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THE EVOLUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL CURRICULUM UNDER CONDITIONS OF RESISTANCE: THE CASE OF THE PALESTINIANS (1970–82)

Abstract

Can a nation mobilizing for an extended armed conflict also construct and implement a national educational curriculum? This article explores the complex and crucial case of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as it sought to develop a national curriculum while in exile in Lebanon during the 1970s, prior to the inception of the Palestinian National Authority. Based on previously unexamined primary sources from PLO archives, I show how the PLO accomplished a high level of curriculum maturity despite considerable contextual and institutional challenges. The PLO mainstream embraced this curriculum as a political instrument of anticolonial and post-diasporic education suitable for regenerating a sense of community, fostering nation building, and increasing the PLO's political legitimacy. However, as can be expected in a colonial or diasporic setting, the process of educational transition remained uneven, fragile, and dependent on the PLO leadership's ability to navigate conflicts and negotiate arrangements with colonial power, host states, and international organizations.

Keywords: anticolonial education; curriculum; nation building; Palestinians; postdiasporic education

Scholarship on education has long held that national and educational policies are usually hegemonic projects of a state's leadership and educational elite. A process of curriculum development and implementation ordinarily occurs after the inception of the nation-state (state formation) and the attainment of sovereignty.¹ The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents a striking exception to this general rule. The PLO succeeded in constructing a highly mature secondary school curriculum (*māddat filasṭīn*, or Palestine Curriculum), as well as a nonschool curriculum on political mobilization, while in exile during the 1970s, long before the formation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994.

In this article, I trace the PLO's curriculum-development process using previously unexamined primary sources from PLO archives, as well as in-depth interviews with authors and editors of the published educational guidelines entitled *Falsafat al-Tarbiya li-l-Sha'b al-'Arabi al-Filastini* (Philosophy of Education for the Arab Palestinian

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People; hereafter *Falsafa*) and of the previously mentioned national curricula. These interviewees offered well-informed, invaluable insider perspectives.² My research suggests that the PLO/Fatah (Palestinian National Liberation Movement) mainstream leadership (hereafter referred to as the PLO leadership), as a resistance movement in a colonial or diasporic setting, recognized the national curriculum as a political domain of anticolonial or postdiasporic education. The curriculum did not simply seek to transmit knowledge of national history and geography; rather, the PLO was attempting to displace colonial/diasporic education, articulate and anchor national narratives, and shape the national identity of the younger Palestinian generation.

The PLO leadership strove to formulate a nationalist curriculum that would capture the community's imagination regarding its past and present. It used historical narratives to establish a unique, ancient origin of the Palestinians as a cohesive people, appealing to continuity with the community's past, validating and naturalizing its claims to nationhood, and asserting its historical right to its homeland. Moreover, through this curriculum the PLO leadership consciously intended to promote political cohesion consistent with its ideals and visions (i.e., its master narratives) in an attempt to consolidate political legitimacy. This intention is apparent in the prominent statements on identity and national (historical) narratives within both the *Falsafa* and the Palestinian curricula that I examine here. My conclusions harmonize with the theoretical insights of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Stewart Hall.

The PLO accomplished a high level of curriculum maturity during the 1970s. However, the process of curriculum development and implementation faced major challenges, which I compare in the last section of the article to other instances of curriculum development amid geopolitical conflict. These challenges included factors related to the geographic, political, and economic contexts, the political culture institutions, and human agency.³ My research suggests that when these factors interact in a positive fashion, education transformation takes place synergistically; in other words, the combined positive effect of these factors is greater than the sum of their individual impact. However, the presence of conflict, as in the case of the PLO, restricts this best-case scenario. In colonial or diasporic settings, the benefits of the education transformation enterprise depend on the ability of political leadership to navigate the challenges posed by the colonial power or host state, which at various points may adopt an attitude of tacit support, ignorance, tolerance, or outright opposition. Overcoming these potential hazards (e.g., through a peace process and bilateral agreement, or by gaining autonomy) appears to be a prerequisite for legally implementing a national education curriculum and ensuring its sustainability.

Although research in the field of Middle East studies has devoted substantial attention to the PLO, the existing scholarship has generally concentrated on the organization's political history, including its emergence, ideologies, military actions, and foreign policy. Perhaps due to the lack of primary sources and the complexity of field research in a conflict-ridden setting, few studies have addressed the socio-cultural and economic governing bodies of this Palestinian quasistate, or more specifically the educational agendas and activities of PLO institutions.⁴ Virtually no study has analyzed the previously mentioned curricula or the *Falsafa*.⁵ Thus, this article contributes to the existing literature by presenting significant original research on an unusual endeavor to transform an educational system carried out by a stateless political organization. Its findings and

implications have relevance to our understanding of education efforts—especially ideologically tinged ones—in unstable governance situations around the world.

The remainder of the article is divided into four main sections. In the first section, I introduce the methodological and theoretical framework of the article by briefly reviewing the scholarly discourse on nationalist and independence movements and on the role of educational materials in nation formation. I then discuss the emergence of a young intellectual and political elite in the Palestinian diaspora as the driving force behind socioeconomic and political developments during the 1970s. In the second section, I show how over time the diasporic conditions faced by Palestinians in exile positioned them to participate in education reforms. In the third section, I outline the extensive process of composing the *Falsafa* and educational curricula during the 1970s and consider this process in terms of concerns over identity policy and national narratives. In the final section, I outline the primary barriers and challenges to curriculum development in such situations, incorporating reflections on other case studies that involved conditions of conflict.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article applies a descriptive, interpretive, and comparative form of inquiry.⁶ I have undertaken a close hermeneutic reading of the *Falsafa* and the previously mentioned Palestine Curriculum in relation to underlying national narratives and possible understandings of identity policy held by the high-ranking Palestinian political elites. Then, I refer to other conflict-afflicted cases to help identify the major factors that influenced education transition in the Palestinian case. As used here, conflict involves many dimensions of hostility “between rival forces within and across states such as civil wars, culture wars, cold wars, and types of warfare—for example, ideological warfare, economic warfare and physical combat in all its forms.”⁷

To address the Palestinian situation properly, I draw on the work of Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and Stuart Hall on national identity and nation building. Eric Hobsbawm regards nations as a novelty in modern history and an outcome of unavoidable political interactions, social transition, and technological progress.⁸ He postulates that national movements invent a nation by creating commonalities (i.e., attributes) that are apparently shared by the prospective nation’s members.⁹ The invention of traditions such as flags, national anthems, and nationalist literature goes hand in hand with the invention (or reinvention) and consolidation of national identity. Hobsbawm draws a link between a sense among certain groups of being suppressed or discriminated against, and being culturally distinct from the despots exercising control over them, and the rise of national movements. National movements take advantage of social conflicts to advance their objective of self-determination. Moreover, political and economic modernization empowers national movements to construct nations.¹⁰ The growth of a national movement (e.g., into a parastate through institution building) results in larger administrative responsibilities and an expansion of education needs; then, the national movement mobilizes both of these factors to support its nation-building efforts.¹¹

In his book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson posits three main ideas: that the nation is imagined because it rests on the perception of similarity as well as perceived and established amity among its members, not on routine face-to-face interaction between or mutual knowledge of most fellow members; that the nation and the state are deeply

interconnected in the sense that nationalism necessitates a state to materialize itself; and that members of an imagined nation regard themselves as part of a collective entity. Motivated by this idea, they devote themselves to collective causes. Anderson emphasizes the role of print capitalism, commodification, and mass production of texts in popularizing national narratives and facilitating nation building.¹²

Both Hobsbawm and Anderson represent an antiprimordial understanding of nationhood that rejects the consistency of nations over time as determined by preexisting, shared characteristics of a community. As members of the postmodernist school, both theorists emphasize a view of nations as artificial, modern, and temporary phenomena based on invented or imagined self-recognition.

A third prominent theorist, Stuart Hall, postulates that nationhood emerges in contrast to a perceived Other. According to Hall, the self-recognition of members of a group as a distinctive Self is important for a nation to affirm itself. This distinctiveness is most effectively clarified relative to the Other. Through interaction between the (collective) Self and the Other, group members recognize their relational dissimilarity from or subjugation by the Other.¹³ Such a process of differentiation was readily evident among the Palestinians living in host states, especially as a result of their experiences of exclusion: distinct living areas (e.g., refugee camps), work limitations, and constricted residence rights.¹⁴ Such a reflective perspective on national identity unifies a nation in development. Efforts to underscore this differentiation are apparent in the teaching materials that I analyze, which not only mirror the national narratives of Palestinians but also project a profound knowledge of the opponent's narratives (those of the Zionist movement).

Nationalist movements struggle for the political independence of their nascent state. Once they have achieved a form of autonomy, they embark on the task of nation building. The creation of educational institutions and the provision of national education are important tools in this task. Stuart Foster and Keith Crawford, among other scholars, regard education systems as effective political tools for the recovery and consolidation of collective memory and representation of a nation in the making. For example, nation builders may use the education system to endorse a politically driven orthodoxy of historical representations that support the historical narratives espoused by the leadership. They closely observe the textbooks of rival political discourses and counter them with validated national historiographies.¹⁵ As I will demonstrate, the PLO has proceeded in this manner to rehabilitate, reinvent, reconstruct, and naturalize national narratives.

THE RISE OF THE PALESTINIAN EDUCATIONAL ELITE AND THE NATION-BUILDING PROCESS

The national catastrophe referred to in Arabic as the *nakba* (December 1947 to July 1949) had disastrous consequences for the Palestinians, including the loss of their native homeland (which disappeared from the political map) and the collapse of their political leadership and military direction. This disintegration resulted, in turn, in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to neighboring Arab states and elsewhere.¹⁶ For Palestinians, the *nakba* signified a deterioration into deep socioeconomic, cultural, and political stagnation.¹⁷ Palestinians' shared diasporic condition (e.g., living in refugee camps) produced a community consciousness among them and elevated their perceived distinctiveness as a collective national entity different from the Other. As time passed,

Palestinian identity in exile was also constituted in relation to Palestinians' perception of additional *Others*: those who treated them as refugees, controlled their movement, or barred them from desirable jobs.¹⁸ Over time, the cause of shaking off their diasporic condition united Palestinians as people yearning to be a nation. The evolution of education played a major role in this process.

Specific influences contributed to the socio-economic (though not geopolitical) recovery and revitalization of the Palestinian community in exile. One such influence was the advances in access to education that they enjoyed thanks to the commissioning of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in 1949, with its diversified delivery of scholastic (primary and secondary) education and vocational and technical training for Palestinians.¹⁹ UNRWA schools implemented the existing curricula of the Palestinians' host states.²⁰ Education systems expanded during the 1950s and 1960s, spreading elementary education among the Palestinian masses.²¹ A second key influence was a surge in demand for a professional workforce in the Gulf region.²² Together, these two influences led to increased student enrollment at all levels. Given the extensive material losses that Palestinians suffered in the wake of the *nakba*, they embraced education as a means of socioeconomic advancement and a way to assert their role as active agents in their community.²³

One local consequence of these factors was the emergence of a well-educated generation of young Palestinians in the 1950s.²⁴ Universities in Egypt and Lebanon in particular became reservoirs for Palestinian students,²⁵ who established the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) in the late 1950s and, subsequently, opened additional branches in other diasporic locations, where they held student-oriented and public activities for Palestinians.²⁶ The expansion of participation in education exposed Palestinians to their potential political strength and compounded it, contributing to the rise of the Palestinian national movement. From the 1950s, this generation marshaled an increasingly novel approach to their national cause and pursued public activities around an emerging nationalist agenda.²⁷ Young Palestinians emphasized the importance of structural development, socioeconomic and cultural advancement, and political emancipation as significant contributors to the revival and regeneration of their people and the achievement of a sovereign Palestinian state. They highlighted education as a key element in the maturing of their community.²⁸

The socio-economic and educational regeneration of Palestinians during the 1950s and 1960s provided a fertile environment for the progress of nation building, initially through a process of improvisation as they created their own socioeconomic, cultural, and political bodies.²⁹ On an individual basis, Palestinians initiated projects such as kindergartens and sewing salons.³⁰ Concerned teachers established schools on a private basis or under the umbrella of a political party or movement. These community services helped to instill a sense of shared values and attitudes. Graduates from the previously mentioned universities established major political factions that became the core of the emerging national movement, such as Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which enhanced the nation-building process and, in later years, undergirded the Palestinian quasistate in exile (i.e., the PLO).³¹ A crystallizing conception of national identity and its ongoing political-cultural transformation in the wider community context lay at the core of this process.³² In this way, the members of a would-be nation could develop a collective entity

over time.³³ Other researchers have recognized the distinct qualities exhibited by this young Palestinian generation, including greater national consciousness and an augmented awareness of regional and international politics, in comparison to the *pre-nakba* elite.³⁴

Although these developments were relatively informal and ad hoc prior to 1970, the evolution of the Palestinian national movement into a unitary quasistate entity (the PLO) during the 1970s allowed the educated elite to press their demands for socio-economic and cultural change while also investing substantially in educational transformation.³⁵ The Fatah movement, as the PLO mainstream,³⁶ was at the core of curriculum policymaking from 1970 to 1982 and attempted to reconstruct the education system according to its principles and visions.

THE PROVISION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

By 1974, the PLO had established a quasistate in Lebanon that included, among other features, political, sociocultural, economic, and research-governing institutions,³⁷ and it began to standardize and manage Palestinian affairs in exile.³⁸ The PLO became important for building capacity and obtaining services for Palestinians, especially at the communal level, such as health care, childcare, kindergartens, and schools. This work enhanced and solidified the PLO's popularity. Over time, Palestinians developed a sense of belonging to the PLO as their autonomous and political entity. They came to sense that their destiny in exile—their very survival in diasporic conditions—was inextricably linked to the organization's success.³⁹

The PLO leadership recognized education as a revolutionary tool in a colonial/diasporic context, one that could regenerate the Palestinians while enhancing the PLO's own political legitimacy. Multiple PLO institutions, all working independently of each other but reporting to PLO leadership—especially the PLO Research Centre and PLO Planning Centre, but also the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, the Department of Education, and the Institution for Social Affairs—regarded education as crucial to the nation-building task because of its ability to foster a sense of national identity and improve the Palestinians' image and status in international diplomacy. Motivated by the PLO leadership's nationalist agenda, these institutions took major strides to revive the educational sector among Palestinians in exile by extending the network of national educational facilities (from nursery through secondary school), launching adult literacy campaigns, and creating national curricula.⁴⁰ Educational institutions provided Palestinian students with a sense of identification, location, and opportunity (consistent with Hobsbawm's conceptualization), thus reducing their sense of homelessness in exile.

The development of the national curricula took place in two stages. In the first stage, in the 1970s, the PLO research institutions began to analyze the state of educational curricula in the Palestinian diaspora, including host Arab states, regarding their content, pedagogy, and compatibility with Palestinian national needs.⁴¹ The studies found that the textbooks in history, geography, and social studies did not sufficiently serve the PLO's national vision. In addition, they identified pedagogical deficiencies. A key problem was that host Arab states used curricula designed to suit their own national narrative (not that of the Palestinians) and to inculcate their own nation-state values and ideas among students.⁴²

During the second stage, these PLO research institutions, in light of these findings and related explorations, formed committees of prospective textbook writers and educators under the auspices of the PLO Research and Planning Centres, for developing the *Falsafa* and relevant teaching curricula that would address national needs.⁴³ These curricula included the *māddat filasṭīn* (consisting of five textbooks for secondary education,⁴⁴ and a curriculum of political mobilization for the new generation (*māddat al-ta'bi'a al-siyāsiyya li-l-jīl al-jadīd*, consisting of approximately thirty teaching units for nonschool activities).⁴⁵ History, geography, and culture were the focus of both curricula. Illustrations (e.g., maps, pictures, audio, and video resources), textual excerpts from national poems, and historical documents were used to support the instructional content.⁴⁶ Some units included related guidelines for teachers.⁴⁷

Initially, the PLO decided to refrain from pursuing a comprehensive educational transformation for Palestinians across all host states because of the significant challenges involved in multinational dissemination. Instead, it focused on Lebanon, where the PLO represented a Palestinian quasistate.⁴⁸ Subsequently, the PLO replicated (to various extents) its successful experience in Beirut within other host Arab states,⁴⁹ such as Kuwait,⁵⁰ Syria,⁵¹ and Jordan.⁵²

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The *Falsafa* provided essential guidance on the objectives of Palestinian national education and addressed issues regarding education policy and curriculum.⁵³ Conforming to the PLO Charter, it is based on an ideological foundation of secularism and nationalism. For example, the codex calls for the fostering of civic responsibilities, critical thinking, and creative judgment, rather than stressing primordial affiliations. In addition, the *Falsafa* calls for equipping children (seen as future Palestinian leaders) for adulthood by means of socialization, sound morality, gender emancipation (i.e., women should have the same educational opportunities as men), and empowerment.⁵⁴ The *Falsafa* contains no religious content because the largest PLO factions (including Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP) were nationalist or secular in nature rather than Islamist. Both nationalism and secularism resonated more strongly with most Palestinians compared to other ideologies at the time and provided the main ideological framework for political legitimization.⁵⁵ The *Falsafa* received criticism from some conservative religious quarters for its secular character.⁵⁶

The rational orientation of the *Falsafa* is also evident in the document's regard for socio-cultural and economic development as central to the transformation of the Palestinian people. Consequently, and in accordance with the scholastic *nakba* literature,⁵⁷ the *Falsafa* underscores the necessity of national education as the basis for the regeneration of the Palestinian people and for state formation. It explicitly depicts history not as a set of coincidences but as a process in which fundamental changes play an essential role.⁵⁸ This perspective departs dramatically from Palestinian public discourse, which addressed the *nakba* in an uncritical way based on Self–Other dichotomies where the Self was good and just and the Other evil and unjust, and the good and just would prevail.⁵⁹

The *Falsafa* demonstrates how the PLO was opening up to political transition and nation building while simultaneously balancing multiple representations of the *nakba* legacy, including the Arab element of Palestinian national identity and militant resistance.

It articulates a multifaceted identity policy for the prospective nation-building process. On the one hand, this identity policy calls for a collective national identity and the cultivation of a distinctive Palestinianism on the basis of love for the homeland, commitment to and self-reliance in state building, and certainty of success. This nationalist orientation is exemplified by such terms as “the Palestinian people” or “the principles of the Palestinian revolution” when the *Falsafa* discusses national needs or the implementation of its guidelines.⁶⁰

On the other hand, the *Falsafa* frequently emphasizes the Palestinian people’s historical ties to the broader Arab civilization or refers to different ethnic groups grouped together within the Palestinian mandate.⁶¹ Accordingly, it calls for a free, democratic Palestinian state in which all citizens have equal opportunities regardless of gender, skin color, or religion.⁶² The *Falsafa* embraces the concept of a unified secular state for all groups in Palestine, which emerged in the late 1960s.⁶³ Moreover, it provides a new perspective on state creation that foreshadows the political transition to come in the wake of the Ten-Point Program (to be explained shortly). It affirms the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination, thus implying that the people (not just the PLO Charter) should play an integral role in decisions concerning the nature of the desired Palestinian state.

Although the PLO Charter is a legacy of the *nakba* paradigm, ever since its inception public opinion and political consensus have been important aspects of the political transition process guided by the Ten-Point Program. Shortly after the publication of the *Falsafa*, the Palestinian Legislative Council provided the Ten-Point Program for the PLO leadership, which included compromises of the PLO Charter’s principles on the approach to state formation and the gaining of territory for a Palestinian state. This transition of paradigms is also apparent in the *Falsafa*, which highlights socio-cultural development as a reason for the endurance of the revolution while undervaluing military training and might.⁶⁴ In this way, the *Falsafa* served the PLO mainstream as a powerful tool in its identity construction policy and as a move away from the *nakba* legacy. Its authors were consciously aiming to chart a course toward establishing a cohesive national and institutional Self without abruptly dismantling previous components of national identity.

Other interpretations of the *Falsafa* have been colored by traditional assumptions regarding the Arab–Israeli conflict and fail to recognize the PLO’s forward-thinking approach to state creation and identity policy. For example, Chelsi Mueller discusses the *Falsafa* predominantly in terms of Arab identity, pointing out that the phrase “Arab Palestinian people” occurs twelve times in the text. In doing so, she downplays the nationalist character that pervades *Falsafa* and overlooks the coexistence of multiple identifications among individuals in the Middle East. Moreover, she stresses the militant character of the PLO and its founding charter without considering the evidence of a shift in emphasis from military to socio-cultural and educational development, which is supported by political history.⁶⁵

Based on the recommendations contained in the *Falsafa*, the PLO initiated the development of the teaching materials to which I now turn. I will analyze them with attention to both their discursive patterns and the political history of the time.⁶⁶

THE PALESTINE CURRICULUM AND THE CURRICULUM OF POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The history of the development of the Palestine Curriculum begins with the arrival of the PLO in Lebanon around the start of the 1970s, followed closely by the advent of Palestinian institution building. The PLO leadership embarked on constructing a sense of national cohesion that was in harmony with Fatah's historical narratives and political visions. Its nationalist agenda incorporated a clear position on education as a prime instrument of nation building and the consolidation of legitimacy. The PLO's consistent commitment to this conviction yielded gradual progress in curriculum development and provided the institutional framework and resources necessary for a national curriculum to flourish.

Nevertheless, as a result of intra-PLO and geostrategic conflicts, the development process was by no means linear. The first major conflict reflected ideological warfare between the PLO mainstream (i.e., Fatah) and opposition groups (e.g., the PFLP) regarding the so-called Ten-Point Program. Approved by the Palestinian National Council in 1974, this program sought a two-state solution and affirmed an approach to state creation.⁶⁷ Although militant struggle and the liberation of historical Palestine (two core parts of the PLO Charter) had previously been the leading paradigm among PLO functionaries, since the early 1970s the political landscape had departed from these principles, eventually coming to challenge the PLO Charter. In response, the PLO leadership embraced the promotion of a nation-building process among Palestinians and resolved to pursue peace with Israel, while maintaining its role as a liberation movement with both offensive and defensive components. This shift in the national paradigm reflected the PLO leadership's realistic assessment of the local, regional, and international environment.⁶⁸

This adoption of a conciliatory stance motivated several opposition elements, including the PFLP, to exit the PLO and constitute the so-called Rejectionist Front, which was supported by Iraq. The Rejectionist Front viewed the sponsorship of the Ten-Point Program as evidence that the PLO leadership had adopted a new paradigm contradictory to the PLO Charter. Although, in retrospect, this rift did not alter the unitary character of the PLO, it presented a challenge to the integrity of PLO institutions and exposed them to controversial and conflicting assessments.⁶⁹ Consequently, the ideological warfare between supporters and opponents of the Ten-Point Program escalated in the media and research sectors.⁷⁰

The curriculum authors inexorably found themselves responding to this internal conflict between factions. Specifically, they disagreed over how to describe the PLO's political representations in curriculum units such as "The Palestinian Democratic State," "Peace Approached," "National Unity," and "Objectives of the Palestinian Revolution."⁷¹ Thus, the completion of these units was delayed and their scope and purpose became particularly contentious.⁷² The authors struggled to reach consensus on what territory should be treated as legitimately belonging to Israel and the type of peace for which Palestinians were striving, and there were few opportunities to resolve either disagreement.⁷³

As part of their effort to maintain and consolidate power, the PLO leaders moved to end this ideological warfare by attempting to dominate the agenda for public and political

action, dictating their understanding of Palestinian political orthodoxy to affiliated institutions from the top down. Politicians became involved in consultations on the curricula, and in meetings with the related commission they sought to retain influence over the structure and content of the curriculum. The authors had little freedom to stray from the firm directives provided by the PLO mainstream.⁷⁴

Due to the PLO's institutional performance at the local and international levels and its above-mentioned policy transition toward state formation, in 1974 both the United Nations and the Arab League acknowledged the PLO as the legitimate representative body of the Palestinian people.⁷⁵ This international recognition and the PLO's expansion of institution building enhanced the bonds linking Palestinian communities in exile and afforded an opportunity to improve Palestinian education in cooperation with international organizations, including UNRWA and UNESCO.⁷⁶ PLO policy and decision makers became more sensitive to the value of education and its relation to socio-economic development and nation building. This realization increased the incentive to gain autonomy in creating schools and curricula for Palestinian youth.

In the mid- to late-1970s, the PLO became involved in several significant domestic policy matters that had clear implications for its educational endeavors. The outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 plunged the PLO system into a state of emergency.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Israeli shelling of Palestinian targets and Syrian intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, to the disadvantage of the PLO, complicated the security situation for textbook authors. Various PLO institutions became incapable of performing their social and educational responsibilities. In addition, the closure of refugee camps and the occupation or destruction of schools by militant groups paralyzed the field of education.⁷⁸ In response to this security environment, progress toward the completion of both curricula stagnated.⁷⁹

The deterioration of education access and quality elevated the importance of deliberations on education policy within the PLO and augmented the level of contention among internal groups (educators, researchers, and politicians), who voiced criticisms and directed repeated appeals to the PLO's executive and legislative branches to improve the situation.⁸⁰ In response, in 1977, the Palestinian National Council mandated that the PLO Executive Committee promote national education by opening additional educational institutions and supporting the completion of teaching materials.⁸¹ The entire PLO system regained relative stability despite the civil war, leading to the completion and implementation of both curricula.⁸²

Following a major public evaluation, the authors produced a comprehensive revision of the curricula.⁸³ While the Palestine Curriculum was delivered in UNRWA, PLO, and Fatah schools,⁸⁴ the nonschool political curriculum was adopted by youth organizations and in off-campus sponsored activities.⁸⁵ The actual implementation of the Palestine Curriculum, of course, depended on the initiative of each school's faculty and administration.⁸⁶ Initially, a PLO publishing house called *Dar al-Fata al-'Arabi* (Arab Youth House) was supposed to publish the curriculum and distribute it to schools.⁸⁷ The PLO saw this process as a way to establish its authority vis-à-vis its Palestinian constituency. However, the curriculum generally remained in unofficial use, rather than becoming officially adopted by Palestinian schools, for reasons not revealed by the archival material.

It remains unclear what the PLO leadership was seeking to achieve in the near- to long-term through its publication of a school curriculum. International regulations hindered the PLO from making autonomous decisions about which curriculum would be used in schools administered by host states or UNRWA. Furthermore, in the context of the civil war, the PLO may not have wanted to negotiate this issue with UNRWA in Lebanon, which may have been seen as violating Lebanese sovereignty. The fact that the Palestine Curriculum constituted only a small portion of the overall content of the educational program complicated the issue further, though the PLO institutions were active in establishing reliable criteria for the provision of textbooks to local Palestinian groups, including those opposed to the PLO. Due to the aforementioned ideological warfare, these opposition groups championed competing opinions on curriculum and classroom control, rejecting the national textbooks as propaganda that supported the strategic rationale of the PLO leadership.⁸⁸

Preparing a comprehensive analysis of the development and implementation of both curricula is extremely difficult because many related archival materials have been destroyed or scattered and the involved actors have been displaced or cannot be located.⁸⁹ However, my access to existing archives and personal interviews adds significantly to the limited information provided by previous research.

PALESTINE CURRICULUM, NATIONAL NARRATIVES, AND IDENTITY POLICY: AN OVERVIEW

The PLO's teaching materials reflect—albeit indirectly—a profound understanding of the national narratives of its Zionist ideological foes. The curricula, specifically their attempt to reconstruct a national collective memory and promote a national identity, also illustrate the applicability of the theoretical conceptions of Anderson, Hobsbawm, and Hall to the case of Palestinian nation building as discussed here.

The Palestine Curriculum teaches the national heritage of the homeland (i.e., historical Palestine) by illustrating its tangible culture (e.g., Palestinian districts, cities, and attractions), its intangible culture (Palestinian folklore and traditions), and its natural heritage in historical, political, cultural, and socio-economic terms.⁹⁰ The descriptions of national heritage are designed to maintain Palestinian refugees' emotional connection to their lost houses, land, cities, and religious places (e.g., the church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, el-Jazzar Mosque in Acre, and the Bahai Seat in Haifa), as well as to cultural and craftmaking traditions (embroidery by women in Nazareth, woodworking and candle industries in Jerusalem, Ramallah folklore).⁹¹ Thus, the text serves as validation of the Palestinian sense of identity.

The notion of the historical permanence of the Arab Palestinians in Palestine since ancient times is evident throughout the Palestine Curriculum. It dates the Palestinians' origins back to the ancient Arab Canaanites, who first populated Palestine, established a civilization, and built cities (e.g., Acre and Nablus, both described in the textbook as “one of the oldest cities of the world”).⁹² Moreover, the text asserts that Palestinians have constituted the majority of the citizens of Palestine since ancient times and, thus, have historical rights to a sovereign state.

These narratives had three rationales. First, they aimed to enhance national identity, as well as the contemporary claim to statehood, by constructing a narrative of the

Palestinians as early arrivals in the Holy Land. Second, they sought to refute the Zionist counternarrative that Palestine was a country without a people—an empty territory—and that the Jews were a people without a country.⁹³ Third, they intended to demonstrate the prosperous heritage of Palestine, contrary to the Zionist claim of a Palestinian wilderness that became a flowering garden only under Jewish rule.⁹⁴

An additional national narrative contained in the Palestine Curriculum was that the Palestinians had consistently opposed external supremacy, whether the foe was the Ottoman occupation, European colonialization,⁹⁵ or Zionism. As a PLO study document stated, “Resistance on behalf of independence from the Ottoman Empire, and later against Zionism, has unified Arab Palestinians in their cause.”⁹⁶ Thus, the teaching materials portray a consistent Palestinian commitment to nonviolent national resistance dating back to the late 19th century. As part of the curriculum’s discourse in opposition to a Zionist state in Palestine, it provides samples of many op-eds and media campaigns by Palestinians (e.g., in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram* and the Palestinian *al-Karmil* and *Filastiniyya*).⁹⁷ Moreover, the text critically presents the seven organized Palestinian National Conferences against the Zionist threat (1919–28) as another example of nonviolent political organization and mobilization.⁹⁸

The curricula also document many of the violent confrontations between Arab Palestinians and the Zionist movement (e.g., the major intafadas, or collective revolts, of 1920, 1929, 1933, 1935, and 1936–39).⁹⁹ These descriptions reinforce the master narrative that the Palestinians have held Palestine as their homeland and have been devoted to self-determination for decades. Another teaching unit elucidated the national resistance during the British Mandate.¹⁰⁰ The construction of this national narrative attempted to draw parallels between various aspects of the national struggle against the British and Zionist groups and PLO activity in the 1970s: patriotism, fearless commitment, and dynamic action.¹⁰¹ It also refuted the Zionist claim that Palestinians were not active in establishing a national home during the Mandate period. By relating these peaceful and violent actions, the national curriculum reconstructed Palestinian identity during the post-World War I period, depicting it as deeply rooted and independent of Arabism.

At the same time, the Palestine Curriculum affirms the myth of Arab unity over Ottomanism, colonialism, and Zionism, and underscores an increasing local consciousness among Palestinians within the pan-Arab nationalist movement against all three of these forces. It presents the Palestinians as becoming, from World War I on, progressively more cohesive as a collective community connected to their history and aware of their immediate domestic and regional political context, including the threat posed by Zionism.¹⁰² This judgment regarding the early occurrence of Palestinian nationalism concurs with the scholarship of Rashid Khalidi, Muhammad Muslih, and James Calvins, though it differs from that of Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal (who claim that the 1834 Arab revolt in Palestine was the first instance when the Palestinians functioned as a nation) and directly contradicts the work of Bernard Lewis (who denies the existence of such identifications at the historic points cited in the curriculum).¹⁰³

Regarding then-recent history, the curriculum identifies 1965 as a turning point in the development of the Palestinian national movement, with the establishment of Fatah. The text presents three reasons for this alleged qualitative progress: independence from Arab regimes, the activation of “Palestinian-ness,” and the fostering of proactive resistance.¹⁰⁴ The school curriculum’s political textbook introduces a vision of a new patriotic and

dynamic Palestinian people, capable of state formation and nation building. The text attempts to imbue in students a shared awareness of the above-mentioned national narratives with the expectation that students and future leaders would espouse and support these narratives.

Though descriptive, the Palestine Curriculum is also comprehensive and illustrative. The teaching units, which include questions at the end of each one, invite students to think analytically and critically about the course of history. However, not all teaching units offer activities to improve students' positive socialization as prescribed by the *Falsafa*. The additional resources come from scholastic works and national poets. Overall, the curriculum grew out of a combination of political and governmental rationalization rather than educational ideals, despite its representation of an educational philosophy.

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AMID CONFLICT: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Prior empirical examinations of educational transformation in conflict-ridden settings have discussed the impact of geographic, political (e.g., relatively stable versus marked by continual strife), administrative (fragmented versus unitary governance structures), and economic (resource-rich versus poor) factors, as well as human agency, on the outcomes and sustainability of curriculum development and implementation processes.¹⁰⁵ My findings indicate that the Palestinian case largely parallels these previous cases.

Although the effectiveness of the PLO-led educational transformation during the 1970s is difficult to measure, primary sources indicate that the national policy to address the educational needs of Palestinians was well articulated and that operational activities were relatively well resourced. As in similar cases in conflict-afflicted environments in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, the PLO recognized education as a modernization tool and an instrument for fostering nation building and increasing political legitimacy. The national curriculum and the *Falsafa* did not aim at just transmitting knowledge of national history and geography to students; it also sought to displace colonial/diasporic educational content by articulating and inculcating national and anticolonial narratives.¹⁰⁶

Notwithstanding many contextual and institutional challenges, Palestinian education experienced substantial development during the 1970s in Lebanon and became increasingly nationalist in character due to the efforts of performance-conscious PLO institutions, with firm support from PLO leadership.¹⁰⁷ The national movement managed to institute a unitary quasistate in exile, as reflected in its wide-ranging governmental institutions, regional and international recognition, and the political legitimacy accorded to it by Palestinians. The PLO's unitary character allowed it to impose its reforms and paradigms on the curriculum development process and to withstand challenges posed by opposition groups. The benefit of a unitary government in enabling educational reform in a conflict-ridden environment was similarly evident in Grenada, where the revolutionary government was determined to improve and expand national education.¹⁰⁸ The Palestinian and Grenadan cases can be contrasted with Angola, where consensus on creating a national educational system before independence was absent due to the heterogeneous political landscape.¹⁰⁹

During the 1970s, the PLO's curriculum development and implementation project also encountered many setbacks. This article demonstrates why settled states are more fertile territories for such transformational enterprises than are national movements in colonial/diasporic settings, particularly because national movements lack authority to control local schools' curriculum decisions. This conclusion harmonizes with that of prior studies on education amid conflict.¹¹⁰ However, the Palestinian case contradicts the widespread assumption that statehood and sovereignty must precede curriculum development, because the PLO accomplished a high level of curriculum maturity before it attained any degree of sovereignty.

In terms of colonial/diasporic settings, the Palestinian case suggests that recognition by international actors (e.g., colonial powers, host states, or international organizations) of the very idea of the legitimacy of a nation-state seems to have implications for the likelihood of educational transformation. The regional and international recognition bestowed on the PLO during the 1970s stimulated the establishment of further educational bodies and gave a desperately needed boost to curriculum development and distribution. However, the likelihood of this outcome depends on whether the colonial power or host state decide to ignore, legitimize tacitly through tolerance, or actively oppose such a national project. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 aimed to deconstruct and abolish the PLO quasistate, with destructive implications for education transformation.¹¹¹ In contrast, under the Oslo Agreements of almost a decade in the future, Israel has tolerated Palestinian national curriculum development following the establishment of the PNA as governing body for the Palestinian territories. Similar cases in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Angola confirm this causal relationship.¹¹²

In host states, the peaceful environment needed for effective education transformation was not present. Rather, PLO institutions were plagued by external challenges related to civil wars in Jordan and Lebanon, which became increasingly concerned over time about the growing autonomy of the PLO parastate.¹¹³ This unstable security situation helps to explain why Jordan opposed a Palestinian educational system after the creation of the PLO,¹¹⁴ whereas Lebanon, lacking a unitary state at the time, tolerated such an initiative. On the other hand, Kuwait supported the inception of the Palestinian education system during the 1970s.¹¹⁵

Ordinarily, in colonial/diasporic settings educational transformation is intimately intertwined with (usually militant) resistance and state formation efforts.¹¹⁶ In such a recurrent state of conflict, the process of educational transition tends to remain fragile, uneven, and distorted—a product of political and socio-economic twists and turns arbitrated by ideological and militant actions.¹¹⁷ Against this background, the Palestinian case supports the relationship between relative political stability and the sustainability of educational reforms, which has also been suggested in scholarship on Angola, Cambodia, Kurdistan, and the Grenada Revolution.¹¹⁸

Socio-economic confidence and material affluence promote education in conflict situations, whereas economic disparity hinders it. In most Caribbean states, limited resources and inadequate budgetary allocations pose severe challenges,¹¹⁹ in contrast to resource-rich states like Sierra Leone, which maintain strong support for education through a period of conflict.¹²⁰ In a setting marked by armed strife, political leaders tend to prioritize funds for evolving displacement problems and human needs. In the Palestinian instance, educational projects failed to be realized fully or to produce the

desired effects because of insufficient expenditures, among other factors. In addition, the conflict-ridden geopolitical environment pushed the Palestinian leadership to reallocate its limited financial resources to the more pressing needs of refugees and to the political and military sectors. In some situations, socio-cultural institutions were financially starved as a result.¹²¹

Education development also depends on support from the prevailing political culture. Comparative studies have shown that successful education transformation is usually accompanied by a consensus among political leaders and key interest groups to endorse a national education policy. On the other hand, dissent can make progress toward curriculum development and implementation impossible. Heightened conflict complicates latent dilemmas with regard to education reform choices.¹²² In the Palestinian context, the political elite and interest groups ultimately acknowledged the importance of education transformation; however, there was limited consensus on how this task related to resistance efforts, as well as on how highly it should be prioritized during periods of heightened tensions.

Within the Palestinian movement, three streams of thought can be distinguished. At one extreme, the “transformation first” stream advocated for structural development programs, arguing that sociocultural and economic advances would be more effective than political or military interventions. This group contended that the war in Palestine was not just a military conflict involving machinery and soldiers. Soft power and nonmilitary means, such as psychological methods, strategic lobbying, and propaganda, were used extensively in the battle for Palestine. Followers of the “transformation first” approach viewed education as a prerequisite for a permanent revolution that would shape the future citizens of the Palestinian state.¹²³

At the other extreme, the “liberation first” stream argued that a nation laboring under conditions of resistance is not amenable to transformational engineering, and that therefore the Palestinian circumstances were incompatible with educational transformation. This group opposed wasting resources on ideological endeavors that had no identifiable impact on the military battleground. The “liberation first” advocates criticized “transformation first” thinkers as utopian or bourgeoisie intellectuals.¹²⁴

Between these two extremes, a large portion of the PLO leadership believed that the two approaches should go hand in hand. These leaders supported a combination of modern institution building and paramilitary competence as the best way to achieve Palestinian self-determination.¹²⁵

However, during heightened stages of internal and external conflict, spontaneous harmony between the three streams could not always occur. The tenser the situation becomes, the more likely it is that education transformation, if pursued at all, will occur within a narrow context in which political goals become the dominant driving force.¹²⁶ In the Palestinian case and others, the political realm has intruded, sometimes overpoweringly, into sociocultural and educational processes.¹²⁷ This fact explains, to some degree, the lack of sufficient cooperation between specific institutions of the PLO and the resulting setbacks in education transformation.¹²⁸ The same dynamics have been observed elsewhere, such as in Nepal as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹²⁹

Since education transformation gained legitimacy in Palestinian policy discourse in the 1970s, the development of a Palestinian national curriculum has been a prominent topic.¹³⁰ This history of discourse contributed to the PNA’s decision to pursue the

construction of a national curriculum after 1994. Not coincidentally, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, who had been a key player in the education debates of the 1970s, assumed leadership of the PNA's Curriculum Development Center.¹³¹ The Palestinian Authority's current curriculum reflects the efforts of the 1970s in its content and aims; it also faces similar challenges to this prior initiative.¹³²

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the University of Exeter for granting me an Honorary University Fellowship in the College of Social Sciences and International Studies, which allowed me to undertake research on the Middle East. In particular, I am grateful to Dr. Ilan Pappé (Director of the European Centre for Palestine Studies) for his invaluable support in this regard. I express my deepest gratitude to the anonymous referees and the journal editors for reading my manuscript and providing constructive comments, which significantly improved the quality of this article. Lastly, I express my love and gratitude to my wonderful sons Adam and Ilias.

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⁴⁴"Khitat A'mal al-Qism" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 4 March 1975), 1–3. Both Najla' Nusayr Bashshur and Jabir Sulayman (contributors to the educational materials) have confirmed in interviews the development and implementation of such school materials.

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⁸³"Taqqarir 'an Nashat wa-Mashari' Qism al-Takhtit al-Tarbawi wa-l-Ijtima'i" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 11 February 1974); "Mashru' Maddat al-Ta'bi'a al-Siyasiyya li-l-Jil al-Jadid," 1–11; "Malahiq," 1–11.

⁸⁴Najla' Nusayr Bashshur, interviews with the author, Beirut, 12 April, 26 April, and 8 June 2007.

⁸⁵"Khitat 'Amal al-Qism," 6–7; Najla' Nusayr Bashshur, interviews with the author, Beirut, 12 April, 26 April, and 8 June 2007; Qasim 'Ayna, interviews with the author, Beirut, 19 March, 4 April, and 6 June 2007; Jabir Sulayman, interviews with the author, Beirut, 26 March, 13 April, 25 April, and 6 June 2007.

⁸⁶Adnan 'Abd ar-Rahim, interview with the author, Damascus, 2 October 2007.

⁸⁷"Khitat 'Amal al-Qism," 5; "Khitat Qism al-Takhtit al-Tarbawi," 4; Nabil Sha' th, interview the author, Ramallah, 31 August 2007.

⁸⁸Jabir Sulayman, interviews with the author, Beirut, 26 March, 13 April, 25 April, and 6 June 2007.

⁸⁹Amour, "Field Research in the Middle East."

⁹⁰"Filastin Qadiya Wataniyya" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 12 August 1977), 1–85.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 27, 12, 36, 28, 55, 60.

⁹²Ibid., 9, 39.

⁹³Adam M. Garfinkle, "On the Origin, Meaning, Use and Abuse of a Phrase," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1991): 540.

⁹⁴See, e.g., Dina Porat, "Forging Zionist Identity Prior to 1948: Against Which Counter-Identity?," in *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006), 50–51.

⁹⁵"Al-Wihda al-Thaniya: Filastin Qadiya Taharruriyya" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, n.d.), 1–151.

⁹⁶"Al-Wihda al-Rabi'a: al-Nidal al-'Arabi al-Filastini hata 1947" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 27 August 1975), 2.

⁹⁷Ibid., 6, 2, 1–88.

⁹⁸Ibid., 11–18.

⁹⁹Ibid., 18–88.

¹⁰⁰"Harakat al-Shaykh 'Iz al-Din al-Qasam" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 1975), 1–85. For complementary perspectives on the Palestinian memory of the Qasam movement, see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville, Ark.: University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 1–2, 7–8, 10, 18, 78, 145, 171, 201.

¹⁰¹See Molly Patterson and Kristen Renwick Monroe, "Narrative in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 315–16; and Amour, "Palästinensische Bildungspolitik," 201–19.

¹⁰²"Al-Wihda al-Thaniya," 1–151.

¹⁰³Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*; Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); James L. Gelvin, *The Israel–Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Palestinian People*, 3–37; Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: Norton, 1987), 164–91.

¹⁰⁴"Al-Nidal al-Filastini (1965–1973)" (Beirut: PLO Planning Centre, 8 September 1975), 1–2.

¹⁰⁵Vavrus and Bartlett, *Critical Approaches to Comparative Education*, 1–18; Buckland, ed., *Reshaping the Future*, 34–35.

¹⁰⁶These insights draw as well on George J. Sefa Dei, "Introduction: Mapping the Terrain - Towards a New Politics of Resistance," in *Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance*, ed. George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006), 1–12.

¹⁰⁷See, e.g., Munir Fasheh, Review of *Education, Repression and Liberation: Palestinians*, by Sarah Graham-Brown, *MERIP Reports* 136/137 (1985): 52.

¹⁰⁸On Caribbean states and poor resourcing, see Anne Hickling-Hudson, "'Post Marxist' Discourse and the Rethinking of Third World Education Reform," in *Third World Education: Quality and Equality*, ed. Anthony R. Welch (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 180–81.

¹⁰⁹Mary Mendenhall, "The Relief- Development Transition: Sustainability and Educational Support in Post-Conflict Settings," in *Critical Approaches to Comparative Education: Vertical Case Studies from Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas*, ed. Frances Katherine Vavrus and Lesley Bartlett (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 181–97.

¹¹⁰Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, eds., *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion* (Paris: UNESCO, International Bureau of Education, 2004).

¹¹¹For the background and context of the war, see, e.g., Emile F. Sahliyeh, *The PLO after the Lebanon War* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 3–22.

¹¹²Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 14–28; Michael Arlow, "Citizenship Education in a Divided Society: The Case of Northern Ireland," in *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 255–313; and Lal Perera, Swarna Wijetunge, and A.S. Balasooriya, "Education Reform and Political Violence in Sri Lanka," in *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 375–433.

¹¹³Mohamed E. Selim, "The Survival of a Nonstate Actor: The Foreign Policy of the Palestine Liberation Organization," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1984), 209.

¹¹⁴"Waqi' al-Tifl al-Filastini," 6; "Taqrir 'an Madrasat Is'ad at-Tufula fi Suq al-Gharb," 3.

¹¹⁵See al-Hasan, *al-Filastiniyyun fi al-Kuwayt*; "Palestinians in Kuwait: Educational Attainments and Institutions"; "Ta'lim Abna' Filastin fi al-Kuwayt"; Farah, "Political Socialization of Palestinian Children in Kuwait"; Ghabra, *Palestinians in Kuwait*; and Zelkowitz, "A Paradise Lost?."

¹¹⁶Agustín Velloso de Santisteban, "Palestinian Education: A National Curriculum against All Odds," *International Journal of Educational Development* 22 (2002): 147.

¹¹⁷Buckland, *Reshaping the Future*, 13–28.

¹¹⁸Buckland, *Reshaping the Future*; Amir Hassanpour, "The Pen and the Sword: Literacy, Education and Revolution in Kurdistan," in *Knowledge, Culture, and Power: International Perspectives on Literacy as Policy and Practice*, ed. Peter Freebody and Anthony R. Welch (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 36–56.

¹¹⁹Hickling-Hudson, "'Post Marxist' Discourse and the Rethinking of Third World Education Reform," 180–81.

¹²⁰World Bank, *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2006), 1–14.

¹²¹Qasim 'Ayna, interviews with the author, Beirut, 19 March, 4 April, and 6 June 2007. For example, the tight budget prevented other employees from participating in completing the Maddat Filastin: "Khittat Lajnat Falsafat al-Tarbiya," 3–4. Financial challenges are mentioned in the autobiography of the head of the PLO Education Department: Naji, *Fi al-Khaymat al-Ukhra*, 274, 370.

¹²²Zajda, Daun, and Saha, *Nation-Building, Identity, and Citizenship Education*; Vavrus and Bartlett, *Critical Approaches to Comparative Education*; Buckland, *Reshaping the Future*; Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*.

¹²³I owe these insights to Anis Sayigh, general director of the PLO Research Centre from 1969 to 1977, interview with the author, Beirut, 17, 26 February, 6, 13, 28 March, 22 May, and 19 June 2007; Amour, "Palästinensische Bildungspolitik."

¹²⁴Jabir Sulayman, interviews with the author, Beirut, 26 March, 13 April, 25 April, and 6 June 2007.

¹²⁵See, e.g., Cobban Helena, "The Dilemma of the PLO," *Merip Reports* 13 (1983): 4.

¹²⁶See, e.g., Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 14–28.

¹²⁷See, e.g., *ibid.*

¹²⁸In the records of the Department of Educational and Social Planning, there are many complaints about the lack of cooperation of many PLO institutions. For example, see "Taqiim A'mal al-Qism li-l-'Am 1975 wa-Khitat al-Qism li-l-'Am 1976."

¹²⁹Sara Parker and Kay Standing, "The Impact of Conflict on Schooling in Nepal," in *Education, Conflict and Reconciliation: International Perspectives*, ed. Fiona Leach and Máiréad Dunne (Oxford: Peter Lang AG, 2007), 51–64; Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 15–28; Philip Stabback, "Curriculum Development, Diversity and Division in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 37–84.

¹³⁰See also Velloso de Santisteban, "Palestinian Education," 147.

¹³¹Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh, ed., *Ibrahim Abu-Lughod: Resistance, Exile and Return: Conversations with Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh* (Ramallah: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies [IALIIS], Birzeit University, 2003), 125–27. The similarities between the ideas and objectives of the *Falsafa* and those of the "Comprehensive Plan for the Development of the national Curriculum" (Ramallah: Curriculum Development Center, 1996) are remarkable. The latter was cowritten by Abu-Lughod. On these similarities, see Nathan J. Brown, *Palestinian Politics after the Oslo Accords: Resuming Arab Palestine* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003), 211.

¹³²For similarities with regard to the post-1995 national curriculum, see Van Dyke and Randall, "Educational Reform in Post-Accord Palestine," 17–32; Brown, *Palestinian Politics after the Oslo Accords*, 201–31.