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Analysis

Securitised development and Palestinian authoritarianism under Fayyadism

Alaa Tartir

This article analyses perceptions of the Palestinian Authority's post-2007 state-building project—popularly known as 'Fayyadism'—by assessing academic and practitioner literatures on the topic, and by drawing on the findings of ethnographic fieldwork conducted at two sites in the West Bank: Balata and Jenin refugee camps. It argues that the ethnographic data reveals that despite the self-proclaimed institutional successes of Fayyadism, its achievements have failed to

have a meaningful impact on the basic rights of Palestinians. These voices from below articulate the detrimental effects that Fayyadism has had on their resistance against Israel's occupation, and by extension on their own protection and security. Criticisms focus on the absence of local legitimacy and accountability, and question the agenda of Fayyadism, its political basis and its trajectory as they relate to the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

Introduction

After taking office in 2007, the Palestinian prime minister of the West Bank, Salam Fayyad, along with other leaders of the Palestinian Authority (PA), argued that the PA

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should focus on creating a functioning state under Israeli military occupation. Indeed, Fayyad proclaimed in August 2011 that the ‘West Bank is already a state in all but name’,¹ and the official documents of the PA confirmed this conclusion.² Hoping to convince the international community to testify to its ability to govern the Palestinian people, the PA approached the United Nations (UN) in 2011 and 2012 requesting the recognition of Palestine as an independent state.³ In 2012, Palestine was offered a non-member observer state status in the UN.⁴ However, Palestine’s newly-elevated status in the international arena has meant very little to the everyday lives of Palestinians. Despite UN recognition and the proclaimed success of institution-creation under Fayyad, Palestinians continue to live under Israeli settler-colonial rule and military occupation.⁵ Ruled by two separate Palestinian governments—Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza—Palestinian lives continue to exist in the context of territorial and political fragmentation. Moreover, under Fayyad, both the PA and the Palestinian people have become more dependent upon international aid,⁶ and Palestinian political institutions tasked with ensuring democratic checks and balances, such as the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), have become defunct. Under the leadership of Fayyad, the PA has adhered to a strict governance reform agenda drawn up by the international donor community that has done little to stall or reverse this process.⁷

In the words of Fayyad himself, the strategy to be followed was one of ‘self-reliance and self-empowerment, focused on providing good governance, economic opportunity and the rule of law, to build strong state institutions capable of providing for the needs of our citizens under occupation, and despite the occupation’.⁸ Towards this end, the PA—with the support of the donor community—has pursued state-building through the four pillars of: (1) the reform of the security sector and the enforcement of the rule of law; (2) the building of accountable PA institutions; (3) the provision of effective public service delivery; and (4) economic growth led by the private sector in an open and free market economy.⁹ Through the implementation of these policies, a ‘new’ West Bank would emerge, and the PA would be transformed into a functioning state.¹⁰ Because these policies have been most closely associated with Salam Fayyad, they have therefore come to be known as ‘Fayyadism’—by both supporters and opponents. This article therefore also uses this shorthand to refer to these policies and to the PA’s post-2007 state-building project and style of governance in the West Bank, despite the fact that they continued after Fayyad resigned in 2013.

The purpose of this article is to critically assess the Fayyadist paradigm by drawing on relevant literatures and fieldwork at two sites in the occupied West Bank, namely Balata and Jenin refugee camps. It is guided by the questions: how has the Fayyadist paradigm and the consequences of its policies been perceived by grassroots actors?; and what do these critical voices tell us about Fayyadism? It argues that there is a gap between the rhetoric at the top and the perception from below in relation to the Fayyadist paradigm and the consequences of its policies.

The article is structured into three main sections. The first provides an analysis of the perceived major successes and failures of Fayyadism as outlined by its proponents and critics within the scholarly and practitioner literature. The second section explores the different perspectives on Fayyadism from people living in Balata and Jenin refugee camps in the West Bank, gathered by the author through fieldwork in 2012. The article concludes in section three by arguing that the rhetoric of the success of Fayyadism does not match with reality, when looked at from the perspective of those in the refugee camps.

Understanding Fayyadism

Fayyadism as a paradigm has polarised scholars. Some celebrate Fayyad's reforms and argue that the improved performance of the PA has contributed to peace-building and the enhancement of Palestinian lives; others argue that it has sustained the occupation, re-engineered Palestinian society and revised the historical national goals of the Palestinian people. Fayyad's critics have questioned his legitimacy and political agenda, while Fayyad's competency and transparency have been the focus of his proponents.¹¹ As such, Fayyad has been viewed as both a Palestinian Messiah *and* as a traitor to the Palestinian cause, and everything in-between.¹²

Proponents argue that Fayyadism has led to better functioning institutions and public service delivery, has strengthened the PA's local legitimacy through its achievements, has created better security conditions and has achieved constant economic growth. Additionally, they argue that Fayyadism followed new public management approaches, increased transparency while decreasing corruption, created a leadership that is viewed as a credible partner for peace, built public institutions ready for statehood, minimised the levels of aid dependency and empowered the Palestinian people.¹³

Critics, on the other hand, argue that Fayyadism has not built new institutions, has only achieved fragmented successes, has created an economic bubble and has achieved

economic growth without creating employment. Furthermore, they charge that it is non-sustainable, inequitable, aid-driven and has, in effect, been anti-poor. These scholars argue that while Fayyadism has meant improved financial management—albeit still with corruption—it has achieved a monopoly of violence through suppressing activism and creating an authoritarian state, it has remained heavily dependent on funds from the international donor community, it has altered the goals of the national struggle, it has functioned as a subcontractor to Israel's military occupation and it has de-politicised the Palestinian cause. In addition, it is criticised as having proposed economic solutions for political problems.¹⁴

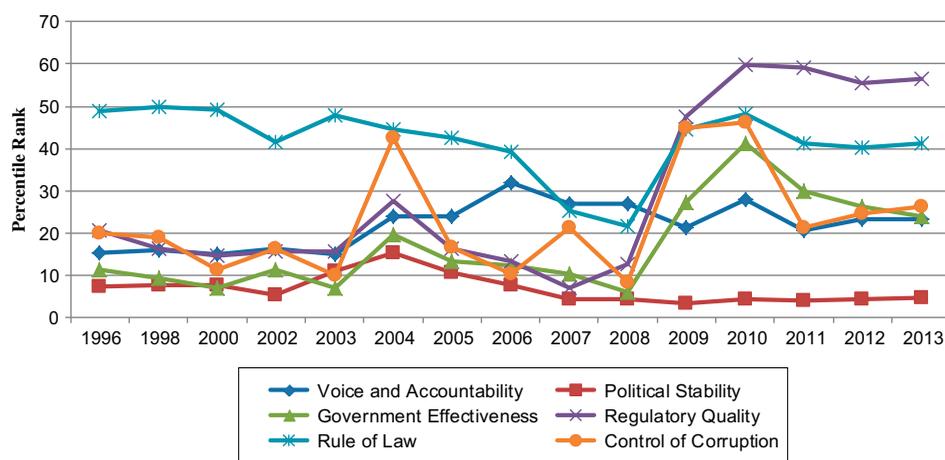
From the perspective of its proponents, Fayyadism was understood as a process of state-building that was marked by a fundamental attitudinal shift. Many international journalists, such as Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* who coined the phrase, regarded Fayyadism to be 'the most exciting new idea in Arab governance ever' and 'as a new approach to Palestinian governance'.¹⁵ Friedman even considered Fayyadism to be one of the main reasons for the emergence of the Arab Spring.¹⁶ Echoing Friedman's celebration of Fayyadism, Robert Danin argued that Fayyadism's emphasis on 'self-reliance is a conscious effort to change the role of the Palestinians in their narrative from that of victims to that of agents of their own fate'.¹⁷ Hence, Fayyadism for its supporters was a bold attempt to convince Palestinians 'that it is worthwhile to make the painful compromises that will be necessary for a genuine settlement to be reached'.¹⁸

Furthermore, Michael Bröning argued that the PA under Fayyad has undergone an untold technocratic revolution by moving away from the dogma of 'liberation before state'. This technocratic revolution was based on 'factual attainment of the basic requirements associated with a sovereign state rather than on the abstract rights legacy'.¹⁹ Fayyad was celebrated as a responsible statesman, who embodied the 'best hope for Palestine' and the 'most important phenomenon in the Middle East',²⁰ and 'probably the best partner for peace that Israel has ever had',²¹ as well as being a 'real revolutionary'.²² Even Noam Chomsky described Fayyad's policies as sensible in that they were focused on developing concrete achievements on the ground, as the Zionist movement had done previously.²³ Indeed, the Israeli President Shimon Peres described Fayyad as the Palestinian Ben-Gurion. Fayyad was seen by many as the embodiment of a kind of 'Palestinianness' that is both reasonable and moderate, and as someone 'to do business with'.²⁴

Consequently, the perceived institutional and governance successes attributed to Fayyadism led to the publication of numerous reports by various international organisations, particularly the ones submitted to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in 2010 and 2011,²⁵ which testified to the readiness of the PA for statehood.²⁶ The World Bank wrote in 2010 that the PA is ‘well-positioned for the establishment of a state at any point in the near future’.²⁷ Furthermore, it argued that ‘the PA has continued to strengthen its institutions, delivering public services and promoting reforms that many existing states struggle with [...] significant reforms still lie ahead for the PA—but no more than those facing other middle income countries’.²⁸ The IMF also congratulated the achievements of the PA, stating that, ‘the PA is now able to conduct the sound economic policies expected of a future well-functioning Palestinian state, given its solid track record in reforms and institution-building in the public finance and financial areas’.²⁹ A number of UN bodies, European Union institutions, the Quartet and many US think tanks published similar evaluations.

The PA, in turn, produced a number of documents that focused on its own achievements.³⁰ For instance, a 2011 report listed these as including: the consolidation of the rule of law throughout the criminal justice chain, the setting of new standards for the security and justice systems (including the expansion of the justice system and the formation of specialised courts), the rehabilitation of the security sector infrastructure, economic growth of nine per cent, increased internal government revenues exceeding US \$2bn, as well as a reduction in unemployment and an improvement in social services.³¹

From an indicator-based perspective, Figure 1 depicts a quantitative evaluation of Fayyadism based on the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators.³² It highlights the substantial improvement of the measured indicators mainly between 2008 and 2010, particularly the ones related to government effectiveness, control of corruption, rule of law and regulatory quality.³³ Political stability and voice and accountability indicators hardly witnessed any change during this phase. It is particularly interesting to note the post-2010 drop in the control of corruption and government effectiveness indicators despite claims of Fayyadism eradicating corruption from its roots and enhancing the delivery of public services and goods. This speaks to the sustainability and fragility of Fayyadism, which is a paradigm aimed at ‘depoliticising the political’ in a highly politicised context.

Figure 1. Palestine's percentile rank—worldwide governance indicators 1996–2013.

Source: Compiled by the Author, Worldwide Governance Indicators Database, World Bank, 2015.

From the perspective of its critics, Nathan Brown argued that Fayyadism at best was ‘a program of improved public administration rather than a state-building effort’. However, even with this understanding, Fayyadism was perceived as a dangerous endeavour because ‘Fayyad’s soft talk and cheery dedication enabled policymakers throughout the world to ignore the brewing crisis. And this may be where Fayyad, despite his impressive management skills, did Palestinians a disservice’.³⁴ Indeed, other critics, such as Philip Leech, understood Fayyadism to be a programme that did ‘little to challenge the basic structures of Israel’s rule’, while simultaneously being a mechanism whereby the PA became ‘the primary agent extending neoliberal hegemony in the West Bank’.³⁵

More avid critics have described Fayyadism as the programme of ‘a bunch of traitors to their own cause’,³⁶ and accused Fayyad of being ‘a collaborator with the Israeli occupation and a pioneer in normalisation’.³⁷ Azmi Bishara, for instance, accused Fayyad of being ‘the man who abandoned the national discourse, forswore national rights and came from outside the national movements to present a Palestinian state as a solution for the Israeli demographic problem’.³⁸ Bishara further accused Fayyad of organising state-building as a ‘contrived folk festival which prioritises the protection of Israel’s security over fundamental Palestinian interests’.³⁹ Similarly, in interviews I conducted with Hamas leaders Fayyad was deemed to be part of the Zionist project

and his policies were considered to be a ‘major national crime’.⁴⁰ Islamic Jihad leaders went so far as to describe him as being ‘politically mutinous’.⁴¹ Even some of Fatah’s leadership were also critical, describing Fayyad as the ‘policeman of the occupation, the good employee and fundraiser, and the puppet’.⁴²

Fayyadism as an agenda has therefore been heavily criticised. Raja Khalidi and Sobhi Samour, for instance, labelled it as ‘neoliberalism as liberation’, concluding that ‘neoliberal “governance” under occupation, however “good”, cannot substitute for the broader struggle for national rights nor ensure the Palestinian right to development’.⁴³ Critics perceived the reports that celebrated Fayyadism as attempts to mask reality and hide behind narrow, static, numeric and technical measurements of success. These critics viewed Fayyadism as being largely directed towards gaining donor support, and therefore it could be neither a liberation strategy nor a bottom-up participatory approach, as claimed by its proponents.⁴⁴ Indeed, even quantitative economic measurements revealed that the celebrated economic growth of 7.1 per cent in 2008, 7.4 per cent in 2009 and 9.3 per cent in 2010, was a jobless growth, aid driven, based on an eroded productive base, anti-poor and reflected an economy recovering from a low base.⁴⁵ This growth was associated with unemployment levels of 30 per cent, poverty reaching 26 per cent—18 per cent in the West Bank, and 38 per cent in Gaza—an increase in public debt by 100 per cent, and took place at a time when 50 per cent of Palestinian households remained food insecure.⁴⁶

Brown has therefore argued that, despite some marginal successes, the overall failure of Fayyadism to create both a short- and long-term strategy was apparent. Fayyad has not brought Palestinians any closer to statehood than in 1999: he failed to establish any new institutions during his time in office and merely protected the existing institutions from failure. Furthermore, Palestinians have become more reliant on international aid.⁴⁷ Therefore, Brown argues, ‘the main problem with Fayyadism is not the way it undermines democracy in the short term but in the way it masks the absence of any long-term strategy’.⁴⁸

Even in terms of the security reforms that took place under Fayyadism, which are often praised, there were detrimental impacts on the dynamics of the Palestinian national struggle and resistance against Israeli occupation.⁴⁹ For the reinvention of the Palestinian security forces under Fayyad was associated with an increasing level of Palestinian authoritarianism. Critics accused the reformed PA security bodies of

human rights violations, practices of arbitrary detention, and the use of torture.⁵⁰ The PA security forces were further accused by critics of creating a police state and an authoritarian regime,⁵¹ and blamed for adding another level of repression by sustaining the Israeli occupation through security collaboration with Israel.⁵²

Security co-operation between the PA forces and the Israeli military operates in a number of different ways. Security co-ordination can refer to Israeli forces ordering the arrest of suspect Palestinians and having the PA forces hand them over. Another example of security co-operation resides in the suppression of any Palestinian protests that aim to confront Israeli soldiers or settlers. Thus the facilitation of arrests to Israel, the withdrawal of PA forces from the streets when Israeli forces invade an area under PA control, the exchange of intelligence information, the 'revolving door' phenomenon where Palestinian activists are imprisoned in both Israeli and PA jails for the same reasons, and the regular joint Israeli-Palestinian meetings, workshops and trainings are just a few additional examples.⁵³ The extent of security co-ordination revealed by the leaked Palestine Papers shocked Palestinians, particularly during the wars on Gaza.⁵⁴ Security co-ordination has therefore been regarded by critics as having had a detrimental impact on the legitimacy of the PA and has been perceived by many as a form of national betrayal.

Because Fayyadism prioritised security matters and security collaboration with Israel, this made the development process a securitised one, as well as one dominated by a neo-liberal economic agenda. Indeed, the entrenchment of a neo-liberal economic agenda under Fayyadism corresponded with the Israeli notion of economic peace and the idea that there could be an economic solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Fayyadism was not concerned with building democratic institutions that could ensure checks and balances accountable to the Palestinian people. Rather, Fayyadism was only possible because of the absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC—the parliament of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) as the PLC could potentially have opposed some of its core strategies. Fayyadism actually helped to further de-politicise Palestinian life by favouring normalcy under military occupation, and directly and indirectly sustaining Israel's occupation.

The ethnographic observations I gathered from both Balata and Jenin refugee camps testify to this. As a result of the security campaigns, people argued that the concept and practice of resistance was targeted: first to tame it, and then to criminalise it.⁵⁶

Members of armed groups committed to resisting the Israeli occupation and to protecting the Palestinian people were arrested and tortured in the PA's jails. The security campaigns not only meant arbitrary detention and torture for local leaders from the camps, but it also meant that stability and security for Israel and Israeli settlers became the dominant focus. Consequently, the security needs of the Palestinian people were denied, and opposing voices were suppressed, thus indicating authoritarian transformations under Fayyadism.

Voices from below: perspectives from Balata and Jenin refugee camps

Balata and Jenin refugee camps are important benchmarks for the Fayyadist paradigm as both camps were regularly paraded by the PA, the international donor community and proponents of Fayyadism as indicators of its success. Balata and Jenin camps were celebrated as camps that were transformed from places that 'export terror' to stable camps operating under the rule of law on account of the PA's security forces. They were used as showcases to testify the ability of the PA to govern its people and provide security to Israel, and as signs of its readiness for statehood. This celebration was mainly attributed to the security campaigns that began in 2007. The PA conducted these campaigns in co-ordination with Israel, and they were made possible by the financial support of the donor community.

However, my ethnographic fieldwork in these two camps between August and December 2012 revealed a wide gap between the perceptions of the people and those of the authorities. These voices from below challenged the proclaimed successes of Fayyadism. Instead, they drew a picture that depicted the ultimate failure of Fayyadism to protect them from Israeli arrests and repression, and to fulfil their basic needs. Indeed, the interviewees questioned the building blocks of Fayyadism, and expressed anger against the PA, its security forces and security doctrine, as well as anger against its economic policies, all of which were seen to have resulted in high levels of inequality and injustice.

The cases of Balata and Jenin camps, and the ethnographic evidence they offer, are not particularly exceptional when contextualised within the overall perceptions about Fayyadism and its performance amongst the residents of the West Bank. For instance,

contrary to Fayyadism's claim of bridging the trust and legitimacy gap, in February 2010 MaanNews Agency, through its online polling of 23,480 participants, revealed that 95.5 per cent believe that politicians lie.⁵⁷ Later in the same month, this time with 28,673 participants, 78 per cent believed that the PA security forces were engaged in surveillance, monitoring activities and intervening in people's privacy.⁵⁸ While Fayyadism claimed that it had uprooted the phenomenon of nepotism and corruption, in March 2010 the statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) showed that 92 per cent believed there to be widespread nepotism and favouritism in the public sector.⁵⁹ And in November 2012 a public opinion poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC), with a sample of 750 respondents from the West Bank, revealed that 82 per cent thought that there was corruption in the PA.⁶⁰ Moreover, Fayyadism's claims to protect civil rights was also challenged in that around 40 per cent of respondents stated that freedom of expression is permissible to a low or very low extent, 18 per cent stated that it is not permissible at all and 56 per cent declared that the PA does not respect civil rights and political freedom.⁶¹

In March 2013, a survey by the JMCC revealed that 60 per cent of participants did not think that security co-operation with Israel benefits the Palestinians and should be stopped,⁶² reflecting public rejection of a major pillar of Fayyadism. The Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) revealed in a May 2012 survey that 50 per cent of West Bank respondents believed that Fayyad's government was not accountable to the people.⁶³ Furthermore, according to a public poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in September 2012, only two per cent and 17 per cent evaluated the performance of the government headed by Fayyad as 'very good' and 'good' respectively, 35 per cent evaluated its performance as 'bad' and 18 per cent as 'very bad'.⁶⁴ This dissatisfaction expressed itself further in a survey by PSR in June 2013 which showed that 70 per cent of the West Bank respondents supported Fayyad's resignation.⁶⁵

In order to survey attitudes in Jenin and Balata refugee camps, I conducted 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews in both camps. The sample interviewees included representatives (both men and women) from different sectors and categories, including local and national leaders, political faction cadres, armed group members, youth, ex-fighters and those previously detained by the PA. Additionally, I conducted five focus groups in the two camps. I adopted an ethnographic approach, observing and

interacting with people's daily lives in their stores and workshops, in their houses, in streets and cafes, in local institutions and at weddings and public gatherings. I entered the camps with the hypothesis that the institutional successes of Fayyadism had affected the people positively. However, I was confronted with the opposite. With a few very small exceptions, the vast majority pointed to the high levels of insecurity, unemployment, poverty, frustration and anger. The youth in particular, who suffer 40 per cent unemployment rates, argued that nepotism (*wasta*) and corruption had not been properly addressed by Fayyad, despite claims by the PA and international reports to the contrary. One youth argued, 'I truly wish to see this authority clean without corruption, but this will never happen even if Prophet Muhammad replaces Salam Fayyad'.

My respondents in Balata and Jenin refugee camps did not support the claims of the authorities. One respondent from Balata camp told me in a voice filled with anger:

Fayyad sits in his air-conditioned and elegant office in Ramallah, and then goes in his fancy black armed Audi to his house in Jerusalem that is guarded by a British security company. Abbas is surrounded by thousands of US-trained guards in his compound in Ramallah. They live in their castles and we are 30,000 people living in one square kilometre. All what I see from this authority is humiliation, national deterioration, repression, corruption and injustices. I keep hearing in the news about their successes; but whenever I hear that, I ask myself: who is living on Mars, me or them?

This lack of trust was accompanied by feelings of anger against the PA and Fayyad's policies. The anger was strong amongst the former members of armed groups, who had been arrested by the PA and tortured in their jails, and who pointed out that the PA's security campaigns had occurred with a high cost. 'I want revenge on the PA. Firstly through elections and then I will use my weapon to take revenge against those who interrogated me in the PA's jails in Jericho', said a former member of the Fatah-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyrs Group, from Balata camp, who was imprisoned in a PA jail for 83 days. Another respondent from Balata camp affiliated with Hamas argued, 'I feel that I live in a police state full of informants. If I just think of opposing the PA and Fayyad's policies, I feel that the PA security forces will be at the door of my house'. Calls for revenge, and anger at the PA security forces and Fayyad's security doctrine, have overshadowed the partial successes that the security campaigns achieved

over the years. Moreover, the PA's legitimacy under Fayyad was particularly questioned by respondents. A local leader affiliated with the Palestinian Left from Jenin camp argued:

There is no parliament, no election, and no democracy. I don't know who represents me. I did not elect Fayyad, no one elected him. He reached us with a parachute. Fayyad claims he is accountable to us, but we only see him in the news. He is accountable to the donors because he is the finance minister of their money.

The crisis of legitimacy was further illustrated when security collaboration with Israel was discussed. 'Do you want me to tell you how many people and freedom fighters were killed because of Fayyad's security collaboration doctrine?', a female activist from Jenin camp asked me. Security co-ordination with Israel is a defining feature of the Fayyadist paradigm. The perception that Fayyadism is largely aimed at taming resistance to the occupation is a dominant view amongst the camps' population. 'All that has happened over the last five years served one objective: to use us to show others that resistance is a crime', a Fatah cadre from Jenin camp told me. Another Fatah local leader from Balata looked at the other side of the resistance equation and argued:

Fayyad wanted to be the Palestinian Gandhi and to win the Nobel Prize after all our sacrifices. Do you want to convince me that playing a violin will urge a settler to leave his settlement, or that hitting on a bowl will dismantle the wall, or that holding a carton with a slogan on it will reclaim Jerusalem?

The legacy of armed resistance is dominant in the popular narrative and resonates in Palestinian collective consciousness. A leftist local leader in Balata camp stated:

Under Fayyad's rule the only thing that happened in the security sphere is that the PA forces are helping the Israeli occupying forces in their tasks; they are subsidising the occupation. Therefore, Fayyad is implementing an American-European policy imposed on the PA, and since PA officials are a bunch of corrupt people, the American-European coalition brought someone in to clean up their mess. However, Fayyad remains the finance minister of the donors' money. Fayyad is not Hasan Nasrallah.

A representative of the youth told me:

Fayyad is probably the smartest in the so-called Palestinian leadership. He knows what he is doing. He offered us, through the banks, loans and credit, so that we can busy ourselves with repaying them instead of resisting the occupation. He promised us money to give up on resistance.

Illustrating the lack of local accountability and absence of local ownership in the Fayyadist paradigm, respondents pointed out that at best Fayyadism serves the interest of the PA's elite, and at worst it serves an external, and even an Israeli, agenda. People questioned the local roots of Fayyadism and pointed out that he joined the Palestinian polity as part of donor conditionalities. 'What is the national history of Fayyad? He was never arrested in Israeli jails, and he never belonged to any political factions. He spent his life in Washington and now he is our prime minister, falling on our head with a parachute', one respondent argued. This criticism that Fayyadism did not represent the needs of the people was dominant. One respondent argued:

They [Fayyad's governments] claim that the plan echoes our needs, but no one visited the camp to ask us about our needs. I don't care if the PA rented a building for \$100,000 per year in Ramallah and moved the offices of the Ministry of Interior into it. I care about why I am not feeling secure, why I am not employed or why my income has declined. I also care about our national struggle and goals. If the security forces are there to suppress us, but not protect us, why should I care or be happy if their ministry has a new building? If so-called Fayyadism was a national, local plan it would care about human beings, not about the stones for the buildings.

Thus, the majority of respondents raised questions about the local legitimacy of Fayyadism and how it is perceived in public consciousness. A respondent from Jenin camp argued: 'It is not rocket science. When you see and hear the Israelis praising Fayyad all the time, you must raise a question mark. He can't be loyal to Palestine while being celebrated by the enemies'. A mother of a martyr and a prisoner in the PA's jails argued that 'Fayyad is implementing a Zionist-American plan; I will never elect Fatah or Fayyad'.

Highlighting case study examples of their own successes was an integral part of Fayyadism, but they also illustrate the tension between the perspectives from below and the ones from above. For example, while the liberal model of modern Ramallah

was held up by Fayyadist proponents to be replicated elsewhere, the voices coming from the camp argued that the Ramallah model is an ‘imposed and strange model, even though it appears as a miracle’. The ‘miracle of Ramallah’ was perceived in the camps as ‘fake’ and an example of living under a ‘five-star occupation’. A respondent from Balata camp argued, ‘Ramallah represents what Fayyadism is: inequality with an exclusive focus on the core, while marginalising the periphery. Ramallah was transformed into a model city. I call it the postcard and billboards city. It is fake and dangerous’. Many respondents felt that the focus on Ramallah, the de facto capital of the PA, marginalised other cities and locations. A local leader from Balata argued:

Over the years, Fayyad governments ignored and marginalised Nablus as a city since it was causing them trouble in terms of security. They therefore decided to punish it. The result was the transformation of Nablus from the economic capital of the West Bank, into a capital of misery, unemployment and poverty.

A female activist and member of the Balata camp committee argued that, ‘what Fayyad has created in Ramallah is a resort to relax in from the occupation. When I want to take a break from the occupation, I take my kids to Ramallah’. Another respondent from Jenin camp argued that, ‘Ramallah is not under occupation. It is in the heart of Switzerland’.⁶⁶ The idea here is not about Ramallah per se, but rather about its symbolic meaning and about the aim of Fayyadism to depoliticise the Palestinian struggle for rights and assume normalcy under occupation. ‘Ramallah is a city of consumerism, nightclubs, and elitism’, a respondent from Balata argued before elaborating further and stating:

Fayyad wanted us to believe that we can have a normal life under occupation. Yes, maybe it is important to have growing businesses, fancy cafes and cars, build new cities, have five-star hotels, organise investment conferences and international festivals, and open up new KFC restaurants. However, all of these can’t mask the picture of reality. Depoliticising our struggle can only help Israel. Fayyad believed that building a modern and peaceful city like Ramallah is a form of peaceful and civilised resistance.

In Ramallah, it has become common to hear people refer to those from the northern part of the West Bank, such as Jenin and Balata refugee camps, as ‘Thai people’ because they are used as cheap labour there. Under the Fayyadist paradigm, elite

Ramallah enjoyed the benefits of being the core, as opposed to the hardships of the periphery. The benefits were reflected in the economic spheres, and were evident in the associated culture of consumerism. This meant that other areas, such as the camps, were largely viewed as inferior and residual areas, as spaces of chaos, and as constituting a bunch of troublemakers. A local cadre of Hamas in Balata camp told me:

Fayyad and his government are making us busy with glowing talk about economic growth and security; however what they miss is that they make Palestinians chase jobs but never attain them. This is like the tires of the car; the front tires are the jobs and growth the PA and Fayyad are talking about, and the back tires are the Palestinian people. They run and run but they will never meet.

Fayyad's call to adopt an exclusively peaceful resistance strategy was not taken seriously in the camps. Almost none of the interviewees thought that a peaceful resistance strategy would be effective. Instead, they preferred a strategy that aimed at clashing with and confronting the occupying power. A local Islamic leader in Jenin camps argued: 'I am telling Fayyad that armed resistance is about preserving dignity despite the fact that it could result in speedy death. Negotiation is a humiliation for dignity and it is a slow death'. Another respondent stated: 'The PA adopted a weekly peaceful protest aimed at appearances for the media, but not at resisting the occupation. These peaceful protests will never fulfil our rights'. Fayyad's policies were perceived by many to be apathetic. A respondent from Jenin camp stated: 'Fayyad wanted us to face a whale with peaceful resistance. It is a joke, apathetic, fake, betrayal, and catastrophe'. Others argued that the concept of resistance did not exist in the Fayyadist dictionary: 'Fayyadism is an approach based on begging the occupier to give us some leftovers, but never to clash with or confront the occupying power to acquire our full rights', a youth activist argued in Balata camp. An active member in Fatah and a former fighter in its armed wing, argued:

I am not saying that the exclusivity of armed resistance is the solution. Actually it is not. Any exclusivity implies a certain level of dictatorship. Under Fayyad, the word resistance became a dirty word and in many occasions it is not allowed. It is only allowed if we go with the foreigners and the activists from the Israeli left and start singing together in front of the 7 meter wall. This is not resistance Mr. Fayyad, it is a celebration of military occupation and colonial subjugation.

Many described Fayyad's policies as dangerous. A local leader in Balata camp argued that:

Fayyad's policies are very, very dangerous. They are not based on a clear political vision, his existence reinforces Palestinian fragmentation and his economic policies only bring disaster unto the Palestinian people. Fayyad tried to co-opt the freedom fighter and transform the army of fighters into an army of public sector employees.

The transformation of Palestinian society through security co-ordination and economic means was a common theme and complaint, as one grassroots activist argued:

Fayyad followed policies to mainly ensure the domestication of people: an economic one through offering easy credit and a security one through empowering the security forces. All of these shackled the trust in Fayyad and his government.⁶⁷

It was also common to hear complaints that the PA security forces were not there to protect the Palestinian people, and that the security operation against the camps had created hostility. One local leader from Jenin camp, and a member of the PLC, told me:

The security operations resulted in distrust between the PA force and the people, and created a hostile atmosphere in the camp against the PA. What Fayyad was not aware of is that I, as a citizen, need to be convinced that this police officer or soldier is there to protect me and that therefore I will respect him and not be afraid of him. If today I am afraid of him, tomorrow I will threaten him.

There was often a sense of how fragile and ephemeral Fayyadism's achievements had actually been, as highlighted by a local leader in Jenin camp, who had also been a key figure in the 2002 Jenin battle as well as being a member of the PLC. He argued:

With all due respect to Fayyad, but in a matter of two days Israel can destroy everything he has built. With Fayyad's rule, 70 per cent of the public servants are in long-term debt with the banks, no factories were built, unemployment levels are the same as before, the cost of living has increased, one million Palestinians have become dependent on the PA's monthly salary and the uncertainty associated with it, and corruption remains but is packaged differently. Fayyad remains a World Bank employee.

These voices tell a different story to the official one of Fayyadism. They are an illustration of what the practice of Fayyadist policies meant on the ground, and how it has affected people's lives.

Conclusion

This article unpacked and critically assessed perceptions about the style of the governance and state-building paradigm known as Fayyadism by drawing on relevant literatures in combination with the findings of an ethnographic fieldwork investigation at two sites in the occupied West Bank, namely Balata and Jenin refugee camps. The article illustrates the tensions between the perspectives coming from the top and those coming from below regarding how Fayyadism and its main strategies are understood, and the consequences of its policies on people's security and well-being and their struggle for national liberation. The voices from below challenged the glowing rhetoric of the authorities, and instead revealed mounting anger, frustration, inequality, insecurity and a widening legitimacy gap. The consistent anger in the voices from the camps is not particularly surprising, given the structural disadvantages and neglect to which they are exposed and subjected.

Fayyadism achieved a number of successes for the PA at the level of institution-building and induced transformations in its functionality.⁶⁸ However, these successes were met with cynicism by respondents in this research, as revealed by the ethnographic evidence gathered from Balata and Jenin refugee camps. The ethnographic findings revealed the consequences of Fayyadism and its policies on the resistance against Israeli military occupation, as well as the implications of the enhanced functionality of the PA's institutions, particularly the security forces, on the sustainability of the status quo. These voices exposed the absence of local legitimacy and accountability for the Fayyadist paradigm. They also questioned the agenda and political basis of Fayyadism, as well as the trajectory aimed at directing the Palestinian struggle. These voices from below rejected the successes claimed by the PA and the donor community—arguing that its successes have failed to have a meaningful impact on their daily lives and rights. This indicates that what matters to the people is different than what matters to the authorities.

People expressed a number of criticisms of Fayyadism. The first was the failure to create sustainable socio-economic development or a national security paradigm. The second was that it had altered Palestinian national liberation goals by focusing on the creation of governance structures rather than resistance strategies. And the third criticism was that it has suppressed informal mechanisms of resistance and protection as tools for the struggle against the occupation. Two years on from the resignation of Fayyad in mid-2013, the practices and policies that dominated his premiership remain dominant. One of the respondents in this research, one of Israel's most wanted fighters from the Second Intifada, summed up the general cynicism of respondents towards this approach by concluding:

Fayyad did his best, he is surrounded by agreements and existing frameworks, he does not have a magic tool but he has a vision to build the institutions for the future state. However, no one is ready to give him a state and therefore all of what he built is for nothing.

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Endotes

1. Salam Fayyad, 'Talk to Al-Jazeera: Salam Fayyad'. *Al-Jazeera*, 6 August 2011.
2. Palestinian Authority, *Building Palestine: Achievements and Challenges* (March 2010; September 2010; and 2011); Palestinian Authority, *Building the State of Palestine*; Palestinian Authority, *Palestine: A State Under Occupation*; Palestinian Authority, *Unlocking Statehood*.
3. Quigley, 'Palestine Statehood and International Law'; Azarov, 'An International Legal Demarche'.
4. UN, 'General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly'.
5. Roy, 'Reconceptualising the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict'; Salamanca et al., 'Past is Present'.
6. International aid provided to the Palestinians between 1993 and 2012 was US\$ 24.6 billion. To illustrate the intensity of aid dependency, from 2004 onward aid represented between 24 per cent and 42 per cent of GDP. Per capita aid for the same period averaged around US\$ 530 per year. For further analysis on aid dependency, please refer to Wildeman and Tartir, 'Unwilling to Change'; and Tartir, 'Contentious Economics'.
7. It is crucial to affirm that Fayyadism does not exist in vacuum. It is not only about Salam Fayyad. It is also about the overall political decisions and approaches of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian Liberation Organisation president. This is why Fayyadism is not only an externally-sponsored paradigm, but also a home-grown one. Therefore, the conceptual basis of the

- strategy of change underpinning Fayyadism's pillars can be seen as the outcome and result of a set of strategic, institutional and operational transformations, induced by the main governance actors in the West Bank. Additionally, the mere existence of the Palestinian Authority and its functions are limited to the different accords and documents resulting from the 'peace process' itself.
8. Palestinian Authority, *Building the State of Palestine*, 7.
 9. Palestinian Authority, *Palestinian Reform and Development Plan*; Palestinian Authority, *Palestine: Ending the Occupation*; Palestinian Authority, *Building Palestine: Achievements and Challenges* (March 2010; September 2010); Palestinian Authority, *Building the State of Palestine*; Palestinian Authority, *Equitable Development*; Palestinian Authority, *Moving Beyond the Status Quo*.
 10. The notion of a 'miraculous' or 'new' West Bank was highlighted in the literature as evidence for the success of Fayyadism: 'The West Bank has been transformed from a besieged and impoverished bantustan into a rough sketch of what a functioning Palestinian state might look like', in Michael Weiss, 'The Pragmatist: Is Salam Fayyad the Palestinian Ben-Gurion?'. *Tablet Magazine*, 8 December 2009; and 'Fayyad has completely transformed the West Bank from an immiserated backwater into a thriving, integrated society', in Michael Weiss, 'Palestine's Great Hope'. *Slate*, 8 June 2010.
 11. In 2010, Fayyad was ranked as number 10 of the top world leaders according to *Time* magazine, and in 2011 as number 28 of the top global thinkers by *Foreign Policy* for forging a path between violence and surrender.
 12. Bröning, *The Politics of Change in Palestine*.
 13. World Bank, *Building the Palestinian State*; World Bank, *Sustaining Achievements in Palestinian Institution-Building*; IMF, *Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework*; IMF, *Recent Experience and Prospects* (2011); Thomas Friedman, 'Green Shoots in Palestine'. *The New York Times*, 4 August 2009; Thomas Friedman, 'This Is Just the Start'. *The New York Times*, 1 March 2011.
 14. Stop the Wall, *Development or Normalization?*; Turner, 'The Power of "Shock and Awe"'; Turner, 'Creating "Partners for Peace"'; Khalidi and Samour, 'Neoliberalism as Liberation'; Khan, 'Post-Oslo State-Building Strategies'; Brown, 'Are Palestinians Building a State?'; Brown, 'Fayyad Is Not the Problem'; Ray Smith, 'Interview: Raja Khalidi on the Neoliberal Consensus in Palestine'. *The Electronic Intifada*, 25 April 2011; Khalidi, 'Looking Ahead'; Bisan, *Wahm Al-Tanmeya*; Dana, 'A Neoliberal Conflict Zone?'; Dana, 'The Symbiosis'.
 15. Thomas Friedman, 'Green Shoots in Palestine'. *The New York Times*, 4 August 2009.
 16. Thomas Friedman, 'This is Just the Start'. *The New York Times*, 1 March 2011.
 17. Danin, 'A Third Way to Palestine', 4.
 18. Danin, 'A Third Way to Palestine', 1.
 19. Bröning, *The Politics of Change in Palestine*, 64.
 20. Roger Cohen, 'Beating the Middle East's Black Hole'. *The New York Times*, 26 April 2010; Roger Cohen, 'Fayyad's Road to Palestine'. *The New York Times*, 29 April 2010.
 21. David Horowitz, 'Fayyad is a Partner for Peace'. *The Jerusalem Post*, 13 May 2010.
 22. Danin, 'A Third Way to Palestine'.
 23. Noam Chomsky, 'Denied Entry: Israel Blocks Noam Chomsky from Entering West Bank to Deliver Speech'. *Democracy Now*, 17 May 2010.
 24. Leech, 'Re-reading the Myth of Fayyadism', 2.
 25. World Bank, *A Palestinian State in Two Years*; World Bank, *Building the Palestinian State*; World Bank, *Sustaining Achievements in Palestinian Institution-Building*; World Bank, *Stagnation or Revival?*; IMF, *Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework*; IMF, *Recent Experience and Prospects* (2011); UN, *Palestinian State-Building*; OQR, *Report for the Meeting*.
 26. Mainly attributed to political reason, the very same institutions issued less enthusiastic reports in 2012 and 2013. World Bank, *Stagnation or Revival?*; World Bank, *Fiscal Challenges*; World Bank, *Economic Monitoring Report*; IMF, *Recent Experience and Prospects* (2013); IMF, *West Bank and Gaza*.
 27. World Bank, *The Underpinnings of the Future Palestinian State*, 4.
 28. Ibid.
 29. IMF, *Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework*, 5.
 30. Palestinian Authority, *Homestretch to Freedom*; Palestinian Authority, *Millennium Development Goals*; Palestinian Authority, *Security Sector Strategic Plan*; Palestinian Authority, *Building Palestine: Achievements and Challenges* (2011); Palestinian Authority, *Building the State of Palestine*.
 31. Palestinian Authority, *Building Palestine: Achievements and Challenges* (March 2010; September 2010); Palestinian Authority, *Results of the 2010 Paris Declaration*.
 32. The Worldwide Governance Indicators are widely debated in the scholarly community: see, for example, Hyden et al., *Making Sense of Governance*.

- They were criticised for their substantial margin of error, lack of sufficient transparency, being a-theoretical with yet poorly articulated hypotheses and almost complete neglect of citizens' evaluations of governance outcomes.
33. The Worldwide Governance Indicators are particularly problematic in the context of Palestine as they depend on few underlying data sources to develop the set of indicators. However, given the vital role of the World Bank and the relevance of its policy prescription in Palestine as the 'patron' for the development industry, the indicators play an important role in the aid industry/development failure with its political ramifications on the peace process and on the state-building/failure venture.
 34. Brown, 'No Savior'.
 35. Leech, 'Re-reading the Myth of Fayyadism', 1.
 36. I. Black, 'Is the Middle East on a Peace Process to Nowhere?'. *The Guardian*, 28 April 2012.
 37. Joseph Massad, 'An Immaculate Conception?'. *Electronic Intifada*, 14 April 2010.
 38. Bishara, 'We Want to Live', 2.
 39. Bishara, 'We Want to Live', 3.
 40. Interview with Hamas leader, Ramallah, 22 June 2010.
 41. Interview with Islamic Jihad leader, Ramallah, 22 June 2010.
 42. Interview with Fatah leader, Ramallah, 23 June 2010. Nathan Brown argued that Fayyad could proudly claim to be Palestine's most accomplished prime minister ever because all of his predecessors 'were impotent, transitory, or frustrated occupants of the post, and collectively set a very low bar'. Hence, he described Fayyad as someone who could not walk on the water, 'but did an almost miraculous job of not drowning'. Brown, 'No Savior'.
 43. Khalidi and Samour, 'Neoliberalism as Liberation', 6.
 44. The titles of the plans are telling. The 2008 plan was called the *Palestinian Reform and Development Plan*. In 2009, it was called *Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State*. In 2010, it was called *Homestretch to Freedom*, and in 2011 it was called *National Development Plan: Establishing the State, Building our Future*. What is noticeable here are the dropped words. It starts by dropping 'reform', followed by 'occupation' and then 'freedom', as if these tasks had been achieved and what now remains is how Palestinians build their future. As stated by Fayyad in September 2011: 'our effort has been to make statehood inevitable [...] we are now ready'. This reflects part of the war of discourses and narratives between the various actors.
 45. UNCTAD, *Report on UNCTAD Assistance*.
 46. Bisan, *Wahm Al-Tanmeyya*.
 47. Brown, 'Are Palestinians Building a State?'; Brown, 'Fayyad Is Not the Problem'; Brown, 'A Little Rain'.
 48. Brown, 'Palestine: The Schism Deepens', 5.
 49. Khan, *Palestinian State Formation*.
 50. Human Rights Watch, *Internal Fight*; Human Rights Watch, *West Bank*; ICHR, *16th Annual Report*; ICG, *Ruling Palestine II*; ICG, *Ruling Palestine I*; ICG, *Squaring the Circle*; Al-Haq, *Illegal Trial*; Middle East Monitor, *Documenting the Crime of Torture*.
 51. Sayigh, *Policing the People*.
 52. Leech, 'Fayyadism's End?'; Leech, 'Re-reading the Myth of Fayyadism'; Leech, 'Who Owns "the Spring"'; Leech, 'After "Security First"'
 53. Amrov and Tartir, 'After Gaza'; Amrov and Tartir, 'Subcontracting Repression in the West Bank and Gaza'. *The New York Times*, 26 November 2014.
 54. The Palestine Papers is a collection of leaked confidential documents by Al-Jazeera related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In January 2011, Al-Jazeera presented for the public nearly 1,700 files and thousands of pages of diplomatic correspondence relating to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Further information can be found on the Palestine Papers page on Al-Jazeera portal <http://www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers/>
 55. See Dana's article in this issue.
 56. I thank Sabrien Amrov for the notion of taming refugee camps and struggle. For further analysis please refer to Amrov and Tartir, 'After Gaza'; and Amrov and Tartir, 'Subcontracting Repression'.
 57. MaanNews Agency, 'MaanNews' Online Opinion Poll'. *MaanNews*, 15 February 2010.
 58. MaanNews Agency, 'MaanNews' Online Opinion Poll'. *MaanNews*, 22 February 2010.
 59. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Main Governance Indicators*.
 60. This does not mean that Fayyad or Fayyadism are the ones to blame for the PA's corruption. On the contrary, Fayyad tried to tackle corruption through governance reform. However, at best, Fayyadism resulted in 'corruption but with better bookkeeping'. This occurred because corruption is inherent in the multiple structures of the Palestinian Authority and in the build-up of its institutions as dictated by the Oslo Accords. The personalised, nepotistic and unaccountable styles of governance of the Palestinian political leadership, framed within patron-client relationships and neo-patrimonial politics, were reinforced during the post-2007 state-building project in

the West Bank but they were merely packaged and presented differently. After all, Israel's intention was to create a 'client state' and entrench the territorial fragmentation and the status of asymmetric containment, as argued in Hilal and Khan, 'State formation under the PA'.

61. JMCC, 'Poll No. 77'.
62. JMCC, 'Poll No. 79'.
63. AWRAD, 'Results of an Opinion Poll'.
64. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 'Poll Number 45'.
65. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 'Poll Number 48'.
66. For further elaboration on the transformations which occurred in Ramallah please refer to Taraki, Enclave Micropolis; Taraki, 'Urban Modernity on the Periphery'; Barthe, *Ramallah Dream*; Yahya, *Ramallah Al-Shaqra*; Khalidi, 'After the Arab Spring'; and Rabie, 'Ramallah's Bubbles'.
67. For further elaboration on the damaging economic policies of Fayyadism, refer to Khalidi and Samour, 'Neoliberalism as Liberation'; Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt*; Samour, 'The Promises and Limitations'; and Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice*.
68. It is worth mentioning that Salam Fayyad was the lead author of the 2014–2015 UNDP Palestinian Human Development Report 'Development for Empowerment'. Chapter three in the report on governance is particularly relevant to the analysis in this article, as it presents the key elements of Fayyad's vision based on the self-evaluation of the Palestinian Authority's post-2007 state-building programme.

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