO employees (40% male, 20% female) do volunteer work in addition to their official work, 69% do not. Most of those (31%) who volunteer do so as administrators, followed by coordinators 19%, supervisors 13%, service employees 12%, office employees 5%, researchers 4% and others 4%. 59% of NGO employees who wanted “to contribute something to my society” do voluntary work. In addition, 54% of NGO employees who declared their personal goal in working for an NGO as “feeling independent” do voluntary work.

3.2.4.2 Volunteering and age

Volunteering in another institution/age group

Do you volunteer work in other institution?						
Age group	17-25	26-37	38-45	46-55	55-74	Total
Yes % within age group	31.9%	24.3%	37.8%	53.3%	37.9%	31.5%
No % within age group	68.1%	75.7%	62.2%	46.7%	62.1%	68.5%
Total % within age group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Tables and Graphs 31: volunteering in another institution / age groups

Some 53% of 46-54 year olds do voluntary work. Participation decreases to 38% in the age groups 55-74 and 38-45. Some 32% of NGO employees in the age group 17-25 do voluntary work but in the age group 26-37, the participation rate drops to 24%.

3.2.4.3 Character of voluntary work

Most do their voluntary work in educational and cultural activities (52%). Others are involved in training activities (39%) or supporting charitable organizations and providing technical assistance (14%).⁵⁵

Because the categories “training activities” or “providing technical assistance” do not specify for whom the work is done, we are careful in drawing conclusions here. We can assume that these categories are closely connected with an NGO worker’s profession. It can be taken to mean either “it is sharing my own personal knowledge with Palestinian society” or “training activities and providing technical assistance in NGOs for NGO employees.” This could also be aimed at improving the NGO community, improving the network and improving personal job prospects.

55 The possibility of answering “being a member of a board of trustees” was excluded

3.2.4.4 Professional NGOs and the impact of a generation gap

“Do any of you volunteer in addition to work?”

“No, now we are employees.”

The results of focus groups, revealed different attitudes towards volunteering between the first Intifada generation (38 years or more) and second Intifada generation (17-37 years).

First Intifada Generation

In focus groups (WB&GS, female and male, 40 years and above) the topic was enthusiastically discussed.

- Being aware that times have changed; changes in attitudes towards voluntary work came with the Oslo agreements and the changing policies of external donors.
- Voluntary work was and remains patriotic and it is done for the people in addition to labor and without payment
- Voluntary work was and remains patriotic in the sense of fighting against Israeli occupation
- Voluntary work was mainly initiated and organized through political parties – today it is no longer a party matter.
- Today, voluntary work is mainly done in the expectation of getting something in return: experience and employment.

Second Intifada Generation

Generalizations are seldom useful and they sometimes miss the voice of minorities in the group described. Voluntary work was rarely considered to be unpaid work in and for the benefit of society.

The majority saw voluntary work as a means of:

- gaining experience, especially immediately after graduation from university
- improving job prospects
- acquiring experience in different fields which improves one's chances of achieving a long term or permanent contract. Having job security and not having to contend with permanent short term contracts means stability in life and that implies “having a future” (FGs <30 male and female, WB&GS).
- providing travel opportunities and money to pay for study.

Contrasting the younger generation with the argument of the older generation, the argument of the younger generation was: “today the economic situation is much worse”, “the general unemployment rate in the oPt is higher than back in the eighties”, “the political situation is different, even worse”, – these statements are reflecting on one hand that most of the younger generation have no good contracts and on the other hand, being worried about their future comparing to the older generations which is established in their jobs and in society.

3.2.4.5 Interim conclusion

31% of NGO employees do voluntary work outside their jobs. A greater percentage of the first Intifada Generation see themselves as doing something as a part of society for society, which was originated in the historical context of NGOs in fighting against occupation (FG >40 years). They admit, however, that this context has changed. Following the argument of a changed context, some questions need to be raised, especially set against the background of how Islamic oriented organizations and NGOs include voluntary work in their self image:

What does the act of volunteering consist of? Is it a self-legitimizing form of self-justification? Has it become depoliticized; is it merely civic in nature, stripped of broader national-political significance? Is it a way of vicariously reliving the principles of the first Intifada which the NGOs were partially responsible for destroying? Could it be that NGO workers are attempting here to resist the broader transformations that have taken place and to uphold ideals such as sacrifice, voluntarism, and national responsibility?

Comparing voluntary work between religious and secular, Islamic orientated organizations and NGOs might reveal that people have different philosophies and concepts of themselves and of society; but this will be touched upon only shortly in this paper. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that nobody has to do voluntary work as a contribution to society and age is irrelevant in this respect.

Sara Roy writes in her new book *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza. Engaging the Islamist Social Sector*, about Islamist social institutions and their attitude to voluntary work and comes to the conclusion: Islamist Social Institutions (ISI) base their self understanding on Islam as a comprehensive system including material, spiritual, societal, individual, political and personal matters in life. By building up a continuous framework for powerless and excluded people and also giving them the possibility of participation, individuals become empowered. The approach is simple: if you or your child is taking part in a program – you are at the same time also a volunteer in the organization. This implies that the organization gets supported with your manpower according to your skills and at the same time, you as an individual person are elevated in a context where understanding and appreciation of human beings is based on common cultural values.

“indeed, the elements of choice and participation were important parts in an ongoing effort among ISIs to (re)-create a sense of the ordinary in an environment – characterized by Israeli occupation and PNA control – that was anything but. In this sense, I believe, many ISIs implicitly understood that what unites people is far more powerful than what divides them. This meant focusing on people’s everyday concerns by embedding programs in local norms and understandings.” (ibid p. 172)

Voluntary work is seen as being a part of a functioning society where people give and take for themselves and as part of the community.

It is generally assumed, and it has been noted in the literature that the majority of western funded NGOs have lost ground compared with Islamic NGOs. The environment characterized by Israeli occupation – which dominates the daily lives of most of the people – and the reality that attempts to build up state structures in an ongoing occupation are extremely difficult if not doomed to failure (see Salam Fayyad, *Ending the occupation, establishing the state*). Even a territory with “independent state structures” remains under occupation – a marionette controlled by the occupiers. A minority, certain elites, might profit from this situation: business elites, the PA-elite, the academic-elite and the NGO elite. All these enjoy privileges that are not available to the average Palestinian.

The majority of voluntary work in international funded NGOs should be seen in a neo-liberal context – voluntary work is the chance for future employees to enter “the first job market”. Sometimes, prospective NGO-employees go through seemingly endless volunteering experiences. This explains why the answer to our question “do any of you volunteer in addition to work?” was “No, now we are an employee.” (FG WB < 30 years). The concept of voluntary work as social and political activism, as seen through the eyes of the first Intifada generation needs to be considered in different socio-political contexts.

NGO employees do not form an entirely homogeneous group. The study shows interesting contradictions and revealingly different orientations. The aid business is not a uni-directional process, and those who work in this sector are not merely actors consumed with finding work and maintaining a middle class existence. NGO employees are on the one hand being pushed – on the other hand they pull in different directions. Under different circumstances, people might choose to act in very different ways. NGO employees are required to adapt to the current political situation in Palestine and to the Palestinian labor market. Some NGOs and NGO employees resist neoliberal ideology and create alternatives while others adapt themselves to it.

3.2.5 Types of NGO employees

NGO employees who remain a long time in the NGO sector are able, through international networking to work abroad. In the study research, NGO employees

who have left the country, either for experience of living abroad or for a better position, are not included.

NGO employees who remain for the long term or have permanent jobs enjoy better chances of careers and of achieving executive positions compared with persons with short term contracts and earning below \$500. The majority of NGO employees are confronted with short term contracts (1 year or less) because NGO work is mainly project-based. Projects by definition are limited in time. ‘Short term contracts’ can be found in all different age categories and also at all level of career status. However, one can succeed in winning one project after another. This means that a skillful player is able to remain in employment through means of successive engagements but the contracts themselves remain limited in time.

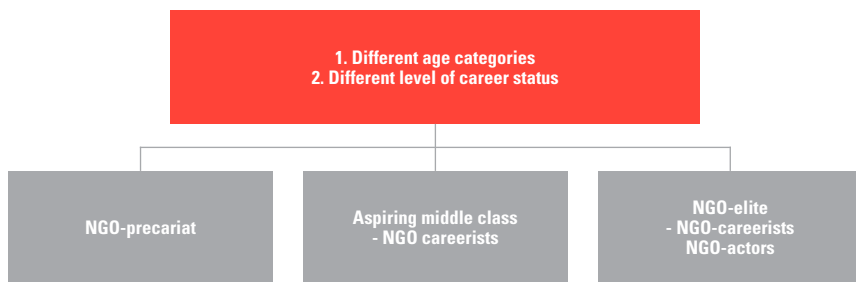
NGO employees offer a differentiated picture depending on:

Working conditions, contract level: short term employees, long term employees/permanent employees, project-based employees, income

We characterize the NGO community as follows:

The characteristics of precariat, aspiring middle class and NGO-elite can be found in (1) different age categories and (2) at different levels of career status.

Type of NGO Employees



Tables and Graphs 32: types of NGO employees

3.2.5.1 Precariat (casual workers, insecure and exploited)

Young Urban and professional – and being among the precarious

This group is young (between 17 and 37 years), urban (76.5%) and professional (90% have a higher education and 41% have undertaken further training courses / improving skills). But this does not guarantee good jobs in the labor market. Often it means being low paid (under the Palestinian average, close to the poverty line), having a short term contract or no written contract at all.

The 'Precariat' are NGO employees who take virtually any job on offer, because they have no freedom to choose the sector in which they want to earn a living. 14% (WB 12%, female 15%, male 9%; GS 17%, female 17%, male 17%) stated that the NGO sector is the only possibility to find work apart from finding work abroad (14%, WB 13%, male 17%, female 11%: GS 15%, male 17%, female 13%). Others stated, in a desolate economic situation and high unemployment "It is not a question of choice, you take what you get" (FGs Gaza, male <30).

3.2.5.2 Aspiring middle class -

Young, urban and professionals – as NGO careerists

30% can be characterized as 'young careerists'

Young careerists or the aspiring middle class (30%) have the chance to find a better job in the NGO sector and generally enjoy a better career status, a higher salary and long term contracts (WB 40%, male 38%, female 38%; GS 24%, male 31%, female 17%) of NGO employees. They have achieved a middle class lifestyle or are aspiring to it, i.e. through debt, status markers, and as mentioned above they have more job security than those on a 1-2 year contract.

3.2.5.3 NGO elite

NGO careerists or NGO actors

In the Palestinian NGO elite we have on one hand NGO careerists and on the other hand NGO-actors. NGO-actors come mainly from the generation of the first Intifada which set up the NGOs. They have the most privileges and retain progressive self images and maybe even progressive values despite the stratification and realities inside the NGOs.

Verified through quantitative research young careerists are in the sense of Hanafi and Tabar a part of the *professionalized elite*, which has undergone a shift at the level of language, categories, discourse, projects and interventions in Palestinian society. They became somewhat detached from the national movement and became shaped by donors' concepts of power, knowledge and discipline.

For a young careerist, personal and economical advantage matters, 'gaining money', "and gaining skills and experiences"; "self-development". "Supporting civil society" becomes a vehicle for the realization of one's own interests. "Supporting civil society" is often taken to mean using society as a target in need of instruction. And a commonly-heard approach is "all problems can be solved" by undertaking social engineering work. In these kinds of interventions a process of individualization is embedded and a collective agency is undermined. As a consequence, the national movement, the struggle against colonialism and against gender domination is weakened.⁵⁶

NGO actors

These are NGO employees, mostly from the first Intifada generation who continue to engage in voluntary work outside their jobs ‘to support Palestinian society’, or have taken up such work again. As described above, before Oslo in 1993, voluntary work was an essential part of the activities of NGOs, charitable organizations and popular committees as a means of fighting against Israeli occupation and / or as an effort to support Palestinian society. This analysis has to be seen in the context of the history of Palestinian NGOs and their withdrawal from the grass roots movements. We need to consider the impact of institutionalization and professionalization and their consequences in changing the self perceptions of NGOs.

This part of the NGO elite went through this institutionalization process and often actively supported it. Now well established in society – and now survivors of a more political generation in the NGO sector. They stand out among other NGO employees, with a radically different background of past political activism and ideas. As stated in FGs, (female and male above 40 years) “times have changed.” This group also accepts this fact: “Our generation believed in voluntary concepts, community serving, civil society, democracy and human rights. Meanwhile there is a generation now, which looks at the issue from financial and job aspects only.”

The landscape of NGOs is divided. Some NGOs resist the ideology of neo-liberalism and developed or are developing alternatives to break out of the roles imposed on them by international donors. They seek to return to models of self-reliance. Others, (for example in the agriculture sector, or ‘Stop the wall’, ‘Badil’, etc.) clearly work to advocate Palestinian national rights, and struggle against Israeli colonial and apartheid oppression.

In general, the goal of the most NGOs today is not to change Israeli politics of apartheid and to stop the continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. The majorities of NGOs are no longer political actors, and take no part of a liberation struggle. They are “political actors” alongside the PA in the sense of building up state structures.

Transforming itself from a broad grass-roots movement into a group of professionals, this cadre, which once took a leading role in the political class, dissolved itself through individualization with the consequences of de-politicization, de-radicalization and demobilization of a formerly powerful political opposition.

56 see also existing literature of Eileen Kuttub, Islah Jad (Birzeit University). They have analyzed ‘institutionalization’ and ‘professionalization’ in this context.

3.3 NGO sector – a female gendered working field?

As we know from other studies, the gender gap in education is closing at all levels. Women and men have reached parity, but this improvement has not reached the formal labor market yet. Women’s participation in the formal labor market in Palestine is at 16% one of the lowest in the region and in the world.⁵⁷

The study shows that the participation of female employees in the NGO sector stands at 57.5% (WB 58%, GS 56%) compared with male employees at 42.5% (WB 42%, GS 44%).⁵⁸ Having their very first job, women in Gaza are better represented at 48%, compared to women in the West Bank at 41%.

3.3.1 Women –presence in the NGO working sector by age

Women dominate in the age groups 17-25 years (female 65%, male 35%), 26-37 years (female 60%, male 40%) and 38-45 years (female 55%, male 45%). Men dominate in the age group 46-55 years (male 58%, female 42%) and 55-74 years (male 73%, female 27%).

3.3.2 Female and the aspect of job distribution:

Being female or male does not demonstrate any effect on whether the employee has a full-time or a part-time job. It does, however affect an employee’s chances of getting a higher position such as that of administrator.

Type of work: male/female

Type of work	Male	Female	Total
Administrator	37.2%	26.6%	31.2%
Office employee	15.2%	23.2%	19.8%
Trainer / supervisor	11.3%	14.5%	13.2%
Services	10.2%	9.5%	9.8%
Coordinator	17.6%	15.2%	16.2%
Researcher	4.6%	4.8%	4.7%
Others	3.9%	6.1%	5.1%

Tables and Graphs 33: type of work: male/female

57 It has been steadily rising since 1995 at 11.2%, 2002 at 10.4% and 2008 at 16%.

58 Also see compare with the study of MAS 2007, *Mapping PNGOs in the WB and the GS*, 54.8% female and 45.2% male, p.43

37% of men have a job as an administrator compared to 27% of women.⁵⁹ This result conforms to the results of a recent World Bank study which estimates that women in the service sector tend to hold lower-status jobs.⁶⁰

20% (WB 24%, GS 13%) of office employees work in NGOs. The rate in the West Bank is 11% higher than in Gaza. In the West Bank, being an office employee is a domain for women (30% female, 17% male), in Gaza the percentage is nearly equal (14% female, 13% male). This result can be explained by the higher unemployment rate in Gaza and by the fact that Gazan men are forced to take any job on offer, even if secretarial employment is generally considered suitable only for women. Being aware that NGOs which focus on women are represented in the study at 40% and also that female employment in NGOs stands at 57.5%, the administrator category, with 37% of posts held by men as against 27% by women demonstrates no gender equality.

3.3.3 Female and higher education⁶¹

Our research shows that the NGO sector is a working sector for highly educated, young women.

Women's participation in the labor force is concentrated both "at the top end of the scale – professionals, technical staff and clerks (service sector)" – but also "toward the lower end of the scale – namely un-skilled agriculture."⁶² An entry requirement for women into the service sector is a high level of education, and as shown in numerous studies, women without a university education in the oPts have a much harder time getting access to the labor force at all.⁶³ At the same time, the lack of growth of job opportunities in the economy as a whole means that very many women (especially young university graduates) are unable to access work in the service sector – thus women with a university education also make up the largest number of unemployed women in both West Bank and Gaza. In the past, women would enter the labor force then, after a few years, drop out because of domestic responsibilities and thus create an opening for new entrants into the labor force. With the decline in the economic situation, however, married women are staying in the labor force rather than dropping out. Female graduates are entering the labor force but many of the jobs they seek are taken.⁶⁴ It can also

59 in our questionnaire was offered: administrator, office employee, trainer/supervisor, services, coordinator, researcher, others/specify. Employees didn't use "others/ specify" for differentiation for jobs in higher level. According to an average job description, an administrator is a person with responsibilities in different matters.

60 *Checkpoints and Barriers: Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza. Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse; February 2010, p.23*

61 Ibid. see in "General assumption" and "Basic facts about women and labor market trends in the WB and GS"

62 Ibid, p. 22

63 Ibid, p.23

64 see Rema Hammami, Amal Syam (2010) in *Who answers to Gazan women? An economic security and rights research.*, chapter 6.1. and chapter 6.5.

be observed that the trend of married women to work is increasing. This trend is taking place not only because more women want to work. One major reason is the massive rise in male unemployment since 2006.

Summing up the results of our study: the public sector is occupied by women who have been in the labor market; for some time; so the NGO sector could be seen as a chance for young women with a higher education to enter the labor market. This goes along with the findings of a UN study on women in Gaza which shows that, for many young new labor entrants in Gaza, the NGO sector is easier to access than the public sector, even though some of the young women would prefer to work in the latter.

The policy of donors of seeking to empower women seems to be a positive sign for women in the labor market.⁶⁵ The attempt to empower women for higher and therefore better paid positions has made little or no progress.

Overall, it looks like that a different role understanding, a shifting in traditional gender roles is touching the ground. We may be witnessing the beginning of a shift in perceptions gender roles. Increasingly, today investment in education for girls is seen as bringing either a good job or a "good marriage."⁶⁶

It should be noted that the positive aspect of more opportunities for women to find work in the labor market, society, family structures remain mostly traditional and patriarchal gender norms remain salient. These mandate that only women are responsible for house and children. Working outside the house thus places a double burden on women. The participation of women in the labor market does mark a degree of empowerment but it is not per se an indication of a progressive change from patriarchal norms and gender based inequalities

3.3.4 Women and marital status

In Palestinian society, 92% of women marry between 15 and 29 years, 29% of women before their eighteenth birthday.⁶⁷ The median age at first marriage for females is 20.1 years and for males 25.4 years.⁶⁸ The fertility rate in 2010 was 4.2 births (WB: 3.8, GS 4.9 births). The average household size of a Palestinian family is 5.8 persons (WB 5.5 and GS 6.4 persons) in 2010.

59% of NGO employees are married, 35% of NGO employees have the marital status single, 1% are separated, 2% divorced and 1% widowed (2% did not

65 Because male unemployment rates have remained fairly constant since 1996, the women's unemployment rate rose until 2007, see in 'Checkpoints and Barriers', table at p.29

66 See also *Checkpoint and Barriers*, executive summary p. XIV and in *Who answers to Gazan women?* chapter 6.1. Background, p4, p. 68-69 and also chapter 10, p.2

67 MAS *Economic and social monitor* 22, November 2010

68 PCBS (2011) *Statistic Yearbook 2010*

answer the question). For further analysis, a recode was done in 'not married' and 'ever married', see Tables and Graphs: 33, below.

Marital status: Single, ever married

Sex cross tabulation			
	Male	Female	Total
Single			
Count	110	256	366
% within	25.2%	43.6%	35.7%
Ever married			
Count	327	331	658
% within	74.8%	56.4%	64.3%
Total			
Count	437	587	1024
% within	100%	100%	100%

Tables and Graphs 34: marital status, ever married / single / gender

64% of NGO employees are or have been married (male 75%, female 56%) and 36% of NGO employees are not married (male 25%, female 44%).

Gender: age groups and single status

Marital status: Age group, Gender

Age group	Female Single	Male Single
17-25	69%	83%
26-37	40%	22%
38-45	23%	1%
46-54	13%	0%
55-75	25%	0%

Tables and Graphs 35: marital status single / age groups / gender

In our study we do have slightly different age categories as mentioned above, 17-25 years and not 15-29 years. Comparisons have to be drawn carefully. If we compare these categories we find in the age group female 17-25 years, 69% are single and 31% married. In the age group female 26-37 years 40% are single and 60% are married. In the age group 38-45 years: 23%, aged 46-55 years: 13% and aged 55-74 years: 25% are single. This indicates a trend to later marriage

among female NGO employees and / or the free choice to remain single. Highly educated women with working experience are often above the average marriage age and this fact can also be a “burden” for women in Palestinian society who are seeking a partner. Studies done at an international level show in general, men tend to marry younger women and that their spouses have a lower level of academic achievements. Results of our focus groups also show that young men (WB&GS 30 years and below) prefer their sisters and wives to work in the public and private sectors, because NGO work for women is still not considered respectable in all sections of society. The study *Who answers to Gazan women? An economic security and rights research*. (2010) were talking with women in women focus group interviews and found out, that women working in NGOs are getting more attractive on the ‘marriage market’, because they earn good wages in a desolate economical situation.

3.3.5 Women’s salaries (full time and part time together)

Monthle wage

In US \$	Palestine	West Bank			Gaza		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
< 500	42.5%	20%	34%	48%	48%	73%	62%
501-1000	38%	47%	46%	46%	36%	21%	28%
1001-1500	12%	21%	11.5%	16%	11%	3%	6%
1501-2000	3%	5%	3%	4%	2%	1%	1%
2001-2500	2%	4%	3%	3%	0.5%	1%	1%
2501-3000	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0.4%	1%
3000-4000	1%	2%	1%	1%	0.7%	0.4%	1%
> 4000	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%			

Tables and Graphs 27: Monthly wage

62% of NGO employees in Gaza earn less than \$500 in comparison to 28% in the West Bank. Women in Gaza have the lowest wages. 73% of them earn less than \$500 compared to 48% of their male counterparts. In the West Bank only 34% of female NGO employees earn below \$500. Concerning women in Gaza: according to the report “Checkpoints and Barriers” young educated women with a university degree show much more flexibility and openness “to a variety of poorly paid and temporary work opportunities (especially within the aid economy) than young men with higher education. Normative gender roles probably account for this; young men still perceive themselves as principle breadwinners with aspirations for jobs in the formal labor market. They are therefore more selective about the type of work that best meets their needs. Young women’s employment,

on the other hand, is still perceived as secondary, and ultimately not their primary gender role. This illustrates how deeper patriarchal gender norms remain salient, even when they are being challenged by new needs and patterns of behavior. Thus, women’s participation in the labor market does not automatically result in changing deeply seated gender-based inequalities.”⁶⁹

3.3.6 Gender and aspects of being not successful in NGO work

NGO employees explain factors hindering their success

Stratified by region/sex

Reason	West Bank		Gaza	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not enough time	14%	20%	7%	35.5%
Donors policy negative	14%	20%	26%	16%
Institution policy/strategy negative	17%	37%	18.5%	10%
Political situation hinders	38%	11%	41%	19%

Tables and Graphs 36: gender / factors hindering their success of NGO work

Gender aspect:

‘There was not enough time’. Women find that the time allotted to projects or the time they are given to complete their own tasks within them is too short. In the West Bank, 20%, in Gaza 35.5% of women complained about “not having enough time”. This is notably higher than their male counterparts (WB 14%, GS 7%).

The high percentage among Gaza’s women could be explained by the fact that women in Gaza have to contend with more part time or short term contracts than women in the West Bank. 26% of male employees in Gaza judged the policy of donors to be ‘negative’; 20% of their female colleagues in the West Bank agreed.

The argument that institutional policy or strategy has a negative impact is mentioned by 37% of women in the West Bank compared to Gaza males at 18.5%; their male counterparts in the West Bank followed with 17%. Finally, 10% of women in Gaza shared this negative evaluation.

West Bank women think too a much higher degree, that the institution policy is working against changes comparing to Gaza’s women. More (19%) of Gazan women think that the ‘political situation hinders’ compared to their female

69 See Rema Hammami, Amal Syam in *Who answers to Gazan women?*, p.71

counterparts in the West Bank at 11%. Male NGO employees in the West Bank (38%) and Gaza (41%) do not show this big gap.

These surprisingly different results raise some questions about the different life situations of women in the West Bank and Gaza. Gaza's women state with 19% the negative impact of the 'political situation', living under occupation, living under siege, living under international boycott, still coping with the internal struggle of Fatah and Hamas – ending in an ongoing humanitarian crises and with a high unemployment rate. To survive in such conditions means 'having a job', taking any job you can find to be the breadwinner or to support your family. 'Institutional strategy' and other aspects of life at work are in this respect irrelevant because what counts is to survive on a daily basis. Criticizing 'ideological structures' would be a luxury and may undermine the privileged status of having a job.

3.3.7 Interim conclusion

The NGO sector can be seen as a working sector for highly educated unmarried women. As we heard in focus groups, women and men can act 'normally' and egalitarian relations inside the NGO world are possible (see more details in the next chapter). This open working atmosphere could be an important reason why the NGO working sector is more attractive for unmarried women. The fact that donors force the implementation of gender equality is important in this regard.

The study shows clearly that, even if women's presence in the NGO sector is higher than their male counterparts, they are under represented in higher positions and over represented in the West Bank in NGO office work. They remain at the bottom end of the wage scale especially in Gaza.

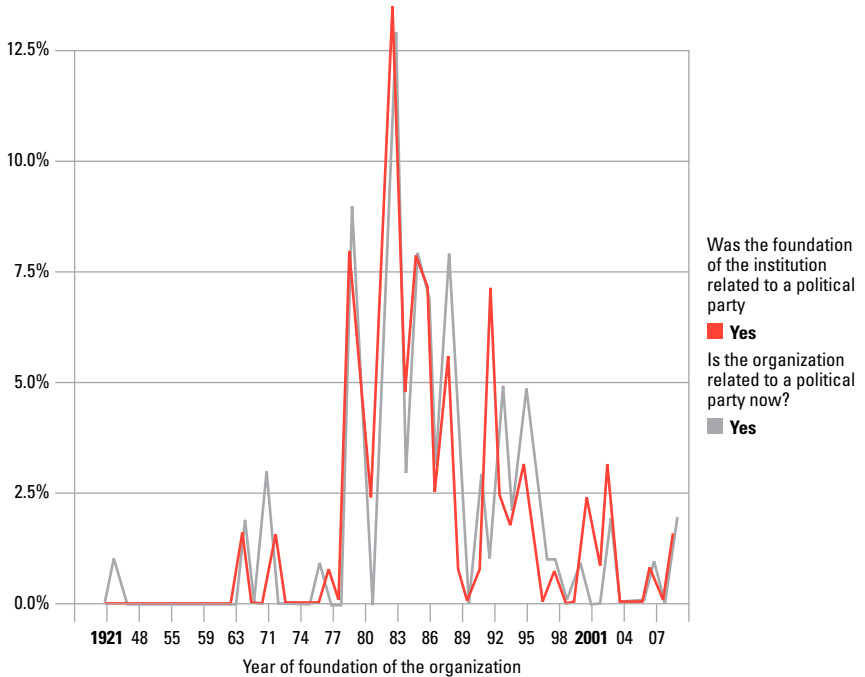
Female participation decreases with age. The question arises: are older women, supported by the income of a partner, choosing to reject the double burden of work and family/household or are they being denied access to senior positions in a patriarchal system? Another important influence on women's lives is increasing access to maternity leave. Many take full advantage of this and often drop out of the labor market, taking up a job again later. Such career interruptions are evident world wide. Some possible causes for women's under-representation at higher professional levels have been outlined here but further research with focus groups is needed to shed more light on this phenomenon.

3.4 NGOs as political actor

NGOs – What kind of background do they have? How do they evaluate themselves?

3.4.1 Historical background

Relation: Organization/political party



Tables and Graphs 37: relation: organization/party

Palestinian NGOs have encountered several turning points in their long history. What all the different periods have in common is that Palestinian NGOs are operating in an occupied country. Charitable societies began to emerge during the British mandate. They can be described as elite based, representing the values and politics of the older ruling classes, with a welfare approach. In the late 'seventies (Camp David Accords 1977) and the beginning of the 'eighties (Israeli Invasion of Lebanon 1982) the national movement was growing again in the light of widespread resistance to the situation engendered by the accords and to implementation of the accords and to the occupation of Israel. NGOs

which had their roots in political mass mobilization, flourished. Theoretically and actively organized by the left, in the beginning NGOs were originally cross fractionally organized but after a few years became increasingly factional. For those NGOs which were allied with the PLO, their factional stance brought with it financial support. At this time, NGOs began to engage with foreign donors. In the beginning of the first Intifada in 1987, the voluntary and non-factional spirit of the late 'seventies returned. With the experience and skills of PNGOs, popular committees were able to form the successful frontline of the uprising.

Rema Hammami reinterprets the "nostalgic view" of this period, describing a backlash of grass roots movements in 1990 when the process of institutionalization re-emerged and NGOs turned into professionally based and foreign funded institutions again. A positive aspect of foreign funding was that it made NGOs independent of political factions; a negative aspect remains the dominant agenda of the donors.

Meanwhile a growing demobilization of the population became evident as, through the PLO stance towards the Gulf war, it lost much of its financial support mainly from Arab countries and thus for all the institution that depended on them – political factions and mass organizations.

After Oslo, foreign donor money increased with NGOs acting and promoting themselves as "the civil society": 'Professionalized NGOs' headed by figures from leftist factions became a vocal lobby for criticism of the PA. In the mid-nineties the World Bank created a "Palestinian NGO trust fund," a project that clearly had a major impact on the way the PA began to perceive NGOs as competitors that it had either to co-opt, control or undermine."⁷⁰ By the end of 1997, the PA became more and more intrusive into NGO affairs and took repressive measures. The NGO law which was signed 2000 remained, however, a victory for the NGOs.⁷¹

In retrospect, the shift in the political economy of western aid to the PNGOs marked a major external intervention. This produced new internal forms of social and political capital but therefore also new forms of exclusion. Charitable societies and popular committees lost out and were subsequently marginalized. As a consequence Hanafi & Tabar analyze the entry of local NGOs into aid channels as "a process of new subject formation as well as changes in the conceptual and institutional foundations of NGOs."⁷² This includes adopting neo-liberal development paradigms and international standards – which were not developed in the local context. These new paradigms influence the local context, however,

70 Rema Hammami (1995) "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo; from NGO politics to social movements?" in: *Race & Class*, Vol. 37, October-December 1995, No.2, p.51-63

71 This short historical review is mainly based on the article "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo; from NGO politics to social movements?" by Rema Hammami.

72 Sari Hanafi & Linda Tabar (2005) *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite. Donors International Organizations and Local NGOs*, p.26

and, along with the emerging relations between state and society. Raja Khalidi and Sobhi Samour analyze the role of NGOs in their article 'Neoliberalism as Liberation' very clearly: "From the start of the Oslo process, they were among the first sectors in Palestinian society to embrace neoliberalism, and they have acted as an important conduit of its development paradigm (55). Moreover, the 'development industry' and its local partners have acted – wittingly or otherwise – as an 'anti-politics machine' that has depoliticized Palestinian society, sustained the occupation, and initiated a long march toward neoliberal hegemony that has found its most elaborate manifestation to date in the PA statehood plan (56)."⁷³ The majority of NGOs incorporate these neo-liberal development goals in order to survive in the competition for donor money. Some NGOs do not resist this neo-liberal agenda at all and some do.

NGOs today

If NGO employees think politically about NGOs and their work within them and if they consider that they and their leaders should play a political role in society, questions for further research present themselves. These concerns:

1. Opinion about democratic structures inside NGOs
2. Opinion about the role of NGOs in society
3. Personal political background

3.4.2 Democratic structures inside NGOs

80% of NGO employees attest their NGO affords basic democratic structures within the limits of a working hierarchy, in words such as: "we can freely express our opinions, but we cannot change the policy of the organization." (FGs GS male <30 years with "good contracts"). Working atmosphere and working relations are predominantly characterized as open between employees. In FGs 30 years and below we may read between the lines that, along with good working relations there appear a natural, aggressive form of competition - regarding who gets the next job in the following project. Women above 40 in Gaza mentioned this tension exists not only between young people (30 years and below) but also between the generations. Those in the generation of 40 years and above, fear losing their jobs to younger employees.

3.4.3 Gender aspect: the world of work versus the world of society

Focus group results in the West Bank and Gaza, female and male 30 years and below mentioned very strongly, specially in Gaza that women and men can act "normally." This implies that the sexes work together on an equal footing. This

73 Raja Khalidi & Sobhi Samour "Neoliberalism as Liberation: the Statehood Program and the Remaking of the Palestinian National Movement" in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XL, No.2 (Winter 2011), chapter 'Force, consent and persuasion'

situation starts on entering the NGO offices and stops on leaving. Women found their working conditions in this respect to be *“an excellent fraternity relationship. Let me tell you why. Because your boss imposes on you a relationship of integrity, understanding and equality.”*

Men: *“Our relationship with our female colleagues is excellent.”*

“There are limitations that rule the relationship. Outside the organization, there is a great caution because the community does not have mercy.”

“The relationship is over at the entrance of the organization.”

3.4.4 Institutions versus programs in support of political liberation

We asked two questions concerning NGOs and their possible impact on supporting Palestinian society in its effort to free itself from occupation. First, we asked NGO employees if the NGO itself, and if their working in an NGO supports the process of liberation from occupation 37% disagree, 32% don’t know and 31% agree.

In comparison, we asked if the programs and services offered by NGOs positively support the liberation process. 52% agreed, 28% did not know and 20% disagreed.

Gaza and the West Bank show differences between male and female in the results concerning training programs and courses. More Gaza male’s feel that they do, followed by females in both the West Bank and Gaza. West Bank males at 54% are least likely to feel that training programs contribute to the liberation process (Tables and Graphs 38, below).

Do NGO training programs promote the liberation process?

	West Bank		Gaza	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agree	54.2%	56.0%	65.1%	56.3%
Don’t agree	19.6%	33.9%	21.9%	31.9%
Disagree	31.1%	13.5%	22.7%	18.1%

Tables and Graphs 38: do NGO training programs promote the liberation process?

An interesting division appears between the overall role of the institution in the liberation process. The institution itself is rather limited regarding a revolutionary orientation but the activities of the NGO, educational in particular, do make a contribution. 52% believe that education in the form of training courses, and courses offered to bolster empowerment and consciousness building support the liberation process. This result agrees with the 61% (22% don’t know, 17%

disagree) of NGO employees who believe that programs and workshops impact positively in building a more democratic society. The variation between West Bank and Gaza is not statistically significant.

3.4.5 NGOs – playing a political role

Opinion of NGO employees about whether NGOs are political

In all focus groups, the direct question, whether NGOs should play a political role or should be a political actor in Palestinian society was answered with yes or no, a position “I don’t know” didn’t appear.

Why and how they are playing a political role:

- Yes – they do play a political role.
 - NGOs represent Palestine internationally
 - NGOs are part of the community – working in and for the community helping to change unequal laws affecting women, handicapped people, etc. in the direction of equality.
 - NGOs are the counterpart of the government – and through acting on the ground, are necessarily political
- No – they should not play a political role because:
 - NGOs should be neutral
 - NGOs should be social and not political
- NGOs, in playing a political role, weaken political parties.
- Some NGOs have lost their connections to their social base. Their interest is principally to stay in existence.

3.4.6 Opinion of NGO employees about NGOs’ playing a political role in the public sphere

NGO employees / leaders role in public sphere (quantitative results)

- 53 %: NGO leader should play a political role
- 70 %: NGO leaders’ being represented in parliament is positive
- 53 %: NGO leaders are in a better position to reach important political or parliamentary positions
- 52 %: NGO leaders have succeeded in this respect

In general, NGO employees think NGO leaders have through their profession and working experience a better understanding of the reality of Palestinian people and a better understanding and practice of democracy than the average Palestinian.

There is a difference in this argumentation between region and female and male: West Bank male 38%, female 23%; Gaza female 32%, male 26%. More West Bank males and Gaza females feel NGO leaders have an important role to play in public sphere while Gaza males and West Bank females support this notion less.

It seems that the attitude towards being a member of parliament is seen more positively (70%) than merely being politically active (53%).

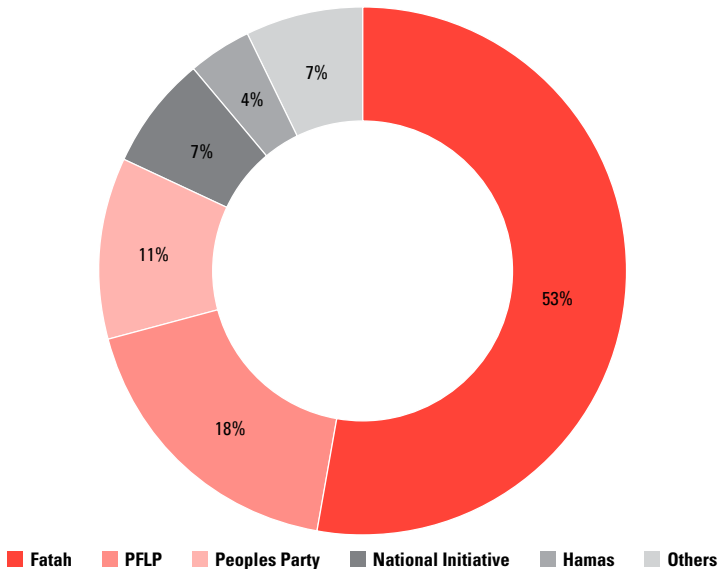
3.4.7 NGO employees – and their membership in political parties

Being a member of a political party is not as common as it was during the 1970s and 1980s. 37% of NGO employees have been members of a political party. Strongest is the age group 46-55 years at 48%, with a decreasing trend 38-45 years 47%, 26-37 years 38% and 17-25 years at 28%. Currently 24% (WB 23%, GS 24%) are members of a political party and 16% (WB 15%, GS 18%) are active members.

37% of NGO employees still feel loyalty to a party which they have left.⁷⁴

Affiliation to political party

Amongst participants who are members of parties



Tables and Graphs 39: affiliation to political party

This graphic shows the distribution of 24% NGO employees in different political parties. 76% NGO employees which are not members in a political party are not included.

NGO employees were also asked for their opinion, if they were currently not members of a political party, which party would best work for liberation of Palestine.⁷⁵ 53% stated 'no party', 25% Fatah, 7% PFLP and 6% Hamas.

9% other parties (parties which received support from fewer than 5% of respondents).

In the West Bank the National Initiative party was better represented than in Gaza.

Party most likely to achieve liberation of Palestine

Stratified by region/sex

Party	West Bank			Gaza		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nobody	52%	55%	52%	49%	57%	54%
Fatah	25%	28%	27%	24%	22%	23%
Hamas	6%	<5%	5%	11%	6%	7%
Popular Front	7%	<5%	7%	8%	7%	9%
National Initiative	5%	<5%	5%			

Tables and Graphs 40: party most likely to achieve liberation of Palestine

3.4.8 NGO employees and their votes in the 2006 election

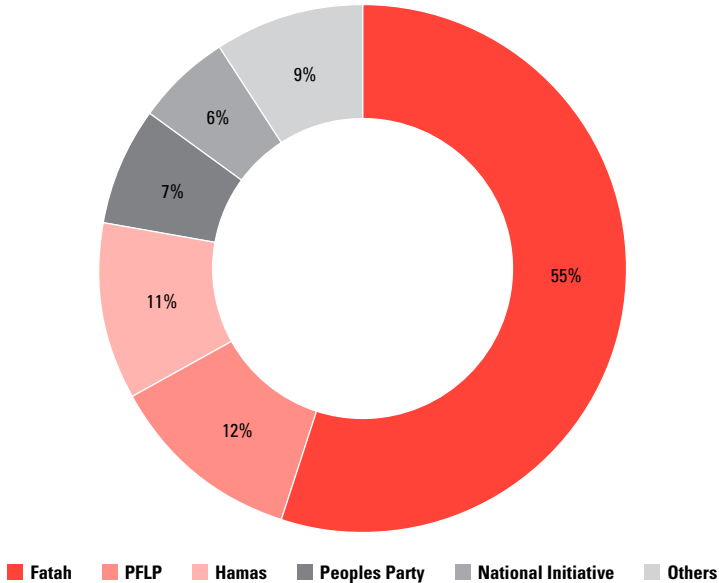
500 answers to a question concerning participants' votes in the 2006 election were valid but another 550 answers were missing. We must therefore interpret the result with caution.

74 All these questions were valid with 991 answers, 59 missing.

75 888 answers are valid (85%), 162 are missing (15%)

Vote in the election 2006

Approximately 48% of 1050 participants answered



Tables and Graphs 41: vote in the election 2006

The strongest vote with 55% of NGO employees was for Fatah followed by the PFLP at 12% then Hamas at 11%. 7% of NGO employees voted for the People's Party, 6% for the National Initiative and 9% for others.

According to polls from the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research (15 February 2006) taking care about education: "support for Fatah drops considerably among the illiterates (34%) and increases to 43% among those with 6-12 years of education, and remains at the same level (42%) among those with two or more years of college education. Support for Hamas increases among the illiterates (50%), and drops to 43% among those with 6-12 years of education, and remains at the same level (44%) among those with two or more years of college education."⁷⁶

76 Results of PSR's PLC Exit Poll, 15 February 2006, p.4

Concerning profession, “support for Fatah decreases considerably among merchants (28%) and increases among professionals (36%), laborers (37%), housewives (42%), students and employees (44% each) and the unemployed (51%). Support for Fatah is weaker among employees in the private sector (37%) compared to employees in the public sector (43%).

Concerning working sectors, support for Hamas increases among merchants (49%) followed by housewives (47%), professionals (46%), laborers (45%), students (42%) and employees and the unemployed (41% each).” Support for Hamas is slightly higher in the private sector (45%) than in the public sector (42%).

Support for the other parties’ increases among merchants (23%), laborers and professionals (18% each), students and employees (14% each), housewives (12%) and the unemployed (9%). Support is slightly higher in the private sector (18%) compared to 16% in the public sector.

3.4.9 Support for a two-state or one-state solution

56% of NGO employees support a 2-state solution, 44% don’t.

There is no significant difference between the West Bank and Gaza.

A One-State solution (one state for Palestinians and Israelis) is supported by 12% while 88% reject this. There is no significant difference in this regard between the West Bank and Gaza.

3.4.10 Interim Conclusion

Two aspects should be borne in mind regarding this chapter. With the pre-selection of western funded NGOs in this study, Islamic NGOs and their employees were not in focus and secondly the environment is affected internally by the Palestinian Authority and externally by donors.

In Palestine today, talking about politics or political opinions demands considerable trust in advance. “Paper is patience, why should I trust interviewers from a research team I don’t know? Is there any reason to be honest?”

Why were only half of the NGO employees willing to answer a question about their political affiliation? Is it because politics are a private matter nowadays, or are employees afraid to be open about this subject?

A majority of 76% of NGO employees have no formal political affiliation. Of these, those who answered the question ‘which party is best for a progressive liberation process’ a majority of 53% answered: no party; followed by Fatah 25%, PFLP 7% and Hamas 6% and 9% others.

24% of NGO employees are party members. Fatah is dominant at 53%, PFLP

18%, Peoples Party 11%, National Initiative 7%, Hamas 4% and others 9%. Concerning party membership, there are no comparative studies with other working sectors.

If, however, we look at the study of voting patterns by education, profession and work sector done by Khalil Shikaki of the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research (15 February 2006), the NGO employees which were willing to answer are following the trend of 2006.

4. Overall conclusion

At the beginning of this study, we posed two questions: what has international aid to the Palestinian people achieved at the level of the individual citizen and at the level of Palestinian society as a whole?

We can now answer these questions to some extent.

International Aid in the NGO sector, directly given to Palestinian people in cash by means of a job, provides roughly 10% of Palestinians with a living.

NGO employees are divided into:

1. educated staff, coming mainly from a university and taking the opportunity of making a career in which they earn above the Palestinian average and
2. educated staff, often coming from a university and finding a chance to work but understanding that the working conditions are poor and the remuneration is at or around the minimum wage. This group of employees sees itself as surviving 'somehow' in a bad economic situation with a high rate of unemployment.

So we can argue that, with their work in the NGO sector, Palestinians are able to cope with extremely difficult living conditions under Israeli occupation. For the majority, the disadvantages under which they have to earn a living lead nevertheless to a notable reduction in their will to resist the occupation.

At the level of society as a whole, following conclusions can be drawn:

4.1. NGO community may be seen as part of a new middle class as well as part of new elite. It creates new internal hierarchies:

The NGO sector is a neo-liberally restructured working sector setting NGO elites against an NGO precariat

Based on their work, PNGOs are part of formal international and national networks. Informal networks go along with formal networks. "People know each other," in their community (FGs in WB&GS). This fact, as in any other sector, makes finding a new job easier.

Looking for another job in the NGO sector, when "no extension of the ongoing contract is possible" (59%) or looking for a working place which offers better conditions such as a long-term contract, better payment, a pension, insurance etc., is target oriented. The motivation is the desire to improve one's personal situation through finding another, better working place and job security. The existence of mainly short term contracts (without job security) creates a community in the NGO sector. An entrance ticket for the community is higher education and /or

wasta. Requirements for staying in the NGO community under the short term contract system include flexibility and willingness to take further training.

Hanafi and Tabar talk in their book "The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite," about this elite by

1. referring to actors who are informed by global agendas,
2. distinguishing this elite's position on the Middle East peace process,
3. describing it as an urban elite, since donor funding is concentrated in Palestinian cities and
4. seeing it as professionalized elite.⁷⁷

Talking about an elite always implies the question of power. The power tool of the NGO elite is "job creation" (around 10% of jobs are generated in the NGO sector). In this sense, external western aid creates a part of a new middle class and concurrently globalized elite, based on academic degrees.⁷⁸ The use of the terms middle class and elite is confined not only to NGO leaders. Administrators in business, in finance and in project management have the same knowledge of fundraising as directors nowadays. To remain on a long term basis in the NGO sector, the determining factor is one's ability to move around in the community network and having the know-how to create funds and jobs.

What 90% of NGO employees have in common, they go through a selection process to enter the NGO sector. The precariat, the aspiring middle class are mainly young, with an academic background, professional and education orientated.

Types of NGO employees

Both the quantitative and the qualitative research clearly showed that NGO employees are not a homogeneous group. They offer a much differentiated picture depending on:

working conditions, contract level: short term employees, long term employees/permanent employees, project based employees and can be classified therefore in different working types:

1. Precariat, (casual workers, insecure and exploited).
2. Aspiring middle class (NGO careerists: leading a middle class lifestyle or aspiring to this, i.e. through debt, status markers) have more security than those on a 1-2 year contract.

77 Hanafi, Sari & Tabar, Linda (2005) *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite. Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*; p.248/249;

78 See Lisa Taraki (2008) *Urban Modernity on the Periphery. A new middle class reinvents the Palestinian city*.

3. NGO elite (NGO careerists and also NGO actors) generation of first Intifada which set up the NGOs. They have the most privileges and retain a progressive self image and maybe even progressive norms despite the stratification and realities inside the NGOs.

The origins of a body of work theorizing this new “precariat” can be traced back to French theories Pierre Bourdieu who described precarity as a “new mode of dominance” resulting from restructuring of the economy that “forced workers into submission.” Bourdieu argued that globalization and fragmentation of the labor market had created a new generalized and permanent state of insecurity for workers. The idea has been taken further by Guy Standing, whose recent book 2011 ‘The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class’ argues that precarious workers now form a distinct social class with separate conditions and interests from other workers.

In general, NGO employees who stay long term or have permanent jobs enjoy better chances of careers and of achieving executive positions compared with persons with short term contracts and earning below US\$500.

The categorization of wages and types of contract or “no written contract” at all, duration of contracts among the precariat, aspiring middle class and the Palestinian NGO elite – leads to a clear stratification of NGO employment in the oPts. Early literature on NGOs determined an ongoing institutionalization and professionalization process of NGOs from the end of the ‘eighties. One outcome of the long-term institutionalization and professionalization process is a high level of employment stratification in the NGO sector – with the older founding generation reaping the highest benefits in terms of income, job security and having “spare time” to undertake voluntary work outside their employment; the aspiring middle class/“young careerists” who make more money than the rest of the society but have more limited job security, and the final group of the poorly paid precariat who are basically an exploited labor caste in the NGO institutions – most of these are in Gaza. This stratification shows that the economic logic of NGOs has become increasingly like any private sector business – in which there is a growing gap between a small elite of privileged workers with full rights and benefits and a growing group of flexible workers with few if any benefits or rights. This shows the changing social and political ethos of NGOs, and illustrates how economic dynamics have distanced them in practice and structure from their stated goals of social justice and egalitarianism.

4.2 NGO sector – a controversial female gender life

The study indicates that the participation of female employees in the NGO sector stands at 57.5% (WB 58%, GS 56%) and male 42.5% (WB 42%, GS 44%).⁷⁹

79 Also see comparison with the study of MAS 2007, ‘Mapping PNGOs in the WB and the GS’: 54.8% female and 45.2% male, p. 43

And the NGO sector can be described as a working sector for highly educated and unmarried women. Summing up the results of our study: the public sector is occupied by women who have been in the labor market for some time; so the NGO sector could be seen as a chance for young women with a higher education to enter the labor market. This goes along with the findings of a UN study on women in Gaza which shows that, for many young new labor entrants in Gaza, the NGO sector is easier to access than the public sector, even though some of the young women would prefer to work in the latter.

Women's participation in the NGO sector decreases as they get older. Female presence dominates in the age categories 17-25 years (female 65%, male 35%), 26-37 years (female 60%, male 40%) and 38-45 years (female 55%, male 45%). Male presence dominates in the age group 46-55 years (male 58%, female 42%) and 55-74 years (male 73%, female 27%).

The real reasons why women drop out of NGO work are still not entirely clear. It seems, however, that some women drop out because they are more occupied with domestic duties and/or that family life is more compatible with work outside the NGO sector. If their spouses are well established in society, it could be that women choose to relieve themselves of the double burden of family and outside work. It is also possible that NGO work for women is still not well respected in society and young men prefer that their wives and sisters work in the public or private sectors (FG male below 30 years.) Under such pressure from their relatives, women may move into another working sector. This issue needs to be examined more closely.

Women who wish to pursue careers clearly lose out, however, since higher positions in a patriarchal society structure continue to be dominated by men.

Being aware that 40% of the NGOs studied were classified as "Women's NGOs" and also that female participation in NGOs stands at 57.5%, it is clear that administrative positions, of which 37% are occupied by men and 27% by women, demonstrate no gender equality. Generally speaking, women are under-represented in higher positions and in the wage scale women come at the end of the line, especially in Gaza.

Women and men stated very positively that they can experience 'normal' and egalitarian relationships inside the NGO world. Such 'normal' and egalitarian relations – which usually end when work is over – could be seen as a factor that makes the NGO working sector more attractive for women, who are looking for more freedom of movement and self-expression inside society's norms. Also a supporting fact could be that donors require the implementation of gender equality to some extent.

Overall, it looks like that a different role understanding, a shifting in traditional gender roles is touching the ground. We may be witnessing the beginning of a

shift in perceptions gender roles. Increasingly, today investment in education for girls is seen as bringing either a good job or a “good marriage.”⁸⁰

What also can be said is that, along with the positive aspect of more chances for women to enter the labor market and the improving statistics regarding female participation in the work force, society and family structures remain mostly traditional and patriarchal gender norms predominate. This brings a double burden for women who work outside the house: full time responsibility for a family and an outside job. The participation of women in the labor market somewhat empowers women but it does not per se indicate a changing of patriarchal norms in a progressive direction. Gender based inequalities in career opportunities and wages remain.

4.3 Gaza – the last in line

The data show in many aspects very clearly; NGO employees in Gaza (especially women but also young men) are deeply disadvantaged compared to their West Bank counterparts.⁸¹ They make less money; are more likely to have poor contracts or to be working part-time. Their work in NGOs is more likely to be the first job they’ve ever had. The reasons for the difference between West Bank and Gaza are due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, through the continuing occupation by the state of Israel and the ongoing international boycott of the Hamas authorities. As a consequence, donors have funneled large sums of money through Gaza’s NGOs for job creation projects offering short term employment to young university graduates.⁸² The situation in the West Bank is different. But also in the West Bank the percentage of ‘short term contracts’ is at 48% very high even though funds for job creation programs is funneled by donors through the Palestinian Authority and the municipalities.

4.4 Preventing the brain drain for good?

28% of NGO employees with BA, MA, diploma or PhD stated they could find work only in the NGO sector (14%) or abroad (14%). At first sight, this appears positive: they are making a living income in their home country and are not facing unemployment or emigration. So one may conclude that external, western aid is preventing a brain drain of people with higher education.

As the study shows, NGO staff is mainly educated in humanity / social science and economics. The following questions arise:

79 Also see comparison with the study of MAS 2007, ‘Mapping PNGOs in the WB and the GS’: 54.8% female and 45.2% male, p. 43

80 See also *Checkpoint and Barriers*, executive summary p. XIV and in *Who answers to Gazan women?* chapter 6.1. Background, p. 4, p. 68-69 and also chapter 10, p.2

81 Thanks to Rema Hammami to point this fact out very clearly in discussion with me.

82 See also Rema Hammami, Amal Syam (2010) *Who answers to Gazan Women?*, chapter 6

- Do they find work because people are educated above the average in these fields and the public and private sectors can not provide jobs for them?
- Or do people decide to be educated in certain fields, because external funded NGOs are in the country and promise a career and a good income?⁸³
- Or do the educated and intellectuals prefer such work because the professionalization and institutionalization of NGOs has created positions associated with status, privilege, international exposure and power in society (possibly thus providing a platform for employees to effect social changes)?
- Do NGO employees really have the chance to emigrate? If so, would they emigrate or would they take a lower paid job in a different sector?

Coming to a definite conclusion regarding NGOs' possible role in preventing a brain drain is difficult: the study does not provide answers to the questions above.

4.5 Capturing human capital and long term dependency

80% of NGO employees in the study asserted, that it would be more effective to support productive sectors such as agriculture, industry and sustainable development projects and education than the NGO sector.

If we talk about external aid, it is important to distinguish between two types of aid, their goals and impact in Palestinian society.⁸⁴ The first type of aid would be reconstructive and developmental, affecting the physical infrastructure and economy of Palestine. The second type would seek to enhance social and intellectual capabilities and to empower ordinary Palestinians. In words of Khalil Nakhleh: "the intervention role of 'external' aid sources should be limited to the provision of funds only, and earmarked not to this or that project, but to the process of enhancing Palestinian social and human capabilities. All aspects of 'emancipating' Palestine through comprehensive human development are exclusively a Palestinian affair. External 'aid' sources play a supportive role only. In other words, it is for the Palestinians themselves to decide, for example, what educational curricula they want for future generations of their youth, what good governance system they need, how to integrate camps, villages and towns, what economic system, what judicial system, how to protect environment from pollution and preserve it for future generations, how to preserve their cultural heritage and identity, how to enhance their intellectual capabilities in order to become producers of knowledge, what kind of human rights monitoring systems they need, how to genderize their development, etc."⁸⁵

83 Compare also with executive summary p.xiv in *Checkpoint and Barriers*

84 see also Khalil Nakhleh (2004) *The myth of Palestinian development*, p.213

85 *Ibid.* p. 213/214

If the majority of NGOs and the PA obey the dictates of the donors, external aid will in the long run capture human capital through encouraging educated individuals not to work in more popular, community of municipal work centers. This leads to a long term dependency on aid with serious consequences in the economic, political and cultural fields.

So the questions arise, why the majority of professional NGO employees do not use their knowledge and experience on the ground – their formal and informal networks and their ability to raise funds – to signal or force donors to support productive sectors of the Palestinian economy, or to develop alternative models with the aim of becoming independent of external aid?

The academic education of NGO employees generally does not match the type of work they do. Private sector, industry, agriculture and universities do offer jobs but they do not offer such good salaries as NGOs. MAS published a study in 2007 dealing with “Wage Differentials in a Fast-Changing Environment: A Sectoral Analysis.” The results show higher wages in the NGO sector than in the private sector and the payment in the private sector were higher than the public sector. Their appeal to the NGO sector was to understand the impact of driving wage inflation and to point out a greater responsibility for all sectors to reach “balanced financial incentives” across all sectors of the economy.⁸⁶

Recently the private sector has started a campaign in universities to introduce the needed skills for new types of jobs. University education is teaching theory but often not teaching the skills required for employment. The NGO sector offers paid training courses to improve professionalism of their employees. NGOs attract people because of the reasons mentioned above. NGO tracking, practicing NGO networking for better paid jobs than the average Palestinian and long term contracts keep people in the NGO sector.

4.6 The NGO sector – stabilization for the ruling system

Political subject

NGO employees – characterized as a “preariat”, an “aspiring middle class” or an “NGO elite”– benefit significantly from the current political and economic system. This results in their tacit or explicit support for that system.

1. In the PNGO sector, 90% of employees have a higher education. Most NGO employees earn more than the average Palestinian employee with a comparable education in other sectors.
2. The labor conditions of NGO employees are mainly distinguished by short term contracts or by the absence of any written contract. Short term contracts can offer good wages but they do not provide job security.

86 MAS 2007, *Wage Differentials in a Fast-Changing Environment: A Sectoral Analysis*, p.xiv

The result of short term contracts and uncertain labor conditions is so-called NGO tracking: moving from one job to another, always looking out for another or a better job. An existing formal work network together with an informal network strengthens the existence of an NGO worker community.

3. Above-average wages and a community open mainly to academics with *wasta* form the basis of a new NGO middle class and NGO elite.
4. The NGO middle class and NGO elite possess a powerful tool for job creation.

This tool comprises knowledge of funding possibilities and know-how in fundraising along with contacts on the international and national levels. It creates around 10% of jobs in the Palestinian economy. This job creation power tool works, however, only if NGO employees operate within the framework of an agenda set by donors or if the projects they suggest find acceptance from donors.

5. This results mainly in jobs for young high educated people and brings about a long term dependency of Palestinians on external aid. This is because donors focus mainly on emergency aid and not on development aid and also because aid flows to a large extent into civil society – a non productive sector – rather than into productive sectors such as industrial, agriculture or the private sector. A balanced and sustainable external aid supply to all sectors would help Palestinians to become independent from external donors in the future.

The question arises, what would happen to those 41% of academics, mainly educated in humanities, if the NGO sector were not able to offer paid jobs? These people are, to put it frankly, not educated for productive work in other sectors. As stated in the survey, they would face unemployment or emigration – or a less well paid job. The 72% of employees who stated they have the chance to find work in the governmental, public or private sectors have chosen to work in the NGO sector because of the possibility of higher wages. The ability of the ‘aspiring middle class’ and the NGO elite to generate employment means not only the creation of new jobs for the Palestinian population. It is also a tool to re-generate their own jobs and thus to support and perpetuate the NGO middle class and the NGO elite itself.

6. Donor countries encourage Fatah and the Palestinian Authority to engage with Israel, reinforcing this encouragement by means of aid. To some extent they treat the PA itself as a non-governmental organization.

Hence external aid supports the internationally-accepted Fatah PA and allows them to co-opt their political clientele. Furthermore it supports the NGO sector, which is treated by donors as financially autonomous. The NGO sector co-opts parts of academia and is creating a new kind

of middle class and a globalized elite. The consequences are that NGO employees clearly benefit from the political situation (the Oslo accords, Israeli colonial realities and the neo-liberal politics of the PA) by positioning themselves within it. This has the impact of stabilizing the ruling system of the PA.

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Eighty percent of the budget of Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is funded by external donors, mainly the EU and the USA. NGOs complain about conditions set by the donors in terms of using this money. They criticize its negative impact on Palestinian society and suggest alternatives.

This study does not look at the outcomes of individual NGO projects, but focuses on the higher level of the NGOs' work or, more precisely, on the impact of foreign funding implemented through local NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza. The author argues that NGOs are not a civil society system of checks and balances to the Palestinian Authority, but, rather stabilizing the ruling system and turning the NGO sector in a neoliberal restructured working sector.



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