



**UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA**

Dipartimento di Scienze Umane per la Formazione “Riccardo Massa”  
Dottorato di Ricerca in Antropologia della Contemporaneità: Etnografia delle  
Diversità e delle Convergenze Culturali  
XXVIII ciclo

**UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 8 VINCENNES-SAINT-DENIS**

École Doctorale de Sciences Sociales - ED 401  
Laboratoire Architecture, Ville, Urbanisme et Environnement UMR 7218  
Doctorat en Anthropologie

**Spring Water: the Lifeblood of the Village of Wādī Fūkīn  
(West Bank)**

Doctoral thesis in Anthropology  
Anita De Donato

Directors: Mauro Van Aken and Barbara Casciarri

Examinations Board :

Mauro VAN AKEN, Professor of Anthropology, Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca

Barbara CASCIARRI, Associate Professor of Anthropology (MCF-HDR), Université Paris 8

Pierre BLANC, Professor of Political Sciences, LAM, Université de Bordeaux

Riccardo BOCCO, Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Cédric PARIZOT, Researcher in Anthropology, IREMAM, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

Paola SACCHI, Professor of Anthropology, Università degli Studi di Torino

Academic year: 2017-2018



## *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

I really thank the Wādī Fūkīn community for hosting me and accepting me as a sister. I wish them to find the strength to keep fighting for the survival of the beautiful village of Wādī Fūkīn and for their rights to be free.

I sincerely thank my professors, Mauro Van Aken and Barbara Casciarri, who have been mentors to me and from whom I hope to have the opportunity to continue to learn.

A special thanks to my family in Italy and in Palestine, who has always supported me while facing every difficulty, as well as every beautiful moment in the intense path of the doctorate and of life. First, my husband, who accompanied me in this adventure and has always supported all my choices.

I am very grateful to my mother, grandmother and my brothers and sisters, who are always close to me and never abandon me, supporting me in the difficult but beautiful task of being a mother. My most heartfelt thought is for my son, to whom I wish to be happy and to find his place in the world with happiness and satisfaction.

Thanks also to my friends, who helped me to overcome many difficulties and, above all, who always remind me the importance of smiling in life.

## RÉSUMÉ EN FRANÇAIS

« *L'eau de source: l'âme du village de Wādī Fūkīn (Cisjordanie)* »

Cette thèse porte sur l'analyse de la gestion de l'eau potable et des eaux des sources utilisées pour l'irrigation dans le village rural de Wādī Fūkīn, situé dans le sud-ouest de Bethléem (Cisjordanie). Il s'agit d'une étude des relations de pouvoir globales, coloniales et nationales qui se nouent autour des politiques de l'eau et des pratiques locales de résistance, qui définissent les appartenances sociales et les significations de la localité, de l'État et de la citoyenneté.

Cette recherche est une contribution à la réflexion anthropologique sur l'eau (Casciarri et Van Aken 2013), en montrant son inscription sociale (Casciarri 2008).

A Wādī Fūkīn, l'eau n'est pas considérée en tant que simple ressource "naturelle" ou H<sub>2</sub>O à gérer en mobilisant exclusivement les savoirs technico-économiques des sciences "exactes" et modernes qui caractérisent les approches économiques et managériales et qui sont l'expression des idéologies occidentales sur la "nature". Il y a plutôt une "diversité des eaux" (Van Aken 2012), des ressources dont les valeurs symboliques varient en fonction des relations socio-écologiques et politiques dont elles sont l'expression, et qui en définissent l'usage et l'accès.

Dans cette thèse, l'eau est considérée comme une ressource interculturelle au croisement entre différentes communautés épistémiques (Long 1992) et en tant qu'arène politique où se confrontent de groupes d'intérêts locaux, nationaux et mondiaux, porteurs de connaissances, systèmes normatifs et valeurs diversifiés qui expriment de différentes représentations du temps et de l'espace, de l'individu et la communauté, des relations avec l'environnement, du travail agricole, du développement, de l'État et de la citoyenneté.

En montrant l'inscription de l'eau dans les logiques sociales locales (Aubriot 2004), cette étude met en évidence que l'eau est une interface politique d'importance cruciale pour la construction communautaire, la négociation des hiérarchies et des formes d'appartenance, en lien étroit avec des processus régionaux, nationaux et transnationaux de construction de la localité.

*La colonisation de l'environnement par Israël et la création de sujets coloniaux palestiniens*

L'analyse des implications spatiales, environnementales et socio-économiques des dispositifs mis en place par Israël pour la gestion de l'eau et l'aménagement du territoire à Wādī Fūkīn apporte un éclairage important à la théorisation de la planification technique en tant que nouvelle dimension du politique et expression du "modernisme autoritaire" de l'État-nation moderne (Scott 1998).

Le village rural de Wadi Fukin, situé dans le sud-ouest de Bethléem, est historiquement caractérisé par la disponibilité de l'eau provenant de nombreuses sources, utilisée pour irriguer les terres agricoles et abreuver les troupeaux par un réseau de canaux gravitaires géré au niveau communautaire.

En 1956, le village a été évacué et démoli par l'armée israélienne et la plupart de ses terres ont été englobées dans les frontières israéliennes. Plusieurs habitants se sont installés dans le camp de réfugiés de Ad-Dehīša, tandis que d'autres sont partis à l'étranger en Jordanie ou dans d'autres pays. En 1972, après une quinzaine d'années en tant que réfugiés, la plupart des villageois ont pu retourner dans le village pour y reconstruire leurs maisons.

Néanmoins, la répression israélienne s'est reproduite sous de nouvelles formes. Depuis la fin des années 1980, d'autres terres ont été confisquées par l'armée israélienne afin de construire les colonies de Beitar Illit et Hadar Beitar sur les collines qui entourent le village. En effet, en application de la législation foncière ottomane et britannique, l'État d'Israël déclare une terre non cultivée pendant trois années consécutives en tant que "terre de l'État" et susceptible d'être expropriée. Tandis que la rhétorique nationaliste israélienne sur affirme une continuité symbolique entre la "nation juive" et l'époque biblique imaginée d'Israël, les autorités militaires israéliennes font recours à des politiques foncières datant des administrations ottomanes et britanniques, en établissant un continuum temporel colonial justifiant le caractère "naturel" de la subordination des Palestiniens en tant que sujets coloniaux.

Le développement de ces zones urbaines redéfinit continuellement les frontières territoriales de Wādī Fūkīn, auparavant plus perméables. En effet, avant la création d'Israël, les moyens de subsistance des habitants de Wādī Fūkīn reposaient sur la complémentarité entre les activités agricoles et l'élevage sur base mobile. Étant donné le rôle central de l'agriculture, il s'agissait d'un mode de vie principalement sédentaire. Cependant, comme dans beaucoup d'autres systèmes de production ruraux au Moyen-Orient (Fabiatti et Salzman

1996; Fabietti 1984), les activités d'élevage impliquaient une certaine mobilité territoriale, condition nécessaire pour garantir l'accès aux pâturages et à l'eau. Comme le montre Cohen (1965), les représentations relationnelles de l'espace – imaginé et socialisé à travers les mouvements des hommes et des troupeaux – ont renforcé au fil du temps la résilience des systèmes productifs locaux et leur capacité de s'adapter à la variabilité saisonnière et annuelle de l'eau et des autres ressources dans un environnement aride et semi-aride, en diminuant de cette manière les risques de vulnérabilité économiques et les différenciations sociales. L'histoire des sociétés du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord se caractérise par l'alternance du mode de vie sédentaire et nomade comme stratégie pour faire face à l'évolution des conditions écologiques, politiques et économiques (Fabietti et Salzman 1996; Fabietti 1984). Les modes de vie sédentaire et nomade sont ainsi deux modèles d'adaptation à l'environnement qui doivent être considérés comme les pôles d'un continuum de réalités socio-économiques caractérisées par différents degrés de mobilité (Salzman 1980).

L'administration coloniale britannique avait délimité les frontières administratives du village dans le cadre de l'arpentage à grande échelle des terres dans les années 1930 et de l'octroi de titres de propriété foncière, une opération connue sous le nom de "systematic settlement" (Attallah et al. 2006). Cependant, les frontières de Wādī Fūkīn étaient à cette époque encore traversées par les groupes tribaux et les éleveurs qui partageaient les mêmes ressources en eau et pâturages régionales, ce qui façonnaient des géographies sociales (Rothenberg 1998) à un niveau bien plus large par rapport à l'unité administrative du village. Dans ce cadre, la composition et la mobilité des groupements tribaux ont évoluées en fonction des relations socio-écologiques interdépendantes, organisée en fonction de la variabilité saisonnière des ressources pastorales, des conflits politiques et des alliances régissant l'accès à ces ressources.

Aujourd'hui, le village ressemble à une île palestinienne, une enclave séparée du territoire palestinien environnant par les zones urbaines israéliennes, où l'accès des Palestiniens est strictement limité et contrôlé. La reconfiguration des frontières du village a limité les mouvements des villageois ainsi que leur accès à de nombreux pâturages et ressources en eau. Il en résulte une forte dépendance du marché, ce qui a conduit à la marginalisation du rôle économique des activités d'élevage. Aujourd'hui, les pratiques d'élevage sont très dangereuses et presque abandonnées et les villageois sont complètement sédentarisés.

En outre, la bétonisation massive liée au développement des colonies urbaines israéliennes sur les collines entourant le village empêche le cycle hydro-social local (Linton 2010), épuisant ainsi les sources, dont certaines ont complètement séchées. Les résultantes conditions de rareté d'eau des sources et de la terre qu'en résultent menacent aujourd'hui la survie de l'agriculture intensive à gestion familiale.

L'agriculture locale est de moins en moins rentable à cause de l'adoption de techniques agricoles intensives, dans un contexte de concurrence acharnée avec l'agriculture subventionnée par Israël. Dans le cadre de ces changements écologiques, économiques et politiques importants, les villageois se tournent de plus en plus vers le marché du travail israélien, notamment dans le secteur du bâtiment, pour satisfaire les besoins de leurs familles influencés par les valeurs bourgeoises occidentales et les styles de vie urbains dans un contexte de concurrence économique croissante.

Israël adopte des politiques juridiques, architecturales, économiques et de gestion de l'eau similaires pour sédentariser et contrôler les groupes bédouins vivant dans le Néguev, à l'intérieur des frontières israéliennes. Là aussi, l'État israélien exproprie les terres des Bédouins et les attribue à de groupes d'intérêts commerciaux, au développement des colonies urbaines et rurales juives, ou bien à l'armée (Marx et Meir 2005). Dans le cadre de l'intégration croissante dans le marché du travail et de la marchandisation de la production pastorale et agricole, aujourd'hui les habitants de Wādī Fūkīn et d'autres villages ruraux de la Cisjordanie ainsi que de nombreux groupes bédouins du Néguev sont engagés dans des "économies multi-ressources" (Salzman 1980), où la production pastorale et l'agriculture ont un rôle économique marginal.

En entravant la reproduction matérielle, sociale et culturelle des sociétés pastorales et paysannes, Israël cherche à sédentariser définitivement les éleveurs palestiniens et les groupes pastoraux bédouins, à les contraindre à s'installer dans les zones urbaines et à les intégrer dans le système économique national, tout en les reléguant dans de rôles économiquement marginaux. Cela permet à Israël d'exproprier leurs terres et d'accroître leur interdépendance vis-à-vis du marché, des services et des ressources israéliens, et ainsi de les contrôler en tant que de sujets coloniaux subordonnés.

Malgré les changements profonds dans la configuration socio-économique de la communauté à Wādī Fūkīn, les villageois revendiquent leur identité d'agriculteurs en réponse aux stratégies coloniales de "dé-paysanisation" et d'expropriation des terres. Les activités

productives agricoles ont une signification politique forte, et représentent des pratiques de résistance et d'autoreprésentation en tant que communauté rurale. Les villageois mettent en œuvre de nombreuses stratégies pour continuer à cultiver malgré les contraintes économiques et écologiques. Ils pratiquent une "agriculture défensive" associée à des revendications identitaires contre la menace de redevenir des réfugiés, un statut encore plus précaire et marginalisé.

Les processus affectant la communauté de Wādī Fūkīn peuvent être considérés comme représentatifs des techno-politiques israéliennes (Mitchell 1990a, 1990b, 1991) visant à la création de la nation israélienne et à la domination des Palestiniens. Israël exerce un pouvoir très direct sur les palestiniens, dont la mobilité, la sécurité et l'accès au territoire et à ses ressources telles que l'eau sont sous le contrôle de l'armée israélienne. Il s'agit d'un contrôle mis en œuvre par la multiplication et la redéfinition continue des frontières territoriales physiques, administratives et symboliques, notamment depuis les accords d'Oslo de 1993 qui ont abouti à la création de l'ANP (Autorité Nationale Palestinienne) en 1994.

Israël renforce et multiplie les stratégies de contrôle techno-politique des États occidentaux dans le cadre d'une expérimentation continue de nouvelles technologies et stratégies et d'une nouvelle manière d'imaginer et gouverner le territoire qui, comme l'a noté Van Aken (2012; 2015), sont ensuite exportées globalement.

Tout en créant un territoire national contigu, la planification territoriale israélienne fragmente les territoires palestiniens en une série d'îles nationales ethniques et politiques aliénées, en empêchant de cette manière la possibilité d'une unité territoriale et l'établissement d'une frontière entre Israël et les territoires occupés. Ces stratégies érodent la base de la souveraineté nationale palestinienne, associé par l'État israélien à la négation du mythe et de l'identité sionistes (Swedenburg 1990) et donc pas reconnue en tant qu'acteur politique légitime.

Face à ces frontières toujours en transformation, les Palestiniens ont la perception de vivre dans un territoire remodelé, fragmenté et réassemblé de manière non uniforme continuellement, composé de morceaux toujours en mouvement et changeant de forme et d'extension. Cette situation rend difficile l'orientation spatiale des Palestiniens ainsi que la perception de tout sens du lieu. En remodelant et en fragmentant continuellement l'espace, la dimension temporelle en résulte également fragmentée, dilatée ou comprimée par la changeante possibilité de se déplacer dans le territoire, en traversant les frontières créées par les politiques administratives et sécuritaires israéliennes.



Ces stratégies de planification rendent les territoires et les populations locales compréhensibles, exploitables et contrôlables, tout en conduisant à l'aliénation des Palestiniens, à leur détachement du temps et du territoire locaux, qui est devenu inconnu et mystérieux. A travers ces technologies de domination, Israël cherche à atomiser la société palestinienne et à créer des sujets individuels coloniaux subordonnés.

L'imagination et la matérialisation de la nation israélienne et la construction d'une structure politique centralisée forte ont été basées sur la centralisation et la modernisation de la gestion de l'eau. Israël s'approprie de la plupart des ressources en eau régionales pour créer l'État et l'identité nationale juifs, en déployant de techniques agronomiques intensives non durables d'un point de vue écologique et en promouvant le développement urbain, dans un contexte aride et semi-aride. En même temps, l'État israélien externalise les coûts et les risques environnementaux (Alatout 2006) de ces processus de domination socio-écologique dans les Territoires palestiniens, en créant des conditions de stress hydrique et de pollution des eaux souterraines (Alatout 2006).

Comme le montre le cas de Wādī Fūkīn, les installations pour le traitement des eaux usées dans des colonies israéliennes en pleine expansion sont à ce-jour inadéquates. En outre, les autorités militaires israéliennes refusent la construction par l'ANP des infrastructures dans les territoires palestiniens (notamment dans les zones B et C) tels les égouts, les réseaux d'eau potable et les stations d'épuration. Cela cause la pollution des eaux souterraines (et donc de l'eau de source) et provoque une détérioration de la qualité des nappes au niveau régional, menaçant ainsi l'approvisionnement en eau potable en Cisjordanie.

Cette thèse met en évidence que dans les territoires palestiniens, la pénurie d'eau est un processus socio-naturel hybride (Latour 1991). La pénurie d'eau est le produit de l'interrelation entre des conditions écologiques changeantes et des dynamiques socio-économiques et politiques (Mehta 2001), telles que la discriminatoire planification israélienne en matière de gestion de l'eau et d'aménagement du territoire.

La production de conditions de rareté d'eau et de pollution des eaux souterraines contribue à affaiblir les secteurs agricoles et industriels palestiniens, et de manière plus générale le développement économique des territoires palestiniens (Dillman 1989, Hilal et Khan 2004). Ces processus aboutissent à la subordination structurelle des Palestiniens à l'économie israélienne et leur interdépendance aux services d'eau de base de l'État israélien,

à ses infrastructures et ses technologies, ce qui permet à Israël de préserver son hégémonie politique, sociale et culturelle.

Les hydro-politiques (Trottier 1999) israéliennes montrent que la subordination structurelle des Palestiniens repose sur leur inclusion dans une position très subordonnée, au moyen de la création de dimensions croissantes d'interdépendance, fortement biaisées en faveur des Israéliens, qui permettent à Israël de garder son hégémonie économique, politique, sociale et culturelle.

Comme le montre le cas Wādī Fūkīn, malgré les stratégies architecturales et sécuritaires de l'État israélien poursuivant la ségrégation spatiale des Palestiniens, la fluidité physique et symbolique de l'eau rétablit une contiguïté sociale entre Palestiniens et Israéliens, liés par de nombreux liens socioculturels, politiques et économiques, tant au niveau local que national.

Cette enquête a souligné que le projet sioniste de construction d'un État-nation juif souverain et d'une identité nationale est fondé sur la "colonisation environnementale" de la Palestine: la réinvention du territoire s'achève par l'appropriation et la centralisation de la plupart des ressources en eau, par l'expropriation systématique des terres et les déplacements des communautés à grande échelle, ainsi que par le développement urbain et des stratégies architecturales particulières. Ces stratégies visent à effacer le paysage palestinien et son histoire, à déraciner les Palestiniens de leur propre territoire et à supprimer les responsabilités morales de ces processus, tout en les naturalisant. Un exemple à ce propos concerne la politique israélienne de plantation (Cohen 1993) consistant à déraciner des oliviers palestiniens – identifiés avec les Palestiniens – pour planter des pins, une variété non locale d'arbre, transformant ainsi le territoire afin de construire un paysage de type européen familier aux Israéliens juifs d'origine européenne (Braverman 2009b; 2009c).

### *La modernisation de l'eau potable: une arène politique pour la construction de l'État-nation palestinien*

L'étude de la gestion de l'eau potable à Wādī Fūkīn contribue à la réflexion sur l'État en tant qu'acteur social, et à la compréhension des stratégies contemporaines de gouvernement des territoires et des populations par l'État-nation.

A Wādī Fūkīn, l'analyse du processus de transition du système pour la gestion de l'eau potable de l'administration israélienne à celui mis en place par l'ANP, qui a construit un

nouveau système hydraulique, montre que la concurrence déloyale entre le proto-état palestinien et Israël pour le contrôle du territoire et le gouvernement de la population s'opère par la mise en place d'infrastructures hydrauliques.

La gestion de l'eau potable apparaît comme une arène politique où la signification de l'État, sa cohésion et sa légitimité sont constamment négociés et remis en question, résultat des processus hégémoniques et de pratiques de résistance entre l'ANP, les institutions israéliennes et les communautés locales.

Depuis sa création en 1994, l'ANP cherche à bâtir l'organisation de l'État palestinien en centralisant et en modernisant la gestion de l'eau, tout en suivant les directives en matière de gouvernance, de gestion des ressources naturelles et de développement indiquées par les donateurs occidentaux comme condition de leur soutien financier, dont l'existence même de l'ANP dépend. Selon l'ANP, l'extension des réseaux d'approvisionnement en eau et la centralisation des systèmes de gestion de l'eau demeure au cœur du projet politique de gouverner la population palestinienne, tout en la reléguant dans une condition de dépendance matérielle et symbolique. Il s'agit d'un moyen de rendre leur corps progressivement plus dépendants de l'administration de l'ANP, en particulier dans le manque d'indépendance, de juridiction et de contrôle ultime sur un territoire continu et ses ressources.

L'analyse des systèmes de gestion de l'eau mis en place par l'administration israélienne et après par l'ANP et de la construction d'un nouveau système hydraulique par l'ANP à Wādī Fūkīn montre que la modernisation de l'eau est une stratégie de "gouvernementalisation hydro-territoriale" (Boelens et al. 2016) visant à l'intégration des communautés locales dans les structures du pouvoir et l'économie nationale "moderne" de l'État israélien et après de l'ANP. La modernisation de l'eau remodèle ainsi les réseaux et les territoires hydro-sociaux locaux, considérés dans ce travail comme les configurations spatiales des réseaux socio-naturels d'individus, institutions, technologies hydriques, flux d'eaux et environnement biophysique qui sont impliqués dans la gestion de l'eau.

Comme cela a été observé dans d'autres contextes, comme par exemple dans le village de Tiraf au sud-est du Maroc (Casciarri 2008), à Wādī Fūkīn l'introduction de robinets individuels a entraîné la disparition des espaces publics et des modes de coopération tribaux qui caractérisaient la gestion de l'eau de source par les femmes, utilisée pour la consommation domestique. Cette gestion était organisée autour d'un régime de propriété au niveau communautaire. Cela a conduit à l'affirmation d'une vision dichotomique occidentale des dimensions privées et publiques, à une plus grande ségrégation des femmes dans la

maison et au changement de leur rôle social au sein de la communauté (Van Aken et De Donato 2018).

Auparavant considérée en tant que don par Dieu et accessible à tous les êtres humains et non humains, l'eau est devenue une marchandise dont l'accès est individualisé et lié aux possibilités économiques de chaque famille. L'accès à l'eau devient ainsi réglementé par les bureaucraties et les dispositifs technologiques, l'expertise hydraulique et le système normatif de l'État. Le changement des critères d'accès à l'eau renforce les inégalités socio-économiques et les dynamiques d'exclusion.

Ainsi, à l'instar de la période coloniale britannique (Van Aken 2012), les projets de modernisation de l'eau poursuivent l'objectif de détribaliser la société locale, afin de désocialiser les individus des réseaux d'entraide et de solidarité qui se situent en opposition aux réseaux socio-économiques de l'État-nation. Ces processus ont été promus par la désocialisation et la naturalisation de l'eau, ressource économique et symbolique vitale sur laquelle les modèles locaux de coopération, de solidarité et les formes d'appartenance – tels que les groupes tribaux, les familles élargies, les quartiers ou la communauté – ont toujours été fondés.

Comme Kaika (2005) le souligne, ainsi que la construction discursive de l'eau en tant que ressource naturelle et marchandise, la construction des réseaux hydrauliques souterrains contribuent à désocialiser les ressources en eau, à effacer, à cacher au regard et naturaliser les relations sociales et de pouvoir régissant l'organisation de l'accès à cette ressource. À Wādī Fūkīn et dans les Territoires palestiniens occupés, cette aliénation et "disparition" de l'eau de l'espace public entraîne la diffusion d'une "ignorance hydrique" parmi les villageois, qui ne connaissent pas dans les détails les systèmes de gestion de l'eau à usage domestique. Cela se traduit souvent par un sentiment de "fatalisme hydrique" quant à la disponibilité d'eau potable au sein des ménages: il s'agit d'une représentation de l'eau et de sa gestion comme étant l'expression d'un destin irrévocable, tissé par le pouvoir des autorités "extérieures" et illégitimes de l'État et par ses connaissances scientifiques "transcendantes".

Les conduites d'eau souterraines cachent le flux de l'eau domestique, qui révèle que l'indépendance des systèmes d'eau palestiniens n'est en réalité qu'une illusion. Les flux d'eau potables mettent en évidence les contradictions et les problèmes de légitimité qu'entraîne la création d'un État dans un contexte colonial. L'ANP apparaît comme un réseau d'institutions assurant le contrôle indirect d'Israël sur le territoire, les ressources et les habitants

palestiniens, dans le cadre d'un système de pouvoir de type colonial soutenu par les donateurs et les agences du développement internationaux, et en particulier par des acteurs occidentaux.

Les réseaux hydrauliques souterrains sont aussi les infrastructures sur lesquelles reposent les politiques discriminantes de l'ANP en matière d'organisation de l'accès à l'eau potable. Malgré la rhétorique moderniste sur les dispositifs techniques contrôlés par l'État qui selon l'ANP permettraient une gestion équitable de l'eau, les agglomérations urbaines sont prioritaires et approvisionnées davantage, au détriment des villages et en particulier des camps de réfugiés. En ce qui concerne la répartition des quotas d'eau à usage agricole ou domestique, la priorité accordée à la production d'eau potable destinée à la consommation des ménages est l'une des conditions imposées par les bailleurs de fonds internationaux pour obtenir les financements. Ce modèle de distribution est adopté par l'ANP pour s'assurer le soutien et la loyauté des élites politiques et économiques urbaines (Tamari 2002).

Dans le territoire administré par l'ANP, l'organisation de l'accès à l'eau potable produit ainsi des "hiérarchies spatiales de l'eau" (De Donato 2013a) caractérisées par différents degrés de stress hydrique. Elle crée des structures de privilèges et des conceptualisations de justice et injustice hydrique spatialisées et de multiples citoyennetés différenciées.

Par cette perspective, l'eau potable est une ressource symbolique qui sert de médiateur à la construction et légitimation de l'hégémonie des élites palestiniennes de l'ANP. Ces dynamiques montrent que la construction de l'État-nation palestinien est un instrument des élites urbaines pour contrôler les ressources telles que l'eau, les espaces publics et les négociations officielles avec Israël, ainsi que pour s'emparer des financements des donateurs internationaux.

Comme l'a montré Anand (2011) dans une étude de cas à Mumbai, le cas de Wādī Fūkīn souligne que l'organisation de l'accès à l'eau ne peut pas être conçue comme le résultat de l'application systématique du système normatif de l'État moderne, ou comme l'expression d'une citoyenneté de type libérale. La citoyenneté n'est pas seulement une extension de la bureaucratie de l'État; au contraire, il s'agit d'un processus public qui implique la négociation de valeurs, de significations et de revendications entre différents groupes d'intérêt.

Les systèmes juridiques nationaux s'organisent autour de la revendication d'universalité des valeurs de justice et des régimes de propriété, fondée sur l'idée de l'égalité de tous les citoyens par rapport à la loi. Cependant, comme le montrent les études d'écologie politique, et plus en particulier les recherches qui abordent les questions de l'eau en tant que questions de justice (Von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1998; Schlosberg, 2013; Goff et Crow,

2014), le principe général et universel de “droit” (Boelens 1998b: 21) est en fait l’expression des intérêts des groupes les plus puissants qui cherchent à affirmer leur interprétation de la justice, tout en occultant les hiérarchies sociales et les relations de pouvoir existantes.

La discrimination des habitants des zones rurales et des camps de réfugiés en ce qui concerne l’accès à l’eau par l’ANP reflète leur marginalisation au sein des structures politiques et économiques de l’État. Ainsi, dans les accords d’Oslo, l’ANP reconnaissait la souveraineté d’Israël à l’intérieur de ses frontières et acceptait la distinction définie par la communauté internationale entre les colonies israéliennes légales et les colonies illégales construites en Cisjordanie et dans la Bande de Gaza. La plupart des ONG ont également adopté cette distinction comme condition imposée par Israël pour travailler dans les territoires palestiniens. Cette représentation de la réalité sociale nie le droit de retour dans les foyers d’origine aux réfugiés dont les villages se trouvaient dans le territoire israélien (les “réfugiés du 1948”). Il s’agit là d’une raison majeure qui porte les réfugiés palestiniens à refuser la légitimité de l’ANP. Aussi les habitants de Wādī Fūkīn, ainsi que ceux de nombreux autres villages situés le long des frontières israéliennes, contestent la position de l’ANP, puisque la plupart de leurs terres ont été incluses dans l’État-nation d’Israël.

Les habitants de Wādī Fūkīn résistent à la centralisation de la gestion de l’eau par l’ANP par le biais des pratiques quotidiennes telles que les vols d’eau potable et le refus de la payer – stratégies de résistance adoptées par d’autres habitants marginalisés dans les zones rurales, ainsi que par les réfugiés vivant dans les zones où la gestion de l’eau est sous l’administration de l’ANP, comme par exemple dans le cas du camp de réfugiés de ad-Dehīša. Les vols d’eau potable montrent la capacité des certains Palestiniens à s’approprier, manipuler et resocialiser cette ressource, l’expertise et les technologies hydrauliques, malgré l’idéologie du développement qui considère le manque de progrès technologique et économique comme une conséquence du caractère “sous-développé” et “traditionnel” des populations locales.

Par ces pratiques les Palestiniens s’opposent à la gestion verticale et bureaucratique de l’eau et ré-politisent l’eau potable comme une arène du débat public sur la construction de l’État palestinien, ses significations, ses relations avec les citoyens, sa légitimité à gouverner et à représenter les revendications des Palestiniens pour la justice hydrique. Pour la plupart des Palestiniens marginalisés, tels que les villageois ou les réfugiés, les infrastructures hydrauliques et l’administration de l’ANP imposent une autorité illégitime et injuste qui, en cherchant d’accroître son pouvoir, favorise les élites urbaines palestiniennes et collecte les taxes utilisées pour maintenir l’occupation israélienne. Les Palestiniens marginalisés

revendiquent ainsi leur participation politique à la prise de décision de la gouvernance de l'eau et l'organisation de l'État.

### *Le rôle de l'eau dans la naturalisation de l'hétérogène communauté nationale*

En s'appuyant sur la théorisation de l'État en tant que projet idéologique élaborée par Trouillot (2001), cette étude met en évidence le rôle de l'eau en tant que ressource matérielle et symbolique dans la construction culturelle des l'État-nations israélien et palestinien.

La diversité des discours sur l'eau à Wādī Fūkīn montre que dans les Territoires palestiniens, l'eau est au cœur de multiples récits historiques et environnementaux et du processus de construction du patrimoine culturel. A travers ces récits, Israël et l'ANP cherchent à affirmer "l'authenticité" culturelle et la légitimité des Israéliens et des Palestiniens, en revendiquant leur enracinement historique dans le territoire.

En particulier, cette étude se concentre sur les constructions idéologiques concurrentielles concernant la pénurie d'eau qui sont produites par l'État israélien, l'ANP et d'autres groupes d'intérêt, et qui véhiculent différentes représentations de la réalité hydrique et conceptions de l'espace, ainsi que différentes affirmations identitaires. Les discours sur l'eau visent à garantir des intérêts contradictoires, tout en légitimant de multiples dynamiques de domination au niveau local, national et global qui contribuent à détériorer davantage le condition de stress hydrique des population marginalisées dans un contexte écologique semi-aride.

La pureté, le caractère naturel, sacré et ancestral de l'eau de source à Wādī Fūkīn sont l'objet de contestation entre les villageois palestiniens et les colons israéliens Haredi installés à Beitar Illit. Ces derniers se rendent aux sources du village pour prier et revendiquent la pureté et le caractère sacré de cette eau. Les sources du village auraient été utilisées dans le passé par les habitants d'une ville juive située dans cette zone, comme déjà évoqué dans le Talmud de Babylone datant de 500 après J.-C. (Shilhav 1998) et aujourd'hui réaffirmé dans les récits religieux et nationalistes israéliens. Ces récits attribuent des nouvelles significations au territoire en tant que territoire du peuple juif, contribuant ainsi à la territorialisation de la région grâce à l'appropriation symbolique de ses flux d'eau historiques.

De la même manière, les habitants palestiniens de Wādī Fūkīn revendiquent la pureté de l'eau de source, considérée comme un don par Dieu, et évoquent les anciens liens de

réciprocité entre la communauté locale et les sources comme preuve de leur caractère autochtone et de leur légitimité à résister face aux États Israélien et Palestinien.

Ces dynamiques socio-écologiques doivent être saisies en lien avec des relations de pouvoir plus larges concernant la construction de l'État-nation israélien et palestinien.

Par exemple, les communautés Haredi vivant à Beitar Illit contestent la légitimité de la souveraineté d'Israël. Cependant, l'État d'Israël parvient à contourner leurs récits religieux dans le but de coopter ces groupes d'intérêt et de légitimer le rôle de l'État-nation israélien et l'occupation des territoires palestiniens. Dans le cadre du processus de construction sociale d'une nation juive et d'une identité nationale enracinée dans le territoire, Israël réélabore certains éléments de mémoire juive dans la Palestine historique, en y associant de nouvelles significations religieuses et nationalistes, tout en faisant disparaître des siècles d'histoire des Palestiniens locaux.

La rhétorique israélienne sur la pénurie d'eau joue un rôle clé dans ces processus. Depuis la création de l'État d'Israël, la pénurie d'eau est considérée dans les récits officiels des autorités nationales en tant que condition "naturelle" de l'environnement semi-aride locale et des dynamiques climatiques régionales. La naturalisation de la pénurie d'eau légitime la construction nationale israélienne ainsi que l'occupation coloniale. Seule la capacité technique déployée par Israël permettrait de surmonter les contraintes écologiques d'une nature représentée comme hostile, et de rétablir par là la prospérité perdue de la Terre Promise en faisant "fleurir le désert" grâce à la modernisation et à la centralisation de la gestion de l'eau et au développement de l'agriculture irriguée. Dans ces récits, les territoires palestiniens sont représentés comme un "désert" et les Palestiniens comme peuple "sous-développé" et responsables de cette dégradation environnementale. Ces discours modernistes et apparentés à une idéologie messianique cachent les implications politiques et sociales des hydro-politiques israéliens (Trottier 1999) et dissimulent les responsabilités d'Israël quant au stress hydrique croissant vécu par les Palestiniens.

En réponse à ces stratégies de territorialisation et de légitimation de l'occupation mises en place par Israël, l'ANP produit à son tour d'autres récits historiques et environnementaux et poursuit ainsi d'autres intérêts politiques.

Les récits nationaux et l'imagination collective palestiniens réifient et idéalisent les activités agricoles et la vie des paysans en tant que symbole de l'identité nationale palestinienne. La culture et les pratiques "traditionnelles" de ce paysan idéalisé, y compris la gestion des eaux



des sources dans des villages comme Wādī Fūkīn, sont considérées comme l'expression de "l'authenticité" culturelle et de l'identité palestinienne historiquement liée à son territoire (Swedenburg 1990) et, donc, comme une importante source de légitimation pour la résistance de ce peuple. Outre la terre, l'eau est aussi une ressource symbolique et matérielle importante dans la construction culturelle de l'État-nation, ce qui sert à naturaliser les liens historiques de la population palestinienne avec son territoire.

Cependant, ces récits permettent aussi aux élites urbaines palestiniennes de légitimer leur rôle hégémonique et de reléguer les paysans et les réfugiés dans une position subordonnée au sein des structures de pouvoir de l'État et de l'économie nationale, tout en dissimulant ces processus par la mobilisation d'une identité nationale réifiée et partagée. En effet, l'ANP revendique le caractère "traditionnel" des activités agricoles et des modes de gestion des ressources des paysans pour légitimer ses projets de centralisation et de modernisation de l'eau. Le régime public de gestion de l'eau est encouragé par les donateurs occidentaux comme condition de leur soutien économique, dont dépend le système institutionnel et infrastructurel de l'ANP. Dans le cadre d'une compétition croissante avec les institutions coutumières locales pour le contrôle de la gestion de l'eau, l'ANP s'approprie du paradigme de développement dominant jusqu'aux années 1980, pour délégitimer les formes décentralisées de gestion des ressources comme arriérées et comme menace pour la sécurité nationale. Dans les discours de l'ANP, seulement un régime public peut assurer une gestion de l'eau équitable et un système efficace parmi les Palestiniens (Trottier 1999, 2013), surtout dans un contexte de raréfaction des ressources hydriques.

Dans les discours sur la justice environnementale élaborés par les institutions gouvernementales palestiniennes et par certaines ONG, le stress hydrique et la pollution des eaux souterraines sont déterminés par l'occupation israélienne : cela est lié à l'appropriation d'une grande partie des ressources en eau, mais aussi aux obstacles imposés par l'État d'Israël au développement des infrastructures, qui empêchent la construction d'une souveraineté territoriale palestinienne. Ces discours portent sur les droits de propriété et sur la répartition spatiale inégale des coûts et des risques environnementaux, externalisés dans les territoires palestiniens occupés (Alatout 2006).

Au niveau national, la lutte pour l'accès à l'eau et pour la qualité de l'eau symbolise la lutte des Palestiniens pour la justice, considérée comme droit collectif à l'indépendance et à l'autodétermination. L'expérience de la pénurie d'eau et des problèmes de pollution de l'eau partagée par les Palestiniens – même si à de degrés différents – par rapport à l'accès privilégié à l'eau des Israéliens, renforce l'affirmation d'une identité nationale palestinienne

en opposition à la population israélienne (Bisharat 1997), réifiée comme les ennemis par excellence.

Néanmoins, l'ANP insiste sur les responsabilités israéliennes en ce qui concerne la pénurie d'eau, pour légitimer ses projets de centralisation de la gestion de l'eau et pour dissimuler les formes de discrimination et d'exclusion qu'impliquent ses modes d'organisation de l'accès aux ressources hydriques. L'eau joue ainsi un rôle important dans la légitimation et dans la "naturalisation" de l'hégémonie des élites urbaines palestiniennes.

Un point de vue différent sur les relations sociales, culturelles et politiques qui se nouent autour de la gestion de l'eau dans les territoires palestiniens est proposé par l'ONG environnementale jordanienne, palestinienne et israélienne FOEME. Le travail de cette organisation porte sur les problématiques environnementales dans le village de Wādī Fūkīn déterminées par le développement urbain israélien, tels que les dégâts et le tarissement des sources et la pollution de l'eau de source.

Adoptant une notion économique de pénurie d'eau et une approche à la justice environnementale axée sur la capacité d'action des acteurs sociaux, cette ONG définit l'eau et les autres enjeux environnementaux comme des questions qui affectent la "qualité de vie" des Palestiniens et des Israéliens dans un système écologique partagé, et indépendamment des conditions de souveraineté ou de subordination de ces populations. Ces récits véhiculent une conception dépolitisée de l'espace, cherchant ainsi à façonner de nouvelles identités régionales, tout en évitant d'évoquer le caractère territorial des dynamiques de pouvoir qui contribuent à causer les problèmes environnementaux.

Cette ONG revendique la protection par l'État israélien de l'environnement socio-naturel du village, par la patrimonialisation de l'environnement et des pratiques et des techniques agricoles et d'irrigation des Palestiniens locaux. Ceux-ci sont définis comme un patrimoine unique des montagnes de Judée, à la fois naturel et culturel, qui est partagé par les Palestiniens et les Israéliens vivant dans de localités voisines. Tout comme l'État israélien et l'État Palestinien, l'approche environnementale de cette ONG réifie les Palestiniens locaux et leurs activités agricoles comme "traditionnelles" et les relie à une mémoire historique réinventée.

Pour les villageois, ces récits s'inscrivent dans un processus de normalisation de l'occupation israélienne qui passe sous silence les relations de pouvoir coloniales et qui peuvent entraîner à la perte de leurs propres terres. En effet, l'appropriation légale et physique israélienne des terres palestiniennes, le refus des droits territoriaux aux populations

locales et leur déplacement à grande échelle sont souvent justifiés par la rhétorique de protection de l'environnement (Braverman 2009b, 2009c). Il s'agit d'une stratégie d'expropriation foncière mise en place par l'État qui a été observée dans d'autres régions du monde, comme le montre le cas des Maasai en Tanzanie (Goldman 2011) et celui étudié par Palumbo (2003) en Sicile, en Italie. Comme le dit Palumbo, le processus de patrimonialisation est une construction sociale, résultat d'une sélection, d'une relecture et d'une interprétation arbitraires d'événements historiques. Ce processus est lié aux dynamiques identitaires, aux différents intérêts d'ordre économique et politique, et aux politiques de l'espace et du temps qui impliquent la régulation de l'espace, en modifiant les relations entre les populations locales et l'environnement concerné (ou la configuration socioculturelle). Les populations locales souvent contestent ces processus, qui sont souvent à l'origine d'une limitation dans l'accès aux ressources naturelles et socioculturelles investies par les projets de patrimonialisation.

Comme le montre bien le cas palestinien, les processus de réification des cultures et des contextes écologiques peuvent être manipulés et détournés pour légitimer différentes stratégies politiques et rhétoriques, dans le but d'affirmer des constructions spatiales et identitaires particulières.

Les rhétoriques de l'État israélien et de l'État palestinien revendiquent une identité nationale, tout en réifiant les Palestiniens et les Israéliens comme des populations homogènes conçues comme des ennemis dépersonnalisés. Ces récits nationaux, renforcés par l'appropriation par Israël de la plupart des ressources en eau et par la ségrégation spatiale des Palestiniens, contribuent à forger auprès des villageois l'image des Israéliens comme "l'Autre" par excellence, en cultivant ainsi les sentiments de méfiance et de suspicion. Ces récits contribuent ainsi à la construction sociale des différences culturelles entre les Palestiniens et les Israéliens et à l'augmentation de l'ignorance réciproque entre eux, ces relations se reproduisant également dans leurs interactions quotidiennes. Ces dynamiques alimentent d'autant plus de tensions et renforcent les récits nationaux de l'État israélien et palestinien.

Cependant, l'analyse des pratiques de partage forcé des différentes eaux qui coulent dans le village par les villageois et les voisins israéliens permet de remettre en question la vision dichotomique des relations entre les israéliens et les palestiniens. Dans le contexte des

interactions quotidiennes entre les habitants du village et les habitants des colonies israéliennes voisines, différents degrés de proximité sociale peuvent être observés, en fonction des interactions, des expériences et des négociations locales autour de l'usage des eaux locales. Les Israéliens qui habitent dans les trois colonies entourant le village – Beitar Illit, Hadar Beitar et Tzur Hadassah – ont des intérêts, des idéologies, des systèmes de valeurs et des opinions différents et conflictuels à l'égard de l'État israélien et de ses politiques. Cela se traduit par différentes représentations et pratiques autour de l'eau et par différentes relations hydriques entre les habitants des colonies et le petit village de Wādī Fūkīn, où le rencontre entre opinions et stratégies diversifiées produisent des résultats parfois paradoxaux. Ces relations mettent en évidence la complexité et l'hétérogénéité des sociétés palestiniennes et israéliennes, observées en prenant l'eau comme principal objet d'étude, et montrent certaines des dynamiques et des intérêts contradictoires qui caractérisent les relations entre elles.

Pour exemple, l'État israélien a forcé les colons sionistes israéliens à quitter Hadar Beitar, une des colonies autour de Wādī Fūkīn, en refusant de relier cette colonie au réseau d'eau domestique de la colonie voisine de Beitar Illit. Cette stratégie visait à déplacer dans cette zone de communautés israéliennes Haredi vivant à Jérusalem qui ne souhaitaient pas s'y installer et qui contestent la légitimité de la souveraineté d'Israël. Les colons sionistes de Hadar Beitar ont ainsi coopté les Palestiniens locaux, en établissant des relations commerciales d'eau potable avec eux, pour lutter contre l'État israélien et défendre leur colonie créée dans les terres appartenant à ces mêmes Palestiniens.

De même, la résistance des Palestiniens au partage forcé de l'eau potable avec ces colons a été indirectement encouragée et légitimée par une institution israélienne dans la colonie de Beitar Illit, sous l'autorité de l'État israélien. Cependant, leur résistance a finalement aidé l'État israélien à surmonter un obstacle à l'expansion de l'une des plus grandes colonies israéliennes de Cisjordanie, Beitar Illit.

L'analyse des relations entre la société israélienne et celle palestinienne, observées dans leur hétérogénéité, a été limitée par la décision de mener mon enquête ethnographique exclusivement dans des zones palestiniennes. Ce choix a été motivé par le besoin méthodologique de construire des relations de confiance avec les Palestiniens locaux – en les rassurant quant à mon statut de chercheuse indépendante et non asservie aux services de renseignement d'Israël – et par la nécessité d'une "méfiance prudente" pendant l'enquête, afin de ne pas exposer ma propre sécurité sur le terrain à des risques trop élevés, et afin

d'éviter la censure et la répression exercées par l'armée israélienne sur les personnes pouvant diffuser des images et des informations en dehors d'Israël (en tant que chercheurs ou touristes).

La compréhension des relations entre Palestiniens et Israéliens pourrait être approfondie par une recherche multi-située, une recherche "aux frontières" entre la société palestinienne et la société israélienne qui permettrait de dépasser les limites qui caractérisent aujourd'hui la plupart des enquêtes menées dans ce contexte, qui étudient ou la société israélienne ou celle palestinienne.

*La gestion de l'eau de source: la signification hydrique du tribalisme et "l'État tribal" palestinien*

L'analyse de la gestion des eaux des sources à Wādī Fūkīn a permis d'identifier deux dimensions interconnectées de la gestion des eaux de source, évoquées par les habitants eux-mêmes : la représentation d'une organisation "officielle" et formelle des droits d'accès à l'eau d'un côté et, de l'autre côté, l'utilisation de cette ressource dans la pratique, selon de modalités changeantes au fil du temps et fortement contestées. Ces deux dimensions mettent en évidence la "synchronisation" et la "désynchronisation" (Fabiatti 1997) du système de gestion des eaux des sources, qui reflète sa grande flexibilité et son caractère négocié, son adaptation aux relations sociales et aux conditions écologiques changeantes, aussi que aux processus politiques et économiques plus larges. La flexibilité du système d'accès à l'eau de source assure la résilience du système productif local, face aux changements écologiques, politiques et économiques.

L'étude des droits théoriques et pratiques – tels que définis par d'autres auteurs analysant des processus similaires dans d'autres régions du monde comme par exemple au Népal (Von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1998) – a montré deux importantes dynamiques interdépendantes : en premier lieu, la production par les villageois de Wādī Fūkīn d'une mémoire sociale historique et la construction et la réification d'identités tribales comme stratégie pour résister au pouvoir d'Israël et de l'ANP. En deuxième lieu, le caractère "moderne" des formes tribales de cohésion politique, considérées comme de structures sociopolitiques changeantes, dans le cadre d'interactions historiques et contemporaines entre les processus écologiques et les institutions et acteurs sociaux locaux, régionaux et internationaux, y compris l'État (Bonte et al. 1991, Bonte et al., 2001). Dans ce travail,

l'analyse de la gestion de l'eau de source et de l'eau potable est une contribution importante au débat sur les relations entre l'État et l'organisation tribale.

De plus, l'étude des pratiques et discours quotidiennes de résistance autour de l'usage de l'eau a contribué à la conceptualisation des relations entre pouvoir et résistance. Ce travail permet en effet de mettre en évidence que toutes les formes de résistance sont stratégiques et contextuelles, et n'existent que comme des réactions à des stratégies de domination particulières dans un contexte culturel et historique spécifique.

Enfin, cette étude a également mis en lumière le rôle central de l'eau de source, utilisée pour l'irrigation, dans la reproduction matérielle et sociale et dans la création culturelle de la communauté rurale locale. Il s'agit d'une dimension d'appartenance qui s'exprime par l'idiome de la parenté et qui est légitimée par un réseau de relations matrimoniales entre les membres des différents groupes tribaux et les familles élargies du village. Les différentes eaux des sources qui circulent dans le village contribuent ainsi à la définition des représentations multiples de soi et de l'autre, sur lesquelles sont fondées les identités sociales individuelles et collectives, en soulignant ainsi leur caractère contextuel et multidimensionnel.

Selon les habitants de Wādī Fūkīn le village est en danger, pris dans les griffes du développement urbain israélien et par sa force destructrice. Il pourrait bientôt disparaître, dévoré par les colonies israéliennes qui l'encerclent et s'étendent de plus en plus sur les terres du village. L'eau de source est son seul point d'ancrage et raison d'être. Son flux relie les Palestiniens locaux à la terre, assouvit leur soif d'identité et de justice.

D'après les habitants du village, le droit d'accès à l'eau de source est négocié et reconnu en raison des relations d'héritage légitimées par de prétendus liens généalogiques patrilinéaires entre les individus et les "ancêtres" de leurs familles élargies.

Comme le soulignent les anthropologues qui ont étudié l'organisation de l'accès à l'eau dans d'autres contextes comme au Maroc (Casari 2008), en Tunisie (Bédoucha 1987), en Inde (Mosse 2003) et au Népal (Aubriot 2004), à Wādī Fūkīn, la gestion des eaux des sources s'organise autour des relations de parenté réelles ou fictives. L'eau de source façonne ainsi des dimensions changeantes d'identification et de différenciation sociale liées à l'organisation politique tribale, telles que le groupe tribal et les familles élargies. Cependant, la gestion des eaux des sources reflète aussi la segmentation économique et les dynamiques politiques qui fragmentent les appartenances tribales, qui sont liés à des processus socio-économiques et

politiques plus larges. De cette façon, cette étude met en évidence l'inscription de l'eau dans des logiques locales en transformation.

Malgré les représentations idéologiques locales du groupe tribal en tant qu'un lignage patrilinéaire, la négociation de l'accès à l'eau de source et les pratiques d'échange des quotas d'eau montrent que la transmission des droits à l'eau et les relations de parenté à la base de ces héritages ne peuvent pas être comprises en faisant référence à un paradigme agnatique conçu comme modèle stable et figé dans le temps. La négociation des droits d'accès à l'eau réinvente constamment des mémoires multiples et conflictuelles sur les généalogies locales qui sont ainsi censurées, réinventées et adaptées aux changements contextuels, à travers des alliances économiques et politiques entre les familles élargies, souvent légitimées par des relations conjugales. Les négociations et les échanges des quotas d'eau de source montrent la "souplesse" des groupements sociaux familiaux et la flexibilité de leurs contours, qui sont élargis et manipulés à travers de nombreuses stratégies telles les relations matrimoniales. Celles-ci sont organisées afin d'inclure dans les relations de solidarité familiale d'autres relations de proximité, comme les liens entre les membres de la communauté, mais aussi des relations de parenté avec des individus résidant dans des localités plus éloignées. Les relations et les alliances matrimoniales sont ainsi organisées en fonction du statut politique et socio-économique des familles élargies concernées et de leurs intérêts particuliers à maintenir ou à consolider ce statut.

Dans le cadre des groupes tribaux et de des familles élargies déplacés par l'armée israélienne, la parenté est un idiome de solidarité pour reconstruire et légitimer les relations de cohésion et les alliances politiques. Dans un contexte où l'accès au capital économique est souvent conditionné par l'accès au capital social, un vaste réseau de relations de solidarité construit en recourant à l'idiome de la parenté agnatique ou aux alliances matrimoniales est une ressource d'importance majeure pour la satisfaction des besoins d'une famille, notamment chez les ménages les plus dépourvus.

En continuité avec une approche déconstructiviste (Dresch 2010), l'analyse de la gestion des eaux des sources montre que le groupe tribal n'est pas une entité sociale et politique ou un groupe d'intérêt immuable et figé dans le temps. Le tribalisme est un langage utilisé pour décrire, organiser et légitimer des relations économiques et politiques changeantes entre des individus et des groupes sociaux, et pour exprimer des droits, des obligations et des formes de loyauté.

Pourtant, les villageois ont une vision idéalisée et réifiée de la gestion coopérative tribale et locale de l'eau de source en tant que système inchangé dans le temps, résistant aux processus économiques, politiques et culturels et aux changements entraînés par l'occupation coloniale israélienne, considérée comme un événement temporaire dans l'histoire palestinienne de longue durée.

Dans le but de légitimer la gestion locale de l'eau de source, les villageois revendiquent l'équité des normes tribales régissant l'accès à l'eau, en mobilisant et en réinterprétant de lois islamiques. Contrairement aux lois islamiques, ils affirment que l'accès monétisé à toute source d'eau est illégitime et immoral. Il s'agit là d'une idéalisation des lois islamiques comme source de justice sociale et d'équité, en contraste avec l'accès de plus en plus inéquitable à l'eau de source et à l'eau potable, avec la marchandisation de l'eau et la bureaucratisation de sa gestion.

Ce point a été évoqué dans d'autres recherches consacrées à l'analyse des systèmes d'irrigation d'une perspective d'écologie politique. Par exemple, dans le cadre des luttes pour le contrôle et l'accès à l'eau contre les institutions étatiques au Népal (Von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1998), les populations locales revendiquent la légitimité de leurs systèmes normatifs régissant l'accès à l'eau et à la terre, en les réifiant et en les idéalisant comme un système de droit "coutumier" et religieux, fondé sur une supposée continuité avec la tradition juridique locale.

De la même manière, le système d'accès à l'eau de source est symboliquement relégué dans une époque antérieure à la création d'Israël, avant l'évacuation du village et le déplacement des groupes tribaux locaux et des familles, avant la perte de la plupart des terres du village, l'abandon des activités agricoles et l'intégration dans le marché du travail. Ce système est réifié comme n'étant pas affecté par la marchandisation de l'eau, ni par la fragmentation des terres et des quotas d'eau liée à la croissance démographique, ni par les nombreux conflits pour l'accès à l'eau et à la terre liés à ces processus qui fragmentent les groupes tribaux et les familles. En idéalisant les relations hydriques, les liens entre les habitants sont naturalisés pour régler ces conflits et atténuer ces fragmentations, pour renégocier le sens du lieu et de la communauté, cherchant ainsi à recomposer les ruptures historiques, identitaires et culturelles provoquées par la fondation d'Israël.

Dans les mémoires sociales locales, l'époque antérieure à la création d'Israël est représentée comme un temps mythique et cyclique toujours présent, qui remonte jusqu'à la



période ottomane, mais qui inclut aussi le présent et le futur. Il s'agit de l'époque idéalisée de la pré-modernité et de la pureté morale, le moment fondateur de la communauté et de son identité.

Les ancêtres de chaque famille élargie qui auraient vécu à l'époque ottomane sont évoqués comme étant toujours vivants, comme si la communauté n'aurait jamais changé. Ils incarnent les liens historiques entre la communauté, la terre et les eaux des sources du village. La gestion tribale de l'eau et la communauté rurale ainsi réifiées sont le symbole des revendications identitaires des villageois, de leur authenticité culturelle, de leur autochtonie et de leur appartenance "ancestrale" à la terre locale, qui légitiment leur lutte pour l'autonomie et leur résistance en tant que communauté rurale authentique. Dans les stratégies discursives des villageois pour revendiquer leur autochtonie, la période historique de l'Empire ottoman joue un rôle clé, en réponse à la législation foncière israélienne et aux dispositifs juridiques permettant l'expropriation des terres, qui restaurent le régime foncier introduit à l'époque ottomane.

Les mémoires sociales concernant le "passé" de la communauté dans le village sont sélectionnées et leurs significations et valeurs sont façonnées à l'image des perceptions actuelles, cherchant à donner un sens à la lutte en cours contre l'expropriation des terres. Pour les villageois, les témoignages oraux de l'évacuation du village et du retour des ses habitants sont devenus une sorte de mythe fondateur de la communauté qui joue un rôle central dans la construction des identités collectives et individuelles. Au contraire, les mémoires orales pouvant témoigner des origines différentes des familles élargies vivant dans le village, qui sont arrivées d'autres régions des territoires palestiniens, sont gardées dans le cadre de l'intimité culturelle de la communauté (Herzfeld 1997). En effet, ces témoignages sont considérés comme une menace à la revendication d'autochtonie face aux expropriations de terres par Israël, ces opérations étant légitimées par une rhétorique justifiant la présence des Israéliens dans la région depuis les temps bibliques.

Bien que les réseaux de solidarité tribaux soient fragmentés par la différenciation et la compétition socio-économique, le groupe tribal est réinventé pour assumer un nouveau rôle important de représentation politique dans les négociations publiques pour la résolution des conflits, ainsi que dans les revendications des droits individuels et collectifs face à des autorités d'Israël et de l'ANP. Les pratiques politiques tribales permettent ainsi d'organiser des revendications très contemporaines et de leur donner visibilité au sein de la société civile

afin de lutter pour la justice hydrique, l'autodétermination et l'autonomie face aux structures de pouvoir israéliennes et de l'ANP qui relèguent la société locale dans conditions politiques et économiques précaires.

En continuité avec les précédentes administrations coloniales ottomanes et britanniques au Moyen-Orient (Bocco et Tell 1995), l'État-nation israélien et l'ANP participent à forger de nouvelles constructions identitaires, à politiser et à territorialiser de manière de plus en plus forte des identités tribales et des réseaux de solidarité, en contraste ou en accord avec l'État.

Malgré l'idéalisation du système local pour la gestion des eaux des sources et des terres, considéré comme n'ayant pas changé, "coutumier" et "traditionnel", l'analyse des pratiques de division et d'utilisation de cette ressource souligne que l'accès à l'eau et aux terres reflète à la fois de normes et valeurs tribales et des processus nationaux et globaux contemporains : ces processus concernent la marchandisation néolibérale de l'eau à une échelle mondiale, la diffusion des régimes de propriété privée, ainsi que les nouvelles normes morales régissant les transactions commerciales en réponse aux stratégies israéliennes d'accaparement des terres – telles que l'interdiction morale de vendre des terres (et de l'eau) aux Israéliens, ratifiée par la loi palestinienne et rétablissant la réglementation jordanienne d'avant 1967.

Comme cela a été observé dans d'autres pays au Moyen-Orient (Van Aken 2003, 2012), en Afrique (Bernal 1997) et en Asie (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998: 60), les régimes fonciers et les droits sur l'eau sont caractérisés par une condition de pluralisme juridique, cette notion indiquant la coexistence et l'influence réciproque de multiples systèmes normatifs. Ces systèmes ont différentes sources d'autorité et de légitimité, ils sont liés à différentes dimensions temporelles (du temps ottoman jusqu'à l'État d'Israël et à l'ANP), et s'appliquent à de contextes et circonstances différents. Ces constructions multiples de la loi locale sont le résultat "d'un assemblage local d'interprétations et de transformations des répertoires légaux pluriels" (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998: 60).

L'économie morale – considérée comme l'ensemble les attitudes normatives et les valeurs partagés régulant les relations et les comportements économiques – n'est pas un vestige d'une culture "traditionnelle" et ancienne, mais plutôt le résultat d'un processus d'hybridation, des

négociations et des conflits contemporains. Elle est liée aux hiérarchies politiques et économiques locales et aux relations de genre, à des systèmes normatifs et productif et à des organisations sociopolitiques plus larges, ainsi qu'à des stratifications économiques. L'économie morale locale s'adapte à la fois aux caractéristiques agro-climatiques et géophysiques locales et aux relations sociales changeantes, en poursuivant l'objectif d'un équilibre entre l'efficacité politique et "l'efficacité sociale" (Boelens et Vos 2012: 21), au delà de la seule efficacité technique et économique poursuivie par la modernisation de l'eau et les programmes de développement rural.

Bien que les villageois considèrent la gestion locale des eaux des sources comme un système juste et équitable, l'étude en parallèle des droits d'eau idéalisés ou théoriques et de la distribution réelle de l'eau met en lumière des hiérarchies de longue durée entre les groupes tribaux et les familles du village.

Les mémoires sociales au sujet de la gestion de l'eau de source auprès des générations de villageois plus anciennes confirment que les relations entre les groupes tribaux et les familles élargies composant chaque groupe ont toujours été caractérisées par des hiérarchies, des compétitions et des conflits pour le contrôle de la terre et de l'eau. Cela montre bien que même si les liens entre les membres d'un groupe tribal sont décrits en utilisant un lexique familial égalitaire, l'organisation tribale ne l'est pas pour autant.

Le caractère égalitaire de l'organisation tribale avait été affirmé par des études anthropologiques consacrées aux systèmes sociaux segmentaires : évoquons l'enquête de Gellner (1969) auprès des sociétés tribales au Maroc, qu'il a réélaboré le travail d'Evans-Pritchard (1940) sur le peuple Nuer, ainsi que d'autres études anthropologiques consacrées aux sociétés tribales musulmanes dans les années 1970. Au contraire, comme le soulignent de nombreuses études sur l'organisation politique tribale en Palestine (Cohen 1965), ainsi que dans d'autres pays du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord (Bonte et al. 2001; Bonte and al. 1991), le système politique tribal est hiérarchique.

En m'appuyant sur les travaux de Bonte (2004) sur l'organisation tribale en Afrique du Nord, j'ai montré que les hiérarchies concernant la gestion de l'eau à Wādī Fūkīn sont liées aux stratégies matrimoniales des familles élargies, qui mettent en évidence l'interdiction d'hypogamie féminine au sein des pratiques matrimoniales, une interdiction liée à la subordination des femmes aux hommes. Les réseaux de relations matrimoniales entre les familles élargies du village ont établi un "système politique dualiste" (Bonte 2004) organisant la communauté en deux groupes de solidarité antagonistes contextuels : les groupes tribaux

Manāšra et Ḥurūb, qui se retrouvent depuis longtemps en compétition pour le contrôle des ressources matérielles et symboliques locales, telles que la terre et l'eau de source, mais aussi pour les nouvelles sources de pouvoir.

Selon Bonte et Conte (1991), l'organisation tribale segmentaire n'est pas fondée sur des oppositions complémentaires mais sur des "oppositions compétitives" (Bonte et al. 2001:42). En concordance avec ces observations, à Wādī Fūkīn le groupe tribal est le résultat de stratégies matrimoniales consistant en des alliances visant à augmenter le statut social de chaque groupe au sein d'une organisation hiérarchique.

Néanmoins, la négociation décentralisée des droits de l'eau met en évidence le caractère décentralisé de l'organisation politique tribale locale. L'autorité politique et le droit d'exercer la violence ne sont pas centralisés. Différemment du cas de "chefferies" analysées par Godelier (2004) – dirigées par une aristocratie tribale – l'organisation de l'accès aux eaux des sources montre que l'autorité politique est partagée et dispersée à de niveaux d'organisation multiples tels que la famille élargie, le groupe tribal et la communauté plus large. L'ensemble de ces formes d'identification sont caractérisées par des relations hiérarchiques légitimées par leur conformité aux normes morales locales définissant l'honneur.

Dans ce cadre, les flux des eaux des sources montrent que les femmes jouent un rôle clé dans la mise en place des relations de solidarité exprimées à travers l'idiome de la parenté qui légitime le partage et l'échange de l'eau de source. Elles maîtrisent un capital symbolique important, dont le contrôle permet aux hommes d'établir des alliances visant à renforcer ou à accroître leur statut.

Aujourd'hui, l'accès à l'eau de source et à la terre fait l'objet de tensions croissantes et de compétition même entre les personnes appartenant à la même famille élargie. Ces conflits sont liés à la concurrence accrue par la raréfaction de l'eau et la pression foncière, par la fragmentation des stratégies individuelles pour faire face à l'insécurité et la précarité et par l'absence de règles partagées dans un contexte de chevauchement des normes, droits, significations et valeurs différents et contestés concernant l'eau. En conséquence de ces processus, les villageois font face à des problèmes de stress hydrique en ce qui concerne l'eau de source et de pénurie de terres dans une mesure différente. La viabilité et la légitimité du système local pour la gestion des ressources et la cohésion sociale nécessaire à résister aux stratégies coloniales israéliennes sont remises en question par l'affirmation au sein de la

société locale de sentiments et d'opinions contradictoires sur la réalité politique, sociale et écologique du village, et par des différents intérêts individuels et collectifs et des revendications conflictuelles pour la justice hydrique.

Les dynamiques locales concernant l'organisation de l'accès à l'eau de source, les pratiques d'échange des quotas d'eau, les conflits et les compétitions reflètent le changement dans la configuration sociopolitique de la communauté locale déterminé par des processus plus larges tels que la création d'Israël, l'établissement de la PNA, l'intégration dans le marché du travail et le flux global de ressources matérielles et symboliques véhiculées par les acteurs du développement. L'intégration dans les structures de pouvoir coloniales, nationales et globales a provoqué des changements dans les hiérarchies locales liées à de nouvelles sources de pouvoir économique et politique.

Outre qu'en fonction de la propriété foncière et de l'accès à l'eau de source, aujourd'hui la compétition entre familles et tribus s'organise principalement en fonction de la classe socio-économique de leurs membres et de leur positionnement au sein des institutions de l'ANP et les ONG palestiniennes et internationales, de la possibilité de mobiliser des expertises "modernes" et un savoir-faire et un langage bureaucratique, ainsi que d'accéder au territoire israélien et aux opportunités de travail, aux services et aux ressources de l'État d'Israël.

L'organisation hiérarchique de la famille et de la société dans son ensemble est toujours considérée comme étant fondée sur le système moral et les normes sociales définissant l'honneur, selon l'organisation politique tribale locale. Cependant, l'honneur est le résultat des relations de réciprocité et d'échange : il est le produit d'une négociation continue de ressources symboliques définissant le statut et la réputation sociale des individus, qui changent en fonction des dynamiques globales, coloniales et nationales.

Les nouvelles hiérarchies et sources de pouvoir amplifient les dynamiques de concurrence et de marginalisation, les inégalités sociales, les processus de différenciation et les perceptions de l'injustice. Cela entraîne également à un renversement des relations de pouvoir entre générations, la population plus âgée se retrouvant de plus en plus marginalisée et mise à l'écart par rapport aux nouveaux centres de pouvoir et aux nouvelles sources d'autorité. De plus, les femmes sont discriminées dans le marché du travail, et leur dépendance vis-à-vis des hommes, fondée sur le manque de contrôle des ressources économiques et productives, en résulte renforcée. Ces dynamiques fragmentent les réseaux tribaux de solidarité, la communauté dans le village, ainsi que la population palestinienne dans son ensemble.

Alors que l'étude de la gestion des eaux des sources a souligné que la création d'Israël et de l'ANP n'a pas mené à la détribalisation de la société locale, l'analyse de la gestion de l'eau potable et des terres à Wādī Fūkīn a révélé que la PNA n'est pas incompatible avec l'organisation politique tribale, ses pratiques et ses logiques. Les normes juridiques et les procédures de l'ANP incorporent en effet certaines normes, pratiques et modèles tribaux de représentations.

Dans le même temps, comme le montre également la recherche menée par Van Aken (2003) dans la vallée du Jourdain, le fonctionnement de l'administration de l'eau potable et les systèmes techno-politique pour l'organisation des l'accès aux autres ressources mis en place par les institutions nationales et locales de l'ANP, par les agences humanitaires internationales (comme l'UNRWA) et par les ONG palestiniennes et internationales est affecté par les logiques tribales. Les acteurs locaux agissent en tant que médiateurs de l'accès aux ressources, aux services et aux fonctions publiques, qui sont distribués sur la base des relations sociales personnels (parenté, amitié, relations de patronage, alliances économiques), exprimés en recourant à l'idiome tribal de la solidarité familiale. Nous retrouvons ainsi les logiques tribales de médiation et de cooptation – le principal modèle tribal pour la distribution du pouvoir – ainsi que l'exclusion des femmes des rôles publics, au cœur du fonctionnement des institutions de l'ANP, comme par exemple le Conseil du village. Ces modèles d'action propres de l'organisation tribale sont adaptés au cadre politique contemporain et contribuent à façonner la moderne organisation politique tribale de l'État-palestinien.

L'eau potable véhicule les relations de compétition entre les groupements locaux, organisés selon l'appartenance politique à la famille élargie, pour contrôler les nouveaux rôles d'autorité et les espaces de pouvoir créés par les nouvelles institutions étatiques et la bureaucratie de l'eau (comme celle du chef du Conseil du village). Cette compétition renforce les appartenances politiques des familles élargies, exprimées en mobilisant à la fois le langage politique tribal et celui "moderne" de la loyauté aux partis politiques.

Cette étude a montré qu'au delà des analogies en termes d'organisation institutionnelle et des procédures administratives qui ont pu être mises en lumière dans différents contextes culturels par des études historiques et comparatives de l'État en sciences sociales, les significations hégémoniques occidentales de l'eau et de l'État ainsi que les techno-politiques hydriques et la bureaucratie de l'eau, aujourd'hui globalement répandues dans le contexte néolibéral, sont réappropriées et réinterprétées par les populations locales, à

partir des personnes travaillant dans les institutions de l'État. Leurs interprétations locales sont façonnées par des mémoires historiques spécifiques, et des idées, des intérêts et des attentes particuliers. Le résultat de ces processus est la multiplication des représentations de l'eau, de l'État, de la démocratie et de l'autorité.

*Les techniques d'agriculture intensive et l'individualisation des pratiques de résistance agricole*

En contradiction avec la représentation par les acteurs de l'aide internationale du caractère neutre, scientifique et universel des techniques d'agriculture intensive et d'irrigation pour faire face à la rareté d'eau et augmenter la production agricole, l'analyse des implications locales de la diffusion de ces techniques révèle leur fonction en tant que dispositifs techno-politiques. En aliénant l'irrigation et les activités agricoles des formes locales d'appartenance politique, de coopération et de gestion des ressources, les principaux bailleurs de fonds du développement international poursuivent ainsi l'objectif d'intégrer les systèmes productifs locaux dans le marché capitaliste global, cherchant à créer de nouveaux agriculteurs "développés", en continuité avec un modèle d'entrepreneur agricole fondé sur l'expérience occidentale.

Par la diffusion des techniques agricoles intensives, les acteurs du développement introduisent auprès des paysans palestiniens des idées très politisées sur l'agriculture, l'irrigation et l'eau, ainsi que des conceptions particulières de l'espace public et privé, de la dimension politique et du développement rural.

Les nouvelles techniques agricoles intensives – comme les semences hybrides, les pesticides et les engrais chimiques et les serres – et la logique de production du marché déconnectent les activités agricoles des processus écologiques locaux, augmentent la pénurie de l'eau pour l'irrigation et menacent de cette manière l'ancienne viabilité écologique et économique qui caractérise le système agricole local.

Ces techniques expriment une nouvelle signification de l'agriculture, considérée comme une activité économique détachée des dimensions sociopolitiques et culturelles, et reliée au projet d'exploitation et de domination de la terre et de l'eau. Le développement agricole implique la maximisation de l'efficacité productive et du profit des activités agricoles par l'adoption d'une expertise "moderne" et des solutions techniques universelles.

La vision moderniste de l'agriculture, de l'irrigation et de l'eau en tant qu'objets techniques et enjeu économique est une construction discursive qui abouti à la dépolitisation et la "naturalisation" des technologies, des modèles d'interventions et des idées des acteurs du développement, implantés dans la réalité locale en tant que "régime de vérité" (Escobar 1995). Les techniques agricoles locales, comme la production de semences, sont de plus en plus abandonnées, ce qui affaibli la biodiversité agricole et conduit à la disparition des connaissances agricoles qui ont historiquement permis à la population locale de cultiver dans les conditions écologiques défavorables de l'environnement semi-aride local.

Les solutions techniques introduites à Wādī Fūkīn pour faire face à la rareté de l'eau – l'irrigation goutte à goutte et les réservoirs privés pour la collecte des eaux des sources utilisé pour l'agriculture – reflètent l'ensemble de valeurs, de normes et des intérêts sociaux au cœur de l'économie morale des planificateurs (Bernal 1997).

En particulier, ces techniques encouragent la marchandisation et la privatisation de l'eau et l'idéologie individualiste caractérisant le paradigme néolibéral dominant. Par cette perspective l'individu est considéré comme indépendant, isolé de la communauté et poursuivant ses propres intérêts économiques. Le stress hydrique et d'autres problématiques liées au travail agricole sont considérés comme une responsabilité individuelle et imputés à de techniques d'irrigation et de mise en culture inefficaces et rétrogrades. Ces obstacles au développement agricole peuvent être surmontés en augmentant les capacités productives et le pouvoir social des agriculteurs défavorisés, et en les encourageant à adopter de techniques intensives, "modernes" et plus efficaces. Les relations structurelles économiques et politiques et les contraintes écologiques à l'origine du stress hydrique et de la marginalisation des agriculteurs locaux – de processus liés aux structures politiques locales et nationales, à l'occupation coloniale israélienne et aux processus économiques et culturels globaux – ne sont pas prises en compte.

De même, aussi certaines ONG proposant un modèle alternatif de développement rural qui favorise la diffusion de techniques d'agriculture biologique durables ne prennent en compte les relations structurelles d'ordre politique qui entravent le succès de ces stratégies.

L'usage des nouvelles techniques d'irrigation repose sur certaines conditions ou "exigences sociales" (Boelens 1998: 93), qui contribuent à modifier les modèles locaux de solidarité tribale liés au sens de la famille qui ont toujours été impliqués dans la gestion de l'eau d'irrigation. L'irrigation goutte à goutte et les réservoirs privés pour la collecte des eaux



des sources utilisées pour l'agriculture ont ainsi conduit à l'individualisation de la gestion de l'eau d'irrigation et des stratégies agricoles, dont la différenciation reflète la segmentation socio-économique et la compétition pour les ressources allouées par les acteurs du développement, fragmentant davantage la famille élargie et la communauté locale.

Ce point peut être bien illustré lorsqu'on considère la construction et l'entretien du réseau d'irrigation dans le village, dont la gestion était autrefois sous la responsabilité collective d'une "communauté d'eau" et représentait sa principale source d'identification. Aujourd'hui, le fonctionnement du réseau d'irrigation repose sur l'ensemble des efforts et de responsabilités individuelles, qui dépendent de l'accès de chaque individu au capital économique et aux ressources véhiculées par les acteurs du développement. Ces ressources sont réparties de manière inégale, ce qui fait l'objet de désaccords et de tensions au sein de la communauté.

Parallèlement à l'individualisation des activités agricoles, aussi la résistance à l'occupation israélienne a été individualisée et neutralisée. Les agriculteurs locaux cherchent à s'opposer à la fragmentation des formes d'appartenance par de pratiques de solidarité telles que les échanges de quotas d'eau d'irrigation, de travail dans les champs et de produits agricoles entre parents ou voisins.

L'infrastructure d'irrigation se révèle comme une construction sociale et symbolique (Van Aken 2012; Boelens 1998; Fabietti 1997), dont les changements reflètent les transformations des hiérarchies locales et des formes d'appartenance et d'autorité, en lien avec l'intégration des villageois dans le marché du travail israélien et dans les structures de pouvoir de l'ANP, avec la marchandisation néolibérale de l'eau et avec la globalisation des valeurs de la classe moyenne occidentale. De plus, le système d'irrigation de Wādī Fūkīn consiste en l'organisation sociale et culturelle de l'espace et de l'environnement du village.

Tout en étant axée sur les significations, les valeurs et les constructions identitaires encouragées par les bailleurs de l'aide internationale à travers les techniques agricoles intensives, cette étude a également mis en lumière l'interférence des donateurs sur les organisations et les associations locales et les formes de mobilisation, ainsi que sur les hiérarchies locales et les dynamiques de marginalisation.

Depuis les années 1990, les donateurs et les organisations occidentaux encouragent la professionnalisation des organisations de la société civile palestinienne comme condition de leur financement. Pour les acteurs du développement, la professionnalisation implique la

dépolitisation des modalités de fonctionnement des organisations ainsi que de leurs formes d'action publique. Cette approche est légitimée par une vision dichotomique distinguant les organisations "professionnelles" et les organisations "militantes". Une nouvelle conception du politique est ainsi imposée, ainsi qu'une idée dépolitisée du développement et de l'agriculture, en opposition aux valeurs locales.

La plupart des organisations de la société civile palestinienne qui auparavant poursuivaient l'objectif de mobiliser la population et de l'organiser dans un seul mouvement national (Hanafi et Tabar 2003), représentent aujourd'hui une nouvelle source du pouvoir politique et économique pour un cercle restreint de personnes, en participant ainsi à la marginalisation et à l'exclusion des autres.

La mise en place par les organisations palestiniennes de structures administratives et financières plus compliquées et bureaucratisées, inaccessibles au plus grand nombre, a favorisé l'émergence d'une nouvelle "élite globale" (Hanafi et Tabar 2005: 247) qui partage les mêmes paradigme d'intervention, le même langage et savoir-faire des acteurs occidentaux du développement international, et dont le rôle est légitimé par un accès privilégié dans les relations avec ces derniers. Cette nouvelle élite se compose principalement de directeurs des organisations palestiniennes. À Wādī Fūkīn, ainsi que dans l'ensemble des territoires palestiniens occupés (Hanafi et Tabar 2005), ces personnes contrôlent et gèrent les organisations locales comme des entreprises privées, et répartissent les ressources allouées par les donateurs internationaux sur la base des relations de parenté, du patronage et des alliances politiques et économiques constamment adaptées au contexte de fragmentation socio-économique croissante. En s'appropriant et en manipulant l'agenda et les objectifs du développement international, ils accroissent leur statut et promeuvent des intérêts politiques qui sont parfois en accord et parfois en contradiction avec ceux de l'élite politique locale de l'ANP.

Les donateurs internationaux essaient de rationaliser les modèles de fonctionnement des organisations locales en instituant des procédures administratives standardisées, comme par exemple la rationalité instrumentale appliquée au contexte social (Hulme et Edwards 1997). Malgré ces efforts, le modèle de gouvernance des organisations palestiniennes est loin d'être déterminé par des injonctions extérieures ou, pour utiliser une expression de Peter Haas (1992), loin de s'inscrire dans la même "communauté épistémique" des bailleurs de fonds internationaux. Les employés des associations locales et des ONG s'approprient du programme de développement international, en déconstruisant et recomposant son discours

hégémonique et sa rhétorique. En Palestine, dans un contexte de chevauchement du paradigme du développement et du système de pouvoir local, les donateurs et les directeurs des ONG trouvent un terrain d'entente pour identifier la forme institutionnelle leur permettant de poursuivre leurs intérêts respectifs.

La capacité d'autrefois des associations locales à organiser des actions collectives cohérentes face aux problèmes quotidiens et à la colonisation israélienne est aujourd'hui compromise, ce qui conduit à la démobilisation de la communauté locale (Hanafi et Tabar 2005, 2003).

Dans le contexte de la distribution de biens et de ressources par les ONG, parmi les villageois il y a la perception croissante que les stratégies individuelles soient inefficaces et insuffisantes pour continuer à cultiver et pour résister aux actions d'expropriation des terres menées par Israël. Cela se traduit par un sentiment d'inertie et de dépendance de l'aide extérieure et par un manque d'initiative. Au lieu de contribuer à la démocratisation de la société palestinienne ou à soutenir sa lutte pour l'indépendance, les modèles de développement rural encouragés au niveau global contribuent à intégrer les groupements sociaux locaux (agriculteurs ou femmes) dans un nouveau réseau de relations de dépendance, en marginalisant davantage les personnes les plus démunies.

Les cas des femmes, dont le vécu quotidien a changé significativement depuis la modernisation de l'eau et de l'agriculture, est à ce propos exemplaire. Le développement d'une agriculture commerciale et intensive favorise un processus de masculinisation de l'agriculture, considérée comme un domaine masculin de la science et de la technologie (Van Aken et De Donato 2018). La construction sociale de l'espace agricole en tant qu'espace public masculin a porté à la marginalisation du rôle des femmes dans les activités agricoles et les espaces publics. Ce processus, associé à la modernisation de l'eau domestique, entraîne une "domestication" croissante (Layne 1994: 202) du travail des femmes et contribue à leur plus grande ségrégation à l'intérieur des maisons. Cela conduit à une privatisation croissante des lieux sociaux dans lesquels les femmes construisent les réseaux de solidarité et d'entraide qui demeurent essentiels pour satisfaire les besoins familiaux et pour contraster la marginalisation et l'isolement social des femmes. Par rapport à la période antérieure à la modernisation de l'eau, aujourd'hui la présence des femmes dans le contexte public est moins tolérée, cette perception étant liée à la segmentation socio-économique et aux reliées hiérarchies entre espaces publics. Le travail quotidien des femmes dans l'agriculture est

devenu un signe d'immoralité et de faible statut social, de plus en plus associé à des conditions socio-économiques défavorables. Ainsi les dynamiques de modernisation de l'agriculture et de l'eau élargissent l'écart entre les rôles de genre.

Cette étude montre que, afin de favoriser la démocratisation de la société locale, les bailleurs de fonds internationaux et les ONG doivent inclure dans leurs interventions des études qualitatives des sociétés locales saisies dans la longue durée. Ces études permettraient d'éclairer les dynamiques du pouvoir local et les processus de marginalisation qui ont un impact important sur les processus décisionnels des associations locales, sur la mise en œuvre et sur les implications des projets, dans le but de mobiliser les personnes marginalisées et encourager leur implication dans les projets de changement social.

*Cultiver le développement: revendications pour la justice socio-écologique et les "agricultures hybrides"*

L'analyse des pratiques agricoles quotidiennes et des discours sur les problématiques agricoles et environnementales à Wādī Fūkīn a montré que les revendications des agriculteurs locaux pour la justice et l'identité contre Israël, l'ANP et contre la marginalisation économique sont exprimées par des formes alternatives de savoir-faire sur l'eau, l'agriculture et les relations avec l'environnement.

Les acteurs sociaux locaux, y compris les employés des ONG, agissent en tant que "courtiers de significations" (Islah 2007). Ils s'approprient, négocient, réinterprètent et articulent les nouvelles techniques gouvernementales d'irrigation et d'agriculture et les nouveaux symboles et valeurs associés à l'eau, à l'agriculture et à la terre. En outre, ils ré-conceptualisent les techniques agricoles et les idées locales en relation avec les changements sociaux et économiques radicaux contemporains. Dans le cas où ces stratégies ne sont mises en place au niveau discursif, ces processus ont lieu au niveau des pratiques agricoles incorporées.

Les interactions entre les savoirs et les pratiques des acteurs locaux d'un côté et, de l'autre côté, les techniques et l'expertise des acteurs globaux n'aboutissent pas à un remplacement de l'agriculture "traditionnelle" par l'agriculture "moderne". L'analyse des pratiques agricoles quotidiennes m'a permis d'aller au-delà de la représentation réifiée des pratiques agricoles "traditionnelles" locales qu'Israël, l'ANP, certaines organisations de développement et les Palestiniens locaux eux-mêmes mobilisent pour revendiquer des intérêts particuliers.

La création d'Israël est perçue comme un événement traumatisant qui a fragmenté l'existence même et l'histoire du village. Cet événement est considéré comme étant à l'origine d'une nouvelle époque: il est perçu comme un changement fondamental de civilité, qui est relié à la dialectique identitaire actuelle entre ce que la communauté était avant et ce qui est maintenant. Cette dialectique oppose d'un point de vue symbolique les représentations réifiées et idéalisées de l'ancien paysan et de l'agriculteur moderne.

Avant la création d'Israël, l'économie paysanne palestinienne était caractérisée par l'autosuffisance économique, dans une condition de manque d'apport de capital externe, et par des activités agricoles à forte intensité de main-d'œuvre comme la mise culture de terrasses (Cohen 1965). À Wādī Fūkīn, ce temps mythique est idéalisé comme une époque de simplicité, moralité, solidarité, de justice et de bonheur. Les agriculteurs décrivent le caractère durable et l'autosuffisance de l'ancienne agriculture paysanne, fondée sur l'utilisation autonome, coopérative et circulaire des ressources locales, capable de s'adapter aux changements climatiques et à la disponibilité saisonnière des eaux pluviales, et aussi caractérisée par des relations de réciprocité entre les communautés humaines et les acteurs non-humains.

Les techniques agricoles historique locales sont associées à une "économie morale" en accord avec l'obligation islamique qui impose aux êtres humains de protéger l'environnement (eau, terre, faune et flore), de respecter les processus écologiques, de réduire la pollution et d'utiliser l'eau et les autres ressources de manière durable (Faruqui et al. 2003).

Dans les récits des villageois, depuis la création d'Israël la communauté est de plus en plus fragmentée et corrompue d'un point de vue moral. Ces dynamiques sont liées à l'abandon de l'agriculture, au tarissement des sources d'eau et à l'accaparement des terres par les colonies israéliennes, ainsi qu'à l'irruption de la "modernité" dans la vie du village. Ce dernier point est mis en relations avec les nouveaux modes de vie des classes moyennes urbaines, avec les valeurs de classe moyenne occidentale véhiculées par les médias, l'individualisme qui fragmente la communauté et l'installation des robinets dans toutes les habitations privées, mais surtout avec le développement du système de production agricole intensive et commerciale.

Dans la lutte pour l'autonomie contre les institutions étatiques israéliennes et palestiniennes et contre la dépendance de l'agriculture vis-à-vis du marché, les villageois s'approprient de la séparation ontologique occidentale nature/culture pour faire référence à une autre différence symbolique. Les relations locales historiques fondées sur la réciprocité et

le partage entre les êtres humains et les êtres non humains (y compris les éléments “naturels” tels que l’eau de source) et les formes de savoir local développées dans le cadre de ces relations sont naturalisées comme faisant partie des processus socio-écologiques historiques locaux. L’eau de source, la terre et les semences, les activités agricoles locales ainsi que les plantes sont considérées comme “naturels” en opposition à la dégradation socio-écologique causée par la domination de l’État. L’urbanisation, la production et la marchandisation de l’eau potable par l’État israélien et l’ANP, les activités agricoles intensives et leur exploitation destructrice de la “nature” – humaine et non humaine – sont considérées comme des pratiques contre nature, malsaines et immorales qui n’appartiennent pas à la communauté, qui représentent une menace pour l’environnement socio-écologique local et qui sont en contraste avec l’essence de la vie des paysans dans le village avant son évacuation.

Les villageois utilisent ainsi un langage moral pour ré-politiser et resocialiser les techniques agricoles intensives que les acteurs du développement considèrent comme des simple solutions techniques. Les techniques agricoles intensives sont réinterprétées comme des stratégies politiques à l’origine des relations de dépendance et d’une perte d’autonomie. Pour faire face à ces dynamiques, comme l’a également observé Van Aken (2015) dans un village proche, les semences locales, ainsi que la variété locale de courgette, ont une valeur politique dans les discours des paysans. Ces produits agricoles sont idéalisés en tant que symbole de leur “authenticité” culturelle et de leur enracinement dans le territoire, ainsi que d’un système de relations réciproques historiques, “saines” et “morales” entre les populations locales et l’environnement.

La plupart des agriculteurs à Wādī Fūkīn considèrent la production agricole comme une interaction, un échange et une transformation réciproque entre les êtres humains et non humains (Van der Ploeg 2009) tels que la terre, l’eau, les semences et les plantes. Dans les discours locaux, la terre, l’eau, les sources, les semences et les cultures sont subjectivés, ont une histoire personnelle et des comportements humains. La fertilité de la terre et l’état de santé des êtres humains sont considérés comme étant interdépendant et s’inscrivant dans une relation de réciprocité. Chaque source d’eau dans le village a son nom propre et ses relations historiques particulières avec des familles élargies : elles peuvent faire preuve de sentiments, de volonté et d’attitudes particulières.

Tout comme les agriculteurs, les acteurs non humains tels que la terre et l’eau peuvent réagir de manière émotive face aux stratégies agricoles actuelles et leur force destructrice. Les villageois interprètent la pénurie d’eau de source, les inondations et la pollution des eaux souterraines dans le village en tant qu’une réaction de l’environnement à la domination

d'Israël, caractérisée par la surexploitation des ressources et un réaménagement brutal du territoire qui détruit les systèmes éco-sociaux palestiniens historique.

L'être humain est l'un des acteurs biophysiques qui fait partie de l'environnement, considéré comme un réseau de relations réciproques et d'interactions entre les pratiques et la culture humaines et les acteurs non humains tels que l'eau et la terre.

L'eau de source, les semences, les légumes ainsi que d'autres êtres non humains se révèlent en tant qu'acteurs qui contribuent à produire des connaissances et des significations locales, à façonner les formes locales d'appartenance culturelle et à forger les différentes revendications identitaires.

A travers ces discours et connaissances incarnées sur les relations avec l'environnement, les agriculteurs locaux revendiquent une justice socio-écologique (Schlosberg 2013), c'est-à-dire leur droit à préserver le système socio-écologique local et le réseau sur lequel et la reproduction matérielle et culturelle de la communauté locale est fondée.

L'analyse des pratiques agricoles quotidiennes dans le village montre que les techniques et les significations locales de l'agriculture et de l'environnement s'inscrivent dans une "contre-culture" (Van der Ploeg 1998: 43; 2009) qui est incorporée permettant aux individus – et notamment aux personnes ayant un faible statut socio-économique – de regagner des espaces d'autonomie et de manœuvre. Il s'agit là d'une stratégie pour continuer à cultiver et à nourrir sa famille malgré la marginalisation de leurs activités productives déterminée par l'agriculture commerciale, en poursuivant ainsi un objectif de durabilité écologique et sociale (Van der Ploeg 2009).

Afin de contester le système de valeurs utilitaristes des techniques agricoles intensives, le développement agricole est associé à la production agricole biologique par certains agriculteurs palestiniens, qui s'approprient de cette manière de la rhétorique sur la consommation de nourriture biologique auprès de la classe moyenne urbaine occidentale, israélienne et palestinienne. Encore une fois, ces agriculteurs attribuent au développement agricole une signification et une portée politique. La diffusion de l'agriculture biologique est considérée comme une stratégie permettant aux Palestiniens de "retourner à la terre" et de lutter pour leur l'autonomie. Cependant, ces modalités d'autoreprésentation discursives et incorporées dissimulent aussi une stratégie des certains agriculteurs palestiniens pour vendre leurs produits sur le marché, en répondant aux nouveaux besoins des consommateurs

israéliens pour les produits issus de l'agriculture palestinienne, représentés de manière idéologique comme étant "naturels" et sains. Tout en adoptant dans leurs pratiques agricoles de techniques diversifiées, ces agriculteurs palestiniens transmettent une image homogène d'eux-mêmes en tant que producteurs "bio", en utilisant de manière stratégique la méconnaissance des Israéliens à propos de la réalité locale. En effet, face à la forte compétition avec l'agriculture israélienne, à la baisse de la fertilité des sols et à des infestations parasites fréquentes, certains agriculteurs locaux perçoivent le besoin des techniques intensives et d'une expertise agronomique moderne, dans un contexte de globalisation de la notion d'efficacité technique (Boelens et Vos 2012).

Les agriculteurs s'approprient les différentes idées globales sur le développement agricole tout en y associant de nouvelles significations, et mobilisent les différentes techniques agricoles en tant que stratégies contextuelles pour "cultiver la résistance" contre l'expropriation et pour leur survie. Dans les pratiques quotidiennes, les techniques agricoles intensives et les techniques locales sont juxtaposées et articulées entre elles dans une sorte d'"agriculture hybride" résultat de la négociation et des interactions entre les processus globaux et locaux.

### *Pluralisme d'État et la revendication pour la liberté hydrique*

Cette recherche a mis en évidence que les Palestiniens sont soumis au chevauchement, à l'interaction et à la compétition entre l'État israélien, l'ANP et les organisations du développement internationale dans un "pluralisme d'État" (Wolf, 1990) dont les relations de pouvoir structurel s'organisent autour des projets de modernisation de l'eau. Les hydro-politiques de ces structures de pouvoir visent à mettre en place des ordres sociaux, politiques et économiques à la fois complices et conflictuels, et à forger de nouveaux sujets coloniaux, ou d'agriculteurs "modernes" ou de citoyens aliénés, en manipulant leurs expériences, leurs interactions et leurs perceptions de la réalité.

Les Palestiniens cherchent à s'évader de ces conditions de vie précaires et aliénés en créant des espaces de manœuvre pour poursuivre leurs intérêts quotidiens et satisfaire leurs besoins. Les pratiques quotidiennes de résistance en ce qui concerne la gestion et l'organisation de l'accès à l'eau montrent que le pouvoir de l'ANP finalement se réduit à une



autorité “virtuelle”, cela en raison des contraintes administratives et juridiques imposées par Israël.

Le pouvoir de l’ANP est limité aussi par les stratégies des Palestiniens, qui utilisent de manière stratégique les contraintes israéliennes à la souveraineté de l’ANP, comme par exemple l’impossibilité des forces de l’ordre palestiniennes d’accéder aux zones B et C de la Cisjordanie, qui permet aux Palestiniens d’éviter leur répression.

Les formes de violence symbolique, physique et psychologique et les dynamiques d’exclusion et de marginalisation mises en œuvre par Israël façonnent les subjectivités et les pratiques des individus et sont redéployées et remodelées dans le cadre des relations sociales locales et des formes de violence entre individus. Cela concerne en particulier les fonctionnaires au sein des institutions de l’ANP, qui bénéficient de l’impunité, et les Palestiniens habitant en Israël, sur lesquels l’ANP ne peut pas exercer son pouvoir judiciaire en raison de leur citoyenneté israélienne.

Ces dynamiques montrent que les Palestiniens qui résistent au pouvoir et aux stratégies de domination d’Israël et de l’ANP par des formes de contestation matérielles et symboliques ont aussi l’effet contradictoire d’alimenter les dynamiques d’exclusion et de discrimination qu’elles sont censées combattre. Les Palestiniens s’approprient des tactiques de violence structurelle israélienne pour les redéployer dans le cadre d’autres structures de pouvoir, comme dans le réseau de pouvoir de l’ANP ainsi que dans les dynamiques politiques au niveau local. Les dialectiques entre pouvoir et résistance aux niveaux local et national impliquent des processus de cooptation, de manipulation et de complicité entre différents acteurs, qui rendent imprévisible les effets cultureux des conflits concernant la construction du sujet et du sens de l’État.

Le chevauchement des politiques hydriques mises en place par l’État d’Israël, l’ANP et par les acteurs du développement participent à fragmenter le territoire en différents réseaux et territoires hydro-sociaux. Cela a conduit à des situations de “pluralisme territorial”, résultat des “configurations hydro-territoriales” (Boelens et al. 2016: 8) chevauchantes, souvent contestées et en interaction dans un même espace, mais avec des contenus matériels et sociaux différents ainsi que des interdépendances et des frontières symboliques différentes. Cette fragmentation de la réalité de l’eau produit différentes formes de citoyenneté et processus de marginalisation, et façonne des “îles d’expérience hydrique” multiples caractérisées par différentes conditions de stress hydrique et de privation socio-économique.

Dans un tel contexte, le lieu d'habitation – comme le camp de réfugiés, le village ou la ville – est une dimension importante de l'identité qui façonne l'image de soi et de "l'autre", conduisant à de multiples constructions des formes d'appartenance collective. Il s'agit d'un important critère d'identification sociale et de différenciation fondé sur le partage de l'histoire locale, des conditions d'accès à l'eau et d'autres conditions matérielles, des relations quotidiennes de solidarité entre les habitants et des pratiques spécifiques de résistance à de stratégies de domination particulières.

Les différentes expériences en matière de gestion et accès à l'eau se traduisent par différentes idées de la réalité politique et sociale autour de cette ressource, et par l'imagination de plusieurs "pays hydrique" et identités palestiniens. Cela abouti à une différenciation sociale croissante, à un sentiment de résignation de plus en plus fort et à une aliénation de la population palestinienne et à la multiplication des revendications pour la justice de l'eau.

Dans des arènes politiques caractérisées par des structures de pouvoir inégales et par une compétition croissante pour les ressources en eau, différents groupes d'intérêt luttent pour affirmer leurs points de vue concernant la justice hydrique et l'équité au sein de systèmes technologiques, normatifs et organisationnels particuliers. Les récits et les perceptions locales de la justice hydrique ne reflètent pas un point de vue homogène au niveau national, mais se différencient selon les appartenances de classe et le genre, le niveau d'éducation et le lieu de résidence (camp de réfugiés, zone urbaine ou village rural).

Les palestiniens résistent aux structures de pouvoir globales, coloniales et nationales en recomposant et en réinventant leurs mondes socio-écologiques à travers l'eau, une ressource fluide qu'il est difficile de contrôler et de considérer en tant que simple objectivation du pouvoir de l'État.

La différentes formes de résistance des palestiniens marginalisés dans les Territoires Occupés, organisées autour de la gestion de différentes sources d'eau, convergent vers une seule et même point : l'émancipation du pouvoir de l'État, perçu comme une organisation politique extérieure, illégitime et injuste contrôlée par un groupe minoritaire. Ces idées sont fondées sur l'expérience présentes et historiques de la domination et de la répression par l'État moderne, depuis les administrations coloniales ottomanes et britanniques jusqu'à l'occupation par les autorités israéliennes, perçues comme des autorités étrangères et illégitimes. Aujourd'hui, l'injustice, la corruption des élites palestiniennes de l'ANP – considérées comme des autorités locales illégitimes – ainsi que leur collusion avec Israël sont

à l'origine du sentiment de déception face à l'incapacité de l'État d'assurer la liberté pour laquelle les palestiniens luttent depuis si longtemps. Il ne s'agit pas de la liberté abstraite individuelle de matrice libérale qui s'exprimerait par l'ensemble de droits individuels octroyés de manière égalitaire à chaque être humain. Il ne s'agit pas non plus d'une idée de liberté négative conçue en tant que "libération" individuelle des contraintes et de la tyrannie de l'État. Il s'agit plutôt de la liberté positive, collective, matérielle et sociale de partager la gestion des eaux et des autres ressources de manière autonome, d'avoir accès et organiser le territoire et lui attribuer des significations. Cette idée de liberté consiste dans la revendication de partager, d'organiser et d'exercer le pouvoir politique sur l'ensemble du territoire historique de la Palestine, de représenter les revendications des Palestiniens et de décider de leur propre vie collective.

En Palestine, le tumulte des flux d'eau est l'expression d'une revendication collective pour la liberté hydrique : la liberté concrète de partager le pouvoir autour de l'eau, tout en s'affranchissant du pouvoir de l'État.



# INDEX

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	
<b>The Histories, Myths and Uncertain Futures of the Rural Village of Wādī Fūkīn</b>	
1. The Local Foreigner. Methodology, Research Postures and Ethics between Colonisation, Globalisation and Development Processes	36
1.1. Suspected Researches in the Israeli Colonisation Context	37
1.2. Being a Female Researcher, a Mother and a Wife within the Masculine Agricultural Space	41
1.3. Channel of Resources or Useless Independent Researcher?	45
2. The History of Resistance of the Village of Wādī Fūkīn	48
2.1. The Foundational Myth of the Heroic Community of the Village	59
3. The Temporal and Spatial Colonial Dimensions in the Village of Wādī Fūkīn	63
3.1. The Village's Island in the Israeli Urban Sea. The Movable Fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories	83
4. Irrigation Water Scarcity: Creating Colonial Subjects through Depeasantisation	96
4.1. Conflicting Narratives on Water Scarcity	106
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	
<b>Spring Water: The Meaning of Community between Continuity and Change</b>	
1. Farming the Resistance: the New Political Value of Agriculture	118
2. The Water Meanings of Tribalism: the Large Water Family of Wādī Fūkīn	124
3. Spring Water and the Naturalisation of the Timeless Rural Community of the Village	138

4. The Springs' Political History and Cultural Intimacy	146
5. Spring Water Hierarchies and Legal Pluralism	159
6. The spread of Individual Land Ownership and the Fragmentation of the Community	171

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **The Politics of Agriculture: between Development and Resistance**

1. Intensive Farming Techniques: Shaping “Developed” Farmers	184
1.1. The Individualisation of Resistance Pouring in Neo-Liberal Irrigation Infrastructures	190
2. Farming the Development: Struggle for the Autonomy of Hybrid Agricultures	201
3. The Global Flow of Development Models and (Re)Sources of Power	215
4. The Multiple Borders of Herders' Water Geographies	226
4.1. Sedentary Farmers or Mobile Herders? The Changed meaning of Mobility	233
5. The Changing Role of Women within the Community	239
5.1. The Virtual Invisibility of Women's Domestic Water	247
5.2. Women's Fluid Political Dimensions	251

### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **Tasting the States' Water Oppression: the Water Relations between Tribalism and the State**

1 The State's Purified Domestic Water	262
2 The Competition between Territorial Domestic Water Infrastructures	273
3 Decentralising Water Thefts and Free Water	284
4 Spatial Water Injustices and Water Fatalism	293
5 From the <i>Muhtār</i> to the Village Council: the Palestinian Tribal State	301

## **CHAPTER V**

### **The Struggle for the Water Freedom from the State**

1. The State Pluralism and its Structural Violence	319
2. The Symbolic Distances of Israeli Water Neighbours	331
2.1 The Symbolic Violence of Religion and Immorality Conveyed by Spring Water	333
2.2 Normalising Settlers in Conflict with Israel	343
2.3 Environmental Claims for Spring Water Protection and Enemy Wastewater Flows	348
3. Segregated Interdependent Subordination	353
3.1 Israeli Sources of Power and Changing Political Morality	358
4. Multiple Water Countries and a Main Claim for Water Freedom	361
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>TABLES and SOCIAL MAPS</b>	<b>437</b>





## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AACD: Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, Junta de Andalucía

ANERA: American Near East Refugee Aid

ARIJ: Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem

BFS: Bethlehem Farmers Society

BFS: Bethlehem Farmers Society

DCO: District Coordination Office

FOEME: Friends of the Earth - Middle East

GVC: Gruppo di Volontariato Civile

ICA: Israeli Civil Administration

ICBS: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics

IDF: Israel Defence Forces

JSCPD: Joint Services Council for Planning and Development

LAP: Land Administration Project

MOP: Ministry of Planning

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PARC: Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee

PCBS: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

PLA: Palestinian Land Authority

PNA: Palestinian National Authority

PNA: Palestinian National Authority

PWA: Palestine Water Authority

RWDS: Rural Women's Development Society

UAWC: Union of Agriculture Work Committees

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WBWD: West Bank Water Department

WEDO: Water and Environmental Development Organisation

YDA: Youth Development Association

YDA: Youth Development Association



## INTRODUCTION

In 2013 summer I went to visit my husband's family in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša, in the outskirts of Bethlehem. I was already accustomed to the difficult life in this camp and to the narrow, dusty streets between the very close and overcrowded houses. Indeed, I lived for many months in this camp to carry out my previous ethnographic researches (De Donato 2013a; 2013b; Van Aken and De Donato 2018) and finally I married a local man. In this refugee camp I began to be interested in water as an object of anthropological analysis and, also, to thought about the project of research on which this thesis is grounded.

The explanation of the trajectory that brought me to carry out this study in Wādī Fūkīn requires a brief mention to my previous investigations about water in this refugee camp.

One of the subjects I analysed in my previous researches for the MA in Anthropology has been the role of domestic water as mediator of the political dynamics and of the conflicts in the definition of the refugee status (De Donato 2013a). The life in this refugee camp is characterised by long periods during which the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) cuts off domestic water supply (up to one month at a time) seeking to force refugees to pay for water. Indeed, the refugee status is associated with economic and social rights established by the Arab states and adopted by the PLO since decades, such as the right of free domestic water supply. By forcing refugees to pay water, the PNA seeks to integrate them as citizens in proletarian suburbs.

The scarce availability of domestic water mirrors the marginalisation of refugees' claims in the building of the Palestinian state. With the Oslo Accords the PNA acknowledged Israel's sovereignty within its borders, thus denying the right to return to their original homes of refugees whose villages of origins were within the present Israeli borders (the '48 refugees), like the refugees in ad-Dehīša camp. This is a major reason leading Palestinian refugees to refuse the PNA's legitimacy. Refugees resist the PNA's strategies by refusing to pay for domestic water, by manipulating the water network in the camp and stealing domestic water.

During the 2013 summer I knew my new sister-in-law, who married one of my husband's brothers while I was in Italy. Knowing my interests in water and refugees' issues, she told me proudly that her village of origin was Wādī Fūkīn, whose community, according

to her, was the only one that has been evacuated by the Israeli army and that later succeeded to implement its right of return.

I had already heard the name of this village. Some of its inhabitants still live in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša. However, I did not know the particular history of this village, which aroused my surprise and curiosity. For many years I used to listen to the histories about the refugees' villages of origins, imagined by the present generations who never experienced them as a lost paradise of peaceful life, green grasslands, small villages and abundant water flows, such as rivers, wells and a never seen sea. Finally, I would have had the opportunity to see one of the villages that I imagined for a long-time.

To arouse even more my interest, my sister-in-law told me that in the village there were many beautiful springs, whose water was managed autonomously by the local community to irrigate the farmlands. Therefore, I decided to visit Wādī Fūkīn. There, I discovered that the return to the village did not imply the end of the Israeli repression. Villagers had lost the access to a great part of their lands, which had been included within the Israeli borders. Moreover, it was almost completely encircled by Israeli urban settlements, which were and still are daily expanding, occupying land of this village and of the other ones in the area.

The visits to the village raised many questions in my mind. How could these people come back to their village after its evacuation? How is the life in the village today, with the Israeli settlers knocking on their door? How did people come back to farm land after 15 years of life in the refugee camp in an urban area? How do villagers manage the water of springs? What is the local meaning of spring water in the context of the Israeli expropriation of most of their land and appropriation of most of water resources paralleled by PNA's attempts at water centralisation?

I began to think that the flows of spring water in the village of Wādī Fūkīn would have satisfied my further interests in the study of the relationships between the state and local communities mediated by water, especially given my knowledge about national narratives and water dynamics. Indeed, in the Palestinian collective imagination and national discourses, peasants' "traditional" life, farming and irrigation activities - including spring water management in villages such as Wādī Fūkīn - are reified as a symbol of the Palestinian national identity. The peasants' idealised practices and ethics, connected to tribal ties and values, are viewed as an expression of Palestinians' cultural "authenticity" and, thus, as a main source of legitimacy to resist against Israeli occupation.

Nevertheless, the inhabitants of rural areas are marginalised by the urban elites ruling the PNA, which seek to establish a public regime of water management as a main tool to extend their control over the local Palestinian population. This objective is hindered by Israel and by local power structures and customary institutions that still manage most of water resources to which Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have access, especially in rural areas – for reasons which I explore in the body of the thesis.

In the framework of the competition with these customary institutions for the social control of water management, the PNA de-legitimises the supposed “traditional”, decentralised patterns of resources management as backward and as a threat to national security (Brooks and Trottier 2010). In the PNA’s discourses the public regime of water management is considered to be the only guarantee of an equitable and efficient water management among Palestinians (Trottier 1999; 2013).

In the following chapters I explain and analyse in depth these contradictory dynamics and their meanings and how these are affected by Israeli administrative and water planning strategies and development agencies’ approach to water problems. My research interest was to understand how Israel and the PNA are perceived by these “privileged” Palestinian refugees who finally saw their claim to return satisfied, but who, anyway, are marginalised by the PNA’s policies and risk Israel’s evacuation of the village once again. Also, by virtue of my anthropological background and my previous investigations in the refugee camp, my aim was to analyse critically the PNA but also the local population’s essentialised views of peasants’ communities, culture, tribal identity, water management patterns and farming practices, highlighting the multiple, conflicting and colluding political strategies and interests which they convey.

In particular, changing my fieldwork from the marginalised urban context of the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša to a marginalised context in a rural area would have offered me an important opportunity: the investigation of the role of water in the definition of the power relationships and processes of social differentiations between the inhabitants of urban and rural areas, going beyond the modernist dichotomous view of the relationships between these life contexts. Moreover, studying water dynamics in a rural context would have entailed the exploration of the practices of use and the meanings connected to land, an important symbolic and material resource in the cultural construction of the nation-state and national identity, used to naturalise the historical ties of the Palestinian population with the territory (Swedenburg 1990).

Further, the study of water management in a rural village whose springs and farmlands are included in an area C – under the Israeli army’s administration and security control – would have allowed me to address the local implications of the interventions of rural development agencies and actors in a context in which the PNA cannot exert its power. Indeed, in the areas B and especially C of the Palestinian territories, NGOs often substitute the PNA in providing basic services and resources and infrastructure development to Palestinian civil population. These reflections led me to decide to study the active role of the waters flowing in the village – especially of spring water and domestic water – in the dialectics between the Israeli and the PNA’s power strategies vis-à-vis local inhabitants’ practices of resistance. In particular, I focused my attention on the ways water mediates these power dynamics, affecting the local perceptions of the meaning of community and political belonging, as well as the ideas about the state and its relationships with citizens.

In this research I explore therefore the local implications of the Israeli water and territory planning, the PNA’s domestic water policies and discourses and the NGOs’ farming and irrigation development projects, analysing the conceptions of water, of space, of time and of the territory and the social identity constructions which they convey.

Following, I address the many ways in which local Palestinians deviate, manipulate, appropriate and resist these flows of power, struggling against their economic and political marginalisation and claiming their particular view of water justice. I focus on the meanings, knowledge, normative systems and patterns of belonging and political organisation that villagers embody through the autonomous and shared management of spring water.

Water is analysed as a “political arena” (Olivier de Sardan 1995) characterised by the power dialectics between discursive and practical strategies and interests of multiple local, national, colonial and global heterogeneous interest groups. These are bearers of particular conceptions of water, space, agriculture and the relationships with the environment, which convey different and conflicting ideas about social and political reality, political belonging, action and resistance, as well as meanings of State and citizenship.

The analysis of the daily local practices of spring water management and use and of the resistance to the state’s domestic water centralisation has been a tool to investigate the complexity, hybrid and “modern” character of peasants’ communities and their water management systems and tribal identities. Water’s material and symbolic fluidity has allowed me to show them as the product of contemporary dialectics between global, colonial and national water policies and narratives and local practices and embodied knowledge. This, in the framework of the struggles against marginalisation connected to the state’s water

modernisation, capitalist market globalisation and the global spread of the neo-liberal ideology.

### **Theoretical Background and Problematics**

By dealing with the subjects of this research, I draw on the following important theoretical debates in anthropology and other social sciences.

First, addressing water as an object of research, I focus on the “embeddedness” (Casciarri 2008) of water within the society and its inscription in local logics (Aubriot 2004). Another important debate concerns the post-structural problematisation of classical units of analysis such as identity, community, locality, as well as the connected theorisation of power and resistance dynamics.

Then, the study addresses the critical analysis of the nation-state as a cultural construction and a social actor. An important place is dedicated to the literature about the role of water in the nation-state creation and its contemporary forms of discipline of territories and populations (Van Aken 2012; Mosse 2003; Mitchell 2002). The interest in the processes of legitimisation of the state’s power has led me to address the critical reflections of water modernisation as a discursive construction. At the same time, the acknowledgement of the role of local people’s agency has entailed to consider the literature about development as a political arena and a situated practice. Finally, this theoretical “path” brings me to consider the important debate about the relationships between the state and tribal political organisations (Bocco 1995; Bonte et al. 2001; Bonte 2004).

All these themes are connected to each other flowing and diverting within water and water issues.

#### *The meanings of waters*

In order to analyse the symbolical and political role of water, this study refers to the contemporary anthropological and political ecologist literature criticizing the Western ontological and epistemological separation between “nature” and culture.

The engineering, management and economics approaches characterising colonial and post-colonial governments’ water planning and development projects address water as H<sub>2</sub>O, a

"natural" and univocal resource to be managed by means of technical-economic strategies and modern positive sciences. The secularisation and commoditisation of water, viewed as a technical and economic matter, are connected to the modernist paradigm spread at the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. According to this ideology, the realm of nature (and, thus, water) has to be controlled, dominated and managed through scientific and technical knowledge, which allow overcoming the constraints of a hostile "nature" (Van Aken 2012).

However, criticising the ontological separation between nature and culture, Latour (1991) shows that even in modern societies, people's practices (even within scientific laboratories) contradict this naturalist view of the world. He highlights the ideological character of the conception of a world characterised by a univocal objective nature and a subjective multiculturalism (the cultural representations of nature). According to the author, all societies, included the "modern" ones, produce "quasi-objects", which are subjects and objects, natural and social, material and discursive.

In line with Latour, while addressing the political-ecology of the urbanisation of nature in Western countries, Kaika (2005) shows that all kinds of water are socio-natural hybrids. They are materially produced as commodity through social relations of production and, at the same time, they are socially constructed as natural, and thus, alienated from social processes.

Studying in the Jordan Valley, Van Aken (2012) shows the problematic character of the Western ontological separation between subjective human dimensions and the objective and univocal "natural" realm while understanding other (but also the Western) "waterworlds". These are characterised by a "diversity of waters" (Van Aken 2012) that mirrors the idea of a multi-naturalism (Latour 1999), multiple subjectified natures and waters that are involved in interdependent relationships with human beings and socio-cultural processes. Like every actor of the non-human world, local water flows participate actively to human power relations and to the building of social and political boundaries (Bennet 2010; Serres 1995) within the framework of multiple socio-ecological worlds.

Also in the Palestinian territories there are multiple waters that take different shapes and bear different meanings according to the socio-ecological and political relationships that they convey and that mediate their use and access.

The analysis of these waters' flows brings to light the multidimensional character of water as symbolic resource mediating power dynamics and cultural processes of meanings and identity construction, showing the cultural politics of water (Mosse 2008, 2009), its social life and the inscription of water in local social logics (Aubriot 2004).



In fact, spring water has an active role in local practices of resistance to land expropriation by Israel. It will emerge as a political interface, a place for community building through the negotiation of hierarchies, patterns of belonging and differences, mediated by regional, national and transnational processes of construction of the locality.

Also, following anthropological and political ecologist studies on local communities' irrigation systems in Jordan (Van Aken 2012), Baluchistan (Fabietti 1997) and in the Andes (Boelens and Vos 2014; Boelens 1998), the irrigation infrastructure in Wādī Fūkīn is analysed as a social and symbolical construct, connected to changing political relationships, hierarchies, patterns of belonging and authority roles. The changes of irrigation infrastructure and techniques are the materialisation of always changing social and normative relationships, which shape the organisation of irrigation and its distribution practices, while creating an "hydraulic property". Moreover, I will show that the irrigation system consists in the cultural and social organisation of the space and of the environment in the village.

#### *Identity, community, locality, power and resistance*

The deconstruction of the reified view of peasants' communities, culture and tribal identities has entailed the problematisation of classical units of analysis such as identity, community and locality. This study draws on the post-structuralist literature that refuses the conception of these dimensions as fixed, essentialised, isolated entities outside of history. The studies of Gupta in India and Ferguson in South African (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), as well as those about refugees carried out by Liisa Malkki (1995), have shown the changes to which the subject and the meaning of community and locality are always subjected.

According to a post-structuralist approach, the subject is the unstable and unpredictable product of transformative experiences consisting in the encounter between structural relationships of power and resistance practices. Structural power relationships (Wolf 1990) affect the life, daily practices and relationships, shaping the contexts of social interactions and defining what are the possible behaviours and meanings. In this way, they affect the construction of individual and social identities, of localities, ideas about the nation and the State (Gupta 1995), as well as the way subjects practice citizenship and perceive political belonging.

Subject and identity are viewed as a process of social construction of difference entailing multiple forms of exclusion and construction of "the other" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992;

Zureik 2003), produced by structural relationships of power. The seemingly immediate experience of community and locality is mediated by regional, national and transnational processes of construction of locality.

In line with these theorisations, a multidimensional anthropological approach grounded on a deep fieldwork has allowed me to go beyond a dichotomous view of the relationship between locality and globality. This study investigates how the dialectics between the global, colonial and national power strategies exerted through water policies and the local resistance practices and embodied knowledge concerning water contribute to define the meaning of community and locality, the perception of space, of time and of the self.

This conceptualisation of the individual and social identity requires a reflection about the dynamics of power and resistance. As suggested by Peteet (1994) studying in the Palestinian Territories and by Abu-Lughod's (1990; 1986) researches in Egypt, in order to avoid a linear conceptualization of the relationships between power and resistance, this study considers the contingent and strategic character of each form of resistance both at the national as much as at the local level. Resistance practices are specific reactions to particular domination strategies, which are both connected to the local cultural and historical context. This has entailed the necessity to consider theoretically the processes of co-optation, manipulation and complicity involved in the dialectics between power and resistance mediated by water, which make the cultural outcome of these conflicts unpredictable.

I show that local people's practices and representations concerning water that resist to Israel and the PNA's hydropolitics (Trottier 1999) both undermine and reproduce the processes of exclusion and structural discrimination to which they are subjected. Palestinians appropriate the Israeli forms of structural violence, such as the discriminating administrative conditions, and redeploy them tactically within other strategies and configurations of power, such as in the struggle against the PNA's power structures, as well as in local power dynamics.

### *The nation-state as a cultural construction and a social actor*

This study is grounded on the refusal of the methodological ethnocentrism considering the State as an empirical fact, a homogeneous and coherent entity separated from society (Mitchell 1990a, 1990b, 1991). It refers to the important theoretical debate about the

nation-state as a social actor and a cultural construction (Gupta 1995; Gupta e Sharma 2006b).

As I show better in the following chapters, the Palestinian Territories are a political arena in which the Israeli and the Palestinian states compete to assert the cultural “authenticity” of their “national community” and, thus, its legitimacy, both claiming its historical roots in the territory.

Both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority produce competitive historical narratives about water and territory and engage in the cultural construction of forms of cultural heritage. In the framework of the cultural creation of a Jewish nation and rooted national identity, Israel reinvents the memory of the ancient Jewish history in the historical Palestine, connecting to it new selected and re-invented religious and nationalist meanings, while omitting and removing centuries of local Palestinians’ history. As a response to this strategy of territorialisation, peasants' life is reified and idealised in the Palestinian national narratives as a symbol of the Palestinian national identity, of cultural “authenticity” and of historical roots in the territory (Swedenburg 1990).

Both the Israeli and Palestinian national rhetoric claim a shared national identity, while reifying Palestinians and Israelis respectively as depersonalized enemies, as the homogeneous “other” for excellence.

To carry out a research in such a context requires a critical view in order to avoid the risk of contributing to the reification of the Israeli and Palestinian “imagined communities”

(Anderson 1991) as homogeneous entities within a dichotomous oppositional relationship.

This entails the need to overcome the interpretations of culture adopted by functionalist and structuralist theorizations, as well as by Geertz's symbolic interactionism, as a set of shared, ordered and coherent, inter-subjective ideas and meanings. Cultures and meanings connected to water and the nation are understood as places of difference and political arenas where dialectical dynamics between power strategies and resistance practices mediated by water challenge the hegemonic cultural interpretations.

The studies about diasporas and refugees criticise the cultural, social and political homogeneity of the nation as an historical and social construction. They analyse critically the Western "sedentary metaphysics" (Malkki 1992; 1995), challenging the idea of the natural character of a national identity rooted in a national territory.

Many researches highlight how both the cultural construction of the nation-state and the national “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) and the functioning of the state’s administration and control (Herzfeld 1997, Maffi 2004) are grounded on the reification of

culture. They shed light on the cultural construction of patterns of cultural heritage and authenticity as central tools for the integration of local communities in the state's power and administrative structures. The state (but also international) institutions appropriate the practices and narratives that shape and express local identity constructions, in order to organise, classify, administer and control local communities. In this way, they dissimulate social and class differences, hierarchies and patterns of exclusions that they contribute to produce, seeking to isolate socio-economic conflicts (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

In line with these considerations, the Palestinian nation-state and national identity are considered as cultural constructions continuously negotiated and contested through water practices and discourses. The Palestinian nation-state is investigated as a political arena where the construction of the cultural "authenticity" of the national identity is understood in dialectical opposition to the Israeli national identity, to sub-national identification processes, to patterns of belonging with different principles of space organization and to non-territorial ways to imagine the community (Appadurai 1996), all engaging in processes of cultural reification mediated by water.

The water interactions between Palestinians and Israelis show some of the contradictory dynamics characterising both the Palestinian and Israeli heterogeneous societies and the relationships between them. They bring insights into the problematic character of the dichotomous view of the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians and of their reification and homogenisation. These are conveyed by Palestinian and Israelis nationalist narratives, but also by the dominating official discourses of the international community.

Focusing on the role of cultural differences in the State's formation, the works of Akhil Gupta, Aradhana Sharma (Gupta and Sharma 2006a, 2006b) and James Ferguson (2005) criticise social sciences' historical and comparative analysis of the State, which emphasise the institutional and procedural resemblances in different countries. In both everyday life and social sciences' theories, the perceptions and imaginations of the State, its boundaries and the power it exercises are cultural and historical constructions connected to the specific context in which they develop.

The hegemonic Western models and techno-politics (Mitchell 2002) spread globally in the contemporary neo-liberal framework are appropriated and reinterpreted by local populations (Gupta e Sharma 2006a), including people working in state institutions, to pursue their proper interests. Their local experiences and interpretations are shaped by specific historical memories and expectations, which lead to the production of multiple meanings at the local level.

In this thesis, the study of the water governmental policies spread globally contributes to highlight that, behind the institutional and procedural resemblances, the state, democracy and authority bear multiple meanings for different people, in specific contexts characterised by particular conditions of water access.

Adopting Trouillot's (2001) theorisation of the state as an ideological project, this investigation addresses the key material and symbolic role of water in the cultural construction of the nation-state and in the continuous reconfiguration of power relationships aimed at integrating new spaces in the state's power network. The attention is focused in the construction of the legitimacy and hegemony of the Palestinian urban elites represented as disinterested and "naturalised", by means of the imposition of water meanings and discourses, of identity constructions and of specific strategies of spatialisation.

This study considers the dispersion of water governmental activities in non-governmental institutional forms, such as the NGOs, as well as in social networks through which social relations are lived (such as the family, the tribal group, the community or the economy). In this way, the exercise of power can be studied analysing the top-down position of the state in power hierarchies of social reality, in order to show it as one of many power knots in a horizontal network of institutions and individuals through which power is exercised (Ferguson, 2005).

### *The role of water in the modern state's construction and patterns of discipline*

In this investigation an important place is dedicated to the theorisation of technical planning as the modern state's new patterns of discipline of spaces, of territories and population.

Scott's (1998) theorisation of the state's power shows that technical planning is a new dimension of politics that expresses the "authoritarian modernism" of the modern state. The daily production of statistics, maps, classifications, categories and territory and landscape planning consist in processes of homogenisation and spatialisation (Trouillot 2001) that reduce the complexity and heterogeneity of social realities, territories and populations in abstractions, uniformities and schematic categories. These strategies are aimed at creating a territory delimited by political borders and a civil society with standardized features, which are more measurable, exploitable and controllable.

In line with Scott's (1998) theorisation, the anthropological and political science studies addressing water issues in the Middle East and Egypt (Mitchell 2002; Van Aken 2003, 2009, 2012; Trottier 2000, 2013), in Asia and Africa (Leach 1959; Geertz 1972, 1973; Bernal 1997; Mosse 2009, 2008, 2003; Anand 2011) and in Latin America (Boelens 1998b) show that the reorganisation and modernisation of water infrastructures and administration fostered by both colonial institutions and the present national governments and development actors are social engineering projects that discipline territories and populations, naturalising a new political and social order. They highlight the colonial legacy of water modernisation projects fostered by development institutions in many post-colonial contexts.

Following Boelens' studies in the Andes context (Boelens et al. 2016), the state's water modernization and irrigation development projects consist in processes of re-territorialisation that are aimed at integrating local communities in state water power structures and global economic networks, reshaping local and national hydrosocial territories. In fact, the state's and the international water projects are hydro-territorial governmentalisation projects seeking to change local dimensions of belonging and solidarity (of the community, neighbourhood, kinship). They introduce new ideas and values of water and space, connected to the state's network of power relationships, authority roles and normative system, but also of knowledge patterns and expertise. In this way, water modernisation projects foster the change of local practices and relationships according to new identity constructions, in order to create new subjects such as subordinated and atomised colonised subjects or citizens.

From an anthropological perspective, the contribution of this study consists in understanding how the structural relations of power (Wolf 1990) exercised through water shape the contexts of social interactions and define the kinds of possible meanings, affecting the processes of identity construction, the local ideas about the nation and the state (Gupta 1995) and the way the subjects practice citizenship and perceive political belonging.

A great attention is paid to the processes of legitimisation on which the exertion of every form of political power is grounded (Godelier 2004). The governmentalisation of territories is produced and legitimised by the creation of new water discourses, knowledge and "truths", which are aimed at ensure particular water interests, hierarchies, policies, and management patterns.

This brings us to the following theoretical reflections concerning water modernisation as a discursive construction.

### *Water modernisation as a discursive construction*

In his book *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes. Essai d'anthropologie symétrique* (Latour 1991), Latour shows the connection between the naturalist ontological divide between the realm of “nature” and that of culture and that between “modern” and “traditional” societies. According to the modernist ideologies, Western societies differ from the other ones for their ability to really know “the laws of nature” and, thus, to control them, thanks to the scientific epistemology. The scientific methodologies allow the knowledge of the world by understanding the material, physical processes, objectifying them, “purifying” them from the interference of the subjective representations and interpretations of the person who knows.

Kaika (2005) analyses the discursive constructions of the purified drinking water and the “bad water” (Kaika 2005:54) in the framework of processes of industrialisation and urbanisation in Europe, understood as socio-ecological processes. Following Latour’s critics of the ontological separation between nature and culture, she shows all kinds of water are socio-natural hybrids, materially produced as commodity through social relations of production, but socially constructed as natural, and thus, alienated from social processes. The naturalisation of water, as well as the construction of underground water networks, masks the social production of water and the power relationships involved in its production and distribution.

According to Kaika, the material production of drinking water and the discursive construction of the difference between it and untreated waters have not entailed only new social and material relationships mediating the access to water ruled by the market. Besides the change of the physical and social character of water, they also lead to different social constructions of space and to connected new marks of social differentiation and dynamics of exclusions.

Following these reflections, the modernist ideologies defining water issues as a technical efficiency are to be studied as “politics of nature” (Latour 1999) with a key role in the imagination and invention of the “other” as “colonised” or “underdeveloped” and in the legitimisation of development interventions.

This discursive construction allows naturalising and masking the dynamics of domination and marginalisation conveyed by water techno-politics (Mitchell 2002), which are political strategies defined as technical matters and masked behind the modernisation mission.

In particular, this study addresses the role of discourses about water scarcity – but also other environmental dynamics - both in the state’s processes of domination and in local dynamics of resistance.

The studies of water of Van Aken and Linton (Van Aken 2012; Linton 2010) explain the political character of the adoption of a universalised and naturalised conception of water “scarcity”, which has been invented in Western countries during the industrial revolution.

While previously water scarcity was viewed as a contextual condition of specific arid territories, relative and connected to changeable ecological conditions, since the beginning of the nineteenth century water scarcity has been constructed as a universal condition (Mehta 2001; Linton 2010). This discursive construction of water legitimises development agencies and governments’ hydro-politics (Trottier 1999) and masks their responsibilities in the creation of increasing water stress conditions experienced by marginalised people, in arid and semi-arid contexts characterised by changing and unpredictable conditions of water availability. Indeed, in line with Latour’s (1991) conceptualisation of “nature”, both Van Aken’s studies in the Jordan Valley and Mehta’s researches in India show that water scarcity are socio-natural hybrids. They are both ecological and anthropogenic processes (Van Aken 2003), produced by the interrelation between changing ecological conditions and social and political dynamics (Mehta 2001) by development policies. At the same time, water scarcity is socially constructed as natural, and thus, alienated from social and cultural processes and power relationships producing them, which are naturalised together with water. These politics of nature (Latour 1999) mask the social and power relationships which have produced them.

In my research I analyse how, besides the construction of historical memories and strategies of cultural reification, different social actors, such as the Israeli state, the PNA, development NGOs and local interest groups, adopt competitive ideological constructions of water scarcity, which convey different representations of reality and conceptions of space, and of the relationships with the environment. These are aimed at ensuring conflicting interests, while legitimising multiple dynamics of domination at the local, national and global level, which contribute to increase marginalised people’s experience of water scarcity conditions in the local semi-arid context.

I show that the modernist view of agriculture, irrigation and water as a mere technical and economic matter, detached from the political, social and cultural dimensions, is a discursive construction that fosters the depoliticisation of development actors’ farming and irrigation technologies.



However, behind the claim of the neutral scientific character of progress, development agencies foster the spread of Western intensively political ideas about agriculture, irrigation, water, farmer, woman, public and private space, the relationship between the individual and the community, as well as politics and progress.

Such approach is grounded on Foucault's (1977) view of the relationship between knowledge and power, which highlights the role of the first in structuring social interaction. As every discursive formation, modernist ideologies about water modernisation entail a claim of truth of a particular cultural order. If normalised and naturalised as in the case of the development system, these cultural meanings take the form of a “regime of truth” (Escobar 1995) to the detriment of other meanings.

Given the assessment of the Western scientific and technical knowledge's superiority, local water knowledge and management patterns and their farming and irrigation techniques are reified as “traditional”, “underdeveloped” and, thus, “inefficient”. They are often considered as negative practices that have to be substituted by “modern” scientific techniques, thus leading to the production of systematic patterns of ignorance about the contexts of the interventions (Hobart 1993). Since the European colonial period, in Middle East and North African countries, these ideologies have been a means to de-legitimised tribal organisations managing water resources, defined as an obstacle to the building of a “modern” state and civil society.

### *Development as a political arena and a situated practice*

The study of the social implications of domestic water modernisation and rural development projects is carried out adopting an actor-oriented approach (Olivier de Sardan 1995; Arce and Long 1993; Long et Van Der Ploeg 1989).

The analysis of local Palestinians’ daily practices and discourses concerning the management and use of domestic and irrigation water allows addressing the role of agency in processes of identity constructions fostered by development projects, to investigate the relationships between power, meaning construction and agency (Peteeet 1994).

Development is viewed as a political arena (Olivier de Sardan 1995) characterised by the power dialectics between discursive and practical strategies and interests of multiple local, national, colonial and global, heterogeneous interest groups.

Domestic water and irrigation modernisation are analysed as intercultural battlefields between epistemic communities (Long and Long 1992) that are bearers of different water knowledge and normative systems. These convey conflicting imaginations of space and time, different ideas about the individual and the community, of the environment, as well as meanings of agriculture, development and politics.

This approach allows me to problematise the modernist dichotomies between modernity and tradition, locality and globality, developed and underdeveloped, deconstructing the PNA and some development NGOs' representations of local peasants' community as "traditional" and backward.

In particular, I criticise the dichotomous view of the relationships between the "traditional" tribal water management and the "modern" bureaucratic water administration of the state; the "traditional" moral economies and the "modern" market economy supposed as ruled by impersonal "apolitical" economic laws; scientific knowledge and techniques and epistemology and local "backward" knowledge, practices and cosmology.

Instead of conceiving the changes produced by "modernity" as processes replacing the "modern" to the "traditional", Escobar (1995) proposes to view them as producing a hybrid modernity, re-elaborated and reinvented by local social actors, who appropriate symbols and practices of Western "modernity" and carry out a re-conceptualization of "traditional cultures" in relation to their involvement in the transformation brought about by modernity. In daily encounters between different actors with different socio-cultural backgrounds, elements of the "modernity" and of the "tradition" are juxtaposed, leading to the creation of different modernities, that is to say, different negotiated realities produced by the articulation of tradition and modernity, global and local dimensions.

In my research, first I highlight that despite the supposed political neutrality of water modernisation and of the technical solutions fostered to manage water scarcity, these mirror a network of values and norms, which shape the planners' moral economy (Bernal 1997).

Following, I show that local social actors, including government and NGOs' employees, act as "brokers of meanings" (Islah 2007). I focus on the way the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn appropriate and reinterpret the new domestic water network and bureaucratic administration and the governmental farming techniques. Besides, I highlight how local Palestinians carry out a re-conceptualization of local farming techniques and ideas in relation to the radical social and economic changes. If these processes do not happen at the discursive level, they are shown at the level of practices and embodied knowledge.

Development techno-politics and their interpretation are shaped by historical memories, by ideas and expectations deeply-rooted over time, leading to the production of different meanings. Development is analysed as a situated practice, whose meaning and scope depend on the local context in which it is put in practice.

Concerning the farming development projects fostered in Wādī Fūkīn, I analyse how in local people's daily practices and discourses, the new farming and irrigation techniques and meanings and the local ones are juxtaposed and articulated, leading to the creation of a sort of "hybrid agriculture", negotiated practices produced by the interactions between global and local processes.

### *The State and tribal political organisations*

This thesis considers an important theme addressed by anthropological and other social sciences, such as the relationships between the "modern" political organisation of the state and the *'aṣabiyya* (tribal solidarity, group of solidarity) – defined by political sociologist studies about Arab Muslim world as a solidarity group consisting in a network of personal relationships legitimised by real or "imagined" blood ties (Roy 2004).

In Middle East and North Africa, during the European colonial administration and the following processes of decolonisation and nation-state building, governments, development agencies and social sciences adopted evolutionist and then culturalist and orientalist approaches (Bonte et al. 1991). These considered tribalism as a "residue" of a past traditional world, a backward "traditional" political organisation that hinders the building and development of a supposed "modern" state. Since the colonial period state-led water modernisation was aimed at detribalising local societies, by de-legitimising and dismissing tribal patterns of resources management and political organisations.

Since the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the political instability and crisis in the Middle East nation-states and the re-composition or emergence of tribal, ethnic and religious patterns of political belonging have stimulated new studies about the relationships between state and tribalism.

I draw on anthropological researches carried out the Arab Muslim world, such as in the Middle East and North Africa (Bocco 1995; Bonte et al. 2001; Roy 2004; Bonte 2004), which address the relationships between state and tribalism within an historical perspective. These studies highlight the "modern" character of tribal patterns of political cohesion, viewed as

changing socio-political constructions produced by historical and contemporary interactions between local, regional, and international social actors and institutions, including the state.

According to Bocco and Tell (1995), in the Middle East, both during the Ottoman Empire – in particular following the Tanzimat administrative and land reforms – and especially during the Mandates period, the state administration entailed the reorganisation of local socio-political structures. It led to the formation of new identity constructions and to the politicisation and increasing territorialisation of tribal identities in opposition to the state or in collusion with it. Similar processes occurred in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southern Asia, during the processes of nation-state building. These have often been characterised by the politicisation and manipulation of local tribal dimensions of belonging by state actors and local elites, in the framework of the competition between local social groups for the access to, and control of, the state's power (Dawod 2004). Some studies have highlighted that tribal political models affected the construction of nation-states and national identities and the functioning of state bureaucracy, showing that local, regional, national and transnational patterns of belonging are not incompatible (Van Aken 2003; 2012; Shryock 2001; Baram 2001).

According to Godelier's theorisation of political-religious power (Godelier 2004), both the State and the "*chefferie*" – a chiefdom ruled by a tribal aristocracy – are forms of political organisation, in which a minority group exerts the same kind of centralised political power. Their different political structures are grounded only on the scale of power territorialisation.

Political power is defined as the ability to represent a society or community as a whole, and to mediate particular individual and collective interests and conflicts, in the name of a common wellbeing. Power entails also the ability to put in action the decisions, imposing one's will through persuasive or coercive strategies, and in case it is necessary, by means of material and symbolic, physic and psychological violence. Finally, power is expressed also by the legitimacy accorded by people to the implementation of decisions, and by their compliance with them. In the lack of legitimacy, violence becomes necessary to keep power.

The analysis of the management of spring water and domestic water in Wādī Fūkīn adds to a theorisation of tribal societies and state. It shows that in the Palestinian territories tribal patterns of political cohesion are an idiom of solidarity adapting to changing political, economic and ecological life conditions (such as water availability). They represent a pattern of political representation mobilised to express very contemporary claims, connected to the

marginalisation of most of the local population by the political and economic elites and to increasing socio-economic differentiations. They consist in a response to radical changes related to the Israeli occupation and the PNA's creation, to water modernisation and commoditisation, farming commercialisation and the global spread of the neo-liberal individualistic ideology. Moreover, this study shows how the creation of the PNA has not led to the detribalisation of local society. The analysis of domestic water management allows me to show how these two political organisations overlap and how Palestinians mobilise both the "modern" political language and the tribal one according to the relational context, in order to claim their personal and collective rights.

Finally, the study of the tribal organisation in the village draws on the literature that criticises the anthropological studies about the segmentary lineage systems that view the tribal organisation as egalitarian: first of all, those of Evans-Pritchard (1940) about Nuer people, later re-elaborated by Gellner (1969) concerning the tribal societies in Morocco and by the anthropological literature about Muslim tribal societies in the '70s.

Differently, as highlighted also by many studies about tribal political organisation in Palestine (Cohen 1965), as well as in other Middle East and North African countries (Bonte and al. 2001; Bonte and al. 1991), the tribal political system is hierarchic. Following Bonte and Conte (1991) the tribal organisation is not grounded on unilateral patrilineal relationships, but on bilateral ones. Such a view entails the irrelevant character of the distinction between endogamous and exogamous marriages, to explain the tribal organisation as the outcome of marriage strategies consisting in alliances aimed at increasing the social status of each group, within a hierarchic organisation.

## **Methodology of the Research**

This study has been carried out during a ten months' ethnographic fieldwork (from April 2014 to June 2014; from May 2015 to November 2015; from June 2017 to August 2017) in the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn, situated in the south-west area of Bethlehem, in the West Bank (Occupied Palestinian Territories).

The main method of ethnographic investigation is the participant observation of the daily practices through which the inhabitants of the village of Wādī Fūkīn use irrigation and

domestic water, in competition with the Palestinian National Authority's water policies and the hydro-politics of the Mekorot (the Israeli National Water Company). This work inevitably involved the exploration of land use and farming practices.

This research has been realised thanks to the knowledge of the Arabic language and Palestinian dialect. The thesis has a glossary with the transliterated Palestinian and Arabic words that I wrote in the text, written also in the Palestinian dialect and connected to their vernacular and literal translation.

I produced some social maps with the collaboration of some local inhabitants. These maps have not to be considered as representations of a static situation. They offer only one of the possible visual representations of some of the changing dimensions of land and water use, connected to patterns of belonging and socio-ecological relationships which are subject to change.

Besides offering a visual representation, drawing these social maps has been an important tool of research, a means to know and understand villagers' socialisation of the space and the environment in the village, their organisation, cultural meanings and representations, materialised in the irrigation channels and pools' network and the division and use of land.

An important part of my fieldwork consisted in writing the oral rota systems ruling the access to the water drawn from each active spring in the village, thanks to some patient local farmers (table 1). Writing a rota system of access to spring water that has always been orally negotiated and handed down over generations is not intended to reify in a static form a system whose orality has always allowed a high flexibility and the possibility to adapt it to local social relationships, changing ecological conditions (such as the availability of spring water) and wider political processes. My intention was to offer a visual representation of the main changing norms ruling the access to spring water, according to the memories and ideas of particular persons, with particular interests and in a specific historical moment.

The rota systems have to be considered as only one of the multiple versions that can be written, given the oral, negotiated and changing character of the system. Moreover, there are multiple memories and frequent conflicts about spring water access, connected to contested norms in a framework of legal pluralism and to the past dispersion of parts of the extended families (after the Israeli evacuation of the village in 1956) and the consequent contested and always negotiated allocation of the water shares of absent people.

Connected to these processes was the farmers' emphasis of the difference between what they considered as the "official" and legitimate allocation of spring water rights and the actual use of water shares, which is considered as temporary, subject to change and, even more, highly

contested. I represented the difference between the representation of the system of water management and the actual practices of use and distribution (Fabietti 1997) - between theoretical and practical rights (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998) - by dividing each table in two parts delimited by borders marked with two different colours (blue and black). As I explain better in the second chapter, the reified representation of the rota system defines the rights of access of the past generations, living before the radical social, economic and political changes entailed by the Israeli occupation. This has entailed further difficulties while seeking to understand the networks of supposed or real kinship relationships between five or six generations of villagers, which are claimed to legitimise the present rights of access to spring water.

Similar reflections have been entailed by the production of a social map about the division of the land in the village (map 8), which is only one of the possible contested visual representations of this social dimension.

Israel does not recognise the PNA's land registration, in particular in the areas C, under the Israeli military administration and security control. Given that the farmlands in the village are included in an area C, they are subjected to the Israeli land legislation. The PNA's Land Department does not deal with their registration, which is banned and is not recognised by Israel. Therefore, the access to most of land is still managed at the local level, according to local power negotiations.

As explained in Chapter II, before the creation of Israel most of land in the village was shared by different extended families and ownership was conceived as mobile and negotiated even if private property was increasingly spread, fostered by the British colonial authorities. Land inheritances and transactions have always been mainly orally regulated.

As a consequence, the division of land in private properties is contested, especially concerning the tracts of land of those who moved to foreign countries after the village evacuation (in 1956), whose legitimate heirs are absent. These lands are not reallocated according to shared norms and social memories, fragmented as the extended families in a context of legal pluralism, but to power relationships and negotiations.

As a consequence of these dynamics, when I wanted to use a GPS to draw a social map concerning land ownership, I faced some resistances, even if only by few farmers. Moreover, this modern technique, used by the experts of the Israeli and Palestinian institutions to certify and register the families' land ownerships, is associated with the structural power configurations to which the village, as well as the West Bank in general, is dependent.

Given the many conflicts between villagers and the Israeli juridical strategies of land expropriation explained in the first chapter<sup>1</sup>, land ownership is a very sensitive subject that is difficult to address without raising suspicion and concern. Furthermore, the writing of the oral property divisions, even if done just by a researcher, was felt as a threat by some inhabitants, especially those whose access to particular plots of land was contested or the object of conflicts.

For these reasons, I decided to draw only the division of land between the large extended families living in the village, less contested (even if not always) and avoid representing their high fragmentation between many male heads of the conjugal families composing each extended family. Therefore, this map does not represent the division of the land in the village according to its use, but according to the hierarchies grounded on land ownership between the extended families, locally viewed as a main dimension of political belonging.

Also, in order not to raise too much suspicion, I preferred to map families' land ownerships manually, thanks to the collaboration of the head of the local Farmers' Cooperative, his brother and father, in the headquarters of this association, which represented a more private and less visible context.

After having established trust relations, I used a GPS to trace the itinerary of the numerous channels in which the irrigation spring waters flow, viewed as a socio-cultural organisation of the space that is subject to continuous changes.

The ethnographic method has been completed by gathering information through open interviews with employers of the PNA's institutions (such as the Wādī Fūkīn and the Nahḥālīn Village Councils, the Wādī Fūkīn health centre and public school, the Palestine Water Authority, the Palestine Land Authority, the West Bank Water Department), of the UNRWA and some NGOs (such as the Italian NGO Overseas, the Palestinian NGO WEDO, the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association called PARC and the joint Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmental NGO called FOEME), with members of local organisations (such as the Bethlehem Farmers' Society, the Wādī Fūkīn Agricultural

---

<sup>1</sup> The property divisions of the lands and the right of access to irrigation water have always been regulated orally. The only legal strategy to prevent that a land is expropriated by the Israeli army is to gain the official recognition of private land ownership by the Israeli Court, through long and expensive legal cases. These ones often have negative results for the impossibility of presenting certificates of land titles dating back to the Ottoman Empire, as required by the Israeli laws. This subject is deeply analysed in the Chapters I and II.



Cooperative, Women's association and Youth Development Association), as well as with many inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn and the West Bank in general.

Data and information have been collected also through an accurate exploration of some official documents produced by these institutions and of some articles in Israeli, Palestinian and international newspapers, as well as in those of other countries in the region.

The collection of accurate and updated data about Wādī Fūkīn and, in particular, the Israeli settlements of Beitar Hillit, Hadar Beitar and Tzur Hadassah has not been easy, because many information are difficult to be found, since they are hidden, inaccurate and even contested. It is important to consider the possible manipulations made by different Israeli or Palestinian institutions. For example, information about urban development and demographic data are at the centre of a struggle between conflicting representations of local reality. Moreover, the data are always and quickly changing, given, for example, the daily expansions of the Israeli urban areas in the Palestinian lands.

Just once I manage to enter in the Beitar Illit settlement: the lack of an ethnographic study in the Israeli settlements encircling the village is connected to both the methodological need of building trust relationships with local people – making them sure that I was not an informer of Israel - and the need of a cautious distrust, in order to not expose my own safety to possible high risks and to avoid the censorship and repression exercised by the Israeli army towards people bringing imagines and information outside Israel (as researchers or tourists).

I adopted a similar caution while making pictures in the village, as well as outside it. I often avoided photographing people, especially in the first fieldwork period, in order not to raise too much suspicion.

I deeply analysed my research postures, methodologies, strategies and ethical positions in relation to the particular Israeli colonial context in the Paragraph 1.1 of the first chapter.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

The subjects of investigation addressed in this thesis are organised in the following five chapters.

In **Chapter I**, the first paragraphs (1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) are consecrated to the analysis of my research postures, methodologies and strategies and of the changing local interpretations

of my role of researcher. These are investigated in relation to the specific Israeli colonial context, to the globalisation processes and to the local dynamics and ideas connected to the spread of development models fostered by local and international NGOs. I highlight how my role of researcher, my strategies and relationships have been affected by my being a woman and by my roles of wife and mother of a Palestinian. Some epistemology and ethical issues arising in the particular conditions of research production in the Occupied Palestinian territories will be considered.

Then, in the paragraph 2, I begin to explain the particular history of domination and resistance of the community of Wādī Fūkīn since the creation of Israel. In the paragraph 2.1, particular attention is dedicated to the villagers' construction of the social memories about this history and of their meanings, seeking to recompose the historical, identity and socio-cultural splits caused by the traumatic event of the creation of Israel and to give a sense to the present struggle against land expropriation.

The paragraphs 3 and 3.1 are dedicated to the temporal and spatial dimensions of the colonisation in the village. I explain how the Israeli urban development and architectural, juridical, security and administrative policies affect the spatial configuration of the village and the surrounding area, creating new almost impermeable village's borders isolating it from the surrounding Palestinian villages and urban areas, as well as multiple symbolic borders within the space of the village.

Attention is dedicated to the local environmental, material and social implications of the Israeli strategies – such as the creation of increasing conditions of scarcity of building and farming land and the restriction of Palestinians' movements. I address the local perceptions of the future of the village affected by the Israeli policies threatening once again its evacuation.

Finally, I show how the case of Wādī Fūkīn can be considered as representative of the Israeli “environmental colonisation” of Palestine, aimed at creating a new sovereign Jewish nation-state and national identity, by means of the control of local resources and in particular of water. While I trace the colonial legacy of the Israeli policies, I highlight Israel's continuous experimentation and multiplication of the political technologies aimed at disciplining space, territories and population, which characterise the modern state. The analysis of the Israeli army's strategies of fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories and atomisation of the Palestinian society is focused on their implications concerning Palestinians' perception of space, of time and of the Palestinian territory.

Paragraph 4 is dedicated to the social implications of the radical environmental changes entailed by the Israeli urban development around the village, particularly of the increasing

conditions of spring water (and, thus, irrigation water) scarcity. Water scarcity will emerge as a hybrid socio-natural process produced by the interrelation between changing bio-physical conditions and socio-economic and political dynamics at the local, national and global level. I show the changes of the socio-economic configuration of the community in Wādī Fūkīn, entailed by the new environmental conditions and by Palestinians' integration in the Israeli labour market and increasing abandonment of agriculture. These processes will highlight Israel's social engineering projects implemented through territory and water planning, aimed at hindering Palestinians' agricultural productive systems in order to integrate them in the Israeli state's power structures and to dominate them as subordinated atomised colonial subjects.

In the paragraph 4.1, I address the multiple environmental narratives about water scarcity that meet and overlap in this small village, such as that of Israel, the PNA and of some Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, as well as the local perceptions and discourses resisting to them. I explore the meanings of water, the conceptions of space and of the environment and the social identities that these different narratives convey, as well as the political interests they seek to ensure and legitimise.

**Chapter II** is dedicated to the analysis of the meaning of farming activities and of the local management of spring water.

Paragraph 1 addresses the new meaning of farming activities and the strategies to continue to farm despite the increasing Israeli constraints and the changed socio-ecological conditions, as a response to the Israel's strategies of land expropriation.

Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 are dedicated to the analysis of the cooperative management of spring water, used for irrigation, in the village of Wādī Fūkīn. I investigate the meanings it bears and its relationships with wider political and economic processes.

In the paragraph 2, I analyse the central role of spring water management in the material and social reproduction and in the cultural creation of the local rural community. I show that spring water actively contributes to define the multiple representations of the self and the other on which the individual and collective social identities are grounded, connected to the tribal political organisation. The investigation of the negotiations of spring water rights and the practices of exchange of spring water shares, connected to marriage alliances, allows me to highlight the local ideological representations of the tribal group and to problematise the centrality of the agnatic paradigm in the tribal organisation.

In the paragraph 3 I highlight villagers' reification and idealisation of the tribal management of spring water as a strategy to negotiate the meaning of home and community and to express identity claims, in the context of Israel's techno-politics and national narratives, of the tribal groups and extended families' dispersion after the evacuation of the village, of the increasing land and water shares' fragmentation and of the political, socio-economic and ecological radical changes and uncertain conditions.

Paragraph 4 explores the local social memories about the history of the community living in the village, connected to the historical reciprocal relationships between the local tribal groups and extended families and the multiple springs in the village. These memories reveal the dynamic political history of the community - despite its reification - and the centrality of the interactions between political and ecological factors, such as water availability and access, in defining people's livelihood and local economic and socio-cultural organisations, dynamics and changes. I will show the active role of the multiple spring waters and the irrigation system in the imagination and social organisation of space, of time and of the environment in the village.

The analysis of the idealised representations of the rota system of access to spring water will allow me to criticise the view of the tribal system as an egalitarian political organisation, showing its hierarchical character and connecting it to marriage strategies.

In paragraph 5, the analysis focuses on the changes in the hierarchies between the local tribal groups and extended families concerning the access to spring water. These will be revealed as connected to Israel's policies of land expropriation, to the integration in the Israeli labour market and the increasing abandonment of agriculture, to the creation of the PNA, as well as to the global process of water commoditisation. I will show that the differentiated access to spring water mirrors the changes in the sources of power on which hierarchies are built, which are connected to the socio-economic segmentation and to the position in wider power structures such as those of the PNA's institutions and the Palestinian and international NGOs. The amplified dynamics of conflict and inequality in the access to spring water entailed by these processes will highlight the increasing fragmentation of the local tribal patterns of solidarity. Finally, the legal pluralism ruling the tribal spring water management will reveal its "modernity" and interactions with wider national, colonial and global political and economic processes, allowing the deconstruction of its reification as "traditional".

Paragraph 6 is dedicated to the analysis of the conflicts and disputes concerning the spread of individual land ownership, which hinder the local community's cohesion facing Israel's legal

devices for land expropriation. These social dynamics will be connected to the temporal and spatial dimensions of the legal pluralism ruling the access to land: this is the product of the overlapping and interactions between the local, historical dominant patterns of land holding, the Israeli public land management restoring the Ottoman and British land legislation, the PNA's attempts at land registration, as well as the new moral norms regulating market transaction of land as a response to the Israeli strategies of land grabbing.

**Chapter III** focuses on the analysis of the daily farming and irrigation practices and strategies, in relation to the spread of new intensive farming and irrigation techniques fostered by rural development agencies and NGOs.

Paragraph 1 is dedicated to the analysis of the environmental, economic and socio-cultural implications of the adoption of intensive farming techniques such as hybrid seeds, green houses and chemical pesticides and fertilisers. I will take in consideration the new meanings of agriculture, of farmer and land conveyed by intensive farming techniques and the connected dis-connection between ecological processes and farming activities, which threatens the historical environmental and economic sustainability and the resilience of local agriculture. I will highlight that intensive farming techniques consists in techno-politics, social engineering projects masked behind the modernisation and development mission, aimed at the integration of local productive systems in the global capitalist market, seeking to create “developed” farmers, according to the Western model of agricultural entrepreneur.

In paragraph 1.1, I investigate the values, norms and social interests conveyed by the new irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation and private pools, which shape the planners' moral economy (Bernal 1997). The new techniques mirror the shift in the global approach to water management and the adoption of a new economic notion of water and water scarcity, entailed by the neo-liberal paradigm dominating the development system since the 1990s.

I analyse the spread of the new irrigation techniques as a “water governmentality” strategy (Zwarteveen and Boelens 2014) leading to the spread of the neo-liberal individualistic ideology and the idea of spring water as a private commodity.

The irrigation infrastructure is shown as a social and symbolical construct, connected to changing political relationships, hierarchies, patterns of belonging and authority roles. I highlight how the changes of irrigation techniques mirror the fragmentation of the tribal dimension of belonging of the extended family and the changing hierarchies and sources of power, affected by the integration in the labour market and the globalisation of Western middle class' values and ideas about the family. Then, I address the consequences of these

processes concerning the individualisation of the farmers' community and agricultural activities, locally viewed as resistance practices.

Paragraph 2 is dedicated to the investigation of local farmers' farming practices and discourses aimed at resisting to the marginalisation entailed by commercial agriculture. I show farmers' embodiment of an agricultural "counterculture" (Van der Ploeg 1998:43) and of alternative identity constructions allowing to gain spaces of autonomy and manoeuvre. Spring water, seeds, vegetables and other non-human beings will emerge as active actors contributing to produce local meanings and to shape local patterns of cultural belonging and differentiation and claims for identity and justice.

The inquiry is focused on the way in daily farming activities local farmers appropriate, mediate, reinterpret and articulate the new farming governmental techniques, as well as the local farming practices and ideas, in relation to the radical social and economic changes and personal interests. The outcome of the encounter between local farming practices and the dominant rural development models is shown to be a sort of "hybrid agriculture" produced by the interactions between global and local processes.

In paragraph 3, I bring to light the consequences of the '90s professionalisation of the local associations fostered by Western development agencies and of the connected models and ideas of development, agriculture and politics. The analysis of the management of local associations and of the distribution of the material and symbolic resources conveyed by NGOs highlights some local actors' appropriation of the hegemonic development discourses and resources, as new sources of power that lead to the emergence of a new elite. The de-politicisation and de-mobilisation of the local community and the amplification of dynamics of marginalisation are explained as the outcome of these processes.

In paragraph 4 and 4.1, I explain the Israeli territory planning that has led the gradual villagers' abandonment of mobile herding activities, such as the Israeli creation of new borders and of conditions of water and pastures scarcity. I will highlight the colonial legacy of Israel's strategies, which mirror the political technologies (Bocco and Tell 1995:26) adopted by the modern states to control, sedentarise and de-tribalise pastoral societies, viewed as challenging the Western "sedentary metaphysics" (Malkki 1992:32; 1995).

Following, I investigate the local implications of these processes and of the PNA's cultural construction of the nation-state and claims for sovereignty, concerning the local meanings of herding activities and mobility. I address the spread of a dichotomous view of sedentary farming activities and mobile herding practices and the connected new processes of social differentiations, in relation to the development of an intensive and commercial agriculture, to

dynamics of competition for the scarce spring water and land and to the global spread of neo-liberal water commoditisation.

Paragraphs 5, 5.1 and 5.2 are consecrated to the investigation of the changes of women's life and role within the community, conveyed by the development of a commercial and intensive agriculture (Paragraph 5) and by domestic water modernisation (Paragraph 5.1). In particular, I analyse the processes that bring to the increasing marginalisation of women's role in agricultural activities and public spaces, to their greater segregation inside the home and the increased dependence on men. These dynamics are connected to the change in the moral evaluation of women's visibility in public context, affected by the socio-economic segmentation and the connected hierarchies between public spaces. Showing women's ability to react to these processes of marginalisation, in paragraph 5.2 I address the critical importance of women's networks of solidarity and mutual assistance for the satisfaction of the family's needs, despite the increasing privatisation of women's social spaces. I highlight the women's important "invisible" political role both in dynamics of competition between extended families and in the building of patterns of solidarity that are critical to oppose the increasing fragmentation of this group of solidarity and women's marginalisation and isolation.

**Chapter IV** focuses on the practices and discourses concerning the management and use of another water flowing in Wādī Fūkīn, in specific the drinking domestic water.

The first two paragraphs (paragraphs 1 and 2) concern the overlapping and competition between the strategies of territorial governmentalisation of the State of Israel and those of the PNA, carried out through domestic water modernisation and techno-politics. These dynamics will contribute to the understanding of the role of water in the nation-state's contemporary patterns of discipline of territories and populations.

I show how the introduction of the commoditised, drinking water and of state water bureaucracies has reshaped the local hydrosocial network and territory, leading to the emergence of new relationships, knowledge patterns, spatial organisation and connections, authority roles, patterns of exclusion and meanings connected to water. It will emerge the key role of the material and cultural production of drinking water in dynamics of marginalisation and differentiation between Israelis and Palestinians, but also among Palestinians themselves. In paragraph 3, I will show that the PNA's attempts at water centralisation are hindered by water practices carried out by marginalised Palestinians (in the village and outside it). I will highlight that the manipulation of the domestic water networks and the refusal to pay for

water convey Palestinians' claims for their right to define their own rules and institutions of water management, the knowledge and values connected to water, as well as territorial meanings and identities.

Paragraph 4 concerns the spatial injustices and differentiated citizenships produced by the PNA's administration and distribution patterns of domestic water in the West Bank. Domestic water emerges as an active symbolic and material resource mediating the construction of the hegemony and legitimacy of the Palestinian elites controlling the building of the Palestinian State. These power dynamics are masked and naturalised by the building of underground domestic water networks, which are de-socialised producing a sense of "water alienation and fatalism", while fostering the disempowerment of local people's resistance.

Finally, in paragraph 5, the analysis of the functioning and local perceptions of the PNA's local institution of the Village Council highlights the interactions and overlapping of the logics, political patterns and institutions of the state and the tribal political organisation.

The study address the important debate about the relationships between the State and the tribal organisation (Bocco 1995; Bonte et al. 2001; Bonte 2004), showing the "modernity" of the latter and highlighting the importance of a deconstructive approach (Dresch 2010) in the theorisation of both tribal societies and the State.

Finally, I show how the creation of the PNA has entailed changes in the criteria for the construction of legitimacy, sources of authority and status hierarchies, leading to new dynamics of differentiation that hinder the national political cohesion facing the Israeli military occupation.

Villagers' idealisation of the *muhtār* and the embodiment of tribal patterns of political organisation emerge as a claim for self-determination and political autonomy, facing the marginalisation by the "outside", authoritarian PNA's power structures, perceived as illegitimate.

The last chapter, **Chapter V**, is dedicated to the processes of structural violence to which Palestinians are subjected and to their strategies of resistance. Besides these structural power relationships, the investigation focuses on the daily relationships of interdependence between villagers and their Israeli distant neighbours, which are conveyed and mediated by the multiple waters flowing in the village.

Paragraph 1 concerns the "state pluralism" produced by the overlapping, interaction and competition of the Israeli state, the PNA and the development system. These exert structural power relations (Wolf 1990) producing multiple daily forms of structural violence – added to



those entailed by capitalist market integration and class segmentation – and increasing dynamics of social differentiations among Palestinians. The Palestinians practices carried out to create “spaces for manoeuvre” to satisfy their daily needs and interests bring insight on the conceptualisation of the relationships between power and resistance.

In paragraphs 2, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, I show the multiplicity of the waters flowing in the village and their role in the mediation of daily local interactions between villagers and the Israelis living in the neighbouring urban areas. I highlight that despite the Israeli strategies of spatial segregation of Palestinians, the material and symbolic fluidity of water re-establishes a “social contiguity” between Israeli and Palestinian distant neighbours.

These dynamics highlight the multiple degrees of “otherness” and closeness that Israelis bear in daily interactions and the multiple colluding and conflicting ideas, interests and strategies characterising both the heterogeneous Palestinian society and the Israeli one, as well as the often contradictory relationships between them. In this way, this study brings insights into the problematic character of the dichotomous view of the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians, fuelled by both the Israeli and the Palestinian national narratives and naturalised by Israelis’ control and privileged access to water.

In paragraphs 3 and 3.1 I show that despite the Israeli strategies of spatial segregation, Palestinians and Israelis are connected by multiple interdependent, cultural, political, and economic ties (highly unbalanced in favour of Israelis), which allow Israel to keep the present political and social order. The spatial segregation of Palestinians and the economic constraints imposed by Israel have increased Palestinians’ precariousness and dependence on the Israeli market, bringing about a change in the local “political morality”. Israeli strategies of domination have led to the creation of new sources of economic and political power and terms of symbolic differentiation, amplifying the socio-economic segmentation and symbolic differentiations between Palestinians.

Finally, paragraph 4 is dedicated to the comparative analysis of the resistance practices and discourses concerning water of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, those of the ad-Dehīša refugee camp and the Israeli citizens living in the Bethlehem urban area.

I will show how the overlapping of the Israeli state, the PNA and the development agencies’ hydro-politics (Trottier 1999) fragments the Palestinian Territories in multiple “islands of water experience”, characterised by different conditions and experiences of water deprivation. In such a context, the place of dwelling – like the refugee camp, the village or the city – emerge as an important dimension of belonging that shapes the image of the self

and the “other”. The differentiated experience of Israel’s and the PNA’s water techno-politics (Mitchell 2002) affects the construction of different ideas about the political and water reality, leading to the imagination of multiple Palestinian “others”.

Finally, I will propose an interpretation of marginalised Palestinians’ claims for water freedom, affected by the long-time experiences of repression by the modern state since the British colonial period until the present Israeli occupation and building of the PNA.

## CHAPTER I

# THE HISTORIES, MYTHS AND UNCERTAIN FUTURES OF THE RURAL VILLAGE OF WĀDĪ FŪKĪN



*Figure 1: the village of Wādī Fūkīn (internet, 2015)*

## **1. The Local Foreigner. Methodology, Research Postures and Ethics between Colonisation, Globalisation and Development Processes**

These paragraphs are consecrated to the analysis of my research postures, methodologies and strategies and of the changing local interpretations of my role of researcher, in relation to the particular Israeli colonial context, to the globalisation processes and to the development models promoted by local and international NGOs. I highlight how my role of researcher, my strategies and relations have been affected by my belonging to the female gender and by my personal family situation, that is to say, my roles of wife and mother of a Palestinian. Some epistemology and ethical issues arising in the particular conditions of research production in the Occupied Palestinian territories will be considered.

The participant observation is the method that distinguishes anthropological researches from other social studies (Olivier de Sardan 1995b). The participation and therefore the adoption of a role within the studied community enable the researcher to have access to, or at least to approach, the points of view of the people he or she is studying. At the same time, it is a cause of concern with the validity of the investigation and the elaboration of the ethnographic material. By rejecting the positivist conception of the observation as neutral and the dichotomous conception of the relation between the subject and the object, I consider the ethnographic research as a dialogical process, a continuous reciprocal exchange between the researcher and the persons studied which entails the researcher's personal involvement. Despite the attempt to maintain an attitude and a position of "neutrality", the relations established by the researcher during the fieldwork entail his/her adoption of different roles and the management of the related expectations, obligations and prerogatives. The process of knowledge takes place also through the emotions and the subjectivities involved in these relationships.

For this reason, during the fieldwork and the writing of the ethnographic text, I analysed in a reflexive way the changes in my role of researcher, relating it to the research context. The latter consists not only in the environmental, material, economic and political conditions, but also in the dense network of reciprocal relations in which the researcher is involved, which are affected also by the present processes of globalisation. I considered my attitudes, expectations, discourses, practices and behaviours within the different relational situations, relating them to the interpretations arising during the field experience and the analysis of the ethnographic material. In this way, I showed how the same researcher's identity is the

product of a continuous process of self-construction in relation to the others and the lived experiences.

I analysed the continuing negotiation and manipulation of the dimensions identifying me as a stranger, a researcher, a middle-class Western woman and a person with her own inclinations and particular vision of the reality, as well as of the aspects that over time have enabled me to define myself as a participant in the local community. I have not analysed only my role's manipulations by the subjects of the research in order to achieve their personal or collective goals, but also the strategies I adopted in the continuous negotiation of my identity, in order to have a space of manoeuvre (in the literal and metaphorical sense) necessary to achieve my research's objectives.

In the following paragraphs, first I consider the specific conditions of research production in the occupied West Bank, in relation to my personal family situation and my research strategies. Afterwards, I highlight the influence over my research postures exercised by the processes of globalisation, which consist in the spread of the Western middle class values and of development models fostered by donors, in the context of the economic and political interdependence that since the 1990s characterises international relations.

### **1.1 Suspected Researches in the Israeli Colonisation Context**

First, I analyse the specific conditions of research production in the West Bank, connected to the Israeli colonial occupation, in relation to my personal family situation and my research strategies.

When I began my fieldwork in the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn, many of its inhabitants were surprised by my presence, whose reasons were not well understood. While I was observing local farmers' work, I often felt a sort of mistrust towards me, despite everybody was cordially greeting me. For local people I was *al-ağnabiyya* (the foreigner) coming from Europe or perhaps from the USA for unknown reasons.

I noticed the differences from my first ethnographic experiences, which I carried out in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša (De Donato 2013a, 2013b), situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem, about fifteen kilometres from the village. In this camp people were clearly more accustomed to the presence of the many foreigners who go to visit Bethlehem. Furthermore, many NGOs in the refugee camp are frequented by Western volunteers, although for short

periods, and two NGOs offer the possibility of staying in their local hostels. On the contrary, as local people told me, Westerners have always been passing through the village of Wādī Fūkīn in the daytime, but they never lived there. I often was told that I was “different” from other Westerners because I speak Arabic and Palestinian dialect, but mainly because I chose to live in the village. First, I rented a room in a local family’s house, then a small house that I obtained with great difficulty, thanks to the help of a person from Wādī Fūkīn who lives in Bethlehem.

My request for information often crashed the wall erected by the inhabitants to protect their intimacy. This wall of mistrust was fuelled by a widespread “suspect policy” characterising local relations in the context of the Israeli colonial occupation and military strategies, such as the use of local and non-local informers. According to local inhabitants, in Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories, people saying to be European or American researchers actually were Israel’s informers.

I tried to clarify the reasons for my decision to carry out a research in the village, by simplifying and especially depoliticising, as much as possible, the subject of my studies, at least during the first period. I said to be interested in the study of the local culture and the "traditional" management of the spring water used to irrigate the farmlands. I did not speak about my interest in the Palestinian nation-state building in the colonial context.

People often asked me: “Why in Wādī Fūkīn and not in other villages?” I usually replied that Wādī Fūkīn is a beautiful village and that its history, which distinguishes it from other villages, is particularly interesting. Indeed, the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn claim to be the only community (this uniqueness is not ascertained) that succeeded to implement its right of return to its village in 1972, after its evacuation in 1956. This answer seemed to satisfy, at least temporarily, the curiosity of my interlocutors, proud of their history.

In the context of espionage and political censorship and repression exercised by the Israeli army but also by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), I had to pay attention to what I was saying and to who I was saying it, as suggested by some local friends. Finding a balance between a cautious distrust and the reciprocal trust necessary to enter the life world of the “others” has not been always easy. For the same reasons, while writing the ethnographic text, sometimes I avoided to write the real name of people, even if, as locals often said me, “Israel knows everything”. The writing of the names of villagers, for example in the representation of the rota system of access to spring water, has been approved by most of villagers, some of them were interested in writing and publishing the rota system as part of the Palestinian cultural heritage. These people are affected by the national rhetoric, as I explain in Chapter II.

During the fieldwork, my behaviour was constrained by both the methodological need of building trust relationships with local people – making them sure that I was not an informer of Israel - and the need of a cautious distrust, in order to avoid the censorship and repression exercised by the Israeli army towards people bringing images and information outside Israel (as researchers or tourists).

"Where are you from?" To this frequent question, I often replied: "From the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša". The fact that I am married to a dweller of this refugee camp has contributed to diminish to a certain extent the degree of my "otherness", that is to say, my symbolic distance from local population. However, despite my husband is a Palestinian, he is not a village's native, and therefore he also was considered as a stranger, despite to a lesser extent. He is a dweller of the Ad-Dehīša refugee camp, where I carried out my first ethnographic researches.

My conjugal relationship has been immediately connected to another tie, that with one of my sisters-in-law, the wife of one of my husband's brothers. Despite she grew up in Jordan and went to live in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša (West Bank) just a few years ago, after she married, this woman is a native of Wādī Fūkīn. Sometimes, facing the difficulties of being accepted, I underlined this tie, which contributed to legitimise my presence in the village and to define my social identity. However, this was not enough to create trust relations which could enable me to have access to the life and the intimacy of local people. Some informers of Israel are themselves Palestinians.

My family situation affected the local interpretation of my role of researcher also in other ways. For my research, I walked all day in the streets and the farmlands of the village, I helped to harvest the crops or to graze sheep early in the morning and I visited the families in the village's houses. During the first period of fieldwork, I carried out these activities while I was pregnant. During the second period I did it carrying my son of few months old in a belt bag and a rucksack filled with everything he could need. Despite the carrying of my son, who is considered as Palestinian, entailed many difficulties and a great effort, it was viewed as a demonstration of sincerity. As a farmer told me when my son was about seven months old, "the guarantee of your sincerity is your son Gianthair". If I was an informer, I would not have put his security in danger!

The sharing of the suffering and the dangers connected to the Israeli military occupation played also an important role in building trust relations with local inhabitants. While talking about the problems and fears that Palestinians have to face daily, some people affirmed that being a European belonging to the middle class and therefore living in supposed

conditions of well-being and security, I could not understand what the Israeli military occupation means. On these occasions, I replied that I experienced directly the military occupation while living in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša for long periods, despite certainly my Italian nationality protected me from most of the violence made to Palestinians by Israeli soldiers. As is well known locally, compared to the village of Wādī Fūkīn, the dwellers of this refugee camp are even more subjected to the night incursions and violence of the Israeli soldiers. I told the difficulties I faced, like the lack of domestic water for long periods, and the suffering and fear I experienced during the incursions of the Israeli soldiers, who sometimes captured people I knew.

Also my personal experiences at the Israeli borders have been incisive. When I was asked with suspicion how I could enter Israel to carry out my research, I told the strategies I usually put into practice to obtain an Israeli entry visa, saying that I wanted to enter for tourism reasons and not to carry out a research. I told the body searches and questionings that the intelligence services often make to me when I leave the country, as well as the strategies to prevent them from taking or erasing all my ethnographic material from my computer. The global digital communication has amplified the risk to be discovered as researcher and to be refuse at the borders, because of the soldiers' possibility to find my works in internet, typing my name on Google or other search engines. These experiences enabled me to establish empathic relations with people who, unlike me, experience this suffering since they born.

Despite the risks and problems I had to face while doing my researches certainly were less dangerous than those to which most of Palestinians are subjected daily, they aroused a kind of satisfaction in my interlocutors. A satisfaction fuelled by my sharing of the experience of the "enemy's" immorality, even if I am not included in the dominated Palestinian "national community".

My willingness and ability to share the dangers and risks connected to the Israeli military occupation sometimes have been tested. During the sixth month of my pregnancy, a group of young women from the village invited me to see a photo exhibition about the life in some Palestinian villages under the threat of Israeli land confiscation and expropriation. This exhibition had been organised in the Palestinian village of al-Walaḡa, in occasion of the commemoration of the *Nakba* (disaster, catastrophe), as Palestinians call the creation of Israel in 1948. During the exhibition, Palestinian and foreign people made a demonstration, despite the girls had reassured me repeatedly that it would not have been carried out. The Israeli soldiers surrounded and attacked the people attending the exhibition, including me and the other girls, with gas and iron bullets covered with plastic. This demonstration and the related



risks for my pregnancy<sup>2</sup> took the meaning of a sort of initiation that I had to undertake to confirm my willingness and ability to share the Palestinians' dangers and risks. When the girls, scared by the military attacks, asked me to forgive them to have invited me, I understood that I passed the test. "This is Palestine", I said to them arousing their relief.

In this context, in order to gain local population's confidence and to gain access to their sincere interpretations of the local political situation, it was important also to dissociate myself from the support for the Palestinian National Authority, which is locally ascribed to the Westerners. Indeed, most inhabitants claim the illegitimacy of the Palestinian National Authority, whose existence depends on the consent of the Israeli military authorities and the financing of international donors and development agencies, especially the Western ones. These are guaranteed on condition that the National Authority pays the taxes to the Israeli state and maintains the control over the local population by suppressing its practices of resistance to the Israeli occupation.

## **1.2 Being a Female Researcher, a Mother and a Wife within the Masculine Agricultural Space**

In this paragraph, I analyse the influence of my gender belonging and personal family situation over my research postures, in relation to the involvement of local Palestinian NGOs into the international development system, with its globalised flows of money and intervention models, dominated by the neo-liberal paradigm.

In the context of the integration of local agriculture into the capitalist market system and the fierce economic competition from subsidised Israeli intensive agriculture, since the late 1980s many rural development NGOs have promoted intensive farming and irrigation techniques in the village of Wādī Fūkīn.

Before the evacuation of the village by the Israeli army in 1956, in the local family's subsistence agro-pastoral activities, the sexual division of labour was not overly pronounced. Today, local family farming is intensive and commercial and few women practice agricultural activities. As in the Jordan valley analysed by Van Aken (Van Aken and De Donato 2018), in Wādī Fūkīn the farming and irrigation "modernisation", connected to the positivist science, modern technology and to solutions considered adequate in all contexts, led to a process of masculinisation of agriculture, considered as a male domain of science and

---

<sup>2</sup> It is known that the gas used by Israelis caused miscarriage in some Palestinian pregnant women.

technology. Not only most of the engineers, aid professionals and economic experts are men. Development projects financed by international organisations target as clients a farmer who is implicitly male, failing to recognise the women's crucial role in the local family farming, which has become "invisible". This process entailed the marginalisation of women's role in agricultural activities and public spaces. Women's agricultural work is viewed as occasional, supplementary assistance to the more productive and economically important work of the male (Chapter III).

Furthermore, with the growing economic competition and the spread of Western middle class values through globalisation processes, families aspire to send their sons and daughters to university in order to improve their socio-economic status. However, because of the lack of job opportunities in the West Bank, almost all women are unemployed, while most men work in the building sector in Israel or in the Israeli settlements.

This situation entails a greater segregation of women in the house. The dominant cultural ideology, which attributes the role of economic provider to the man and that of consumer to the woman, has been reinforced compared to the past (Moors 1990). This process - which is connected to the dichotomous view of the relation between the domestic and the public dimension and to the polarisation of the roles at home and at work - has widened the gap between gender roles. Today, instead of being a place of daily life shared by both sexes, the farmlands have a different value, that of a male workplace, where women's daily work is a symbol of a low social status.

In relation to the social construction of the agricultural space (farming and irrigation spaces) as a masculine space, my belonging to the feminine gender and my conjugal relationship with a Palestinian affected my research postures, challenging my ability to be accepted and therefore to do my research. My interest in the use of irrigation water and in farming led me to spend a lot of time with farmers, who are almost all men. The trust relationships I established with them sometimes have been the subject of some women's malicious chattering. If my husband, a Palestinian, is a respectable person, how could he allow me to go alone to the farmlands all day, while he was at work in Bethlehem until late at night? My respectability and with it, that of my husband and his family, was at stake.

During my previous researches in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša, I was unmarried and without sons. Because of this, I was treated as a young girl despite my age (27 years old). This enabled me to have more access to the occasions of meeting among men, despite my belonging to the female gender. On the contrary, during this fieldwork, being a wife and a mother, I have been considered to be "effectively" a woman, coherently with the local

cultural construction of its meaning, connected to the reproductive function. This meant to be subjected to greater restrictions and difficulties of access to the public dimensions dominated by men, and to a greater control of my movements and choices exercised by men, but especially by women themselves.

A farmer's wife, jealous of the time I spent with her husband, sometimes told me with a malicious and provocative tone: "Me, too, I farm the land. Why do not you come to see my work?" Every time I replied that it would have been very interesting for me and I just needed to know when she would have gone to the farmlands. I explained that I was spending more time with men just because they were almost always present in the farmlands, unlike most women. Indeed, I spent a lot of time also with Fahīma, a woman of the village who, unlike the others, dedicates her daily life to agricultural and pastoral activities. For this reason, many villagers consider her as a man (Chapter 2).

Furthermore, the fact that I spent the days in the farmlands with my son, who was seven months old, was commented by some women of the village, but also by some men, with the expression: « *ḥarām!* (illicit) ». For these people, a so small child should have stayed at home and not under the sun. I replied by stressing all the precautions I took not to make him suffering, like the veils and the hats to protect him from the sun, the water to wet him and to quench his thirst and the food that never lacked. In negotiating my morality, above all I stressed that my behaviour was not very different from that of local women before the evacuation of the village by the Israeli army. As the older women proudly claim, women used to work daily in the fields with their little children, also if they were pregnant. Some of them even gave birth while working in the fields.

At the same time, in the constant oscillation between the affirmation of my closeness and that of my symbolic distance from Palestinians, I asserted a certain degree of diversity from local women. I stressed to be, nevertheless, an Italian woman belonging to the middle class, accustomed to a certain degree of independence and freedom of movement, may be different but no less respectable.

Many strategies I adopted to negotiate the possibility to participate to the public life of women, as well as of men, consisted in the construction of a respectable self-image according to local values, despite the prejudices and stereotypes spread locally on Westerners and especially on Western women. The diffusion of these stereotypes, like those on the lasciviousness of Western women, is probably amplified by the media such as the television and internet, to which everyone can have easy access. They are also connected to the Israeli

cultural colonialism and the supposed immorality of the Israeli Jewish population, some of which are of Western origin.

Despite I believe that the anthropological methodology entails exchange relations which involve reciprocity and the sharing of differences, sometimes I had to tell some lies, such as that I had not sexual relations before my marriage, like also some Western women choose to do, as I explained to them.

I often had to deny my insurmountable difference, for example stressing the important value that, like Palestinians, I associate to the family despite, according to them, I am an “individualist” European. At their request, I explained that I have very good relations with my husband's family, which I used to visit and with which I spent the feast days (such as that at the end of the Ramadan month), like local women<sup>3</sup>. When they asked me about my marriage, I explained that my husband and me, we met and married in the refugee camp, not in Italy, and that my mother, one of my sisters and many friends attended our wedding. In this way, I asserted the "legitimacy" of our union according to local values, a union approved by my family.

In order to gain access to the women's world and to explore their political agency - a dimension to which a male researcher has a more difficult access - I used to visit them at their homes. The visit is the main institutionalised form of public meeting and therefore it is an essential practice to participate to the public life in Wādī Fūkīn<sup>4</sup>. Another way of participating to women's relationships was to exchange food, instruments and favours with women living in my neighbourhood, a dimension of solidarity which has a central role in families' daily life and resistance.

My participation to the frequent weddings, which are important occasions of public meeting, was increasingly demanded and appreciated, interpreted as my willingness to participate to the local public life and to respect the founding moments of the local community. During the weddings, I stayed in the hall dedicated to women, separated from that of men, participating to their dances. I used to wear the “traditional” *thaub* (dress), currently used mainly by the more adult women, while the younger ones, and particularly those belonging to the middle class, wear clothes associated with the "modern" western culture. In this way, I affirmed my

---

<sup>3</sup> Despite this, I spent the feast days also with some families in the village, to understand the different dynamics and meanings attached to these particular days in the different contexts of the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša and the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn.

<sup>4</sup> The place of hospitality is a virtual public place, created by the bodies' movement and the ritualised practices of the visit.

involvement in the local women's group, as a woman who, despite her different culture, respects and shares local women's customs.

### **1.3 Channel of Resources or Useless Independent Researcher?**

In this latter part, I explain the relationship between the presence of international and local NGOs and institutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the local interpretation of my role of researcher.

Despite the international donors' rhetoric on the decisive role of NGOs in the democratisation processes as representatives of the civil society, donors do not implement a real control of local NGOs' decision-making processes (Hanafi and Tabar 2005). These ones, rather than including the participation of the civil society's segments, are often dominated by the organisations' directors and founders. In Palestine, NGOs often act like private enterprises through which their directors become part of a new "globalised" elite dependent on international development policies. Donors' resources for projects are distributed locally according to personal relationships such as patronage relationships (Chapter III) and become the object of an intense competition between local residents.

Like in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories, in Wādī Fūkīn several researchers, such as agronomists and engineers, have been sent by rural development NGOs to study in the village. What these actors were doing was clear for local people. On the contrary, they did not understand what an anthropologist like me was doing. If I am not an agronomist and I was interested in local traditions, why did the kind of cultivated seeds interest me? During the first research period, some villagers watched me with curiosity, wondered what "*al-aḡnabiyya al-maḡnūna*" (the crazy foreigner) was doing while walking all the day in the farmlands. The epithet "crazy" indicates the absence of *'aql*, which means good sense or rationality. In local ideas, this characteristic distinguishes human beings from other animals. To this qualifier is attributed a negative value, overturning the Israeli colonial rhetoric about the madness and animal character of Palestinians, compared to the rationality of the Israelis. Not understanding my work, some inhabitants viewed it as a sign of irrationality.

I wonder if the lack of understanding of my role of anthropologist is a symptom of the marginality of the anthropological profession in the development system. Surely, it aroused suspicions and uncertainties among local inhabitants.

Some events I have experienced led to important changes in the interpretations of my role in Wādī Fūkīn, influenced by local ideas about the presence of Westerners in Palestine, who are often associated to development actors.

Invited by a Political Sciences' researcher about water issues in Palestine<sup>5</sup>, I participated to an European Parliament delegation's visit of the village of Wādī Fūkīn, organised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)<sup>6</sup> to explain local water problems connected to the Israeli military occupation. After local inhabitants saw me walking in the farmlands with a group of people who, according to them, occupy an important political position at the international level, some of them began to consider my role differently, confusing it with that of the NGOs or other international institutions' actors.

To distinguish my role of researcher from that of the development actors has been even more difficult after the director of the local Agricultural Cooperative asked me to accompany a group of Italian people who stayed in Wādī Fūkīn for ten days as volunteers of the Italian NGO OVERSEAS<sup>7</sup>. Some local residents identified me as belonging to this group of Italians. Many people began to interpret my presence in an instrumental way, as a channel of access to possible economic and symbolic resources (such as funding or contacts with organisations for projects addressing them). In order not to create false expectations, I often had to emphasise the distinction between my temporary role of cultural mediator for the local Agricultural Cooperative and that of researcher, independent of the interests of all organisations, local or international.

This independent position freed me from the political ambiguity often associated to development actors, sometimes accused to collaborate with Israel or to contribute to normalise the colonial occupation, as I explained previously. However, for some local inhabitants it also meant my "uselessness".

Despite Anthropology has the potential of giving voice to the marginalised groups in a society, it is important to reflect critically on the myth of the "good anthropologist", whose

---

<sup>5</sup> This person is Julie Trottier, a director of research at the CNRS, the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

<sup>6</sup> The UNRWA (United Nation Relief and Works Agency) is a humanitarian organisation founded by the United Nations in 1949, to deal with relief operations for Palestinian refugees. The role of this agency is to provide refugees with basic services and projects for work development. The UNRWA is active in the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip) and in the Middle East countries where many Palestinian refugees escaped: Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

<sup>7</sup> In 2015 these Italian persons have experienced the first summer camp organised by this organization in Wādī Fūkīn, consisting in going in the farmlands to help farmers, while knowing better their problems.

contributions are supposed to be always appreciated and demanded locally. During my ethnographic experiences, I realised that the anthropological researches can be considered by some local people as useless or even inappropriate and inconvenient because they often violate the cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997) perceived locally and reveal dynamics and interests otherwise hidden or mystified. For example, my analysis of the political conflicts mediated by water, which fragment the community in Wādī Fūkīn, was considered by some people as a threat to the local political claim, while facing the outside world, of the local community's cohesion as one large and harmonious family. When I will give my thesis to the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, as I promised to do, may be not all of them will appreciate it!

These reflections lead us to consider the potentialities and ethical problems of an applied anthropology. How to apply anthropological knowledge? For who, a research can be "useful"? The value of a research consists in the production of knowledge itself? What are the consequences of the "restitution" of a research to the studied subjects and what might be their reactions? What's the anthropologist's role in the dynamics of the studied society and in that of origin? Which ethical and political choices are entailed by the answers to these questions?

Some personal choices contribute to distinguish me from international development actors, especially the Western ones. The choice of fasting during the Ramadan month was not only a way to show my respect for the Islamic religion and local culture and, therefore, my respectability. It meant, above all, my active participation to a practice, that of not eating during the same period, which involves the sharing of values, feelings and physical sensations contributing to the imagination of the international Muslim community. This distinguished me from international development actors, most of whom are Western people with a Christian culture.

My participation to events in which usually there are not international development actors allowed me to confirm the difference between my role and that of the latter. One of these is the funeral of a woman from Wādī Fūkīn, who died because of a cancer. My participation to this public event and to the suffering of the villagers (or at least of a part of them) has been appreciated as a sign of respect and of sharing of the values and practices contributing to create the local sense of community.

Despite the difficulties in reducing the expectations about my role, these enabled me to have greater access to the mostly male public meetings<sup>8</sup>, during which, on the contrary, before I was excluded or invited to stay among the women.

My participation to the European Parliament delegation's visit of Wādī Fūkīn allowed me to negotiate the possibility to attend a meeting organised by the local Agricultural Cooperative, usually attended only by adult men representing their families because of their authority. If first my presence caused a great astonishment among these men, finally it legitimised my sharing of the conflicts arising between local families concerning the use of spring water, land and of the resources given to the Agricultural Cooperative by some NGOs. Indeed, after I attended the discussions and quarrels that characterised the whole course of this meeting, many people felt legitimised to say to me their personal opinion about some of the local problems and tensions.

In order to gain the confidence of my interlocutors, I never said to them, despite their requests, the opinions of other people about these conflicts. "I cannot say to you what Mohammed said to me, as I will never say to him what you're saying to me", I usually answered to the requests for information. In this way, I asserted my neutral position in the conflicts among local families, which did not concern me personally, by repositioning myself as a participant, but in any case stranger to the village community and its tensions.

By means of these strategies, I gained an increasing access to the dynamics of power and conflict fragmenting the community, which before was depicted to me as a large and harmonious family. Over time, I became a member of this large family, although with a particular role, which the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn defined, while speaking with other Palestinians, as that of "*al-aḡnabiyya al-maḥalliyya*" (the local foreigner).

## **2. The History of Resistance of the Village of Wādī Fūkīn**

Situated 9.4 km south-west of Bethlehem City and included in the Bethlehem Governorate, the historical Palestinian rural village of Wādī Fūkīn<sup>9</sup> hosts about 1353

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, the political negotiations among men, expressed through the language of the visits they make to each others' houses.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), as well as to a local farmer, "Fukin" derives from the Aramaic word "Suk", which means "thistle". Therefore, Wādī Fūkīn means the "Valley of Thistle" (ARIJ 2010).



inhabitants<sup>10</sup> and lies in a narrow valley, called *al-wādī* (the valley)<sup>11</sup>, and in the slopes of the hills encircling it, on a total area of about 3,000 dunams (in 2015)<sup>12</sup> - (1 dunam = 1000 m<sup>2</sup>). According to the Wādī Fūkīn Village Profile prepared by ARIJ (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem) in 2010 (ARIJ 2010), the history of the village of Wādī Fūkīn goes back 1800 years. Besides the ruins of al-‘Omarī mosque, on which the new *al-ḡām‘a al-kabīr* (the big mosque) has been built, in the village there are Canaanite and Roman ruins and old water channels and pools. Ancient remains have been found in the area, including remains of a chapel, cisterns, burial caves in rock, columbarium, and Byzantine ceramics (Dauphin 1998:915).

In 1863, during the Ottoman period, the French explorer Victor Guérin visited the village, which he described as “half ruined” and inhabited by few people. He noted that the village was the successor of an ancient town, as he found several ancient tombs carved into rock (Guérin 1869:321).

Wādī Fūkīn is mentioned also in the Survey of Western Palestine made for the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1883. I quote:

“Wād Fūkīn (L u). — A small stone village on the side of a hill, with a good spring in the valley below on the south-west. There are gardens of oranges and lemons near the spring. To the west of the village there are rock-cut tombs. To the east is a second spring, ‘Ain el Keniseh” (Conder and Kitchener 1883:27).

The remains of Jewish rock-cut sepulchres used as storehouses have been found on the west of the village's houses, while on the east, beside the spring called *‘ayn al-kanīsa* (the spring of the church), now included in the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement, there was the ruin of a little

---

<sup>10</sup>According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Wādī Fūkīn in 2013 was 1353. There were 217 households living in 244 housing units (PCBS 2013). In 2007, the total population was 1,168 (588 males and 580 females), distributed in 217 households living in 244 housing units (PCBS 2008).

<sup>11</sup> *al-wādī* means valley, but also river.

<sup>12</sup> Information provided by the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn, Aḥmed Sukkar, elected in November 2011 and reconfirmed on 30th May 2017. According to the Wādī Fūkīn Village Profile made by ARIJ (Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem) in 2009, the total area of the village was 3,262 dunams, on which 2,744 dunams were considered arable land, while 51 dunams were residential lands (built-up area), 80 dunams were included in an Area of Industrial, Commercial and Transport Unit, and 387 dunams were occupied by settlements and military bases. Of the 2,744 dunams considered as arable lands, 1,891 were rangelands and 2 dunams were occupied by forests. The access to most of these lands, which include the slopes of the hills encircling the village, is forbidden by the Israeli army for security reasons (ARIJ 2010).

church called "the ruin of the spring of the church", which dated back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>13</sup>. A little lower down the valley other ruins have been found, called "the ruin of the sacred place" or "sanctuary" (Conder and Kitchener 1883: 37-39).

Concerning the British Mandate period, the village is mentioned in the Report and General Abstracts of the Census of Palestine in 1922, compiled by Barron (1923). According to him, the village was inhabited by 149 persons (Barron 1923:21). Moreover, according to the Census of Palestine in 1931, the village was composed of 45 houses inhabited by 205 persons (103 males, 102 females) (Mills 1932:36). The map 2, at the end of the thesis, is a map drawn by British officials in 1936.



*Figure 2: the Palestinian village of Wādī Fūkīn seen from the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit (De Donato, 2015)*

A few days after my arrival in Wādī Fūkīn, a 20 years old girl brought me close to the top of the hills encircling the village, even if this is forbidden by the Israeli army. From there, I could capture with a look almost entirely this small village.

In the northern hills of the village, which have the highest altitude<sup>14</sup> and to which the villagers refer as *al-ġibāl* (the mountains), there is the only entrance of the village, a narrow

---

<sup>13</sup> The church had two construction phases: the first one in the 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., while the second one was probably between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<sup>14</sup> The village is located at an altitude of 643 m above sea level (ARIJ 2010).

paved road that branches from the road 375<sup>15</sup>, under Israeli jurisdiction, and drops steeply towards the village, winding through the hills like a snake (figure 8).

Entering the village, one can see the farmlands occupying this area, which suddenly appear behind the hills. Since most of these lands have not access to irrigation water, they are cultivated with olive tree groves, whose shimmering silver leaves glisten in the summer sun. Indeed, this tree can resist to water stress<sup>16</sup>.

After running along the northern cultivated lands, this road leads to the built-up area, composed of about 244 concrete houses (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - PCBS 2013)<sup>17</sup> built on the slopes of the northern hills until the beginning of the valley at their feet. Many houses have a little cattle sheds where women breed few sheep (5-8), which provide milk and cheese for home consumption. Some families have some poultry and few ones have a mule.

Then, the road branches off into two main roads which continue down, below the built-up area, in the south direction. These roads run along the two sides of the village's valley, whose lands are dedicated to agriculture, mainly vegetable farming. From March-April to September-October, the farmlands in the valley are cultivated with courgettes, cucumbers and white cucumbers, aubergines, chilli and capsicum (bell peppers), climbing beans, pumpkins, tomatoes, watermelons and melons, and spring onions (cultivated all year long). Differently, from September-October to April-May farmers cultivate broad beans, cabbages, cauliflowers, lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, rocket, spinach, squash, and asparagus.

Some fields are uncultivated, while many other host olive groves or vines. Other fruit trees, such as citrus and almond trees, walnuts, figs, prickly pear trees, are spread between the farmlands.

In *al-wādī*, the water flowing in the stone and cement channels branching off through the green fields reflects the sun's rays, shaping a sort of light skeleton that supports the valley's body. It is *māyyat al-'uyūn* (the water of the springs<sup>18</sup>), the water drawn from numerous springs and used to irrigate the farmlands via community management of a network of channels and pools, some of which, according to local inhabitants, date back to the Roman Empire.

---

<sup>15</sup> This road encircles the north-eastern part of Wādī Fūkīn, heads towards the north-eastern part of Hadar Beitar and Beitar Illit, where there are their entries, and intersects with the Highway 60, a military bypass road connecting Bethlehem to Jerusalem, under the Israeli jurisdiction.

<sup>16</sup> I analyse the material and symbolic role of the olive tree in the paragraph 1, Chapter II.

<sup>17</sup> Houses usually are white and made up of two or three floors.

<sup>18</sup> *'uyūn* means eyes but also springs.

Sometimes the valley is traversed by the goats and sheep of the few local villagers (two or three) who still practice mobile herding, despite the difficulties and Israeli constraints.

The space of the village is delimited by very clear borders inscribed in the local environment by the recent colonial history of Wādī Fūkīn, as represented in figure 3.



Figure 3: the area of Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato, 2016)

To the west, the village borders the State of Israel, and in particular, the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah. The 1949 Armistice border between the West Bank and the State of Israel, the so-called Green Line<sup>19</sup>, runs along the top of the hills encircling the west side of the valley, approximately 0.5 km from the village. To the north-east, the top of the hills encircling the village are occupied by the Israeli settlements of Beitar Illit and Hadar Beitar, whose building began in the late '80s. To the south the village borders with the Palestinian village of al-Ġāb'a. The view of the village was very different from the image that the Palestinian girl described to me, while bringing me to the hills. Looking at the western hills of the village

<sup>19</sup> The Green line is the demarcation line (rather than a permanent border) set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the Israeli army and those of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.

where the neighbouring Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah develops, the girl pointed at the horizon with her hand and told me about lush lands cultivated with cereals, forage and olive groves, which once belonged to the village and particularly to her family. The memories about these idyllic lands, which extended beyond the horizon, imagined and idealised as endless and luxuriant, are collectively reproduced and handed down over the generations. They refer to the period preceding the creation of the Israeli State in 1948.

Since that date, the lands in the village of Wādī Fūkīn have been contended between the Israeli army and the Jordanian one. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and also after the Armistice Agreement, the village was subjected to several attacks by the Israeli army and to multiple raids by the Zionist paramilitary group called Haganah (World Heritage Encyclopedia; Morris 2004).

According to the territorial provisions of the Armistice Agreement on 3<sup>th</sup> April 1949, around 14<sup>th</sup> April the Jordanian soldiers withdrew from Wādī Fūkīn, but its inhabitants remained. In July, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) drove out the villagers, claiming that they were infiltrators attacking Israel through the border. On 31<sup>th</sup> August, the Israel–Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission declared that Israel violated the Armistice Agreement, since the village had been included in the territory controlled by Jordan. The Commission decided that villagers should be allowed to return to their homes. However, on 6<sup>th</sup> September, when villagers returned to Wādī Fūkīn under the supervision of the United Nations observers, they found most of their houses destroyed and were again compelled by the Israeli Army to return to the Jordanian controlled territory (the West Bank). The United Nations Chairman of the Mixed Commission, Colonel Garrison B. Coverdale (US), pressed for a solution of this issue to be found in the Mixed Armistice Commission. According to the agreement reached, the Armistice line was changed to give back Wādī Fūkīn to the Jordanian authorities that, in turn, agreed to transfer some fertile territory south of Bethlehem to Israel (World Heritage Encyclopedia; Morris 2004).

Clearly, Israel did not respect this decision, given that in 1956 the village has been evacuated. Some adults in Wādī Fūkīn say that the village evacuation was justified by security reasons, because the Armistice Line crosses the village.

The western hills of the village (about 3/4 of the village's lands, an area of about 9,000 dunams on the total 12,000 dunams of the village<sup>20</sup>) have been absorbed into the State of

---

<sup>20</sup> I obtained this information from the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn and from other inhabitants. They do not correspond to the Village Statistics in 1945, which state that the village of

Israel. Here, in 1960, Israel began to build the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics - ICBS 2016:35) (See also map 3, representing).

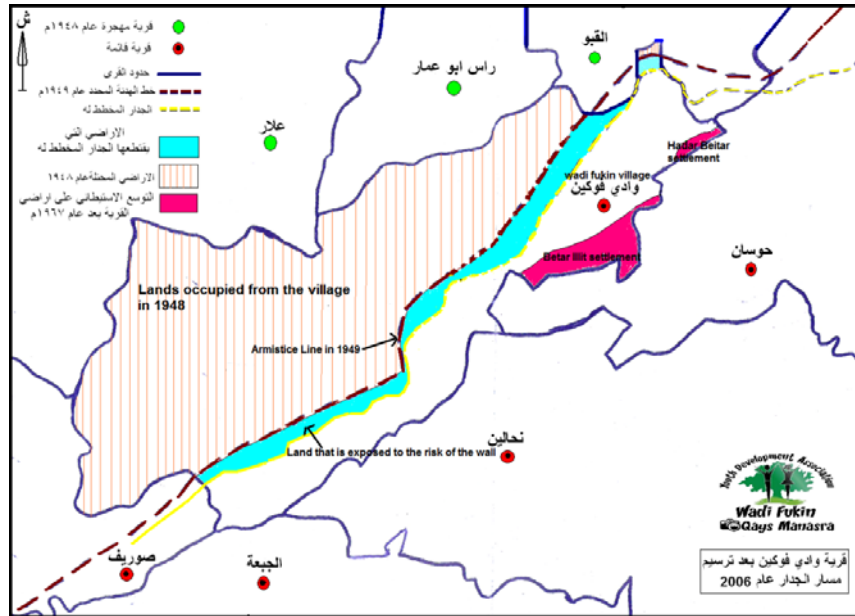


Figure 4: the map of the borders of Wadi Fukin and of the lands occupied by Israeli urban areas (2016)

In the built-up area of the village, hidden among the modern concrete houses, the ruins of some old stone houses - generally composed of a couple of rooms on a single floor - guard the memory of the village's evacuation.

Most of the inhabitants of the village moved to *muḥayyam ad-Dehīša* (the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša), situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem, about fifteen kilometres from the village - where I carried out my precedent fieldworks for the thesis for the Master of Anthropology. Other inhabitants moved to the neighbouring villages of Ḥūsān and Naḥḥālīn, while others

---

Wādī Fūkīn extended on 9,928 dunams and had a population of 280 Muslim people (Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics. Village Statistics, April, 1945. Quoted in Hadawi, 1970:58). Of these lands, 226 dunams were plantations and irrigable land, 863 were cereal lands (Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics. Village Statistics, April, 1945. Quoted in Hadawi, 1970:104), while 6 dunams were built-up (urban) land and 8,833 dunams were non-cultivable lands (Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics. Village Statistics, April, 1945. Quoted in Hadawi, 1970:154). This discrepancy might be explained by the strategies villagers carried out since the Ottoman period, in order to not pay land taxes.

went to live in foreign countries, in particular in the neighbouring Jordanian territory, as many other Palestinians did at the time. Indeed, since the creation of the State of Israel until the Six Days War in 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip<sup>21</sup>, Jordan administered the West Bank<sup>22</sup>, while Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip.

While staying in the refugee camp, women and men from Wādī Fūkīn continued to commute to the village every day, from the sunrise to the sunset, to farm their lands clandestinely.



*Figure 5: The ruins of an old stone house in Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato, 2015)*

This has been the destiny of most of Palestinian communities living in villages situated in the territory included within the Israeli borders. In order to create a nation-state for Jewish people, Israel forced large-scale displacement of Palestinians, who escaped in the Middle East and other countries, with the consequent scattering of groups of solidarity such as tribal groups or extended families.

However, differently from most of these villages, Wādī Fūkīn has a particular history. In 1972, after the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, most of the population whose origins are from Wādī Fūkīn (in particular people who did not expatriate<sup>23</sup>) has been authorised by the Israeli military authorities to return to live in the village, rebuilding their houses. Nevertheless, many people who moved to foreign countries are prevented from

---

<sup>21</sup> Since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, these are called “Occupied Palestinian Territories”.

<sup>22</sup> This name refers to the west bank of the Jordan River, whose east bank is included in the State of Jordan.

<sup>23</sup> According to some villagers the number of people who returned to the village was about 500.

coming back to live in Wādī Fūkīn (and in the Occupied Territories in general) by the Israeli army, with the excuse that they have not a Palestinian identity card (given that they moved from Palestine before the creation of the Palestinian National Authority).

Related to the mutable and unpredictable Israeli military strategies and to the negotiations concerning the 1949 Armistice Line, the reasons behind this authorisation are not easy to ascertain. Some villagers think that maybe Israel took this decision because the security problem was solved by the Israeli control over all Palestine. Differently, other people assert that allowing the villagers to return to Wādī Fūkīn, Israel made one of its biggest mistakes. Anyway, almost all people in the village, from children, to youths and adults, ascribe this success to the last *muḥtār* (the chosen one) in the village, who negotiated the return with the Israeli military authorities. The *muḥtār* was an administrative role created by the Ottoman authorities, consisting in representing the community of the village facing outside actors (like colonial administrators or Palestinians from other villages) and in mediating the negotiations to solve conflicts and disputes between families living in the village<sup>24</sup>.

Some adults mention a written, formal application which the *muḥtār* presented to the Israeli army, asking the return to the village. Others claim that the Israeli military authorities did not answer to this appeal and the villagers decided to come back without their permission. Again, other adults say that the Israeli army allowed them to return to the village in order to make space in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša to many Palestinians coming from the Gaza Strip. Many people remember the name of the family from Gaza to which they left their house's keys in Ad-Dehīša, where this family still lives: “We did not sell our house, as people in Ad-Dehīša do today. We left our house to other families for free, we wanted just to come back to our lands”<sup>25</sup>.

For whatever reasons they have been allowed to return to live in the village, all inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn proudly claim to be the only evacuated Palestinian community that succeeded to implement its right of return<sup>26</sup>, even if this uniqueness is not ascertained.

---

<sup>24</sup> I address in detail this administrative role in Chapter IV.

<sup>25</sup> In the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša families built their houses by themselves, enlarging the 7 m<sup>2</sup> concrete rooms built in the 1960s by the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), which administers the Palestinian refugee camps. However, refugees' houses are considered as UNRWA's properties and cannot be sold by refugees. People moving from the refugee camps have to give back the keys of their houses to the agency, which allocates them to other families. Nevertheless, people usually sell their houses.

<sup>26</sup> On 11 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution 194 (III), resolving that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for



However, the return to the village did not imply the end of the Israeli repression. Villagers had lost the access to a great part of their lands, which had been included within the Israeli borders. Moreover, between the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s (after few years from the return), the two Israeli *mustawṭanāt* (settlements) of Hadar Beitar e Beitar Illit have been built on the top of the eastern hills encircling the village, at the opposite side of the Israeli border, occupying other lands belonging to Wādī Fūkīn - respectively about 7 dunams and 379 dunams at that time (ARIJ 2010)<sup>27</sup>.

Since their creation, Tzur Hadassah and Beitar Illit are expanded continuously in lands expropriated from the village. Today the village looks like an island, an enclave almost entirely encircled by Israeli urban areas, which separate it from the surrounding Palestinian territory, particularly from the neighbouring Palestinian villages of Naḥḥālīn (to the east) and Ḥūsān (to the north).

The establishment of illegal<sup>28</sup> Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, under the authority of the State of Israel, began in the '70s, after the 1967 war and the following occupation of the Palestinian territories by the Israeli army. The aim is to expand Israel's control over the Palestinian Territories<sup>29</sup> (Freijat 2003). Currently, in the West Bank and East Jerusalem there are 196 Israeli illegal settlements and 232 settlers outposts, which take up about 45% of the West Bank and host 750,000 settlers, of whom 425-

---

the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible”.

<sup>27</sup> In 2004-2005 Beitar Illit extended over an area of 507.8 ha (Ma'an Development Center 2005). Accurate and updated data about Wādī Fūkīn and the Israeli settlements of Beitar Illit, Hadar Beitar and Tzur Hadassah are difficult to be found, because they are hidden, inaccurate and even contested. It is important to consider the possible manipulations made by the different Israeli or Palestinian institutions. Demographic data and information about urban development, for example, are at the centre of a struggle between conflicting representations of local reality. Moreover the data are always and quickly changing, given the daily expansions of the Israeli urban areas in Palestinian lands. I address this issue in the introduction of the thesis.

<sup>28</sup> The establishment of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories violets the Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (adopted in Geneva, 12 August 1949), which states that the “occupying power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies” (United Nations 1949).

<sup>29</sup> According to 2013 data from the Israeli Civil Administration, on the 671,000 dunams of land confiscated as state land in the West Bank, 400,000 have been transferred to the World Zionist Organisation to establish settlements, and 103,000 have been allocated to Israeli local authorities in the West Bank. Only 8,600 dunams, 0.7 % of the total, have been allocated for use by Palestinians, mainly for the resettlement of Bedouin. In addition, private lands have been expropriated for military purposes and then transferred to settlements (ARIJ 2014).

462,000 live in the West Bank<sup>30</sup>. Settler outposts are composed of a small number of settlers occupying strategic hilltops around larger settlements in order to connect them together, appropriating other lands. Even if they are built without official authorisation and, thus, they have not the same status of government settlements, they enjoy the support of government ministries and the protection of the Israeli Occupation Forces, which soon secure the area where the outpost is created and provide it with infrastructure such as roads accessible only to settlers and water and electricity connections (ARIJ September 2015).

The development of the Israeli urban areas redefines continually and strengthens the territorial borders of Wādī Fūkīn, which previously were more permeable.

Before Israel's creation, the British colonial administration (1914-1948) demarked the village's administrative borders, in order to facilitate the control of local communities and tax collection (Attallah et al. 2006), in the framework of the State's attempts at sedentarising the local population. As in the other villages, the community in Wādī Fūkīn was defined as an administrative unit collectively responsible for paying a joint tax (Cohen 1965), contributing to its territorialisation. The map 2 (at the end of the chapter) shows a map of the village drawn by the British officials in 1936.

Despite the British mandate's strategies of control, the borders of Wādī Fūkīn were still traversed by tribal groups and herders' movements and sharing of regional water resources and pastures, which shaped social geographies (Rothenberg 1998) wider than the village's administrative unit.

The livelihood of local inhabitants was grounded on the complementary integration of agricultural and herding activities. Given the central role of agriculture, the life was mainly sedentary. However, as in many other rural production systems in the Middle East, herding activities entailed a certain degree of mobility, as a necessary condition for securing the access to pasture lands and water. Space was imagined and socialised through tribal groups and herders' movements according to changing interdependent and reciprocal socio-ecological relationships, such as the variability of resources and political conflicts and alliances for the access to them. As shown by Cohen (1965), this relational notion of space allowed the resilience of local productive systems, which adapted to the seasonal and yearly variability of water and pastures in a difficult arid and semi-arid context, decreasing the

---

<sup>30</sup> Information are deduced from the satellite imagery of the West Bank, because the Israeli government does not make statistics on settlers and settlements' growth available (ARIJ September 2015).

economic risks and social differentiations. The Middle East and Nord Africa societies are historically characterised by the temporary alternation of sedentary and nomadic way of life, affected by changing ecological, political and economic conditions (Fabietti and Salzman 1996; Fabietti 1984). Sedentary and nomadic way of life are two models of adaptation to the environment, that have to be considered as opposite poles of a continuum of realities characterised by different degrees of stability and mobility (Salzman 1980).

Today, the Palestinians' access to the Israeli areas is strictly limited and controlled by the Israeli army. The new, strengthened borders of the village have entailed the restriction of villagers' movements and the loss of access to many farmlands, pastures and water resources. The consequent high market dependence and unsustainable and dangerous character of herding activities have led to their marginalisation and gradual disappearing. Today, in the village mobile herding practices are almost abandoned and villagers are completely sedentarised<sup>31</sup>.

## **2.1 The Foundational Myth of the Heroic Community of the Village**

Through the villagers' words, the oral history of the village's evacuation and of the return to it, handed down from generation to generation, has become a sort of foundational myth of the present village's community and, like every oral myth or social memory, there are different versions of it.

The evacuation of the village by the Israeli army is socially constructed as a traumatic event which does not just allow identifying a temporal order in the history of the group, but establishes also an epochal division, a fundamental change of civility in the village. It is the "seed" of a new temporal order and a renewed way to give meanings to the local history's memories. With the village's evacuation, the fragmentation of the life's continuity in the village is connected to an identity dialectics between what the community was before, and what is now.

The time before the evacuation of the village is referred to as a mythical time in which the identity of the community is produced and reified. As observed in refugees studies carried out in Palestine and in other countries (Malkki 1992, 1995; Farah 1998; Falestin 2009; De Donato 2013a, 2013b), this past period is idealised as the time of the community's cohesion, of the pre-modernity and moral purity in a place imagined as a lost paradise. It is an *illo*

---

<sup>31</sup> I analyse in detail this process in Chapter III.

*tempore* eternally present, which goes back to a far past (often identified with the Ottoman period, which takes a particular value)<sup>32</sup>, but also encompasses the present and the future time. Indeed, the values characterising the community's way of life in this period are handed down as principles guiding the present villagers' life.

The second part of the mythicised history of Wādī Fūkīn is the period lived in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša. This period is always described emphasising the heroic tenacity, cohesion and fearless of the community, while coming back daily to its lands in the village to farm them in day time, despite the Israeli army's attempts at repressing and repulsing it. As villagers claim, “we never abandoned our lands as instead, Palestinians in other villages did it”.

The elder women proudly claim how strong they were when they daily walked from the village to the refugee camp, carrying the harvest which they had the responsibility to sell in the markets of Bethlehem and Jerusalem (though the men had the responsibility to sell the most important amounts). As one elder woman said me, “at the time, just few people had a car”. Women used to work daily in the fields with their little children, even if they were pregnant. Some of them also gave birth while working in the fields or walking to the refugee camp.

The life in the refugee camp is described as a limbo where the community was waiting to return to its “lost paradise”. It seems like a static period in which the community's members acted just according with their aim of returning to the village, the event which would have re-established their world's order, recreating the continuity of their history and identity.

The community is described and reified as if it did not undergo any change in this period, despite the many contemporary changes of their livelihood (even if they continued to farm, the new generations were also involved in different jobs), the new urban life styles, and the dispersion of some villagers in the West Bank and in foreign countries. The about 16 years lived in the refugee camp are told as a long and patient struggle condensed in a brief moment, which did not affected the relations among the community's members and with their lands.

According to villagers, the moral values and solidarity relationships shared by the idealised community while living in the village before its displacement allowed it to be strong and cohesive also while living in the harsh conditions of the refugee camp, as well as in the present struggle against the Israeli expropriation of the village's lands.

---

<sup>32</sup> I explain the importance of this period in Chapter II.

Local oral histories illustrate their heroic venture of returning to live in the village as the resolving event which re-established the villagers' world's order, even if a changed one. *Al-'awda* (the return) is the event which orders and gives a meaning to the history of the local community. It is a central moment in the construction of the collective and individual self, a zero point in the history of the group, which reconnects the past and the present and gives a sense to them.

The last *muhtār* in the village is idealised as the hero of the village, whose wisdom, courage and intelligence allowed him to bring his people back to their homes, by negotiating with the Israeli military authorities.

As many people repeated to me many time, as a lesson learned by memory, a man said me:

“The *muhtār* brought us back to our village. He was so strong, that even the Israeli military authorities were respecting him. One day, he said to us to come back to live in the village with him. At the beginning, many people were afraid, and just few of us followed him. Later, also the others came back to live in the village”.

Among local inhabitants, the oldest generations keep the memory of the difficulties their families faced while returning to live in Wādī Fūkīn. They had to rebuild their houses in about ten days, as imposed by the Israeli army's conditions of re-settlement. First, they built few small concrete houses (first that of the *muhtār*), composed only by a room, where the numerous extended families clumped to seek refuge from the bad weather. Some people told to me that their family had to sleep for days under the rain and the snow, which sometimes also caused the collapse of the roofs built quickly. Over the time other inhabitants arrived and they built and enlarged other houses.

Viewed as a symbol of the strength and cohesion of the community of Wādī Fūkīn, the return to the village contributes to the public negotiation of the local meaning of community, which was presented to me as a single *'ā'ila kabīra* (big family)<sup>33</sup>.

The oral and mythical history of the return to the village gives a sense and strength to the present struggle against the systematic Israeli land confiscation, which threatens another time the village's evacuation and disappearing. It allows the villagers to hope and believe in the cyclical character of time, in which another eventual Israeli evacuation of the village can be opposed by the community, as in the past.

---

<sup>33</sup> The local view of the community is analysed in the next chapter.

However, the historical, identity and cultural splits cannot be recomposed completely by this event. This is clear when villagers' describe nostalgically their lost idyllic lands occupied by the Israeli State and the Israeli settlements, whose presence hinders the re-establishment of the past, moral, peaceful and autonomous way of life.

The community's fall towards the present moral corruption and fragmentation, mirrored by the increasing abandonment of agriculture<sup>34</sup>, is ascribed to the '90s building of the Israeli settlements and to the "modernity's" irruption in the village's life. The latter is identified, for example, in new urban middle-class lifestyles, in the entering of the television (which captures the villagers' time, interests and attention) and of the water taps in all private houses, as well as in the farming "modernisation" through the adoption of intensive farming techniques (such as hybrid seeds, chemical inputs and drip irrigation), fostered by international and local NGOs and companies. As shown in the third chapter, the present time of dependence (on multinationals selling hybrid seeds and chemical pesticides and fertilisers), immorality (in which even water is rented or sold) and individualism, is seen as antithetical to the essence of the reified peasants' life in the village before its evacuation: a time of simplicity, morality, solidarity and happiness.

By referring to an imagination shared by most adult men in the village, a person from Wādī Fūkīn said me:

"Previously the life was simpler and people had not the commodities and facilities they have today. It was a harsh life, but at the same time a better life, in which people were satisfied by the life's simple things, and appreciated the value of relations instead of money... they did not need too much to be happy, differently from today..."

The memories on the past in the village are selected and their meanings and values are shaped through the lens of the present perceptions. The collective imagination of the mythical past of the village's community before its evacuation and the values connected to it are continually negotiated and handed down through generations, broadening this timeless period until the present days, despite the many changes, as a model to educate present young villagers to a moral and "bravery culture".

However, for the younger generations, this mythical period is an abstract one. They did not experience it and, thus, they did not experience a cultural continuity with that time. It still has a central role in the collective and individual identity's construction, but its meanings

---

<sup>34</sup> The forms of agricultural activities and their evolution will be described more in detail in the third chapter.

multiply, affected by the youths' different views and evaluations of the present days. Even if young boys and girls, since they are children, claim the heroic history of the village as they lived it, the idyllic peasants' past told by their older relatives is often seen as a time of backwardness, harsh life conditions and too much traditional norms. It is a positive period, because of the freedom and autonomy from the Israeli capillary control (despite the previous colonial occupations), but also a time which many youths would not like to re-live in the same way. As a young boy said to me:

“I do not want to be a peasant, I want to be something else, to study at the University, to have a car, to travel throughout the world... older people cannot understand us, the youths, we are different and we want different things...”

With the spread of urban middle class values and the increasing socio-economic competition, the expectations of the new generations and the meanings they connect to farming activities and the past peasants' life changed. Young people are less interested in farming and aspire to have a waged employment and to increase their socio-economic status. As I show more in detail in the third chapter, this process hinders the social and material reproduction of the local rural community.

### **3. The Temporal and Spatial Colonial Dimensions in the Village of Wādī Fūkīn**

The Israeli Beitar Illit settlement (within the West Bank borders) and that of Tzur Hadassah (within the Israel State's borders) are expanded daily on lands expropriated by Israel to the Palestinian village of Wādī Fūkīn (and to those of Nahhālīn, Hūsān and al-Ġāb'a), by means of legal and security policies.

The State of Israel declares a land that is uncultivated for at least three consecutive years as *arḍ dawla* (state land)<sup>35</sup> and, therefore, public (for Israelis) and liable to be expropriated<sup>36</sup>. In

---

<sup>35</sup> Most of the territories in the West Bank are divided into three categories: private lands (whose ownership is registered at the Israel Land Authority), state lands (areas that haven't been worked and are not listed by the Israel Land Authority, and therefore are considered state-owned), and lands under survey or *admot seker* (lands that have reverted to the state because are unused for 10 years and their ownership is not registered, but which have yet to be declared as such). These surveys, which in many cases take years to be carried out, are aimed to determine the ownership of the land based on several criteria. In most cases, the declaration of a land's status is delayed because the government has yet to make the decision on the issue (Levy and Blumental 2014).

this way the Israeli army expropriates the lands to which it prevents the access, like the slopes of the hills encircling the valley, close to the Israeli urban areas, where farming, grazing or just walking is forbidden for security reasons. Once these lands were terraced and occupied mainly by tree cultivations and rangelands, given the lack of springs, most of which are in the valley. Today the slopes of the hills are uncultivated and in some parts covered by a “cemetery of olive trees” uprooted by the Israeli army. The Israeli strategy creates this further border within the village, which even if is not drawn materially, it is quite clear to local population and reduces the space for building, farming and grazing in the village.

Israel applies the Ottoman land legislation, later adopted by the British Mandate. During the Ottoman Empire (1800-1914), water and land were managed mainly at the local level, according to oral flexible norms changing from village to village, valley to valley. The predominant, historical Palestinian system of land tenure was the *māšā'* (Moors 1990; Atran 1986; Cohen 1965; Patai 1949). According to this communal land holding, land was owned by a cooperative unit, consisting in the tribal group or a confederation of tribal groups living in a village or an area. Families' rights of access to land and water were regulated orally<sup>37</sup>.

However, when the Ottoman hegemony was threatened by internal struggles for independence, the Ottoman authorities sought to increase direct control over local populations and to facilitate the administration of the territory, by means of the Tanzimat reform program adopted in 1839 and gradually implemented (Reilly 1981). This program was aimed at the “modernisation” of the state's administrative system and land legislation, according to the European model of state. In 1858, in order to increase tax revenue and control over local peasants, the Ottoman government adopted the Land Code (Ongley 1892), seeking to foster a private property regime.

Moreover, in the framework of state modernisation, Palestinians began to experience the legal devices allowing the state to confiscate peasants' lands and the Jewish immigration. The land legislation established that non-cultivated lands were considered as belonging to the state and could be confiscated and sold to Europeans<sup>38</sup>. Most of lands were sold to Jewish people coming from Europe and sustained by Jewish organisations like the World Zionist

---

<sup>36</sup> The Israeli law concerning the State lands is the Prescription Law, 5718-1958, enacted in 1958 and amended in 1965. Under this law, farmers are required to submit documentation proving uninterrupted cultivation of designated plots of land over a 15-year period (the ‘prescription’ period).

<sup>37</sup> I explain in detail this land tenure system and its social implication in the next chapter.

<sup>38</sup> As stated, in particular, in the 1876 Land Law concerning *mulk* land held by notables (Temper 2009).



Organisation, founded in 1897. Nevertheless, the Ottoman state had not highly centralised power structures and local communities were self-governing (Cohen 1965; Reilly 1981).

Following the Ottoman Empire's downfall and the partition of its territory into different mandates, in the Middle East the new states created according to the European model strengthened direct means of control of the territory and populations, by means of the political technology (Bocco and Tell 1995:26) invented in the European nation-states and further experimented in other colonial territories like in India (Van Aken 2012).

Besides the introduction of physical borders, which allowed a greater control of the territory, since the 1930s the British Mandate ruling Palestine (1914- 1948) engaged in a large-scale surveying of land and granting of titles, known as "systematic settlement" (Attallah et al. 2006). The British authorities adopted the Ottoman land legislation. In 1921 they issued the transfer law, which gave the opportunity (and the right) to turn individual land holding into private properties, intensifying land transfers to European Jewish settlers, whose agricultural settlements multiplied and expanded significantly (Temper 2009). Also, the British administration adopted a law concerning rural property tax, which established that a land non-cultivated for three years could be confiscated by the State to use it in a more "efficient" way.

The main aim was to detribalise local societies and sedentarise (Bocco 1993) and "civilise" nomadic pastoral groups, supposed as backward and hindering the construction of a modern state and the Western "sedentary metaphysics" (Malkki 1992:32; 1995), that is the idea of the natural character of a national identity rooted in a national territory<sup>39</sup>.

However, according to villagers, the British colonisation was less oppressive compared to the present *ihtilāl* (occupation), which entails daily struggles and forms of repression.

Today, the Israeli authorities restore some policies dating back to these previous colonial administrations, in an overlapping of different temporal and colonial dimensions. While the Israeli nationalist rhetoric legitimating the Israeli colonisation of Palestine imagines a symbolic continuity between the present "Jewish nation" and the imagined Biblical time of Israel (Braverman 2009b), the Israeli military authorities' policies create a colonial temporal continuum unifying the past and present colonial dimensions, as asserting the "natural" character of the subordination of Palestinians as colonial subjects.

---

<sup>39</sup> I address in detail the social implications of the spread of individual land ownership in the second chapter.

As for the previous colonial occupations, also for the Israeli Court land private property is a necessary condition to protect Palestinians' lands from *muṣādara* (confiscation). However, while before this was mainly a strategy of control and tax collection, today Israel aims at hindering the Palestinians' private land titles' recognition, in order to allow a systematic expropriation of land that Israel allocates to Jewish Israelis. Indeed, since the declaration of a land as state land<sup>40</sup>, Palestinians have 45 days to appeal it at the Israeli Court. The expensive<sup>41</sup> legal cases usually have negative results for the impossibility of presenting, as required by the Israeli law, the document attesting the individual land ownership dating back the Ottoman Empire, called *ṭābū* (written in the old Turkish language). The payment of land taxes is not claimed by Israel, as it would entail the recognition of Palestinians' ownership rights over local lands.

Given that during the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate people adopted many strategies in order to not register their lands' ownership and to avoid the payment of taxes, not all the families have lands' *ṭābū*, and just few preserved it over generations. Moreover, even if all *ṭābū* are preserved in the Ottoman archives about land administration, situated in Istanbul (Turkey), the access to them depends on a family's possibility to have the necessary economic resources. Furthermore, even if a person presents at the Israeli court his land's *ṭābū*, he has to prove his present property right, legitimated by the inheritance or purchase of the land from the owner specified in this document, which in the past were usually regulated orally. He has to retrace his genealogical tree (and, thus, his legitimate inheritance right) and the past land's transactions, whose veracity has to be attested by other members of the concerned families, which take the role of *šāhid* (witnesses). These procedures are often hindered by the disputes and conflicts about land ownership among Palestinian families belonging to the same or to different extended families or tribal groups<sup>42</sup>.

Even when the documents are provided, in most cases the Israeli Court shelves the case for many years (which entails the payment of huge trial expenses), delaying the declaration of the land's status because the government has yet to make the decision on the issue. In this

---

<sup>40</sup> The technical and juridical process which brings to a land's expropriation is systematic, entailing always a period of survey of the land, followed by the declaration of its status as state land and, then, its registration as Israeli state land.

<sup>41</sup> The *tasḡīl* (registration) as private ownership of each dunam of land costs between 700 and 800 dollars (Source of information: Māḥer Sukkar, a man living in Wādī Fūkīn).

<sup>42</sup> I analyse the social dynamics concerning Israel and the PNA's land registration in Chapter II, paragraph 5.

period, the land whose expropriation is contested has not to undergo changes (new crops or trees cannot be farmed).

Among villagers, Māḥer Sukkar is known to be the only person who appealed the confiscation of his lands at the Israeli Court and won. His lands declared under confiscation as State lands are situated in the south-eastern hills encircling the lowest part of the valley, and had not been farmed for many years because the Israeli army forbade the access to them. He appealed their confiscation in 1998, after he found out it at the Israeli television news, and he quickly planted 750 olive trees in these lands, which soon Israeli soldiers uprooted, given the ban of access and farming in Israeli State lands. Despite he presented all documents attesting his ownership of the concerned lands, the case is not concluded yet. Until 2015, the Court forbade Israel government to expropriate his lands, but it allowed him to farm just a part of them, without planting new crops or trees. However, the only previous cultivations were the trees uprooted by the Israeli army. Therefore, his victory is very relative, considering also that he spent a lot of money for the trial expenses.

From the village one can see with naked eyes the daily planned expansion of the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah (which in 2015 was home to 7,392 people<sup>43</sup>) towards the village of Wādī Fūkīn, occupying its lands beyond the Green Line. The peaceful silence characterising this small and quiet Palestinian rural village is often broken by the violent loud noise of the bombs used to level the lands in the hills for the development of this Israeli town, which every day is closer and closer to the village's houses. Farmers complain that the destruction of the habitat of snakes and ferrets makes these animals descend from the hills into the valley, infesting the fields and going to the village's houses. The ongoing building activities on the hills have a devastating impact on the local fauna and flora and might result in the decline of biodiversity not only in the village, but also in the larger area stretching from the Western areas of Jerusalem (where there are the Palestinian villages of Al-Walaḡa and Battīr, which has been declared as a world heritage site) to the Western areas of Hebron (Wādī Ġab'a, near Gush Etzion settlement block) (Qumsiyeh 2017).

Along the segment of the Israeli border (the Armistice Line) between Tzur Hadassah and Wādī Fūkīn, the Israeli segregation wall, whose building began in 2002 (during the second Intifada<sup>44</sup>), has not been built yet. This makes this part of the Israeli border more

---

<sup>43</sup> ICBS (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics) 2016:35.

<sup>44</sup> The Second Intifada, also known as the *Intifādat al-Aqṣā* (Al-Aqsa Intifada), is the second Palestinian uprising against Israel – a period of intensified Israeli-Palestinian tensions and violence. It

permeable to Palestinians' illegal movements, but it also offers to Israel a "passage" through which to expropriate other lands in the village and to expand its control over the Palestinian territories beyond the Green Line, absorbing them within the Israeli State.



*Figure 6: the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah, seen from the village of Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato, 2017)*

At the opposite side of the village, to the north-east, there is Hadar Beitar (the Glory of Beitar), a little Israeli settlement<sup>45</sup> made up of a few trailers and huts. In the village of Wādī Fūkīn most of inhabitants ignore the history of the creation and non-development of this settlement. Just few people have some ideas about this subject, but answering to my questions, they stressed the uncertain veracity of their information. However, all the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn were sure that the Israeli state was threatening to displace the Hadar Beitar settlers in order to develop the close greater settlement of Beitar Illit<sup>46</sup>.

Founded in 1990, Beitar Illit is one of the largest and most rapidly growing Israeli settlements. Israel considers it as a Haredi suburb in the Jerusalem metropolitan area, since it hosts orthodox and ultra-orthodox Haredi communities. Today Beitar Illit covers about 5,100 dunams of land, expropriated from the neighbouring Palestinian villages of Wādī Fūkīn, Hūsān, Nahhālīn and al-Ġāb'a. In 2015 it was home to about 49,343 people (ICBS 2016:7). The birth rate in Beitar Illit is one of the highest in Israel and stands at 1,800 annual births. Beitar Illit has the fastest population growth among the West Bank settlements.

---

started in September 2000, when Ariel Sharon made a visit to the Temple Mount, where there is the Al-Aqsa mosque. Palestinians viewed this behaviour as highly provocative and Palestinian demonstrators throwing stones at police have been dispersed by the Israeli army, using tear gas and rubber bullets.

<sup>45</sup> In 2001, this settlement occupied 74 dunams (ARIJ GIS Database 2004). In 2008, the number of these settlers was 30 (ARIJ 2010).

<sup>46</sup> In Chapter V I analyse in detail the history of these settlements and their relationships with the village.

Built on the top of the hill overlooking the eastern side of the valley, the Beitar Illit Israeli settlement dominates the village of Wādī Fūkīn for almost its entire length, from the built-up area to nearly the entire valley at its feet. Because of its elevated position and its closeness to the homes and farmlands in the village, from Wādī Fūkīn the settlement of Beitar Illit seems like awesome and threatening, arousing the impression that it is on the verge of flattening the village.

The settlement is so close to the village, that *al-ǧīrān* (the neighbours), as Israeli settlers are ironically called by local Palestinians, can be seen with necked eyes while moving by foot or by car, and the voices of the numerous children playing in the little playgrounds in the settlement can be confused, by a not accustomed ear, with those of Palestinian children. The music of the wedding parties in the Israeli settlement resounds through the valley, mixing with the music of Palestinian wedding parties or breaking the silence characterising the nights in Wādī Fūkīn, illuminated by stars and by the lights of the dwellings and streets in the Israeli settlement.

Despite the extreme closeness of this Israeli area, which is part of the village's neighbourhood, one can perceive a feeling of distance while seeing it from the village. This is an effect of the strategic elevated position of this settlement, enclosed with a security fence and whose main entrance - situated along the road 375, before the entry of Wādī Fūkīn - is closed by a big cancel and controlled by a checkpoint's guards behind it. The Palestinian village and the Israeli settlement are bordered neighbouring areas, built in contiguous lands, whose division is created by the Israeli architectural strategies of domination and control.



*Figure 7: the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit, seen from the village of Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato 2017)*

The strategic position of the Israeli settlements, which develop on the top of highlands, at a higher altitude than the Palestinian villages like Wādī Fūkīn, favours the Israeli army's protection of their inhabitants and the control of the underneath Palestinian territories. This is an old strategy adopted by local populations since the Ottoman period, when inhabited centres were built in the mountains areas to protect their inhabitants from the frequent Bedouin raids and the malaria epidemics spreading in the plains areas, especially near the coasts (Cohen 1965; Reilly 1981; Temper 2009).

These territory planning strategies inscribe in the environment the Israeli domination of Palestinians. The strategic position of the Israeli settlements and the appropriation of the sky in the West Bank, heavily guarded by military helicopters and drones, create and materialise the dis-connection between extremely closed Palestinian and Israeli neighbouring areas and a symbolic distance between their inhabitants, while exhibiting the structural subordination of Palestinians.

To the north, Beitar Illit (and Hadar Beitar) is connected to West Jerusalem by the Israeli road 375, which encircles the north-eastern part of Wādī Fūkīn, heads towards the north-eastern part of Hadar Beitar and Beitar Illit, and intersects with the Highway 60, which Palestinians call *an-nafaq* (the tunnel). This is a military bypass road, under Israeli jurisdiction, which connects the Israeli settlements of Gush Etzion, situated in Bethlehem and Hebron areas, to Jerusalem area, passing through a tunnel underneath the Palestinian town of Beit Ğālā (West Bank). Before reaching Jerusalem periphery, this bypass road is interrupted by an Israeli checkpoint called *maḥsūm an-nafaq* (the checkpoint of the tunnel) by Palestinians, situated in the area of the Palestinian town of Beit Ğālā.

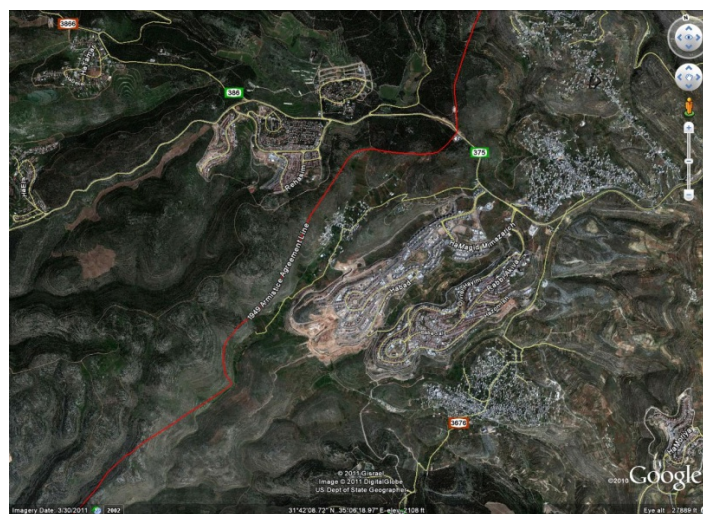


Figure 8: the Israeli by-pass road 375 (internet 2016)



Figure 9, 10: to the left, the Highway 60 called *an-nafaq* (the tunnel); to the right, *maḥsūm an-nafaq* (the checkpoint of the tunnel) (De Donato 2012)

This is one of the Israeli “bypass” roads allowed by the Oslo Agreement, which connect the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to each other and to West Jerusalem and Israel, bypassing “Arab” towns through highways, bridges and tunnels. These roads are often accessible only to Israelis, in particular settlers and soldiers<sup>47</sup>, allowing them to move without coming within view of Arabs.

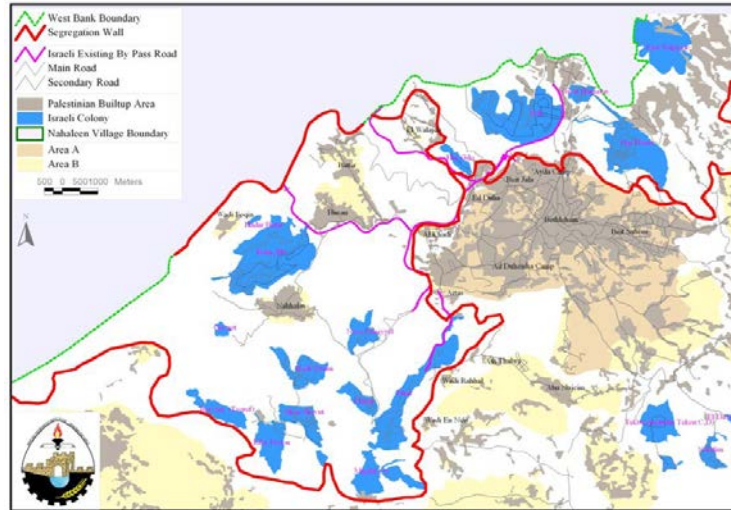


Figure 11: the Israeli By-Pass roads in the south-west area of Bethlehem in 2005 (in violet color) (Arij 2016)

While creating an Israeli territorial contiguity, these roads divide the Palestinian territories not only in their horizontal dimension, but also along their vertical dimension. As highlighted

<sup>47</sup> In total these roads extend over 870 km and 150 meters of buffer zone, which separates them from the neighbouring Palestinian areas. They take up 2.3% of the West Bank (ARIJ September 2015).

by Weizman, a social architect, Israel dominates Palestinians through a territory planning which follows a "politics of verticality" (Weizman 2003, 2007).<sup>48</sup> These politics are based on the new imagination of the territory as a three-dimensional volume, instead of a two-dimensional surface like in the cartographic imagination of the territory.

This territory planning creates an Israeli territorial contiguity, while dis-connecting the Palestinian territories not only in their horizontal dimension, but also along their vertical dimension. According to a vertical fragmentation of the territory, also the underground spaces in the Occupied Territories, including underground aquifers, some infrastructure and archaeological sites, become areas of conflict.

These planning strategies establish a vertical division of space and inscribe in the environment the Israeli domination of Palestinians. The appropriation of most of underground aquifers and the development of Israeli water systems<sup>49</sup> establishes the Israeli subterranean sovereignty creating a hidden interdependence between Israelis and Palestinians, grounded on the unequal sharing of common water resources<sup>50</sup>. At the same time, the strategic position of the Israeli settlements, which develop on the top of highlands, and the appropriation of the sky in the West Bank, heavily guarded by military helicopters and drones, create and materialise the dis-connection between extremely closed Palestinian and Israeli neighbouring areas and a symbolic distance between their inhabitants, while exhibiting the structural subordination of Palestinians.

---

<sup>48</sup> A clear example is the case of the Palestinian city al-Khalīl (the Arab name of Hebron, in the West Bank), whose *madīna* (old-town) is divided vertically. The Palestinian buildings have been enlarged vertically to host, in the upper floors, Israeli settlers who move in the town passing through their houses, without using the Palestinian streets, located underneath. Their houses and movements are protected by a high number of soldiers. Israeli settlers throw solid and liquid waste from their houses to Palestinians, damaging the Palestinian products in the historical market underneath, which is increasingly abandoned (because of the Israeli settlers and soldiers' violence against Palestinians, too).

<sup>49</sup> The Israeli strategies of territorialisation through the development of water infrastructures is addressed in the Chapter IV, paragraph 2.

<sup>50</sup> The segregated interdependence of Palestinians and Israelis is addressed in detail in Chapter V.



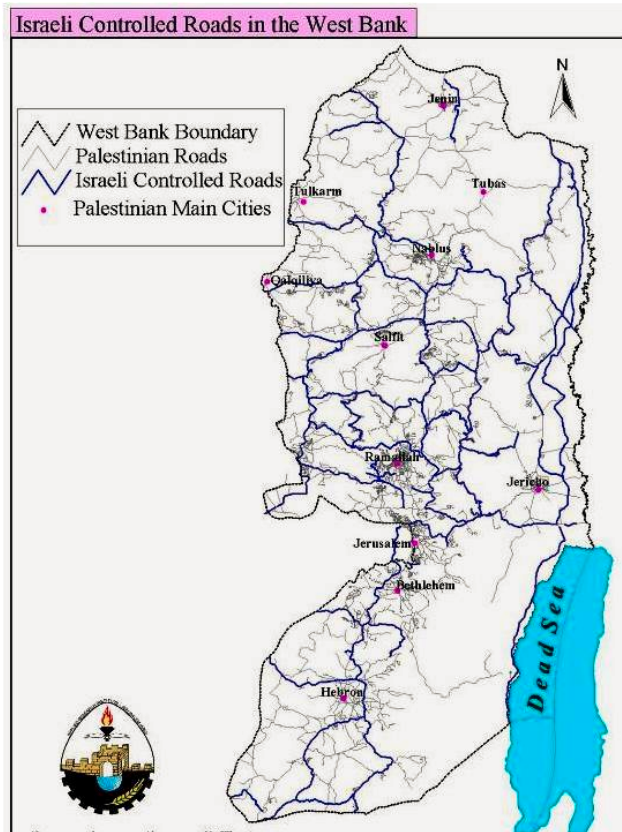


Figure 12: the Israeli Jewish-only bypass road in the West Bank (Arij 2016)

Being aware of these territorial strategies, some inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn think that in order to connect directly the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah (included in Israel) and the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit (in the Palestinian Occupied territories), the Israeli military authorities might build a large bridge crossing their valley, creating a higher and dominating Israeli spatial and life dimension. The construction of this bridge would imply the destruction of the environment and the loss of other lands in the village's valley.

However, the continuity between these two Israeli urban areas is planned by Israel in a different way, as shown in the following official map of these Israeli urban areas' expansion plans.

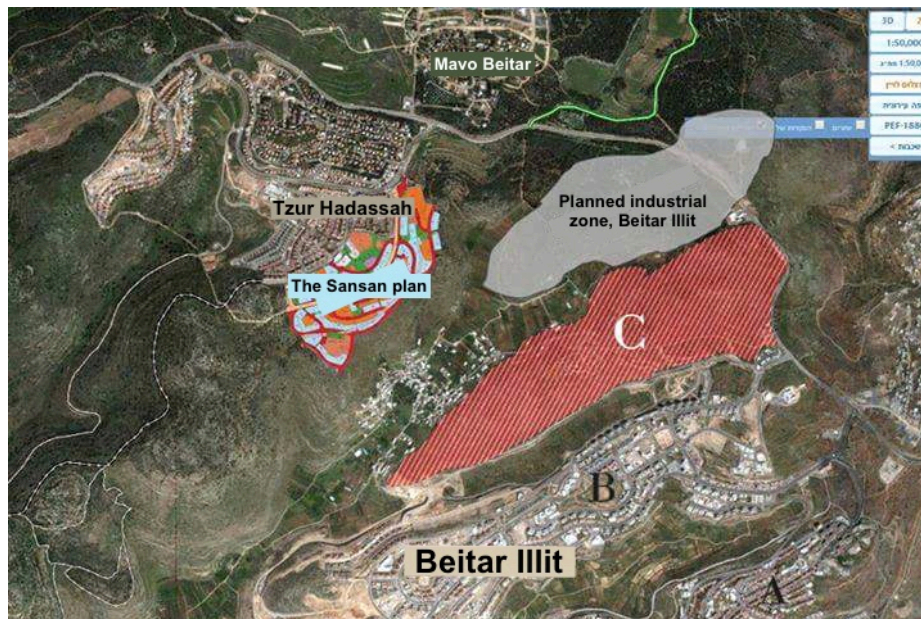


Figure 13: map of the expansion plans of the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah and the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit (FOEME, 2017)

Israel aims at expanding the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah in other lands of the village (the Sansan Plan). According to another expansion plan (the outline plan 426, approved in 1988), at the opposite side of the village, the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit - which occupies the two parallel hills marked with the letters A and B and in part the hill C - will be expanded in the whole hill C, occupying other Palestinian lands confiscated as state lands.

The continuity between these two Israeli urban areas would be created by the building of an industrial area connecting them, in the northern part of the village, locally called *al-ġibāl* (the mountains) or, since the English Mandate, the "English Forest Territory". The industrial settlement's project, planned during the Oslo Accords in 1993<sup>51</sup>, would entail the occupation of about 850 dunams of land of the village.

The implementation of these projects began in February 2015, when Uri Ariel, the Israeli Housing and Planning Minister, issued tenders to construct a new neighbourhood of Beitar Illit settlement with 218 housing units, in the hill above the village's school (hill C, see figure 11) - to the west of the Israeli settlement and about 500 meters away from the Green Line. These lands have been declared under confiscation as state lands. In June 2015, as well as in September 2016, villagers saw a great expansion of the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit over lands in the village (ARIJ February 2015), and on 3th August 2017, Benjamin

<sup>51</sup> For the Oslo Accords this industrial area had to be under a joint Israeli-Palestinian management (Source of information: Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council, 2015).

Netanyahu, the current Prime Minister of Israel, visited Beitar Illit in order to inaugurate the building of the new neighbourhood in the hill C, with more than 1000 housing units. As Benjamin Netanyahu said during the visit:

“We are connecting Beitar Illit to Jerusalem... There is no government that does more for the settlement in the land of Israel, then this government under my leadership”. The premier then joked, saying that Beitar Illit settlement is growing so rapidly that soon Jerusalem might become its suburb (Tovah 2017).

Moreover, on 11th June 2015, 800 olive trees have been uprooted by the Israeli army in order to raze 20 dunams of land in the north-western hills, between the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah and the Beitar Illit settlement, where the new Israeli industrial area is planned to be built. In December 2012, the owner of this land, Naṣrī Rašād Maḥmūd Mufarraḥ, called Şabrī, had received the Israeli confiscation military orders numbers 178 and 179, issued by the "Custodian of State property". Despite he submitted the Israeli Court to defend his ownership of the concerned lands, after two years the Court issued its decision in favour of the Israeli institution's interests.

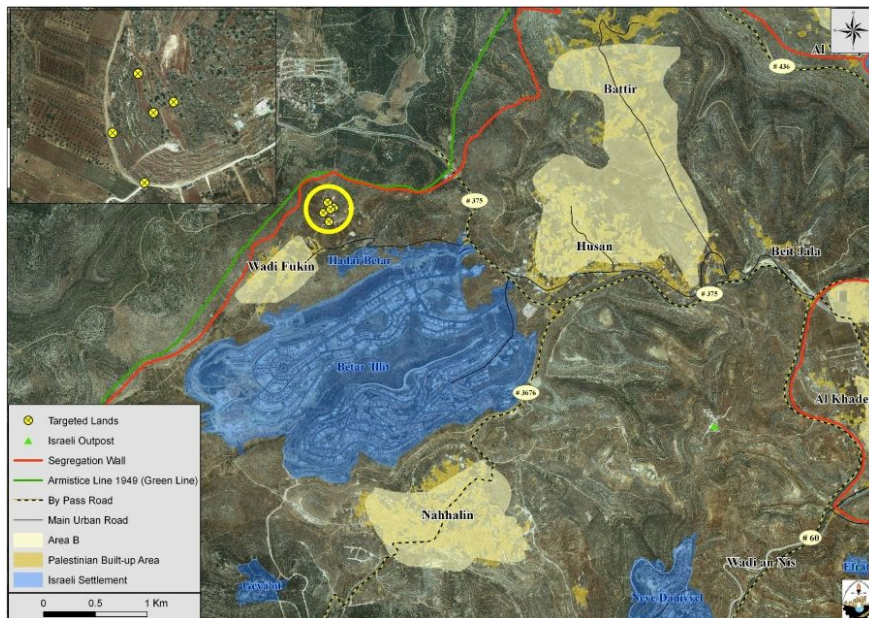


Figure 14: the lands in Wadi Fukin expropriated in June 2015 (internet 2017)



Figure 15, 16: Trees' uprooting by the Israeli army (internet, 2017)

While the houses of Tzur Hadassa continued to be built in the village's lands behind the Green Line, on 28th September 2016 the Israeli bulldozers razed 22 dunams of land, uprooting about 50 olive trees and destroying 2 water wells. According to an analysis carried out by the Geo-informatics Department at ARIJ, this land has been confiscated despite it does not lie within the area declared as state land (Morris 2004). One of its three owners (two brothers and one of their relative<sup>52</sup>) claimed that they did not received any notification by Israel. He stated that about 30 years ago they submitted the Israeli Supreme Court against the confiscation of the targeted land as State land, which has been cancelled, given that they proved their ownership.

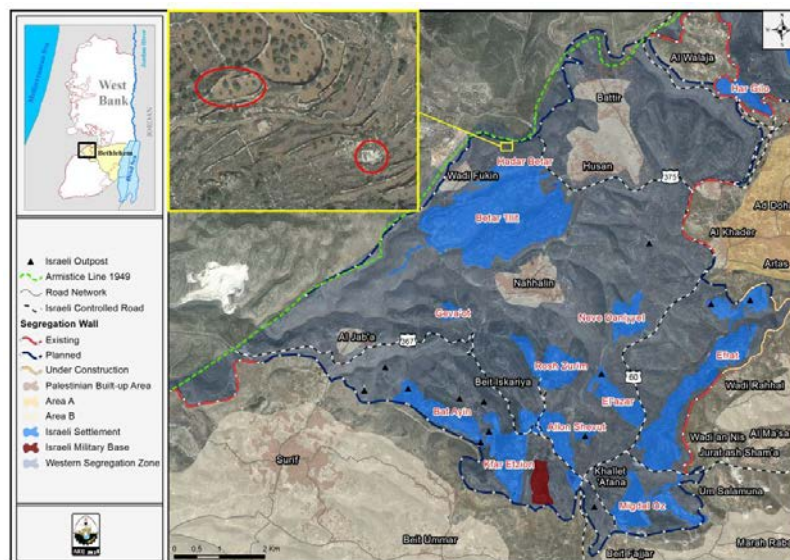


Figure 17: The lands in the village expropriated in September 2016

<sup>52</sup> Maḥmūd Moḥammed Ḥalīl Abd-allah, Iūsef Moḥammed Ḥalīl Abd-allah and Moḥammed Abd-al-Maḡīd Abd-allah, who originally are from the Palestinian village of al-Qabū, evacuated and included in the Israeli State on 1 May 1949 (Morris 2004).

The complete realisation of the Israeli expansion plans in this area would entail the confiscation of other village's lands and the village complete isolation from the surrounding Palestinian territory (and from the many services provided only by institutions situated in Palestinian urban areas, like hospitals, health centres, ambulances, fire and police stations and universities). The village would be turned into a Palestinian enclave, completely encircled and separated from Palestinian areas by Israeli settlements. Even its only entrance road, situated in its northern part, would be absorbed into the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit.

The Israeli expansion plans in the area are not limited to these projects. On 30 August 2014, the Israeli Civil administration - the body tasked with administering the Occupied Palestinian territories - announced the expropriation of 3,799 dunams (988 acres) of land in Bethlehem and Hebron Governorate, belonging to the Palestinian villages of Wādī Fūkīn, al-Ġāb'a, Nahhālīn and Šūrīf. Over a quarter of these confiscated land (1,155 dunams = 289 acres) belongs to Wādī Fūkīn.

The following day, the Israeli army placed placards across these lands declaring them as "State Land", according to the military order issued by the "Custodian of the Absente Property and Israel Land Authority of Judea and Samaria" (attached to the Israeli Ministry of Defence/Civil Administration). This order was based on the "Absentee Property – Judea and Samaria- 59/1967", an Israeli law issued after the Palestinian territories occupation in 1967<sup>53</sup>. According to this law, many local Palestinians have the contradictory status of "present absentees", given that they cannot have access to their lands, even if they are present.

---

<sup>53</sup> According to the Absentees' property law (1950), « "absentee" means: (1) a person who, at any time during the period between the 16th Kislev, 5708 (29th November, 1947) and the day on which a declaration is published, under section 9(d) of the Law and Administration Ordinance, 5708-1948(1), that the state of emergency declared by the Provisional Council of State on the 10th Iyar, 5708 (19th May, 1948) (2) has ceased to exist, was a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held it, whether by himself or through another, and who, at any time during the said period - (i) was a national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Iraq or the Yemen, or (ii) was in one of these countries or in any part of Palestine outside the area of Israel, or (iii) was a Palestinian citizen and left his ordinary place of residence in Palestine: (a) for a place outside Palestine before the 27th Av, 5708 (1st September, 1948); or (b) for a place in Palestine held at the time by forces which sought to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment; (2) a body of persons which, at any time during the period specified in paragraph (1), was a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held such property, whether by itself or through another, and all the members, partners, shareholders, directors or managers of which are absentees within the meaning of paragraph (1), or the management of the business of which is otherwise decisively controlled by such absentees, or all the capital of which is in the hands of such absentees » (Kirshbaum 2007).

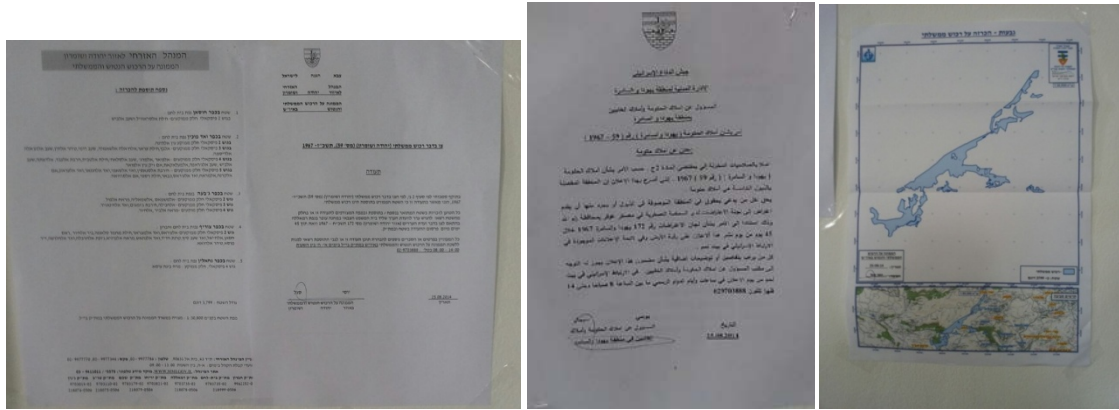


Figure18: Israeli official letter announcing that the targeted land is became a State land. The letter is written in Hebrew and Arabic and pinned on every cardboard sign planted in the targeted land (internet 2017).

On 5th September 2014, many inhabitants from the Palestinian villages targeted by this Israeli expropriation organised a Friday non-violent demonstration in Wādī Fūkīn (for the first time in many years) against the Segregation wall and the Israeli settlements. Palestinians suffered gas inhalation after the Israeli Occupation Army (IOA) attacked them firing teargas and stun grenades. The *hayy'et muqāwamat al-ḡidār wa-l-istīṭān* (Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee), a PNA's (Palestinian National Authority) institution, brought a case before the Israeli Court, contesting the land expropriations in the Palestinian villages of Wādī Fūkīn, Naḥḥālīn, Ḥūsān, Šūrīf and al-Ġāb'a. However, given the negative experiences concerning these legal cases, the head of the Village Council and the other inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn do not trust these legal procedures.

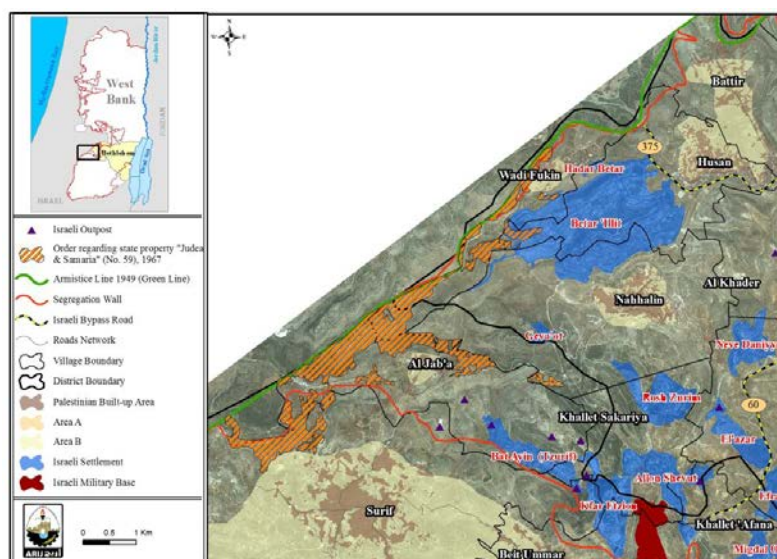


Figure 19: land declared as State land by Israel in August 2014. The biggest land confiscation since 1967(Arij, 2017)

This land confiscation - the biggest since 1967 - has been justified by Israel as a response to the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli Jewish boys<sup>54</sup> by Hamas militants in June 2014. The officials in the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bureau said that the Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon had not coordinated with them for the confiscation, by sending to them an update in advance, because it was merely a technical procedure (Ravid 2014). Indeed, this techno-political confiscation had been planned previously, in order to pave the way for the expansion of Gva'ot, an Israeli settlement south-east Wādī Fūkīn, which has been established in 1984 as a military base (Beaumont 2014; Ravid 2014). This settlement is included in the settlements' block of Gush Etzion (in the south-west area of Bethlehem). According to the Israeli expansion plan of this block of settlements, the aim is to unify them by expropriating all the south-west area of Bethlehem and, then, to annex this area to Israel. In this way, the Bethlehem Governorate would lose its biggest agricultural area, which is a main source of local resources (ARIJ 2005).

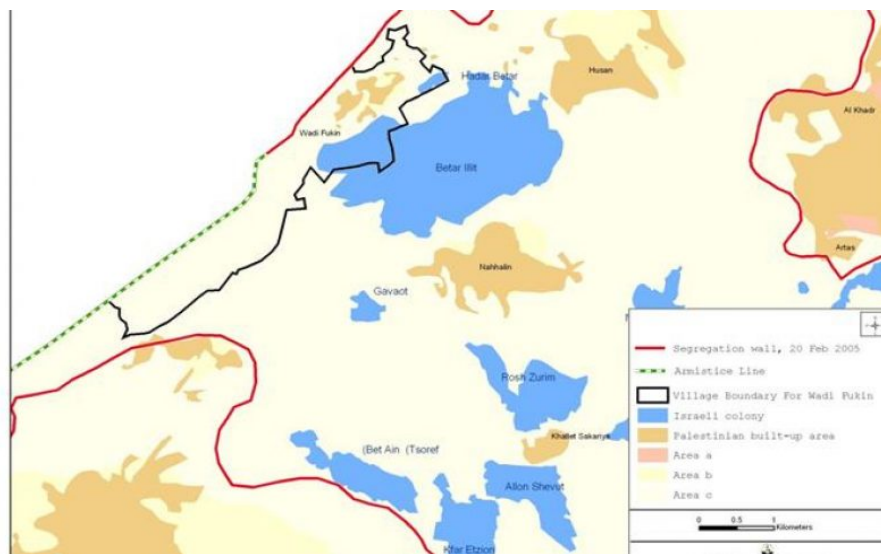


Figure 20: the settlements' block of Gush Etzion (in the south-west area of Bethlehem), (internet 2017)

The planned inclusion in Israel of the south-west area of Bethlehem is mirrored also by the path of the Israeli *ǧidār* (wall), according to the wall map issued on 30th April 2007 by the landscape architectures of the Israeli Ministry of Defence. The wall, which is not

<sup>54</sup> Eyal Yifrah, Naftali Fraenkel and Gilad Shaar.

completed yet, is planned to be built to the east of the Palestinian villages in the south-west area of Bethlehem (Wādī Fūkīn, Naḥḥālīn, Ḥūsān, Battīr, Al-Walaḡa, al-Ġāb'a).

With the building of the wall, these Palestinian villages, which today are included in an area delimited to the west by the Armistice Line, and to the east, north and south, by Israeli settlements, would be completely separated from the surrounding Bethlehem Governorate (and West Bank territories).

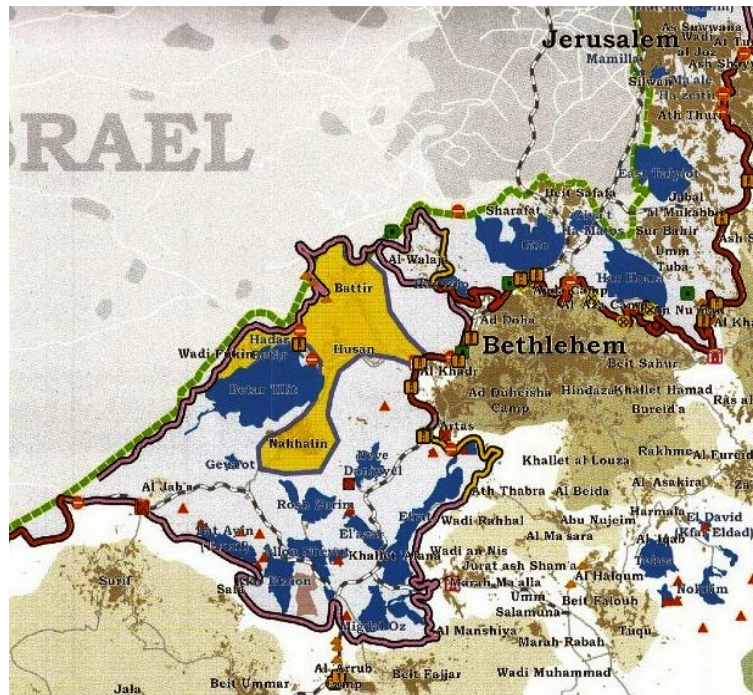


Figure 21: the path of the wall (built or planned) in the south-west area of Bethlehem (internet 2017)

Furthermore, the planned expansion of the Gush Etzion block of settlements is part of another Israeli plan, the Greater Jerusalem Plan, which concerns the expansion and annexation to Jerusalem city of the three major settlement blocks surrounding it: the Gush Etzion settlements' block in Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates<sup>55</sup>, Ma'ale Adumim settlements' block in East Jerusalem<sup>56</sup>, and the Giv'at Zeev settlements' block northwest of Jerusalem city<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> This block consists of 11 illegal settlements, spanning an area of 69.8 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of more than 60,000 Jewish settlers (ARIJ September 2015).

<sup>56</sup> This block has an area of 72.5 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 50,000 (ARIJ September 2015).

<sup>57</sup> This block has an area of 12 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 16,000 (ARIJ September 2015).



For Ahmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn, the settlements' expansion in the Occupied Palestinian territories and Jerusalem is aimed at increasing the number of Israeli Jewish people in these areas<sup>58</sup>, in order to “de-Palestinianise” the local population, in the context of a demographic war with Palestinians, who also give a political value to the birth of children. As he said to me very worried, "Soon, Beitar Illit will host until about 200,000 inhabitants, while in the village we are just a little more than 1000!"



Figure 22: the “Greater Jerusalem Plan” (Arij, 2017)

The life in Wādī Fūkīn is characterised by the perception of a strong feeling of precariousness and uncertainty about the future of the village, which depends on the variable, arbitrary and often unknown Israeli military decisions.

The village is threatened to be completely isolated from the surrounding Palestinian territory, closed in a sort of Palestinian ghetto encircled by Israeli areas. Its entry might be controlled by the Israeli army through a fixed military checkpoint, limiting the inhabitants' movements from and to the village, as happened during the second Intifada. Men and women remember that during this period the Israeli army closed the entry street, forbidding them to enter (and exit) the village and imposing on them a curfew. For some months nobody could move from the village and farmers had to walk clandestinely in the hills to the east of the valley, through

<sup>58</sup> The annual growth rate of settler population in the West Bank is more than two and half times higher than that of the total population in Israel (4% and 1.6% respectively) (ARIJ September 2015).

the neighbouring Palestinian village of Naḥḥālīn, in order to sell their crops in Bethlehem markets. Today even this strategy is hindered by the development of the Beitar Illit settlement between Wādī Fūkīn and Naḥḥālīn.

The village might even disappear, destroyed after the evacuation of its inhabitants, who would become again refugees, an even more precarious and marginalised status. Another village's future imagined (and sometimes secretly desired) by some inhabitants is its absorption into the State of Israel by extending the Israeli citizenship to its Palestinian inhabitants<sup>59</sup>.

The Israeli water and territory planning in the area of Wādī Fūkīn brings insights into the theorisation of technical planning as a new dimension of politics that expresses the “authoritarian modernism” of the modern state (Scott 1998). According to Scott, the daily production of statistics, maps, classifications, categories and territory and landscape planning consist in processes of homogenisation and spatialisation (Trouillot 2001) that reduce the complexity and heterogeneity of social realities, of territories and populations in abstractions, uniformities and schematic categories. These strategies are aimed at creating a territory delimited by political borders and a more measurable, exploitable and controllable civil society with standardized features.

The Zionist project of construction of a new sovereign Jewish nation-state and national identity is grounded on the reinvention of the territory through the appropriation and centralisation of most of resources such as water, through legal devices for systematic land expropriation and large-scale displacements, through radical landscape planning and territorial policies, as well as urban development and architectural strategies. As the official discourses of Israeli government actors show, these strategies consist in techno-politics (Mitchell 2002), political strategies defined as technical procedures and masked behind the modernisation mission.

While creating and extending a continuous Israeli nation, the Israeli territory planning fragments the Palestinian Territories into a layered and overlapping series of ethnic and political alienated national islands, hindering the possibility of a formal coherence of the territory and any attempt to establish a potential continuous border between Israel and the Occupied Territories. These administrative and control strategies erode the basics of the

---

<sup>59</sup> In Chapter V I analyse the different hopes for the future of the village and the ideas connected to them.

Palestinian national sovereignty, whose legitimacy is not recognised by the Israeli State, which associate it to the negation of the Zionist myth and identity (Swedenburg 1990).

### **3.1 The Village's Island in the Israeli Urban Sea. The Movable Fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories**

The lands in the village that are targeted by the Israeli expropriation as state lands, and then occupied by the Israeli settlements, are those in the valley and in the slopes of the hills encircling the village, given that they are under the Israeli military administration. Indeed, despite the creation of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, its institutions have not jurisdiction over the whole village.

According to the Oslo agreements<sup>60</sup>, the village has been divided internally in two areas that differ in their administrative conditions (map 4 and 5). This is an invisible border which, however, affects strongly the life in the village.

A little part of the village which extends over 277 dunams (corresponding to the 9, 23% of the total area of about 3000 dunams<sup>61</sup>) and includes almost the whole built-up area of the village, called *balad* (inhabited centre)<sup>62</sup>, has been defined as an area B, under the administration of the PNA as regards civilian affairs, but under the security control of the Israeli army. This means that the PNA administers the space and the infrastructures (streets and electric and water infrastructures) in the built-up area, collects taxes for solid waste

---

<sup>60</sup> The 1993 Oslo II Agreement decided the creation of the Palestinian National Authority and the administrative fragmentation of the Palestinian occupied territories into discontinuous areas identified by the letters A, B and C, which differ for their administrative conditions. The areas A (17, 2% of the West Bank) are under the administration and security control of the PNA; the areas B (23,8% of the West Bank) are under the administration of the PNA as regards civilian affairs, but under the security control of the Israeli army; the areas C (59% of the West Bank) are under the administration and security control of the Israeli army, even if they do not provide the Palestinian population with educational or health services, which are left to the responsibility of the PNA (Freijat 2003). This decision is rather ambiguous if you take into account the Treaty of Geneva, which requires the occupying countries to take care of the occupied population. The implications of the Oslo Agreements concerning the PNA's administration of the village of Wādī Fūkīn will be explored in Chapter IV.

<sup>61</sup> I provide this information in 2015 from the head of the Village Council, Aḥmed Sukkar. Differently, in 1995, the area B of the village corresponded to the 7,3% of the total area of the village, which was 3.817 dunams (ARIJ 2010).

<sup>62</sup> In Arabic and the Palestinian dialect *balad* means the country, the territory. Palestinians usually use this term to refer both to the country and, as in this case, to the inhabited centres (like a village or a town). As I explain in the following analysis, given the fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories, the inhabited centres are perceived as multiple countries.

collection and the water bills from villagers and provides educational and health services, without the possibility to exercise its executive power in the village.

Israel's power in this area is exerted also through water administration. Indeed, in the 1980s the Israeli army built the first domestic waterworks for the village, hooking it up to the water network supplying also the nearby Israeli Beitar Illit settlement. Since the building of the waterworks, villagers have to pay to the Mekorot the domestic water bills charged according to the consumption of every dwelling.

The appropriation of the underground aquifers and the development of Israeli water systems in the Occupied Territories - hooking up Palestinian refugee camps<sup>63</sup> and villages to the waterworks of the nearby Israeli settlements - are "territorialisation" strategies (Trottier 2000:38) aimed at extending Israeli control over the Occupied Territories and at fragmenting them (Trottier 2013). The development of centralised domestic water networks and administration integrates the local spaces and population in the Israeli national territory and economy<sup>64</sup>.

Differently, all lands encircling this area, extending over about 2723 dunams (the 90, 77% of the total area of about 3000 dunams<sup>65</sup>) - that is to say, the farmlands in the valley to the south of the built-up area and the slopes of the hills encircling the village - have been included in an area C. This area is under the administration and security control of the Israeli army, except concerning the educational and health services, which are PNA's responsibilities. Indeed, the area C includes also a part of the built-up area, where there are the public mixed secondary school and the health centre, under the PNA's administration (See the maps 4 and 5 at the end of the chapter).

If the village seems like a Palestinian island immersed in the Israeli urban sea, the small area B of the village, completely encircled by the area C, seems like an island within an island.

In the area C of the village any maintenance and construction work, such as the maintenance of the springs and the irrigation channels network, must obtain the permission of the Israeli military authorities. This permission is always denied, hindering the improvement of the farming and living conditions and denying to local Palestinians their right of self-determination in the development plans of their lands.

---

<sup>63</sup> Like, for example, the refugee camp of Al-‘Arrūb, included in an area C (in the Hebron district).

<sup>64</sup> I analyse in detail these strategies in Chapter IV.

<sup>65</sup> The head of the Village Council gave me this information in 2015. Differently, in 1995 the area C corresponded to the 92,7% of the village: 3,540 dunams on 3,817 dunams (ARIJ 2010).

The Israeli military ban on building in the area C restricts the space for building houses to the small area B, shaping the development of the village and denying to it any possibility of future expansion. The growing local population is worried about where the future generations will go to live. They think that by means of these administrative conditions the Israeli military authorities aim at making the new generations move from the village, which finally will be abandoned.

Because of the shortage of space in area B, today some families build new houses in the slopes of the western hills encircling the valley, in the area C. However they are aware that these houses can be demolished by the Israeli army, even more given that the Israeli dwellings of Tzur Hadassah are increasingly close to them.

The creation of *as-sulṭa* (the authority), as Palestinians call the PNA, did not improve the living conditions of the villagers. It claims its authority over local Palestinian people - concerning, for example, the payment of taxes - but it cannot ensure their security and rights. The Israeli army has the total control of the village, as of all areas B and C in the Occupied Palestinian territories. Along the only entrance road in the village, included in the area C, Israeli soldiers or policemen often make a temporary *maḥsūm* (checkpoint), controlling and hindering local inhabitants' mobility.

Despite many times farmers invited me to appreciate the *hudū'a* (quiet) in the farmlands in the valley, today these are perceived also as a place characterised by a high risk of experiencing violent encounters with Israelis, the "Others" par excellence.

In the area C, the community of Wādī Fūkīn stands alone facing the raids and aggressions of the Israeli army and settlers, aimed at making local Palestinians leave their land. Soldiers sometimes close the roads which brings to the farmlands in the valley, hinder farming activities (like olives harvest), or come to uproot hundreds of olive and other trees in lands declared as State lands or included in security areas, like those close to the Israeli settlements. When Islam, a widow of about 55 years old, goes to harvest olives from her trees planted in the lands below the Beitar Illit settlement, close to its border, some settlers often throw stones to her. As she said to me many times: "they want me to leave my trees!"<sup>66</sup>

The Israeli soldiers enter the village also to protect Israeli citizens from the settlements in the area, who go to the valley to swim in the private pools for irrigation water collection or to pray at the springs, whose water is considered as sacred water for Jewish people<sup>67</sup>.

---

<sup>66</sup> The Israeli strategies of trees' uprooting and the meaning of olive trees are addressed in Chapter II.

At the sunset, people come back quickly to the built-up area, especially women and children. They seek to avoid meeting stray dogs and settlers, who Palestinians compare to these dangerous dogs, dehumanising them. Children and women are afraid also to meet other "foreign" people, such as Palestinians coming from other villages in the West Bank and in particular those coming from Israel (the so called "67 Palestinians" or "48 Palestinians"<sup>68</sup>), who often pass from the village (as it is a place of passage to go to Israel) and sometimes steal local farmers' donkeys or motor pumps.

In 2017, one day, while I was playing with local children in the valley, just after the sunset, we have been scared by some lasers pointed at us from the Beitar Illit settlement. The children were afraid that Israeli soldiers or settlers wanted to shoot us. Their fear was justified by the frequent violence enacted by Israeli settlers towards Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian territories and Jerusalem<sup>69</sup>. Sometimes Israelis coming from settlements in the area enter the village armed with M16s, and on 25th February 2015 settlers from Beitar Illit opened fire towards Palestinian houses in Naḥḥālīn village, southwest of Bethlehem city (ARIJ February 2015). However, when we came back to the built-up area (area B), the children's fathers made fun of their young sons, asking to them: "Were you really afraid?" The children denied it firmly: "Me, I am never afraid of soldiers and settlers!" Finally their fathers revealed to them that the lasers were not projected by a gun, but by toys used by children living in the Israeli settlement, who wanted to scare them. However, they did not make fun of their children because of this, but because they wanted to teach them that "they have not to be afraid of Israelis...to be afraid means to bow to Israel, thus losing all

---

<sup>67</sup> I explore the meaning of these Israelis' strategies and the local resistance practices to them in Chapter V.

<sup>68</sup> The "48 Palestinians" are the Palestinians who are born and still live in Israel: they have the Israeli identity card and passport and can vote for Israeli public elections. The "67 Palestinians" are the Palestinians who are born in Jerusalem and in 1967, when Israel occupied the Palestinian Territories, were still living in Jerusalem. These people have a second class Israeli citizenship (they cannot have the Israeli passport and vote for Israeli public elections, for example) and they (and the "48 Palestinians") cannot be prosecuted for a crime by Palestinian institutions or, in case of conflicts, reached by Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. In Chapter V I analyse the implications of these administrative conditions concerning the processes of social differentiations between Palestinians.

<sup>69</sup> From June 2014 to September 2015, more than 900 attacks were carried out by Israeli settlers against the indigenous Palestinians. In 2014 the West Bank saw the highest number of Palestinian casualties at the hands of Israelis in recent years. Settler attacks range from graffiti on the walls of Palestinians homes, mosques and churches, to the uprooting of more than 10,000 Palestinian olive trees since July 2014. Settlers have also been responsible for the injuring and murder of Palestinian civilians, and often operate with impunity (ARIJ September 2015).

Palestine”, as a man explained to me. This is the “bravery and resistance culture” which most of Palestinians try to hand down over generations.

For this reason, despite the Israeli ban of building in the area C, the Village Council<sup>70</sup> built a playground in the valley, called *al-muntazah* (the park), while in 2015 the Green Land Association (one of the associations in the village) began the building of a *mal'ab* (soccer field) in the slopes of the hills in front of the playground, thanks to the United Methodist Churches' funding. On July 2015 the Israeli army stopped these works and forbade the implementation of the project. The head of the Village Council petitioned the Israeli Court to contest the military ban of building the soccer field, but at the same time, it supports the continuation of the works, little by little. Between 2016 and 2017, despite the soccer field was not completed yet, another playground (called “Garden of the Green Valley”) has been built next to it by the local Youth Development Association (YDA) and the Bethlehem Farmers Society (BFS), thanks to the funding of the Swiss organisation HEKS-EPER<sup>71</sup>.



Figure 24: the old park in the village  
(De Donato, 2017)



Figure 25: the new park in the village

The aim of these projects in area C does not concern just the offering of services and facilities to local inhabitants, which cannot be offered in the built-up area for the lack of space. They are aimed at opposing the confiscation of lands that are said to be unused, through the creation of public places where to bring together the inhabitants of the village, encouraging them to frequent the valley daily, without fear, and not to leave farmers alone. For this

---

<sup>70</sup> It is not clear if the Village Council or the local Agricultural Cooperative built it, given that both the institutions, which are in competition, claim to have implemented this project. See Chapter III.

<sup>71</sup> EPER has been founded in 1946 by the Swiss Federation of the Protestant Churches (Fédération des Eglises protestantes de Suisse - FEPS). Since 2004 EPER is a foundation.

reason, they did not repair the old playground, which has been damaged by Israeli soldiers and settlers many times, but they created a new one just in front of it, in the struggle against land expropriation.

The administrative division of Wādī Fūkīn mirrors the general Israeli criteria of fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian territories in areas A, B, C, according to the Oslo Accords in 1993. According to the Oslo Accords, by 1999 Israel should have transferred sovereignty to the Palestinian National Authority, relinquishing control of the West Bank (ARIJ September 2015). However, until now Israel has not respected this agreement. On the contrary, most of the West Bank territories are under the exclusive control of Israel military forces.



Figure 26: The geo-political status of the West Bank (Arij, 2014)

Indeed, the areas C (under the Israeli administration and security control) correspond to the 63% of the West Bank (including the 3% of nature reserve), while the areas A (under the PNA's administrative and security control) extend over the 18% of the West Bank and the areas B (under the Israeli security control and the PNA's administration) correspond to the



19% of it. The areas C include mainly agricultural lands and other lands rich of natural resources. They are close to Israeli settlements, whose expansion targets them.

Israel has the control of 87% of the nature reserves in the West Bank, 90% of its forests, 48% of its wells and 37% of its springs, all included in areas C (ARIJ September 2015)<sup>72</sup>.

Therefore, Israel denies to Palestinians the access to many resources and hinders the economic development of the Palestinian territories. Differently, the areas A include the biggest Palestinian urban centres - like Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus and a part of Hebron - whose population's livelihood depends on the resources in rural areas. The areas B, which often include Palestinian villages or refugee camps, usually are positioned between the areas A and C (like buffer zones).

If the border between the areas B and C is not always signalled, at the entry of an area A usually there is a road sign informing that Israelis' entry is forbidden. This ban, together with the wall, contributes to the separation of Palestinian and Israeli civilians, who before the PNA's creation and the building of the wall had more solidarity relationships between each other.



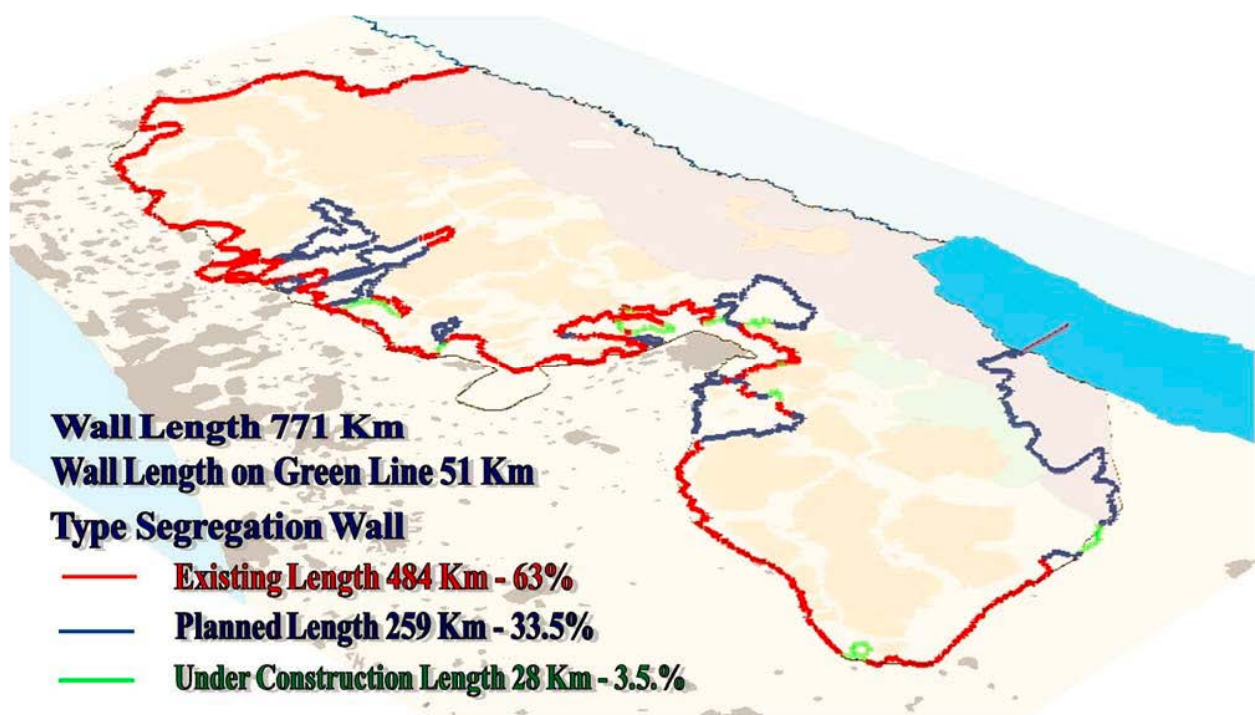
Figure 27, 28: the border between an area B and an area A and the sign signaling it (Beit Jala, West Bank), (De Donato 2015)

Given that the areas A, B, C are alternated irregularly, the areas under the PNA's administration are not contiguous. The PNA established in 1994 according to the Oslo

<sup>72</sup> Israel plans to annex 75% of the areas C and 45% of the total area of the West Bank.



Besides the Israeli water systems, settlements and by-pass roads expanding in the Palestinian territories, these are fragmented also by their administrative conditions decided by the Oslo Agreements in 1993, as well as by the segregation wall surrounding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli wall does not just limit Palestinians' access to Jerusalem and Israel, but it also cuts through Palestinian cities and villages dividing them<sup>74</sup>. It does not follow the path of the Armistice line, entering Palestinian territories and further appropriating Palestinian land. The building of the wall often entails the expulsion of Palestinians and the destruction of their farmlands and houses, while hindering the access to many water resources.



*Figure 31: status of the separation wall in January 2015 (ARIJ 2015).*

Moreover, also the numerous military checkpoints and control towers scattered throughout the territory constitute borders which fragment the territory and hinder the Palestinians' mobility within it. Since the creation of the PNA, the Israeli army has established permanent military checkpoints in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories<sup>75</sup>. The biggest ones are positioned along the roads connecting the main Palestinian urban

<sup>74</sup> This is the case, for example, of the village of al-Walaġa, in the West Bank.

<sup>75</sup> Previously the Israeli army used to make movable and temporary military roadblocks.

centres (under the PNA's administration) to each other, and along the wall separating the West Bank from Jerusalem and Israel (like in Bethlehem, where the wall cuts through the street connecting it with Jerusalem).

To pass a *maḥsūm* (checkpoint) in order to go to study at the University, to work or to make a medical visit, for example, entails the risk of being arrested for administrative detention. The administrative detention is a prison sentence in an Israeli prison for a period usually comprised between six months and two years (but sometimes extended for more years), without committing any crime, but only justified with the suspect that a person is potentially dangerous for the Israeli national security.



Figure 32: the checkpoint “three hundred”, positioned along the Israeli wall separating Bethlehem (West Bank) and Jerusalem (De Donato, 2015)

Connected to the checkpoints, another Israeli control politics consists in the permits to enter Jerusalem, Israel and the Israeli settlements, which Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian territories have to ask since they are sixteen year old. The *taṣrīḥ* (permit) can be given for some months to work in Jerusalem, Israel or in the Israeli settlements (especially in the building or agricultural sector), or just for a day to pray in the Temple Mount Mosque in Jerusalem or to make a medical visit in the more equipped hospitals in Jerusalem or in Israel. One of the conditions imposed by Israel to obtain the permission to enter Israel (or Jerusalem or the Israeli settlements) for work or commercial purposes is the official request of the concerned Palestinian person for work (or to buy Israeli products) by an Israeli person, who

takes the role of guarantor. Since the building of the wall and the adoption of the permits politics, few Palestinians, usually belonging to a high social class, have the access to this important social capital. Concerning the permits to visit a doctor or a hospital in Israel or Jerusalem, the request has to be done by a Palestinian or Israeli medical institution or organisation, but not always has positive results, limiting the Palestinians' access to many medical treatments which are not offered in the Palestinian territories.

Another condition that is necessary to enter Israel is to have a clean Israeli criminal record and not to be considered as active in the resistance to Israel. People who have a history of resistance because they have been in an Israeli jail or were *fidā'iyyin* (fighters) during the Second Intifada have few or none possibilities of entering Israel or Jerusalem legally.

During periods of high tensions between Israel and Palestinians (like during the second Intifada or in 2014, when three Israeli Jewish boys have been kidnapped and killed by Hamas militants<sup>76</sup>), Israeli authorities stop to give the permissions or they give them to very few persons, using them as a reprisal strategy.

The times for issuing a decision about the permission can be short as very long and the reasons for the refusal are never clarified, allowing a discretionary power. Moreover, the permits' politics allows the Israeli army to keep a file about every Palestinian asking the permission, who has to declare many personal information and give his fingerprints.

Through the permits politics Israel denies the access to most of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian territories to many material and symbolic resources, while controlling them.



*Figure 33: the Israeli segregation wall*



*Figure 34: a checkpoint in the area of Nablus*

*(De Donato 2014)*

---

<sup>76</sup> This event has been used by Israel to justify also Palestinians' mass arrests in the West Bank and the 50-days war in Gaza.

As I state in my previous researches carried out in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša (De Donato 2013a), situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem, by fragmenting the territory, Israel's water and territory planning and security policies constitute material and symbolic borders which create discrimination among Palestinians, in particular to the detriment of the inhabitants of refugee camps, categorised as more rebel (Peteet 1994).

The permeability of these borders (depending, for example, on the release of the Israeli entry permit in Jerusalem or Israeli areas) and the resulting possibility to get access to the territory and its material and symbolic resources like water, are linked to the nationality (Israeli or Palestinian), the socio-economic class, place of dwelling (Israel or Occupied Territories; area A, B, C, urban area, rural one or refugee camp), religious belonging (Jewish, Islamic, or Christian) and criminal record. These terms of differentiation are resources ever more important in defining local patterns of belonging and exclusion, local hierarchies, as well as social identities, built through the continuous repositioning with respect to the « others » and the material world.

In Chapter V, I will show that the Palestinians' different possibilities to go to work legally in Israel, Jerusalem or in the Israeli settlements contribute to the production of growing social differences among them, which lead to different perceptions of the political reality and belonging, of Israel and the Palestinian nation-state.

These processes highlights Israel's techno-politics (Mitchell 1990a, 1990b, 1991) aimed at the creation of the Israeli nation and at the domination of Palestinians. Israel exerts "a very direct rule" of Palestinian bodies, whose mobility, security and access to the territory and its resources such as water are under the strict control of the Israeli army. A control exerted by means of the multiplication and continuous redefinition of physical, administrative and symbolic territorial borders, especially since the 1993 Oslo Accords establishing the 1994 creation of the PNA.

The Israeli architectonic, administrative and security strategies restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians, who before the creation of the PNA were more free and less controlled by the Israeli army, even while moving in Israel and Jerusalem. Differently, today most of Palestinians belonging to the new generations are confined to their homes, cities, towns, villages or refugee camps, locally called *bilād* (the inhabited centres) and experienced as an "archipelago of large open-air prisons" (Khalidi 2010).

The West Bank and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in general are not experienced as one contiguous territory by its inhabitants, but as fragmented in multiple and movable

"islands of experience" (Khalidi, *ibid.*), multiple Palestinian countries, characterised by different administrative, control and water access conditions<sup>77</sup>.

Not all the material and symbolic borders created by Israel are permanent and predictable. Some checkpoints and temporary roadblocks are temporary and movable, as well as the path of the streets where Palestinians are obligated to travel while moving in the West Bank, which are often changed by the Israeli military authorities. The borders fragmenting the Palestinian territory, produced by the Israeli administrative and control policies, are movable and always changing, arousing the perception of living in a territory that is reshaped over and over again, unevenly fragmented and reassembled, composed of jagged pieces always moving and changing their shape and extension. This situation hinders the Palestinians' orientation in the territory and makes the perception of any stable sense of place difficult.

By reshaping continuously the space, also the temporal dimension is fragmented, dilated or compressed by the Israeli territory planning and security policies. Before the building of the segregation wall, one could go by car from Bethlehem to Ramallah, passing through Jerusalem, in about 20 minutes. Today the path imposed by Israel passes around Jerusalem (separated by the wall) and takes about 45 minutes, if the Israeli checkpoint controlling the movements between these two urban areas is open and when the Israeli soldiers leave Palestinians cross it easily. The distance between Ramallah and Bethlehem has become greater. The abundant time calculated for the travel to reach in time the University or the work can become very short if the checkpoint is closed or soldiers make deep controls. One can even not reach the University and not come back home for a long time, if he/she is arrested for administrative detention.

The perception of time and space, and of their relation, is very relative, affected by the changing possibility to move in the territory crossing the borders created by Israeli administrative and security policies, which is unpredictable and uncertain, depending also on the arbitrary personal decisions of the Israeli soldiers that have the shift at the checkpoint. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are not alienated only from local space, but also from local time.

The Israeli state does not only adopt the Western states' techno-politics of control, but it also strengthens, multiplies and renews them, in the framework of a continuous experimentation of new technologies and strategies and a new imagination of the territory

---

<sup>77</sup> In Chapter V I analyse in detail the water fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories and its social implications.

which, as noted by Van Aken (2012; 2015), are exported globally. These planning and administrative strategies bring to the extreme edges the nation-state politics of de-socialisation of space and time. While they make local territories and populations comprehensible, exploitable and controllable, they lead to the disorienting alienation of Palestinians from local space and time, to their detachment from the territory, which has become unknown and uncanny. Through these technologies of domination, Israel seeks to atomise the Palestinian society, to alienate Palestinians between each other, separating them and creating disempowered and subordinated colonial individual subjects.

#### **4. Irrigation Water Scarcity: Creating Colonial Subjects through Depeasantisation**

The village of Wādī Fūkīn is historically characterised by the availability of abundant *mayya* (water) drawn from numerous *'uyūn* (springs)<sup>78</sup>, and used for domestic purposes, and to irrigate the farmlands and water the sheep via community management of a network of channels and pools. In the maps 6 and 7, I represented the active springs and the irrigation channels in the village.

The inhabitants of the village tell that before the creation of Israel, spring water was sufficient to satisfy not only the villagers' needs but also those of “foreign” people, that is to say, people coming from outside the village, like the herders coming with their sheep from the neighbouring Palestinian village of Naḥḥālīn. The spring water was at the centre of solidarity relations which shaped a “social geography” (Rothenberg 1998) overflowing the physical borders of the village.

Today, local inhabitants complain that “*al-'uyūn ḍa'īfa*” (the springs are weak) and spring water is not always sufficient to cultivate even the few accessible lands in the village, despite their shortage. In 2015, during my second and longer research period, the abundant winter rainwater allowed the access to the greater amount of spring water in the last 10 years. However, in 2017 many farmers had to cultivate just a part of their lands because of the insufficiency of irrigation spring water, due to the scarce winter rainwater and the summer high temperatures, which entailed vegetables' need of a bigger amount of water and caused the burning of many of them.

Four of the twelve springs in the village dried completely. One of these, called *'ayn al-farrāsh* (the spring of the butterflies), is one of the only two springs situated in the northern

---

<sup>78</sup> *'ayn*, *'uyūn* means spring, springs, but also eye, eyes.



area of the village, called *al-ḡibāl* because of its highest altitude. As a consequence, differently from the valley, today the farmlands in this area have not access to spring water and are dedicated to rain fed agriculture, excepted those irrigated with the water drawn from ‘*ayn al-Quds* (the spring of Jerusalem), which is the only spring in the village considered as a private property. It is owned by a family originally from al-Qabū, a Palestinian village neighbouring Wādī Fūkīn to the north-west, which has been evacuated and included in the Israeli State on 1 May 1949 (Morris 2004)<sup>79</sup>. Few farmers irrigate their lands in this area using the domestic water supplied to the built-up area of the village, by buying or stealing it<sup>80</sup>.

Also ‘*ayn al-maghāra* (the spring of the grotto), situated near the mosque of the village, called *al-ḡām‘a al-kabīr* (the big mosque), dried completely. In the memory of the adult villagers, before the Israeli occupation this spring, which today is covered by grass and solid waste, “gave a great amount of water” flowing in an old open-air channel, where children used to play cooling them down. The third spring that dried, called ‘*ayn al-kanīsa* (the spring of the church), is situated in the territory occupied by the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit. Finally also ‘*ayn as-subeh* (the spring of the morning) dried almost completely.



*Figure 35: the dried spring called ‘ayn al-maghāra (the spring of the grotto), situated near the mosque of the village (De Donato, 2017)*

---

<sup>79</sup> In the next chapter, I address the relationships between this family and the other ones living in the village, connected to the status of this spring.

<sup>80</sup> I analyse these practices of resistance in the next chapter and in Chapter IV.

On the twelve springs historically used for agriculture, today farmers can benefit just from eight springs – among which, three springs are so close between each other that are managed as one only spring, called '*ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre).

A hydrological study carried out by researchers from the Hebrew University - at the request of the NGO FOEME (Friends of the Earth - Middle East) - explains the processes causing the weakness of the springs in Wādī Fūkīn (Haviv and Asaf 2005).

The Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah (included in Israel) is developed in the western hills encircling the valley, in the catchment area of the underground aquifer feeding the springs in the village. The expansion of paved impermeable lands for the building of this urban area is decreasing winter *maṭar* (rainwater) infiltration into the ground, hindering its flow to the underground phreatic aquifer feeding the springs in the village. Indeed, the aquifer lays on the marlstone foundations under the valley. Moreover, also the frequent bombs used to level the ground of the hills in order to expand this Israeli town affect the underground aquifer, by blocking the water passage to the small recharge area (6m<sup>2</sup>) of the aquifer. This process is weakening the springs, leading to increasing conditions of irrigation water scarcity<sup>81</sup>.

The winter rainwater that is not absorbed because of the expansion of paved lands in Tzur Hadassah flows down from the hills occupied by this Israeli urban areas to the village's valley, drowning it despite the traditional little stone walls of containment, with destructive consequences for farmlands, roads and some houses.

Every winter the rainwater generates a dangerous *sayl* (torrent) flowing for some days in the last part of the valley (to the south), which has the lower elevation.

The Israeli ban on building in the areas C prevents the construction of a collection pool where to canalise the winter rainwater<sup>82</sup> through channels and pipes, in order to prevent the

---

<sup>81</sup> In 2005, the average daily flow of spring water in summer was 190-220 m<sup>3</sup>, while the total average flow was about 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> (less than 5% of the total average yearly precipitation in this area, which was 575mm). Most of rainwater flows underground out of the catchment area, while other rainwater evaporates or flows as surface runoff (Haviv and Asaf 2005). According to the embodied experience of local farmers, today the average flow of spring water is further decreasing.

<sup>82</sup> A project proposed by the Village Council to the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) in 2010, concerning the building of *ḥazzānāt* (cisterns) to collect rainwater, has not been implemented because of the lack of funding. In 2011 the Village Council made a project with ARIJ (Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem) concerning the building of a *bi'r* (well) to collect rainwater. However, many inhabitants, and in particular the Agricultural Cooperative, refused to implement it because they were afraid that these works would have damaged the springs (given that the wells had to be built close to them). Moreover, according to the head of the Village Council, nobody wanted to

destructive consequences of its floods and to use it for irrigation. In this way, Israel hinders the ability of resilience of the local eco-social productive system.

However, in 2015 the Village Council and the local Agricultural Cooperative organised the building of two parallel stone walls in the last part of the valley, to contain the rainwater which in winter drowns the farmlands. The walls are composed of stones blocked only by a metal structure, an easy construction which could be quickly done without the intervention of the Israeli army. The building of simple infrastructures (like wells) which can be done quickly and, if requested by the Israeli army, destroyed quickly (without losing too much resources) and eventually rebuilt, is a strategy adopted in many Palestinian villages to satisfy their inhabitants' needs despite the Israeli repression.

Spring water scarcity and rainwater floods are produced by the Israeli urban development policies, which hinder the hydro-social cycle (Linton 2010) that has always characterised the local semi-arid environment and livelihood<sup>83</sup>.

The present conditions of irrigation water and land scarcity threaten the survival of the local intensive and commercial family farming and the village itself, whose land might be completely expropriated by Israel.

With the growth of the population over the generations, the irrigation water and the farmlands are not enough to satisfy the family needs. Furthermore, the lands (and in particular those in the valley) become more and more unproductive because of their over-exploitation, due to the impossibility of leaving them at rest because of the risk of expropriation, but also to the adoption of intensive chemical farming techniques. These new techniques are adopted to cope with the fierce economic competition from Israeli, subsidised<sup>84</sup>, high-tech, intensive agriculture. Indeed, since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip in 1967, the Israeli cheapest crops have been introduced in the Palestinian markets, causing the decrease of Palestinian products' prices. Given the high competition with the Israeli agriculture and the

---

occupy his land with this infrastructure (Source of information: Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn).

<sup>83</sup> Some villagers do not know the actual processes causing the weakening of the springs. Few people told me that spring water scarcity is caused by the drawing of the aquifer's water by means of deep wells built in the Israeli settlement. This is an Israeli strategy frequently adopted, but not in the case of Wādī Fūkīn.

<sup>84</sup> The Israeli agricultural industry uses 2/3 of all the water in Israel at subsidised rates. Moreover, the price of water is the same all over the country, even in the areas where there are higher costs of transportation, like the mountains and the desert (Temper 2009).

increase in costs of production, connected to the employ of new intensive farming techniques, farming has become an unprofitable activity<sup>85</sup>.

In the context of the increasing cost of living in the West Bank, agriculture cannot satisfy the changing and expensive needs of the new generations. With the spread of Western middle class values and growing economic competition, families aspire to send their sons and daughters to university and to make them becoming lawyers, medical doctors or teachers, in order to improve their socio-economic status. This requires a big investment of resources, which cannot be sustained only by agriculture. In this situation the ideas about agriculture and the prospects of the new generations are changing.

For these reasons, most of the men take up some kind of waged employment, which is often temporary, and farm when they come back from these jobs - in the late afternoon, on non-working days (usually Friday and Sunday) - and during periods of unemployment.

Some persons work as employees of Palestinian governmental schools (as teachers or cleaners) or of other public institutions, while few people have private activities, like those who own the about 6 groceries, one tailor and one mechanic situated in the village<sup>86</sup>.

However, the expectations of the families are rarely met. Because of the lack of job opportunities in the West Bank (where there is a high rate of unemployment<sup>87</sup>), almost all women are unemployed, while most men work in the building sector in Israel, Jerusalem or in the Israeli settlements<sup>88</sup>, both legally and illegally. To work in Israeli urban areas (even if temporarily) is more profitable than local agriculture. The Israeli wages are also higher than those offered in the West Bank<sup>89</sup>.

In order to work in Israel, many young men cross clandestinely the Israeli border demarked in the western hills of the village, risking their imprisonment. They walk for several hours hiding themselves from the Israeli soldiers controlling the border and the Israeli helicopters

---

<sup>85</sup> The social and cultural implications of the adoption of intensive farming techniques are addressed in Chapter III.

<sup>86</sup> In 2010, the economy in Wādī Fūkīn was dependent on several economic sectors: the agriculture sector, which absorbs 60% of the village workforce; the Israeli Labour Market (20%); the government or private employees sector (10%); the trade sector (10%) (ARIJ 2010).

<sup>87</sup> In 2009, the unemployment rate in Wādī Fūkīn was 40% (ARIJ 2010).

<sup>88</sup> According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census - 2007, 34.8% of the population in Wādī Fūkīn was economically active. Among these persons, 82% were employed, 65.2% were not economically active, 58.5% were students, and 28.7% were housekeepers (ARIJ 2010).

<sup>89</sup> In the Israeli building sector, Palestinian workers are paid between 150- 250 Nis in a day, depending on their position and role. These wages are higher than those offered in the West Bank, even if they are low-paid jobs also in Israel.

flying over the heavily guarded sky in the West Bank. Even the sky is appropriated by Israel, according to the Israeli politics of verticality implemented while fragmenting the territory.

The Israeli military control of this part of the border sometimes is very efficient, while most of times Israeli soldiers leave Palestinian *'ummāl* (workers) crossing it. In this way, they guarantee the affluence of illegal workers in the Israeli building sector. These can be paid less and Israel has not to pay taxes for them to the PNA, as instead, it has to do for legal workers. The borders' control is a performance by which the Israeli army makes Palestinians feel their exclusion from the Israeli State, as well as its frightening power, while using and controlling them as vulnerable, precarious and discriminated labour force (a politics which is not so different from that implemented in many Western countries).

Wādī Fūkīn has become a sort of Palestinian base, where in the early morning many Palestinian workers coming from other villages and cities (like Hebron) gather together, while waiting the call of an Israeli Jewish or Arabic person in Tzur Hadassah, who informs them about the best moment to pass the border illegally. In 2017, a family in the village has even organised a parking by payment for workers, in the built-up area of the village (in an empty land owned by the family). This family takes advantage of Palestinians' need to cross the border to satisfy its personal economic interests.

By working in the Israeli building sector, men from Wādī Fūkīn contribute to build the houses of the Israeli settlers and citizens on the same lands expropriated from their families. They are conscious that this choice contradicts the collective political struggle against the Israeli colonial occupation. They justify themselves with the challenges they have to face in satisfying their families' private economic needs, in the context of high unemployment rate and difficult conditions of local agriculture.

The implications of Israeli territory planning and hydropolitics (Trottier 1999) in Wādī Fūkīn show that despite the segregation wall separates the Palestinians territories from those included in the Israeli State, the multiple relationships between their inhabitants and economies are characterised by an increasing interdependence - unbalanced, surely, to the detriment of Palestinians<sup>90</sup>. Israel does not simply exclude Palestinians from the sharing of local resources and power structures. The structural subordination of Palestinians is grounded on their inclusion in a very subordinate position, by means of the creation of increasing

---

<sup>90</sup> The interdependent relationships between Palestinians and Israelis are analysed in Chapter V, focusing in particular on water dimensions of interdependence.

dimensions of interdependence<sup>91</sup> (including water interdependence), which allow Israel to keep its present economic, political, social and cultural hegemony.

The spread of the waged employment as families' main means of support has brought about the increasing socio-economic differentiation and competition among local inhabitants. The abandonment of agricultural activities is an increasingly frequent phenomenon, which is locally perceived as a political threat to the existence of the village. Indeed, to leave agriculture would entail the expropriation of the farmlands in the village as State lands and the loss of the last spaces of autonomy from the Israeli occupation, but also from the PNA. The village would become a proletarian suburb of workers for Israel. It might even disappear, destroyed after the evacuation of its inhabitants, who would become again *lāǧ'īn* (refugees), an even more precarious and marginalised status.

In the context of the economic uncertainty and political instability, agriculture is still an important source of livelihood, especially for people with a low socio-economic status. It is an economic strategy to satisfy the family's basic needs during the frequent periods of unemployment, even after many years dedicated to other jobs<sup>92</sup>.

The problem of water scarcity is experienced by all Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian territories, even if to a different extent.

The case of Wādī Fūkīn highlights that water scarcity (as other environmental problems) is a hybrid socio-natural process (Latour 1991). As highlighted by Van Aken's studies in the Jordan Valley (2003) and Metha's researches in India (2001), in the Palestinian Territories water scarcity is produced by the interrelation between changing ecological conditions and socio-economic and political dynamics, in particular the Israeli discriminating water and territory planning.

Water centralisation and modernisation have an important role in the imagination and materialisation of the Israeli nation and the building of a strong centralised political structure. Israel has appropriated most of the regional water resources to create the Jewish nation-state and national identity. Indeed, since the creation of Israel, the control of water resources was necessary for the building of growing Jewish urban and rural settlements and the development of an intensive high-tech irrigated agriculture, in an arid and semi-arid context. As well explained by Van Aken (2012; 2015), intensive irrigated agriculture had a material

---

<sup>91</sup> I address the numerous interdependent relationships between Palestinians and Israelis in the fifth chapter.

<sup>92</sup> I analyse in detail the role of agriculture for Palestinians' resistance in the Chapter II.

and symbolic role in the creation of Israel. Besides providing food to the growing Israeli population, it was a material and symbolic tool for the transformation and redemption of the imagined degraded and “desert” landscape of the “Promise Land”, supposed as abandoned by the “underdeveloped” and immoral Palestinians. At the same time, agriculture was a means for the creation of a new Jewish man, by inventing and producing a material and symbolical strong tie between him and the Promise land.

Israel achieved the complete control of most of underground aquifers and water resources (as well as of land) since the occupation of the Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) in 1967 (Freijjat 2003). Since that event, Israel brought under its control 80% of the regional water resources. Both Israel and the Palestinian territories depend on the freshwater sources of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan Basin. The latter consists of the Jordan river, its sources and tributaries and many aquifers. The biggest subterranean water reservoirs are the Coastal and the Mountains Aquifer with 240 and 679 million cubic meters per year respectively (Dombrowsky 1998: 94).

Israelis expropriates even a part of the wastewater produced by Palestinians, in order to treat it and use it for Israeli agricultural purposes, while deducting the cost of wastewater treatment from the Palestinian Authority’s taxes (Fortunato 2012).

The environmental costs and risks of the Israeli nation-state construction and socio-ecological domination of Palestinians are externalised in the Palestinian Territories (Alatout 2006), creating increasing conditions of water stress experienced by Palestinians, even if to a different extent. These conditions actively contribute to obstruct the Palestinian agricultural and industrial sectors, thus hindering the Palestinian territories' economic development (Dillman 1989; Hilal and Khan 2004). It creates Palestinians’ structural subordination on the Israeli economy, on water resources, on basic water services, infrastructures and technologies, within a network of interdependences.

Also the Israeli economic restrictions on Palestinian crops' exportation and those on transportation, imposed for security reasons, contribute to the decline of Palestinian agriculture.

Israel exercises a capillary power which rules also the industrial and agricultural production through the politics of permits and licenses (to establish, for example, sanitary landfills) and through military orders concerning the kind and quantity of crops which Palestinians are

allowed to farm<sup>93</sup>. Some substances that previously were used as fertilisers and pesticides (like the sulphur<sup>94</sup>) are now forbidden by the Israeli military authorities, while the improvement of agriculture and living conditions are hindered by the restrictions concerning the building and maintenance of infrastructures. By means of these strategies, Israel prevents the Palestinian capital accumulation and competition with Israeli agriculture and industrial production, and produces an increasingly dependence of Palestinians' bodies on the Israeli market, concerning the access to food and basic goods (given also the lack of facilities to process raw materials).

The spread and development of Palestinian agriculture depend on the economic and political strategies adopted by Palestinian families, affected by changing socio-ecological conditions, such as water availability, by Israeli policies concerning Palestinian labour force employment and control (Fawzi and Abu Dhabi 1990), as well as by global and national economic and political processes.

From 1970 to 1987, while in the West Bank the number of farm workers decreased, that of Palestinians wage earning in Israeli agriculture increased and one-third of the Palestinian labour force was employed in the Israeli economy both in Israel as much as in the Israeli settlements. On the contrary, during the first Intifada, when Palestinians' access to Israel was restricted, Palestinian agriculture grew again (Temper 2009).

Since the beginning of the second Intifada in 2000, Israel closed another time the labour market to Palestinians – or at least restricted their access to legal labour market, through the drastic decrease of the Israeli work permits in Jerusalem and Israel for security reasons and as punitive measures. The Palestinian labour force, on which previously the Israeli economy highly depended, has been increasingly replaced by a cheap labour force coming from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and South America, whose immigration has been favoured by Israel (Epstein 2002). In the context of rising unemployment in the Occupied Territories and of increasing pauperise process, Palestinian agriculture, and the olive industry in particular, grew considerably (Braverman 2009c).

Since the end of the second Intifada and the construction of the segregation wall to date, to enter in Israel illegally is more difficult, even if it is not impossible and in part tolerated by the Israeli authorities. The Israeli enter permits in Jerusalem, in Israel and in the Israeli

---

<sup>93</sup> For example, the permit to plant fruit trees, tomatoes and eggplants only for home consumption (military orders No. 1015 e 1039) (Temper 2009).

<sup>94</sup> Sulphur is forbidden because it can be used also to make bombs. However, some Palestinian farmers buy it in the black market at a high price.



settlements are more frequently released to Palestinians living within the Occupied Territories<sup>95</sup>. Even if under more strict conditions of control, the number of people employed in Israel and in the Israeli settlements has grown, as well as the number of people employed in the PNA's public sector (even if there is a high rate of unemployment), which is highly dependent on foreign donors' funding<sup>96</sup>. The number of persons working in agriculture has continued to decrease (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2016)<sup>97</sup>, given the precarious conditions of local farming, that is an increasingly less sustainable and remunerative activity.

The Israeli urban development and jobs policies in Wādī Fūkīn mirror the Israeli domination strategies aimed at producing Palestinians' de-peasantisation (Heather 2004; Van der Ploeg 2009). By hindering the material, social and cultural reproduction rural communities (for example creating water and land scarcity), Israel attempts at making Palestinians leaving agriculture and moving to urban areas, allowing the expropriation of their land. By means of this strategies, Israel increases their segregated dependence on the Israeli market, services and resources (Kurzom 2001), dominating them as subordinated colonial subjects.

---

<sup>95</sup> The decrease of the Israeli work entry permits and the border closure policy are temporary strategies adopted for security reasons or as punitive strategies while facing the open resistance of Palestinians, in the context of the final objective of making Palestinians totally dependent on Israel.

<sup>96</sup> The funding of donors is conditioned to the respect of their conditions while building and managing the State and the territory. When Western donors decide to stop the funding of the PNA, the last cannot afford and stops the payment of the salaries of its public institutions' employees. This happened, for example, in 2011, when U.S.A. donors stopped their funding because the PNA submitted the application for the admission of the State of Palestine to full membership in the United Nations (on 23 September 2011).

<sup>97</sup> Analysis of the statistical indicators produced by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: concerning the "Unemployment Rate", it first grew rapidly from 9.5% in 1999 to 28.2% in 2002, but since it peaked in 2003 (at 23.7%) it has steadily decreased, coming down to 15% in 2015 (only in 2012 it once again jumped to 19%). The percentage of "Wage Employees" (in the Occupied Palestinian territories), which between 1995 and 1999 had grown, in 2000 began to decrease, going from 63.7% in that year to 54.2% in 2004. In the same period, also the percentage of people employed in "Israel and Settlements" decreased from 21.4% in 2000 to 10.7% in 2004. In this context, the percentage of people employed in "Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry" grew from 13.1 in 2000 to 18.8 in 2006 (except a decrease in 2001). Since 2005, the percentages of both "Wage Employees" and those employed in "Israel and Settlements" have grown (the former from 55.5% to 64.9% in 2015; the second to 16.5% in 2015). On the contrary, since 2007 the percentage of people employed in "Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry" (17.3% in 2007) has fallen steadily right up to 2015, when it reached 9.5% (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2016).

The dynamics analysed in Wādī Fūkīn highlight also the role of water in the nation-state construction and its contemporary patterns of domination. The water scarcity experienced by Palestinians is an Israeli political tool to dominate Palestinians and to hinder the Palestinian nation-state sovereignty and independence. In the Chapter IV, I show in detail that the competition between Israel and the PNA for the control of the Palestinian Territories is grounded on water modernisation and infrastructures development. These are highlighted as social engineering projects conveying conflicting forms of socialisation of space and time and identity constructions.

In the following paragraph, I address the water narratives legitimising Israel and the PNA's water centralisation and modernisation, as well as their role in the cultural construction of the Israeli and Palestinian nation-state. These narratives are contested by local people, who produce different discourses and representations of water reality.

#### **4.1 Conflicting Narratives on Water Scarcity**

In Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole Palestinian Territories, water scarcity and other environmental issues are addressed by multiple environmental narratives, which bear different political meanings and convey multiple experiences of power.

The Israeli state, the PNA and different local interest groups adopt competitive ideological constructions of water scarcity, which convey different representations of water reality and conceptions of space and of the relationships with the environment, as well as different identity constructions. These are aimed at ensuring conflicting interests, while legitimising multiple dynamics of domination at the local, national and global level, which contribute to increase marginalised people's experience of water scarcity conditions in the local semi-arid context.

Despite the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn are aware of the important role of global warming and climate changes<sup>98</sup>, they refuse the naturalisation of local spring water scarcity, which they connect to the Israeli environmental narratives dominating the early years of the Israeli State.

---

<sup>98</sup> They say that until the 1980s, local climate was characterised by two rain seasons: in winter, between October and February, and in spring, between April and May. Differently, today usually there is rainwater only from November or December until February or March.

Since the early years of the Israeli State, Israel's narratives define water scarcity as a natural condition characterising the local semi-arid environment and climate changes, conveying the modernist disconnection between cultural and "natural" processes (Latour 2004). The naturalisation of water scarcity legitimises the Israeli national construction and colonial occupation. Only Israel's technical ability to overcome the environmental limits of a hostile "nature" can restore the lost prosperity of the Promised Land making "the desert bloom" through an efficient, centralized water modernisation and agriculture development. In these narratives, the Palestinian Territories are imagined as a degraded and "desert" landscape, supposed as abandoned by the "underdeveloped" and immoral Palestinians. As during the previous British colonial administration (Van Aken 2012), the modernist ideologies defining water issues as a technical efficiency consist in "politics of nature" (Latour 1999) with a key role in the imagination and invention of the "other" as "colonised" or "underdeveloped" and in the legitimisation of development interventions.

The Israeli modernist and messianic discourses naturalise water scarcity, and thus, alienate it from socio-cultural and political processes. In this way, they mask the political and social implications of Israel's hydropolitics (Trottier 1999) and their responsibilities in the creation of increasing water stress experienced by Palestinians, while naturalising their subordinated position.

On the contrary, according to the environmental justice discourses of Palestinian governmental institutions and some environmental NGOs, water scarcity is socially and politically created. These discourses focus on property rights and the unequal spatial distribution of environmental costs and risks, which are externalised in the Occupied Palestinian territories (Alatout 2006). They claim that water stress (and groundwater pollution) is produced by the Israeli occupation, which has appropriated the greater part of water resources and land and denies Palestinian infrastructure development, thus hindering the Palestinian territorial sovereignty.

At the national level, the struggle for the access to water and for water quality symbolises the Palestinians' struggle for justice, viewed as their collective right of independence and self-determination. The experience of water stress and problems of water pollution shared by almost all Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – even if to a different extent – strengthens and naturalises the cultural formation of a Palestinian national identity, which is primarily the product of the relationship of difference from Israelis (Bisharat 1997). In the Palestinian national narratives Israelis reified as the enemies for excellence.

Nevertheless, the PNA uses these narratives as a tool to legitimise its attempts at centralising water. In the PNA's discourses, the public regime of water management is considered to be the only guarantee of an equitable and efficient water management among Palestinians (Trottier 1999; 2013), especially in the context of increasing conditions of water scarcity.

The PNA's narratives on water scarcity mask the forms of discrimination and exclusion entailed by its patterns of water distribution, which lead to the further unequal access to domestic water among Palestinians and to the related multiple local perceptions and meanings connected to water, water scarcity and water justice<sup>99</sup>.

Differently, for the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn water scarcity is not only the outcome of distributive injustice, which can be overcome only by the Palestinian State's water sovereignty and centralisation. Spring water scarcity, rainwater floods and groundwater pollution are the outcome of the Israeli state's destructive relationships with the local environment, which highlights its further illegitimacy. They consist in the active response of non-human actors such as water to Israel's disrespectful submission of the environment (besides the Palestinians living in it), characterised by resources' over-exploitation and the drastic re-modelling of the territory, while destroying local, secular Palestinians' harmonious and sustainable eco-social systems.

Acknowledging the strong interrelation and reciprocity between human practices and culture and the "natural", non-human actors like water and land, villagers claim for socio-ecological justice (Schlosberg 2013), that is to say, for their right to preserve the socio-ecological network on which the local livelihood and collective cultural belonging are grounded<sup>100</sup>.

A different view of water reality is proposed by Friends of the Earth - Middle East (FOEME), a joint Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmental NGO (member of Friends of the Earth International) created at the time of the Oslo Peace Negotiations in 1994<sup>101</sup>. This NGO addresses the environmental problems<sup>102</sup> in the village caused by the Israeli urban

---

<sup>99</sup> The PNA's water policies and their meanings and social implications are analysed in Chapter IV.

<sup>100</sup> I explain the local views of the relationships between human beings and the environment and the connected claims for justice in Chapter III.

<sup>101</sup> FOEME engages with both top-down advocacy approaches and bottom-up strategies to involve communities on a grassroots level.

<sup>102</sup> In Wādī Fūkīn, as well as across the region, FOEME works via community empowerment to install grey water systems, harvest rainwater, build ecological wetlands and mediate the relationships with mayors and administrators. The education of children and the youth on water issues and the creation of cooperative knowledge on common environmental threats, by planting gardens, building grey

development planning - such as the damage of springs and landscape and spring water scarcity and pollution - in the framework of the "Good Water Neighbours" initiative, which was born in 2001 (with funding from USAID, Swedish SIDA and Belgium). Wādī Fūkīn-Tzur Hadassah is one of 28 joint communities in Israel, Palestine and Jordan which are involved in this initiative, whose objective is to bring the problem of water shortage that is shared by Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians onto the public agenda, encouraging a joint management of the regional water resources and environment.

Differently of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives which consider water as a matter of territoriality over which sovereignty and property rights should be exercised, today this environmental NGO focuses on the production, management, and distribution of environmental hazards shared by populations living within a shared ecology, independently of the sovereignty status (Alatout 2006).

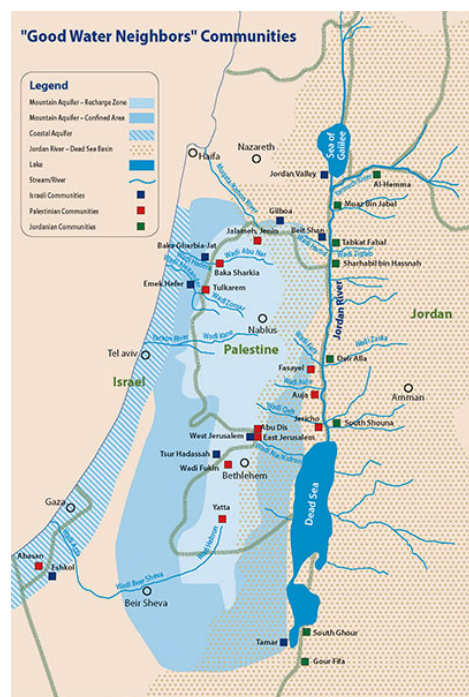


Figure 36: The communities participating to the "Good Water Neighbours" initiative (FOEME, 2016)

Adopting a capability approach to environmental justice, this NGO defines water and other environmental problems as issues concerning the "quality of life" of both Palestinians and Israelis living within a shared ecology. Within the framework of neo-liberal economics and of water commoditisation entailed by the new "global water regime" (Linton 2010), this shift

---

water systems and engaging with the environment physically, play a central role in the design of every project.

has been allowed by the Israeli water experts' adoption, during the early-1990s, of a new, economic notion of water scarcity.

The narratives of shared environment claim the improvement of the quality of life of both Palestinians and Israelis, while improving the environmental quality. They convey a depoliticised conception of space, without addressing power relations that are, at least in part, territorial.

The FOEME's environmental peace-building approach (EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East 2008) aims at changing environmental behaviours and at replacing the concept of mutually exclusive and politically defined identities with new forms of regional identity. It aims at creating an ecological community or a "community of sufferers" (Fröhlich and Ide 2008:2), grounded on the sharing of the same environmental problems (such as the degradation of cross-border water resources), perceptions, experiences, goals and benefits. However, the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn can difficultly have the same perceptions and feel the same suffering and patterns of belonging of the Israelis in Tzur Hadassah, given the discriminatory forms of planning, policies and violence which they experience daily as Palestinians.

Most of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn (included the head of the Village Council) consider FOEME's initiatives as *taṭbī'a* (naturalisation), that is the word used by Palestinians to call the process of normalisation of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and of their colonial relationships, which contributes to maintain them. They argue that the proposed activities hide the political causes of the local environmental problems and shape an image of normal and egalitarian neighbouring relations between their village and the Israeli town, while the last continues to be expanded in the lands of the village.

The FOEME NGO claims the Israeli government's protection of the socio-natural environment in the village, through the patrimonialisation of both the environment and local Palestinians' "traditional" farming and irrigation techniques. These are defined as a unique natural and cultural heritage in the Judean Mountains, characterised by an ancient tradition of spring fed agriculture.

In the framework of this NGO's initiatives, some members of the communities of Wādī Fūkīn and Tzur Hadassah have been involved in the development of an Alternative Master Plan concerning the development and conservation of Wādī Fūkīn (FOEME 2006). Given that the priority of the group is the conservation of the springs in the village, the planning process first entailed scientific surveys about the hydrological system of the springs and its present conditions, whose results I exposed previously (Haviv and Asaf 2005). Grounded on

these results, the Master Plan recommends to limiting the expansion of the Israeli town, as well as that of the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit on the hill C.

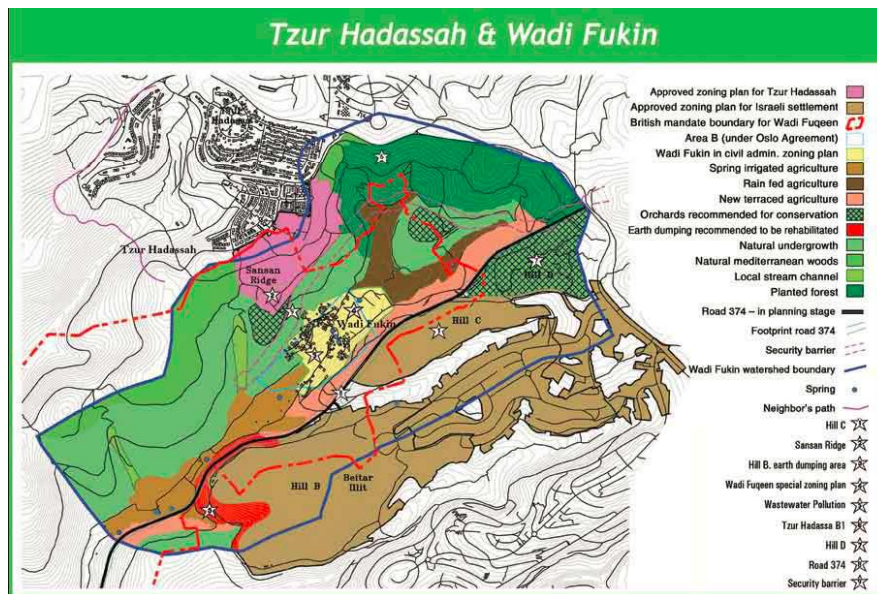


Figure 37: map of Conflicts - Wadi Fukin and Tzur Hadassah (Wadi Fukin –An Alternative Master Plan 2006, FOEME 2005)

Moreover, the plan asked to consider an alternative path for the Separation Fence (the Israeli wall), which is planned to be built between the village and Tzur Hadassah, justified by security reasons such as the protection of Israel from terrorist attacks. Indeed, digging for the foundations of the wall might further damage the local hydrological and ecological system, destroying the underground paths of water feeding the springs in the village, and thus depriving local inhabitants of their historical agricultural livelihood.

On February 24, 2010, some Israelis and Palestinians from both the communities met to prepare a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice against the building of this part of the segregation wall. Three hundred Israeli residents from Tzur Hadassah signed and succeeded to (temporary) stop the construction of the wall (Katz-Mink 2012-2013).

Some Israeli green groups lobby the Israeli government for the protection of the local environment by declaring the village's valley as a natural reserve shared by the inhabitants of both the Palestinian and Israeli inhabited centres.

For the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn these proposals are dangerous and may entail the loss of their land. Many villagers state that today the Israelis in Tzur Hadassah want to preserve what

tomorrow they will appropriate. The Israeli green groups do not take into consideration that the protection of the valley as a nature reserve or national park, would not necessarily guarantee the respect of local Palestinians' rights of access to their land<sup>103</sup>. Indeed, the Israeli legal and physical appropriation of Palestinian lands, denying local people' territorial rights, is justified by environmental protection (Braverman 2009b).

Despite well intentioned, the Israeli green groups' claim for legal protection of the environment often increases Israel's spatial and temporal control over Palestinians' life, further fragmenting the space in multiple areas characterised by different "codes of mandatory spatial conduct" (Braverman 2009c:257).

Many lands are expropriated as state lands, by declaring them as nature reserves or archaeological sites<sup>104</sup>, as well as closed military areas<sup>105</sup>, buffer zones characterised by the strong presence of Israeli soldiers and security areas usually located near the Israeli urban areas. Palestinians living in these areas are subjected to severe restrictions, permit systems, to the demolition of their homes and infrastructure and to violence. These strategies are aimed at hindering the local livelihood and coercing Palestinians to leave their land, which later is expropriated as state land and occupied by Israeli settlements (ARIJ September 2015).

---

<sup>103</sup> One of the solutions which the Israeli members of the organisation proposed to the Defence Ministry, in case it decided not to stop the wall's building, was the construction of a gate in this section of the fence, which would have enabled tourists to walk on both sides of the Green Line and enjoy the sight of the ancient culture preserved there. According to a security official, this gate would have been controlled through technological measures (Rinat 2005). Certainly, this solution is not wished by Palestinians living in Wādī Fūkīn. A Palestinian farmer who knew this proposal at Israeli television news, said me: "If we have to wait the Israeli permission to enter and exit not just the village, but also the farmlands in the valley, and to share them with Israeli settlers, then, I prefer to leave the village".

<sup>104</sup> In the Occupied Palestinian territories there are 48 nature reserves, which extend over 12.4% of the total area. 88% of nature reserves are included in areas C, while 12% of them are located in areas A and B. Many Palestinian land's expropriations are justified by environmental protection, by declaring the land as "nature reserve" or "forest reserve". The same strategies of expropriation are applied by declaring an area as archaeological site (ARIJ September 2015).

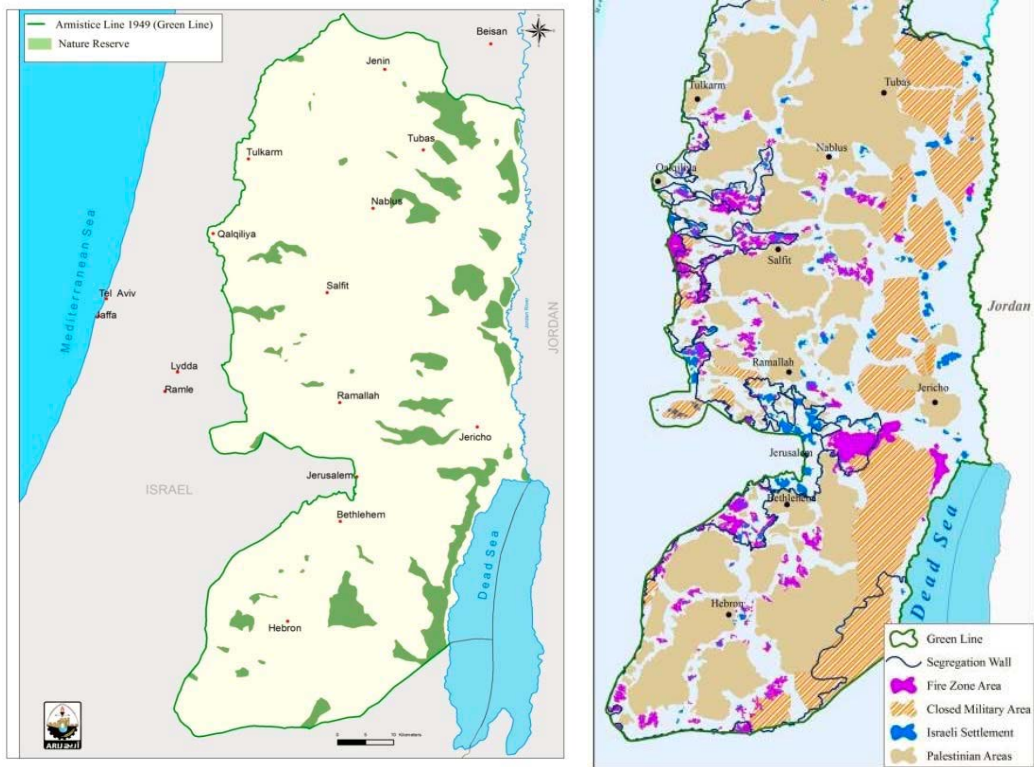
<sup>105</sup> The "closed military areas" or "firing zones" constitute 17.6% of the total area of the West Bank (the same percentage of the territories included in areas A, under PNA's jurisdiction, where 70% of Palestinian population lives). According to Israeli legislation, any military commander has the right to declare a land as a "closed area". Although Palestinian inhabitants of the concerned land are allowed to retain ownership, they lose their rights to have access to, use and develop it and no compensation is provided to offset the economic loss. This entails that the land can be expropriated as State land because it is abandoned, and then allocated to settlements. Until the 1990s, the "firing zones" were used for military training. Since the Oslo Accords Israeli training camps have been transferred to Southern Israel and the firing zones have been abandoned, while Palestinians' access to these lands continue to be restricted (ARIJ September 2015).



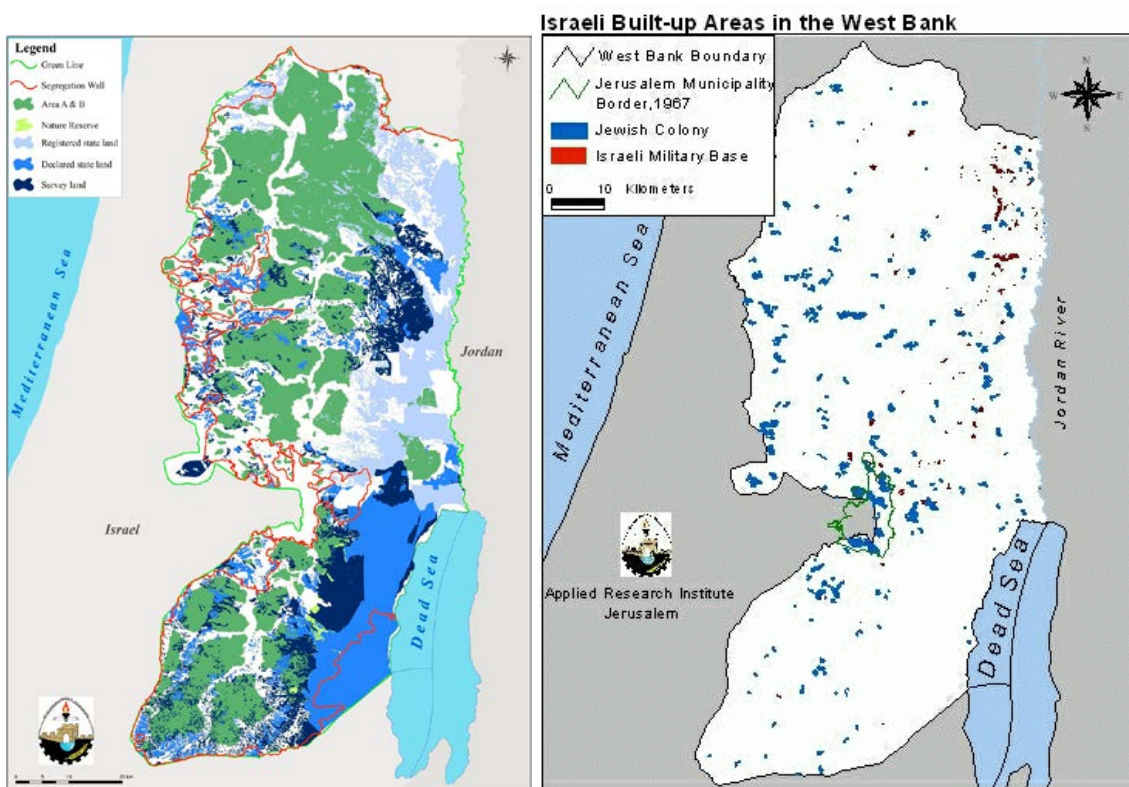
This state's strategy of land expropriation is globally spread, as shown by the case of the Maasai in Tanzania (Goldman 2011) and by that studied by Palumbo (2003) in Sicilia, in Italy. As stated by Palumbo, the processes of patrimonialisation is a social construction, the outcome of the arbitrary selection, manipulation and representation of history, connected to identity politics, as well as to politics of space and time, which entail changes in the management of space and the relationships between the concerned environment, or socio-cultural configuration, with those identified with them. Local populations usually contest these processes, since they entail the loss of their right of access to the patrimonialised environment or cultural goods.

Processes of reification of cultural dimensions or environments can be manipulated and appropriated to legitimise multiple political rhetoric and strategies, which seek to shape different meanings of space and identity constructions.

In Wādī Fūkīn, the same objective - the protection of the village's socio-ecological system - is imagined to be accomplished in multiple ways, which convey different meanings of protection and peace, notions of space and identity constructions. The claim of the environmental protection of the area as a common Israeli and Palestinian nature reserve, independently of its juridical status, is very different from the claim for self-determination of the local Palestinian community, which is interested to protect the area as a natural and cultural heritage belonging to local Palestinians.



Figures 38 and 39: maps on the status of land in the West Bank (ARIJ September 2015)



Figures 40 and 41: maps on the status of land in the West Bank (Arij 2015)

Most of villagers do not trust also many Palestinian environmental NGOs, such as WEDO, the only Palestinian partner of the FOEME organisation (and thus often identified with it by villagers)<sup>106</sup>. Founded in 1997, this organisation concerns with the protection of the local and regional natural resources and environment<sup>107</sup>. Besides of environmental education and training, and the promotion of eco-tourism activities in the area, in 2009 this organisation implemented a project in collaboration with the Village Council, consisting in the rehabilitation of three springs in Wādī Fūkīn, called *'ayn ṣiddīq* (the sincere spring), *'ayn al-fawwār* (the spring of the gush) and *'ayn maḍīk* (the spring of the pass).

Farmers in the village complain that this NGO implemented invasive interventions (using bulldozers), which damaged the spring called *'ayn maḍīk*, breaking the underground rock layers impervious to water (where spring water flows) and leading to the loss of a great amount of spring water. Other farmers asserted that these works also made *'ayn al-fawwār* descends into the ground (now it is not visible), leading to the dispersion of spring water, whose availability decreased. According to many inhabitants, the rehabilitation of these springs was not legitimated by the local community, but only by the top-down decision of the Village Council, in collusion with the NGO.

Some uninformed people even consider this project of rehabilitation of the springs as imposed by the NGO with the set purpose of damaging local springs, contributing to the Israeli strategies of occupation. They justified this idea considering that any rehabilitation and maintenance work in the valley (included in an area C) has to be approved by Israel. As many adult men asked to me: “Since the past, we know that the springs have to be touched in a very sensitive way! How the engineers did not know it?”

---

<sup>106</sup> Some persons, often belonging to the middle class, participate to this NGO's activities. Some of them stated that their children participated because of the lack of other activities to carry out. Differently, a young woman from the village works in the organisation as Community Coordinator in Wādī Fūkīn.

<sup>107</sup> WEDO has a main interest in water conservation, sanitation, wastewater treatment and reuse, solid waste management, hazardous /medical waste management, pollution prevention, the protection of wildlife and eco-tourism development. This Palestinian organisation applies low-cost, small and medium size and decentralised technologies in order to enable the recycling and reuse of various liquid and solid wastes by its producers (for irrigation, cooling, cleaning, flushing, composting, etc.). It works in close cooperation with the project owners and the Palestinian local and national authorities, such as the Palestinian Environmental Authority. WEDO's strategy is centred around research-demonstration programs, based on applied activities organised with local, regional and international partners, and around environmental education programs and training of professionals, seeking to increase environmental awareness (WEDO website, accessed on September 2017).

However, in order to oppose the implementation of the project, some farmers asked the intervention of *sulṭat al-bī'a* (the authority of the environment), as the Israeli environmental ministry is locally called, which stopped the works. These villagers did not decide to engage with this Israeli institution because they trusted it. They did it as a contingent strategy aimed at re-establishing their control over the local environment, against the authority of the PNA's institution and that of the NGO. They claimed the validity and value of the local know-how about springs and their maintenance, facing the presumed legitimacy of the NGO, grounded on the adoption of scientific knowledge. Therefore, they used the language and ideas often adopted by Israeli institutions to control and expropriate Palestinian natural resources, in order to pursue their interests.

According to Abu-Lughod (1990), practices and representations resisting to particular domination strategies have a contingent and strategic character. They reproduce or undermine some forms of exclusion and discrimination, or are appropriated and redeployed tactically within another strategy and configuration of power. The dialectics between power and resistance involve processes of co-optation, manipulation and complicity, which make the cultural outcome of these conflicts unpredictable.

## CHAPTER II

### Spring Water: The Meaning of Community between Continuity and Change



*Figure 42: A man in Wādī Fūkīn drinking spring water (internet 2016)*

## 1. Farming the Resistance: the New Political Value of Agriculture

While walking in the village's farmlands on working days, I usually did not meet many farmers all at once, in particular in the morning. Most of men farm when they come back from another job, in the late afternoon, on non-working days (usually Friday and Sunday), or during periods of unemployment. Indeed, local farmers often complain that instead of farming to sustain their families, they have to find other waged employments in order to sustain the increasing production costs of intensive farming activities.

To leave a field uncultivated means exposing it to the risk of expropriation; it is therefore viewed as an immoral behaviour and engenders the suspect that the land has been secretly sold to the Israelis, who soon will expropriate it because it is uncultivated.

For villagers, as a response to the colonial strategies of land expropriation, *az-zirā'a* (the agriculture) bears a strong political meaning. Despite the deep socio-economic changes entailed by the integration in the labour market, farming activities are viewed as practices of resistance and self-representation as a rural community, a claim of their legitimacy to resist against the continuous land expropriations by Israel and to the threat of becoming again *lāğ'iīn* (refugees), an even more precarious and marginalised status.

According to Abu-Lughod (1990) - who studied a Bedouin community in the Egyptian Western arid region - the relationships between power and resistance are dialectic. Local strategies of resistance have a contingent and strategic character and exist only in relation to the dynamics with particular domination strategies. They represent specific reactions to local and global power relationships, connected to specific cultural and historical processes.

The farmlands in the village's valley are historically dedicated mainly to vegetable agriculture, thanks to the access to the irrigation water drawn from the springs in the village. Differently, the northern farmlands of the village - within the area called *al-ğibāl* because of its highest altitude - have lost the access to irrigation spring water, since one of the two springs situated in this area dried completely due to the development of the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah. The other spring in this area is the sole spring in the village that is considered as a private property and it is used only by a family<sup>108</sup>. As local farmers say, here the land is rocky, but is not *ta'abāna* (tired) like the land in the valley, which is overexploited and unfertile, because of long-time intensive farming practices. However, only two farmers can

---

<sup>108</sup> I explain the reasons of the status of this spring in the paragraph 3, chapter II.

afford to grow vegetables by paying drinking domestic water, which they divert from the waterworks in the built-up area to their fields by means of rubber pipes<sup>109</sup>.

For this reason, here most of farmers cultivate olive trees, which require less water than vegetables and can resist to water stress. To irrigate them, sometimes they bring some tanks filled with domestic water to their fields.

Olive trees are cultivated also in many plots of land in the valley that are not reached by the channels' network where spring water flows, which in the past were cultivated also with wheat and barley.

In the valley, farmers increasingly grow these trees even in plots with the access to spring water. Indeed, olive trees do not require daily work and many inputs bought in the market<sup>110</sup>, as, instead, other trees and vegetable farming do. Therefore, people who have not enough time (because they have other jobs) or the economic resources for vegetable farming cultivate olive trees in order to not leave their land uncultivated.

Also people living outside Wādī Fūkīn, in other areas of the West Bank or in foreign countries, often plant olive trees in their lands. They do it during their visits or they ask their relatives in the village to plant these trees. The rooted trees embody these uprooted Palestinians' absence, standing for their presence (Braverman 2009c).

Differently, the slopes of the hills encircling the village, which before the creation of Israel were terraced and were occupied mainly by tree cultivations, today are uncultivated and in some parts covered by a cemetery of olive trees uprooted by the Israeli army. Palestinians' access, farming and grazing in these lands, especially those close to the Israeli urban areas, is banned by the Israeli military authorities for security reasons.

---

<sup>109</sup> There are frequent thefts of domestic water for irrigation purpose, whose meaning is analysed in Chapter IV.

<sup>110</sup> Concerning olive trees' cultivation, the activity requiring more work is the olives' harvest, usually carried out by the entire family, with an important contribution by women and children.



*Figure 43: trees uprooted by the Israeli army in the hills encircling the village (De Donato, 2014)*

In December 2012 Israel declared a land in the slopes of the north-western hills, close to the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah, as state land<sup>111</sup>. Previously the targeted land was owned by Ğamīl Ğuma‘a Yūsef ‘Assāf, who did not cultivate it for many years, because of the lack of water and time. As he said me, « this land is too large for me, I farm alone! ». In 2005 Naṣrī Rašād Maḥmūd Manāṣra (from the extended family called Mufarraḥ) - a local wealthy man working in an Israeli tourist agency - bought half of this land for his son Moḥammed Naṣrī, who “returned to the land” following in his grandfather’s footsteps. After Israel declared this land as public (for Israel) the two farmers planted 800 olive and almond trees, which had been donated by the Agricultural Development Association PARC. In June 2015, Israeli soldiers brought Palestinian workers to Wādī Fūkīn to uproot all these trees, repressing the protests of many inhabitants of the village and of some people coming from outside it.

In order to support local strategies of resistance, some donors, international and Palestinian NGOs – such as the Italian GVC (**Gruppo di Volontariato Civile**), the Arab Centre for Agricultural Development (ACAD), the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN), and the Association France Palestine Alsace – donated many olive trees to be planted in lands under expropriation (or subjected to the risk of being expropriated), within the framework of projects implemented in cooperation with the local Youth Development Association (YDA) and Agricultural Cooperative, and the Bethlehem Farmers Society (BFS).

« What we need is to continue to farm and to plant trees in our lands in the hills, where the Israeli settlements are expanding », said Ibrāhīm ‘Aṭiya, the head of the

---

<sup>111</sup> I wrote about this land expropriation in Chapter I, Paragraph 3.



local Agricultural Cooperative, while speaking with some volunteers working for the Italian NGO Overseas.



*Figure 44: olive trees in the village Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato, 2014)*

The *šağar az-zeytūn* (olive tree) is viewed as the symbol of the Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation, a cultural interpretation which this tree's physical features contribute actively to shape. The planting of this tree, a very permanent and resistant cultivation, consists in a claim of the permanent use of land and of its ownership<sup>112</sup>. This is highlighted also by the customary ban on planting trees in a rented land, since it would bring about conflicts concerning ownership. The olive tree bears the value of a Palestinian flag symbolising Palestinians' territorial claims. Its roots inscribe in the land the Palestinians' deep tie with it, as the tree embodies Palestinian nationhood (Braverman 2009c).

The identification of olive trees with Palestinians is not only the outcome of its historical, economic and cultural value as a main economic activity and a sacred tree according to the Quran. This new cultural and political meaning connected to the olive tree is a reaction of the Israeli land grabbing strategies and politics of planting (Cohen 1993). Since the creation of Israel, and even more in the last two decades, the Israeli army has been

---

<sup>112</sup> In the Occupied Palestinian territories, 45% of arable land is planted with olive trees. Olive industry accounts for about 40% of the total value of agricultural production, and 70% of the production from fruit trees (Braverman 2009c).

uprooting thousands of olives and other trees to secure roads, to build the Separation Barrier, the checkpoints and watchtowers, the security fences around the Israeli settlements, and to increase visibility against the risk of “terrorist” attacks. In the historical Palestine, tree uprooting was carried out by the Ottoman and following British administration as a punitive measure against peasants’ tax avoidance. Differently, Israel legitimises this policy as necessary for security reasons. It combines its systematic implementation with forestation projects legitimised by security issues and Zionist messianic and environmental discourses of nature protection and redemption<sup>113</sup>. Israel plants pine trees, identified with Jewish people and establishing their tie with land. Pine trees are reified as opposed to olive trees, which, instead, are identified with Palestinians.

Following Braverman’s studies (2009a, 2009b, 2009c), by uprooting Palestinian olives trees and enrooting non-local pine trees protected by legal norms, Israel<sup>114</sup> carries out the physical, symbolical and legal occupation of the Palestinian land. It transforms the territory in a European-type landscape characterised by legibility and arousing a sense of home in Jewish Israelis with European origins.

The dialectic opposition between olive trees embodying Palestinians and Israeli pine trees has a pivotal and active role in the power and resistance dynamics between Palestinians and Israel. Palestinian olive tree uprooting makes a Jewish project of pine tree enrooting physically and symbolically possible.

The Zionist project of construction of a new sovereign Jewish nation-state and national identity is grounded on an “environmental colonisation” of Palestine: the reinvention of the territory through the appropriation and centralisation of most water resources, through legal devices for systematic land expropriation and large-scale displacements, as well as through radical water and landscape planning. By means of these strategies, which threaten the reproduction of local biodiversity, Israel erases the Palestinian landscape, history and presence, uprooting Palestinians and removing the connected moral responsibilities, while naturalising these processes.

This is clear if one considers that on the total 418 villages evacuated and demolished by the Israeli army during the 1948 war, 182 villages are situated in present Israeli forests (86

---

<sup>113</sup> I explained these narratives in Chapter I.

<sup>114</sup> In particular, the Jewish National Fund implements many programs fostering tree donations, planting and mapping, shaping the Israeli/Palestinian landscapes. During the twentieth century, it has planted over 240 million trees, mostly pines, both in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian territories (Braverman 2009b).

villages), parks and nature reserves, which have covered them and erased their presence (Braverman 2009b).

Despite the new political value of farming, in the village many lands are uncultivated. Many villagers suspect that people who leave their land uncultivated have sold it to Israel, which soon will expropriate it.

Most of the uncultivated lands in the upper part of the valley – at the spring called *‘ayn at-tīna* – are owned by the sons of Moḥammed ‘Abd-allah, a dead large landowner belonging to the Ḥurūb tribal group<sup>115</sup>. Today Moḥammed’s wealthy sons and grandsons live in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša, have other jobs (like in the Palestinian National Authority’s security forces) and have never farmed. Therefore, they allow their relative Ṣāliḥ Slimān Ḥurūb, called Abū Fāyq<sup>116</sup>, uses their spring water shares<sup>117</sup>. However they do not allow him or other farmers cultivate all their land, leaving most of it uncultivated, even if some people belonging to the Ḥurūb tribal group have not access to these resources. Some of them have not the access even to land for building their house.

Also many lands in the eastern hills encircling the village, occupied by the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement, were owned by Moḥammed ‘Abd-allah Ḥurūb. Many inhabitants suspect that his family became rich by selling its lands to Israel, thus betraying the village's community, as had happened in the neighbouring village of Ḥūsān. In the opinion of many Palestinians, some inhabitants of this village sold their lands to Israel, which later occupied them by building the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit. These accusations<sup>118</sup> are difficultly verified, motivated only by the expensive cars, houses and buildings bought by these persons with money of not clear provenance.

Also many lands in the lower part of the valley, at the spring called *‘ayn al-fawwār* (the spring of the gush), remain uncultivated. They were owned by Ismā‘īl ‘Alayān, called Abū ‘Alayān. Until 2014 this elderly man was one of the only two persons living in a cave in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley. These two men did not want to abandon their land,

---

<sup>115</sup> I explain how this man achieved the control of a great amount of land in the next paragraph, analysing the exchange of water shares and land through marriage relationships.

<sup>116</sup> In Arabic *abū* means father: therefore Abū Fāyq means “the father of Fāyq”. Palestinians use to name a father as “abū” (father of) followed by his oldest son’s name. This mirrors the cultural importance of the oldest son.

<sup>117</sup> 23 hours of the water of *‘ayn al-balad* and 23 hours of the water of *‘ayn at-tīna* (table 1).

<sup>118</sup> In some cases, the sale of lands to Israelis by Palestinians has been ascertained by the PNA’s investigation and the Israeli documents attesting it. This is the case, for example, of the Abū Ghnīm Mountain (Arabic name), in which the Israeli settlement of Har Homa developed.

contesting its expropriation by Israel. Abū ‘Alayān was farming almost all the land belonging to his extended family, using also his relatives’ spring water. His sons live outside Wādī Fūkīn, never farmed and occupy important positions in the PNA’s institutions. Therefore, since he aged, he rented to Māher Sukkar and his brother all his spring water and a part of his land<sup>119</sup>. This agreement was negotiated in the name of the marriage ties established between the two families since Māher’s paternal grandfather married a woman belonging to the ‘Alayān family. However, after Abū ‘Alayān died in 2015, his sons stopped to give the access to their lands to other farmers, leaving them uncultivated and, thus, arousing local inhabitants’ suspect.

The Israeli military authorities adopt strategies such as the use of Palestinian and non-Palestinian informers or the secret negotiations with Palestinians to buy a land. As a consequence, in Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole West Bank, the relationships between Palestinians are often characterised by a widespread “suspect policy” and increasing mistrust.

## **2. The Water Meanings of Tribalism: the Large Water Family of Wādī Fūkīn**

Spring water, locally called *mayyat al-‘uyūn* (the water of the springs), is used for irrigation and to water the sheep of the few people in the village who still practice mobile herding activities. This resource is locally viewed as a gift from God, an unmarketable, sacred, communal asset shared by villagers. According to villagers, it is used through the cooperative management of the springs and irrigation gravity flow channels, according to a communal property regime.

Spring water has a central role in the material and social reproduction and cultural creation of the rural community of Wādī Fūkīn. As a local building entrepreneur who never farmed said me, « Without our springs, the village would not exist. We could not farm the land and then, what would we be? ».

This material and symbolic resource actively contributes to shape the meaning of community, a dimension of belonging expressed through the idiom of kinship and legitimised by a thick

---

<sup>119</sup> In 2015 Māher Sukkar rented 83 hours of the water of *‘ayn al-fawwār*, while his brother rented 84 hours and 5 minutes of the water of *‘ayn maḍīk*. Māher rented only a part of the land of Abū ‘Alayān to which the spring water of *‘ayn al-fawwār* is allocated, because he could not farm all of it alone (together with his land). His brother, instead, rented also all the land of Abū ‘Alayān, to which the water of *‘ayn maḍīk* is allocated (table 1).

network of marriage relationships between members of the different extended families in the village.

The water of each *'ayn* (spring) is divided among those who own a plot of land close to it, at a lower altitude (and, thus, reachable by the water gravity flow), who are given access to it according to a rota system of 8 days, locally called *nizām* (system).

An important part of my fieldwork consisted in writing the oral rota systems ruling the access to the water drawn from each spring in the village, thanks to some patient local farmers. These rota systems are represented in the table 1, at the end of the thesis.

According to villagers, spring water shares are allocated to the plots of land according to its size. The amount of water allocated to each plot is calculated in hours and not with the units of measure such as the litre or cubic metre, as a fixed amount independent of the changing total amount of available spring water.

Similarly to the irrigation systems analysed by anthropologists in Jordan (Van Aken 2012; 2003), Morocco (Casari 2008), Tunisia (Bédoucha 1987), the access to spring water is organised according to a temporal division of this resource, connected to a relational idea of time. Time and, thus, the turns of access to water are flexible and always negotiated, connected to the interaction between socio-ecological variable factors. As highlighted by Van Aken (2012), the relational conception of time (and space and property) allows the resilience of local productive systems, which adapt to the seasonal and yearly variability of water, decreasing the economic risks and social differentiations.

According to Māher Sukkar, a local adult farmer, the clock and the connected new way to view and organise time, has been introduced by the British Mandate in 1935. In order to know the beginning of water-turns, all inhabitants consulted his grandfather, the only person in the village who had a clock. As Ḥālīd 'Abd al-Qādir Sukkar, another farmer, explained to me, previously the water of the springs situated in the upper part of the valley was divided by observing the shadow of *qal'at al-mā'* (the castle<sup>120</sup> of water), which was a big stone situated where today there is the Beitar Illit settlement. During the night, water turns were regulated according to the changing position of stars in the night. Agricultural activities were organised according to the alternation between day and night, to the apparent movement of sun, to seasons and sidereal movements, as well as to social and political dynamics.

---

<sup>120</sup> In Arabic *qal'a* means castle, fortress, while local Palestinians use this word to refer to a big stone.

Differently from the local way to socialise time, clock time is detached and alienated from local social practices and ecological processes, making easier the British authorities' land taxation, based on the access to irrigation water.

A land and the hours of spring water allocated to it are part of the inheritance handed down from generation to generation. According to local norms, land and spring water are strictly associated, inherited (or sold) together. Local farmers assert that the *nizām* has always respected and still respects the rules of the *šarī'a* (the Islamic law) about inheritance, which establish that a father's inheritance has to be equally allocated to his sons, while every daughter is entitled to half of the part allocated to each of her brothers.

The Islamic law is viewed as a source of legitimacy of the present *taqsīm mayyat al-'uyūn* (the division of the water of the springs), as well as of the division of land. However, actually the women entitled to a share in the water are very few. Moreover, women are excluded from the use and collective management of irrigation water, a public arena which actively contributes to the construction of the local meaning of community as a community of men (Van Aken and De Donato 2018)<sup>121</sup>.

As highlighted by anthropologists addressing water issues in Morocco (Casciarri 2008), Tunisia (Bédoucha 1987), India (Mosse 2003) and Nepal (Aubriot 2004), in Wādī Fūkīn the management of spring water is organised according to supposed kinship relationships. The different spring waters flowing in the village contribute to shape the multiple dimensions of identification and differentiation characterising each individual's social identity, which are connected to the tribal political organisation.

As shown in table 1 (representing the rota systems of access to the springs' water), a complete rotation schedule for the access to each spring is composed of 192 hours of water (eight days). According to the general rules that farmers explained to me, these hours are divided (equally or not, depending on the spring and its history<sup>122</sup>) among the tribal groups owning land with the access to that spring. The hours allocated to each *hamūla* (tribal group) are divided among the extended families belonging to it, which are called *'ā'ilāt* (extended families). The hours allocated to each *'ā'ila* (extended family), also called *dār*<sup>123</sup> (house), are

---

<sup>121</sup> I analyse these dynamics in Chapter III, paragraph 5.

<sup>122</sup> I describe the history of the relationships between local springs and families in the paragraph 4 of this chapter.

<sup>123</sup> The word *dār* means "house" and it is used to indicate the building where a family lives, as well as the same family, whose presence confers to a place the meaning of "home".

divided among the male adults belonging to it, generation after generation. These are the heads of the *usar* (conjugal families) comprising each extended family.

According to the rota system, the community in the village is composed of two large tribal groups, named Manāšra and Ḥurūb.

The Manāšra tribal group is composed of the extended families named Sukkar, ‘Aṭiya, Mufarraḥ, ‘Assāf and al-Aqra‘a. Differently the extended families comprising the Ḥurūb tribal group do not have different names and are all called Ḥurūb.

The other two tribal groups to which the rota system refers, named Iḥsīnāt and ‘Amāmra, disappeared many years ago, maybe during the British Mandate<sup>124</sup>.

The ‘Alayān people who have access to land and spring water do not live in Wādī Fūkīn, but in the neighbouring Nahḥālīn village. They belong to the large and powerful ‘Alayān patrilineal lineage, which is dispersed in many areas of the West Bank (and some members live in foreign countries, like some people of the other families in the village). Similarly, according to villagers there are other parts of the Manāšra and Ḥurūb tribal groups in the whole West Bank, which have been dispersed since the Ottoman period.

Each extended family is locally viewed as composed of people tied by patrilineal genealogical relationships and descending from the same “ancestor”, who is considered as the founder of the present *dār*. It usually comprises four or five generations and can include hundreds of people, as in the case of *dār* Sukkar and *dār* ‘Aṭiya. From the point of view of an adult man (for example a 50 years old man), his extended family includes his elderly father and paternal uncles, his brothers and paternal cousins, his sons and grandsons and those of his brothers and paternal cousins.

The present members of *dār* ‘Aṭiya are considered to be the descendants of seven brothers, considered as the *aṣl* (origins) of the ‘Aṭiya extended family. These brothers arrived in the village and founded this family. They are called ‘Aṭā ‘Aṭiya, ‘Alī ‘Aṭiya, Ṣāliḥ ‘Aṭiya, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ‘Aṭiya, Mūsā ‘Aṭiya, Moḥammed ‘Aṭiya and ‘Aysā ‘Aṭiya. They are the sons of the ancestor of the ‘Aṭiya patrilineal lineage, named ‘Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū ‘Ālya, son of Moḥammed Abū ‘Ālya, belonging to *dār* Abū ‘Ālya.

Similarly, the present Sukkar people are viewed as the descendants of ‘Alī Sukkar, considered as the ancestor of the Sukkar patrilineal lineage, who arrived in the village with his sons Aysā, ‘Othmān and ‘Abd ‘Alī and founded the present Sukkar extended family.

---

<sup>124</sup> I addressed the history of these tribal groups the paragraph 4 of this chapter.

According to villagers, the ancestors of the extended families that are considered to belong to the same tribal group are tied by patrilineal genealogical relationships and descend from a common ancestor, who lived in a far past and founded the tribal group. Therefore, for local inhabitants the extended families comprising a tribal group are different segments of the same large patrilineal lineage.

‘Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū ‘Ālya and ‘Alī Sukkar, as well as the founders of the local Mufarraḥ, ‘Assāf and al-Aqra‘a extended families, are considered to descend from the same far, unknown ancestor, who founded the tribal group Manāṣra. The tribal group Manāṣra, as well as the Ḥurūb tribal group, are viewed as patrilineal lineages.

According to local adults, the Manāṣra tribal group previously was the ‘*ā’ila* of a person called Manāṣra, whose descendants founded the different segments of this patrilineal lineage, which generation after generation grew and became a *ḥamūla*.

The individuals’ right of access to spring water is negotiated and acknowledged following inheritance relationships legitimised by supposed patrilineal genealogical ties between present individuals and the “ancestors” of their *dār*.

While negotiating water rights, farmers produce multiple memories about their extended families’ genealogies according to the patrilineal lineage system, until their “ancestors”, who are mentioned as they are still alive and as the source of legitimacy of present water rights.

As in many other Middle East and North African societies (Bonte 2004; Abu-Lughod 1986), in the Palestinian territories the patrilineality is the main ideological principle defining kinship, the lineage and inheritance, as well as the whole tribal socio-political organisation (Cohen 1965). The common belonging to the same patrilineal lineage is viewed as consisting in the sharing of *dam* (blood), which allows a sort of “natural” mutual identification and emotional sharing. Even the Islamic belonging is supposed to be passed down through the blood, as an identity dimension acquired since the individual’s birth.

The predominant, historical Palestinian land tenure system was the *mašā’* (Moors 1990; Atran 1986; Cohen 1965; Patai 1949). According to this communal land holding, land was owned by a cooperative unit, consisting in the tribal group or a confederation of tribal groups living in a village or an area. According to Cohen (1965), land was redistributed periodically among villagers, usually every about two years, according to the cycle of the rotation of crops. As spring water in , land was divided between the *ḥamāil* (tribal groups), according to the number of adult male members of each tribal group. Then, the land of each tribal group was divided between the heads of the extended families belonging to it,



according to the number of his male dependants. The redistribution allowed the sharing of the limits and quality of the different part of land, connected to the availability of irrigation water, decreasing economic risks and social differentiations (Van Aken 2012; Cohen 1965). The members of the tribal group held the land jointly and cooperated closely in daily agricultural activities. They also lived together in a quarter of the village. Before the Israeli occupation the extended family was a corporate group whose members shared the land and hours of spring water (as well as the herd) and cooperated in the daily agro-pastoralist and domestic work.

Today, as I show in the following paragraphs and the next chapter, land and water shares are increasingly seen as individually owned and farming activities (and thus, the use of land and water) are individualised, carried out by farmers with the only help of their closest relatives, such as their sons and wife. The dimension of solidarity of the tribal group and the extended family is increasingly fragmented by the socio-economic segmentation and the competition between its members.

Nevertheless, the tribal group and the extended family are still important practice and dimension of political representation and cohesion.

To a stranger person's (coming from outside the village, like the researcher) question « who are you? », local inhabitants answer that they are Manāşra or Ḥurūb, the two numerous and powerful tribal groups living in the village. However, while dealing among each other, the members of the same tribal group claim their belonging to different extended families, which are in competition for the status and the access to resources.

In Wādī Fūkīn, as in the whole Palestinian territories, the extended family is a main dimension of belonging, sharing and solidarity. Despite the increasing economic competition between the members of the extended family, this solidarity and assistance network is the main source of each individual's social security, especially in the lack of economic capital. The mutual relationships between the extended family's members are expressed by their frequent mutual exchanges of agricultural work, knowledge, services and resources such as water hours and vegetables, in the framework of the ritualised practices of the visit (at home and in the fields).

Each individual's honour and reputation, responsibilities and obligations are identified with those of his extended family, in particular of his father, grandfather, paternal uncles and brothers and sons. The status and political power of an individual and his/her extended family is mirrored by the number of men passing down the blood, sharing mutual solidarity

relationships and representing and defending the family's honour and interests in public contexts.

If a person has a conflict with a member of another extended family, the honour and reputation of their whole extended families are at stake. According to the local tribal organisation, the solution of the conflict has to be negotiated by the concerned extended families. The negotiations for conflicts' resolution, as well as marriages or funerals<sup>125</sup>, are public contexts in which the extended family acts as a single body concerning the hierarchic coordination and control of its elements.

A family's power to claim its rights depends on the possibility to mobilise a greater dimension of belonging and solidarity, such as the tribal group. According to the seriousness of the conflict, a person is represented by the men of his extended family or tries to mobilise a greater number of men. Generally, the solution of disputes is negotiated by the father, brothers, paternal uncles and paternal parallel cousins of a person. In case of conflicts involving physical violence, but also symbolic violence (as the threat of a woman's reputation), many people are mobilised by virtue of their common belonging to the same tribal group, but also of maternal kinship, alliances and friendship relations.

The case of murder is the most serious case, which involves hundreds of people. The murder of a family's member is not only a violation of his/her right to live, but it also threatens the extended family and tribal group's respectability and status. In particular, it shows the family's weakness, exposing it to possible other families' abuse of power. In order to reassert the family and tribal group honour and status, the extended family should adopt the principle "*al-'ayn bi-l-'ayn wa as-sin bi-s-sin, wa-l-bādī azlam*" (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and who begins is more unjust). The extended family whose member committed the murder has to pay the "bloody debt", which can be paid by everyone belonging to its tribal group, even by very far relatives. The vengeance often triggers long-time blood feuds, during which a sequence of murders increases the dimension and destructive potentiality of the conflict.

The local tribal political organisation includes processes of conflict resolution aimed at avoiding violence and long-time hostilities between families. The customary tribal negotiation of the solution of a conflict between the concerned extended families or tribal groups is a mechanism of social control, justice administration and consensus building.

---

<sup>125</sup> I analysed this issue in the third chapter, while analysing the role of women in the local community.

After three days of *hudna* (truce), people belonging to other families represent the two groups of solidarity that are in conflict, avoiding they meet each other because of the risk of violence. The representative of the two parts, who are chosen because of their high political status and reputation, negotiate the payment of the *diya* (death compensation, blood price) by the murderer's extended family. In the past the death compensation consisted in land and animals, while today is mainly paid with a great amount of money. Differently from the past, the payment of the death compensation is viewed as a responsibility only of the closest relatives of the murderer, such as his/her father and brothers, who have also to leave their houses, lands and properties and to move far away, in order to avoid feuds. The support of other relatives such as paternal uncles and cousins depends on the relationships of solidarity they have between each other.

The extended family and the tribal group are dimensions of belonging mobilised as social capital depending on the relational context. Facing power relationships with "stranger" actors and institutions, such as Israeli settlers and soldiers or officials of the PNA's security forces, the solidarity pattern of the extended family is broadened until comprising the entire village's community, while it is narrowed to the conjugal family in the framework of the economic competition.

Despite the emphasis on the norms of patrilineality, among the inhabitants of the village there are different opinions concerning the belonging of the 'Assāf and al-Aqra'a extended families to the tribal group named Manāšra.

In the rota systems of the springs, these two extended families are considered as segments of the Manāšra lineage (given that they are entitled to a share in the spring water of the Manāšra tribal group). However, the elderly in the village say that they descend from other patrilineal lineages.

As explained in detail in the paragraph 4 of this chapter, the extended family named al-Aqra'a came to Wādī Fūkīn from the Dimra village, in the area of Gaza.

Differently, elder people tell that the tribal origins of the 'Assāf extended family are unknown. Because of this, since the past this family is considered to be "*bidūn ašl*" (without origins), which means to be without honour and, thus, with a low status and political power in the negotiations with other families. As highlighted by Abu-Lughod (1986), the main metaphor of honour is the *ašl* (origins, genealogy, nobility), which entails that the moral character is handed down to the descendants of a paternal lineage.

This moral judgment sometimes was justified by lack of cohesiveness of this family's members, due to the many conflicts for land ownership, locally viewed as immoral. Because of this, the 'Assāf people are weak while claiming their rights facing other families. Both in 2015 and 2017 the conflicts between them hindered their agreement about the person who would have had to represent the family in the Village Council. None member of the 'Assāf family was included in this local PNA's institution, meaning this family's exclusion from an important public space of negotiation and channel of power<sup>126</sup>.

Despite elderly people's memories about the history of these families, as a 90 years old Manāšra tribesman told me, since *zamān* (time, meaning a far past) the 'Assāf and al-Aqra'a extended families became part of the Manāšra tribal group. As he said: « Many women from *dār* 'Assāf and *dār* al-Aqra'a married Manāšra people... finally, they shared with us women and spring water ».

According to many people, the al-Aqra'a family obtained many lands and hours of spring water in the village both establishing a patronage relationship with a local landowner, named abū 'Alayān, and also as *mahr* (the bride price) for giving their women in marriage, whose beauty was well-known in the village<sup>127</sup>.

Sometimes a member of an extended family obtained the control of land and spring water shares as *mīrāth* (inheritance) from the maternal lineage. As shown in the rota system of access to spring water (Table 1), the Sukkar family, belonging to the Manāšra tribal group, has the exclusive access to the water of 'ayn *šiddīq* (the sincere spring). Māḥer Sukkar, a local farmer, explained to me that his grandmother belonged to the 'Alayān extended family, whose head was a large landowner. She married his grandfather, belonging to the Sukkar family, and she inherited land and the control of this spring water from her father. The inherited land and water were actually controlled by the woman's husband and have been inherited by her sons, passing to the Sukkar family. This family's exclusive access to this spring is not contested by other inhabitants, given also the present weak water flow of this spring.

Many lands in the upper part of the valley – at the spring called 'ayn *at-tīna* – are owned by the sons of Moḥammed 'Abd-allah, a dead large landowner belonging to the Ḥurūb tribal group. His father, named 'Abd-allah Aḥmed, achieved the control over the great amount of land and spring water inherited by his wife Ḥadīḡa, the only daughter of Falāḥ,

---

<sup>126</sup> I analyse the competition between local extended families for the new administrative role of the Village Council, created by the PNA, in the Chapter IV.

<sup>127</sup> I address in detail this history in the paragraph 4 in this chapter.

another member of the same tribal group. According to Mūsā Sukkar and his wife, two elderly local inhabitants, when Falāḥ decided to give his daughter in marriage, Ḥadīḡa had been contended by some tribesmen. Indeed, she was the only heiress to her father's land and spring water. Ḥasan Maḥmūd, a paternal parallel cousin of Ḥadīḡa, claimed his priority right to marry her. However, he was already married with 'Abda, a strong woman from al-Ḥalīl (Hebron), who menaced Ḥadīḡa to kill her. The latter thus refused to marry her cousin and married 'Abd-allah Aḥmed, who had a high political status, given that during the British Mandate was the *muḥtār* of the village.

As a vengeance, Ḥasan killed Abd-allah's brother, called Iḥseīn. In this case, the negotiations for the death compensation established that only Ḥasan's conjugal family had to go away from the village for six years and to leave to Abd-allah his part of land and water.

Women mediated the exchange of spring water and land between different extended families belonging to the same tribal group or to different tribal groups. Since the local extended families settled in Wādī Fūkīn, they established marriage relationships between each other. Marriages consisted in economic and political alliances which secured the access to resources controlled by others, such as spring water and land.

The tribal groups and extended families often exchanged land and spring water as *mahr*, which according to the Islamic law is the money given to a woman in exchange for the permission to marry her. Despite this, villagers use this word to refer also to other transactions that they carried out by virtue of marriage contracts, such as the exchange of land and water. According to them, before the creation of Israel, in Wādī Fūkīn the bride price could include a plot of land and its hours of spring water, some animals and material goods, such as gold, and money. This has been noted also by Granqvist's studies in Artas, another village in the Bethlehem area, between the 1930s and the 1940s (Granqvist 1975). Also, differently from the Islamic norms, the bride was entitled only to one-third of the bride price and the resources allocated to her were often controlled by her husband and his paternal relatives living with her<sup>128</sup>, according to the principle of virilocality.

Despite the local ideological representations of the tribal group as a patrilineal lineage, the negotiation of spring water rights and the practices of exchange of spring water shares show that inheritance and kinship are not strictly grounded on the agnatic paradigm.

---

<sup>128</sup> I analyse the implications of these behaviours concerning women's subordinated position in the next chapter.

The negotiations of water rights consist in the continuous reinvention of multiple and conflicting memories about local genealogies, which are continually censored, reinvented and adapted to the changes of the local context, through economic and political alliances, often legitimised by marriage relationships. The exchanges of spring water shares show that the borders of the tribal dimensions of solidarity are flexible. They are broadened and manipulated through many strategies such as marriage relationships, which are aimed at including in the pattern of the familiar solidarity other closeness relationships, far and spatially dispersed genealogic relations, as well as the ties between the members of the whole community.

In the framework of the tribal groups and extended families' dispersion by the Israeli army, kinship is an idiom of solidarity to rebuild and legitimise relationships of cohesion and political alliances. In line with a deconstructive approach (Dresch 2010), spring water management shows that the tribal group is not a social and political entity, a corporate group that has been preserved as a remnant of the past. Tribalism is a language used to describe, organise and legitimate changing economic and political relationships between individuals and social groups, and to express rights, obligations and loyalties.

Given that the access to economic capital is strictly connected to the access to social capital, a wide network of solidarity relationships legitimised as paternal kinship or marriage ties is a main resource for the satisfaction of a family's needs, especially in low socio-economic conditions.

The members of the 'Assāf family strongly claim to belong to the Manāšra tribal group, as a strategy to increase their political power and tribal protection while claiming their rights. Also, since the establishment of the PNA in 1994 most of people in Wādī Fūkīn chose to write the name of their powerful and well-known tribal group as "surname" in their Palestinian identity card, instead of the name of their smaller and less powerful patronymic group (Cohen 1965:105) of the extended family.

Since the past villagers establish endogamy marriages between people belonging to the same extended family, as well as exogamy marriages between people from different extended families belonging to the same or to different tribal groups. Marital relationships are established also with people living outside the village.

Before the creation of Israel endogamy marriages were preferred when the aim was to keep the family's control over land and spring water, strengthening the solidarity relationships between the members of the same extended family and the status of the family, grounded

mainly on land ownership. However, as the rota system of access to spring water shows, also many exogamy marriages were celebrated, redefining the configuration of the tribal group and the hierarchies between the concerned extended families (belonging to the same or to different tribal groups), which are mirrored by the renegotiation of spring water distribution and by the differentiated access to it.

Today the *mahr* (the bride price) does not include land and water and is paid only with money, but in particular gold jewels. This choice is adopted as a consequence of the present land and spring water shortage and the increased land's fragmentation and price, and it is connected to the changed ideas about the family. Also, even more than in the past, women are denied their inheritance rights or they give them up in favour of their brothers, in exchange for their economic and social support in times of difficulty. Therefore, a man has no more access to the land and spring water inherited by his wife or mother, which were often controlled by her husband and sons<sup>129</sup>.

However, marriages are still political contracts between the bride and groom's extended families, whose establishment is affected by their mutual class belonging and status. In the name of this contract, families often establish economic alliances or exchange solidarity practices and assistance, such as the exchange of work in the field, the temporary access to land and water shares or the possibility to rent or to buy them, as well as the access to other resources (as one can see from the rota system of access to spring water in the table 1).

Quoting a local girl's words, « most of *zawāğ* (marriages) are still “*taqālīdī*” (traditional) », meaning that they are not freely chosen by the bride and groom because of their personal relationship and sentiments.

The networks of marriage relationships between the extended families in the village have established a “dualist political system” (Bonte 2004) organising the community in two main antagonistic, contingent and contextual groups of solidarity: the *Manāšra* and the *Ḥurūb* tribal groups, which since the past are in competition for the control of local material and symbolic resources, such as land and spring water, but also for the new sources of power<sup>130</sup>.

Women have the key role of mediating the building of solidarity dimensions expressed through the idiom of kinship, which legitimises the sharing and exchange of spring

---

<sup>129</sup> These issues are deeply analysed in the fifth paragraph of the Chapter III.

<sup>130</sup> In the paragraphs 4 and 5, I show the long-time changing hierarchies between these tribal groups, according to historical and new sources of power.

water<sup>131</sup>. They are an important symbolic capital, whose control allows men to establish alliances seeking to strengthen or increase their status.

Marriage relationships and alliances are organised between the members of the same extended family or tribal group, as well as between people belonging to different tribal groups, according to the reciprocal political and socio-economic status of the concerned groups of solidarity and to their particular interests in strengthening or increasing it.

As I show in detail in the next paragraph, the relationships between the members of an extended family or those between the extended families belonging to the same tribal group are not egalitarian.

Following Bonte and Conte (1991) the tribal organisation is not grounded on unilateral patrilineal relationships, but on bilateral ones. Such a view entails the irrelevant character of the distinction between endogamous and exogamous marriages, to explain the tribal organisation as the outcome of marriage strategies consisting in alliances aimed at increasing the social status of each group, within a hierarchic organisation.

Today, almost all families living in the village are tied by a thick network of marriage relationships between their members. The collective sharing and management of spring water contribute to define the local meaning of community. Facing “stranger” people - like Palestinians from other villages, the Israeli soldiers and settlers or the researcher - local inhabitants claim to be a *‘ā’ila wāḥida* (a single family), as was repeated to me many times, as a common rhetoric.

The important role of spring water sharing in the production of a common feeling of familial cohesiveness and identification between villagers is highlighted by the forms of exclusions that it entails.

A family living in the north-western part of the village comes from the north-western neighbouring village of al-Qabū, which on 1<sup>th</sup> May 1949 has been evacuated by the Israeli army and included in Israel’s borders (Morris 2004). During the British Mandate, this family bought the land where it lives in Wādī Fūkīn from the ‘Assāf family, and the neighbouring land which it farms from Adība Ḥurūb (a woman who was the only heir to her father's inheritance). Since the evacuation of the village of al-Qabū, this family lived in the Ad-Dehīša refugee camp (as they did, later, the Wādī Fūkīn villagers), but in 1972 it moved to its land in Wādī Fūkīn, following the local villagers' return to it.

---

<sup>131</sup> I analyse in detail the role of women in the local community in the third chapter, paragraph 5.



This small extended family (comprising three adult brothers, their elderly father and conjugal families) farms its land thanks to the exclusive access to the water drawn from *'ayn al-Quds* (the spring of Jerusalem), the only active spring in the northern part of the village (where the other spring dried because of the Israeli urban area's development). This spring, situated in the land owned by this family, is the only spring in the village considered and used as a private property. Moḥammed Naṣrī Mufarraḥ, the owner of a neighbouring farmland, complains the unjust refusal of the family from al-Qabū to share this spring water with him to irrigate land. Other people legitimise this choice as an Islamic right connected to private ownership, saying that the scarce water drawn from this spring is not enough even to irrigate this family's farmlands.

No one in the village considers the family from al-Qabū (whose origins are emphasised) as part of the village's community despite it lives within the village's administrative borders<sup>132</sup> (map 4). As a villager explained to me, this family « does not share with us the spring water in the village ».

Its house had not been connected to the first domestic waterworks built in the village by the Israeli army in the 1980s, even when, it has been restructured in 2008 by the Village Council, thanks to the funds allocated by the Palestinian Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Local Government. Differently, the new waterworks supplying drinking domestic water to the village – built in 2015 by the PNA thanks to the USAID and World Bank's funding – as well as the new road built in 2017 (thanks to USAID and ANERA's funding) reach the house of this family. These infrastructures mirror the administrative inclusion of this family in the village's community - entailing, for example, the payment of water bills as the other villagers.

Despite this PNA's top-down decision, the family “from al-Qabū”, as it is still called locally, is not legitimised by the other families to participate to the Village Council. This PNA's institution is composed of nine local inhabitants, each one representing his extended family (the most numerous families usually are represented by two persons)<sup>133</sup>. This family complains that it cannot exert its political power and claim its rights in this public context despite, as one of the three adult brothers belonging to its second generation said me, « We gave our daughters in marriage to other families in the village ».

---

<sup>132</sup> Since the PNA's creation, in the identity card of this family's members the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša has been substituted by Wādī Fūkīn as their place of residence.

<sup>133</sup> I analysed the functioning of the local Village Council in the fourth chapter.

The family from al-Qabū is excluded from the large “family” of the village, a dimension of belonging grounded on the sharing of spring water, the local community's life-blood.

### **3. Spring Water and the Naturalisation of the Timeless Rural Community of the village**

The access to irrigation spring water in the village is regulated orally and connected to the annual and seasonal variability of water resources. During the winter rainy season (from November to March), because of the availability of a greater amount of water and its lesser need for irrigation (given that less crops are farmed and land requires less water because of low temperatures), the access to spring water is free of rules, excepted those concerning the mutual respect and interest in good living, and the Islamic moral obligation of not accumulating too much water and of sharing it with others, especially poor people (Faruqui et al. 2003). The water of each spring is used first by farmers owning the lands closest to it, who later let water flowing to the next lands, at a lower altitude, taking advantage of the slope of the land.

Every year, at the beginning of the dry season and the most intensive period of farming activities (from April-May to October, depending on the amount of winter rainwater), farmers negotiate the irrigation rota systems of eight days ruling the access to the water of each spring. Since the decision to adopt the rota system, farmers have two days to fill their pool with spring water, in order to be ready to wait their turn of access to it. Then, the rota system begins.

In 2015, during my second and longer research period, the abundant winter rainwater allowed the access to the greater amount of spring water in the last 10 years. Given the relative abundance of irrigation water, farmers postponed the adoption of the rota system of access to it. However, some farmers complained the unjust use of irrigation spring water by other farmers owning lands at a higher altitude, who were accused to use and accumulate too much water. On the contrary, the latter complained that farmers who wanted to begin the rota system were those favoured by it. Following these tensions, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July farmers negotiated families' water rights and began to follow the rota system.

In 2017, the situation was very different. Because of the scarce winter rainwater and the very high temperatures burning plants, the available spring water was not sufficient to irrigate all

lands in the valley (or at least the same of the past year). Farmers adopted the rota system of access to spring water earlier.

Villagers assert that the local tribal communal and cooperative management of spring water and land has always been the same since the far Ottoman period, since it has always respected the Islamic norms ruling inheritance.

However, the rota systems I wrote in table 1 have to be considered as only one of the multiple versions that can be written. Indeed, while writing the rota system of each spring, sometimes farmers disagree about the allocation of some water shares. Also, even if every farmer knew the number of hours allocated to him and the name of the farmers who had the turns before and after him, few people knew the complete rota system of the springs to which their extended family has access.

Moreover, while writing with me the rota system regulating the access to the water of each spring (table 1), farmers emphasised the difference between *taqsīm mayyat al-‘uyūn* (the division of the water of the springs) – as they call the “official” and legitimate allocation of spring water rights – and *at-tawzī‘ al-musta‘mal* (the used distribution), referring to the actual use of water shares, which is considered as temporary and subject to change and highly contested. This differentiation between the local representation of the system of water access and the practical system, between theoretical and practical rights, has been shown also by other authors analysing local irrigation systems in Tunisia and Nepal and (Bédoucha 1987; Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998).

In Wādī Fūkīn these dynamics are connected both to the orality and decentralised character of the local management of spring water, as well as to wider socio-economic and political processes affecting the socio-economic configuration and hierarchies of the local society.

As noted by Fabietti studying farmers’ irrigation systems in Baluchistan (1997), in Wādī Fūkīn since the past the norms ruling the allocation of water rights are negotiated collectively. This negotiation is a public dimension establishing a “synchronised model”, a fixed order of turns of access to water and of time division of water shares, which shapes a fixed and synchronised social time of water and irrigation. However, the orality of the system of management of spring water has always allowed and mirrored its high flexibility and negotiated character. During the daily farming activities, water shares are exchanged and negotiated by farmers, according to changing social relationships and ecological conditions and to wider political and economic processes. This flexibility and “de-synchronisation” of the system have always allowed farmers to adapt the management of water to the changing

yearly and seasonal availability of spring water, to the contingent, changing need of water according to the land and crops cultivated. These flexible dynamics allow the resilience of the local productive system, facing the ecological, political and economic changes.

The flexibility of spring water management is allowed also by a decentralised negotiation of water rights, which mirror the contextual and multidimensional character of the individual and collective social identities.

Since the past the division of spring water is negotiated at the different level of the local tribal political organisation. The decentralised negotiation of water rights highlights the local decentralised tribal political organisation. In the village the political authority and the right to exert violence are not centralised. Differently from cases of “chefferies” analysed by Godelier (2004) – chiefdoms ruled by a tribal aristocracy – the political authority is shared and dispersed at the multiple levels of organisation, such as the extended family, the tribal group and the community in the village. These dimensions of identification are all characterised by hierarchic relationships legitimised by the conformity to moral norms defining honour<sup>134</sup>.

According to villagers, before the creation of Israel the division of the water of each spring was negotiated between the tribal groups and the extended families not included in them (like the ‘Alayān family), who have access to that spring. Each group of solidarity was represented by its oldest man, according to the tribal hierarchies connected to age and gender. According to villagers, the water disputes were controlled by the *muḥtār*, who had the role of mediating the conflicts between the tribal groups and families living in the village.<sup>135</sup>

Then, the spring water allocated to each tribal group was divided between the extended families belonging to it, according to negotiations controlled by the oldest men representing each family. Indeed, before the Israeli occupation the members of each extended family lived in the same neighbourhood cooperated in the daily agro-pastoralist and domestic work and shared the control and use of a part of the land and spring water in the village, under the control of the family’s head, usually its elder male member. Each extended family consisted in a cooperative unit with a certain degree of autonomy from the tribal group, concerning farming and herding activities, the division of other tasks and the consumption of crops and

---

<sup>134</sup> I explain in detail the hierarchic character of the tribal organisation in the paragraph 5 of this chapter.

<sup>135</sup> I analyse in detail the role of the xxx and its idealisation in the paragraph 5 of the fourth chapter.

resources, as well as the resolution of conflicts between its members – all organised according to a hierarchical structure.

Today, the negotiation of the rota system at the beginning of the dry season is carried out by the representatives of each extended family, mirroring the fragmentation of the tribal group connected to the socio-economic segmentation and to the increasing conflicts for the access to water and land.

Given the dispersion of the tribal groups and extended families' members - due to the Israeli evacuation of the village in 1956 - and the increasing abandonment of farming activities, some families are represented by younger adult farmers. Despite their age, these farmers fulfil this authority role because they are always "*fy-l-ard*" (in the land), that is to say, they farm daily, even when they do not farm all day long because they have another job. However, their authority is contested by other farmers. In particular, farmers disagree about the division of the spring water allocated to each extended family between the male adult members belonging to it, according to inheritance norms. Before the creation of Israel, the knowledge of the water shares allocated to an extended family and their division between heirs, generation after generation, was shared by all the adult male members of the family and handed down to the new generations while farming together. Following the increasing abandonment of farming, the memories about past water rights' inheritance have been individualised and multiplied, bringing about many conflicts between farmers, each one seeking to assert the validity of his proper knowledge.

In particular, the object of many disputes is the division of water between the last generations. With the grow of the population, generation after generation, the water hours of an extended family are divided among an increasing number of descendants (brothers and cousins), leading to the extreme fragmentation of water shares. This is made possible by the clock's time, which allows water division in littler units of time, such as hours and minutes.

Today, same farmers have the right of access only to few hours of water, which are difficultly enough to irrigate even the increasingly fragmented small plots of land.

Given that many people who are entitled to spring water rights live in foreign countries, and that spring water is actually used only by a part of villagers, the division of spring water among the last generations is problematic. The hours of spring water to which each large extended family is entitled, as well as its land, would have to be divided considering descendants who are born abroad and never lived in the village, some of whom are even unknown by local inhabitants, as well as those who still live in the village but never farmed, further increasing the fragmentation of water-hours.

The reallocation of the water shares of absent people and the present generations' water rights are continuously negotiated according to local hierarchies and contested. This is due to the lack of shared rules, in the framework of the present legal pluralism ruling the access to this resource, connected to water commoditisation<sup>136</sup>, and of to the competition for the access to the increasing scarce spring water and land that fragments the extended families.

In order to mitigate these conflicts and the fragmentation of both spring water shares and land and the extended families, villagers freeze the rota system of access to spring water that defines theoretical rights in the time before the creation of Israel, the village's evacuation and local tribal groups and families' dispersion, before the loss of most of land in the village, the increasing abandonment of agriculture and the land and water shares' fragmentation. It is reified as not affected by water commoditisation, the increasing

Indeed, the rota system ruling the division of spring water that defines theoretical rights and is considered as legitimate refers to the older and past generations of villagers, establishing the rights of people who died. Many times it refers even to the supposed ancestors of the extended families, who lived during the Ottoman period but who are mentioned as they are still alive, as the community never changed. The genealogies of the extended families are shortened, so that their founders are placed four or three generations above the living elders, even if, according to local social memories, the founders of the local families arrived in the village about 350 years ago<sup>137</sup>. The present members of *dār* 'Aṭiya or those of *dār* Sukkar are considered as belonging to the third (when still alive), fourth, fifth and sixth generation of descendants of the ancestors who founded these extended families.

These ancestors are viewed as the symbols of the long-time ties between the community and local land and spring water flow, as well as of the past cohesion of the extended families.

Moreover, in the rota systems of access to the water of the springs called *'ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre) and *'ayn at-tīna* (the spring of the fig), the two tribal groups named Iḥsīnāt and 'Amāmra are entitled to 96 hours of water (each of these tribal groups has 48 hours from each spring). According to local inhabitants, these tribal groups disappeared a long time ago, maybe during the British Mandate. Almost all of them ignore the origins and history of these tribal groups, as well as the cause of their disappearance and relationships with the other tribal groups in the village.

---

<sup>136</sup> I analyse the legal pluralism that characterises spring water management in the paragraph 5, chapter 2.

<sup>137</sup> I address the history of the local tribal groups and extended families in the paragraph 4, chapter II.

These tribal groups' hours of water are divided among some families belonging to the Manāšra and Ḥurūb tribal groups. Nobody knows the criteria for this water reallocation, which have been forgotten over time. However, all inhabitants know the existence of these supposed patrilineal lineages, whose memory is guarded by the rota systems of access to the water of these two springs, which allocate to them a share in spring water as if their descendants might claim their right of access to land and spring water at any time.

As Ḥālid ‘Abd al-Qādir Sukkar told me, the rota system refers to the time during which all inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn were farming.

The people who leave farming to take up another job usually let their paternal relatives use their lands and hours of water, conforming to the local norms and solidarity relationships connected to the tribal political organisation. They do not lose their right of ownership and access to them, which they may claim at any time, for example, if they lose their job and decide to “return to the land”, as some farmers did during my fieldwork periods.

Also people who went to live and died in Jordan or in other foreign countries, as well as their descendants still living there, are still considered as owners of their lands and hours of water, despite most of them are prevented to come back to live in the Palestinian Occupied territories by the Israeli authorities<sup>138</sup>. Their lands and hours of spring water symbolise their families' presence and belonging to the community in Wādī Fūkīn as its de-localised part.

Local inhabitants idealise the local community and its cooperative resources management as unchanged over time, resisting to the economic, political and cultural processes and changes entailed by the Israeli colonial occupation, viewed as a temporary event in the long-lasting Palestinian history. According to villagers' ideas, as the other colonial occupations that dominated Palestine, also the Israeli colonisation one day will finish. Therefore, the definitive solution of the conflicts for water access is postponed to a supposed future return of people living abroad whose origins are from the village.

By means of the idealisation of water relationships, the ties between the inhabitants are naturalised to negotiate the meaning of home and community, seeking to recompose the historical, identity and cultural splits caused by the traumatic event of the creation of Israel.

---

<sup>138</sup> As explained in the first chapter, following the village's evacuation by the Israeli army in 1956, many villagers escaped to Jordan, which administered the West Bank until the Six Days War in 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Many Palestinians that moved to foreign countries are prevented from coming back to live in the Occupied Territories by the Israeli army, with the excuse that they have not a Palestinian identity card (given that they moved from Palestine before the creation of the Palestinian national Authority).

As highlighted in Chapter I (paragraph 2.1), in the local collective memories about the history of Wādī Fūkīn, the time before the evacuation of the village is constructed as a mythical, cyclical time eternally present, which goes back to a far past identified with the Ottoman period, but also encompasses the present and future time. It is the idealised past of the pre-modernity and moral purity in which the identity of the community is reified, and before which nothing exists and needs to be. The historical period of the Ottoman Empire has a key role in these strategies to claim the autochthony and land ownership of the local community, in response to the Israeli land legislation and expropriation devices, which restore the land tenure system introduced at the time.

As stated by political ecologists' researches on irrigation systems in Nepal (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998), in the contexts of the struggles over natural resources and of disputing of rights, local people often claim the legitimacy of their normative rules concerning the access to water and land, by reifying and idealising them as a system of "customary" and religious law based upon the supposed continuity of local legal tradition. Facing the Israeli strategies of land expropriation and the Israeli and the PNA's water centralisation, villagers view the idealised and reified tribal irrigation water management as a symbol of their identity claims, of their autochthony and "ancestral" belonging to local lands, which legitimise their struggle for autonomy and their resistance as an "authentic" rural community.

As a farmer explained to me, « *taqsīm mayyat al-'uyūn* (the division of the water of the springs) is the same since *zamān* (time - meaning a far past). We have always been here! »

Moreover, in order to legitimise the local tribal spring water management, villagers claim the local legitimacy and not contested character of the rota system of access to spring water. They assert the fairness of the supposed "traditional" tribal norms ruling it, by connecting them to reinterpreted Islamic laws concerning water management, such as the illegitimacy and immorality of the commoditisation of any kind of water. According to villagers, the *šarī'a* (the Islamic law) establishes that spring water is a gift from God, an unmarketable, sacred, communal asset shared by villagers.

A person in the village, who often declared to me to be a devout Muslim, explained to me his ideas about the universality of spring water during *ad-dawla al-islāmiya* (the Islamic State) of the prophet Moḥammed – which Muslims view as a model for human behaviour and an equitable society. This person idealised this period as a peaceful time characterised by social justice and by a sort of "water socialism", in which all water resources, as well as land, were



shared by a community of brothers comprising potentially the entire humanity, independently of their status, economic conditions and Islamic, Christian or Jewish religion.

I quote his words: « Anyone was passing here and wanted to farm a land and to have access to spring water to irrigate it, to water his animals or to drink, was allowed to do it ».

According to him, the sharing of spring water shaped a “social geography” (Rothenberg 1998) which extended until including, potentially, the entire world.

Actually, in the *Sunna*<sup>139</sup> natural water sources (rivers, lakes, aquifers, glaciers, oceans, snow, rain and springs) are established as public properties. However, villagers do not consider that the Islamic law establishes also the possibility of land and water private property regime.

According to the Islamic norms, when a natural water source, such as streams, lakes, sources or springs, is situated in a private land, it is considered as a limited private property. The land owner has particular rights of access to it, including the right to sell or to buy it as any other commodity. However, he has also some moral obligations, such as to leave others passing from his land to satisfy their need to drink, even if they cannot draw surplus water. Water resources can be considered as a private property also when the access to them is guaranteed thanks to investments in work, infrastructures and knowledge, like the building of a well in a private land, or of a waterworks or a sewage treatment works by the government. In this last case, the government’s expenses for the public service can be asked to be covered by its consumers (Faruqui et al. 2003).

During the Islamic State of the prophet Moḥammed, societies were characterised by hierarchies grounded on land ownership. However, social justice and equity were main Islamic moral principles ruling water and other resources management. Nobody had the right to accumulate too much water and everybody was obliged to allow every human being and animal to have access to water to satisfy their basic need to drink. For the Islamic law, human beings have the priority right of access to water to drink, followed by domestic animals and then by irrigation purposes (Faruqui et al. 2003).

The supposed Islamic laws ruling water management are idealised as guaranteeing social justice and fairness, in opposition to the increased unequal access to spring water and

---

<sup>139</sup> The *Sunna* consists in the prophet Moḥammed’s way to live according to the *ḥadīth*, the documented narrations about what Moḥammed said and did, as written by his followers.

domestic water, connected to water commoditisation and the illegitimate domestic water administration and knowledge of the Israeli and PNA's water bureaucracies<sup>140</sup>.

#### 4. The Springs' Political History and Cultural Intimacy

In Wādī Fūkīn there is not only one spring water (*mayyat al-'ayn*). Each 'ayn (spring) is called with its proper name and has its proper features and history, characterised by its long-time active and mutual interactions with the families who farm the land with access to its water.

Similarly to other communities' irrigation systems analysed in anthropological studies carried out in Jordan (Van Aken 2012) and in Baluchistan (Fabietti 1997), in Wādī Fūkīn the irrigation network contributes to the imagination and social organisation of space and of the environment.

As I represented in the map of the irrigation channels in Wādī Fūkīn (maps 6 and 7), at the end of the thesis), the flows of the multiple spring waters<sup>141</sup> in the channels of the irrigation network have an active role in the local imagination and organisation of the valley as divided in two areas.

The first area includes the farmlands irrigated with the water of 'ayn *al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre) and 'ayn *at-tīna* (the spring of the fig).

The spring called 'ayn *al-balad* is the only one situated in the built-up area of the village (area B), called the *balad* (inhabited centre), close to *al-ḡām'a al-kabīr* (the big mosque). Actually this name encompasses three springs that are so close between each other that are managed as one only spring.

---

<sup>140</sup> I analyse the PNA's domestic water administration in the fourth chapter.

<sup>141</sup> The considerations made in this paragraph are grounded on the analysis of the rota systems of access to the present active springs, which are situated in the village's valley, except 'ayn *al-Quds* (the spring of Jerusalem), which is used only by a family as a private property. They do not consider the springs that dried, such as 'ayn *al-farāš* (the spring of the butterflies) – situated in the northern hills of the village – 'ayn *al-maghāra* (the spring of the grotto) – situated close to 'ayn *al-balad* and whose water poured under a small stone that is in the shape of a grotto – and 'ayn *al-kanīsa* (the spring of the church) – situated in a land included in the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit. In local memories this spring's name is connected to the past presence of a church close to it, whose priests were using its water to live.

This spring is hidden under the yard of the only kindergarten in the village, which between 2001 and 2003<sup>142</sup> has been built above it by the local *lağnat al-ḥadamāt al-‘āmma* (General Services Committee)<sup>143</sup>, thanks to the funds raised by the international humanitarian organisation named World Vision. The water of the spring flows underground until it pours out from four holes in a close rock. Then, it is canalised in four open-air channels conveying it to the irrigation network in the first farmlands in the valley, at the feet of the built-up area.

In 2013 the Village Council made the four channels, paved the land where this rock is situated and built a high stone wall around it, in the framework of a rehabilitation project of this spring and a part of the irrigation channels, thanks to the UNRWA’s funding.

The land where this spring, the mosque and cemetery are situated (three dunams) is considered as *waqf*, which is a religious endowment controlled by *wizārat al-awqāf* (the Ministry in charge of religious endowments), (see map8). According to the Islamic juridical system, the goods of a *waqf* (Islamic charitable organisation) are inalienable real estate used as usufruct or collective ownership for religious aims or public services. They are instituted as a charitable donation to poor people or a whole community or population (Faruqui et al. 2003).

While pointing with his hand at this spring, a local inhabitant asked me: « Do you see that spring? It is the heart of the village. The village was born around it ».

Before the building of the first domestic waterworks in the village in the 1980s, women used to meet at this spring to wash clothes on the rocks around it and to source the domestic water necessary to satisfy their families' needs, through a communal management and property regime.

Once, the abundant water of this spring was used also to irrigate the lands until the spring ‘*ayn maḍīk* (the spring of the pass), situated about in the middle of the valley<sup>144</sup>. Today, it is scarce and used only to irrigate the first farmlands in the valley. Therefore, only families owning these lands have access to its water.

The farmlands in the valley below those irrigated with the water of ‘*ayn al-balad* have access to the water of ‘*ayn at-tīna*, which is the first spring that one meets while walking in the valley. This spring is circumscribed by a low stonewall and was situated near an old fig,

---

<sup>142</sup> In particular, the garden of this kindergarten has been built in 2003.

<sup>143</sup> This local grassroots association was founded in 1986 and in 2004 stopped to be active.

<sup>144</sup> Ḥālīd ‘Abd al-Qādir Sukkar, an about 45 years old chemistry teacher and farmer, remembers that when he was about ten years old, he used to play with the abundant water of this spring flowing in a open-air channel along the road leading to the valley.

which in 2016 has been uprooted by local inhabitants because it was sick. Its water flows in an underground concrete channel until a close, old stone pool, which according to local inhabitants dates back to the Roman Empire. The water collected in this communal pool is divided in hours by farmers who have a land close to this spring, at a lower altitude.

According to local farmers, *‘ayn at-tīna* is *kaddāba* (lying, untruthful), which means that one cannot trust the amount of water it gives, which some years is not enough to irrigate all lands with the access to it. When this happens, farmers use the water of *‘ayn al-balad*, by leaving it flowing to the lands beyond *‘ayn at-tīna*, in channels shared by the waters of the two springs, considered as *ḥawāt* (sisters).

The idea of this kinship relationship is strictly connected to the common history these springs share with the same tribal groups and extended families in the village. As shown in the rota systems of *‘ayn al-balad* and *‘ayn at-tīna*, their waters are shared by almost the same tribal groups and families in the village (the rota systems of access to their waters are almost identical). The 192 hours composing a complete rotation of eight days are divided in equal parts (each one of 48 hours) between the Ḥurūb, Manāṣra, Iḥsīnāt, and ‘Amāmra tribal groups.



*Figure 45 and 46: the spring called ‘ayn at-tīna and the communal pool to collect its water for irrigation (De Donato 2015)*

The farmlands in the valley below those irrigated by these two springs are considered as included in a different area of the village, identified by the flow of the waters of *‘ayn maḍīk* (the spring of the pass), *‘ayn ṣiddīq* (the sincere spring) and *‘ayn al-fawwār* (the spring of the gush).

Walking in the street along the western side of the valley, to the south direction, one cannot notice *‘ayn maḍīk*, so called because the part of the valley where it is situated narrows between the hills. This spring is enclosed by a stone wall and a chain-link fence. Its water is canalised through large pipes into a main stone channel, which branches off into many channels reaching the fields below this spring (at a lower altitude). A playground, called *al-muntazah* (the park), has been built next to this spring.

At a lower altitude, in the eastern side of the last part of the valley, *‘ayn ṣiddīq* is immersed in the thick, wild vegetation growing in this land thanks to the torrent covering it during the winter rainy season. Most of people do not remember when they built the stone arched wall enclosing it. According to some inhabitants' uncertain information, this spring's name mirrors its past evaluation as a powerful spring. Differently, today « it does not give a great amount of water », as local inhabitants complain.

Continuing to walk to the south direction, the last spring in the valley is *‘ayn al-fawwār*, which is said to be at present the most powerful spring in the village<sup>145</sup>. Today, this spring cannot be distinguished easily, given that it is hidden by the grass covering the soil above it.

Differently from the previous two springs, the water of these three springs are divided in different amounts between the Manāṣra tribal group, that called Ḥurūb, and other two lineages named al-Aqra‘a and ‘Alayān. The ‘Alayān family is the only one that does not live in the village and is not considered as belonging to the local community. It is said to come from the neighbouring Palestinian village of Nahḥālīn.

---

<sup>145</sup> According to same farmers, the most powerful spring in the village is *‘ayn al-fawwār*, followed by *‘ayn al-balad*, *‘ayn ṣiddīq*, *‘ayn maḍīk* and *‘ayn at-tīna*.



*Figure 47: the spring called 'ayn şiddīq (De Donato 2015)*



*Figure 48: the spring called 'ayn maḍīk (De Donato 2015)*

The imagination and socialisation of the valley as divided in these two areas is grounded on the historical relationships between the springs situated in each part and the tribal groups and families with the access to them.

The tribal groups and extended families' differentiated right of access to the water of the springs mirrors their different origins, and the history of the birth of the present local community.

The memories about this history are obfuscated by time, remembered only by elderly inhabitants and few adults. In particular, I have to thank the elderly Mūsā Ḥalīl 'Othmān Sukkar<sup>146</sup> and his elderly sister (married with Ğuma'a 'Assāf, who died), who dedicated to

---

<sup>146</sup> Mūsā Ḥalīl 'Othmān Sukkar died in 2017.

me time and efforts despite their age (more than 90 years old). Their memories refer to an undefined period, identified in general terms with the long period of the Ottoman administration of Palestine. Indeed, in their speeches local people refer to time as divided in colonial periods, from the Islamic State, to the Ottoman administration, the British Mandate and, then, the Israeli occupation. Answering to my request to date the events of this history in a more precise way, some elderly inhabitants said to refer to about 350 years ago. An about 90 years old elderly woman connected some of the events of this history to the time of Abd ul-Hamid II, the 34<sup>o</sup> (of 36) sultan of the Ottoman Empire, ruling from the 1876 until the 1909.

The sequence of the colonial occupations which ruled Palestine marks Palestinians' historical social memory. The colonial periods are points of reference to socially construct, select and order the past, to rebuild the connection between past and present which has been broken by radical and disorienting changes, giving a sense to the present situation and a glimmer of hope that, as every past foreign occupation, also the Israeli colonisation will finish.

During the far past of this history, the tribal groups and extended families living in the village arrived from other Palestinian areas and settled in Wādī Fūkīn. When they arrived the Iḥsīnāt and 'Amāmra tribal groups were living in the upper part of the village, including the northern hills and the first lands in the valley irrigated with the water of the springs called 'ayn al-balad and 'ayn at-tīna (as mirrored by the rota systems of these springs).

Differently, the lower part of the village, including the lands in the valley irrigated with the water of 'ayn maḍīk, 'ayn al-fawwār and 'ayn ṣiddīq, was owned by 'Alī 'Alayān, a rich large landowner living in the neighbouring Palestinian village of Naḥḥālīn, but whose *aṣl* (origins) is said to be from Beit 'Iṭāb.

The extended family named al-Aqra'a moved to Wādī Fūkīn from the Dimra village, in the area of Gaza. As established by the tribal norms ruling conflicts' resolution between agnatic descendent groups, this extended family had to leave its village because one of its members killed a person belonging to another lineage. It obtained protection and land in Wādī Fūkīn from the sheikh 'Alī 'Alayān, on condition that it paid taxes to him. The sheikh gave to them about one-third of his land in the lower part of the valley, from the spring called 'ayn maḍīk, but in particular at 'ayn al-fawwār. They got access to 96 hours of water drawn from this spring.

Differently, a part of the tribal group named Ḥurūb moved to Wādī Fūkīn from Su'īr (in front of Hebron), while other extended families belonging to it went to Dūrā and Ḥārās. The Ḥurūb

conquered some lands in the upper part of the village, by fighting a war against the Iḥsīnāt and ‘Amāmra lineages.

Later, the Manāšra tribal group and the ‘Assāf extended family arrived in Wādī Fūkīn from the village of Fāghūr, in the area of *ḡabal al-ḥalīl* (the mountain of Hebron). While the Manāšra tribal group's *aṣl* (origins) is considered to be from this village, the tribal origins of the ‘Assāf family are unknown. It is locally said that six brothers belonging to the ‘Assāf family escaped from their unknown village of origins to different areas of the historical Palestine, when one of them killed another inhabitant belonging to another lineage. One of these brothers went to live in the village of Fāghūr.

While living in Fāghūr, the Manāšra and ‘Assāf people were *quṭṭā’at-ṭuruq* (bandits) stealing merchants passing in the street connecting Hebron and Jerusalem. When the Ottoman authorities decided to stop these practices by killing them, they escaped scattering across Palestine. While some families belonging to the Manāšra tribal group escaped to other Palestinian villages (like Dīr Dibbwān and Benī Na‘īm), ‘Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū ‘Ālya, ‘Alī Sukkar and Moḥammed Mufarraḥ - considered as the ancestors of the ‘Aṭiya, Sukkar and Mufarraḥ extended families living in the village and belonging to the Manāšra tribal group (see Figure 2) - went to Wādī Fūkīn together with a part of the ‘Assāf extended family. As some elders told me, the spring water in the village was the source of a new life for these families. Differently from the village of Fāghūr, where there was only a spring, the numerous springs in Wādī Fūkīn allowed them to farm and become peasants.

After strong intertribal wars with the Iḥsīnāt, ‘Amāmra and Ḥurūb tribal groups, the ‘Assāf and Manāšra people conquered lands in the upper part of Wādī Fūkīn, that one including the northern hills and the first lands in the valley irrigated by the water of *‘ayn al-balad* and *‘ayn at-tīna*.

According to the reified rota systems of access to the springs called *‘ayn al-balad* and *‘ayn at-tīna*, the total 192 hours (eight days) of water composing a complete rotation of turns are divided equally among the four tribal groups named Manāšra, Ḥurūb, ‘Amāmra and Iḥsīnāt (each tribal group has access to 48 hours of water from each spring).

Local inhabitants told me that before the creation of Israel, the amount of hours of spring water allocated to a land (with access to spring water) depended on its size, and the amount of land to which a tribal group or an extended family were entitled depended on the number of men belonging to them and farming the land. The number of men sharing mutual solidarity relationships and representing and struggling for the tribal group's honour and interests defined the status and political power of the tribal group.



Therefore, one can suppose that during the Ottoman period, when the Manāşra and Ḥurūb settled in the village, the outcome of the intertribal conflicts and negotiations between them and with the ‘Amāmra and Iḥsīnāt tribal groups has been an equal division of the land irrigated by these springs’ water and in general of the land in the upper part of the village (including the hills without access to spring water). Maybe the number of the members of these tribal groups was almost the same.

The Iḥsīnāt and ‘Amāmra tribal groups became gradually less numerous, until they disappeared, maybe during the British Mandate. According to some people these tribesmen have been killed by the epidemic disease *ḥaṣba* (measles). Others say that also the Ḥurūb people contributed to their disappearance, since during intertribal wars they killed even their pregnant women, and thus their descendants.

The 96 hours of water acknowledge to each of these two tribal groups (48 hours from each spring) in the rota systems of ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna* have been divided unequally between the Ḥurūb and Manāşra tribal groups, favouring the Manāşra tribesmen. While the Manāşra tribal group is entitled to 121 hours of water from ‘*ayn al-balad* and 112 hours from ‘*ayn at-tīna*, the Ḥurūb tribal group has access to 71 hours of water from ‘*ayn al-balad* and 79 hours from ‘*ayn at-tīna*<sup>147</sup>.

This is coherent with the memories of local adult and elderly inhabitants, according to which during the British Mandate the Manāşra tribal group owned a greater amount of land in the village (including the hills without access to spring water), compared to the Ḥurūb tribal group<sup>148</sup>. It occupied a higher position in local power structures grounded on land ownership. The relationships between the Ḥurūb and Manāşra tribesmen have always been, and still are characterised by harsh status competition and conflicts for the control of land, spring water and local authority roles. In the past they competed for the role of *muḥtār* and today they compete for that of the head of the village Council, the local PNA’s institution<sup>149</sup>.

---

<sup>147</sup> Concerning the water of ‘*ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre):

Manāşra: (32 hours of Iḥsīnāt + 41 hours of ‘Amāmra) + 48 hours of Manāşra = 73+48= 121 hours.

Ḥurūb: (16 hours of Iḥsīnāt + 7 hours of ‘Amāmra) + 48 hours of Ḥurūb = 23+48= 71 hours.

Concerning the water of ‘*ayn at-tīna* (the spring of the fig):

Manāşra: (23 hours of Iḥsīnāt + 41 hours of ‘Amāmra) + 48 hours of Manāşra = 64+48 = 112 hours.

Ḥurūb: (24 hours of Iḥsīnāt + 7 hours of ‘Amāmra) + 48 hours of Ḥurūb = 31+48 = 79 hours.

<sup>148</sup> According to two elders living in the village, a great amount of land in this area was owned by the ‘Aṭīya and Sukkar families. Māher Sukkar stated that his family owned about 2700 dunams of land in these hills.

<sup>149</sup> I analyse the local interpretations of these roles in the Chapter IV.

The last open conflicts between them remembered by the elderly in the village date to the 1930, during the British Mandate. If first the Manāšra people prevailed and the Ḥurūb had to come back to their village of origin, later the Ḥurūb people re-appropriated lands in Wādī Fūkīn.

However, according to the memories of Mūsā Ḥalīl ‘Othmān Sukkar, an 90 years old local inhabitant, during the intertribal conflicts characterising the history of the village, these two tribal groups established also alliances between each other, in order to conquer the land of the ‘Alayān large landowner (from the village of Naḥḥālīn) and to expel him from the village, in agreement with the al-Aqra‘a family. Later, the concerned lineages negotiated an agreement establishing that the Manāšra (including the ‘Assāf family) and Ḥurūb tribal groups shared the control of the upper part of the village (including the part of the valley where there are the springs called ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna*). The ‘Alayān and al-Aqra‘a families had the control of the lower part of the village, including the land in the valley irrigated with the water of the springs called ‘*ayn maḍīk*, ‘*ayn al-fawwār* and ‘*ayn šiddīq*.

This history explains the present local view of the valley as divided in two areas, connected to the particular historical relationships between the springs and the tribal groups and extended families in the village.

However, as one can see in the rota systems of access to the springs represented in table 1, today the Ḥurūb and Manāšra people have access to the water of the springs in the lower part of the valley (‘*ayn maḍīk*, ‘*ayn al-fawwār* and ‘*ayn šiddīq*). At the same time, the al-Aqra‘a family, who in the past obtained many land and spring water shares from a local sheikh, today has legitimate access only to 18 hours and 40 minutes of the water of ‘*ayn maḍīk* and 11 hours and 30 minutes of the water of ‘*ayn al-fawwār*.

According to Mūsā Sukkar, in this period the al-Aqra‘a family lost the access to the great amount of land and spring water it owned, because during the British Mandate some of its members sold their land to other villagers because they needed money. One of these persons, called ‘Abd-allah, did it because he was poor and needed money to marry his daughters. As a consequence, today this extended family has access to few plots of land and hours of spring water and some of its members have not access to them. Mūsā Ḥalīl ‘Othmān Sukkar judged this strategy as not very intelligent and forward-looking. According to him, this family’s members were “*kasūlīn*” (lazy) and wanted to get money easily. Comparing the land to woman, he told me that « *Illī biṭṭāwawz bibalāš biṭṭalliq bibalāš* (who marries for free, divorces for free) » - meaning that who obtains land easily, as the al-Aqra‘a family did, also lose it easily.

According to local social memories, villagers carried out land transactions in particular during the British Mandate. This situation and the history of al-Aqra‘a family may be explained by the British authorities’ attempts at fostering private property. Given that many Palestinian peasants could not afford the payment of the increasing taxes for land, they could not register their land ownership or they had to sell their land titles. This increased the gap between the few powerful Palestinian families owning most of land and the majority of families living in poor conditions (Temper 2009).

The powerful Ḥurūb and Manāşra people, in particular those belonging to the ‘Aṭiya and Sukkar families, obtained land ownership and spring water in the lower part of the valley, sometimes by buying land (and the water allocated to it) from al-Aqra‘a family, sometimes as bride price or as inheritance from a maternal lineage. In particular, marriage alliances that allowed the access to these resources were established with the ‘Alayān extended family, whose heads was a large landowner.

The increased power of the Manāşra tribesmen compared to the Ḥurūb tribal group can be deduced also by the greater number of hours of the water drawn from the springs in the lower part of the valley<sup>150</sup>.

In order to allow the extended families owning land in both the two areas of the valley to manage the irrigation water drawn from the different springs, the rota systems of access to them have been coordinated. The rota systems of access to the springs in the upper part of the valley (such as ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna*) begin at four o’clock in the afternoon, while those regulating the access to ‘*ayn maḍīk*, ‘*ayn al-fawwār* and ‘*ayn şiddīq* begin at five o’clock in the morning.

The idealised representation of the rota systems of access to the different springs’ water mirror also the hierarchies between the extended families comprising the Manāşra tribal group, which have a differentiated access to this resource.

On the total hours of water drawn from ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna* and allocated to the Manāşra tribal group (including the hours of the Işşīnāt and ‘Amāmra tribal groups), the

---

<sup>150</sup> On the 192 hours of water drawn from ‘*ayn maḍīk*, the Manāşra tribal group is entitled to 77 hours and 15 minutes, while the Ḥurūb tribal group has access only to 12 hours.

The Manāşra tribal group has access to a greater amount of water than the Ḥurūb lineage also from ‘*ayn al-fawwār* (89 hours and 30 minutes and 8 hours respectively), while it has exclusive access to the water of ‘*ayn şiddīq* (inherited by some of its members from their mother’s lineage).

Sukkar and ‘Aṭiya families are entitled to the greater amounts, while the Mufarraḥ and ‘Assāf families have the right of access to few hours<sup>151</sup>.

Since the past, the Sukkar and ‘Aṭiya extended families are the most numerous among those belonging to the Manāšra tribal group and they have a high political status. As today, these families competed for political status and the access to land and spring water. However, before the creation of Israel they were tied also by strong solidarity and cooperative relationships, as mirrored by their common ownership of some lands in the hills (without access to spring water). Some of these lands are still considered as shared by these two families, like the land where the soccer field has been built.

Differently, the Mufarraḥ and ‘Assāf families are less numerous and have always occupied a marginal position in local hierarchies grounded on land ownership. Indeed, they have been almost excluded from the sharing of the spring water to which the disappeared tribal groups

---

<sup>151</sup> The 96 hours of water of ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna* (48 hours from each of these springs) to which the Manāšra tribal group is entitled are divided among the Sukkar, ‘Aṭiya, Mufarraḥ, ‘Assāf families in unequal parts. On these 96 hours, the Sukkar family is entitled to 48 hours (24 hours from ‘*ayn al-balad* + 24 from ‘*ayn at-tīna*), while the ‘Aṭiya family is entitled only to 12 hours (0 hours from ‘*ayn al-balad* + 12 hours from ‘*ayn at-tīna*), the Mufarraḥ family to 18 hours (18 hours from ‘*ayn al-balad* + 0 hours from ‘*ayn at-tīna*) and the ‘Assāf family to 18 hours (6 hours from ‘*ayn al-balad* + 12 hours from ‘*ayn at-tīna*).

The great difference between the number of hours of the water of these two springs to which the Sukkar and ‘Aṭiya families have access decreases if one considers the hours of water that originally belonged to the two disappeared tribal groups (‘Amāmra and Iḥsīnāt) and today are used by the Manāšra and Ḥurūb tribal groups.

Indeed, on the 137 hours and 40 minutes of water of ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna* that belonged to the two disappeared tribal groups and to which today the Manāšra tribal group has access (73 hours from ‘*ayn al-balad* and 64 hours and 40 minutes from ‘*ayn at-tīna*), the Sukkar family is entitled to 59 hours and 20 minutes (from ‘*ayn al-balad* : 7 hours of ‘Amāmra + 26 hours and 40 minutes of Iḥsīnāt = 33 hours and 40 minutes; from ‘*ayn at-tīna*: 7 hours of ‘Amāmra + 18 hours and 40 minutes of Iḥsīnāt = 25 hours and 40 minutes), while the ‘Aṭiya family is entitled to 73 hours (from ‘*ayn al-balad* : 34 hours of ‘Amāmra + 0 hours of Iḥsīnāt = 34 hours; from ‘*ayn at-tīna*: 34 hours of ‘Amāmra + 5 hours of Iḥsīnāt = 39 hours). The Mufarraḥ family is entitled only to 5 hours and 20 minutes (of Iḥsīnāt from ‘*ayn al-balad*), while the ‘Assāf family has not access to the spring water that was entitled to the disappeared tribal groups.

Therefore, considering the total amount of water drawn from ‘*ayn al-balad* and ‘*ayn at-tīna*, on the 233 hours and 40 minutes of water to which the Manāšra tribal group is entitled (48 hours + 73 hours of Iḥsīnāt and ‘Amāmra from ‘*ayn al-balad*, and 48 hours + 64 hours and 40 minutes of Iḥsīnāt and ‘Amāmra from ‘*ayn at-tīna*), the Sukkar family is entitled to 107 hours and 20 minutes, while the ‘Aṭiya family is entitled to 85 hours. The Mufarraḥ family is entitled to 23 hours and 20 minutes, while the ‘Assāf family to 18 hours.

were entitled<sup>152</sup>. Also, differently from the Sukkar and ‘Aṭiya families, during the British Mandate they could not negotiate political and economic relations with the al-Aqra‘a and ‘Alayān lineages, allowing the access to land and spring water in the lower part of the valley (*‘ayn maḍīk*, *‘ayn al-fawwār* and *‘ayn ṣiddīq*)<sup>153</sup>.

Following Bonte’s (2004) insights about the tribal organisation in North Africa, these water hierarchies can be connected to the marriage strategies of the extended families. According to Bonte marriage relationships are ruled by the ban of female hypogamy, connected to women’s subordination on men. The authors explain the effect of this norm concerning the hierarchic character of the tribal organisation. Despite I could not collect complete information about all the marriage in the village, I could note some frequent dynamics.

In the past but also today, besides many “Arab marriages” between parallel paternal cousins, villagers celebrated and still celebrate many marriages between maternal cousins. The marriage that Bonte calls “balad” (2004:88) has always been practiced: sisters or daughters are exchanged between two men. According to Bonte, these kinds of marriage establish the equal status of the two groups involved in the contract and strengthen the alliances between them.

Since the past the mutual exchange of women is practiced especially between the Sukkar and ‘Aṭiya extended families, building strong ties of solidarities between them (mirrored by the sharing of some land). Many times a father belonging to one of these families gave his daughter in marriage to a man of the other family, whose sister previously married the son of the first man. In some cases this kind of marriage is established between in-laws.

Differently, many other marriages mirror the hierarchic relationships between the extended families belonging to the Manāṣra tribal group or to different tribal groups, connected to the direction of “women’s flow”.

According to local memories, before the creation of Israel the al-Aqra‘a family is remembered as the family who often gave its women in marriage to other extended families

---

<sup>152</sup> The Mufarraḥ family is entitled only to 5 hours and 20 minutes of the water of *‘ayn al-balad*, while the ‘Assāf family has not access to the spring water that was entitled to the disappeared tribal groups.

<sup>153</sup> The Manāṣra tribal group is entitled to 77 hours and 15 minutes of the water of *‘ayn maḍīk* and to 89 hours and 30 minutes of the water of *‘ayn al-fawwār* (166 hours and 45 minutes of water). On these, the Sukkar family has access to 25 hours from *‘ayn maḍīk* and 33 hours and 30 minutes from *‘ayn al-fawwār* (58 hours and 30 minutes), while 52 hours and 15 minutes from *‘ayn maḍīk* and 56 hours from *‘ayn al-fawwār* are allocated to the ‘Aṭiya family (108 hours and 15 minutes).

The Sukkar family obtained also the exclusive access (192 hours) to the water of *‘ayn ṣiddīq*, inherited by some of its members from their mother’s lineage.

in the village, thus obtaining land and spring water as bride price. This family seems to have a “feminised status” (Bonte 2004), connected to its low position in local political hierarchies and to the ban of female hypogamy. Also today, it is difficult to find a man of this family who married a woman of the Sukkar and ‘Atiya families, which have a higher political status. I noted the same situation concerning the ‘Assāf family, whose male members are married mainly with women from al-Aqra‘a family or belonging to families living outside the village. The Sukkar extended family gave women in marriage to ‘Alayān men, obtaining land and spring water in the lower part of the valley from this family of large landowners with a high political status.

Despite the static and reified representation of the rota system of access to spring waters and the naturalisation of immemorial rights of access to this resource, the analysis of the reified rota system of access to spring waters highlights the intense political history of the community of Wādī Fūkīn. The water history of the village is characterised by the high mobility of tribal groups and the State's attempts to control them and to impose taxes, and by intertribal conflicts, patronage and marriage relationships and other alliances and negotiations for the control over the territory and its resources. It highlights the active role of the interactions between political processes – such as the Ottoman and British state administration – and ecological factors – in particular the availability of water resources – in defining people’s livelihood and local economic and socio-political organisations and dynamics, as well as the imagination and organisation of space and time.

The reified rota system of access to spring water does not define an equal water division between the extended family in the village, as claimed by villagers facing “stranger” people (coming from outside the community). This suggests that even if the ties between the members of a tribal group are expressed through the egalitarian family language, the tribal organisation is not egalitarian, as supposed by some anthropological studies about the segmentary lineage systems: first of all, those of Evans-Pritchard (1940) about Nuer people, later re-elaborated by Gellner (1969) concerning the tribal societies in Morocco and by the anthropological literature about Muslim tribal societies in the ‘70s. The “spring water hierarchies” between the tribal groups and extended families living in the village highlights that the community of Wādī Fūkīn has always been characterised by hierarchic relationships between local tribal groups and the extended families comprising each of them.

Moreover, spring water flows in the irrigation network reveal the extended families’ different origins and histories which fragment the heterogeneous community in the village. These are viewed as a threat to the claim of autochthony of the present local community,

facing the land expropriations carried out by Israel and legitimised by the rhetoric about Israelis' presence in the area since the Biblical times.

These ideas are affected by the power and resistance dynamics for the control over land and water at the national level. Both the Israeli and the PNA's competitive national narratives<sup>154</sup> claim the cultural "authenticity", autochthony and roots in the local territory of Israelis and Palestinians respectively.

Differently from the social memories about the village's evacuation and the return to it – which became a sort of foundational myth of the community – the memories about this far past are not produced and claimed collectively in the interactions with people and institutions (coming from outside the village like the researcher). They are narrated quietly by the older generations, which guard them as part of the cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997) shared by the local community's members.

## **5. Spring Water Hierarchies and Legal Pluralism**

The following analysis of the actual practices of division and use of spring water (table 1) brings to light changes in the "spring water hierarchies" between the tribal groups and extended families living in the village, affected by national, colonial and global political and economic processes that occurred since the creation of Israel. These have led to new criteria of access to spring water and land, which mirror the change in the sources of power on which hierarchies are built and amplify dynamics of inequality, competition and conflict between families, concerning the access to local resources.

The analysis of the use of irrigation spring water has inevitably entailed the exploration of the practices of division and use of land, another important symbolic and material resource in the cultural construction of the nation-state, used to naturalise the historical ties of the Palestinian population with the territory (Swedenburg 1990). The map 8 illustrates a social map I drew about the extended families' land ownership in Wādī Fūkīn. As explained in the introduction of the thesis, this social map is only one of the possible contested visual representations of this social dimension<sup>155</sup>, given the lack of shared norms

---

<sup>154</sup> I analyse the Palestinian national narratives in Chapter IV.

<sup>155</sup> While doing this social map I faced many difficulties, like that of persuading people to patently dedicate time to this difficult and long-lasting work, as well as the suspect and opposition of some local inhabitants. I explained these dynamics in the introduction of the thesis.

ruling the management of land and the increasing conflicts for the access to it, analysed in the next paragraph.

Since the expropriation of most of land of the village, included in the Israeli state and urban settlements, the local hierarchies grounded on land ownership have undergone important changes. While before the creation of the Israeli state the Manāšra tribal group owned a greater amount of land than the Ḥurūb tribal group, since the inclusion of the western hills of the village within Israel – where many lands were owned by the Manāšra tribal group – this hierarchic relation has been reversed. Today the Ḥurūb people have access to a greater amount of land, considering also the land without access to spring water.

Israel's urban development planning and confiscation of most of land in the village have created increasing conditions of land and spring water scarcity. This situation is affected also by the growth of the population, which has led to the increasing fragmentation of the scarce land and spring water shares. The irrigation water and the farmlands inherited by the head of a conjugal family are not enough to satisfy his family's needs. This is one of the reasons that lead some people take up some waged employment.

As a consequence, the access to land and spring water is the object the harsh competition between the different extended families but also between the members belonging to each of them.

Frequently, brothers compete between each other for their father inheritance or for the use of shared land and spring water (when the father is still alive and did not divide his land and water yet). For example, while I was in the village, two brothers quarrelled and interrupted their relationships because they did not agree about the use of a common land. While a brother wanted to continue to farm it, as he did alone for many years, the other wanted to build a pool for spring water collection, even if they already had one. This would have allowed him to collect his water share in the new pool and to manage it alone, in an independent way.

Many villagers connect the 'Assāf family's lack of honour to the frequent conflicts for the ownership and inheritance of land and spring water, which since the past characterise the relationships between brothers or cousins of this family. These conflicts are locally viewed as immoral and connected to the 'Assāf family's low economic and political status, which is justified in moral terms.

During my fieldwork periods, some lands and hours of spring water were contended between the sons of two women who both married their father, belonging to the 'Assāf family. After



this man divorced from the first woman, he married the other one, whose sons today claim the right of inheritance of their father's land and spring water, denying it to the first wife's sons. As a consequence of these long-time conflicts, Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ğuma'a 'Assāf has inherited none land and hours of spring water. He owns only a little land he bought from Abū Ya'qūb Ḥurūb, where he built his family's house. This tireless local inhabitant dedicates most of his time and efforts to intensive farming activities, by renting both land and spring water. Ḥalīl perceives his disadvantaged position in local dynamics of economic competition as unjust. Sometimes he used to work in the Israeli building sector, struggling to achieve the possibility of buying some farmland and hours of spring water in the village, in order to ensure a more permanent livelihood to his conjugal family and to improve its low socio-economic status (making his daughters and sons study at the university).

Differently Ğamīl Ğuma'a Yūsef, one of his paternal uncles, owns a land in the northern part of the village, the area locally called *al-ğibāl*. He cultivates it only in part, given that he has to buy domestic water to irrigate it (in this area there are not active communal springs), and that he farms almost alone, with his wife, his only young son and daughters' occasional assistance (his son works in the only garage to fixing cars in the village). However, this land is not shared by his relatives, some of which, also, might not pay the necessary domestic water. In 2015, following the Israeli declaration of this land as State land, he sold a part of it to Moḥammed Naṣrī Mufarraḥ, the son of Naṣrī Rašād Mufarraḥ (called Ṣabrī), a wealthy local inhabitant belonging to the Mufarraḥ family.

The tensions between the members of the 'Assāf family are viewed as deeply-rooted in the past, in the limited number of people belonging to this lineage who moved to Wādī Fūkīn, which allowed them to have access to a limited amount of land and hours of spring water (as shown in the rota system of access to spring water). Indeed, the amount of land and spring water allocated to a family depended on the number of its members farming it, and its power to negotiate them depended on the possibility to mobilise an even greater number of relatives belonging to the same tribal group.

The conflicts began when, with the growth of the 'Assāf members' number, generation after generation, the small amount of land and water was not enough to satisfy all their needs (see map 8). Seeking to explain to me the reason of these conflicts, an elderly man belonging to the Sukkar family said me: « even if many of my sons moved to Jordan or Europe, they know the part of land to which they are entitled after my death. Differently, the 'Assāf family's members do not know it ».

Following the village's evacuation by the Israeli army, the dispersion of the local extended families and the Palestinians' integration in the labour market have led to the increased abandonment of agriculture.

In order to contrast the families' land and spring water shares' fragmentation, some inhabitants who work in other sectors leave one of their relatives (a brother or cousin) uses alone their land and hours of water in exchange of some crops, because of his lack of opportunities in the labour market, or his long-time intense dedication to farming.

Also the land and spring water allocated to people living in foreign countries are usually used by some of their closest relatives, according to local tribal patterns of solidarity that in the framework of the increasing competition for the access to land and spring water are increasingly narrowed, limited to the closest relatives.

Seeking to protect their own family's interests in the village, some families displaced in Jordan adopt a new strategy. They give one of their daughters in marriage to a member of their extended family, usually a paternal cousin, who lives in the village. According to the virilocality principle, these women come back to live in the village, where they inherit their father's land and spring water, since their brothers still live in Jordan. Land and spring water are usually controlled by their husband. By means of these marriage alliances, these displaced families are sure that these resources continue to be under the control of their extended family, since they will be inherited by its members.

People who can use their relatives' land and spring water are privileged by the access to a greater amount of these resources, compared to other farmers belonging to the same or to different families and tribal groups.

Today few members of the Ḥurūb tribal group still farm. Many of these tribesmen abandoned farming to take up other jobs, like private activities (especially in the building sector) or important positions in the Palestinian governmental institutions. Some of them still live in the Ad-Dehīša refugee camp, while few of them live in European countries or the United States. Many of these Ḥurūb people leave their water and land to Ṣāliḥ Slimān Ḥurūb, called Abū Fāyq, by virtue of his authority connected to his age. Indeed, he is the elder farmer belonging to this tribal group (he is about ninety years old), representing it during the negotiations of the rights of access to the concerned springs. Despite his old age, this person farms alone with

local farming techniques, called *mašākib*<sup>156</sup>, without the assistance of his sons, who are not interested in farming and work in other sectors.

Abū Fāyq is entitled only to 4 hours of the water of *'ayn al-balad*, to 8 hours from *'ayn at-tīna* and to 10 hours from *'ayn maḍīk*. However, he has the control also of more than 39 hours of water of *'ayn al-balad*, and to 31 hours from *'ayn at-tīna* (in particular, the sons of Moḥammed 'Abd-allah leave to him a great amount of water, but not all the land to which it is allocated).

Given the great amount of spring water and land to which he has access, he does not endure spring water and land stress like other people belonging to his tribal group. Some of them have not access to enough spring water to farm their land, while others have not even the land in which to build their house.

Some farmers criticise him because, as they stated, « he has too much spring water... and he wastes a lot of it irrigating only with the traditional technique, without using drip irrigation ». However, most of people do not protest in an open way, given the respect they accord to him because he still farms despite his old age. In the rota system of access to *'ayn al-balad* and *'ayn at-tīna* they leave the first turn to him, given that he cannot wait many days to irrigate his fields with the local technique.

Given that Abū Fāyq is not able to farm all the land left to him, he farms only a part of the land with the access to the irrigation water of *'ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre), which is closest to the built-up area (and easier to be reached by foot). However, he does not leave his relatives use the hours of water of *'ayn at-tīna* and the land to which are allocated, even if some of them have not access to these resources. Abū Fāyq prefers to rent these 39 hours and a part of the land (because water is not enough) to Maḥmūd Badr, called Abū Dīa', belonging to the Mufarraḥ family (table 1).

Today, the lands and irrigation water of people who do not farm are always more frequently rented or sold as private commodities to other local farmers, even if they are relatives. Sometimes some brothers are entitled to a different amount of spring water because some hours have been sold or bought (see the case of *'ayn al-fawwār*, in table 1).

These practices convey new meanings connected to the land and in particular to spring water, which has undergone a process of commoditisation. Despite the idealisation of

---

<sup>156</sup> The *mašākib* technique consists in dividing a plot of land into square parts making earth borders and in digging temporary channels through which the water is canalized inside each square part, one after the other, taking advantage of the land's slope. I will analyse the irrigation techniques in the Chapter III, paragraph 1.1.

spring water as an unmarketable sacred resource commonly owned, spring water, as land, is increasingly viewed as a private commodity to be exploited for the personal profit and for which one competes with other villagers.

This process is affected by the Israeli and the PNA's domestic water commoditisation<sup>157</sup>, in line with new "global water regime" (Linton 2010). Since the '90s development actors foster the global spread of a new pattern of water management, connected to the neo-liberal paradigm dominating the development system since this period. This focuses on water demand management and patterns of decentralised management, on water-pricing principles, on the engagement of the private sector in water distribution and on water-saving technologies such as drip irrigation<sup>158</sup> (Postel et al. 2001). This shift in the international approach to water management is grounded on the adoption of a new economic notion of water and water scarcity.

According to villagers, since the past the sale of land and even more of spring water is judged as *ḥarām* (illicit), given that spring water is viewed as an unmarketable sacred resource and land is viewed as the symbol of a family's *šaraf* (honour). « *Al-ard hiya al-ašl, wa al-ašl huwa aš-šaraf* » (the land is the origins, and the origins are the honour), as it was said me. Quoting another farmer's words, « to sell your land is like to sell your daughter ». Despite this, the analysis of the rota systems of access to spring water highlights that before the creation of Israel some people sold them<sup>159</sup>, in particular during the British Mandate, which strengthened the individual private property and increased the taxes to pay for land (which were greater if land had access to spring water)<sup>160</sup>. Sometimes land was sold also to families from other villages.

Since the Israeli colonial occupation of Palestine the sale or renting of land and spring water to people whose origins are not from the village bear a different meaning, viewed as a

---

<sup>157</sup> Domestic water management is analysed in detail in the Chapter IV.

<sup>158</sup> The local social and cultural implications of the spread of drip irrigation is analysed in the Chapter III.

<sup>159</sup> There are few cases of spring water sale before the creation of Israel. One of these dates back to the British Mandate, when the grandfather of Māher Sukkar bought eight minutes of the water drawn from 'ayn al-fawwār paying ten Palestinian *ḡinīh* (the Palestinian currency before the creation of Israel), which according to Māher in 2015 were the equivalent of about 200-300 Jordanian *dīnār* (the Jordanian currency). This is a higher price than today, because the spring was more powerful. The *dīnār* is the Jordanian currency, and it is still used in the Palestinian Territories in many transactions, such as those of spring water or sheep.

<sup>160</sup> For example, 'Alī Sukkar (Mūsā Sukkar's grandfather) sold a great amount of land to the 'Aṭiya family, and 'Aysā Sukkar sold his land for 200 Palestinian *ḡinīh*, with the aim of becoming sheikh.

threat to the community's cohesiveness and resistance to land expropriation by Israel. This moral norm regulating market transactions emerged as a response to the Israeli strategies of land grabbing, and is affected by the Palestinian laws prohibiting the sale of Palestinian-owned lands to "any man or judicial body corporation of Israeli citizenship, living in Israel or acting on its behalf" (Kaplan and Karatnycky 1998)<sup>161</sup>. These laws recover a pre-1967 Jordanian regulation banning land sales to Jews.

Despite some inhabitants sell their land to other extended families, generally people consider more moral and just to sell it to their paternal relatives, such as paternal uncles or cousins, but also to their in-laws<sup>162</sup>. Some people originally from Wādī Fūkīn but living in Jordan or in other foreign countries respect this moral norm.

However, in the framework of the conditions of job insecurity and precariousness, most of people increasingly prefer to keep their land and to temporary rent it. Indeed, even for people who work in other sectors, land and spring water continue to be important resources that ensure a livelihood in case of unemployment.

To rent land and spring water is considered as even more immoral than to sell them. As Māher Sukkar told me, according to the Koran if a person cannot farm his land, he has to leave it to anyone else.

The renting price of land is paid yearly with money or with half of the crops. Especially when the rented land is cultivated with olive trees, people prefer to be paid with the increasingly expensive oil, as many Palestinians living in Jordan.

Indeed, even many people living in Jordan or in other foreign countries ask money from their relatives farming their lands and using their spring water in the village. While few people justify this request as a legitimate right connected to the private property regime, most of farmers contest these practices, claiming their unequal character considering the great amount of work and economic capital they invest in farming. They complain that, on the contrary,

---

<sup>161</sup> The PLO's Revolutionary Penal Code (1979) applies the death penalty both to traitors and to those accused of "transferring positions to the enemy".

In 2008, the Negotiations Affairs Department of the State of Palestine (PLO-NAD) declared that all transactions with Israelis and other foreigners transferring confiscated land in the Occupied Territories violate international law and are null and void. It stated that under Hague Regulations an occupant may only administer public property as usufructuary and cannot gain sovereignty or title over any part of the occupied territory. Therefore, Israel has not the right to sell Palestinian state lands or to lease them for long periods, for the purpose of settlements' development (PLO Negotiations Affairs Department 2008).

<sup>162</sup> I analyse the implications of this moral norm concerning the PNA's land registration in the next paragraph.

people who do not farm should pay local farmers taking care of their land and avoiding that it is expropriated.

The satisfaction of the immediate individual economic interest is in conflict with the long-time, collective political interest in farming as a practice of resistance to the Israeli colonial occupation.

Moreover, previously a land usually was sold together with the hours of spring water allocated to it, which increased its value, as well as the taxes to pay to the Ottoman and the following British administration.

Today, given that the available spring water and the number of farmers are not sufficient to farm all land in the valley, spring water is often rented<sup>163</sup> and less frequently sold as a separated resource. This means that while some farmers irrigate their lands with an increased number of water hours, thanks to their economic possibility to rent them, the lands to which the rented water was allocated lose temporarily the access to irrigation water.

According to local norms, the use of lands without access to irrigation water has to be allowed for free, because of their lower economic value and profitability. During my fieldwork periods, only few persons did so, in the name of personal solidarity relationships. In this case the land was cultivated with wheat (historical local crop), used as forage for sheep. However, farmers usually rent land without spring water when they have access to enough spring water (allocated to other lands) to irrigate it, thanks to the use of expensive motor pumps and pipes. Trees' cultivation in rented lands is not allowed by their owners, since it would cause conflicts concerning ownership.

An increasing number of people ask money also for the use of lands without the access to irrigation water. If nobody rents them, they sometimes prefer to leave their fields uncultivated because of competitive relationships with other inhabitants.

A local farmer had to leave farming temporary to work in Israel, because he needed money to marry his daughter. Given that his sons were working in Israel and his brother never farmed (and, thus, he does not know how to do it), he left his plot of land to one of his relatives. However, the latter could not farm alone his land and that of his relative, which has not been given to other farmers; finally nobody took care of it.

As a consequence of these processes, while many lands in the village are uncultivated, in other lands plants suffer for the lack of enough water, while other lands are irrigated

---

<sup>163</sup> From 2015 to 2017 the price of one hour of spring water every eight days was about 10 Jordanian dīnār (the Jordanian currency). Every year this price changes depending on the amount of available spring water.

without enduring spring water stress. Some inhabitants have not land to farm, while some farmers have an amount of land that they cannot farm alone.

Not all the Palestinians living in the village endure problems of spring water stress and land shortage to the same extent. Irrigation water and land scarcity are hybrid socio-natural processes, produced by the interrelation between changing bio-physical processes and socio-economic and political dynamics at the local, national and global level.

This was clear when, in 2017, an employee of the Italian NGO called Overseas proposed to the local Farmers' Cooperative to plan a project addressing the problem of irrigation water stress. During a meeting, few inhabitants said that this was not a main problem, arousing the protests of others. The community's political cohesiveness in the resistance to Israel's expansion is compromised by the spread of multiple and uncertain perceptions and views about the present political, social and ecologic reality, as well as by conflicting individual and collective water interests and claims for water justice.

Despite the daily solidarity practices between relatives or neighbours, like the exchange of hours of irrigation water, work and vegetables, the access to spring water and land is at the centre of increasing tensions and competition even between people belonging to the same extended family, such as brothers or cousins. Many conflicts are caused by the competition to rent water hours, for their renting price, or for the use of the water and land of relatives living in Jordan. The manipulations to appropriate the water hours of someone else - taking advantage of his absence because he is working outside the village - also provoke mutual hostility.

These conflicts are connected to the lack of shared rules in the framework of the overlapping of different and contested water norms, rights, meanings and values.

The neoliberal commoditisation of water and the privatisation of water and land property regimes compromise the local Islamic ideals of social justice, amplifying equity problems and patterns of exclusion that mirror local processes of differentiations connected to the economic segmentation. The monetised access to spring water leads to increasing conditions of precariousness, arousing increasing perceptions of injustice. This endangers the resilience, sustainability and legitimacy of the tribal cooperative spring water management.

In Wādī Fūkīn, irrigation water problems are perceived as issues concerning justice. Drawing on the environmental justice paradigm (Sze and London 2008; Walker 2011), I address justice as a situated concept, an ideological construct embedded in particular ecological, historical and socio-cultural contexts, and related to different local perceptions of

equity<sup>164</sup>. According to specific conceptions of social justice in different localities, dynamic equity principles structure the relationships and practices of production and resources distribution and, at the same time, are continuously recreated and negotiated through these practices, affected by the continuous interactions between local, State and global normative systems and power structures.

Despite the reification of the local spring water and land management system as unchanged over time, “customary” and “traditional”, the analysis of the actual practices of division and use of this resource highlights its “modern” character. The access to spring water and land is affected by tribal norms and values, by the global spread of the neoliberal water commoditisation and private property regimes, as well as by new moral norms regulating market transaction as a response to the Israeli strategies of land grabbing.

Water rights are constituted by the dialectics between the local water normative systems and the practices concerning water use and control, which are informed by different socio-legal settings and power structures at different scales.

As in other Middle East (Van Aken 2003; 2012), African (Bernal 1997) and Asian (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998:60) countries, in the Palestinian territories water rights are ruled by a legal pluralism, which consists in the co-existence and reciprocal influence of multiple normative systems. These have different sources of authority and legitimacy and different spheres of validity and applicability and are connected to different temporal dimensions. The multiple constructions of local law consist in “the locally dominant mixtures of interpretations and transformations of the surrounding universe of plural legal repertoires” (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998:60).

The moral economy – viewed as a shared set of normative attitudes and values regulating economic relations and behaviours – is not a remnant of a past “traditional” culture, but the hybridised outcome of present, ongoing negotiations and conflicts. It is connected to local political and economic hierarchies and gender relationships, to broader normative and production systems and to wider socio-political organisations and economic stratifications. The local moral economy adapts to both the local agro-climatic ecological and geophysical features and to changing social relationships, seeking the political and “social efficiency” (Boelens and Vos 2012:21), instead of the only technical and economic one conveyed by water modernization and rural development.

---

<sup>164</sup> This approach criticises the Western philosophical and legal, universalistic and abstract concept of justice.



The dynamics of distribution, exchange, conflict and competition for the access to spring water mirror the change of the socio-political configuration of the local community caused by wider processes such as the creation of Israel, the establishment of the PNA, the integration in the labour market and the global flow of symbolic and material resources conveyed by development actors. The integration in the colonial, national and global power structures has led to the emergence of new sources of economic and political power, bringing about changes in local hierarchies, which are increasingly connected to the socio-economic stratification. Besides land ownership and access to spring water, today the status competition between families and tribal groups is grounded mainly on the socio-economic class of their members and their position in wider power structures such as the PNA's institutions and the Palestinian and international NGOs, on the access to “modern” expertises and bureaucratic knowledge and language, as well as to the Israeli territory, labour opportunities, services and resources.

The new socio-economic differentiations and competition among local inhabitants have overlapped with the hierarchies grounded on land ownership, sometimes strengthening, other times changing individuals and families' position in local power structures (as shown in the table 1 about the rota system of access to spring water).

The 'Aṭiya and Sukkar extended families are still the most numerous and own a greater amount of land (map 8) than the other extended families belonging to the Manāšra tribal group. They have a high political power in local political dynamics. Despite the past ties of solidarity between these groups of solidarity, today their relationships are characterised by many conflicts<sup>165</sup>. The harsh competition between these extended families is commonly known, internalised and embodied by all generations of villagers. While bickering among each other, even children side with those belonging to their extended family, to which they claim their loyalty. Once I intervened in a dispute between some children about a football match they were playing. When I asked why they were bickering, children answered: « because we are Sukkar while them, they are 'Aṭiya ». They stopped quarrelling only when I replied that finally they were all brothers sharing the Israeli occupation.

Today, the al-Aqra'a and 'Assāf families' low position within the local power structures is not grounded only to their small size and limited access to land and spring water (as shown in the tables 1 representing the rota system of access to spring water and in the map 8 about land

---

<sup>165</sup> In Chapter IV I address the competition between these two extended families for the past administrative role of the *muḥtār* and the present administrative role of the head of the Village Council, a new source of power in the village.

ownership). It is connected also to most of their members' low socio-economic conditions. Differently, some members of the small Mufarraḥ family, which has always had access to few land and spring water in the village, have achieved a higher socio-economic status, thanks to their work as employees in the Israeli and foreign labour market. This allowed them to rent and even buy land and spring water, as shown in the rota systems of access to the water of the springs.

Also, the 'Alayān family owns many lands (map 8) and spring water in the lower part of the valley (84 hours and 5 minutes from *'ayn maḍīk* and 83 hours from *'ayn al-fawwār* - table 1). This family lives in the neighbouring village of Naḥḥālīn and has a long-time high political and economic status (this is the family of the large landowner owning land in Wādī Fūkīn before the settlement of the present tribal groups living in the village). Its high social status connected to land ownership, today is strengthened by its members' belonging to the middle class.

The hierarchic organisation of the family and the whole society are still viewed as grounded on the moral system and rules defining honour, according to the local tribal political organisation. However, honour is the product of reciprocity and exchange relationships: it is the outcome of a continue negotiation of changing symbolic resources defining the status and social reputation, which are shaped by global, colonial and national dynamics and affect the local access to resources, services and patterns of solidarity.

The new hierarchies and sources of power amplify dynamics of competition and marginalisation, social inequalities, patterns of differentiation and perceptions of injustice. They often entail the overturn of intergenerational power relationships, given the eldest generations' difficult access to the new sources of power. Moreover, since women are discriminated in the labour market, their dependence on men, grounded on the lack of control of economic and productive resources, is strengthened<sup>166</sup>.

The new socio-economic hierarchies fragment the networks of solidarity and reciprocal exchange characterising the local tribal resource management and political organisation, highlighting deep changes in the local moral economy. In many families, while a person enjoys a wealthy condition, his brothers or cousins struggle against marginalisation to support their conjugal family.

The "large family" of Wādī Fūkīn is increasingly less inclusive, fragmented in multiple views of justice and dimensions of differentiation and exclusion connected to the tribal political

---

<sup>166</sup> I address the changes in women's life conditions in Chapter III.

culture, to gender power relationships, as well as to the economic segmentation and to the modern state's political organisation.

## **6. The spread of Individual Land Ownership and the Fragmentation of the Community**

In the village of Wādī Fūkīn the land is highly fragmented in numerous small plots, whose borders are implicitly inscribed in the ground, identifiable only by those who have a profound knowledge of the territory, its history and its social and cultural organisation. While walking, local inhabitants identify each plot of land with the head (the eldest man) of the conjugal family owning it. They relate it to other plots on the basis of the kinship relations between their owners, as if lands stand for people.

An increasing number of plots are encircled by low stonewalls, or are even fenced in with high meshes which prevent the access to it by the few herds and protect crops from possible thefts. From being public arenas of sharing, conflict and negotiation among villagers, a place of community construction, today the farmlands are increasingly viewed as private places where the conjugal families owning them exhibit their socio-economic status.

The civil-law concept of property as an individual right is increasingly rooted, especially concerning land tenure conditions. These ideas are affected by the colonial and national land tenure legislations.

For the Israeli Court the private property is a necessary condition to protect a land from its expropriation as “State land”. In fact, Israel restores the Ottoman and British land legislations, which fostered the spread of the individual land ownership system (Temper 2009). However, while before this was mainly a strategy of control and tax collection, in the framework of the state modernisation, today Israel aims at hindering the private land titles’ recognition. Indeed, the expensive legal cases usually have negative results for the impossibility of presenting, as required by the Israeli law, the document attesting the individual land ownership dating back to the Ottoman Empire, called *tābū*.

Indeed, according to the elderly in Wādī Fūkīn, villagers resisted to the state’s control through many strategies. When Ottoman officials came to register land ownerships and collect taxes, villagers usually escaped from the village, in order to hide their use of land. Another strategy to avoid the payment of taxes, adopted also during the following British

administration, was to register lands in the name of the *muḥtār*, who enjoyed tax breaks because of its administrative role.

The oral knowledge about historical families' land ownerships is ignored by Israel, which does not claim the payment of land taxes, as it would entail the recognition of Palestinians' ownership rights over local lands.

Israel does not recognise also the PNA's land *tasḡīl* (registration), in particular in the areas C, under the Israeli military administration and security control.

Given that the farmlands in the village are included in an area C, and therefore they are subject to the Israeli land legislation, the PNA's Land Department does not deal with their registration. Therefore, the access to land is still managed at the local level, according to local power negotiations. However, the inheritance and purchase of a land are increasingly ratified through private written contracts registered by the Palestinian National Authority on demand (and by payment) of the concerned people, especially in the building area defined as area B. The buildable land in this area has a highly economic value and is increasingly scarce to host the new generations.

Even the transactions and division of spring water is sometimes ratified by the PNA's institution of the Village Council (which is subject to the authority of the Ministry of Local Government), as the 'Aṭīya family's members decided to do.

The PNA's registration of a land as *arḍ māliyya* (financial land) - as private property is defined by the PNA's land legislation - is the object of many conflicts between villagers, as well as between other Palestinians in the Occupied Territories in general.

Even when a person and his father and grand-father farmed a land or built on it since a far past, his claim of ownership is often contested by other Palestinians, who also claim their ownership of the land, connected to their father, grandfather or grand-grandfather's right of access to it. Before the Israeli creation most of land in the village was still *arḍ amīriya* (shared by different families or villages), and land inheritances and transactions have always been regulated mainly orally.

Moreover, after the village's evacuation by the Israeli army in 1956, many relatives emigrated in foreign countries and their descendants are born there (and sometimes are unknown by local inhabitants). Therefore, land ownership is not easily ascertainable.

In Wādī Fūkīn, as in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories, the division of many lands is contested and contended, since many members of each large extended family are dispersed in foreign countries and many legitimate heirs are absent. These lands are not reallocated according to shared norms and social memories, but to power relationships and negotiations.

Few lands are still considered as shared by two or more families, according to the local, historical management of resources. These lands are in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley, which have not access to spring water and whose cultivation is ban by the Israeli army. The *mal'ab* (soccer field) and the building hosting the Village Council's offices and its *qā'a* (hall) have been built in lands shared and donated by the Sukkar and 'Aṭiya families. However, during the British Mandate the land where there is the soccer field had been registered in the *muḥtār*'s name.

Today, in the whole Palestinian territories this shared form of land ownership gives rise to many problems concerning land titling. Even when the Palestinian Court recognises both the families' right of ownership, the division of the land between them is a source of other tensions and disputes. These problems obstruct the Palestinian Land Department's procedures of land titling.

They also make the achievement of the expensive Israeli court's land title further more difficult. Even when a person has his land's *tābū*, the Ottoman document attesting his family's property right, requested by the Israeli court, he has to prove his present property right. This is legitimised by the inheritance or purchase of the concerned land from the owner specified in this document, which in the past were often regulated orally. He has to retrace his genealogical tree (to show his legitimate inheritance right) and the past land's transactions, whose veracity has to be attested by other persons, which take the role of *šāhid* (witness). In the context of the competition and conflicts for land ownership, these conditions are difficultly satisfied.

The disputes about land ownership hinder also other Palestinians' strategies of resistance to land expropriation by Israel. Indeed, some villagers complain that they did not build their house in the hills' slopes because land had not been divided, thus giving to Israel the opportunity to expropriate it.

In 2015, the Italian NGO named GVC (Gruppo di Volontariato Civile) financed a project managed by the local Agricultural Cooperative and Youth Development Association<sup>167</sup>, consisting in planting olive trees in land under confiscation in the slopes of the western hills of the village, targeted by the expansion of the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah.

---

<sup>167</sup> I analyse the management and role of these local association in the third chapter.

As other lands in the village, the ownership of the land chosen for the project is considered as shared by the two most numerous extended families belonging to the Manāšra tribal group, the ‘Aṭiya and the Sukkar families, whose rivalry is well known by all villagers.

The adult men of these two families met to discuss the project. What was perceived as the main condition to implement the project, but also as the main problem, was the division of the targeted land between the two families. The latter never agreed about how to do it, since both families did not want the part of the land at the higher altitude, closest to the Israeli town and, thus, subject to a higher risk of being included in it. Finally, the trees have been planted. However, because of these disputes none of the two families’ members wanted to take care of them, except the two ‘Aṭiya brothers who have the role of head of the two local associations.

Some people who abandoned farming, especially those living outside Wādī Fūkīn, do not want to leave others use their land (or they do it for a limited period), because they are afraid to lose its ownership. Indeed, according to the *ḥaqq at-taqāḍum* (right of prescription) included in the PNA’s land legislation, if a person takes care of a land (farming it or building in it) owned by someone else (as an individual or shared property) for a period comprised between ten and fifteen years<sup>168</sup>, he can claim the ownership of at least a part of it.

Even when the land is included in the area C (under the Israeli military administration and security control), as most of farmlands in the village are, people do not want to give others the potential opportunity to claim its ownership. They consider the future hypothetical extension of the PNA’s civil administration in the areas C of the Palestinian territories (and the possibility to return of Palestinians living in foreign countries) as established by the Oslo accords.

The perception of the importance of the Israeli certificate of land title (or the potential possibility to achieve it) is mirrored by the very higher price of plots with the document “*tābū*”. Similarly, in Wādī Fūkīn, as in the whole Palestinian territories, the building lands in the area B have a higher economic value (at least 20-30 Jordanian dīnār/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>169</sup> than the lands in the area C, subjected to the Israeli administration’s constraints and the higher risk of being expropriated<sup>170</sup>. Moreover, among the lands in the valley, included in the area C, those closest to the built-up area (the area B) are rented and sold at a higher price compared to the

---

<sup>168</sup> For ten years, if the land is *mulk* and, thus, owned in a private way, and included within municipal borders; fifteen years if the land is *mīrī*, shared by different families or villages, and outside the municipal borders.

<sup>169</sup> I refer to prices in 2015. *Dīnār* is the Jordanian currency.

<sup>170</sup> In the area C any maintenance and construction work, such as the building of electricity infrastructures, must obtain the permission of the Israeli military authorities, which is always denied.

more distant lands at the bottom of the valley, which have been declared under confiscation, and the access to which, therefore, might be banned soon<sup>171</sup>.

The lands near the built-up area are valued more also because they are more easily reachable while moving crops and instruments stored in the houses – given the frequent stealing of crops and motor pumps in the fields. They also have an easier access to the electricity supplied to the built-up area, necessary for the motor pumps used for drip irrigation<sup>172</sup>. However, the lands in the lower part of the valley are less over-exploited and, thus, more fertile than the lands closest to the area B. Indeed, not all farmers can afford the expensive intensive farming techniques, buying also a generator to produce electricity for the motor pumps. This is one of the reasons explaining why the land in this part of the valley is less sold and fragmented between the families in the village.

According to local farmers, before the Israeli occupation a land was valued according to its size and quality, including the access to water. Today, a land's value depends also on its administrative conditions. This situation further complicates the negotiations among local hierarchies based on land ownership, and leads to other dynamics of differentiation, discrimination and speculation between Palestinians.

The PNA's legislation and bureaucratic procedures often replace the ritualised tribal negotiations for the resolution of conflicts about land ownership between villagers.

A local man told me: « problems concerning land ownership are too much important to be solved with oral agreements. When they have the economic possibility to do it, people prefer to bring the case before a Palestinian judge ».

However, the Palestinian Authority's legal framework also incorporates some local customary norms, such as the moral obligation to favour the purchase of a land by a neighbouring land's owner.

In 2015, a household belonging to *dār* 'Assāf contested the purchase of a building plot of land neighbouring its house, in the area B of the village, by another extended family, which soon began to build a house in it. According to a member of the 'Assāf household, this family said to have bought the concerned land by his paternal uncles living in Jordan. He complained that his family had not the opportunity to buy the land or to express its opinion. «

---

<sup>171</sup> In 2015, the price of the lands closest to the built-up area (the area B) was 10-20 Jordanian dīnār/m<sup>2</sup>. The price of the more distant lands at the bottom of the valley was 5-10 Jordanian dīnār/m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>172</sup> In the lands in the lower part of the valley, farmers need generators to produce electricity, and a car, a tractor or a mule to move crops and instruments from the fields to the houses, where farmers store them.

We cannot accept that our women live close to strangers », as he told me referring to people of another extended family. The ‘Assāf household thus brought the case to the Palestinian court, claiming its *ḥaqq aš-šafā‘a*<sup>173</sup> (the right of intercession or safeguarding), which consists in the priority right of a land owner to buy a neighbouring land.

This local customary norm had been recognised (with some differences) by the Ottoman land code and the following Jordanian and Egyptian civil legislations recovering it (in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip respectively). The Palestinian land legislation has adopted a definition of this right almost identical to the Jordanian one. It is the right to own a sold property or a part of it, even by force towards the buyer, at the same price and costs (Basha 1931).

The recognition of this right is aimed at protecting a family from the damages and disturbances caused by undesired neighbours, mirroring the local, historical evaluation of the neighbourhood as an important dimension of belonging and solidarity. Quoting a local proverb: “*al-jār qabla ad-dār*” (the neighbour is before the house), meanings that the choice of the house (or the place where to build it) depends first on the neighbours.

The solution of such cases brought to the Palestinian court is hindered by the implicit inconsistency between the *ḥaqq aš-šafā‘a*, and the inalienable *ḥaqq al-mulkiya* (property right), which entails the right of a person to decide in an independent way the use and transactions of his private property (Basha 1931).

In Palestine, land and water is historically managed mainly by decentralised customary norms, which differ from village to village. The predominant historical land tenure system was the *mašā‘*, which has been analysed by many authors (Moors 1990; Atran 1986; Cohen 1965; Patai 1949). According to this communal land holding, land was owned by a cooperative unit, consisting in the tribal group or a confederation of tribal groups living in a village or an area. According to Cohen (1965), land was redistributed periodically among villagers, usually every about two years, according to the cycle of the rotation of crops. Each individual had not the right of inheriting a specific plot of land, but he has the right of access to a share in the total land in the village, which was renegotiated periodically (Warriner 1948). Therefore, ownership was viewed as movable and dependent on the relationships between villagers.

---

<sup>173</sup> The word “*šafā‘a*” derives from the word “*šafi‘*”, which means pair number, pair or couple.



The redistribution allowed the sharing of the limits and quality of the different part of land, connected to the availability of irrigation water, decreasing economic risks and social differentiations (Van Aken 2012; Cohen 1965).

The regulation of land ownership by State's institutions began in the era of the Ottoman Empire. In order to increase direct control over local populations and to facilitate the administration of the territory, in 1839 the Ottoman authorities adopted the Tanzimat reform program (Reilly 1981). In the framework of this program of "modernisation" of the state's administrative system and land legislation according to the European model of state, in 1858 the Ottoman government introduced the Land Code (Ongley 1892). This land legislation was aimed at fostering a private property regime (Temper 2009), in order to increase tax revenue and control over local peasants.

The new land legislation brought about the worsening of life conditions of peasants, who often could not afford the payment of the increasing taxes and had to sell their land titles. As a consequence, most of land ownerships had been concentrated in the hands of few powerful Palestinian families, creating a gap between them and the majority of families living in poor conditions (Temper 2009).

The Ottoman Land Code (Arazi Kanunnamesi) has been recovered by both the British Mandate's "Settlement Law" number 9, issued in 1939, and the following Jordanian land legislation (LANDac 2012). In the 1930s, the British authorities' attempted a large-scale surveying of land and granting of titles, known as "systematic settlement". In this period, villages' borders were demarked (Attallah et al. 2006) and the private property land titling was fostered, increasing peasants' pauperisation.

The oldest generations in Wādī Fūkīn still remember the *mašākil* (problems) local people had with the British authorities, from whose hands many local inhabitants died. They remember the violent repression and their high taxes imposed by the British authorities for lands (in particular those with the access to water), crops and animals<sup>174</sup>, which brought about the further pauperisation of local peasants.

The main aim was to detribalise local societies and sedentarise (Bocco 1993) nomadic pastoral groups, in order to integrate them in the state's power structures and national

---

<sup>174</sup> Abu Ibrahim, an elder man of Wādī Fūkīn, remembers that families had to pay to British administrators an amount of money for each member of the family (1 Palestinian *ḡinīh*: 1000 *qerš*), as well as for the owned land, water and animals (15 *qerš* for each donkey or sheep, 50 *qerš* for each camel or cow). The *muḥtār* received by the British administration a monthly payment corresponding to about 40 NIS (the Israeli currency).

economy. These politics were legitimised by modernist discourses representing local people, their management of resources, land tenure systems and political organisations as backward and hindering the construction of a modern state.

The gradual (and partial) substitution of the dominant collective, movable and relational kind of land ownership with the fixed and de-socialised private property facilitated tax collection and weakened tribal groups. These were fragmented by new stratifications and the loss of the economic basis of their cohesion, consisting in the common land-holding and management, which entailed great cooperation between each tribal group's members and decreased social differentiations (Cohen 1965).

Also the Jordanian and Egyptian administrations engaged in land registration and land titling in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. While the 98% of land parcels in Gaza have been registered, only the 25-30% of the West Bank has been surveyed and registered (Attallah et al. 2006; Hussein 2008). However, until the creation of Israel in 1948 the predominant land tenure form was still the *mašā'*.

Following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, systematic land registration and new legislation have been both interrupted. The land registry has been closed to the public and many Israeli military orders – among which 2,500 still remain in force today – paralysed the legal systems. Judicial control was severely restricted and the Palestinian court systems were dismantled or rendered ineffective and in-operative. Consequently, since 1967 land transactions have not been recorded, and only 48% of the current owners match the registration records (Hussein 2008).

Today, in the West Bank land registration is performed also by the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA), a Palestinian Land Administration Agency established in 2002 with the Presidential Decree 10, which is in charge of land surveying, registration and state land administration.

In December 2004 the PNA's Council of Ministers adopted a land policy statement, the "PLC Draft Land Law", while in 2008 it approved the Land Policy Framework. The PNA mainly recovers the Jordanian land legislation<sup>175</sup>, which is composed of about seventy laws on land registration and transactions, among which the "Land and Water Dispute Settlement Law" (n. 40), created in 1952, is one of the most relevant (Attallah et al. 2006). Besides the privately owned land, called *mulk*, there is the community owned cropland without written title, called *mašā'*. The religious land endowments (like the land where there is the mosque in Wādī

---

<sup>175</sup> Differently, the Gaza legal framework is based on the Egyptian legislation.

Fūkīn) are called *waqf*. State land are divided in *mīrī* - which are the croplands close to inhabited areas that can be privately operated and inherited - and in *mawāt* - which are the lands used for grazing and in part for cultivation with frequent fallow, under customary rights (LANDac 2012).

The PLA's creation of a complete land register is hindered first by the administrative conditions imposed in the areas C, which are controlled by the Israeli authorities and include 63% of the West Bank (ARIJ September 2015).

The PNA's land registration is hindered also by the lack of clear directives about property rights and dispute resolution harmonising the overlay of conflicting systems and norms - which are mobilised according to the system in which the land was originally recorded and to the dominating interests. Moreover, the land registration process (including the registration of transactions) is very laborious for both officers and customers, given that it is based on complicated and long-term manual processes. Not all Palestinians can afford the expensive services of lawyers and private surveyors.

Also, the PLA has not the necessary resources and the organisational structure to undertake its mandate. None legislation sets out the Palestinian Land Authority's powers and functions, and its jurisdiction and responsibilities are not clearly determined. The lack of a clear definition of the institutional responsibility for public land management<sup>176</sup>, as well as the corruption practices, weaken the accountability and efficiency of the acquisition and disposal of public land, given also that there is not a complete inventory of public land.

The tasks and responsibilities of the private surveyors and the PLA, as well as the work-flows, are not clear, affecting the quality of the management system and undermining principles of good governance and equity (Husseini 2008).

A main PNA's challenge is to reinvent the formal justice system, including passing new laws governing land ownership, administration and registration. These efforts are supported by donors such as the USAID, the World Bank and the Finnish government (World Bank 2004)<sup>177</sup>.

---

<sup>176</sup> Concerning public land management, various Palestinian authorities overlap. The PLA does not have authority for public land management functions, nor for municipal planning and zoning.

<sup>177</sup> The USAID is covering the West Bank and Gaza under their Land Tenure and Property Rights portal. In 2005 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation received a "Learning and Innovation Grant" from the World Bank for the implementation of a Land Administration Project in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, supported also by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Responsible authorities are the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA). The objective of the Land Administration Project (LAP) is to assess the feasibility of introducing reforms in land administration

The USAID is covering the West Bank and Gaza under their Land Tenure and Property Rights portal. In 2005 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation received a “Learning and Innovation Grant” from the World Bank for the implementation of a Land Administration Project in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, supported also by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Responsible authorities are the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA). The objective of the Land Administration Project (LAP) is to assess the feasibility of introducing reforms in land administration within an emerging government structure, by enabling the formulation of policy, and legal and institutional changes, in order to achieve efficient procedures for land titling and the registration of property transactions, and transparent processes of management and disposal of public land (Husseini 2008; Attallah et al. 2006). The “program aims at alleviating poverty and enhancing economic growth by improving land tenure security and facilitating the development of efficient land and property markets in rural and urban areas through the development of an efficient system of land titling and registration based on clear, transparent and coherent policies and laws that are supported by an appropriate institutional structure” (World Bank 2004: 3).

The spread of private property by the state’s institutions is legitimised by modernist discourses about efficiency and development, viewed as economic growth, as during the previous colonial administrations. At the national level, the PLA’s creation of a complete land register is viewed as a fundamental step towards the Palestinian modern state building. It is aimed at increasing the control of land and Palestinians, to integrate them in the national economy, while attempting to guarantee tenure and property rights’ security against the Israeli strategies of land grabbing. However, in the context of the present colonial constrictions, local conflicts and the fragmentation of the national legal framework, the PLA’s systematic land registration is hardly feasible (Attallah et al. 2006).

Despite the PNA and development actors’ representation of a dichotomous relationship between local “traditional”, backward, systems of resource management and the state’s “modern” and efficient system, the PNA’s legislation mirrors the influence of both historical,

---

within an emerging government structure, by enabling the formulation of policy, and legal and institutional changes, in order to achieve efficient procedures for land titling and the registration of property transactions, and transparent processes of management and disposal of public land (Husseini 2008; Attallah et al. 2006). The “program aims at alleviating poverty and enhancing economic growth by improving land tenure security and facilitating the development of efficient land and property markets in rural and urban areas through the development of an efficient system of land titling and registration based on clear, transparent and coherent policies and laws that are supported by an appropriate institutional structure” (World Bank 2004: 3).

customary norms according to communal resource management and tenure forms, as well as the civil law principles of the Jordanian legislation.

As I shown concerning water rights, in the Palestinian Territories, land tenure conditions are characterised by a legal pluralism. This consists in the co-existence and reciprocal influence of multiple normative systems with different sources of authority and legitimacy and different spheres of validity and applicability, and which are connected to different temporal dimensions. The inconsistency between some customary norms and the private property regime leads to contradictory dynamics.

As during the previous colonial administrations, the spread of private property fostered by the PNA's institutions and international donors brings about many local conflicts, amplifies patterns of exclusion and marginalisation and participates to the reconfiguration of local tribal groups of solidarity. All these dynamics arouse most of local Palestinians' mistrust of the PNA's registration system, contributing to the persistence of unofficial 'titling' systems.



## CHAPTER III

### THE POLITICS OF AGRICULTURE: BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND RESISTANCE



*Figure 49: the valley of Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato 2016)*

## **1. Intensive Farming Techniques: Shaping “Developed” Farmers**

As many other days during my fieldwork periods, one Friday<sup>178</sup>, while I was walking in the valley I saw some farmers spraying chemical pesticides on their plants without any protection. Others were harvesting zucchinis or other crops, and an elderly woman was taking the seeds she produced the previous year and preserved in an empty, dried pumpkin hung from a tree’s branch. An adult man was planting seedlings of cabbages in his field, close to the rubber pipes used for drip irrigation, after he had weeded it with the assistance of his young two sons. One of the only two farmers who own a tractor was going to some fields to plough them, paid by their owners. Other farmers were using ploughs pulled by mules, while others used only their hands. Some women were harvesting vine leaves.

From March-April to September-October local farmers plant and harvest courgettes, cucumbers and white cucumbers, aubergines, chilli and capsicum (bell peppers), climbing beans, pumpkins, tomatoes, watermelons and melons, and spring onions (cultivated all year long). Differently, from September-October to April-May they cultivate broad beans, cabbages, cauliflowers, lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, rocket, spinach, squash, and asparagus.

Some fields are uncultivated, while many other host olive groves, whose olives are harvested between October and November. Other fruit trees, such as citrus and almond trees, walnuts, figs, prickly pear trees, are spread between the farmlands. Clusters of grapes hang from vines.

Since the late 1980s, local farmers adopt intensive farming techniques in order to face the created conditions of water and land scarcity and the harsh economic competition with the Israeli subsidised, high-tech agriculture. These new techniques are fostered by some Palestinian and international NGOs engaging in rural development, which is one of the objectives of the present global development agenda, considered as a key strategy to achieve the main goal of reducing poverty (Pallotti and Zamponi 2014).

Hybrid seeds, chemical pesticides and fertilisers, greenhouses and drip irrigation have been spread globally in the framework of the Green revolution, which consisted in a set of initiatives of research and technology transfer occurring especially since the late 1960s. These initiatives were aimed at increasing agricultural production worldwide, particularly in

---

<sup>178</sup> On Friday and Saturday, the non-working days in the West Bank and Israel respectively, usually there are more people in the valley, included male adult farmers and youths, women and children assisting or visiting them, or going to the playground or to swim in the pools for irrigation water collection.



the developing world. The new techniques and technologies<sup>179</sup> were seen as a “package of practices” to be adopted as a whole, in order to supersede backward “traditional” technology. As the development discourses addressing women analysed by Simmons (1997), the dominant rural development narratives are grounded in the modernization theory, which considers the progress in a teleological way, as a linear process transferable in the “developing” countries by means of the adoption of positivist science and “modern” techniques considered appropriate for all contexts.

Given the assessment of the Western scientific and technical knowledge's superiority, local farmers and their farming techniques, patterns of knowledge and cooperation rooted in local contexts are often reified as “traditional”, “underdeveloped” and, thus, backward and inefficient. They are not considered if not as negative practices which have to be substituted by “modern” intensive techniques, thus leading to the production of systematic forms of ignorance (Hobart 1993).

As happened many times, one day a farmer invited me to enter his greenhouse. He received it by the Village Council in the framework of a rural development project financed by the AACD and the UAWC. Here, he showed me proudly his climbing beans cultivation and the pocket of the hybrid seeds he used to grow them. He complained the expensive price of these seeds, for which he paid 500 Nis<sup>180</sup>.

In the valley there are an increasing number of *buyūt blāstīkiyya* (greenhouses) where farmers cultivate expensive *buḍūr muhaḡḡana* (hybrid seeds)<sup>181</sup>, which generate a greater quantity of crop in less time, but they cannot be locally reproduced and they have to be bought at each production cycle. Growing the new hybrid seeds<sup>182</sup> dominating the market has led to the increase of production costs and produces new relations of dependency on multinational and Israeli seed, fertiliser and pesticide companies.

---

<sup>179</sup>The new technologies included new high-yielding varieties of cereal grains (especially dwarf wheat and rice), hybridised seeds, synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and agro-chemicals. The initiatives involved the development of controlled water-supply (usually involving irrigation), the expansion of irrigation infrastructure, the modernisation of management techniques, and new methods of cultivation, including mechanisation.

<sup>180</sup> The shekel (Nis) is the Israeli currency.

<sup>181</sup> Hybrid seeds are cultivated also without a greenhouse, even if farmers say that are more suitable for the cultivation within greenhouses.

<sup>182</sup> In biology a hybrid, also known as cross breed, is the result of mixing, through sexual reproduction, two animals or plants of different breeds, varieties, species or genera.

The adoption of intensive farming techniques has led to the liberalist market integration and commoditisation of local agricultural production, threatening its economic sustainability.

Many farmers complained to me that hybrid seeds are *marīd* (sick) and *al arḍ ta'abāna* (the land is tired). They are more susceptible to fungi and parasites infestations, especially in the greenhouses, due to intensive humidity. Therefore, hybrid seeds require the use of synthetic *mubīdāt* (pesticides), herbicides, fungicides, generally called *dawā'* (medicine), which over time make the soil increasingly less fertile, leading to farmers' perception of the need of *samād kīmāwy* (chemical fertiliser).

Chemical pesticides and fertilisers contribute also to the increasing pollution of groundwater and, thus, spring water<sup>183</sup>. Their containers are abandoned along the fields' sides, and also beyond an eastern hill (under confiscation) close to farmlands. Together with rubber pipes, construction material (cement, iron...) and other not-organic and solid waste, they further increase the impact of farming activities on environmental pollution (including spring water pollution).

The land is more and more unproductive also because of its over-exploitation and the impossibility to leave it at rest, given the risk of its expropriation by Israel, and that « *as-sukkān* (the inhabitants) are more than the land », as was explained to me.



Figure 50: a green house in Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato, 2016)

---

<sup>183</sup> I analyse the local perceptions about spring water pollution in the fourth chapter.

Besides the hybrid seeds, most of farmers buy in the market also expensive *šetl* (seedlings)<sup>184</sup> ready to be transplanted, in particular of tomatoes, capsicum (bell peppers), cabbages and cauliflowers. According to them, to produce and farm these vegetables' seeds is more difficult than other seeds, because of their small size and the special care they require. Many farmers do not know how to do it.

The adoption of new hybrid seeds has led to the increasing abandonment of historical local techniques such as the production of local rain-fed seeds, historically selected to be suitable for the specific local semi-arid context, variable water availability and dry farming.

Hybrid seeds, locally called *al-buḍūr min barra* (the seeds from outside), seem to be unsuitable for the present water stress, given that they require a greater amount of water than local seeds. The greater amount of water used to irrigate hybrid seeds – and the more frequent irrigation practices required by the drip irrigation technique – increases the infestations of *faṭriyāt* (fungi).

In the local semi-arid context the substitution of local seeds with the new hybrid seeds for irrigated agriculture, created in a context of greater water availability, increases irrigation water stress and threatens the local agricultural biodiversity.

The spread of intensive farming techniques leads to the increasing loss of the local farming knowledge which since a far past has allowed to cultivate in the difficult ecological conditions which characterise the local semi-arid context.

Farmers connect the increasing soil infertility in the lands in the valley also to the abandonment of local techniques such as crop rotation and the use of sulphur as fertiliser, banned by the Israeli army because it can be used also to make bombs.

Some farmers proudly claimed that, differently from others, they knew and adopted the combination of crops to prevent pest infestation, such as cabbage and cucumber, aubergine and *mulūḥiya*<sup>185</sup>, or squash and capsicum. They explained to me that they farm courgettes close to cauliflowers. The latter first attract the *ḥašarāt* (insects) and, then, their odour makes them escape, protecting also the courgettes.

As Ḥālid 'Abd al-Qādir Sukkar told me, « our grandfathers knew that after aubergines one has not to farm cabbages or cauliflowers, but onions or spinach [which absorb different minerals from the soil]... today people do not know *ad-dawra az-zirā'iyā at-taqālīdiyya* (the traditional agricultural rotation) and only follow the market ».

---

<sup>184</sup> In 2015 the cost of 750 seedlings was about 3.000 Nis.

<sup>185</sup> This plant is cooked to make a typical Palestinian soup.

Indeed, most of the market-oriented agricultural production is intensive and generated by hybrid seeds. Profitable crops that are unsuitable for the present water stress because they require a great amount of water, like tomatoes, are cultivated according to the market demand and independently of irrigation water availability. This is another factor contributing to irrigation water stress.

Given the expropriation of the hills encircling the valley (without access to spring water), where local peasants farmed cereals, the production of flour used to make bread and other local food, have been almost abandoned, increasing the family nourishment's market dependence. Even the plots of land in the valley that are not reached by the channels conveying spring water flows are rarely used for rain-fed farming of wheat and barley. As declared by farmers, these crops, which might be used also as forage, require a great amount of land and are less profitable than vegetables, or olives and oil.

The intensive farming techniques and market logic of production convey the disconnection between local ecological processes and farming activities. This process threatens the historical environmental and economic sustainability and the resilience of local agriculture.

The social and material reproduction of the local rural community is hindered also by other processes affecting the life of villagers. Given that young men often engage in waged employments and university studies, they have few time and interest to carry out farming activities, whose prestige has been declining. With the changes in the sources of power on which hierarchies are built, the values and ideas connected to agriculture and herding activities have also changed, especially among the new generations, which have different prospects for the future. Adult farmers are very worried about who will farm the lands in the village in the near future. Therefore, farming know-how is handed down with more difficulty. This is a process that began since the village's evacuation.

Farmers buy also small olive trees, which they do not produce in an autonomous way, as the past generations did. One of them said me: « it is a difficult activity, which not all people are able to carry out... also, today we are “*kasūlīn*” (lazy) and we prefer to buy the trees ». Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ğuma‘a ‘Assāf, a farmer with a low socio-economic status that is often marginalised in local power dynamics, wanted to learn the local technique of *tarkīb* (graft) in olive trees, which is well known only by few farmers in the village. Because of the tensions and competition with these farmers, he could not ask their assistance. He had to go to the

close Ḥūsān village and to pay a farmer 150 Nis, in order to get access to this practical knowledge.

The local farming knowledge, locally defined as *taqālīdiyya* (traditional), is often viewed as a commodity and an object of competition, as well as the expert knowledge about intensive farming, which is often carried out in the private context of the greenhouse.

Before the evacuation of the village by the Israeli army in 1956, local subsistence economy was still based on a family agriculture that had not yet been fully integrated into the capitalist market system.

Since the Mandatory rule (1914-1948), Jewish settlers introduced intensive farming techniques and new crops in the historical Palestine. They developed a high-tech, mechanised and capitalist agricultural production, characterised by highly subsidised inputs such as water and large capital inflows from the Jewish Diaspora, the United States and the German reparations (Temper 2009). However, Palestinian peasant economy continued to be characterised by self-sufficiency, lack of external input and capital, and labour-intensive activities like the cultivation of terraces (Elazari-Volcani 1930), as during the Ottoman period (Reilly 1981)<sup>186</sup>.

Through intensive farming techniques, development actors brought to the Palestinian farmlands new meanings connected to agriculture, rural development, land and water. Agriculture is seen as an economic activity detached from social and cultural dimensions, consisting in the exploitation and domination of land and water. Agricultural development means the maximisation of the productive efficiency and profit of a commercial agriculture, through the adoption of “modern” expertise and technical solutions adapt to all contexts.

Intensive farming techniques like hybrid seeds convey new meanings of land and water, viewed as natural resources to be exploited as much as possible. These new meanings are connected to the Western idea of “nature” as a dimension of not-human beings extrinsic to that of human culture, which has to be dominated by positivist science and “modern” techniques considered appropriate for all contexts.

Criticising the naturalist ontological divide between the realm of “nature” and that of culture, Latour (1991) shows the connection between this ideology of “nature” and the

---

<sup>186</sup> During the Ottoman administration, Palestinian agriculture was extensive and subsistence-oriented (Temper 2009). Most of land (75%) was dedicated to grains farming (Reilly 1981), but also vegetables, fruit (in particular citrus) and olive trees, grapes and tobacco (mainly in the northern Palestine) were farmed. The rural villages were self-sufficient except the relations with the close Palestinian towns, where peasants exchanged agricultural and dairy products for manufactured goods.

construction of the differentiations between “modern” and “traditional” societies. According to modernist ideologies, Western societies differ from the other ones for their scientific epistemology and methodologies, which allow to know the world by understanding the material, physical processes, by objectifying and “purifying” them from the interference of the subjective representations and interpretations (Latour 1991).

By virtue of these modernist discursive constructions, many development agencies delegitimise local knowledge and techniques as “underdeveloped” and inefficient, while legitimising their interventions.

However, behind the claim of the neutral scientific character of rural development, development agencies foster the spread of Western very politically ideas about agriculture, farmer, the relationship between the individual and the community, as well as politics and rural development. The intensive irrigation and farming techniques consists in techno-politics (Mitchell 2002), social engineering projects aimed at the creation of a new economic order and of particular identity constructions: they are political strategies that entail deep political, economic and cultural changes, defined as technical matters and masked behind the modernisation and development mission. The main development agencies aim at the integration of local productive systems in the global capitalist market, seeking to create “developed” farmers dependent on the market, according to the Western model of agricultural entrepreneur.

### **1.1 The Individualisation of Resistance Pouring in Neo-Liberal Irrigation Infrastructures**

In the valley of Wādī Fūkīn the sun's rays are reflected by many private concrete pools collecting irrigation spring water and by many scattered white greenhouses.

While I was in the farmlands, I often saw male farmers walking following an irrigation channel from their field to the close spring, opening and closing with rags the connections between the channels in order to divert spring water to their land.

Other men irrigated their fields with the local irrigation technique, called *mašākib*: they divided their plot of land into square parts making earth borders. After they opened the concrete *qanā* (channel) bringing spring water to their plot of land, they dug temporary channels through which the water was canalised inside each square part, one after the other,

taking advantage of the slope of the land. While digging the channels with a hoe, the men bent over the soil and followed quickly the flow of water, wearied by the hot summer sun. I saw some farmers measuring their field, in order to position black rubber pipes in parallel rows at the same distance, used for the expensive drip irrigation technique. Some of them were very proud of their expensive motor pumps<sup>187</sup> that pushed the spring water conveyed by the main concrete channel into the pipes.



Figure 51: some fields in the village irrigated through the technique of the drip irrigation (De Donato 2016)

Drip irrigation – invented in the Israeli settlements in the arid area of the Negev – has been introduced in the village in 1986 by the non-profits organisation ANERA (American Near East Refugee Aid), by means of a project of farming “modernisation” implemented in collaboration with the local association called *al-ḡam‘iyya al-ta‘āwniyya az-zirā‘iyya* (the Agricultural Cooperative). The organisation funded the purchase of rubber pipes and motor pumps, organised courses about drip irrigation taught by five engineers in Jenin and Jericho, and provided a tractor and the material to build about 31 concrete *burak* (pools) for irrigation water collection.

This NGO’s introduction of drip irrigation mirrors the shift in the international approach to water management entailed by the neo-liberal paradigm dominating global water

---

<sup>187</sup> In 2015 a motor pump could cost about 2.000 Nis.

management and discourses since the 1990s. This approach adopts a new economic notion of water and water scarcity. The state-led water supply paradigm has been substituted by the focus on water demand management and patterns of decentralised management. The main development agencies foster the introduction of measures to promote technical and economic efficiency, such as water-pricing principles, the engagement of the private sector in water distribution and the spread of water-saving technologies through the private sector – such as low-cost drip irrigation more affordable by poor farmers (Postel et al. 2001).

Before the creation of Israel, the local irrigation practices, which require a greater investment of labour force, were carried out thanks to the collaboration of the male members of an extended family. The irrigation practices were realised at the same time of the turn of access to spring water, which, together with land (and the flock), was shared by the young and adult members of an extended family. The cooperation of this group of solidarity in the daily agricultural, herding and domestic work was a key resource to ensure the self-sufficiency of local productive systems. The division of tasks and the consumption of crops and other resources were organised according to a hierarchical structure, in which the younger generations were subordinate to the authority of the oldest male relatives, on whom they depended for the access to the essential resources to live.

Irrigation practices were organised according to a social time, according to changing ecological factors (such as water availability) and to local relationships, patterns of solidarity and authority roles, connected to the norms ruling the right of access to spring water.



*Figure 52: a woman irrigating the land with the local irrigation technique called mašākib  
(De Donato 2017)*





Figure 53: a field irrigated with the local irrigation technique called *mašākib*  
(De Donato 2017)

Compared to the local irrigation technique, drip irrigation requires less effort but also a larger investment of capital that not all families can afford. It entails the use of a smaller amount of water, but plants have to be irrigated more frequently than the turns of access to spring water, which has to be collected in irrigation pools<sup>188</sup>.

The building of pools to collect irrigation water is an historical technique in Palestine. Local farmers claim that *birkat at-tīna* (the pool of the fig), which is the pool collecting the water of 'ayn at-tīna (the spring of the fig), dates back to the Roman Empire. As the other three stone pools<sup>189</sup> built in the village before its evacuation, this pool is communal and the spring water collected in it is divided in water hours among all farmers with the right of access to this spring, according to the rota system.

Differently, since the late 1980s, conjugal families build an increasing number of private concrete pools, within the framework of rural development projects implemented by the local Village Council, Agricultural Cooperative, Youth Development Association and *Ġam'iyat*

---

<sup>188</sup> As an example, a farmer said me that with the traditional irrigation technique a land is irrigated one or two times during the eight days comprising the rota system, while with the drip irrigation it has to be irrigated four alternate days on eight, using about one-third of the amount of water used with the traditional technique.

<sup>189</sup> The three old communal pools for spring water collection were called *birkat al- ā'ilāt* (the pool of the families), *birkat az-zeytūna* (the olive's pool), and *birkat al-ġisr* (the pool of the bridge). One of these pools has been built in 1920 and today is used only by a part of the Sukkar family, one pool is destroyed, and the other one has been modified and is used collectively to collect the water of the spring 'ayn maḏīk, before to divide it.

*nazra mustaqbaliyya al-khayriyya* (Future Outlook Association)<sup>190</sup>. These projects are supported by donors such as ANERA, World Vision, and Association France Palestine Solidarité.

As shown in the maps 6 and 7, representing the irrigation network and pools in the village, in 2015 in the valley there were 83 pools, each one named after its individual owner's name<sup>191</sup>.



*Figures 54, 55, 56, 57: open-air and covered concrete channels used for irrigation (De Donato 2016)*

<sup>190</sup> Between 2013 and 2015 twenty pools have been built in the valley. Some farmers who did not benefit from the NGOs' resources built their pool in an independent way while others could not do it because of the limited dimension of their plot of land.

<sup>191</sup> I preferred not to write the name of the owners of the pools, because I did not have the approval of all of them.

In the 2015 summer, two adult brothers were sharing a pool, where they collected their father's hours of spring water and divided them in two equal parts, measured with an historical local technique. This consists in immersing a wood *'ūd* (stick) vertically, and marking on it with two incisions the level of water in the pool before its use and the middle point of the immersed part of the stick. This second incision marks the beginning of the second turn of access to water. One of the two brothers often complained that the other was using a greater amount of water, taking advantage of his absence for other work engagements. After many quarrels, the displeased brother, argued by his wife, decided to build his proper pool, in which to collect his share of water.

Building its private pool, a conjugal family becomes independent from its extended family in irrigation water management. Today the irrigation practices are not shared by the extended family's members, who collect water and irrigate when they want, depending on their different farming strategies<sup>192</sup>.

Without the access to the important resource of the extended family's cooperative work, the hard local irrigation technique requires further greater efforts by farmers, who work alone most of time, assisted only by their sons and wife's temporary and occasional assistance.

The spring water collected in the pools is increasingly viewed as a commercial commodity privately owned that is sold or more frequently rented even to relatives.

The spread of the private pools highlights the changes in local patterns of belonging and solidarity related to the meaning of family, viewed as a specific historical, social and cultural construction, a main dimension of belonging and solidarity whose borders are movable and flexible. Today, the local meaning of family is affected by the integration in the wider market economy and the globalisation of Western middle class' values and ideas.

As waged employment has become the main means of support (although the unemployment rate is high), when young men find a job, they achieve a greater economic independence of their oldest male relatives. So long as they live with their parents, they usually contribute to their household's income. The diversification of the household's sources of income is a common strategy in the context of economic marginalisation. Since young men marry and

---

<sup>192</sup> The spread of pools led to changes in the rota systems of access to spring water. Indeed, once the night time and daytime turns of access to spring water were alternated, given that night time turns were preferred because land is colder and "drinks" less water. However, since the Israeli evacuation of the village, night turns became also dangerous, given the higher risk to meet Israeli soldiers. Following the building of private pools, farmers stopped to alternate night and day time turns, since every person has only to open the channels conveying water to his pool and, then, he can irrigate when he wants.

have their household, they usually seek to make their conjugal families independent of their extended family, in particular of their father, paternal uncles and grandfather's control and allocation of resources.

However, this goal is attained especially by some privileged young men belonging to the middle class. The high unemployment rate, job insecurity and the low salaries of young workers do not allow them to achieve the complete economic independence soon. In particular, they cannot afford the organisation of their expensive marriage (which entails the groom's payment of the bride price, the wedding party and gown...) and the building of their household without the support of their father and paternal uncles. In cases of low income, the oldest male relatives maintain their power position and control over the social reproduction and personal choices of the younger generations longest, even if an independent waged employment allows the latter to have more spaces of manoeuvre, by manipulating the information concerning it.

According to Cohen (1965), during the Ottoman period and the British Mandate, the predominant communal land holding entailed a close cooperation between different holders of adjacent plots of land: they shared the same time-table, methods of cultivation, rotation of crops. Today, the multiplication and differentiation of farmers' farming and irrigation techniques and strategies – and the related economic investments – mirror the socio-economic segmentation and the competition for the resources allocated by development actors, which fragment the extended family and the community and lead to change in local hierarchies.

Local farmers seek to contrast the fragmentation of local patterns of belonging, by means of solidarity practices such as the exchanges of irrigation water shares, of work in the fields and of vegetables with relatives or neighbours. Facing economic marginalisation some local farmers show their ability to appropriate the new technologies and to adapt their use to their own situation. For example, some farmers who have not the money to buy a motor pump sometimes use the rubber pipes for drip irrigation without the pump, calculating the amount of water collected in their pool which exerts the necessary pressure. Maḥmūd Mufarraḥ explained to me that in drip irrigation the motor pump pushes water into rubber pipes with a pressure of 1/1.5 bar (a higher pressure would break the pipes). Thanks to his long-time experience, he understood that 3 m<sup>3</sup> of water in his pool exert a pressure of 1 bar (considering that his pool is built at a higher altitude than his land).



*Figure 58: pools for the collection of spring water, used for irrigation  
(De Donato 2017)*



*Figure 59: pools for the collection of spring water, used for irrigation  
(De Donato 2017)*

Intensive irrigation has led to the individualisation of irrigation water management and farming practices and strategies, locally viewed as practices of resistance against Israeli legal devices of land expropriation.

This is clear while considering the building and maintenance of the irrigation network and the springs in the village, on which the reproduction of the local agricultural productive system and, thus, the resistance to Israel, is grounded.

The cleaning and freeing of the springs from rubbish and overgrown vegetation, and the maintenance of the irrigation channels are targeted by many projects implemented by local associations and institutions – such as the Village Council, the Agricultural Cooperative, the Youth Development Association and the Future Outlook Association – and financed by international donors. Many times these projects are contested by some local inhabitants, who

complain that they did not benefit from them, or that they had not been involved in their planning and implementation, which were appropriated by the local associations' heads<sup>193</sup>, in collusion with other inhabitants.

Some villagers claim that not all inhabitants agreed about the building of the kindergarten above the spring called '*ayn al-balad*, which has been planned and carried out in 2013 by the *lağnat al-ḥadamāt al-‘amma* (General Services Committee), thanks to World Vision's funding. Today, to have access to this underground spring, one has to enter a manhole in the yard's flooring of the kindergarten, whose access is controlled by the local association called Future Outlook Association, and in particular by its head<sup>194</sup>. Therefore, '*ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre) has been removed from the public view and control and lost the status of public place of meeting and negotiation.

Villagers feel mistrust and suspect towards any intervention to restructure the springs, especially after the works implemented by the Palestinian NGO WEDO, accused to have damaged some springs<sup>195</sup>. They claim the unsuitable character of the expert scientific knowledge legitimising NGOs and other environmental institutions' interventions, opposing to it the validity and value of local know-how about springs and their maintenance, achieved during long-time relations with the local environment<sup>196</sup>.

Besides the maintenance of the springs, since the 1986 development donors such as ANERA, UNRWA, World Vision, the Association France Palestine Solidarité, and ARIJ (Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem) financed the gradual substitution of most of the open-air irrigation channels dug in the stone with pipes covered by a concrete jacket. The aim was to increase the spring water flow by reducing the loss of water due to its evaporation, leakage, and the clogs in the open-air channels.

Moreover, every year the Bethlehem Farmers' Society organises one or more days consecrated to the cleaning of the irrigation channels and springs, bringing to Wādī Fūkīn volunteers from outside the village. In 2015, the Village Council took in consideration the possibility to pay some workers to carry out these works.

As in other peasants' irrigation systems analysed in Jordan (Van Aken 2012) or in Baluchistan (Fabietti 1997), before the 1990s the cleaning and maintenance of the springs and

---

<sup>193</sup> I analyse the functioning of the local associations in the paragraph 3 of this chapter.

<sup>194</sup> The head of the General Services Committee founded the Future Outlook Association, which substituted it.

<sup>195</sup> I address the environmental NGOs' intervention in the village in the first chapter.

<sup>196</sup> I addressed this subject in the first chapter, paragraph 4.1.

the network of irrigation channels and common pools were a collective responsibility, whose fulfilment by farmers expressed the meaning of “water community”. Each person’s legitimate right of access to spring water grounded on his contribution to this communal work and collective interest.

Today, the maintenance and development of the irrigation infrastructures – made up of materials bought in the market such as pipes and concrete - is highly dependent on the knowledge and resources bestowed by NGOs, whose allocation is viewed as unfair by most of inhabitants, and is at the centre of competition and tensions between them. The NGOs’ resources supply has led to the spread perception that individual strategies to continue to farm, resisting to the Israeli attempts at de-peasantisation and land expropriation, highly depend on development actors’ resources, bringing about a passive and dependence attitude and lack of initiative.

Farmers have not access to an equal extent to the economic capital or construction material provided by NGOs, thus leading to the maintenance of some channels and pools while others are left to the gradual decay. Especially in the lower part of the valley, there are still many open-air channels dug in the rock. Most of farmers are worried to maintain only their private pools and the little parts of the channels conveying spring water to their fields, and few ones collaborate to adjust the parts of the channels far from their fields, or to clean the springs, increasingly covered in non-organic rubbish (plastic and metal containers).

The changing path of the irrigation channels (and, thus, the choice of the lands to irrigate) is not decided by collective negotiations any more. It is decided by NGOs’ engineers or by local individuals. Each farmer can divert spring water flow to a new field by using a motor pump and rubber pipes, which can convey water even to plots of land situated at a higher altitude than the spring.

Therefore, today the building and maintenance of the irrigation network consists in the sum of individual efforts and responsibilities, whose fulfilment depends on each individual’s differentiated access to economic capital and to the resources conveyed by Palestinian and international development agencies.

As many local farmers told me, besides land and spring water scarcity and their excessive fragmentation over generations, a main problem is that «everyone thinks only about himself».

Together with farming activities, viewed as resistance practices, also the resistance to the Israeli occupation has been individualised and disempowered, fragmented in different individual farming strategies and in multiple views of water reality and water justice.

In line with anthropological and political ecologist studies on local communities' irrigation systems in Jordan (Van Aken 2012), Baluchistan (Fabietti 1997) and the Andes (Boelens and Vos 2014; Boelens 1998), this analysis highlights that irrigation development does not consist only in a technical matter. The irrigation infrastructure is a social and symbolical construct, connected to changing political relationships, hierarchies, patterns of belonging and authority roles. The changes of irrigation infrastructure and techniques are the materialisation of always changing social and normative relationships, which shape the organisation of irrigation and distribution practices, while creating the "hydraulic property" (Boelens and Vos 2014).

Following Kaika's (2005) insights about the political-ecology of the urbanisation of nature in Western countries, the modernist ideologies defining water and irrigation modernisation as a mere technical and economic matter consist in "politics of nature" (Latour 1999) with a key role in the imagination and invention of the "other" as "colonised" or "underdeveloped" and in the legitimisation of development interventions. They are ideological constructions which entail the de-politisation and "naturalisation" of development actors' farming and irrigation technologies, models and ideas, imposed as "regime of truth" (Escobar 1995).

The case of Wādī Fūkīn highlights that despite development actors' modernist discourses about the political neutrality of the new technical solutions to manage water scarcity – considered as universal and extraterritorial scientific solution – the new technologies convey a network of values, norms and social interests that shape the "planners' moral economy" (Bernal 1997).

Irrigation projects fostered by *al-mu'assasāt* (the organisations) – as NGOs are locally called – convey water commoditisation, which entails the naturalisation and de-politicisation of water issues, detached from social and political and cultural dynamics and viewed as a technical-economic matter.

Moreover, they convey the individualistic ideology characterising the neo-liberal paradigm dominating development discourses and interventions. The individual is viewed as isolated, independent and opposed to the community, while pursuing its own economic interest. Irrigation water stress and other agricultural problems are considered as an individual responsibility and are ascribed to farmers' adoption of inefficient and backward irrigation and farming techniques. The solution of these problems and, thus, agricultural development, can be achieved by increasing the abilities and social power of disadvantaged individual farmers,



by fostering their adoption of “modern”, efficient intensive techniques. The economic and political structural relationships and ecological constraints producing water stress and local farmers’ marginalisation – connected to local and national political structures, to the Israeli colonial occupation and to global economic and cultural processes – are not taken into account. Also some NGOs proposing alternative model of rural development, which foster the spread of more sustainable and autonomous organic farming techniques, do not address the political structural relationships hindering the success of this strategy.

By conveying “social requirements for usage” (Boelens 1998:93), the new irrigation techniques exercise forms of “water governmentality” (Zwarteveen and Boelens 2014), which seek to expropriate (Van der Ploeg 1998) and reshape local people's knowledge, norms, social relationships and practices concerning the production, use and distribution of water and other resources, the property regime, as well as the meaning of farmer and his relationships with the community.

The individualisation of irrigation practices contributes to the reconfiguration of local tribal patterns of solidarity and authority related to the meaning of family, which have always been involved in irrigation water management.

By means of the alienation of irrigation and farming activities from local patterns of political belonging, cooperation and resources management, development agencies proposing intensive farming and irrigation techniques foster the creation of new individualised farmers, as conform to a pre-existing model of “modern” farmer, grounded on the Western experience.

## **2. Farming the Development: the Struggle for the Autonomy of Hybrid Agricultures**

While I was walking in the fields to observe, collaborate and speak with farmers, many times I took a rest from the sun sitting under a big fig encircled by a low stonewall. Here, I was welcomed by Moḥammed Ibrāhīm Moḥammed Sukkar, called Abū Ibrāhīm, an about 56 years old teacher of English in the local public school, who always farms when he comes back from his job and during non-working days (like on Friday and during school summer holidays). He and his elderly father, Ibrāhīm Moḥammed ‘Awwaḍ ‘Othmān, called *ḥağ Ibrāhīm* (the pilgrim Ibrāhīm)<sup>197</sup>, organised a sort of house under this fig. They arranged

---

<sup>197</sup> This epithet is given to people who made the pilgrimage to the Mecca but also to elderly people in general, as a way to show respect.

two beds, an old desk, and a gas camp stove, on which they prepare coffee or tea when they take a break from farming, and during other farmers' visits. These visits usually are aimed at asking vegetables, or exchanging information and turns of access to spring water. A corner is organised to light the fire on which sometimes their wives cook the lunch to be consumed by the family during its visits in the valley.

Other farmers take a rest from the hard work and the hot summer sun, or repair themselves from the winter bad weather, in metal tool sheds built close to their fields.

Like a house, the space under this tree and the metal sheds bear the meaning of private or public places, according to the contextual people's practices and social interactions.

Sometimes they are viewed as the family's private space, which does not always correspond to the physical space of the house. Indeed, it consists in the relational context characterised by the only presence of close paternal relatives. They become a public place of hospitality when the family's members welcome visitors (like other inhabitants or the researcher) belonging to other families, and carry out the ritualised practices of hospitality, like the offering of coffee.

The delimitation of public and private dimensions is symbolic and movable, shaped by practices and the continuous mutual positioning of the self and the others, in connection with the material world, as mirrored by Arab architecture (Layne 1994).

During the long conversations I engaged under their fig with *ḥağ* Ibrāhīm and his son Abū Ibrāhīm, many times *al-ḥağ* showed me proudly his *kūsā baladiyya* (local courgettes) and the local seeds he produced the previous year. This local kind of courgette - like the white aubergines historically cultivated in the near village of Battīr - is well known also outside the village as one of the symbols of the local historical agriculture. As noted also by Van Aken (2015) studying in the close village of Battir, in farmers' discourses, local seeds, called *baladī* (local), as well as the local kind of courgette, bear a political value, idealised as a symbol of their cultural "authenticity" and roots in the local territory. They are viewed as the outcome of specific historical, "healthy" and "moral" reciprocal relationships between local people and the environment.

Many farmers often described to me the farming and living conditions in the village before the creation of Israel. Palestinian peasant economy was characterised by self-sufficiency, lack of external input and capital and labour-intensive activities like the cultivation of terraces (Cohen 1965).

Farmers imagine and idealise that period as a time of simplicity, morality, solidarity, justice and happiness. Describing it, they expressed a melancholy for a time not always lived, but

whose memory is produced collectively and kept alive over generations. All of them stressed the differences between past peasants and present farmers.

Ibrāhīm said me: « at my grandfather and father's time, when I was young, in the village all people produced their own seeds and had many sheep. They farmed barley, wheat and lentils...they were *fellāhīn* (peasants), not farmers like today ».

In farmers' imagination, the *fellāh* and its farming culture are idealised and reified as opposed to the present *muzāri* (farmer) and to the intensive farming and irrigation techniques.

Villagers use the moral language to re-politicise and re-socialise the intensive farming techniques which development actors propose as technical solutions. Intensive farming techniques are viewed as political strategies creating new relationships of dependence and the connected loss of autonomy. The farmer and his intensive farming techniques, as well as the connected idea of "nature", are defined as immoral, antithetical to the essence of the peasants' life in the village before its evacuation.

Farmers describe the sustainability and self-sufficiency of past peasants' agriculture, which consisted in the autonomous, cooperative and circular use of local resources, adapting to climate changes and seasonal rainwater availability, and characterised by the awareness of the relationality between human communities and non-human actors.

According to local inhabitants' idealised social memories, before the evacuation of the village, local families' livelihood was grounded on farming and herding activities, viewed as integrated and complementary strategies of using the multiple and interconnected resources of the local semi-arid environment. In the valley peasants cultivated mainly vegetables, thanks to the access to spring water. The terraced lands in the slopes of the hills were used for trees' cultivation, such as citrus groves, walnuts, almond trees, and in particular olive trees, historically cultivated in Palestine for the production of olives, oil and soap.

Differently, the lands in the hills surrounding the valley – which today are included within the Israeli state and urban settlements – were dedicated to rain-fed farming of *qamḥ* (wheat) and *ša'īr* (barley) - used to produce flour and forage. Some lands were fallow, grazed by the numerous *ḥirfān* (sheep), *ḡidiān* (goats) and *baqar* (cows), and the few camels, which were raised by every extended family in the village. Surplus crops were sold mainly in the near Jerusalem market (which today is inaccessible), but also in the Bethlehem one.

Peasants used to produce their seeds by themselves and to farm some vegetables and plants as pesticides (anti-parasitic agents). They produced forage for their flock, which provided milk and meat for their nutrition and were raised in caves in the slopes of the hills encircling the

valley - among which in the 2015 summer only one was still used. They produced also *samād* (compost) and *zibel* (manure) in order to fertilise the soil.

Many times farmers complained to me that the abandonment of herding activities has contributed to local agriculture's loss of self-sufficiency. Given the new borders created by the Israeli urban development in the hills encircling the village, historically used for grazing, pastures shortage and the impossibility to move have forced local inhabitants to leave these activities. Most of the households have only few sheep (5-8) that provide milk and cheese for home consumption. Some families have some poultry and few ones have a mule. Women breed animals in little cattle sheds outside home. However, sheep are not enough to produce the necessary manure, as the amount of waste agricultural products is not enough to produce the necessary compost, which farmers have to buy in the market<sup>198</sup>.

Villagers claim that past peasants used to farm respecting the reproductive capacity and limits of resources (included animals) and contributing to the enhancement of soil fertility and health and to the maintenance of the springs.

In the context of agriculture commoditisation and economic marginalisation, the meaning of peasant and of historical local farming techniques is idealised and legitimised as connected to a "moral economy" that follows the Islamic obligation of human beings to protect the environment (water, land, fauna and flora), reducing pollution and using water and other resources in a sustainable way (Faruqui et al. 2003). For the Islamic law the environment is entitled to rights like human beings, such as the right of access to a sufficient amount of water of high quality (Faruqui et al. 2003).

Most of farmers in Wādī Fūkīn view agricultural production as an interaction, exchange and reciprocal transformation between human and not-human beings (Van der Ploeg 2009) such as land, water, seeds and plants, which are subjectified. Farmers speak about land as a human body, whose blood is spring water. In local speeches, land is anthropomorphic and has a morality. Land is *ṣādiqa* (sincere) because she gives back what is given to it. The land is *ta'abāna* (tired) because of its over-exploitation, it becomes sad (*tiz'al*) when it is irrigated with insufficient water, or it becomes happy (*ibtinebset*) when rainwater is abundant. Crops and spring water come "from the belly to the face" (*min al-baḥān 'ilā-l-waḡah*), as if land has the human physical structure.

---

<sup>198</sup> I analyse in detail the processes that led to the abandonment of mobile herding activities and its cultural and social implications in the paragraph 4 of the third chapter.

Hybrid seeds are *marīd* (sick) and plants need *dawā'* (medicine) when are infested by fungi or parasites. The healthy conditions of land and human beings are strictly connected in a reciprocal relationship. « The land is our own body, and water is its vital lymph... if they get sick, we get sick, too ». Explaining to me this sentence, Abū Ibrāhīm stated that if the land is fed with harmful food by human beings, it gets sick and gives bad and harmful fruits. These are like the cancer in the human body, often associated with the hiring of non-organic agricultural products.

Each spring in the village has its proper name and has established particular historical relationships with the tribal groups and extended families in the village<sup>199</sup>. Two springs are viewed as tied by a kinships tie, they are sisters. They express sentiments, will and attitudes. A spring *takḍib* (it lies) when one cannot be sure about the amount of water “it gives”, or it is sincere.

As in the Jordan Valley analysed by Van Aken (2012), in Wādī Fūkīn and the Palestinian Territories in general, water is not considered as H<sub>2</sub>O, a "natural" and univocal resource, as in the modern positive sciences and western ideologies about “nature”. Differently, in the village there is a “diversity of waters” (Van Aken 2012) that mirrors the idea of a “multi-naturalism” (Latour 1999): multiple subjectified “natures” and waters are involved in interdependent relationships with human beings and socio-cultural processes.

The case of Wādī Fūkīn contributes to problematisation of the Western ontological separation between subjective human dimensions and the objective and univocal “natural” realm, while understanding other (but also the Western) “waterworlds”. It shows the “embeddedness” of water within the society (Casciarri 2008). Spring waters, as well as seeds, vegetables and other non-human beings, are active actors who participate to human social relationships, contributing to produce local knowledge and meanings and to shape local patterns of cultural belonging, political boundaries and identity claims (Bennet 2010; Casciarri 2008; Aubriot 2004; Serres 1995).

The knowledge about the material reality is achieved by understanding the subjectivity, intentionality and personality of its different elements (each spring, water, land, seed, plant...). This way to view the environment is very different from that conveyed by the Western scientific epistemology, according to which the knowledge of the world is achieved by understanding the material, physical processes, objectifying them, “purifying” them from

---

<sup>199</sup> I have shown the multiplicity of spring waters in the second chapter, paragraph 4.

the interference of the subjective representations and interpretations of the person who knows.

Human being is one of the bio-physical actors composing the environment, viewed as a network of reciprocal relationships and interactions between human practices and culture and the non-human actors like water and land.

By means of these discourses and embodied knowledge about the relationships with the environment, local farmers claim for socio-ecological justice (Schlosberg 2013), that is to say, they struggle for their right to preserve the local socio-ecological system and network on which the material and cultural reproduction of the local community are grounded.



*Figure 60: farmland in the village (De Donato 2016)*

Especially for some people with a low socio-economic status, local farming techniques and meanings of agriculture consist in a “counterculture” (Van der Ploeg 1998:43; 2009). These alternative patterns of farming knowledge are embodied to gain spaces of autonomy and manoeuvre. They are strategies to continue to farm and to feed the family despite the marginalisation entailed by commercial agriculture, seeking to achieve the eco-social sustainability (Van der Ploeg 2009). This is the case of some inhabitants that cannot afford the expensive production costs of intensive farming activities, even more in the context of the low salaries and the high unemployment rate: for example, people with a low level of education, which disadvantages them in the competition for waged employment in the West Bank, or people that are excluded from the Israeli labour market because for Israel they have a criminal record.

In order to satisfy the family's needs and culinary preferences, some vegetables are produced with local seeds, according to the women's management of the yearly family's diet. This includes also some herbs, such as basil, parsley, coriander, oregano, thyme, as well as *mulūḥiya* and *bāmya* (okra), which women dry out or freeze to preserve them for the winter season. Sage and mint are used to flavour the tea and wild mint is particularly appreciated. Some farmers participate to the *bank al-buḍūr al-baladiyya* (the bank of local seeds), organised in the municipality of al-Ḥaḍer, near Bethlehem, as well as in other areas such as that of Hebron and Jenin. This association collects local seeds and encourages their use by Palestinian farmers, aware of the risk to lose local farming culture and biodiversity, besides the Palestinian agriculture's last spaces of autonomy. It fosters the spread of an autonomous, sustainable and organic agricultural production, in order to resist to the Israeli cultural and economic colonial strategies<sup>200</sup>. Each farmer can have access to 250 g of seeds for each dunam of land, and he has to bring back 250 g and the 3% of the total amount of the same seeds (also seedlings are available).



*Figure 61: farmlands in the village (De Donato, 2016)*

---

<sup>200</sup> This project is organised by the Bethlehem Farmers Society (BFS) and financed by many donors, such as OVERSEAS, PARC, ACS Italy, and the Italian Development Cooperation-Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2017 the bank collected 28 kinds of seeds and also seedlings were available.

In the village farming activities are at the centre also of other globalised narratives about agriculture, alternative to the dominating rural development discourses focusing on technical and economic efficiency.

In order to contest the positive value of intensive farming techniques, agriculture development is often connected to organic farming, appropriating the new rhetoric about organic food spread among the Western, Israeli and Palestinian urban middle class.

Abū Ibrāhīm claims the better taste and healthy character of his *ḥoḍār* 'oḍowiyya (organic vegetables), cultivated with local seeds. He sells them to Palestinian and Israeli urban citizens (especially from the neighbouring Tzur Hadassah) coming to his land in the village's valley.

As the Israeli state, the PNA and some dominating development discourses, also these social actors reify Palestinian agriculture and rural communities as "traditional". However, these people overturn the modernist negative evaluation of local farming techniques as backward, affected by a blind trust, imagination and naturalisation of local Palestinians and their farming activities as "traditional", independent of regional and global economic dynamics, never changing and thus implicitly "natural" and healthy. This rhetoric is similar to the past social sciences' myth of the naturalised "good savage" – the idea that the natives of the colonial territories embodied a pristine goodness.

A blind trust in science is exchanged with a blind trust in "tradition", but the outcome is the same: Palestinian farmer and its farming activities are reified, detached from the local reality and the political and ecological constraints which hinder the sustainability of an organic agricultural production. This blind naturalisation of the Palestinian farmer is the product of, and it further produces the ignorance (Hobart 1993) fostered by the Israeli and Palestinian processes of cultural reification of Palestinian peasants<sup>201</sup>.

Some farmers' discourses about organic farming are strategies of self-representation to seek to gain space in the crops' market, by using the new needs perceived by these Israelis and their imagination of Palestinian agriculture. Not all these farmers necessary engage only in organic farming but they represent themselves as doing so, using in a strategic way some Israelis' ignorance about local reality.

---

<sup>201</sup> I analyse the PNA's reification of Palestinian peasants and their farming activities in the fourth chapter.



Moḥammed Naṣrī Rašād Mufarraḥ is one of the farmers who practice organic agriculture. However, he refuses to sell his crops to Israelis, which he views as an unjust practice normalising the colonial relationships between Palestinians and Israelis.

He is a very resourceful and tireless young farmer who “returned to the land” following in his grandfather’s footsteps. His father Naṣrī Rašād never farmed, works in an Israeli tourist office, and owns land and buildings also in the area of Bethlehem. Thanks to his wealthy condition, he bought a land for Moḥammed in the upper part of the village, without access to spring water. Moḥammed is one of the few farmers who cultivate vegetables in this part of the village. He is also the only one (except the family from al-Qabū, which has access to his private spring) who built two greenhouses, even if this farming technique requires a greater amount of water. He irrigates his plants using the *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water), as local inhabitants call the drinking domestic water delivered to the village's dwellings, and paid by villagers according to the consumption of every household<sup>202</sup>. Moḥammed diverts this water’s flow from the waterworks in the built-up area to his *bi’r* (well) in the fields, by means of rubber pipes.

Moḥammed is very passionate about farming. He produces a great variety of vegetables and fruits and his land is particularly well-cared compared to the others. His agricultural strategies consist in the mixture of historical local techniques he learnt when he was a child, assisting his grandfather – such as crop rotation and combination – and new organic farming techniques, such as the use of nylon to kill weeds, of *ramād* (ash) and *karbūn* (carbon) as fertilisers, and garlic as pesticide. He is one of the only farmers who alternate rows of vegetables and rows of trees, explaining to me that vegetables provide the necessary amount of nitrogen to trees.

His privileged access to multiple forms of economic, social and cultural capital contributes to the success of his farming strategies. His high socio-economic status and level of education allow him to have an easier access to new farming knowledge, learnt during his academic studies in Agrarian Science, or consulting Internet and attending organic farming courses organised by the NGO PARC and the Bethlehem Farmers’ Society. He has a privileged access to many resources allocated by the PARC NGO, the Bethlehem Farmers’ Society, and international agencies and NGOs<sup>203</sup>, because of his middle class position and high status.

---

<sup>202</sup> As he said to me, in 2015 he was paying monthly about 200 Euros for 150 m<sup>3</sup> of domestic water.

<sup>203</sup> For example, in 2015 he received trees to be planted in a part of his land under confiscation (2 dunams) by the Municipality of Milano (Lombardia Region) and the Cariplo Foundation. In the same year, the Italian NGO called GVC supported the Agricultural Cooperative with a project to

Other farmers in the village sell their crops in *as-sūq al-markazy* (the central market)<sup>204</sup> and in a square called *sīnama* (cinema) in Bethlehem, or in the streets in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša (where they lived in the past). Differently, Moḥammed’s symbolic and economic resources allowed him to create a market niche consisting in a network of privileged commercial relationships with some Palestinian urban middle class citizens, who are interested in buying his healthy organic crops at a higher price. These are owners of restaurants and Cremisan monks producing wine in Beyt Ğāla, a municipality near Bethlehem. In 2017 he achieved (by payment) a certificate attesting that he engages in *zirā’a bī’īa* (environmental agriculture)<sup>205</sup>, by the Fair Trade Adel Corporation. This non-profit organisation aims at fostering a fair trade culture and encouraging Palestinian consumers and producers to reach an agreement upon equitable price. In this way, Moḥammed has increased the possibility to expand his commercial activity.

In 2017 he bought land in the valley<sup>206</sup> by his paternal uncle, who stopped farming because of his old age (half of this land was his father’s inheritance, but was used by his uncle). He thus increased his production. He is the only farmer in the village who can afford the payment of some workers, when he cannot carry out all farming activities alone, as he does most of times.

Between 2016 and 2017, his wealthy condition allowed him even to install a very expensive system for hydroponic cultivation<sup>207</sup> in one of his greenhouses. He was very proud showing

---

rehabilitate lands under confiscation, close to the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah. Among the lands chosen by the Cooperative for the project, ten dunams were owned by Moḥammed, and other ten by the neighbouring farmer Ğamīl Ğuma’a Yūsef ‘Assāf. He received many olive trees and the material to build a well where to collect domestic water (used for irrigation). Moreover, in the framework of the solidarity relationships established by the Agricultural Cooperative with the Italian NGO Overseas, in 2016 he could travel to Italy (paying his airplane ticket by himself) to speak about the problems concerning farming in Wādī Fūkīn during public meetings organised by the NGO.

<sup>204</sup> Some taxi drivers transport the crops of some farmers to the Bethlehem Central Market by payment, other farmers make it alone. Given that in the Central Market farmers do not sell crops by themselves, they have to pay also this service.

<sup>205</sup> He said me that the certificate attesting that he engages in organic agriculture was more expensive.

<sup>206</sup> Today he owns 15 dunams of land in the northern hills of the village, where there are not active and available springs, and 35 dunams in the valley, of whom 10 dunams are cultivated with olive trees.

<sup>207</sup> His system for hydroponic cultivation is comprised of 600 tubes. He spent about 100.000 Nis to build it. A press report has been made about his innovative production system.

me what he considers as the best solution to overcome problems of parasites' land infestation, and to increase the production using the same space<sup>208</sup> and a smaller amount of water<sup>209</sup>. Such solution strengthens his privileged position, given that it cannot be afforded by other farmers in the village.

According to Moḥammed and other farmers, despite organic farming of local seeds is a less profitable strategy in the short-period (because of the production of a smaller amount of crops), it allows the long-term environmental and economic sustainability of local agriculture (maintaining the soil fertility and decreasing the production costs). Once again, these farmers give to farming development a political meaning and scope. The spread of organic farming is viewed as a strategy to make Palestinians return to land, in order to struggle for autonomy.



*Figure 62: a farmer in his land in the village (De Donato 2017)*

In the context of the harsh competition between farmers, Moḥammed often criticises other villagers for not carrying out organic farming. He says that they do not want to spend efforts in learning new techniques and only think to satisfy their immediate economic interest, competing between each other.

However, both Moḥammed and the NGOs fostering organic farming do not consider the economic and ecological constrains and power structural relationships hindering most of

---

<sup>208</sup> In 2017, in his hydroponic system he cultivated 12.000 seedlings of onion, lettuce, parsley, strawberry, mint.

<sup>209</sup> Moḥammed told me that his hydroponic cultivation requires only 3 m<sup>3</sup> of water every month, because water is reused many times.

local farmers' adoption of successful organic farming practices. They do not address programs to organise collective actions and choices, targeting individual farmers. As a consequence, also NGOs fostering the spread of organic farming as a strategy of resistance to the Israeli political, economic and cultural colonisation actually amplify the local socio-economic differentiations between farmers, and strengthen the local power structures.

According to many farmers, growing local seeds in the valley without using synthetic fertilisers would require previous soil treatments to increase its fertility, compromised by long-time intensive farming. These processes would not allow to farm for a long period, increasing the risk of land expropriation. Farmers would need to be supported to maintain their family, by compensating the economic loss entailed by the halt of the production. They would need also to produce collectively a great amount of compost, in order to not buy it in the market, as they do today<sup>210</sup>.

Given the harsh economic competition with Israeli subsidised and high-tech agricultural production, the production of organic crops with local seeds would have to be combined with the creation of a short food supply chain involving all farmers. This would guarantee the sale of their crops and a profit compensating the decrease of their amount.

Moreover, according to Ḥālīd 'Abd-al-Qādir Sukkar – an about 45 years old teacher of chemistry in a public school who always farms when he is not at school – “the return to organic farming” would benefit everybody only if carried out by all farmers in the village, as a collective choice. As he said, « If my neighbours use hybrid seeds, they bring parasites also to my organic crops cultivated with local seeds... without the use of synthetic pesticides my crops would die ».

Ḥālīd and other farmers view this collective choice and cohesiveness as a remote possibility. Similarly, they consider even more difficult the strategy I suggested to adopt: the restoring of the communal management of land. Indeed, I think that the collective struggle for land may be favoured by creating solidarity networks transversal to the economic stratifications and to other forms of differentiation fragmenting the local community. Wide networks of solidarity and sharing of resources may allow inhabitants to farm all land in the village and to face economic marginalisation, leading to the empowerment of marginalised people.

Nevertheless, today in Wādī Fūkīn « there are few true peasants», as many villagers often stated referring also to people practicing only organic farming. In the context of the

---

<sup>210</sup> In 2015, the Agricultural Cooperative was trying to raise funds to complete the equipment to produce compost, built in part thanks to a NGO's funding.

high competition with the Israeli agriculture and increasing soil infertility and parasites' infestations, the need of the intensive techniques and agronomic expertise, defined as *aşriyya* (modern), is increasingly perceived by farmers<sup>211</sup>, affected by the global spread of universalistic, technical efficiency concepts (Boelens and Vos 2012).

In 2015, Ḥalīl had to face the important problem of parasites' infestation in his greenhouse, a main increasing trouble of local farmers. First, he tried in vain to solve this problem by spraying synthetic pesticides on his plants, as most of farmers do. Then, he adopted a new technique of *ta'qīm* (sterilisation), consisting in creating a layer of water mixed with synthetic substances with an anti-parasitic function between the land and the bottom of the greenhouse, leaving it for many hours. He learned this technique observing farmers in Israel, when he achieved the permit to go there by the Israeli military authorities. He was very proud to be the only farmer in the village knowing this "modern" technique, viewed as a "stolen" resource to be used in the competition with other farmers.

Ḥalīl 'Assāf was not worried about the great amount of spring water required by this technique, or about its consequences concerning soil fertility and crops' quality. As local inhabitants told me, this tireless farmer « is always in the land ». He does not own any farmland and he farms the plots he rents using intensive farming techniques (but also some local techniques), in order to increase his crop production as much as possible. In order to pay the great production costs, sometimes he works in the Israeli building sector. Seeking to overcome his unjust and marginalised condition by increasing his family's status, his priority is to earn and save enough money to send all his sons and daughters to the University (one of his daughter obtained a degree in law), to make his sons marry, and to buy land for them. «I want to give them a future», as he said me many times. In the context of job insecurity and marginalisation, and of changing political and economic constraints imposed by Israel, for people with a low socio-economic status to own a farmland means to have a safer livelihood.

Local farmers appropriate the different globalised ideas about agriculture development and connect to them different meanings, while they mobilise the local and new

---

<sup>211</sup> Some farmers think that one of the solutions to farm all land in the valley is adopt a mechanised agriculture, by buying, for example, expensive tractors. In 2015, a tractor could cost about 15.000 Jordanian *dīnār*. The Agricultural Cooperative bought a tractor, but when its motor broke the Cooperative's head sold it, despite many farmers disagreed. According to some farmers, also the Village Council bought a tractor, which it is not used (and maybe it has been sold without they know it) because of the lack of money to pay the necessary diesel and someone who drives it, given that not all people are able to do it.

farming techniques as multiple contextual strategies to “farm the resistance” against land expropriation and for survival. In daily practices, the intensive farming techniques and the local ones are juxtaposed and articulated, leading to the creation of a sort of “hybrid agriculture”, negotiated practices produced by the interactions between global and local processes.

The agricultural activities in the village highlight the need to go beyond the reified representation of local farming practices as “traditional”. This is a representation that Israel, the PNA, some development agencies and local Palestinians themselves convey to claim different particular interests.

The outcome of the encounter between local actors, knowledge and practices and global actors, techniques and expertise is not the replacement of “traditional” farming practices with a “modern” agriculture. Local social actors, including NGOs’ employees, manipulate the global agenda, acting as “brokers of meanings” (Islah 2007). They appropriate, mediate, reinterpret and articulate the new farming techniques and knowledge, as well as the hegemonic Western development discourses and knowledge legitimising them. They also carry out a re-conceptualization of local farming techniques and ideas in relation to the radical social and economic changes. If it does not happen at the discursive level, this process occurs at the level of the embodied farming practices.

The case study of Wādī Fūkīn highlights that rural development is not only technical and economic matters. It concerns political choices and views that affect the collective fate of the community in the village. Rural development is a political arena (Olivier de Sardan 1995) characterised by the power dialectics between discursive and practical strategies and interests of multiple local, national, colonial and global, heterogeneous interest groups. It is an intercultural battlefield between epistemic communities (Long and Long 1992) that are bearers of particular conceptions of agriculture, of water and “nature”. These convey different and conflicting ideas about social and political reality, social identity, political action and resistance.

The experience of the development techno-politics and their interpretation are shaped by historical memories, ideas and expectations deeply-rooted over time, leading to the production of different meanings and consequences. Rural development is a situated practice, whose meaning and scope depend on the local context in which it is put in practice.

### 3. The Global Flow of Development Models and (Re)Sources of Power

On 4th August 2015, I could negotiate the possibility to attend a meeting organised by *al-ḡam‘iyya al-ta‘āwniyya az-zirā‘iyya* (the Agricultural Cooperative), locally called also *ḡam‘iyyat al-muzāri‘īn* (the farmers’ association). This local association’s meetings are usually attended only by adult men representing their families because of their authority. The only two women enrolled in the cooperative (one by virtue of her kinship with the head of the cooperative) were not present. The meeting was focused on the election of the members of the cooperative’s administrative board and its head, which should be carried out every two years, according to the PNA’s laws<sup>212</sup>.

The whole course of the meeting has been characterised by harsh discussions and quarrels, which hindered the agreement about the choice of the new administrators. Many farmers complained in an excited way over the unfair allocation of the resources provided to the cooperative by Palestinian and international NGOs, such as rubber pipes for drip irrigation, olive trees to be planted in lands without the access to spring water and under Israeli confiscation, and the construction material to build concrete pools for irrigation water collection, low stonewalls to protect the fields from winter rainwater floods, and greenhouses<sup>213</sup>.

Replying to these accusations, the members of the administrative board complained most of farmers’ lack of participation to the projects’ implementation. For example, they said that some farmers left some trees dying because no one wanted to take care of them. Farmers were also accused to want everything for free, without paying the money contribution often asked to have access to the material provided by NGOs. Indeed, many development NGOs and agencies, like the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association called PARC, ask farmers to pay the 25% of the total cost paid by the organisation for the project, in order to make them feeling responsible and more interested in its successful implementation.

Defending his position, Ibrāhīm ‘Othmān Mūsā ‘Aṭiya, the Agricultural Cooperative’s head since 2010, claimed his merits in “bringing” projects targeting local farmers, bringing the Cooperative back to life. Indeed, according to many male adults, the Cooperative has been founded in 1975, but since the first Intifada in 1987 until the 2010, the Cooperative “was died”. In particular, during the first Intifada and the 2001 *Intifādat al-Aqṣā* (as the

---

<sup>212</sup> The Agricultural Cooperative is registered in the Palestinian *wizārat al-‘amal* (Work Ministry), which establishes that the administrative board of a civil association has to comprise seven members. One of the employees of this PNA’s institution attends and registers the elections.

<sup>213</sup> In 2015, the cost of a greenhouse occupying one dunam is about 10.000 euro.

second Intifada is called by Palestinians) the cooperative was not active, and its members did not meet and plan any project or programme. The hard struggles and difficulties made people thinking “only to survive”, as was said to me.

As an act of defiance, Ibrāhīm refused to propose his candidature, challenging the farmers to find another person with the ability and will to plan and implement projects in the village, making the Cooperative works. Later, he complained to me the individualism of farmers, who think only about their own interests and do not collaborate between each other. Because of this, as he stated in a paternalist way, they did not achieve the minimum number of voters (50% + 1)<sup>214</sup> required by the PNA’s legislation<sup>215</sup>, as it happens since many years. Moreover, the number of the candidates for the administrative roles was not enough, and no one proposed himself for the head position. The few candidates for the administrative roles belonged to the head’s extended family, named ‘Aṭiya. They were supporting their relative while others protested claiming that also the other families would had to be represented in the cooperative<sup>216</sup>.

Finally, even some farmers who criticised his way to administrate the cooperative invited him to keep his position, acknowledging his power position, connected to his ability to raise funds and resources. Their protests were a sort of performance to claim the moral obligations of a dominating person to be generous and fair with subordinated people, while recognising and strengthening his power. As a consequence, in 2017 Ibrāhīm was still fulfilling the role of head, even if contested.

Ibrāhīm is not a farmer, even if he achieved farming knowledge farming part of his grandfather’s land for many years. He works as Bethlehem Office Coordinator of the *Ġama‘iyyat at-tanmiyya az-zirā‘iyya* (Palestinian Agricultural Development Association), called PARC (Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee), and as director of the *Ġama‘iyyat muzāra‘ī beit-leḥem* (Bethlehem Farmers’ Society - BFS). The BFS is included in the

---

<sup>214</sup> Only 24 on the 74 members of the Agricultural Cooperative participated to this meeting.

<sup>215</sup> The same problem hindered the work and the election of a new administrative board of the *nādī al-wādi al-aḥḍar* (the Club of the Green Valley), a local association locally called also *nādī aš-šabāb* (Youth’s club). Founded in 1974, this is the first grassroots association established in Wādī Fūkīn, and it addresses sport, culture and social issues. It has about 360 members, enrolled until now, but today it has not a very active role in local society. Its headquarters hosts a billiard and ping-pong table, and its only activity consists in the organisation of a soccer team. However, because of the long-time absence of most of youth, who work in Israel, and the lack of a soccer field and of money to move to other places, also this activity is difficultly carried out.

<sup>216</sup> Also for the Palestinian Work Ministry’s rules, the administrative board cannot comprise first degree relatives.



coalition of rural development associations working with PARC. PARC is a national non-profits organisation fostering the spread of organic agriculture in the Occupied Palestinian territories. This NGO has established a network of relationships with many donors and international agencies and NGOs.

Ibrāhīm's office in these organisations allows him to plan many rural development projects targeting the local Agricultural Cooperative - considered by development actors as the local institution representing local farmers as an interest group. Thanks to the access to the NGOs' resources, he achieved the position of head in the local Agricultural Cooperative.

According to Ibrāhīm's discourses, the cooperative proposes projects supporting the collective cause of land reclamation and rehabilitation, such as the planting of trees, the construction of new wells and roads leading to the fields (especially in the hills slopes, where land are under expropriation) and the spread of an autonomous organic agriculture and of drip irrigation and pools to save water. Ibrāhīm explained how cooperative's allocation system of the resources provided in the framework of rural development projects. According to him, it follows the rational and fair rules and procedures implemented by many NGOs and the Village Council. In order to identify the most needy farmers, the inhabitants are invited to fill an application asking the daily time they consecrate to farming, the eventual other job they have, their income and number of sons, and other personal information.

However, many farmers complained the lack of transparency of Ibrāhīm's management of the NGOs' funding, insinuating that he takes decisions alone and « he is putting it in his own pockets ». Moreover, according to them, people sharing kinship or other personal ties with him have a privileged access to the resources for the projects.

In Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories (Hanafi and Tabar 2005), local associations and NGOs are managed as private enterprises by their directors.

Thanks to their control of the access to services and resources, people who hold an important position in local associations, NGOs, but also in the PNA's institutions such as the Village Council, exert control over those depending on them for the access to resources. In this way, they achieve a high status in local power structures and they pursue their own political interests.

As highlighted also by Van Aken (2003) studying in the Jordan Valley, the technopolitical allocation system of the state and local institutions, international agencies (like the

UNRWA<sup>217</sup>) and Palestinian and international NGOs is manipulated by local actors who hold an important position within them, who allow some people's privileged access to public resources and services.

NGO's directors and public officers mediate the access to rights and public resources and services allocated by the institutions through vertical power relations (Hoodfar 1998), by distributing them according to personal relationships such as kinship, patronage relationships and political and economic alliances, which are increasingly affected by socio-economic segmentation. These personal relationships are viewed through the idiom of the tribal and family patterns of solidarity and are called *wāṣṭa* (mediation) relations, since people providing resources act as brokers of the vertical relations with the institutions regulating the distribution of resources. Mediation is a main tribal political pattern of power distribution and dynamics<sup>218</sup> and rules the functioning of NGOs and other institutions. Through tribal practices and personal relationships Palestinians adapt to the new bureaucracies and manipulate them from within, attempting to achieve a space for autonomy and decentralising the institutions' control over resources.

The *wāṣṭa* relation is negotiated during ritualised visits that the family needing the service does to the household of the person with this power, whose family carries out the practices of hospitality (like the offering of coffee..). The visit is the main institutionalised form of public meeting<sup>219</sup>. Despite its egalitarian language, connected to the patterns of family solidarity, people providing services exert a discretionary power on which new hierarchies and social inequalities are built. Kinship model is a language used to describe and organise economic and political relationships. It is a metaphor of social relationships which hides the arbitrary character of the political order, "naturalising" it.

The access to a preferential relationship with the person who has the power to do *wāṣṭa* usually is provided by a male relative or a friend, thanks to his network of solidarity relationships, which is affected by his socio-economic class. Families asking the access to a resource or service have to be able to exchange it with material goods or services, when

---

<sup>217</sup> As highlighted in my previous study about the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša (De Donato 2013a), also this institution's allocation system of resources is mediated by *wāṣṭa* (mediation) relationships. The inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, which since 1956 to 1972 lived in this refugee camp, still have the UNRWA's registration card identifying refugees and, thus, they have the access to the UNRWA's resources and services.

<sup>218</sup> This tribal logic is explained in detail in the fourth chapter.

<sup>219</sup> I address this issue in the paragraph 5 of this chapter.

requested by the person who provided it through *wāṣṭa* relationships. A person has access to *wāṣṭa* relations by virtue of solidarity relationships such as kinship ties, alliances, friendship. However, the socio-economic status is a factor increasingly important in defining the possibility to have access to resources.

Development agencies and NGOs funding projects in Wādī Fūkīn refer to the Agricultural Cooperative as a legitimate, democratic, local organisation representing an important segment of the local civil society, such as the farmers' interest group.

However, they do not carry out an actual control of the cooperative's decision-making and allocation processes. They need to find a local representative able to implement the financed short-term projects, without engaging in expensive and long-time studies of the local society, which would bring insights about local power dynamics and processes of marginalisation.

Actually, not all farmers enrolled in the cooperative are involved in the decision-making processes, independently of the family, socio-economic class and political party to which they belong. Public meetings are organised only in particular occasions, such as the election of the new administration or the need to negotiate delicate issues entailed by the implementation of a project (like the division of a land targeted by a project between the extended families owning it). Differently, most of the decisions are taken by Ibrāhīm, sometimes (but not always) in collusion with the interest group (Olivier de Sardan 1995) comprising the other six members of the administrative board, or with his closest relatives (like his brother) and other persons sharing interests with him.

As Ibrāhīm said to me, « here, all of us we know each other. If we need to speak about something, we call each other ». However, many farmers often are not asked to participate to, and even ignore the few Cooperative's meetings organised by Ibrāhīm, or are not informed of the organisation and implementation of some projects. In 2015, most of people did not know that international volunteers would have arrived in the village to assist families harvesting olives, even those owning olive trees in dangerous lands. Umm Ferās (the mother of Ferās), a widow whose olive trees are under the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement, protested because she is never assisted even if settlers often throw stones to her while she is harvesting her olives.

In August 2017, many farmers have been excluded also when in the Italian NGO called Overseas asked a meeting with local farmers to listen their voices about their needs and priorities, in order to decide how to support the community, and in particular farmers, against land expropriation by Israel. On the contrary, Ibrāhīm sometimes involves local inhabitants who do not farm and belong to the middle class. These people have also the right to vote for

the election of the cooperative's administrative board, in the name of their (often died) father's enrolment in the Cooperative<sup>220</sup>.

The local organisations are a new source of political and economic power for few people, entailing the marginalisation and exclusion of others, connected to local tribal patterns of belonging and to the socio-economic segmentation. Instead of contributing to the democratisation of the local Palestinian society or to its fight for independence, most of the rural development models fostered in the village contribute to the integration of local social groups (farmers or woman) in a new network of dependence relationships. Marginalised people are increasingly disempowered and further marginalised, as highlighted by the case of women analysed in the paragraph 5 of this chapter.

Many adult men assert that since Ibrāhīm's election as head, the Agricultural Cooperative changed radically. The cooperative is one of the first grassroots association created in Wādī Fūkīn. Before the PNA's creation, it consisted in an independent, informal and collective network of solidarity relationships cutting across the local tribal power structures, which anyway affected, and still affects, the negotiations and relationships between its members.

Today the Agricultural Cooperative depends on the development agencies' funding and operates appropriating their models and bureaucratic language. Instead of promoting the community's cohesiveness and collective mobilisation, and the inclusion of marginalised local inhabitants through long-time programs, today the Cooperative's actions are organised in the form of short-time projects aimed at increasing their own power fostering the diffusion of individual techniques of self-assistance – according to the neo-liberal paradigm and individualistic ideologies dominating the development system.

One of the farmers who worked in the administration of the Agricultural Cooperative since 1982, views these changes as the outcome of the intergenerational competition for the control over local resources and people. According to him, previously the cooperative was controlled by the elderly in the village, according to the local, tribal power structures. Differently, Ibrāhīm is viewed as representing the new generations of villagers, who achieved the control of the Cooperative and of other institutions and local resources, thanks to the access to formal education, “modern” expertises and bureaucratic knowledge. Most of people belonging to the oldest generations are excluded by the sharing of these new sources of power.

---

<sup>220</sup> The inscription fee is 80 Jordanian *dīnār* (the Jordanian currency).

The man complained that when he was still enrolled in the cooperative, he asked many times Ibrāhīm to be involved in the projects' planning. However, the head of the Cooperative always answered that he could see the projects alone in the cooperative's computer, despite he knew that this aged farmer was not able to use it.

Moreover, the farmer complained the new generations' different "political mentality". Since the PNA's creation, they "brought in the Cooperative" – as well as in all organisations – an increased differentiations between villagers connected to the political party to which they belong.

As he said me, previously he thought that Ibrāhīm was a leader bringing the « *rabī' aḡ-ḡama'iyya* » (the spring of the cooperative), meaning a new revolutionary collective mobilisation of local farmers. Later he understood that Ibrāhīm only wanted to increase his personal power. For these reasons, finally Abū Dīa' left the Cooperative.

The case of the Agricultural Cooperative in Wādī Fūkīn mirrors the changes that Palestinians organisations and their social action underwent since the 1990s and the connected reconfiguration of social hierarchies in the Palestinian Territories.

Hanafī and Tabar (2003; 2005) have analysed the functioning and role of international and Palestinian NGOs in the Occupied Palestinian territories. According to the authors, before the 1990s the majority of local Palestinian organisations were mass organisations with a popular character, characterised by informal organisational structures, flexible behaviour patterns, inclusive access structures and public programs. They mirrored the attempt to involve and organise the mass of the social base by channelling it into a single national movement.

This network of mass organisations was born after the Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, in order to meet the growing need to build alternative social options to those offered by the military apparatus of the occupation forces, through self-help practices and new forms of national resistance. These organisations were added to voluntary charitable societies, the oldest form of Palestinian NGO. Especially with the advent of the first Intifada in 1987, the sources of funding of these grassroots organisations were differentiated, obtained by the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation)<sup>221</sup>, and some Arab and Western countries. However, the Gulf War (August 2, 1990 - February 28, 1991) changed the relationship

---

<sup>221</sup> The Palestine Liberation Organisation (*Munazzamat al-tahrīr al-filasṭīniyya*) is a Palestinian political and paramilitary organisation founded in Jerusalem in May 1964, according to the Arab League's decision. Since 1974, this organisation was considered by the Arab League as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

between Palestine and the Arab countries, which stopped providing funding, leaving the establishment of the American hegemony in the region.

Since the 1990s, Western agencies became the main donors and began to impose new conditions for their financial support, such as the Palestinians organisations' professionalization. Donors fostered local organisations' adoption of the organisational and operational criteria of the international development system.

For development actors professionalisation means the de-politicisation of the organisations' internal practices and outward action models, conveying the dichotomous view of the relationship between professional and activist organisations. A new concept of politics is imposed, together with a de-politicised concept of development, contrary to local views. This process entails the formal detachment of the organisations from the Palestinian political parties. However, as shown by the case of Wādī Fūkīn, this detachment is only apparent.

The services to support marginalised groups have been replaced by projects aimed at increasing their power in the local society, thanks to the spread of individual techniques of self-assistance. This view is conveyed by the dominant neo-liberal paradigm and individualistic ideology.

Palestinian organisations' adoption of more complicated and bureaucratised administrative and financial structures, which not all people are able to manage, has favoured the emergence of a new "globalized elite" (Hanafi and Tabar 2005: 247) characterized by the sharing of development global agendas, paradigm, language and expertise and legitimised by a favoured access to the relationships with Western development actors.

Donors affect local organizations and social action through regulative relations that encourage the normalisation of established patterns of behaviour (at the expense of others) as organisational norms – such as that of the instrumental rationality applied to the social context (Hulme and Edwards 1997). However, the relationship between them are not deterministic, as it would be in what Peter Haas (1992) called "epistemic communities".

They are rather part of a "virtual community" (Islah 2007). Indeed, the directors of local organisations share with donors the language, culture and forms of technical knowledge characterising the development system. However, their meanings are creatively redefined during the local implementation of the global agenda. This phenomenon can be explained by the "institutional isomorphism" theory (Hanafi and Tabar 2005: 200), which asserts that the development industry leads to the replication of the same institutional forms (kind of administration, action in the form of the project, language), but not to the identity of their

meaning. The global development agenda undergoes a process of re-appropriation by local actors, included those working in NGOs. This process consists in the decoding and recoding of hegemonic development discourses and symbols, according to personal experiences and interests.

In Palestine, the creative overlapping of the development paradigm with the local power system, the different interests of donors and NGOs' directors agree in the institutional form through which to obtain them. Development agencies' interventions have led to the creation of a new political alliance and of new hierarchies in the Palestinian society.

In the village the control and management of local associations (included the PNA's local institution of the Village Council) as private enterprises arouses local inhabitants' mistrust and disenchantment towards development actors' roles, projects and ideals. This affects their participation to the activities organised by local associations, which depends on the personal relationships they have with their heads and on their personal interest.

Among the many problems hindering the planning of some projects, a main issue consists in the frequent farmers' refusal to give their lands to implement them, especially the croplands in the valley, given this resource's scarcity. Since many years, *al-mağlis al-qarawī* (the Village Council) attempts to plan the building of channels and a large well (or cisterns) in which to convey and collect winter rainwater, which every year flows from the northern hills of the village and floods the fields in the valley<sup>222</sup>. One of the obstacles is the availability of lands in which to build the channels, in particular in the upper part of the valley, where land is more fragmented. Differently, some lands in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley, whose use is banned by the Israeli army, have been donated by the 'Aṭiya and Sukkar extended families in order to build the new Village Council's headquarters, the soccer field and the new playground.

As in the whole Palestinian Territories, also in the village the associations' past ability to organise cohesive collective actions facing daily problems and the Israeli colonisation is compromised, disempowering the local community and leading to its de-mobilisation (Hanafi and Tabar 2005; 2003). According to Islah Jad (2007), in the Palestinian territories development NGOs have led to important changes in power relations. The people's power has turned to the power over people, in the new local elites' hands.

---

<sup>222</sup> In 2010 the Village Council tried to organise this project with the UNRWA, in 2011 with ARIJ, while in 2015 with ANERA.

The interests of the new elites sometimes collude and sometimes conflict with those of the local political elite ruling the PNA, as highlighted by the dynamics of competition between the head of the PNA's local institution of the Village Council and the heads of the Agricultural Cooperative and other local organisation. This competition is affected also by tribal patterns of differentiations.

When Ibrāhīm answered to my questions about the activities organised by the Agricultural Cooperative, sometimes it was difficult to discern between his role of head of the Cooperative and his job in the Palestinian organisations PARC and BFS. Similarly, the activities and scope of the Agricultural Cooperative were often confused with those of the *Ĝama'iyyat tanmiyyat aš-šabāb* (Youth Development Association - YDA) of Wādī Fūkīn, whose head is Ibrāhīm's younger brother, named Qays 'Othmān Mūsā 'Aṭiya.

The Youth Development Association is a Palestinian non-governmental youth organisation established in 2003 and included in the coalition of rural development associations working with PARC, whose Bethlehem Office's Coordinator, as I said, is Ibrāhīm.

The two 'Aṭiya brothers control these two local associations collaborating together and sharing their different knowledge, resources and background.

Ibrāhīm has experience in farming and in the field of development projects, with many potential contacts with Palestinian organisations and international NGOs, and the control of many PARC's projects in the area of Bethlehem. Qays is a teacher in the UNRWA's school in the refugee camp of Ad-Dehīša and knows the English language necessary to establish long-time relationships with development actors.

Ibrāhīm has also the indirect control of the local *Ĝama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-ḥākūra* (Vegetable gardens' Development Cooperative). This women's cooperative, locally called as *an-nādī an-nasawī* (the women's club), is included in the network created by the Palestinian NGO named *Ĝama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-mar'a ar-rīfiyya beit-leḥem* (Rural Women's Development Society – RWDS – of Bethlehem). Also this NGO is part of the coalition of associations working with PARC. Therefore, also many donors' funds for the local women's cooperative are raised by Ibrāhīm, whose wife is included in the administrative board of the cooperative.

By means of the control of these local associations, the two 'Aṭiya brothers seek to increase their political and economic status, becoming part of the elite controlling most of donors' resources in the Palestinian Territories.

The Agricultural Cooperative, together with the Youth Development Association, sometimes collaborates, but more frequently competes with the Village Council for donors' funding. Sometimes the point of contention was the merit for projects implemented in the



village, such as the building of the first small playground in the valley, called *al-muntazah* (the park).

Indeed, the Village Council, founded in 1995, is directly responsible of the public administration of Wādī Fūkīn, providing local inhabitants with services such as water and electricity systems, solid waste collection, road construction and maintenance, and street cleaning<sup>223</sup>. It has also the responsibility of organising social development services, projects<sup>224</sup> and case studies for the village. The Village Council's fulfilment of these tasks depends on donors' funding, as all the PNA's institutions do.

Since 2011 the head of the Village Council is the young man Aḥmed Sukkar. On 30th May 2017 he has been chosen for his second mandate. This office is not paid by the PNA, since it is considered as a voluntary work. Aḥmed works also as employee in the Joint Service Council for Solid Waste Management in the Bethlehem Governorate<sup>225</sup>, seeking to become part of the Palestinian political elite ruling the PNA's institutions. While this job allowed him to achieve a high position in local power structures, becoming the head of the Village Council, this local office consists in another source of personal economic and political power, thanks to the control over the economic and material resources allocated by other PNA's institutions and NGOs, and over their local distribution through *wāṣṭa* patronage relationships.

The competitive relationship between the Village Council and the Agricultural Cooperative is radicalised by the power dynamics between their heads as members of the Sukkar and 'Aṭīya families, which are both part of the Manāṣra tribal group. The competition

---

<sup>223</sup> Sources of information: the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ 2010) and interviews to the head of the Village Council carried out in 2015.

<sup>224</sup> For example, in 2015 the Village Council implemented a project supported by the AACD (Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, Junta de Andalusia) and the UAWC (Union of Agriculture Work Committees). The project consisted in the distribution to local farmers of the material to raise bees and to build low stonewalls around their plot (in order to protect them from the winter rainwater floods), and in the offering of courses to raise bees and farm within the greenhouse. To allocate these resources, Aḥmed Sukkar said to have done a survey, passing from every house in the village. The survey asked information such as the number of the household's members, the time consecrated to farming, the experience in farming, the other eventual job (temporary in Israel, or with a contract in the PNA's institutions) and the family's income (sources of information: interview with the head of the Village Council, 2015).

However, some inhabitants said to have not participated to the survey, while others even did not know nothing about this project.

<sup>225</sup> In this PNA's institution, he is responsible of the public relations and media.

between these two extended families, which is commonly known by all generations in the village, concerns also the control over local public organisations and institutions.

Once again a tribal political pattern rules the functioning of local organisations and state institutions and the dynamics between them.

Moreover, the rivalry between these two local institutions is further exacerbated by their head's loyalty to different political parties.

Some adult villagers claim that while the Agricultural Cooperative is deeply-rooted and legitimised locally, and self-managed (even if not in a democratic way), the Village Council's source of legitimacy is the PNA, and in particular the ruling Fatah political party, which controls it. According to them, the head of the village council has to belong to this party, if villagers do not want to be further marginalised by the PNA<sup>226</sup>.

Individuals and local interest groups compete for the development agencies' flow of (re)sources of power by mobilising tribal patterns of belonging such as the extended family, but also the loyalty to the "modern" political parties<sup>227</sup>.

#### **4 The Multiple Borders of Herders' Water Geographies**

According to local inhabitants' collective memories, before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, local peasants' livelihood was grounded on both agricultural and herding activities entailing a mobile style of life. Every extended family in the village had its animals<sup>228</sup>, such as sheep, goats and cows, poultry and sometimes few camels.

The livelihood of local villagers has always been characterised by the central role of agriculture, and thus, by a mainly sedentary way of life. However, before the Israeli occupation, the local subsistence economy was grounded on the complementary integration of agricultural and pastoral production. As many other rural production systems in Middle East, a certain degree of mobility was a necessary condition for securing the access to the multiple resources of the specific local semi-arid environment, adapting to their variable availability.

---

<sup>226</sup> In Chapter IV I analyse the functioning and role of the Village Council and the dynamics of competition for this new authority role of head of the council.

<sup>227</sup> I analyse in detail the relationships between the tribal political organisation and the "modern" state in the fourth chapter.

<sup>228</sup> Ahmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council, told me that in 2000 in the village there were about 1.000 sheep, while in 2015 only about 200 sheep.

Sedentary and nomadic way of life are two models of adaptation to the environment, which have to be considered as opposite poles of a continuum of realities characterised by different degrees of stability and mobility (Salzman 1980). The Middle East and Nord Africa societies are historically characterised by the never definitive alternation of these different strategies, affected by changing ecological, political and economic conditions (Fabietti 1984).

Families moved with their flocks in an “area of subsistence” (Marx 1977) including two different ecosystems, in order to guarantee to them the access to pastures and water, according to annual transhumance cycles. This area of subsistence extended beyond the village's administrative borders decided by the British administration, which defined the village as an administrative unit to facilitate tax collection and control over its inhabitants. During rainy seasons (from October-November to March-April), some of the male members of each extended family usually brought their family's flock from Wādī Fūkīn, with a semiarid climate, to the area of Jericho, in the Jordan valley, characterised by an arid climate with a higher winter average temperature<sup>229</sup>. Their flocks grazed in pastures controlled by other tribal groups, some of which were Bedouin (like those living in the Ta‘āmra area, near Jericho).

In dry seasons (from April-May to September-October), when the average temperature in the village is lower than that in the Jericho area<sup>230</sup>, local herders brought their flocks to the pastures in the western hills of the village, in the area called Sanasīn.

As shown in the map of Wādī Fūkīn dating back to the 1936 (map 2), before the creation of Israel the Sanasīn area was included within the village's administrative borders. This hill area was used by villagers for grazing and rain-fed farming, given the lack of springs. Land was cultivated with fruit and olive trees. *Qamḥ* (wheat) and *ša'īr* (barley) were planted between October and December, to be harvested between June and July, and were used to produce flour and forage. A part of this land was fallow.

Animals were raised in caves scattered in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley.

The pastures in these hill lands were not used only by the families owning them. They were shared by all families and tribal groups in the village and even by herders living in the territory traversed during the transhumance, like people coming from the Palestinian villages of Nahḥālīn, Ḥūsān, Beit Faḡḡār, as well as Bedouins from the Ta‘āmra area. Herders usually

---

<sup>229</sup> While in the area of Wādī Fūkīn, in January (the coldest month) the average temperature is 10-12°C, in the area of Jericho is 16-18°C.

<sup>230</sup> In August, the hottest month, in Wādī Fūkīn the average temperature is 26-28°C, while in the Jericho area is 30-32°C.

watered their animals at the waterholes in the hills and at the numerous springs spread in the village's valley.

However, during drought years characterised by water and pasture shortage, the families owning the village's lands had the priority right of access to them and to water.

According to some elders' memories, families' access to resources controlled by others both within the village and in the transhumance area was secured by a network of economic and political relationships between tribal groups and families, often legitimised by marital relationships between their members.

As I explained in the first chapter, before the Israeli occupation, the village's borders were permeable and movable, traversed by tribal groups' movements and sharing of multiple regional and seasonal resources such as water and pastures. People's movements and sharing of resources shaped social geographies (Rothenberg 1998) wider than the village's administrative unit, creating a "social contiguity" of the physical environment. Space was imagined and organised according to changing interdependent social relationships and ecological factors, such as the yearly and seasonal changes of water and pasture availability and connected negotiations, alliances and conflicts for the access to them.

The territorial contiguity characterising the historical transhumance area of local herders has been fragmented by the Israeli architectural, juridical and administrative policies, which redefine continually the territorial borders of Wādī Fūkīn and make them more impermeable. The new borders of the village have entailed the restriction of villagers' movements and the loss of the access to most of pastures and water resources.

Herders' movements are hindered in all directions. The north-eastern Beitar Illit settlement separates the village from the surrounding territory like a wall, hindering herders' movements towards the Palestinian villages of Naḥḥālīn and Ḥūsān (and then towards the Jericho area). The development of this Israeli urban settlement « has eaten many grazing lands in that area », as was told me. The Israeli border and the town of Tzur Hadassah, instead, separate the lands in the village from the western hills in the area called Sanasīn. Following the village's evacuation by the Israeli army in 1956, this area has been included within the Israeli State (map 3).

Explaining to me this situation, Ğamīla ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ‘Aṭiya, an about eighty years old woman, said that today: « *mafiš rabī‘ lil-ḡanam* » (there is not spring<sup>231</sup> for sheep and goats), referring to the lack of pastures and water for animals.

Moreover, today families cannot leave their animals in the caves in the hills encircling the valley, as peasants did in the past, when « they lived in the caves with their animals », as was said to me. Here, sheep and mules might be seized by Israeli soldiers, given the Israeli military ban of access to these lands. As it happened many times, animals might also be stolen by Palestinians living in neighbouring villages or by those living in Israel, who the Palestinian Authority’ institutions cannot reach and indict<sup>232</sup>.

These processes have entailed the commoditisation of herding activities and their unsustainable and dangerous character, leading to the marginalisation of their economic role and to their gradual disappearing. Today, in the village mobile herding practices are almost abandoned and villagers are completely sedentarised. This has increased the commoditisation of agriculture, due to the lack of manure, previously produced locally and today bought in the market, together with chemical fertilisers.

Most of families in the village seek to achieve some spaces of autonomy, by breeding at least few sheep (5-8) that provide milk and cheese for home consumption, can be fed with some of the scant waste agricultural products and can be raised in little cattle sheds outside home. Some families have also some poultry and few ones have a mule.

Differently, the household of Ğamīla, her husband and her daughter Fahīma Ḥasan, together with that of her son Ishāq Ḥasan, are two of the few ones in the village that, besides agriculture, still carry out mobile herding activities as much as possible. They belong to the large extended family named ‘Aṭiya, a subtribe of the Manāšra tribal group.

Fahīma is an adult woman farming the plots of land and raising the about 40 *ḡarūf* (sheep) and *ḡidī* (goats) of her about ninety years old father, whose name is Ḥasan Moḥammed, called Abū Ishāq (Ishāq's father). In 2015 she was raising about 50 animals, while her eldest brother Ishāq, who has an independent household, owned about 80 sheep and goats. They had also some poultry and a mule, besides some dogs and cats.

---

<sup>231</sup> With “spring” I mean the spring season.

<sup>232</sup> I analyse these dynamics and their implication concerning social differentiations in the Palestinian society in the fifth chapter.

Abū Ishāq<sup>233</sup> was the only person who lived in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley, despite the Israeli military ban of access to them. He lived in hard conditions in a little metal shack in front of two natural caves in which he kept his and his son's flocks. Since 2015 he stopped to bring his flock to graze by himself, because of serious problems of mobility caused by a fall from the mule. He used to go rarely to the built-up area, since he refused to leave his land and animals, opposing the Israeli colonisation policies.



*Figure 63: the house of Abū Ishāq, in the slopes of the hills encircling the valley  
(De Donato, 2017)*



*Figure 64: two caves in the slopes of the hills, used to keep sheep (De Donato, 2017)*

---

<sup>233</sup> This strong man died in 2018.

Fahīma and her brother sometimes bring their flocks to graze in few uncultivated plots of land in the valley, especially in its southern part, where land is less fragmented and cultivated and animals have more space to move between the farmed fields. Their flocks graze also in the slopes of the western hills encircling the village, despite the Israeli army's ban.

Given the insufficiency of these lands, the two herders often go also to the west direction, crossing illegally the Israel State's border, to go to the western hill area called Sanasīn, which can be reached in one hour's walking. So doing, they risk of being beaten, shot and imprisoned by Israeli soldiers, who might also seize their animals. To bring flocks in the few grazing lands is an activity increasingly difficult and dangerous.

Because of pastures shortage, Fahīma and her brother have to feed their flocks also with animal feed bought in the market, besides the waste agricultural products they produce, which are not enough.

Given the present spring water and pastures shortage, the few herders still coming from the village of Naḥḥālīn despite the many difficulties are not welcomed by local villagers as in the past. The place of residence - and the sharing of the same conditions of water and land availability and territory administration - has an increasingly important role in defining local processes of differentiation and exclusion<sup>234</sup>. The past wide social geographies shaped by spring water and land sharing for herding activities are increasingly narrowed.

The fate of herding activities in the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn brings insights into the strategies of territory planning carried out by Israel both within its borders and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in order to increase its control over local populations and resources, while creating and extending the Israeli nation-state<sup>235</sup>.

As in the case of Wādī Fūkīn, in the Negev (Israel) the Israeli state implements juridical, architectural, water and economic policies aimed at the sedentarisation and control of Bedouin groups. Also there, the Israeli state expropriates Bedouins' lands and allocates them to the development of Jewish urban and rural settlements and commercial interest groups, or to the army (Marx and Meir 2005).

As I shown in the first chapter, the re-invention of the territory through territory and water planning and the redefinition of territorial borders, as well as the control of people's mobility

---

<sup>234</sup> I address in detail this issue in the Chapter V.

<sup>235</sup> I analysed in detailed the Israeli territory planning affecting the village and its local social implications in the first chapter.

and access to resources, such as water and land, have a key strategic role in the establishment of the Israeli national sovereignty. While herders' (and not only) movements in the territory are hindered by Israel's creation of new territorial, administrative and symbolic borders, large-scale displacements of the local populations are forced by the Israeli army.

Today, in the common framework of the increasing integration in the labour market and commoditisation of pastoral and agricultural production, both the rural communities in the West Bank and the Bedouin pastoral groups in the Negev (Israel) are engaged in similar multi-resources economies (Salzman 1980), in which pastoral production and farming have a marginalised economic role. Their economic and socio-cultural configurations have undergone deep changes, connected to their increasing sedentarisation.

By hindering the material, social and cultural reproduction of pastoral and peasants' societies, Israel seeks to completely sedentarise Palestinians herders and Bedouin pastoral groups, to detribalise and coerce them to move to urban areas and to integrate them in the lower rungs of the Israeli national economy. This allows Israel to expropriate their land and to increase their segregated interdependence on the Israeli market, services and resources, thus dominating them as subordinated, individualised colonial subjects.

Israel multiplies and intensifies strategies that have a long history in the region. In the Middle-East, the attempts to control and marginalise mobile herding activities and pastoral societies began after the Ottoman Empire's downfall and the partition of its territory into different mandates. By means of the adoption of the political technologies (Bocco and Tell 1995:26) such as territorial borders and the spread of the private property, the new states, created according to the European model, strengthened direct means of control of the territory and populations<sup>236</sup>, establishing centralised political structures. The main aim was to detribalise local societies and sedentarise (Bocco 1993) and "civilise" nomadic pastoral groups, supposed as backward.

Following the 20<sup>th</sup> century processes of decolonisation, the new nation-states have adopted the same approach and strategies, leading to even deeper socio-economic changes in rural and urban productive realities and, in particular, in that of nomadic pastoral groups. These have undergone forced processes of displacement and sedentarisation (Fabietti 1984).

The strengthening of state's control and the growth of the population intensified pastoral groups' adoption of agriculture or agro-pastoralism as livelihood, the urban development and migration and the related loss of pastures. In the framework of the global economic

---

<sup>236</sup> In the first chapter I showed the strategies adopted by the British Mandate in Palestine.



integration, in the Palestinian Territories and in the whole Middle East these dynamics are connected to the pastoralists' integration in the labour market and to the commoditisation of water and of pastoral livestock economy (Fratkin and Meir 2005).

Once again, central governments' attempts to settle nomadic pastoral groups was aimed at their detribalisation and nationalisation, at their integration in the "modern" national economies and productive systems, converting them to more governable and productive urban citizens or farmers (Chatty 2006). Indeed, pastoral societies and mobile productive systems are viewed as challenging the construction of a modern state and the connected Western "sedentary metaphysics" (Malkki 1992:32; 1995), that is the idea of the natural character of a national identity rooted in a national territory. Pastoral groups' mobility threatens the state's control over the national territory and its population, as well as its claim of a legitimate juridical sovereignty in a demarcated territory (Fratkin and Meir 2005).

In the next paragraph, I address the implications of these power strategies and national ideologies concerning the relationships between the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn and their views of mobile herding activities.

#### **4.1 Sedentary Farmers or Mobile Herders? The Changed Meaning of Mobility**

Despite the deep changes in their socio-economic structures, in response to the political and economic marginalisation within the state's political structures (Israeli and Palestinian), the national economies and the global market system, the community of Wādī Fūkīn and the Bedouin pastoral groups in the Negev claim their identity of sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists respectively – both opposed to the urban citizens and style of life.

In the framework of Israeli land expropriation and national rhetoric, in the village the political value of mobile herding activities is perceived as subordinate to that of farming, also by the few people who practice both of them. Agriculture is necessary to keep the access to land facing the Israeli legal devices for land expropriation, while inscribing in the territory Palestinians' belonging to it. Differently, mobile herding activities are connected to ideas of space and land's sharing that are felt to be unsuitable for the present struggle for the access to land. Mobile productive systems are perceived as opposed to the need to grasp the local territory, in the uncertain context of the Israeli land expropriation. They are connected to the nomadic life of the Bedouin groups that since the past traversed Palestine and that the Israeli state represents as "backward people without land". The stigmatisation of the systems of production of nomadic people has been a tool to de-legitimise their access to land.

Villagers' ideas are affected by the dichotomous view of sedentary and nomadic life and productive activities, which is spread also by the PNA's national narratives aimed at the cultural construction of a modern nation-state according to the Western model. In these narratives peasant's farming culture is viewed as the symbol of Palestinians' historical ties with the territory (Swedenburg 1990). Mobile herding and nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral activities are marginalised also by the PNA's policies and modernist discourses. Once again they are connected to a pre-modern style of life and imagination of the territory that hinder the construction of a modern Palestinian nation-state. In the context of the PNA's lack of sovereignty over a continuous territory fragmented by Israel, for the PNA mobile herding activities and pastoral groups are a further threat to its control over the local population. Once, while I was speaking with Fahīma about mobile herding practices and I just mentioned Bedouin people, she asserted strongly to not be a Bedouin person, but a farmer. She stressed that her family, as well as the whole community in the village, has always practiced agriculture.

These dynamics show that the contraposition between nomadic pastoral identity and that of the sedentary farmer both in emic and ethic representations – and the different evaluation of pastoral and agricultural activities on which are grounded – is the outcome of specific historical processes and power dynamics, affected by changing ecological, political and economic conditions (Chatty 2006; Casciarri 1999).

Local ideas about herding activities are affected also by farming modernisation fostered by many NGOs. Agriculture and breeding of animals are increasingly viewed as separated economic sectors.

In Wādī Fūkīn, almost all projects promoted by Palestinian and international NGOs concern only agriculture, without addressing herding activities as they do, instead, in other areas of the Palestinian territories, where they foster livestock farming. In the framework of the rural development goal of maximising productive activities' efficiency and profit, mobile herding activities and, in particular, nomadic pastoralism are viewed as a “traditional”, backward and inefficient pattern of production.

When their flocks graze in the valley, Fahīma and Ishāq have to exercise a strict control of their movements, to prevent them entering the cultivated plots of land, damaging plants and vegetables, and the rubber pipes used for drip irrigation, or eating olive trees' leaves. They have to do it, to have not conflicts with other farmers, who often complain that sheep damage their fields. For this reason, as well as to prevent possible crops' thefts, some

people have fenced in their land with high meshes, also when is cultivated with trees, and in few cases, even if uncultivated.

The new intensive farming techniques such as hybrid seeds, synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, greenhouses and drip irrigation, further limit the movements of animals. This leads to an increased perception of agriculture and herding activities as two conflicting and incompatible productive systems, in competition for local resources.

As I stated previously, according to local norms, the use of a land without access to water has to be allowed for free, because of its lower economic value and profitability. During my fieldwork periods, few persons did it. Among them, only one, named Nāṣer Ia'qūb Ḥurūb, between 2013 and 2015 left a local farmer belonging to the 'Aṭiya family (the husband of one of Fahīma's sisters) uses his land for free to cultivate wheat, used as forage for his sheep, in the name of personal solidarity relationships.

Many people ask the payment of a rent, which local herders usually cannot afford. Others prefer to leave their fields uncultivated than to give them to competing families.

The few local herders sometimes are not allowed to leave their sheep graze even in the uncultivated lands of people belonging to their extended family or tribal group.

Some farmers protest if animals drink the spring water flowing in the few open air irrigation channels (most of which are underground) during their turn of access to water. Herders have also to prevent their animals drinking the spring water collected in the few private pools built at a greater depth and, thus, accessible to them.

The spring water to which Fahīma and her brother are entitled is barely enough to irrigate their small farmlands. Given the present weakness of the springs, they cannot rent spring water in order to water their flocks. This would be contested by other farmers needing spring water for agriculture, as happened when a villager left the temporary access to his pool and spring water share to a herder belonging to the same extended family.

Therefore, Fahīma and her brother have to bring to their flocks the *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water), as local inhabitants call the drinking domestic water paid by villagers according to the consumption of every dwelling. This entails an even higher commoditisation of their pastoral production.

The monetised access to spring water, affected by the global neoliberal water commoditisation, amplifies processes of social differentiation and leads to a harsher competition for the access to this resource between people practicing only agriculture and those engaging also in mobile herding practices. Many farmers view mobile herding activities

as an illegitimate way to use the scarce local resources. The few herders are increasingly discriminated.

Despite villagers claim to manage spring water respecting the *šarī'a* (the Islamic law), once again daily practices contradict it. The Islamic norm establishing domestic animals' priority right of access to water compared to irrigation purposes – and preceded only by human beings' need to drink (Faruqui et al. 2003) – has been reversed. Instead, since the 1980s human beings' need to drink is satisfied by the domestic water delivered to the village's dwellings through a water supply system. Spring water has become exclusively irrigation water, a sectorial resource entailing new forms of exclusion (of herders and domestic animals) from the access to it.

The local inhabitants' integration in the labour market and the masculinisation of farming activities (see the next paragraph) have led to the scarcity of another resource that in the past had a key role in the local productive system: the male and female relatives' cooperation, sharing of resources and solidarity that allowed peasants to carry out both agricultural and mobile herding activities, which require a great amount of labour force and, today, also of capital. The extended family's young and adult members cooperated to carry out the different subsistence activities. Some male youths and adults had the responsibility to graze flocks, while the others farmed the land in the village together with women, who contributed to take care about animals and produced milk and cheese.

Today, Fahīma is unmarried and lives in her parents' home with her mother and adult sister, who also did not marry and contributes to the household's income by working as cleaner in the village's school. Their other brothers and sisters are married and live in independent houses, some of them outside the village. Despite the relationships of solidarity and exchange with some of her relatives, Fahīma carries out her household's agro-pastoral activities almost alone. From four o'clock in the morning until the sunset, Fahīma brings her father's sheep and goats to graze, and gives to them barley seeds and domestic water. She milks the ewes and cleans the manure out of the caves where animals are raised, and, when necessary, she shears the sheep. She produces cheese and yogurt (locally called *laban*), and she also farms her father's lands. In the evening, at home, she assists her sister to prepare the dinner and fulfil the housework.

In 2017, her increasing difficulties to fulfil all these tasks, together with the family's need of money, led to her mother and father's decision to sell many sheep and goats.

Given this situation, some local inhabitants told me that that Fahīma and her brother's stubbornness to engage in pastoral activities was irrational, motivated only by their will to indulge their elderly father, Abū Ishāq. According to them, Abū Ishāq did not want to accept the changed life conditions and still « lived in the past ».

Complaining the hard life conditions of this man, many villagers asserted that he had to leave the cave and come back home, because of his old age and the uselessness of his practices of resistance.

However, his family's choice to continue to engage in herding activities consists in a rational attempt to conciliate the political claims for socio-ecological justice (Schlosberg 2013) and the need of supporting the family in conditions of marginalisation. Given that they cannot afford the expensive production costs of intensive farming activities or livestock farming, and that they have a low level of education, Fahīma and her brother are disadvantaged both in the Palestinian market and in the competition for the access to labour. Fahīma is also excluded from the Israeli building sector, which is a male domain. Therefore, they integrate agricultural and pastoral activities as complementary strategies of using the available resources and knowledge, seeking to make their agro-pastoral production self-sufficient as much as possible.

Fahīma and her brother cultivate only *budūr baladiyya* (local seeds) and they irrigate their fields only with the cheap local irrigation technique called *mašākib*, without using drip irrigation, which is more incompatible with animals' grazing.

They try to keep their flocks stable, selling a high number of animals only when they need a great amount of money, as happened, for example, when they wanted to buy land. Animals are not viewed as a commodity produced and sold according to considerations of capitalist profit maximisation. They are viewed as non-human actors contributing daily to the household's livelihood.

Their goats and sheep provide meat and milk used to produce cheese and yogurt for home consumption. The sale of their surplus contributes to the household's income, even if in a marginal way. The sheep's fleece is used to make mattresses for the house, avoiding to buying those produced by factories with synthetic materials<sup>237</sup>. Their flocks provide also a sufficient amount of *zibel* (manure) to fertilise the soil in their farmlands, without buying and

---

<sup>237</sup> According to Fahīma and her mother, since the tents for long transhumance are no more used (at least in the area of Wādī Fūkīn) and the mattresses are produced by factories with synthetic materials, they have to throw away the surplus of goats' skin and sheep's fleece, which are not demanded in the market anymore.

using synthetic fertilisers. Therefore, animals contribute to the economic and environmental sustainability of their farming activities.

Sheep and goats are also an important symbolic resource at *'ayd al-adḥa* (the Sacrifice feast), when they are slaughtered. Their meat is offered to many households belonging to the large 'Aṭīya extended family, and to those of Fahīma's sisters' husbands, building a network of solidarity relationships.

Fahīma and Ishāq try to bring their flocks to pastures as much as possible, despite it is dangerous and difficult, and they use some waste agricultural products as forage. However, given these resources' shortage, they have to feed their animals also with barley seeds bought in the market. Claiming the better taste and healthy character of their animals, they said to me many times: « our sheep eat only grass and barley seeds! »

Indeed, they refuse to adopt the intensive techniques of livestock farming - such as the hormonal synchronisation of oestrus, considered as *ḥarām*, or the *ḥalṭa* (mixture), as they call the commercial, composite animal feeds integrated with additives such as growth hormones or antibiotics with the same effect. They lengthen the breastfeeding and weaning of lambs as longer as they can, usually for three months, in order to increase the meat's quality. Therefore, compared to the intensive techniques of livestock farming, they milk their animals (and sell the lambs if necessary) later.

As Fahīma said me, most of their *ḡanam* (sheep and goats) are *baladī* (local). She was referring to the indigenous goats and, in particular, to the breed of sheep called *ḡanam al-'awāsy*. This sheep is named after the *al-'awāsy* Bedouin tribal group, which is said to have introduced it. It is considered as hailing from an area called *bādyat aš-šām* (the desert of the Levant), which extended in a territory included in the present Palestinian, Israeli, Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese countries. This area was historically traversed by *al-Badū* (the Bedouins), who took their name from the word *bādiya* (desert, steppe). Later this sheep has been spread also in Iran and Iraq<sup>238</sup>.

The history of this kind of sheep mirrors that despite the present modernist dichotomous representations of sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists and the stigmatisation of the latter, Bedouin people moving in a wide contiguous territory now fragmented by many borders and peasant communities with a more sedentary life have always lived in a strict interdependence.

---

<sup>238</sup> The source of this information is an informative booklet made by the PARC (Agricultural Development Association), whose title is "Best Farming Management of Sheep and Goats".

This sheep is compared to the widespread sheep's breed named *'assāf*, created in 1955 by the Israeli Agriculture Research Organisation, by crossing the local sheep and the German East Friesian one. "*Al-ġanam min barra*" (the sheep from outside), as this sheep is locally called, grows more quickly, and the ewe produces a greater amount of milk, can reproduce earlier and gives birth to more lambs at once<sup>239</sup>. However, Fahīma and her brother prefer to raise mainly local sheep, which are more suitable for extensive grazing and the increasing high summer temperature, and less susceptible to respiratory infections and other diseases.

As the seeds historically produced locally, the local breed of sheep is viewed as a symbol of the local collective claims for autochthony and autonomy, in the context of the Israeli cultural, economic and environmental colonisation connected to the new breed of sheep and hybrid seeds.

Despite almost all local inhabitants share these political claims, the changed meaning and value of mobile herding and agriculture and the increasing competition for local resources affect their judgement about Fahīma's family's political and economic strategies.

## 5 The Changing Role of Women within the Community

Fahīma Ḥasan 'Aṭiya is one of the few women in the village who participate daily to farming activities, and the only one who carries out pastoral activities, raising her father's herd. She farms her father's land and she irrigates it with the local technique called *mašākib*, managing her father's hours of spring water. Fahīma often uses the seeds of the seeds' bank, and in order to improve her farming knowledge she attends lessons about organic farming organised by the Bethlehem Farmers' Society, whose head is her relative Ibrāhīm 'Aṭiya. These lessons are usually attended only by men.

Given that she did not achieve the *tawġīthy* (the high-school diploma) she manages all her household's productive activities to contribute to her household's livelihood. This important role is acknowledged by other farmers, as highlighted by their way to call her father's pool for irrigation water collection, which she manages. This is the only one named after a woman: "*birkat Fahīma*" (the pool of Fahīma) (Figure 5).

---

<sup>239</sup> The sheep's breed named *'assāf* can reproduce since it is seven months old. It lambs more than one lamb at once with more probability (70-80%). Differently from the local breed of sheep, this sheep cannot carry out extensive grazing and, thus, is more suitable for livestock farming. It is also more susceptible to respiratory infections and other diseases, and cannot endure the increasing high summer temperature.

Nevertheless, being a woman, she is not legitimated to participate to the male public meetings and negotiations concerning the division of spring water or other public issues, as well as to the meetings organised by the Farmers' association, attended only by men. Fahīma does not participate also to the wedding parties in the village. She does not like these public occasions, as she is often discriminated by other villagers, in particular by women, who deride her for being mannish.

This woman has a low social status, which is not grounded only on her low socio-economic condition and level of education. It is affected also by her status of unmarried adult woman without sons, and her fulfilling of what are locally viewed as masculine tasks, such as farming and pastoral activities, and the management of irrigation water. For a Palestinian adult woman, being unmarried entails to continue to live with her parents or brothers, who have to support her. Also, it means to lose the respect connected to the main female social role of giving birth to descendants.

Today few women carry out farming activities daily, and Fahīma is an exceptional case. However, Fahīma's life is not so different from that of the women in the village before its evacuation by the Israeli army in 1956.

Many adult men told me nostalgically their childhood and adolescence, when the whole family went to the fields to farm together. As the elder women said to me, all women used to work daily in the fields with their little children, even if they were pregnant. Some of them even gave birth while farming. Women had an important role also in the raising of animals and the production and processing of milk, while men brought flocks to pastures.

As well described by Moors (1990) studying in the context of Nablus, the sexual division of labour was not overly pronounced and women had an important role in the subsistence productive activities of the family and a certain degree of control of the labour process and the property.

Also, when the village has been evacuated by the Israeli army (1956-1972) and most of its inhabitants went to live in the Ad-Dehīša refugee camp, women and men continued to go to the village daily to cultivate their lands from the sunrise to the sunset, despite the Israeli military ban. Elder women proudly claim how strong they were when they daily walked from the village to the refugee camp carrying the heavy harvest, which they had the responsibility to sell in the Jerusalem and Bethlehem markets, although men had the responsibility to sell the greater amounts. Nevertheless, most women did not own irrigation water.

Even today, in Wādī Fūkīn almost all the few women who practice agricultural activities use the spring water hours and land of their father, brothers, or husbands when married. Within



the system for coordinating the spring water (Table 1), the women entitled to a share of water are very few, fewer than those who farm the land.

Some women who inherited spring water and land belong to the eldest generations of villagers. For example, as was told me, during the British Mandate Adība Ḥurūb inherited her father's land, given that she had not brothers and was the only heir to her father's inheritance. Local inhabitants claim to respect the rules of the *šarī'a* (the Islamic law) about inheritance, which establish that every woman in a family is entitled to half of the part of her father's inheritance that is equally allocated to each of her brothers (Eifler and Seifert 2009).

However, as Rosenfeld stated about women in the Arab villages in Israel (Rosenfeld 1960), since the past in Wādī Fūkīn most women are denied their inheritance rights or they give them up in favour of their brothers, in exchange for their economic and social support in times of difficulty. This happens even more in the present conditions of land and spring water shortage<sup>240</sup>.

A full time farmer informed me that he would like to leave a part of his lands to his two daughters. As he said, « this is God's will. It is written in the Koran! People who do not respect it are not good Muslims ». However, given land scarcity, he cannot do it and thus, he is trying to give to his daughters as much as he can until he is still alive.

Differently, Fahīma's mother, named Ğamīla 'Abd ar-Raḥmān 'Aṭīya, is very proud of her daughter and as she repeated to me many times, while pointing to her family's land and herd, « all this belongs to Fahīma... and also to her sister, sure ». Fahīma's father has the intention to respect Fahīma's right of inheritance, leaving to her a share in the spring water and land that she manages daily.

As in the past, also today the few women who inherit land and spring water usually leave their husband and sons control them.

As shown in the table 1 representing the rota system of access to spring water, the Sukkar family, belonging to the Manāšra tribal group, has the exclusive access to the water of 'ayn *šiddīq* (the sincere spring). As Māḥer Sukkar, a local farmer, explained to me, his grandmother, belonging to the 'Alayān extended family, married his grandfather, belonging to the Sukkar family, and inherited land and the control of this spring water from her father. The inherited land and water were actually controlled by the woman's husband and have been inherited by her sons, passing to the Sukkar family.

---

<sup>240</sup> A survey shows that in 2011 only 5% of women owns, or shares the ownership of a piece of land (LANDac 2012).

According to the rota system (Table 1), Miyāda al-Aqra‘a, a local adult woman, has inherited a plot of land and two hours of the water of *‘ayn al-fawwār* from her father Zakariyā al-Aqra‘a. However, the analysis of the actual practices of use of spring water has highlighted that this water share is actually controlled by her husband Ğamīl Ğuma‘a Yūsef ‘Assāf.

As I have shown in the second chapter<sup>241</sup>, despite for the Islamic norms the bride price and inheritance are a woman’s legitimate channels of access to money and productive properties such as spring water and land, both in the past as well as today the resources allocated to her – and in particular land and spring water – are usually controlled by her husband and his paternal relatives living with her.

As observed also by Casciarri (2008) in the south-eastern Moroccan village of Tiraf, while drinkable water is connected to the domestic space of women, irrigation water is viewed as the main source of productivity and a space of public negotiations and, therefore, as a male domain (Zwarteveen 2010). Like women, irrigation water is connected to fertility. Therefore, as women, also irrigation water has always been under the control of men, as well as the irrigation system. « The land is nothing without water », as a local inhabitant commented to me. Also, the negotiation of the rota system of access to spring water has always been a male responsibility. « The woman does not have a say (*kilma* – word) », as Ğamīla said me in reference to the right to speak at public meetings and make public decisions.

The families’ different choices highlight the dialectic dynamics between idealised norms and equity principles structuring the relationships of production and resources distribution and the actual practices constituting these relationships. The latter contribute to the continuous recreation of local norms, and are affected by local and wider power structures and subjective choices, ideas and interpretations.

As in the Jordan valley described by Van Aken (Van Aken and De Donato 2018), in Wādī Fūkīn the present limited female participation to agriculture is connected to the development of a commercial and intensive agriculture fostered by rural development projects. Intensive farming techniques convey a process of masculinisation of agriculture, viewed as a male domain of science and technology. Not only most of the development actors such as engineers, agronomists, aid and economic experts are men. Development projects target as client a farmer who is implicitly male, failing to recognise the women’s crucial role in the local family farming, which has become “invisible” (Moors 1990:206).

---

<sup>241</sup> I analysed in detail these dynamics in the paragraph 2 of the second chapter.

In Wādī Fūkīn, even the projects targeting women do not address women's farming activities. In the village there is a women's association called *Ġama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-ḥākūra* (Vegetable gardens' Development Cooperative). According to Šafīqa, one of the six women working in its administration, this cooperative has been founded in 2011-2012 by some women coming from another local association, called *Nādī nasawī Wādi Fūkīn* (Women's club of Wādī Fūkīn). This club, founded in 1996, today is not active.

The women's cooperative is included in the network of cooperatives involved by the Palestinian NGO called *Ġama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-mar'a ar-rīfiyya beit-leḥem* (Rural Women's Development Society – RWDS). This NGO targets women living in the Palestinian rural villages in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and it is part of the coalition of rural development NGOs working with the national Agricultural Development Association called PARC. Quoting the presentation of the RWDS written in its website<sup>242</sup>, this organisation advances «the rights of rural women by creating an empowering and supportive environment for them in their local communities through the clubs, highlighting their invaluable contributions to Palestinian society, and designing innovative projects in three program areas: Economic Empowerment, Political and Social Participation, and Violence Prevention. We use education, community participation and mobilisation, skill-building, and advocacy as tools to develop women into strong, committed, and able leaders » (RWDS).

Besides the courses of a psychologist about domestic violence, children's education and health and other family issues and problems, the projects targeting the local cooperative foster the economic “empowerment” of women. They support some productive activities, seeking to increase women's independence and contribution to their household's income.

In 2015, only fifteen women were enrolled in the women's cooperative<sup>243</sup> and participated to the productive activities (and to the division of their profits), while other women in the village sometimes participated to the courses organised by it. Among the women enrolled in the cooperative, only three participated to farming activities, assisting their husband occasionally, or farming in a little vegetable garden in their house's yard.

The productive activities consist in the production of jam, *dibes* (a type of molasses made with grapes) and *malban* (another product derived from grapes), according to the market

---

<sup>242</sup> Website of the Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS)

<sup>243</sup> In 2015 the yearly inscription fee was of 30 Nis and was used to pay the electricity, domestic water and the maintenance of the cooperative's headquarters.

demand. The sale of these products in shops and supermarkets in Palestinian towns (such as Bethlehem, Ramallah...) is managed by the Rural Women's Development Society<sup>244</sup>.

The support and improvement of women's farming activities are not addressed. On the contrary, many women engaging in farming daily, like Fahīma, are not involved and have no time to participate to the activities of the association. Even the fruits used to produce jam and other products usually are not cultivated by local women or their family. They are often provided by the Rural Women's Development Society, which buys them in the market.

The productive activities and courses organised by the local women's cooperative are carried out at home or in its headquarters, on the second floor of a two floor building, hosting the village's medical centre on the ground-floor. Therefore, women meet each other and cooperate in indoor places with a limited public dimension, protected from the men's view.

Today, instead of being a family place of daily life shared by both sexes, the farmlands have a different value, that of a male workplace within a "naturalised" environment. Here women's daily work is a sign of her immorality and low social status. Most women go to the farmlands only few times in the daytime, to assist their husband farming or to bring their children to the playgrounds built in the valley or to swim in the irrigation pools. Women with a high status go to the valley with their family only to have occasional walks or meals in the "nature", approved and controlled by their father or husband.

The agricultural space (in area C) is socially constructed as a masculine space also in relation to the possible encounters with Israeli *ḡunūd* (soldiers), the "Other" for excellence. These do not threaten only women and children's safety, but also women's honour and respectability. Against soldiers' violence and violations of the intimacy of a woman, her male relatives cannot redeem her reputation and that of their family, by means of vengeance or the ritualised tribal negotiations for conflict resolution, as they do while dealing with other Palestinian families according to local political norms.

These processes have led to the marginalisation of women's role in agricultural activities and public spaces, bringing about the increasing "domestication" (Layne 1994:202) of women's work and their greater segregation inside the home, and widening the gap between gender roles.

---

<sup>244</sup> This NGO takes the 40% of the profits, while the local cooperative takes the 60% of them.

This profit of the cooperative is used to pay the women who worked and the domestic water and electricity, to rent the cooperative's headquarters, and sometimes to buy some fruits and vegetables used in the productive activities.

Most of women farm only some days for few hours. They engage mainly in harvest activities, which require less decision-making. Especially, the harvest of the vine leaves, used by women to cook a Palestinian dish called *waraq dawāly*<sup>245</sup>, is still viewed as a female prerogative. Also the olives' harvest carried out between October and November, which requires a great amount of labour force, is still carried out by the whole family, with women playing a fundamental role. Some women produce local seeds, an important but less visible task fulfilled mainly at home. Women still have the responsibility for raising sheep, goats and chickens in little cattle sheds in their house's yard, producing milk and cheese for home consumption. However, while doing these tasks they depend on men's earnings, necessary to pay the domestic water used to water animals, and to buy the animal feed when vegetable waste is not enough.

Today, the men view women's agricultural work as occasional, supplementary assistance to the more productive and economically important work of the male. The dominant masculine ideology, which attributes the role of economic provider to the man and that of consumer to the woman, if anything, has been reinforced compared to the past (Moors 1990; Zwarteveen 2010).

Even more so given that farming has been replaced by waged or salaried employment as families' main means of support, another mainly masculine world where women are discriminated and included in subordinate positions. With the spread of Western middle class values and growing economic competition, young men and women aspire to study at the university in order to improve their socio-economic status. As Fahīma said to me, « today women do not want to farm, they only think about make-up or want to study to get an office job ». However, because of the lack of job opportunities in the West Bank, most female graduates are unemployed, while most male graduates work in the building sector in Israel or in the Israeli settlements, another domain from which women are excluded. Few women in the village have a waged employment in the West Bank.

The woman's dependence on man, grounded on her lack of control of economic and productive resources, is further increased, given also that women can exert little control over their husband's earnings, on which they have not information. Woman's dependence prevents her from achieving the cultural ideal of autonomy, and carrying out hospitality and generosity

---

<sup>245</sup> Women roll up these leaves, filling up them with rice and minced meat, and they cooked them with chicken, to make one of the Palestinian typical dish.

practices, which would allow her to have people relying on her for the access to some resources, thus gaining honour, power and a high social status.

However, as Ḥālīd ‘Abd al-Qādir Sukkar, a teacher of chemistry and farmer, said to me: « today, women are changing. They begin to claim their property rights, taking their brothers to court ». In particular, some women belonging to the youngest generations claim their ownership right of lands in the built-up area (the area B), a resource increasingly scarce in the Palestinian territories, whose economic value is higher than farmlands. A woman’s possibility to do it depends on her husband’s support and is affected by his and her socio-economic status.

Fahīma thinks that today many women « take their husband’s money, go to Israel and buy what they want...Women who are not in awe of God, are stronger...». Generally, Israel is viewed as a place of strangers where families cannot exert local forms of social control.

In this scenario, women have still the key role of mediating the building of solidarity dimensions expressed through the idiom of kinship<sup>246</sup>. However, the value of women’s reproductive role in bearing descendants for a patrilineal family has also changed, affected by new ideas about the family.

In the past, the power of a family depended on the number of sons that worked the land and represented the family in public negotiations. Today, although the dimension of a lineage remains important in the competition for status, the families do not need a big number of sons to farm their plots, since they are smaller. Most of families prefer to have fewer children and give them the opportunity to study and increase their socio-economic status<sup>247</sup>.

With the changes in the sources of power on which hierarchies are built, women’s roles have also changed. Women are excluded from the collective management of irrigation water, a political arena in which negotiations among local hierarchies and forms of solidarity actively construct the local meaning of community. The spring water is a public asset belonging to the village community, the community of the men.

---

<sup>246</sup> I analysed the role of women in political alliances established between families in the second chapter, paragraph 2.

<sup>247</sup> Explaining to me this change, Mūsā Sukkar said me to have seventy *nafar* (person), referring to his sons and grandsons.

## 5.1 The Virtual Invisibility of Women's Domestic Water

In Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole Palestinian territories, women have always had the responsibility of the housework almost exclusively. In order to fulfil this role, the management of domestic water is critical.

In Wādī Fūkīn drinking, domestic water is supplied by the Mekorot (the Israeli National Water Company) since the 1980s<sup>248</sup> - after most of the population returned to live in the village in 1972 - when the Israeli army built, together with the Israeli settlements' infrastructures, the first waterworks in the village. This water infrastructure entailed many political, economic and cultural changes which affected the lives of both men and women.

Before the building of the waterworks, women had the role of sourcing domestic water, drawing it from the only spring situated in the built-up area of the village, locally called '*ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre). Old women remember with pleasure the days when they used to walk to this spring in order to wash clothes and to bring water to home by transporting it in heavy jars. The water was stored in wells built under the houses in order to collect also rainwater. Today few houses have a well, which is often unused.

As in other Palestinian villages (Naguib 2009), women had full control of the management of this resource, independently of the men. This role, together with farming tasks, entailed a certain freedom of movement and many opportunities for public meetings between men and women who did not belong to the same extended family.

As observed by Casciarri (2008) concerning the public fountain in the south-eastern Moroccan village of Tiraf, the "the spring of the inhabited centre" bore the value of a public place where women shared public resources such as water, negotiated values and exchanged solidarity practices. This was particularly important in a socio-cultural framework characterised by women's marginalisation and exclusion from public contexts dominated by men.

« We had to go to the springs to wash the clothes. It was tough, but nice! We always used to see each other! Now we only meet at weddings and funerals », as one elderly woman told me.

---

<sup>248</sup> The Israeli army built the waterworks during the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip (1967-1994). See Chapter IV.

The water system that delivers water directly to the house through private water taps - as well as the spread of the gas cooker instead of the wood oven outside the house - not only entails greater convenience but also greater segregation of women inside the home.

Today the water of this spring is used only for irrigation by men, like the other springs in the village. The new waterworks brought about the fragmentation of women's collective patterns of belonging and sharing. Social meeting places for women have undergone a process of privatisation, being limited to the relations between the women of the family and those living in the immediate neighbourhood (see the next paragraph).

If previously the woman had full control of domestic water, today her access to this resource depends on the man, who has the economic resources to pay the domestic water bill charged according to the consumption of every dwelling. The flow of domestic water that once gave shape to the women's public spaces and political dimensions today is canalised within the men's network of political relations with the Israeli and Palestinian state's institutions, which control domestic water. Women have been excluded, thus, from the management of the domestic water supply system, another male public domain; they exert little control over this resource and develop greater dependence on men. While drinking water was once a shared asset associated with the woman domestic space, since the introduction of modern hydraulic technology and the encounter with a fragile centralised administrative system, it has been identified with the values and spaces of masculinity.

The new "modern" housing practices have entailed changes in the interpretation of gender relations, particularly concerning the visibility of women, which is viewed as a threat to the family's honour, given the cultural connection between women and sexuality.

Abu-Lughod stated that among Egyptian Bedouin, women's inferiority is viewed first as a moral inferiority, whose primary source is the connection between femininity and procreation and, thus, menstruation and sexuality. These are viewed as natural events that women cannot control, entailing that they have less self-control of their body's needs and, thus, less *'aql* (good sense, common sense). As a consequence, they can be controlled by others easily. These features hinder the women's achievement of the cultural ideal of autonomy, which is one of the main criteria on which the evaluation of an individual and his/her family's morality, respectability and status is grounded, according to the honour's moral code. The women's moral inferiority and subordination is thus "naturalised".

The autonomy is connected to the control of resources, and it is a main criterion defining the status of a family, as well as the status differentiation between its members. According to the



local political ideal, the juridical equality is viewed as the equal freedom from others' control and is perceived as a fundamental value.

In order to solve the contradictions between this ideal and the actual hierarchies characterising the family and the whole society, people understand status differences as moral differences. The authority of some people is legitimised by their greater conformity to local moral principles. The moral justification of authority makes it appear as less arbitrary. The inequality relationships between the family's members are not viewed as dichotomy relationships of domination and subordination, but as moral and emotional bonds of mutual responsibility, dependence and identification. Who has the control of symbolic and material resources has also the moral duty and responsibility of protecting and taking care of the weak.

Also in Wādī Fūkīn, according to the local tribal political culture, the hierarchic organisation of the family and the whole society – grounded on the control over resources – is viewed as strictly connected to the different embodiment of the code of honour. This code is both a moral system consisting in definitions, symbols and values used to understand the reality, and a set of rules and processes guiding behaviours and actions.

Moreover, the menstruation is viewed as a woman's natural contamination, which entails her impurity and, thus, her impossibility to achieve the complete devotion to the Islamic religion, another important value defining the honour and respectability of an individual and his/her family. The identification of the dominant social system with Islamic principles constitutes a strategy to legitimise it, strengthening the tribal idiom with the religious one. However, I agree with Abu-Lughod (1986) when she states that the source of the negative evaluation of sexuality is not religious, but concerns the structural organisation of the tribal social system. According to it, blood bonds between relatives belonging to the same patrilineal lineage are the only morally legitimate solidarity ties.

Except cases of endogamy<sup>249</sup>, marital relationships are viewed as a form of affiliation threatening the patrilineal relationships, and challenging the authority of the agnates, who represent the interests of the patrilineal lineage, understood as the tribal group.

Therefore, the woman is the embodiment of the antithesis of the social order.

---

<sup>249</sup> According to the local tribal political organisation, endogamy marriages do not threaten the patrilineal family's interests, and therefore is ideally preferred. This is clear when considering the theoretical priority right to marry a woman recognised to her paternal cousins. Despite these idealisations, both endogamy and exogamy marriages have always been established, according to the relative economic status of the families establishing this political contract (I analysed this subject in the second chapter, paragraph 2).

According to Abu-Lughod, the voluntary deference and respect of moral norms are viewed as virtuous behaviours allowing a subordinated person to maintain a semblance of independence, thus achieving respectability. This idea guarantees the voluntary social conformity and strengthens local hierarchies.

In Wādī Fūkīn adult women such as the mother and paternal aunts have the role and duty of teaching to the girls the right and moral behaviours, limiting their freedom of movement and controlling their activities, conforming to what Abu-Lughod called as “modesty code” (Abu-Lughod 1986).

*Ḥarām* (illicit) is one of the words that women pronounce more frequently. By means of this word, women negotiate and define as immoral and unrespectable some behaviours, views, attitudes and activities, as well as who carries out them. The repetition of this word is a continuous self-exhortation to observe moral bans, which is grounded first on the identification and moral judgement of deviant acts and behaviours.

The modesty code is a moral code of conduct requiring the adoption of behaviours and feelings characterised by *ḥasham* (shame, modesty), such as the chastity before marriage, sexual modesty, and the “invisibility” in public contexts (expressed, for example, by wearing the veil) – which are relational contexts characterised by the presence of men and women belonging to other families.

The woman’s “invisibility” in public contexts and her adoption of other moral behaviours consist in the symbolic denial of her sexuality, showing her morality and deference to people with a higher status (because of his gender, his/her age, but also class of belonging) and, thus, her conformity to the dominant system. This behaviour allows her to achieve honour and respectability, and contributes to define her status, as well as that of her family.

In Wādī Fūkīn, when women participated daily to farming activities, their invisibility was mainly rhetorical, expressed by women's embodiment of a “virtual invisibility” (Van Aken 2003:130). This consists in practices and behaviours expressing self-denial, seeking to be less symbolically visible as much as possible, according to a flexible embodiment of moral norms (Gilsenan 1982).

As in the past, today the visibility of the women is symbolically limited by dressing *al-mandīl* (the veil). At home, when a guest visits a family, the women dress the veil and go in other rooms, moving quickly when they are visible. In the streets women walk quickly, avoiding to look men into their eyes (at least visibly) and to greet people who do not belong to their family. In the men’s point of view, the respect of the symbolic invisibility of other families’ women consists in the symbolic act of not seeing what can be seen, avoiding looking at

women explicitly. However, today the physical visibility of women in public spaces is less tolerated and more limited. The building of domestic waterworks and the masculinisation of farming activities have contributed to the polarisation of roles at home and at work, connected to the spread of the dichotomous view of domestic and public dimensions.

The moral evaluation of the woman's visibility in public contexts is affected by the socio-economic segmentation and the connected hierarchisation of public spaces. The woman's visibility in the street – a public place less disciplined and characterised by many encounters with stranger people (belonging to another family) – or in the male work domain of the farmlands, is viewed as a sign of a low social status, increasingly connected to low socio-economic conditions.

Differently, universities, restaurants and other places frequented by the middle class, as well as important waged employments, are public dimensions with a prestigious value, in which women's visibility is more tolerated and connected to a high social status. Most of local women are excluded from these prestigious public places.

The woman's participation to the labour market and, thus, her visibility in public contexts increases or decreases her family's respectability and status according to the position she occupies. When women work as NGOs' employees, teacher, lawyer or nurse, their families are proud of them. Differently, Rāmā is an adult unmarried woman working as cleaner in the school of the village, in order to contribute to her household's income. She is ashamed of her work, as it is viewed as a social stigma.

The economic segmentation and the spread of Western middle class values affect the social construction and moral evaluation of the gender dimension, the meanings of woman and the gender relationships, which are continuously negotiated by women and men through their daily practices and behaviours.

By means of the practices expressing the embodied gender identity, women carry out a continuous construction of the self and femininity and the negotiation of the meanings of being woman in the local society.

## **5.2 Women's Fluid Political Dimensions**

Even if in public spaces women have an "invisible" and unacknowledged role (Moors 1990), they are not foreign to the political domain, since they establish networks of relationships that contribute to the building of local patterns of solidarity and differentiation,

affecting the relationships between extended families and, thus, the political life of the community. These networks constitute the women's public dimensions, which are fluid, shaped by the relational context, by women's different possibility to move and by their ability to evade men's control and to co-opt them.

### *The women's family*

When in the Ad-Dehīša refugee camp there is not water for a long time, a young woman who lives there with her husband's family goes to take some tanks of water from her family of origin, who lives in Wādī Fūkīn. In the Ad-Dehīša camp, situated in an area A<sup>250</sup>, the lack of domestic water indicates marginalised refugee status (De Donato 2013a). Differently, the village of Wādī Fūkīn benefits from a continuous domestic water supply delivered by Mekorot (the Israeli national water company) to the nearby Israeli Beitar Illit settlement, whose inhabitants never suffer from a lack of water<sup>251</sup>.

The resource of water is at the centre of relations of solidarity that, overflowing the physical borders of a place of residence, shape the social space of women and families. These relations contribute to defining a "social geography" (Rothenberg 1998), which, through the creation of "spaces of manoeuvre" for resisting daily oppression, is ever changing.

This gift of water mirrors the relationships of solidarity that a married woman continues to keep with her paternal extended family of origin, in particular with her father, brothers and paternal uncles<sup>252</sup>.

The principle of virilocality entails that when a woman marries, she moves in with her husband's family, sharing everyday life with it. However, according to the principle of patrilineality governing tribal socio-political organisation, the social identity of a woman, like that of a man, is determined by her belonging and loyalty to her own paternal lineage, with which she keeps relations of dependency, protection and mutual identification. Women sometimes receive money, food and material goods from their father and brothers, during their reciprocal visits.

The intense exchange of resources and services carried out between the extended family's members during the ritualised practices of the visit (Hannoyer 1989; Van Aken

---

<sup>250</sup> The areas A are under the administration and security control of the PNA.

<sup>251</sup> I analyse domestic water administration in the fourth chapter.

<sup>252</sup> During the three days called '*ayd al-fuṭr*' (feast of the interruption [of the fast, at the end of the Ramadan]), celebrated at the end of the fasting sacred month of Ramadan, and the four days called '*ayd al-adḥa*' (the Sacrifice feast) celebrating Abraham's sacrifice, the practice of the gift offered to a woman by her male paternal relatives while visiting her is ritualised.

2003)<sup>253</sup>, expresses the meaning of the family as a network of solidarity and assistance guaranteeing each individual's social and economic safety, especially in the lack of economic capital.

Through the ritualised practices of the visit, hospitality and gift, both men and women establish and strengthen alliances and relationships of solidarity and mutual assistance with people with the same or a high status and power, in order to satisfy their daily needs.

The visit is the main institutionalised form of public meeting, whose political character consists in being a channel for the circulation and exchange of material and symbolic resources (Hannoyer 1989). Despite its egalitarian language, the ritualised representation of the visit is a political arena in which the participants (even if belonging to the same extended family) exhibit, negotiate and define social hierarchies, criteria of identification and differentiation, patterns of solidarity and exclusion, through body's practices and the organisation of the space. *Aḍ-ḍiyāfa* (the hospitality) and the generosity displayed by the hosting family are two main values defining its honour and respectability. Women have an important role in the performance of their family's status and respectability, fulfilled by preparing the coffee and food for the guests, and by doing it in an "invisible" way.

Mutual visits consist also in the exchange of respect, honour and status. The honour and reputation of a man and his family are negotiated through the embodiment of masculine values such as the generosity, the ability to behave in an appropriate way according to social hierarchies, and the control of his passions and weakness, and of his family's women's behaviour. During the visit, the masculinity is socially constructed and gender roles are continuously negotiated as embodied identities through ritualised practices.

The gift expresses the moral duty of people with a higher status and power (like men) to be generous towards those who are subordinated (like women). It contributes to create women's dependence on men. However, it is given without ostentation, without much visibility, in order to not emphasise the hierarchic relationship between who offers it and who receives it, showing some semblance of autonomy of the latter.

Nevertheless, for a woman the gift is also one of the culturally legitimate ways to have access to properties. Father and brothers' gifts can increase a woman's power of negotiation, allowing her to achieve some spaces of independence from her husband and his patrilineal

---

<sup>253</sup> As in the Syrian context studied by Hannoyer (1989) and in the Jordan Valley analysed by Van Aken (2003), also in the West Bank the visit is a ritualised activity, which consists in the repetition of a sequence of acts defining the different temporal phases of the visit, as well as its spatial and symbolic dimensions.

family. The brothers' support and protection affect a woman's possibility to claim the respect of her rights.

In Wādī Fūkīn, a farmer's young daughter divorced because her husband used to beat her. She could take this decision thanks to the support of her parents, who paid the lawyer and welcomed her and her two years old son in their home again. Also Zīna, another woman living in the outskirts of Bethlehem, was often beaten by her husband. Many times she called her brothers, who went to her home to menace her husband and to bring her to their native home. To come back to the native home, even if for a few time, is a culturally legitimate form of rebellion, which women carry out to claim the respect of their rights by their husband. Zīna's brothers support her family, bringing food and material goods to them. They also give money to her without her husband knowing it, giving to her the opportunity to manage it in an autonomous way. At the same time, they support also her husband's economic activities, allowing their sister to negotiate her life conditions with him, to achieve his respect and to stop violence. In exchange for this, Zīna often takes care of her brothers' sons and daughters « as they are her children », as her brothers said me.

Not all married women have these opportunities and power. Some families do not respect the moral norms concerning the protection and support of the family's women after their marriage, leaving them to their own devices. « She married, therefore she's a *muškila* (problem) of her husband's family », as a father said me referring to his young daughter.

In the name of her children the woman uses all her abilities and “strategies of manoeuvre” to negotiate spaces of authority over her husband. Besides the support of her father and brothers, her authority in part depends also on her ability to exert the power of sexuality and love. While in public contexts the women's sexuality is hidden according to the local moral system, in the framework of the private marital relationship, it is often used by women to obtain services, resources and concessions by their husband, as well as to affect his decisions concerning the family and his work.

A local farmer told me that his brother decided to build his private pool for irrigation water collection because his wife urged him to do it and to think only about his family. As in this case, women sometimes exert influence over their husband to make their own conjugal family independent from their husband's extended family in the management of irrigation water, land and other resources. From a woman's perspective, making her household independent means increasing her access to resources to the benefit of her sons and

disengaging herself from the authority of her husband's relatives. It increases her power and autonomy associated with her husband becoming the most senior figure in the hierarchy of the household unit.

Indeed, a married woman is constrained by a double dependence. She is subordinated both to the authority of her older male relatives and also to the will of the men and women in her husband's family, in which she enjoys a low social status (Rothenberg 1998; Sa'ar 2006).

However, according also to Moors' studies of political relationships in a rural village in the area of Nablus, the nuclearisation of the family household entails also the "individualisation" of female domestic work (Moors 1990). Many women (especially those belonging to the middle class) carry out their numerous tasks alone, supported only by the occasional assistance of other women during their visits.

#### *The Cohesive and Destructive Power of Women*

Women establish networks of solidarity and mutual assistance that are critical to satisfying the needs of their entire family. This important role today is constrained by the increased women's segregation inside the home, entailed by the building of the domestic waterworks and the masculinisation of agriculture. As a consequence of these processes, the social places for women have undergone a process of privatisation, being often limited to the relations between the women of the family and those living in the immediate neighbourhood. Nevertheless, these relationships still cross the social boundaries connected to the belonging to different extended families. Women still act an important role in the building of patterns of solidarity that are critical to oppose both the increasing fragmentation of the extended family and of the whole community, as well as women's marginalisation and isolation. At the same time, also women's practices and ideas are affected by the socio-economic segmentation and the spread of the individualistic ideology. Through their practices women often participate to the local dynamics of competition between extended families, but also between the conjugal families comprising it, contributing to the fragmentation of the women's community in the village.

When a woman visit her relatives' households, she shares key moments of complicity with the other women of her extended family and her sisters-in-law (her brothers' wives), while carrying out household tasks and strictly female practices, such as washing up or

depilation. They exchange food, instruments (such as kitchen utensils and appliances) and sometimes money, and they assist each other to take care of children.

During the frequent mutual visits, women share also female knowledge and discuss family problems. They often complain to each other that the men do not appreciate the daily challenges they face in taking care of the house and children. As highlighted by Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) in her studies about the Awlād ‘Ālī Bedouin tribes in the Egyptian Western Desert, women take advantage of their spatial segregation to create spaces for manoeuvre not controlled by men and to express freely what James Scott called the “hidden transcript”, that is to say, the dissidence toward authority in a mediated or invisible way, in order to avoid direct conflict (Scott 1998). The sharing of practices and feelings expresses the dimension of belonging to the female solidarity group and allows women to have a greater control over their life and relations, protecting them from the social and emotional isolation (Rothenberg 1998)<sup>254</sup>.

However, also the dynamics between women are characterised by hierarchic relationships, connected mainly to their age and to their mutual position in local power structures, connected to their socioeconomic class. The women of a house share responsibility for managing the domestic duties. While carrying out them, young women have to be at the adult women’s service, and all of them have to obey the elder women.

Women view the more personal issues and problems, often concerning love matters, sexuality and marital relationship, as secrets which can be shared only with their closer female relatives, usually their sisters and paternal aunts, cousins and nieces (when they have almost the same age), but sometimes also with their brothers, depending on their personal tie and age. As stated by Abu-Lughod (1986), the secret increases the cohesiveness between those who share it, especially when their relationships are hierarchic, thus strengthening the local social system and status quo.

The women’s “sisters-in-law” (their brothers’ wives) are often excluded from this practice. Women view the relationships with their sisters-in-law as ties of competition and hostility, although almost every woman fulfils both these roles simultaneously at some stage in her life cycle (Van Aken and De Donato 2018).

These ideas are affected by the local tribal political model. Given the woman's key social role of contributing to producing descendants of her husband’s lineage, she takes on the positive

---

<sup>254</sup> In the paper I mentioned, Rothenberg critically analyses the English anthropological literature about the Palestinian tribal group and extended family, and the women’s life in the West Bank (Rothenberg 1998).



value of a resource to be controlled by her husband's family, but is never considered completely part of it. According to the principle of patrilineality governing tribal socio-political organisation, a wife continues to be viewed as belonging to her own patrilineal lineage. She continues to pursue its interests, which, aside from cases of endogamy, generally do not correspond to those of her husband's lineage, except in relation to her children's wellbeing.

Also women belonging to different families frequently exchange ritualised visits characterised by the political language of hospitality. During these mutual visits, the women's movements in the village shape and strengthen another key dimension of belonging and solidarity in the local culture and life, that of the neighbourhood. Once again, this dimension of belonging is legitimised by imagined or real relations of kinship.

The women in the neighbourhood where I lived during my second and third fieldwork periods often visit each other (and visited me), bringing gifts such as cooked food or vegetables and fruits cultivated by their family. During these ritualised visits characterised by the political language of hospitality, they exchange also suggestions about household tasks and other female practices.

Moreover, in these occasions, women share information about other people in the village, commenting their behaviours and choices. Rumour is a strong means of social control and power, especially in a little village like Wādī Fūkīn. However, in the lack of the collective negotiation of conflicts previously mediated by the *muḥtār*<sup>255</sup>, it can become a factor of social disintegration. By means of the rumour, a person and his/her family are discredited and defamed, and their honour and respectability are threatened. This hinders their ability to build a network of solidarity relationships, which constitutes a main form of social capital and source of power, allowing the access to economic, material and symbolic resources. The outcome of the rumour depends on the reputation of the person pronouncing the accusation, and even more on that of the accused person, given that while the slander is transmitted from mouth to mouth, its source often becomes unknown. Taking advantage of the segregation and "invisibility" of their networks of relationships, women use rumour as a political strategy to affect "in an invisible way" the political relationships between the families living in the village, despite their marginalisation in public life.

---

<sup>255</sup> I analyse the role of the *muḥtār* in the fourth chapter.

Women's segregation and the socioeconomic segmentation of the society affect the relationships between them. This is more visible in public occasions in which women's relationships are less invisible.

Despite the privatisation of women's social spaces, there are still some occasions of larger public meeting among women, such as the *ġanāza* (funeral) and the *'oros* (wedding party)<sup>256</sup>. Both funerals and wedding parties constitute contexts of hospitality of the families organising them, characterised by their greater public dimension, which requires a great amount of women's work, while performing the practices of hospitality.

In Wādī Fūkīn wedding parties and funerals are characterised by sexual segregation. Women usually meet in a hall or room separated from men, whose hall is often created in the street by erecting tarps as walls. However, both these public events are important moments of visibility and meeting between men and women, given the large crowds and their high mobility. Therefore, women view wedding parties as occasions in which to show their physical and social qualities.

As during the ritualised negotiation for conflict resolution between families, also in these occasions the extended family moves and acts as a single body, shaping a ritual group. The honour and status of a ritual group is represented by the largeness of the network of solidarity relations that it mobilises to represent the family and claim its rights, such as those connected to the belonging to the same tribal group.

Wedding parties, but also funerals, are political arenas in which different interest groups exhibit and negotiate their position in local hierarchies, competing to make their own views of reality, identity and cultural belonging, and their own moral values and ideas about gender relationships prevail. In these public dynamics, women have a central and active role. The extended families of the *'arūs* (bride) and of the *'arīs* (groom) – and that of the deceased in cases of funeral – negotiate their status by engaging in the practices of hospitality and generosity towards the other families (the offering of coffee, soft drinks, cake..), conforming to local moral norms and according to their reciprocal position in local hierarchies.

Both for women and men, the dance has a central role in the performances of the individual and collective belonging and of the family's qualities and respectability. As shown also by Van Aken in the context of the Jordan Valley (2003), the exclusion or participation to varying

---

<sup>256</sup> Wedding parties are organised in spring and summer, when the climate allows to organise open-air parties and to carry out the ritualised movements of numerous people between the bride's house and that of the groom.

degrees to the dance performance expresses patterns of identification and differentiation, relationships of solidarity and hierarchies.

Within the women's space, by means of the body's movements and the embodied ritual performances, women shape the dimension of belonging of the extended family and the tribal group and dialogue with the women belonging to other families.

The dance is a common language through which women exhibit their abilities, female qualities and reputation.

Besides the embodied performance of the tribal identities, the concerned families exhibit also their socio-economic class, through the quality and amount of coffee, food and clothes, and through the embodiment of different values, models and meanings of being a woman (by dressing Western middle class clothes or dancing with the Western middle class style, for example)<sup>257</sup>.

If in the past all local families participated to the wedding parties organised in the village, today the participation to this event is limited by the selective practice of the invitation, which reduces its public dimension and the potential extension of the social space and network of solidarity relationships of both women and men. The wedding party has undergone a process of privatisation, highlighted by the exclusion of some conjugal families, even if belonging to the groom or bride's extended family. Some conjugal families are excluded because of conflicts concerning, for example, land and water access, or because they belong to a lower social class.

Nevertheless, it is difficult that an elderly woman is not invited to a wedding in the village. During the daily visits and the wedding parties, the elder women in the village express strong ties of solidarity between each other. These are the outcome of their past sharing of a common life, while farming and managing the domestic water drawn from springs together, despite their different status. They shared also the common and hard experiences of the Diaspora, the life in the refugee camp, and the return to the village.

The relationships between the women of the last generations are different. They are not characterised by such cohesiveness, since they are affected by status competition and the socio-economic segmentation. The increasing individualisation of women's life hinders the cohesion of women while facing daily difficulties and the power of men.

---

<sup>257</sup> In wedding parties organised by families belonging to the urban middle class, women and men often meet in the same hall, without respecting the sexual segregation. This choice and the ideas of gender relationships and woman which it conveys are affected by Western middle class values and cultural models.

In summer 2015, Ğamīla ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ‘Aṭiya, an elderly woman, was invited to the wedding party of Ğamāl Bassām ‘Aṭiya, the grandson of the *muḥtār* (the chosen one). However, her adult daughter Fahīma has been excluded from the celebration by this middle class conjugal family, even if she belongs to the same extended family, named ‘Aṭiya. In particular, she was discriminated by its women, because of her low status and mannish attitudes.

Also the organisation of multiple wedding parties during the same day brings to light that a public space of sharing which in the past contributed to arise in local inhabitants the feeling of a common belonging and reciprocity, today is fragmented in multiple selective public spaces. These multiple public spaces mirror the fragmentation of the present community in the village, connected to the socioeconomic segmentation and to the spread of multiple views of gender relationships, family and collective belonging.

The community is recomposed during the funerals, which differently from wedding parties are still public occasions to which almost all people from the village participate, expressing their collective belonging and solidarity as a large family. These events are characterised by women’s sharing of feelings such as sadness, sorrow and also religious devotion, while crying and praying together, and reciting the Koran.

Once, I went to the funeral of a woman in the village. In this occasion, a man explained to me the difference between women's meeting and that of men, according to the local cultural connection of woman with sensitivity and of man with rationality: «men speak, while women cry together», as he told me.

Suffering and crying together, women rebuild, at least temporary, a strong cohesion between them, especially while sharing the frequent, anguishing experience of losing a son, a husband or a brother, killed by Israeli soldiers.

## CHAPTER IV

# TASTING THE STATE'S WATER OPPRESSION: THE WATER RELATIONS BETWEEN TRIBALISM AND THE STATE



*Figure 65: the village of Wādī Fūkīn (internet, 2017)*

## 1 The State's Purified Domestic Water

Another kind of water flows in the village of Wādī Fūkīn, the drinking domestic water, locally called *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water).

This water has been introduced in the village in the 1980s by the Israeli army, which built the first water infrastructures in the village and connected it to the water network supplying also the nearby Israeli Beitar Illit settlement.

The villagers benefit from a continuous domestic water supply delivered by the Mekorot (the Israeli national water company), while supplying the Israeli settlement, whose inhabitants never suffer from a lack of water. Since the building of the waterworks, villagers have to pay to the Mekorot the domestic water bills charged according to the consumption of every dwelling.

The water system led to the reorganisation of the space in the village and to connected political and cultural changes, which affected the women's life in the village, as well as that of the entire community.

For the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn the waterworks in the village is a symbol of the loss of autonomy in the satisfaction of their vital needs, previously satisfied through the communal management of the water sourced from a spring locally called *'ayn al-balad* (the spring of the inhabited centre). As many adult and elderly inhabitants told me, « the village was born around this spring... it was *qalb al-qarya* (the heart of the village) ». According to them, the few houses<sup>258</sup> in the village were built around this spring and the mosque. Every family living in the village had access to it.

This spring bore the value of a public space in which the communal management and sharing of water expressed and contribute to create the local meaning of community, particularly for women. Women went to this spring to share its water and other resources, to negotiate values and exchange solidarity practices, participating to the public life of the community.<sup>259</sup> This was particularly important in a socio-cultural framework characterised by women's marginalisation and exclusion from public contexts dominated by men.

---

<sup>258</sup> In 1945 the population of Wādī Fūkīn was 280, and all people were Muslim (Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics. *Village Statistics, April, 1945*. Quoted in Hadawi 1970: 58).

<sup>259</sup> These issues are deeply analysed in paragraph 5 of the Chapter III.



Figure 66: the spring called 'ayn al-balad (De Donato, 2014)

In local ideas the other springs in the village embody the historical differentiations among local tribal groups and families, mirrored by their differentiated access<sup>260</sup>. Differently, the wider public dimension and local importance of this spring before the creation of Israel and the following evacuation of Wādī Fūkīn was mirrored by its central position in the built-up area of the village at the time and by its legal status.

The land where this spring, the mosque and cemetery are situated (three dunams) is considered as *waqf*, which is a religious endowment controlled by *wizārat al-awqāf* (the Ministry of religious endowments). According to the Islamic juridical system, the goods of a *waqf* (Islamic charitable organisation) are inalienable real estate used as usufruct or collective ownership for religious aims or public services. They are instituted as a charitable donation to poor people or a whole community or population (Faruqi et al. 2003).

This spring water had an active role in defining the village's conformation, spatial organisation and housing scheme, according to local tribal dimensions of belonging. Before the evacuation of the village in 1956 and during its re-settlement in 1972, the members of each extended family built their houses in the same area of the village, considered as a *hāra* (neighbourhood) and named after the extended family living in it. The important dimension of solidarity of the neighbourhood and its legitimacy are grounded on the actual or imagined kinship ties between people living in it.

---

<sup>260</sup> I addressed the historical differentiations among local tribal groups and families in paragraph 4, Chapter II.



Figure 67: the mosque in the village of Wādī Fūkīn (De Donato 2014)

Following the building of the waterworks in the village, *'ayn al-balad* has lost its spatial and symbolic centrality in the *al-balad*, as well as in the public life of the local community. It is the flow of the *mayyat baladiyya*, which actively affects the development of the village and the organisation of its space, since houses are built according to the possibility to connect up them to the new water network.

Since the creation of the PNA in 1994, the domestic water flow and the organisation of the space in the village is constrained by the administrative division of the village in an area B and an area C<sup>261</sup>, as decided by the Oslo Accords (this administrative division is represented in the maps 4 and 5). The Israeli military ban on building in the area C limits the built-up area and infrastructures' development to the small area B, hindering any possibility of future expansion of the domestic water network and the built-up area.

Given the scarcity of land available to build, the growing local population is worried about where the future generations will be able to live. Villagers view these administrative conditions as Israeli planning strategies aimed at making the new generations move from the village, which finally will be abandoned.

---

<sup>261</sup> As I explained in the first chapter, almost the whole built-up area of the village has been defined as area B - under the PNA's administration of civilian affairs, but under the security control of the Israeli army. The farmlands in the valley and the slopes of the hills encircling the village have been included in an area C - under the Israeli army's administration and security control, except the educational and health services, which are a PNA's responsibility. Indeed, the only public school and health centre in Wādī Fūkīn are included in the area C, in the upper part of the valley.



Some families build their house in the area C, close to the area B, despite the high risk of its demolition by the Israeli army and the most difficult access to water and other infrastructures. Also, the “modern” concrete houses are increasingly expanded vertically by building new floors to host new descendants, a well-known housing strategy adopted by all families living in the refugee camps, due to the lack of space (De Donato 2013a).

In map 3 I present a social map about the division of land between the extended families living in Wādī Fūkīn. As shown in this map, today the neighbourhoods are not completely homogeneous concerning tribal and family belonging. Given the increasing building land scarcity, some conjugal families bought land and built their houses in other extended families’ neighbourhoods, fragmenting the spatial and solidarity dimension of the neighbourhood. These dynamics mirror the fragmentation of local institutions involved in domestic water management, such as the tribal group and the extended family.

Besides being connected to the growth of the population, these processes are amplified by the administrative constraints imposed by the Israeli military authorities and are affected by the new centralised water administration and modernisation, by water commoditisation and the individualisation of the access to it.

As observed by Casciarri (2008) in the south-eastern Moroccan village of Tiraf, the “modern” water system that delivers water directly to the houses in the village through individualised water taps brought about the demise of public spaces and patterns of cooperation, which historically characterised women’s collective domestic water management. It led to a radical shift in defining public and private spheres, to the connected greater segregation of women inside the home (Van Aken and De Donato 2018) and to the change of her social role<sup>262</sup>.

The introduction of hydraulic technologies and the centralised administrative system has fostered the de-politicisation of domestic water management and distribution, viewed as a technical and economic matter connected to an implicitly positive modernisation mission.

The kind of domestic water has changed: previously, it was *mayyat ‘ayn al-balad* (the water of the spring of the inhabited centre), an unmarketable good of God shared by villagers according to a communal management and property regime.

Following water modernisation, it became *mayyat baladiyya*, a commercial commodity, whose access is individualised and connected to the economic possibilities of each family. The new domestic water strengthens social differentiations and patterns of exclusion connected to the economic segmentation.

---

<sup>262</sup> I analyse in detail this subject in the paragraph 5.1, Chapter III.

The water system in Wādī Fūkīn introduced new knowledge patterns, political roles and models, patterns of exclusion and meanings connected with water. The access to this resource depends on the state water bureaucracy, technologies, hydraulic expertise and normative system.

Water modernisation projects foster the individualisation of local society, aiming at the detribalisation and atomisation of the local society. This strategy is grounded on the de-socialisation and naturalisation of the essential economic and symbolic resource of domestic water, on which the local patterns of cooperation, solidarity and identification have always been grounded – such as the tribal groups, extended families, neighbourhoods and the whole community.

The flow of domestic water reshaped the local hydrosocial network and territory – viewed as the spatial configuration of the socio-natural networks of people, institutions, water flows, hydraulic technology and the biophysical environment, which are involved in the control of water (Boelens et al. 2016). Therefore, it brought about the emergence of two different, interconnected, spatialised hydrosocial configurations, connected to the material, symbolic and social differentiation between spring water and domestic water.

Domestic water defines the women’s space of the private houses, situated in the area of the village called *al-ġibāl* (the mountains) and without access to spring water. It is connected also to the space of the Israeli state producing and distributing it, and to its territorialisation process (see next paragraph).

On the other hand, the flow of spring water defines the men’s space of the farmlands in *al-wādī* (the valley)<sup>263</sup>, connected to the local community’s struggle for identity claims and for the resistance and autonomy from the state (Israeli and Palestinian).

Water modernisation has led to a ‘territorial pluralism’ within the village, created by “overlapping, often contested, and interacting hydroterritorial configurations in one and the same space, but with differing material, social and symbolic contents and different interlinkages and boundaries” (Boelens et al. 2016:8).

According to Boelens (Boelens et al. 2016), state’s water development consists in processes of re-territorialisation which are aimed at integrate local communities and livelihoods in state water power structures and global economic networks, reshaping local and national hydrosocial territories and networks. In fact, the state’s (but also international)

---

<sup>263</sup> *al-wādī* means the valley, the river.

water projects are hydro-territorial governmentalisation projects seeking to change local dimensions of belonging, identification and solidarity (community, neighbourhood, kinship). They foster the change of local behaviours, practices and relationships, according to new water hierarchies, views and values of water, and new identity constructions, in order to create new subjects such as dominated colonised subjects or individualised citizens.

The governmentalisation of territories is produced and legitimised by the creation of new water discourses, knowledge and truths, such as those on water scarcity<sup>264</sup>, which are aimed at ensure particular water interests, hierarchies, policies, and management patterns.

The new water system has conveyed other dynamics of domination that contribute to create increasing social differentiations. The introduction of the “drinking, potable water”, treated, purified and produced thanks to science and technical development, spring water has become less “pure” and undrinkable. The perception of the decreased quality of spring water is affected by hygienist representation of the unhealthy quality of the waters that are not treated and “purified” by the State.

The spatial and symbolic opposition between these two waters has been strengthened since some organisations such as WEDO and ARIJ have ascertained spring water pollution (Muamer et al. 2014; ARIJ 2010). While domestic water is said to be *nazīfa* (clean), spring water is increasingly said to be harmful for one’s body and « *mnīḥa bas lil-zirā’a* » (good only for farming), using the words of a local farmer who advised me to not drink it.

Groundwater contamination is due to the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers, as well as to the interactions with other waters acting in the village. One of these is the untreated *mayyat maḡārī bītār ‘īlīt* (the water of the sewer<sup>265</sup> of Beitar Illit). Indeed, the sewage treatment facilities in Beitar Illit cannot treat the amount of waste water produced by settlers. Therefore, since about 12 years the untreated waste water of Beitar Illit overflows and is poured out in the Wādī Fūkīn valley's farmlands, causing the pollution of groundwater and soil contamination (Fortunato 2012). Moreover, this settlement is responsible also of the unauthorised disposal, in the Wādī Fūkīn valley's farmlands, of the solid waste produced by the settlement's construction works.

---

<sup>264</sup> I have analysed the multiple narratives on water scarcity in the first Chapter.

<sup>265</sup> In Arabic the word *maḡārī* derives from the verb *ḡār*, which means “to run, to, to flow. However, it is used to refer to water flows, channel, riverbed, stream and aqueduct. In this case villagers use it to refer to the sewer.

Since 2005, the Palestinian NGO called WEDO (Water and Environmental Development Organisation) engaged an advocacy work to stop these practices, and just in 2014 succeeded to organise a meeting between the majors of Tzur Hadassah and Beitar Illit, the Israeli environmental ministry, lawyers working in the issue and press agencies. Despite the promise of solving this problem, the sewage of Beitar Illit continues to be spilled to the village, usually on Saturday, when there is less visibility and control, given that most of activities in the settlement are stopped to celebrate the rest day of the Sabbath.

The Israeli settlements are the main cause of environmental pollution in the West Bank. In 2012 just 81 on 121 settlements in the West Bank were connected to facilities for sewage treatment, and most of these are too small to treat the great amounts of wastewater produced (Fortunato 2012). While Israel appropriates most of the regional water resources and carries out unsustainable agronomic intensive techniques and urban sprawl, it also externalises the environmental costs and risks (Alatout 2006) of these socio-ecological domination processes in the Palestinian Territories.

Another other water causing groundwater contamination is the *mayyat al-mağārī* (the water of the sewer<sup>266</sup>) produced by the inhabitants of the village. Differently from the Bethlehem urban area, in Wādī Fūkīn there is not a sewage network, locally called *šabaket al-mağārī* (the network of the sewer). Most of housing units has an underground private cesspit, locally called *ğūra* (pit, hole), as a means for wastewater disposal. Cesspits have to be emptied by wastewater tankers at the expense of the family owning it.

Families that cannot afford the high cost of the tankers, they discharge sometimes wastewater directly in the streets, causing the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village and environmental damages (Muamer et al. 2014). While I was living in Wādī Fūkīn, a woman in my neighbourhood complained the stench of the wastewater discharged in the street by another neighbour.

Moreover, most cesspits are built without lining. They are only dug in the ground, which absorbs wastewater, decreasing the need of tankers. Therefore, wastewater contaminates soil and groundwater, as well as the water collected in the few domestic rainwater harvesting cisterns in the village.

The building of the sewage system in Wādī Fūkīn is hindered by the Israeli army. While Israel develops its water systems in the Palestinian Territories, it hinders the PNA's

---

<sup>266</sup> In this case the term *mağārī* is used metaphorically, to refer to sewage water even if there is not a sewer, but only private cesspits.

building of water infrastructures. Indeed, the building and maintenance of infrastructure in the Palestinian territories, such as sewage system, drinking water networks or wastewater treatment plant, depends on the Israeli authorities' permit. Indeed, the 1994 Cairo Agreement between Israel and the PNA has established that the development and management of water and sewage systems in the Palestinian territories are a responsibility of the Palestinian Authority, except in the Israeli military areas and settlements. However, the following 1995 Washington agreement has set up a permanent Joint Water Committee that deals with all issues concerning water and sewage in the West Bank. Its permit is necessary to engage in well drilling and to build and maintain any water and sewage infrastructures in the West Bank. Despite the Committee is made up of an equal number of Palestinians and Israelis, Israelis have the veto right, which they use to hinder water development in the Occupied Territories, leaving most of Palestinians with insufficient or without important facilities (Fröhlich and Ide 2008).

The lack of sewage network in most of Palestinian rural areas, but also in many urban areas, is an important factor contributing to groundwater and spring water pollution and quality deterioration at the regional level, threatening the drinking water supply in the West Bank. Given the lack of wastewater treatment facilities, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed in open areas or nearby valleys, damaging the environment<sup>267</sup>.

Some inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, especially those belonging to the middle class and new generations, connect drinking water to the modernity and superiority of the state of Israel, which purifies and treats groundwater making it suitable for human consumption.

This idea shows the naturalisation of groundwater pollution and contamination, which denies its hybrid character as product of socio-ecological processes of domination and repression entailed by the Israeli and Palestinian urban development and the Israeli discriminating planning strategies and techno-politics (Mitchell 2002). It highlights the spread of the Western modernist contraposition between the commoditised nature controlled by human beings (the drinking water), which bears a positive value, and the negative and threatening uncontrolled nature (the untreated groundwater) (Latour 1991).

---

<sup>267</sup> In 2012 in the West Bank only ten towns were served by sewer systems, only four of them had treatments plants, and none had a significant reuse scheme. About 69% of the West Bank population still relied on septic tanks. Only a little part of the remaining 31 % of sewage collected by sewers is adequately treated. A total amount of 25 MCM of untreated sewage is discharged to the environment each year in 350 locations (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

Differently, in Wādī Fūkīn some farmers resist to, and overturn, the discursive construction of the greater quality and healthy character of the commoditised and purified drinking water, compared to the unhealthy character of untreated waters such as spring water. In particular, people belonging to the eldest generations or with a low level of formal education, less affected by it and by media, they contest the scientific discourses about quality deterioration of spring water. They still drink spring water, claiming its pureness and healthy character, connected to its “naturalness”. As an elderly farmer said me:

« *Mayyat al-‘uyūn ṣaḥḥīa ‘ašān btīgī min al-arḍ... binišrahā min zamān* (the water of the springs is healthy because it comes from the land... we drink it since a far past<sup>268</sup>) ».

Beside, these elder farmers claim the lower quality of the treated *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water), which is harmful for plants. Another farmer explained to me: « If spring water is better for plants, it is better also for us... ». According to them purified water has been created by Israel as a political tool to make people drink only Israeli water.

The “Palestinian nature” is reified as implicitly healthy and resisting to the “corrupting” outside, authoritarian human interventions, such as the urban and infrastructure development organised by the Israeli and Palestinian state, viewed as noxious (harmful physically and morally) for men and the environment. It may seem that these ideas are grounded on the Western ontological separation of nature and culture. However, in the struggle for autonomy against the Israeli and Palestinian state’s institutions and power, this dichotomy is appropriated to express a different symbolic divide.

The local, historical, reciprocal and sharing relationships between human beings and non-human beings (including “natural” elements such as spring water) and the related local forms of knowledge, are naturalised as part of local historical ecological processes. Spring water, land, local seeds and Palestinians’ interactions with them (farming activities and other practices), as well as the products of these sustainable interactions (such as crops), are viewed as natural, implicitly healthy and resisting to the deterioration caused by state domination.

Differently, the Israeli and the PNA’s state-led urbanisation, production and commoditisation of a new kind of water and their destructive exploitation of local “nature”, including both human and non-human beings, are viewed as “unnatural”, unhealthy, stranger practices, threatening the local socio-ecological environment.

---

<sup>268</sup> In Arabic the word *zamān* means time and it is used to refer to a far past.

Addressing the political-ecology of the urbanisation of nature in the Western countries, Kaika (2005) highlights that both the purified drinking water and the “bad water” (Kaika 2005:54) are produced in the framework of processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, understood as socio-ecological processes. Following Latour’s critics of the ontological separation between nature and culture, all kinds of water are socio-natural hybrids, “quasi-objects” (they are subjects and objects, natural and social, material and discursive) (Latour 1991). They are materially produced as commodity through social relations of production, but they are socially constructed as natural, and thus, alienated from social processes. The naturalisation of water masks the social production of water and the power relationships involved in its production and distribution.

According to Kaika, the material production of drinking water and the discursive construction of the difference between it and untreated waters have not entailed only new social and material relationships mediating the access to water, ruled by the market. Besides the change of the physical and social character of water, they also lead to the social construction of specific spaces for the use of these kinds of water, and to connected new marks of social distinction and dynamics of exclusions.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, drinking water is a source of symbolic differentiation between the dominating Israelis and the subordinated Palestinians, many of whom have not access to drinking water. The symbolic and material production of drinking water contributes to create Palestinians’ subordination and dependence on Israeli infrastructures and technologies.

Besides the access to water, also the quality of water is an important dimension of the Palestinian national struggle against Israel (Bellissari 1994). Palestinian national discourses claim the Palestinians’ right of healthy drinking water, emphasising the need of state’s facilities and infrastructures in the increasingly urbanised Palestinian territories.

Drinking water is a source of symbolic differentiation also between Palestinians with the access to it and those who have not it. In particular between citizens living in urban areas under the administration of the PNA and served by water networks (the main town like Bethlehem, Hebron, Ramallah..) and those living in rural or urban areas and refugee camps situated in an area B or C, in which the need of an Israeli permit to build infrastructures leads to the their further marginalisation.

These dynamics bring insights on the political and cultural meaning of water modernisation, contributing to the understanding of the role of water in the nation-state's contemporary patterns of discipline of territories and populations.

This subject has been analysed by many studies about the old and new forms of colonialism (Gasteyer et al. 2012) addressing water issues in the Middle East and Egypt (Mitchell 2002; Trottier 2000, 2013), by the anthropological Anglophone literature concerning water in Asia and Africa (Leach 1959; Geertz 1972, 1973; Bernal 1997; Mosse 2009, 2008, 2003; Anand 2011), and by political ecology studies carried out in Latin America (Boelens 1998b). These researches highlight the colonial legacy of the hydro-politics promoted by the development institutions in many Middle East, African, Asian countries, and in other post-colonial contexts. They show how the reorganisation and development of water infrastructures and administration, fostered by colonial institutions and the present development politics and actors (Van Aken 2003; 2009; 2012), constitute a state's strategy and attempt of control of the territory and its resources and inhabitants. The colonial, national and development water policies are hydro-politics (Trottier 1999) of control which discipline territories and populations, creating and naturalising a new political and social order, which allows to make local spaces and populations comprehensible, exploitable and controllable (Scott 1998).

The history of Palestine is characterised by the succession of state structures which have exerted an increasing direct control over local populations, territories and water-worlds. During the European colonisation of the Middle East water modernisation was aimed at controlling and integrating local territories and populations in the "modern" state's centralised power structures, national economies and productive systems. According to the British mandate's "indirect rule" of local populations, in Palestine water projects were planned at the local and regional level.

Some elder inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn remember that during the British colonisation the irrigation channels network in the village has been extended, allowing peasants to irrigate more lands and the British authorities to ask the payment of taxes for them.

The British Mandate's authorities left local political institutions manage resources and production systems, in order to co-opt the most powerful tribal groups and leaders (to the detriment of others), through which they ruled local territories, seeking to decrease conflicts and resistance. Until the creation of Israel, in Palestine water was mainly managed at the local level. The territory was shaped by multiple hydro-social configurations (Boelens et al.



2016) often characterised by collective and cooperative forms of management according to communal property regimes, but which included also water resources privately owned.

As in the whole Middle East, the state administration led to a radical reorganisation of the territory and the socio-political configurations. It led to the formation of new identity constructions and to the politicisation and increased territorialisation of tribal identities, communities and networks of solidarity, in opposition to the state or in collusion with it (Bocco and Tell 1995).

In the framework of the 20<sup>th</sup> century processes of decolonisation, in the Middle East and North African countries also the elites building and controlling the new nation-states according to the Western model have engaged in water planning as a means to control local territories and populations. Similarly to the colonial period, the integration of local water flows within state's power network and territorial scale are processes of territorialisation aimed at converting tribesmen into more governable and productive individual urban citizens or agriculturalists. Once again, the objective was the sedentarisation, detribalisation and atomisation of the local societies, in order to integrate local people in the new national political order and global economic network, by detaching individuals from patterns of loyalty and political belonging, which differ from and compete with that to the nation-state. However, differently from the British administration, the new nation-states created in the Middle East and North Africa countries – included Israel and later the PNA – adopted a centralised approach to water management. Centralised water planning and modernisation allowed a higher control of local productive systems, leading to even deeper changes in rural and urban productive realities.

## **2 The Competition between Territorial Domestic Water Infrastructures**

The Israeli national water company, called Mekorot, built the waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn and the neighbouring villages of Naḥḥālīn, Ḥūsān and Battīr, and connected them to the water system supplying domestic water to the Beitar Illit and other settlements in that area. This water network, represented in figure 68, created a new dimension of sharing between these rural villages, by connecting their local hydrosocial networks and territory between each other and to wider territories, power and economic structures.

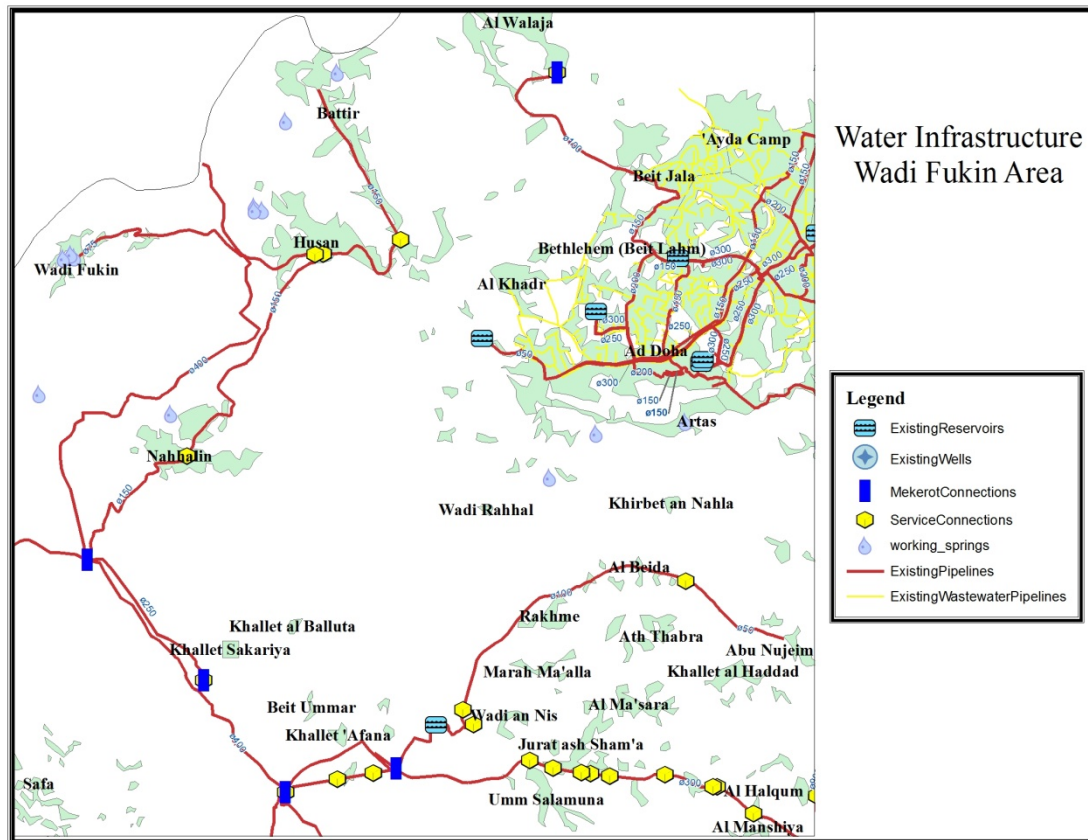


Figure 68: Water network in the area of Wādī Fūkīn (WBWD, 2015)

In order to supply domestic water to Israeli settlers occupying Palestinian lands, the Israeli water company develops its water systems in the West Bank and connected to them also some Palestinian villages and refugee camps<sup>269</sup> situated in the areas C and a few areas B close to the settlements.

The development of the Israeli water systems in the Occupied Palestinian territories consists in a strategy of “territorialisation” (Trottier 2000:38) aimed at extending Israeli control over the territory. These water techno-politics (Mitchell 2002) are the expression of the “politics of verticality” (Weizman 2003, 2007) that characterises Israeli water and urban development planning.<sup>270</sup> This politics consists in the creation of a territorial contiguity between the territory included in Israel, Jerusalem and the settlements in the Palestinian Territories, while

<sup>269</sup> The al-’Arrūb refugee camp, situated in an area B between Bethlehem and Hebron, is under the siege of the Israeli military forces all the day long. Nevertheless, the families living in it benefit from the continuous water supply of the nearby Etzion Israeli settlement.

<sup>270</sup> I analyse in detail the Israeli strategies of fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories in the paragraph 3 of the first chapter.

dis-connecting the Palestinian territories not only in their horizontal dimension, but also along their vertical dimension. The appropriation of most of underground aquifers and the development of Israeli water systems establishes the Israeli subterranean sovereignty creating a hidden interdependence between Israelis and Palestinians, grounded on the unequal sharing of common water resources<sup>271</sup>.

Water has a key role in the material and symbolic construction of the sovereign Israeli state and in the domination of Palestinians as subordinated colonial subjects.

Following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, in 1959 Israel proclaimed the Israeli Water Law, which established the centralisation of water resources<sup>272</sup>. This law establishes that in Israel all water users have to apply for a one year-long production licence from the Water Commissioner, which decides the conditions of water use.

In 1967, after the Six-Day War<sup>273</sup>, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and brought under its control 80% of the regional water resources (Dombrowsky 1998)<sup>274</sup>. The military authorities issued military orders which established the Israeli authorities' complete control over the access, use and management of the entire water supplies in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

The Israeli military Order No. 92 (1967) "gives the absolute authority of controlling all issues related to water to the Water Officer, who is appointed by the Israeli courts". The Israeli military Order No. 158 (1967), "Order Amending the Water Supervision Law", establishes that all wells, springs and water projects are under the full direct command of the Israeli Military Commander. It states that:

"It is prohibited to construct any new water installation without a license and that the licensing officer has the right of rejecting any application for a license without having

---

<sup>271</sup> The segregated interdependence of Palestinians and Israelis is addressed in detail in Chapter V.

<sup>272</sup> In 1955 Israel proclaimed two laws concerning drilling (law 5715-1955) and water metering (law 5716-1955), while in 1957 it established a law on drainage and flood control (law 5718-1959).

<sup>273</sup> The Six-Day War, also called 1967 Arab–Israeli War, was fought between June 5 and 10, 1967 by Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt (known at the time as the United Arab Republic), Jordan, and Syria.

<sup>274</sup> Both Israel and the Palestinian territories depend on the freshwater sources of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan Basin. The latter consists of the Jordan River and its sources and tributaries, and of many aquifers. The biggest subterranean water reservoirs are the Coastal and the Mountains Aquifer with about 240 and 679 million cubic meters per year respectively (Dombrowsky 1998).

to give the justification for his rejection”. Every installation or water resource built without a permit is liable to be confiscated<sup>275</sup>.

Moreover, the Order No. 948 states that every citizen in the Gaza Strip is compelled to obtain the approval of the Israeli military commander before to implement any water-related project (Kirshbaum 2007). These military orders allowed Israel to limit new wells drilling by Palestinians and to impose a quota on the existing agricultural wells, establishing the amount of water that could be sourced.

During the Oslo negotiations, water was one of the more sensitive, contested and critical issues, together with the problems of refugees and the Jerusalem status. Their final solutions have been postponed to the permanent status negotiations. However, the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995 Israel and Palestinians have negotiated an agreement in Washington establishing an unequal allocation of the renewable water resources from the two aquifers situated in the territory (the Mountain aquifer and the Coastal aquifer). It attributed about 20% of the total estimated water resources to Palestinians, and 80% to Israelis (not as a percentage of a changing total amount, which entails the sharing of yearly and seasonal droughts)<sup>276</sup> (Kirshbaum 2007). Water withdrawals per capita for Palestinians in the West Bank are about one quarter of those for Israelis, and with the growth of the population in Israel and the West Bank, this gap is increasing (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

Through the control of underground water resources and the extension of the water systems Israel appropriates the Palestinian Territories and leads to the integration and dependence of the basic water services in the Occupied Territories with those of Israel. These conditions entail a high dependence of the Occupied Territories on the Israeli economy (Dillman 1989; Hilal and Khan 2004) and hinder the possibility of attaining the Palestinian national sovereignty.

---

<sup>275</sup> Only the Head, appointed by the Area Commander, has authority in any water issue regarding “transportation, extraction, export, consumption, sale, distribution, inspection of its use, purification, allotment of shares, the establishment of water projects, measurement, prevention of contamination, carrying out of studies and measurements in anything that deals with water matters, drilling wells, hearing of objections and all proceedings dealing with any of the above laws, etc., fixing and collecting fees, taxes and any payments for any of the above and any other matter which has not been mentioned specifically above which deals in any way whatsoever with water subjects”.

<sup>276</sup> Since the Oslo Accords, in the West Bank Palestinians extract only about 17-20% of the “estimated potential” of the aquifers, since Israel overdraws on this amount by more than 50% (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

For Palestinians, at the national level, the struggle for water symbolises the Palestinians' struggle for justice, viewed as their collective right of independence and self-determination. The Israelis' privileged access to most of water resources strengthens and naturalises the process of cultural formation of a Palestinian national identity, as the product of the relationship of difference from Israelis.

Since the PNA's establishment in 1994, the operation and maintenance of the waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn, as well as those in the other three villages, are under the administration of the WBWD (West Bank Water Department)<sup>277</sup>. The WBWD is responsible of the greater supply of water to the Palestinian communities in the West Bank. This department is under the PWA (Palestine Water Authority), the PNA's central agency with responsibility in the water sector, such as water resources management and water supply and sanitation services. The PWA oversees the technical operation and maintenance of the WBWD networks and is responsible of the administrative management of wells. However, the Mekorot still controls the operation and maintenance of wells, for which the Israeli company charges the PWA.

Water supply and the maintenance of the water network connecting the villages and the Israeli settlements in the area are still prerogatives of the Israeli water company, which provides the greater amount of water supply used in the Palestinian territories through interconnected systems.

However, villagers' payment of the Mekorot for domestic water is mediated by PNA's institutions.

*Al-mağlis al-qarawī* (the Village Council) is the institution with the role of managing the water services, such as water supply and sanitation services, at the local level. It is responsible for the villagers' payment to the WBWD (West Bank Water Department) of the domestic water bills charged according to the consumption of every dwelling, measured by individual water meters (one for each dwelling). The Village Council gives the money collected to the WBWD, which gives it to the PWA<sup>278</sup>. The PNA has the ultimate

---

<sup>277</sup> Before the creation of the PNA the Israeli Civil Administration (within the Israeli Ministry of Defence) ruling the Occupied Palestinian territories was fully in charge of all existing water supply facilities operated by the WBWD, which was established in 1967 (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

<sup>278</sup> The PWA has been given the mandate through By-Law No. 2 (1996) and has stressed (in its amendments to Law no.3 for 2002) the management of water resources; the execution of water policy; the establishment, supervision and monitoring of water projects; and to the initiation, coordination and co-operation between the parties affected by water management (Muamer et al. 2014).

responsibility to pay the Mekorot the domestic water delivered to Wādī Fūkīn and to the other Palestinian villages, according to the bulk water meter located at the connection with each village, measuring the total amount of water flowing in its waterworks.

The Village Council is a PNA's local institution created in 1995, and subject to the authority of the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government. It is directly responsible of the public administration of Wādī Fūkīn, providing local inhabitants with infrastructure services such as domestic water and electricity systems, solid waste collection, road construction and maintenance, and street cleaning; it has also the responsibility of organising social development services, projects and case studies for the village<sup>279</sup>. In fact, the Village Council's fulfilment of these tasks depends on the PNA's institutions' approval and donors' funding.

In 2015 the PWA has built a new *šabaket al-miāh* (water network) supplying domestic water to the four Palestinian villages of Wādī Fūkīn, Naḥḥālīn, Ḥūsān, and Battīr. The new PNA's water network connecting these villages between each other has been built thanks to USAID funding, while the new waterworks built in each village have been funded by the World Bank, for a total amount of 3,650,000 USD<sup>280</sup>.

This water system has been planned in the framework of a development project addressing "Water Supply and Sanitation Improvements for West Bethlehem Villages" (State and Peace-building Fund 2012). According to the 2012 project proposal (State and Peace-building Fund 2012), the project concerned the replacement of the water supply piped networks in the four villages, the construction of two water reservoirs to improve water supply (in particular in Naḥḥālīn and Battīr), and the development of the capacity of local institutions such as the Village Councils and the JSCPD (Joint Services Council for Planning and Development) for West Bethlehem.

The PWA was the technical counterpart of the World Bank, with the responsibility, among others, of the preparation of the water system design, the implementation of the project and management of financial matters. The World Bank had the responsibility of approving the plan of the PWA's engineers, which anyway was subjected to the Israeli institutions' approval and permit. In particular, in the built-up area of Wādī Fūkīn and the other villages,

---

<sup>279</sup> Sources of information: the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ 2010) and interviews to the head of the Village Council carried out in 2015.

<sup>280</sup> The project concept originates from the NGO FOEME (Friends of the Earth - Middle East) in the framework of the "Good Water Neighbours" program. I have explained the activities and projects organised by this NGO in the paragraph 4.1, Chapter I.

mainly included in an area B<sup>281</sup>, any infrastructure building has to be approved by the Technical Joint Water Committee<sup>282</sup>.

The PNA planning decisions are limited by international powerful actors on which funding it depends, and on the Israeli military institutions, which anyway have the ultimate decisional power.

The Project Management Unit<sup>283</sup>, under the PWA, paid two engineers to supervise the work on the ground (one for the waterworks in each village, another one for the main water system connecting them), in collaboration with the JSCPD<sup>284</sup>.

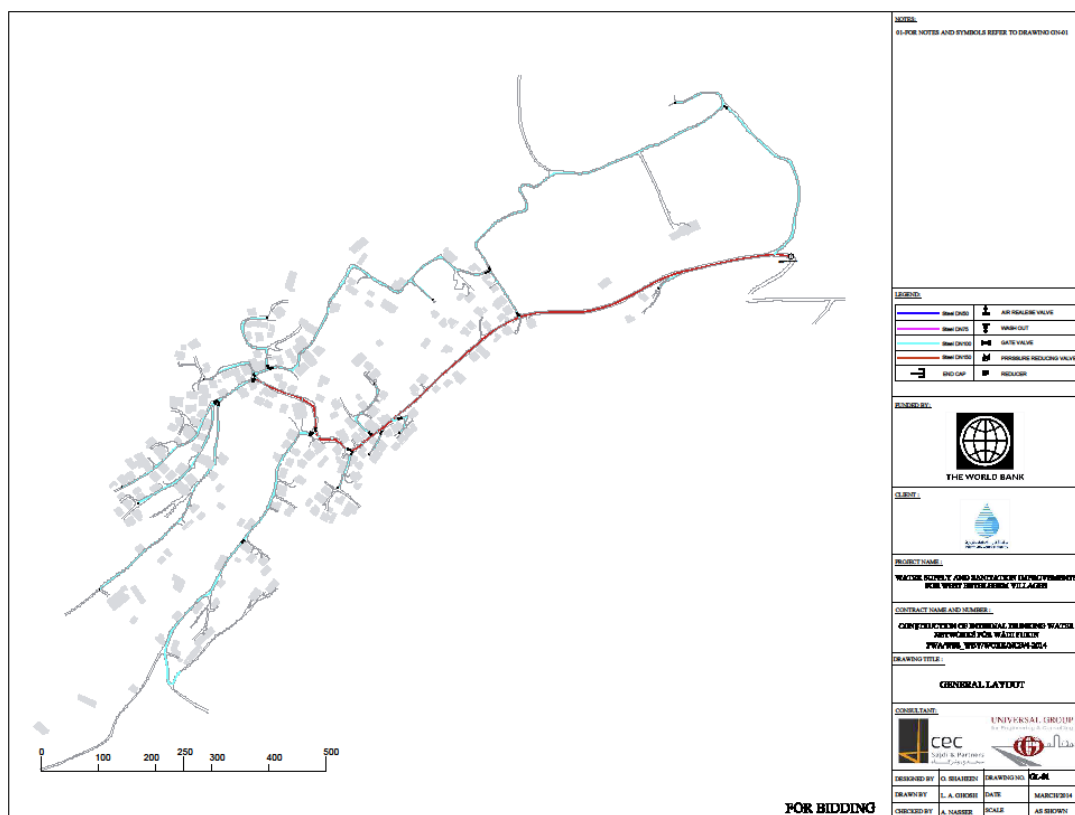


Figure 69: The plan of the water network in Wādī Fūkīn completed in 2017 (WBWD, 2015)

<sup>281</sup> The areas B of the Palestinian Territories are under the PNA's administration but under the security control of the Israeli army.

<sup>282</sup> I explained the prerogatives of this institution in the Paragraph 1 of this chapter.

<sup>283</sup> The Project Management Unit has extensive experience in water supply and sanitation system design, construction and contract management (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

<sup>284</sup> I have analysed the role of this PNA's institution in the next paragraph.

The gradual extension of the PNA's administration and infrastructure in Wādī Fūkīn (and in the other three Palestinian villages) consists in the complicated and slow implementation of the political and administrative arrangement decided by the 1993 Oslo II Agreement – according to which the areas B are under the PNA's administration.

Actually, the Oslo Accords established that by 1999 Israel should have transferred sovereignty to the Palestinian National Authority, relinquishing control of the West Bank. However, until now Israel has not respected this agreement. On the contrary, most of the West Bank territories are under the exclusive control of Israeli military forces, which appropriated agricultural lands and other lands rich of natural resources. Therefore, Israel denies to Palestinians the access to many resources such as water and hinders the economic development of the Palestinian territories<sup>285</sup>.

For the PNA, the new water network built in the area of Wādī Fūkīn symbolises an important step toward national water centralisation and modernisation, viewed as a key part of the Palestinian State building, according to the Western model of state and supported mainly by Western donor funding. Indeed, the building of the institutional and infrastructural systems of the PNA depends on international donor funding. In the context of lack of independence, jurisdiction and ultimate control over a continuous territory and its resources, the centralisation of the water resources available to Palestinians is essential to the PNA's attempt to extend its control over the local Palestinian population. It is a way to make their physical bodies progressively more dependent on the PNA's administration, especially in the lack of an ultimate territorial power.

Today, the WBWD is responsible for the administration and maintenance of the whole new water network (also the water system connecting the villages between each other), and controls the main taps regulating water flow to each Palestinian village. Therefore, it has the control over water distribution between the villages and within each of them.

However, this new Palestinian water system is connected up to the Israeli one supplying domestic water to the Israeli settlements in the area, such as, for example, Beitar Illit. Therefore, domestic water is still supplied by the Mekorot, which delivers it to the Palestinian network. The Israeli national water agency still has the power to decide the total amount of water flowing in the Palestinian network and to cut off water supply to these Palestinian

---

<sup>285</sup> I analysed this subject in the Chapter I.



villages, according to changeable repressive and administrative strategies. Israel still retains ultimate control over water resources.

The construction of the new water system was planned to be completed in 2014. However, it finished in 2017, hindered by Israeli institutions' obstructionism. The implementation of the water development project has been the outcome of complicated and unfair negotiations between the PNA's institutions and those of the Israeli state. These negotiations did not concern only technical and management considerations; they consisted in a political arena characterised by power dialectics between discursive and practical strategies of these states' institutions competing for the control over the local territory.

The path of the water networks was often a contested and sensible matter whose planning was limited by Israeli legal devices and administrative constraints, which also hindered and made slower the works. For example, in the village of Naḥḥālīn, situated to the east of Wādī Fūkīn, the building of the waterworks has been interrupted for three months, waiting the Israeli military authorities' permit to uproot two trees situated along the planned path of the waterworks, in order to broaden the street and put the pipes.

Explaining to me these dynamics, Ibrāhīm Šakārna, the head of the Village Council of Naḥḥālīn, stressed the ironic character of this situation: in order to build the electricity infrastructure of the Israeli settlements encircling Naḥḥālīn<sup>286</sup>, the Israeli army uprooted five thousands trees grown in a hill of the village, further appropriating other Palestinian land. However, in the name of environmental protection, it controlled and hindered the uprooting of two only tree for the implementation of a PNA's project<sup>287</sup>.

A main object of negotiations with Israel (clearly unbalanced in its favour) was the building two 1.000 m<sup>3</sup> reservoirs, locally called *ḥazzānāt* (cisterns). The PWA wanted to build them in order to collect the domestic water delivered by the Mekorot.

In the following figure 70, I reproduced the sketch of the new water system plan proposed by the PWA's engineer Rā'ed Samāra, which he made when I interviewed him in 2015.

---

<sup>286</sup> Naḥḥālīn is bordered by the Israeli settlements of Beitar Illit and Hadar Beitar to the north-west, by the Geva'ot settlement to the west, by Neve Daniyyel settlement to the east, and by a number of Israeli settlements which are part of Gosh Etzion settlements (Rosh Zurim, El'azar, Allon Shevut and Kfar Etzion) to the south (Muamer et al. 2014).

<sup>287</sup> I explained the Israeli strategies of land expropriation legitimised by environmental protection claims in Paragraph 4.1, Chapter I.

## Water network proposed by a PWA' engineer (not accepted)

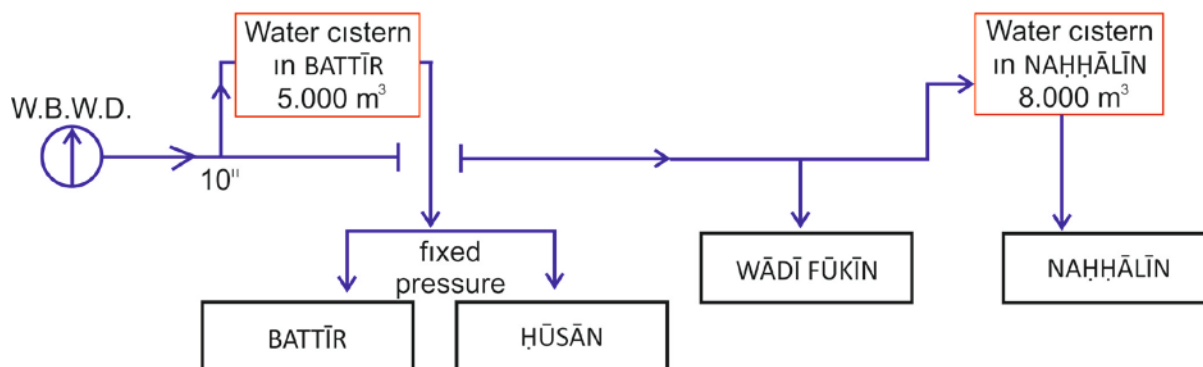


Figure 70: The water network proposed by a PWA's engineer and not accepted by Israel (2015)

This plan included the building of a reservoir in the village of Battir, in which to collect domestic water for this village and for Ḥūsān, and of another reservoir in the village of Naḥḥālīn. As acknowledged by the project proposal (State and Peace-building Fund 2012), this was a very sensitive issue, since the two reservoirs were planned to be built within the area C<sup>288</sup> adjacent to the area B of these villages. Therefore, their construction had to be approved by the ICA (Israeli Civil Administration), under the Israeli Ministry of Defence, which is the military institution ruling the civilian affairs in all the areas C of the Palestinian Territories.

All was ready: the Project Team received verbal assurances from the ICA that permits would have been provided within a six month time, and the availability of land for the reservoirs was secured by the two Village Councils<sup>289</sup>. Nevertheless, finally the ICA refused to issue the permit to build the reservoirs.

The reasons behind this decision are political. The building of a Palestinian infrastructure in a land within an area C would have entailed the PNA's legal ownership of that land. Moreover, the reservoirs would have allowed the WBWD to have a greater, even if relative, autonomy

<sup>288</sup> The areas C are under Israeli civilian affairs administration and security control.

<sup>289</sup> While the land for the reservoir in Battir was already owned by the municipality, in Naḥḥālīn it has been donated by a villager to the Village Council.

in the management and distribution of domestic water to the concerned Palestinian villages, in the framework of the colonial constraints.

For example, the reservoirs would have allowed the WBWD to ration out water and store it, in order to deliver it to the villages in case the Mekorot's water supply was cut off. The reservoirs – whose building is still an object of negotiation with Israel – bear a political meaning, symbolising a little step towards the PNA's water independence.

The independence of the new Palestinian water system is very relative. For Palestinians living in Wādī Fūkīn the *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water) is still *mayyat Mekūrūt* (the Mekorot's water). The new water network, claimed by the PNA's actors - such as the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn, or the PWA's engineers - as an important national success, actually mirrors the subordinated and ambiguous role of the PNA.

The institutions of the Palestinian proto-state take on the maintenance and administrative responsibilities and costs of water supply – as well as of other services – without exerting any control over decision-making processes concerning the access to water and other resources, held by Israel. The PNA and the international development agencies provide the occupied population with basic services, avoiding Israel to fulfil this responsibility and to pay the connected costs as established by the Treaty of Geneva, which requires the occupying countries to take care of the occupied population.

The creation of the PNA actually consists in the establishment of a network of institutions for Israel's colonial indirect rule of the Palestinian territory, resources and inhabitants, sustained by international, and in particular Western, development donor and agencies.

In the West Bank, the competition for the control over the local territory and population between the PNA and Israel is carried out through conflicting territory planning and water techno-politics, both legitimised by modernist ideologies and scientific knowledge. Since its creation in 1948, the strong state of Israel centralised water management within its borders, establishing its ultimate power.

Differently, from 1948 to 1967, the Jordanian authorities ruling the West Bank and the Egyptian ones administering the Gaza Strip allowed local forms of water management to continue. Until 1950 most of the water used in the West Bank originated from springs and rainwater collection, given that the West Bank is characterized by a rocky soil, where wells are drilled with more difficulty compared to the coastal plain. In the 1950s and 1960s capital and technologies to drill wells became available for villagers, who created associations in order to gather the necessary funds (Kirshbaum 2007).

In 1967 Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and brought under its control most of regional water resources (Dombrowsky 1998). However, Israel allowed the persistence of the local water property regimes and customary institutions in most of villages (excepted concerning the domestic water supplied to some villages such as Wādī Fūkīn.

Since its establishment in 1994, also the Palestinian proto-state seeks to centralised water resources, supported by development agencies. Water centralisation has been formalised with the national water law proclaimed by the Palestinian Authority in 2002. The Water Law (No. 3/2002) aims to develop, manage and protect water resources. All water resources are considered public property. Current legislation on water resource management dates from both pre-1967 and post Oslo Agreement (Palestinian Water Authority 2002). After the Second World War, development agencies and donors fostered centralised water management pattern in almost all post-colonial states by, whose funding was necessary for the building of the new nation-states. Until the 1980s, the development agencies' approach to water problems was dominated by a supply management paradigm that emphasised the need of strong state institutions able to increase water supply by building large-scale infrastructures and a centralised administration. In the framework of this water paradigm, local organisations and forms of water management were de-legitimised as primitive and inefficient by governments and development agencies.<sup>290</sup>

However, as addressed in the next paragraph, the PNA's hydro-social projects and the ideologies they convey are manipulated and contested by local societies as issues of justice related to local perceptions of equity and legitimacy.

### **3 Decentralising Water Thefts and Free Water**

Since 1995 the village council is responsible for the villagers' payment to the WBWD of the domestic water bills charged according to the consumption of every dwelling. Local inhabitants are asked to pay 5 Nis for each m<sup>3</sup> of domestic water, which cover the price of water (2.68 Nis) and the cost of maintenance of water infrastructures. Many times I spoke with Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the local Village Council from 2011 until 2018, about domestic water administration in Wādī Fūkīn.

---

<sup>290</sup> I address these discourses and their political implications in the next paragraph.

According to Aḥmed, a main problem of the Village Council is that only about 30% of villagers pay water regularly<sup>291</sup>. As he told me: « in the village of Naḥḥālīn, the situation is even worse... only 10% of inhabitants pay for water ».

Since the creation of the PNA and the PWA administration of domestic water, most of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn refuse to pay for domestic water supply, which previously, instead, was paid to the Mekorot to avoid problems with Israel. Therefore, until 2017 the Village Council incurred a debt of more than 100.000 Nis with *as-sulṭa* (the authority), as the PNA is called by Palestinians. The PNA menaces the head of the Village Council to not support any project in Wādī Fūkīn if this debt is not paid.

Aḥmed Sukkar tried in vain to negotiate the reduction of this debt complaining to the PNA that local inhabitants are asked to pay an amount of water greater than the one they use. Indeed, as Rā'ed Samāra (a PWA's engineer) explained to me during an interview, the plastic *mawāsīr* (pipes) of the waterworks built by Israel were placed close to the surface, at a depth of nearly half a meter underground, and some parts were not buried. Since they were not insulated, over time they have been corroded by rain, soil and sun. Therefore, a great amount of water was lost and not used. The amount of water loss was calculated by subtracting the sum of the amounts of water measured by the water meter of each house from the amount of water measured by the bulk water meter in the village<sup>292</sup>.

Differently, as one can see in figure 71, in the new waterworks, pipes are buried at greater depths (about 1.20 m) and they are insulated by means of a jacket made of a concrete layer and a separated PVC<sup>293</sup> layer.

---

<sup>291</sup> According to the project proposal for the building of the network, in 2012 only 20% of the inhabitants in Wādī Fūkīn were paying for domestic water; in Battīr 35% of inhabitants, in Naḥḥālīn 10% and in Ḥūsān 44% (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

<sup>292</sup> Reliable numbers are difficult to find. However, in 2015 Ibrāhīm Šakārna (the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council) told me that on the 20.000 m<sup>3</sup> supplied to the village of Naḥḥālīn, 8.000 m<sup>3</sup> were wasted. In Battīr, the rate of water losses was about 45% (Muamer et al. 2014). In 2012 the “unaccounted for water” in Wādī Fūkīn was 10%, in Battīr was 55%, in Naḥḥālīn was 38%, and in Ḥūsān was 40% (State and Peace-building Fund 2012). A part of these amounts of water may have been also stolen.

<sup>293</sup> The PVC is the acronym of polyvinyl chloride, which is a plastic-like material.

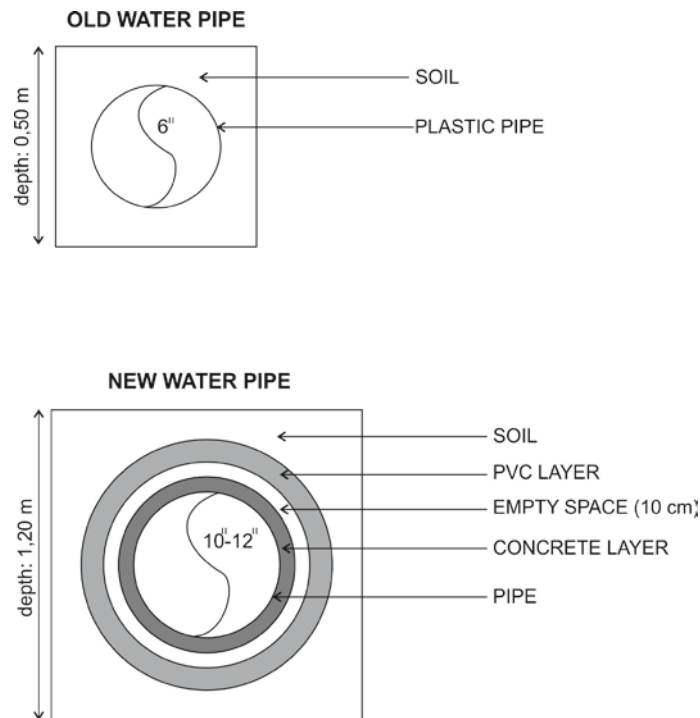


Figure 71: A section of a pipe in the old and the new waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn (a PWA's engineer, 2015)

Another problem in Wādī Fūkīn is that some local farmers steal domestic water to use it for irrigation, especially in the land without access to spring water, in the northern area of the village, called *al-ġibāl* (the mountains). These farmers divert domestic water from the waterworks in the built-up area to their fields, by means of rubber pipes, and damage the water meters.

These problems (the debt and the water loss) are shared by the four Palestinian villages connected to the Israeli (and later Palestinian) water network. However, their claims are not organised in common strategies. Each village engages in the negotiations with the PNA alone. This issue is not addressed also by the JSCPD for West Bethlehem, appointed as the entity responsible for water supply and sanitation services management in that area. This institution is part of the Palestinian local government structure and has been established in March 2001, thanks to the technical assistance from the European Union. It is composed of the heads of the Village Councils of 19 Palestinian villages situated in the south-west area of

Bethlehem Governorate<sup>294</sup>, including Wādī Fūkīn. Its prerogatives are to organise, manage and facilitate the planning and development of that area, fostering infrastructure development – such as the building of streets, schools, houses, water and sanitation systems – and heritage, tourism, and education projects concerning also the preservation of resources (State and Peace-building Fund 2012; Muamer et al. 2014)<sup>295</sup>.

In January 2011, this organisational structure has included a new department – the Water and Wastewater Department. This department has to plan and manage water supply and wastewater projects and services in all villages in the south-west area of Bethlehem. Water and sanitation services should be provided on the basis of full cost recovery.

The Village Councils included in the JSCPD signed a document attesting their agreement to transfer responsibility for providing and managing water supply and sanitation services to the JSCPD.

This arrangement complies with the April 2011 Institutional Water Sector Review of the PWA. This reform process establishes the delegation of the development and management of water supply and sanitation services to local institutions, such as municipalities, regional utilities, Village Councils or the inter-municipal cooperation structures Joint Service Councils. The declared aims were “to build social capital” and promote “social solidarity between local governments”, and to empower communities “to manage their own development”. Evidently, this objective has not been achieved, given the lack of common actions for shared claims.

Moreover, in 2017 in Wādī Fūkīn and the other villages domestic water was still managed mainly by the Village Councils. As Ibrāhīm Šakārna (the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council) told me, actually the Joint Council was still fulfilling the almost only role of granting licences to build houses<sup>296</sup>.

Local inhabitants often complain the uselessness of the Village Council and the other local PNA’s institutions, claiming their political participation in decision making within State

---

<sup>294</sup> The 18 Palestinian villages included in the Joint Council are: al-Ḥaḍer, Beyt Faḡḡār, al-Ġaba‘a, al-Ma‘šara, al-Walaḡa, Um Salamūna, Irtās, Battīr, Ġūret aš-Šama‘a, Ḥūsān, Marāḥ Ribāḥ, Marāḥ Ma‘allā, Naḥḥālīn, Wādī an-Niṣ, Wādī Raḥḥāl, Wādī Fūkīn, al-Manšiyya, Ḥallat al-Ḥaddād.

<sup>295</sup> Other sources of this information are the semi-structured interviews with: Aḥmed Sukkar (the head of the Wādī Fūkīn Village Council), who in 2015 was the General Manager of the JSCPD, and Ibrāhīm Šakārna (the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council), which I carried out in 2015.

<sup>296</sup> At the Palestinian Court many cases concern houses built without this licence, because of the lack of the economic resources necessary to pay the engineer and other experts, to connect the house to the electricity and water system, and to pay other services. Source of information: interviews with Ibrāhīm Šakārna, the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council in 2015.

institutions, from which they are excluded. In the framework of the PNA's attempt at centralising resources management and extending its power over the local population, local institutions are used by the PNA to exert social control but they are not empowered to participate to the PNA's negotiations and decision-making around local and national water issues and other political problems.

In 2015, when the building of the Palestinian water system began, Aḥmed was confident that the technologies in the new waterworks would have allowed solve these problems. According to him, the water flow to each house would have been regulated by a tap allowing closing water supply to the households refusing to pay. Some pressure sensors would have measured the decrease of pressure due to water thefts, allowing discovering them easier. Also, as one can see in figure 68, in the old waterworks the main water tap (indicated as "service connection") and the water-meter measuring the amount of domestic water supplied to the village were in the neighbouring village of Ḥūsān, two Km far from Wādī Fūkīn. The inhabitants and the Village Council could not control water thefts occurring in another village. In the new waterworks the main tap and water meter are placed closer to the built-up area in Wādī Fūkīn. According to Aḥmed, in this way the village would have had not to pay the stolen domestic water diverted before the water meter, outside the village.

However, in 2017, when the waterworks was completed, most of Aḥmed's expectations have been disappointed. Some people still stole domestic water and most villagers did not pay for it yet. Some local inhabitants with the access to the "modern" hydraulic expertise have appropriated quickly the new hydraulic technologies. As Aḥmed told me, one of them continued to steal water, by tampering with the water meter with a magnet.

Domestic water thefts show the ability of Palestinians to appropriate, manipulate and re-socialise the new commoditised water, hydraulic knowledge and technologies, despite the development ideology supposing indigenous populations' "underdeveloped" and "traditional" character hindering their technological and economic progress.

Moreover, in the new waterworks there are not taps which regulate the flow of water to each house in the village. In order to force families to pay for water, the Village Council cannot close the taps regulating the water flows to different areas in the village. This decision would affect all families living in it, including those paying for water, thus arousing harsh conflicts between them and with the Village Council. This situation highlights Aḥmed's blind faith in science and technology as the solution of social problems. Even if he had not hydraulic expertise, he imagined unlimited potentialities of hydraulic technologies and



scientific knowledge. His ideas were affected by modernisation ideologies considering water management as an economic and technical issue, which can be improved by the adoption of efficient scientific technologies. However, finally Ahmed had to admit that none technical solution can solve local behaviours hindering an “efficient” water management, which according to him are grounded on locally rooted « cultural and political ideas ». The discourse of the other villagers confirmed this view.

Besides the few families that have economic difficulties to pay for domestic water, some households do not pay the water bills because the adult male relatives (like brothers) living together do not agree about the amount of water each of them has to pay for. This highlights the fragmentation of the family pattern of solidarity.

Few inhabitants think that the Village Council collects the money but does not give them to the WBWD. Even if this idea is not shared by all villagers, almost all of them comment that, anyway, the PNA pays Israel for water, independently on their choices. Indeed, if the PNA wants to keep the control of the West Bank, it has to respect the agreements imposed by Israel, to not destabilise the current precarious (un)balance of power.

The complicated administrative conditions imposed by Israel lead to the spread of a feeling of irresponsibility concerning politics and problems at the national level.

Many people claim that water supply has to be free of charge, because for the *šarī'a* (Islamic law) water is an unmarketable gift of God. This despite today even spring water is rented or sold as a commodity by many local inhabitants. Also, previously domestic water was paid to Israel, fearing its repression.

This idea is confuted by a study showing that the Islamic norms ruling water management, established in the *šarī'a* (Islamic law) and its sources such as the Koran and Sunna, are not incompatible with the new global paradigm of water commoditisation (Faruqui et al. 2003). According to this analysis, in the Islamic law water is viewed as a common asset, which every human and not human beings has the right to use to satisfy vital needs. However, when the access to natural water sources is guaranteed thanks to investments in work, infrastructures and knowledge – such as private containers, wells, waterworks or sewage treatment works built, for example, by a government – water is defined as a private property and the expenses for the public service can be asked to be covered by its consumers.

Local inhabitants mobilise and reinterpret the Islamic norms to legitimise the reified local customary norms about water management in opposition to state institutions and water bureaucracies. Indeed, in most of people’s discourses finally the refusal to pay for water is

justified as a mainly political choice, by contesting the PNA's legitimacy to govern and to represent Palestinians' claims for justice. For most of villagers, the PNA's waterworks and administration consists in the imposition of another illegitimate and unfair authority that, attempting to extend its power, favours the Palestinian urban elites and collects taxes used to maintain the Israeli occupation.

By stealing water and refusing to pay for it, villagers compete with the vertical management of the water bureaucracies and re-politicise domestic water as medium of the public debate around the Palestinian state-building, the meanings of the state perceived locally and its relationships with citizens. They claim their political participation in decision making and the sharing of control and authority at all scales of water and state governance.

The management of domestic water, locally called *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water) emerges as a political arena in which the power dialectics between the villagers, the PNA and the Israeli institutions bring to light the contradictions and problems of legitimacy entailed by the creation of a State in a colonial context.

The PNA has not sovereignty, jurisdiction and ultimate control over a contiguous territory and its resources, held by the Israeli military forces. Its legitimacy and existence are not grounded locally. They depend on the consent of the Israeli military authorities and on the international donor funding, on condition that it pays the taxes to the Israeli State and controls local Palestinians, by repressing their resistance practices to the Israeli occupation and delegitimising their claims for justice and equity, which conflict with the PNA's narratives and policies.

As highlighted also by many studies about water carried out in Asia (Mosse 2008) or Latin American (Boelens 1998; Romano 2016), also in Middle East water is a main means of state building and a tool to increase direct control over local population, through processes of hydro-territorialisation which reshape local hydro-social territories and networks (Boelens et al. 2016). These processes of territorialisation strengthen the power of some social groups, usually urban citizens, and lead to the disempowerment of other groups, usually rural communities.

Local populations' struggles for water are not aimed only at sustaining livelihoods, but also at claiming decision-making authority, their right to define their own rules and institutions of water management, knowledge, values and meanings connected to water, territorial meanings, and identities.

The case of Wādī Fūkīn brings insights on the key role of water in the competition for the control over the territory between local populations and the PNA's centralised power structures, affected by global water dynamics.

The PNA's public regime of water management is hindered by the administrative conditions imposed by Israel, which deny Palestinian water infrastructures building and development, especially in the rural areas included in areas C, in which the PNA cannot exert its administrative and security prerogatives. In these areas (but not only), local power structures and customary institutions still manage most of water resources to which Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have access. The waters of numerous springs, used mainly for irrigation, are managed mainly in a cooperative way, according to rules and values negotiated by local users. The PNA's water centralisation is hindered also by numerous privately owned wells, and by regional utilities and Palestinian municipalities' administration of some water resources (Trottier 2013), by local practices such as water thefts and the personal relationships (patronage, kinship, friendship relations) mediating the preferential access to the domestic water managed by the PWA's institutions (De Donato 2013a).

In the framework of the competition with local customary institutions for the social control of water management, the PNA appropriates the development paradigm dominating until the '80s to de-legitimise decentralised systems of resources management as backward and as a threat to national security (Brooks and Trottier 2010). According to the PNA's discourses, the public regime of water management is the only guarantee of an equitable and efficient water management among Palestinians (Trottier 2013), especially in the context of the conditions of water stress created by Israel.

These discourses adopt the universalistic, technical and allocation efficiency concepts and ideas spread globally (Boelens and Vos 2012), according to which water distribution and problems consists in a technical, management and economic matter. The secularisation and commoditisation of water are connected to the modernist paradigm spread at the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. According to this ideology, the realm of nature (and, thus, water) has to be controlled, dominated and managed through scientific and technical knowledge allowing overcoming the constraints of a hostile "nature" (Van Aken 2012).

Following Kaika (2005), the discursive construction of water as "natural" allows naturalising and masking the dynamics of domination and marginalisation conveyed by water technopolitics (Mitchell 2002), which are political strategies defined as technical matters and masked within modernisation mission.

In Palestine, both during the previous British administration and today, these “politics of nature” (Latour 1999) have a key role in the imagination and invention of the “other” as “colonised” or “underdeveloped” and in the legitimisation of development interventions. Local knowledge and techniques concerning water have been and still are de-legitimised in the name of a supposed superiority of the scientific epistemology and methodologies.

The PNA’s water centralisation is hindered also by the black market of the *tank mayya* (tank water). Thanks to their wealthy condition, private salesmen who own water tankers buy water from the PNA at the network outlets and sell it as a private commodity to people at a higher price<sup>297</sup>. Until 2012, the price was decided by local water salesmen’s oligopolies, favoured by the lack of national rules on water price and quality.

Since 2012 the PNA attempts to co-opt and control these powerful social actors by establishing rules concerning the allocation of tank water, and the water price determination (De Donato 2013a)<sup>298</sup>. Nevertheless, some salesmen continue to sell water in an autonomous way at a higher price, exploiting the need of people that cannot wait the long waiting list of the PNA.

Differently from the communal forms of water management, the private sector participation in water supply may be formalised by the PNA, as discussed in the First Palestinian Water Forum in 2014. The privatisation of water supply, in line with the neo-liberal paradigm dominating global water management and discourses since the 1990s, may favour local elites, characterised by an overlap of positions among state officials and heads of public and private companies (Tamari 2002).

This change in the PNA’s patterns of water management mirrors changing models of water management at the regional and global scale.

In the Middle East and North Africa countries the present national water agencies still orient their interventions mainly to the development of State-led, large-scale water supply systems for urban areas and commercial irrigation (Brooks 2008), according to a supply management paradigm dominating international donors’ approach to water problems until the 1980s.

---

<sup>297</sup> Differently from refugees living in the ad-Dehīša camp (De Donato 2013a; Van Aken and De Donato 2018), the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn buy this water only in few occasions. For example, I saw an inhabitant of Wādī Fūkīn buying this water to irrigate his lands, given his access to a scarce amount of spring water.

<sup>298</sup> According to these rules, a family who wants to buy an additional amount of water has to get a permit from the PNA, which sends to the family one of the owners of water tankers registered under the PNA, following the chronological order of the requests.

However today, within the framework of water commoditisation and privatisation entailed by the new "global water regime" (Linton 2010)<sup>299</sup>, these actors are beginning to engage with water demand management, introducing forms of decentralised management, water-pricing principles, the engagement of the private sector in water distribution, and water-saving technologies such as drip irrigation (Postel et al. 2001).

Nevertheless, as shown in the case of the PNA, the decentralisation of water management often concerns only services provision and tasks such as the payment of bills. Local elites controlling state institutions seek to retain or achieve the control of the decision-making processes concerning water price, distribution and sectoral allocation, and the local social actors that can be empowered to establish some rules governing the social control of water management (Trottier 2013).

#### **4 Spatial Water Injustices and Water Fatalism**

During the works to build the new water network I made open some interviews to Aḥmed Sukkar, Ibrāhīm Šakārna (the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council), and to Rā'ed Samāra (a PWA's engineer).

According to them, the new "modern" technologies of the Palestinian water system would have solved also the problems concerning the unequal water distribution between the four Palestinian villages and within each of them, connected to their geographic position and features and to related pressure issues. With the old Israeli water system (figure 68), the amount of water supply to each concerned village depended in part on its position and altitude in relation to the Israeli water system and water flow direction.

According to the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council in 2015, the village of Naḥḥālīn, and Battīr were supplied with a relative smaller amount of domestic water, compared to Wādī Fūkīn<sup>300</sup>, because of problems of low water pressure. These villages are situated at a higher altitude compared to the Mekorot connection from which water is delivered<sup>301</sup>. The domestic

---

<sup>299</sup> I addressed the new neo-liberal paradigm of water management spread globally in the third chapter, paragraph 1.1.

<sup>300</sup> Altitude of Wādī Fūkīn: an average of 643 m above the sea level.

<sup>301</sup> According to a research carried out by the NGO WEDO, in 2008 the amount of water supplied to Wādī Fūkīn was 34.431 m<sup>3</sup>/ year, with an estimated rate of water supply per capita of 85 l/day. In the village of Battīr the rate of water supply per capita was 75 l/day; Naḥḥālīn was supplied with 117.500 m<sup>3</sup>/ year, with an estimated rate of water supply per capita of 48,5 l/day; Ḥūsān was supplied with 61.500 m<sup>3</sup>/ year, with an estimated rate of water supply per capita of 31 l/day (Muamer et al. 2014).

water flowing in the Israeli network came from the Mekorot connection, situated at a lower altitude, and was conveyed to Naḥḥālīn<sup>302</sup> and then to Battīr<sup>303</sup>, situated at an even higher altitude. The low pressure exerted by the motor pumps in the old network, connected also to the limited diameter of its pipes, entailed these villages' access to a lower amount of water, especially in summer, when water request is higher.

Pressure problems entailed unequal domestic water distribution also within the space of the village of Battīr, whose built-up area develops on different altitudes. The pump pushing water flow from the lower part of the village to its upper part did not exert enough pressure to guarantee an equal water supply to the families living in the two areas. The two parts of the village had to be supplied during different, alternated days.

These pressure problems were not only connected to technical issues related to the natural inclination of the hills where these villages are situated. They also mirrored the political marginalisation of Palestinians living, in particular, in the areas B and C, where Israel does not provide Palestinians with basic services, or it leaves them with inadequate infrastructures. To solve these problems, in the new water system the new pipes have a larger diameter than the old ones<sup>304</sup>, which were also obstructed by a layer of limestone. Therefore, water flows with a higher pressure, which is also regulated and kept constant by electronic pumps, according to the geographical features of each village.

The PNA's institutional actors which I interviewed – such as Aḥmed Sukkar, Ibrāhīm Šakārna, and Rā'ed Samāra – believed that the new PNA's centralised water administration could guarantee to Palestinians an equitable access to water, thanks to an efficient management of water resources and to the adoption of new hydraulic technologies in the framework of water modernisation. In these ideas water modernisation is connected to water distributive justice. These men were affected by the PNA's discourses, in which the public regime of water management is considered to be the only guarantee of an equitable and efficient water management among Palestinians (Trottier 2013).

Until the end of my last fieldwork period, in 2017, the village of Wādī Fūkīn benefited from the almost continuous domestic water supply delivered to the nearby Israeli settlement by the Mekorot. Water supply was usually cut off only few hours during the night,

---

<sup>302</sup> Altitude of Naḥḥālīn: an average of 682 m above the sea level.

<sup>303</sup> Altitude of Battīr: an average of 761 m above the sea level.

<sup>304</sup> The main pipes connecting the villages between each other have a diameter of 10-12 inches instead of the 6 inches, while the pipes within the villages are less large. (Source of information: a semi-structured interview with Rā'ed Samāra, a PWA's engineer).

or sometimes for few days, for example because of maintenance works in the Israeli main water system – as happened during one of my fieldwork periods.

For this reason, in Wādī Fūkīn, as in the Bethlehem urban area under the PNA's administration, few houses have cisterns. Also, today few houses have a functioning underground *bi'r* (well), a technique to collect rainwater historically spread in the Palestinian territories<sup>305</sup>.

According to the uncertain information of Aḥmed Sukkar (head of the Wādī Fūkīn Village Council), the village of Wādī Fūkīn was supplied monthly with about 1.500-2.000 m<sup>3</sup> of domestic water in winter, and 2.000-2.500 m<sup>3</sup> in summer. These amounts were variable<sup>306</sup>.

In the whole Palestinian territories, the availability of water for Palestinians is subject to changing Israeli use and administrative strategies of water sources, connected to economic and climate changes and to the variable yearly and seasonal rainwater availability.

Many villagers are afraid that the new PNA's water network may entail the access to a lower amount of domestic water. Indeed, in the areas A and B of the West Bank in which domestic water is supplied through the PNA's infrastructures, not all Palestinians endure problems of domestic water stress to the same extent.

Villagers know very well the situation in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša, situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem, where the elder generations lived for about fifteen years and some people originally from Wādī Fūkīn still live. This refugee camp differs from the surrounding urban area of Bethlehem for the presence of metal cisterns on the roof of each house, in which families store water to cater for the long periods when the PNA water supply is cut off (up to one month at a time). Refugee status is associated with economic and social rights established by the Arab states and adopted by the PLO since decades, such as the waiving of domestic water charges. The PNA has been trying to force refugees to pay for water, by restricting water supplies to the houses in the refugee camp, in order to integrate refugees as citizens in proletarian suburbs. Refugee families divert the water supplied by the PNA from the main water pipes to their cisterns, which are connected to the taps in the houses via rubber pipes. This water is locally called *mayyat al-ḥazzānāt* (the water of the cisterns).

---

<sup>305</sup> Fahīma's household is one of the few ones in the village which have a well. The rainwater collected in it is used to irrigate the few trees planted around the house or to clean the house without increasing domestic water bills. Differently, many of the still present old wells are unused.

<sup>306</sup> In 2012 the amount of water delivered to Wādī Fūkīn was 50.000 m<sup>3</sup>/year for 1400 inhabitants; in Battīr was 85.564 m<sup>3</sup>/year for 5400 inhabitants; in Naḥḥālīn was 270.000 m<sup>3</sup>/year for 7300 inhabitants; in Hūsān was 140.000 m<sup>3</sup>/year for 6900 inhabitants (State and Peace-building Fund 2012).

Despite its modernist discourses about the state's equitable, technical water distribution, the PNA does not supply water equally. Its domestic water distribution patterns favour the main cities, at the expense of the villages and in particular the refugee camps.

By favouring urban water use, the PNA does not only ensure the local political and economic elites' loyalty and support (Tamari 2002). The water reallocation from irrigation to domestic use also meets the conditions imposed by international donors on their funding of the building of the State institutional and infrastructural systems<sup>307</sup> (Trottier 1999; Goff and Crow 2014).

The PNA's distribution of domestic water produces "spatial water hierarchies" among the spaces under its administration (De Donato 2013a), characterised by different conditions of water stress. It creates spatial structures of privilege and conceptualisations of water justice and injustice (Soja 2010) and multiple differentiated citizenships, which lead to the spread of multiple meanings of state and political collective belonging experienced by local population.

Domestic water dynamics show that building the Palestinian nation-state is a vehicle for the urban elites' interest in detaining the control of local resources such as water, public spaces, and access to international donor funding and the official negotiations with Israel.

The water discrimination experienced by many inhabitants of rural areas and refugee camps under the PNA's water administration mirrors their marginalisation in state's political and economic structures, as well as that of their political claims.

Nevertheless, as a response to these Israel's strategies of territorialisation and legitimisation analysed in the first chapter, the Palestinian national narratives and collective imagination reify and idealise peasants' life and farming activities as a symbol of the Palestinian national identity. The reified peasants' culture and practices, including spring water management in villages such as Wādī Fūkīn, are represented as "traditional", an expression of Palestinians' of cultural "authenticity" and of historical "natural" roots in the territory (Swedenburg 1990) and, thus, as a main legitimacy to resist. Besides land, also water is an important symbolic and material resource in the cultural construction of the nation-state, which is used to naturalise the historical ties of the Palestinian population with the territory.

However, these narratives are also a strategy for the construction of the hegemony and legitimacy of local Palestinian elites masking peasants and refugees' inclusion in a subordinated position within national power structures and economy, behind the shared

---

<sup>307</sup> The Palestinian Water Authority is supported, among others, by the Austrian Development Cooperation, World Bank, Japan/ JICA, AFD, Turkey, CRC, USAID, MoF.



reified national identity. Indeed, the PNA claims the “traditional” and backward character of peasants’ farming activities and their tribal resources management also to legitimise its attempts at water centralisation and modernisation.

Many studies have highlighted how the reification of culture characterises both the cultural construction of the nation-state and national belonging, and the functioning of the state’s administration and control (Herzfeld 1997, Maffi 2004), as well as the global and transnational processes of cultural and identity construction.

The reification of culture and the cultural construction of forms of cultural heritage and authenticity are central tools for the integration of local communities in the state’s power and administrative structures. Practices and narratives, which shape and express local identity constructions, are appropriated by the state (but also international) institutions to organise, classify, administer and control local communities, establishing differences, hierarchies and forms of exclusions.

Despite the PNA’s historical narratives about territory and water and its construction of forms of cultural heritage reify the Palestinian “national community” as homogeneous and cohesive, the political arena of domestic water highlights the heterogeneity of the Palestinian society, characterised by many conflicts and patterns of differentiations affected by national and global water processes.

According to Aḥmed, the head of the Village Council, the villagers’ fear the possible PNA’s “water discrimination” is not justified from the technical point of view. Indeed, the new Palestinian water network supplying Wādī Fūkīn and the other three Palestinian villages, and the water network supplying the close urban areas under the PNA’s administration, such as the Bethlehem town and outskirts, are not connected between each other. Therefore, the PNA cannot divert the domestic water supplied to the villages to the urban areas.

Moreover, Israel has banned the large cisterns which the PWA’s engineers proposed to include in the new waterworks to collect the domestic water delivered by the Mekorot. This means that the PNA cannot store and ration the water delivered by the Mekorot to the Palestinian network, affecting its amount.

What changed since the building of the Palestinian water network is that the PNA has to negotiate with the Mekorot the amount of water to be delivered to this network supplying the four Palestinian villages, decided previously as a fixed amount, which in the future may be insufficient to satisfy the needs of the growing population.

During my fieldwork this issue was still in course of negotiation. All institutional actors I interviewed could not give me accurate information about it<sup>308</sup>. They only emphasised the Israeli responsibilities concerning the creation of water stress in the Palestinian Territories, since the Israeli State appropriates the greater part of water resources and land.

Ibrāhīm Šakārna, the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council, explained to me with resignation:

« The PNA cannot do anything... Israel decides... we cannot know what Israel will do in the future... maybe it will decrease domestic water supply, or even cut off it... even if Israel will not change the amount of water, with the growth of the population this water will not be enough... »

Institutional actors such as the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn and that of Naḥḥālīn, and three PWA's water engineers, adopted the environmental justice discourses dominating in the Palestinian governmental institutions and environmental NGOs focusing on property rights (Alatout 2006)<sup>309</sup>. The PNA often use these discourses as a tool to mask forms of discrimination and exclusion entailed by its patterns of water distribution, which also lead to the unequal access to water among Palestinians, and to the related multiple local perceptions and meanings connected to water, water scarcity and water justice.

While defending his position of promoter of the PNA's water modernisation project, Aḥmed did not considered (or maybe omitted) that in the future the PNA may negotiate with Israel the decrease of domestic water supply to the four Palestinian villages, in order to increase the amount of the Mekorot's water delivered to Palestinian urban areas through other connections with the Mekorot's networks.

Moreover, by means of the control of the main taps regulating the water flow to each village the PNA may implement an unfair water distribution between the four Palestinian villages connected to the main network, creating unbalanced situations of spatial water shortage and

---

<sup>308</sup> According to Aḥmed Sukkar and to Ibrāhīm Šakārna (the head of the Naḥḥālīn Village Council), the WBWD was negotiating with Israel a greater amount of water for Wādī Fūkīn and the other villages. According to Aḥmed in 2015 the WBWD was negotiating 15 m<sup>3</sup>/h of water for the village of Wādī Fūkīn, which means more than 10.000 m<sup>3</sup> /month, a three times greater amount than that supplied in 2015. Ibrāhīm Šakārna told me that the WBWD was negotiating the following amounts of domestic water for each village, in relation to the number of its inhabitants: about 20 m<sup>3</sup>/h for Wādī Fūkīn, with about 1.300 inhabitants; 40 m<sup>3</sup>/h for Battīr, with about 5.000 inhabitants; 35 m<sup>3</sup>/h for Ḥūsān, with about 6.500 inhabitants; 50-60 m<sup>3</sup>/h for Naḥḥālīn, with about 8.000 inhabitants. These informers told me that their information were uncertain.

<sup>309</sup> I analyse these discourses in the paragraph 4.1, Chapter I.

abundance. The PNA may also use this new administrative power as a repressive and coercive strategy to force local inhabitants to pay for water, or as a way to co-opt local elites. The conferment of the status of municipality to the village of Battīr in April 2016 and to the village of Naḥḥālīn in September 2017, may lead to a shift in the domestic water distribution pattern which favours them.

It would be interesting to explore the redefinition of the neighbourhood relationships between the concerned four Palestinian villages, caused by the long-time PNA's administration of the new domestic water network, which reconnects territories divided by the Israeli administrative conditions, legal devices and urban development.

Another interesting object of a further investigation may be the long-time local consequences of the new conditions of the PNA's water administration, in terms of solidarity and conflict relationships between the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn – connected, for example, to new local implications and meanings of water thefts in the context of a fixed total amount of water supplied to the village.

Few villagers were aware and could explain to me the technical features allowing, or not allowing, the PNA to change the local conditions of access to domestic water. Most of them only know that the new water network is a PNA's network, and implicitly connect it to water stress. For them, the introduction of the PNA's water administration and infrastructure means to be increasingly subjected to a double burden, a double repressive power network, a tyranny within a tyranny.

The works to build the new water network finished in January 2016. In 2017 the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn told me to have not experienced a decrease of domestic water supply. However, many of them continued to express their fear and expectation of an imminent situation of domestic water stress in the village, for example posting on Facebook a picture of the water cisterns in ad-Dehīša refugee camp, as a representation of the future fate of Wādī Fūkīn.

The disputes about the local consequences of the new PNA's water network are not grounded on a deep knowledge about its functioning and colonial constraints. Despite villagers (including the head of the Village Council) are aware of the ultimate social origin of water – the Israeli national water agency which appropriated most of regional water resources – they do not know the exact social and physical path of water before it reaches their houses. Domestic water is canalised in underground networks, removed from the public view and control.

As highlighted by Kaika (2005) analysing Western countries, besides the material and discursive production of commoditised and purified water, also the burial of water networks contributes to de-socialise water and to mask the social and power relationships involved in its production and distribution, naturalising them. The management of the underground water network and of the water flowing in it depends on technical expertise and hydraulic knowledge which are not accessible to everybody, and on a distant centralised and bureaucratised administrative system, constrained by complicated Israeli legal and administrative conditions. As a natural commodity and technical issue, domestic water has been de-socialised, disconnected from local knowledge and management patterns, engendering the spread of “domestic water ignorance” among local inhabitants.

These processes produce what I would define as a “water alienation” that creates a sense of “water fatalism”, a view of domestic water world, access and management as ruled by an irrevocable fate, woven by illegitimate outside authorities and their “transcendent” scientific knowledge.

Some people’s fatalism (like Aḥmed at the beginning) is expressed as a “blind” faith in “modern” science and technologies and scientific management as guarantees of an equitable and efficient water distribution. Other people’s “water fatalism” consists in a “blind” distrust in the PNA’s institutions and actors, justified by their daily experience of this coercive, repressive and unfair outside power structure.

These different views depend on each one’s position in the state institutions managing water (including the Village Council) and in the economic segmentation, on personal interests towards domestic water, and on personal experiences of the PNA’s policies in the context of the Israeli occupation. These dimensions affect in multiple ways the individuals’ political ideas and strategies. Only few villagers are able, at least in part, to appropriate the hydraulic knowledge and manipulate the technologies of the network such as water meters, in order to pursue their personal interests.

The case study of the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn highlights the active role of water as symbolic resource mediating the construction of the hegemony and legitimacy of the Palestinian elites controlling the building of the Palestinian State, as well as the claims for justice of groups that are marginalised within the national power structures, like villagers or refugees.

As also Anand (2011) showed studying in the Indian context of Mumbai, the access to water is not defined by the normative regime of the modern state and liberal citizenship. It depends

on changing negotiations of effective regimes of political and social relations and on technological and environmental dimensions. Citizenship is not just a discrete extension of the state bureaucracy; on the contrary, it is a public process of construction that entails the negotiation of values, meanings and claims among different interest groups.

In national legislations, the constructions of positive legal justice claim the uniformity of values of justice and property frameworks, based on the idea of the equality of all citizens with regard to the law. However, as shown by political ecology perspectives addressing water problems as issues of justice (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998; Schlosberg 2013; Goff and Crow 2014) the supposed "general and universal principle of rightness" (Boelens 1998b:21) are particular principles of powerful interest groups which seek to universalise their version of justice, while hiding the existing social hierarchies and power relations. The de-socialised underground domestic water pipes contribute to mask these power dynamics, producing a sense of "water alienation and fatalism", which foster the disempowerment of local people's resistance.

Following James Ferguson's insights about the state's power functioning (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) in the context of Zambia, by means of mechanisms regulating water distribution and the reproduction of the power relations involved in its distribution, the state conveys cultural processes allowing to produce and to keep social inequalities (like those of class and gender) and the exploitation conditions necessary for the maintenance of the present order.

These dynamics highlight that, in line with Trouillot's (2001) theorisation of the state as an ideological project, water as a key material and symbolic role in the cultural construction of the Palestinian nation-state and in the legitimacy construction and "naturalisation" of the hegemony of the Palestinian urban elites. These are represented as disinterested by means of the imposition of water meanings and discourses, identity constructions and historical narratives.

## **5 From the *Muhtār* to the Village Council: the Tribal Palestinian State**

Founded in 1995, following the creation of the PNA, *al-mağlis* (the council), as the Village Council is locally called, is the local PNA's institution which is directly responsible of the public administration of Wādī Fūkīn. This institution substituted the role of the *muhtār*, who represented the community in the village before the creation of the PNA.

The Village Council is composed of nine inhabitants, including its head, who are co-opted by local families every four years, according to the rules established by the PNA's Ministry of Local Government, to which the Council is subjected. The members of the council are not elected. The male adult members of each extended family (Ḥurūb, Sukkar, 'Aṭiya, Mufarraḥ, 'Assāf, al-Aqra'a) negotiate between each other the choice of one person representing it in the Council. Women are excluded from this right and source of power. Later, the representatives of each extended family negotiate between each other the decision about who has to fulfil the role of head. Therefore, the Palestinian Authority's institutions and legal framework incorporate some customary tribal norms, practices, logics and forms of representation, as I showed also concerning land registration<sup>310</sup>.

The increased power conveyed by the position of member and, in particular, head of the Village Council is not connected to earnings. Indeed, the members of this institution are not paid by the PNA, since they are considered as volunteers.

Aḥmed Sukkar (the head of the Village Council) considers this decision as an unjust depreciation of the role of head and the great amount of work it requires, which is not very different from that of mayors, which occupy a higher position in the PNA's power structures. The local prestigious character of the office of head of the council is connected to the control of the representation of the village, of the negotiations with state actors, and the distribution of the material and symbolic resources allocated to the village by state institutions and development NGO supporting them – which can eventually be used as a channel to increase one's economic status. As I explained in the second chapter, this power is often monopolised by the head of the Council, who manages it almost alone.

The choice of the members of the Council is the outcome of hierarchic power negotiations dominated by families and men with a higher status, especially by those with personal relationships with state officials occupying high positions.

Some extended families, usually the most numerous (Ḥurūb, 'Aṭiya and Sukkar), are represented by two persons. This does not mirror a sort of proportional representation system. It is connected to tribal sources of power such as the number of the male members of the family. An extended family represented by two persons has a potential greater power while negotiating decisions with the other members of the Village Council. However, there is always the risk that conflicting interests hinder the collaboration between the two representatives.

---

<sup>310</sup> See Chapter II, paragraph 6.

For example, the conflicts among members of the ‘Assāf family hindered the decision about who would have had to represent their family. Therefore, both in 2015 and 2017 none member of this low status, small family was included in the Village Council. The ‘Assāf family has been excluded from this important public space of negotiation and channel of power<sup>311</sup>.

It is not a case that the head of the Village Council is loyal to the ruling Fataḥ party and belongs to the *dār*<sup>312</sup> (house) Sukkar, one of the two most numerous and powerful extended families in the village, and a segment of the Manāšra tribal group, one of the two most numerous and powerful tribal groups in the village.

Many inhabitants told me that the role of head of the Village Council has to be fulfilled by a person loyal to the Fataḥ ruling party, as a condition to not be further marginalised by the PNA, which can deny economic support for projects or marginalise villagers’ claims against the Israeli state’s policies of land expropriation. Indeed, the *hayy’et muqāwamat al-ḡidār wa-l-istītān* (Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee), under the PNA, brings to the Israeli Court the collective cases of land expropriation (or other rights’ violation), such as that of Wādī Fūkīn. However, all the numerous cases are assigned to an only lawyer, who difficultly can manage all of them alone. Therefore, some cases are favoured compared to others.

This means that the PNA, and in particular the Fataḥ party, controls the Village Council, as the other Palestinian public institutions. This is one of the main reasons for which most of villagers do not acknowledge the legitimacy of this local institution to represent and administer the community. Further, it means that the loyalty to the ruling political party or, better, the access to personal relationships with actors occupying high positions in state institutions (belonging to Fataḥ) is a new important source of power in the status competition both between individuals and families.

The members of the Village Council, including the head, are often young men. This highlights changes in the criteria to build authority roles, following the integration in the labour market, and the creation of the new Palestinian state power structures and bureaucracy. According to the tribal political system, each extended family is headed by its elder male member, who mediates tensions between his relatives and represents them in the negotiations with other families. The elderly are viewed as embodying tribal values, norms

---

<sup>311</sup> I explain the reasons of these conflicts in the paragraph 2, Chapter II.

<sup>312</sup> This word means house and is used to indicate the building where a family lives, as well as an extended family (whose members used to live together) whose presence confers to a place the meaning of home.

and forms of knowledge. Age is connected to *'aql* (good sense, common sense), and it is an important source of authority. Before the Palestinians' participation in the labour market, the elderly controlled also the access to resources, such as land, spring water and crops.

As shown in the second Chapter, as waged employment has become the main means of support, young men are increasingly independent of their oldest male relatives. Some of them bear authority roles within their family thanks to their high level of formal education, their higher socio-economic status, or to the access to development or state institutions' economic and political support of personal interests or projects addressing the village.

Moreover, in the intergenerational competition for the control over local resources and people, the new generations are advantaged by an easier access to "modern" expertises and bureaucratic knowledge and language. These resources are new sources of authority both in local and state power structures, as well as in the globalised political arena of the development system<sup>313</sup>.

Besides the integration in the capitalist market economy and the development system, also the creation of the PNA has entailed the introduction of new sources and roles of power, leading to the emergence of new hierarchies. These overlap with tribal dimensions of power and differentiation, strengthening some of them or threatening others.

According to Aḥmed, the Village Council would have soon undergone a process of "modernisation", by means of the adoption of the election system characterising the Western modern liberal democracies. According to him, this would guarantee democracy. Also another young man in the village asserted he would prefer democratic elections, but for other reasons. In 2017, he has been chosen as one of the two representatives of the 'Aṭīya extended family in the Village Council, whose head was still Aḥmed Sukkar. According to this man, in democratic elections the majority of inhabitants would vote as head of the Council someone like him, who does not belong to the ruling Fataḥ party, independently on the family to which they belong. He supposed that democratic elections would necessarily lead local inhabitants to vote as "free individuals", free from the authority of their family and the PNA.

The two men's discourses appropriate the modernist ideology about state – and in particular the English and French model of state (Roy 2004) – which views tribal dimensions of political belonging as incompatible with the development of a modern democratic State, and an obstacle to it. The Western concept of civil society entails the existence of autonomous

---

<sup>313</sup> In the paragraph 3 of the Chapter III I explained how these resources affect the intergenerational competition for the control of local associations.



individuals detached from forms of loyalty which differ from that to the nation-state. By virtue of their political belonging to the State, they are considered as citizens with inalienable individual rights and obligations, such as individual freedom and the right to vote.

However, the two men appropriated the same modernist language to pursue different interests. As head of the Village Council, Aḥmed sought to legitimise his position, claiming the quasi-democratic character of this institution, as a first step towards the objective of the Palestinian public institutions' democratisation, according to the PNA's rhetoric.

As competitor for the role of head of the Village Council, the other man's personal interest was to discredit the legitimacy of Aḥmed and his family and to justify his own lower political status, by claiming the lack of democracy.

The competition between the two men was not grounded on different political programs and ideas about the village's administration, connected to the loyalty to different political parties. It consisted in the long-time competition for the authority roles in the village between the two most numerous extended families belonging to the same tribal group<sup>314</sup>.

Anyway, both men do not consider that democratic elections do not necessarily lead to the detribalisation of society. Studying the interactions between the Kurdish society and the Turkish nation-state, Van Bruinssen (2004) shows that democratic elections can even strengthen tribal political dynamics.

Many households do not pay the domestic water bills to hinder the ability of the Village Council, and in particular of its head, to represent and administer the community in the village, because they belong to a rival extended family or political party.

Domestic water mediates the competition among families and tribal groups for the new roles created by the new State administration and domestic water centralisation.

Domestic water mediates the competition between local groups, organised according to the tribal dimension of political belonging of the extended family, for the new authority roles and spaces of power created by the new state institutions and water bureaucracy, such as that of the Village Council's head. This competition strengthens the dimension of political belonging of the extended family, expressed mobilising both the tribal political language and the "modern" institutionalised political language.

Indeed, the competition between extended families is often expressed through the loyalty to different political parties. This does not mean that all the numerous members of an extended

---

<sup>314</sup> I have shown the hierarchies and dynamics of competition between the tribal groups and families in the village in the second chapter, paragraph 5.

family belong to the same political party. However, in the competition for political roles mediated by the family dimension of cohesion, people generally sustain the political position of their relatives with a higher status – especially if they have not the power to oppose them – with the expectation that they will favour them according to family solidarity ties.

In the context of the authoritarian regime controlled by the Fatah party in the West Bank (and that of the Hamas party in the Gaza Strip), the loyalty to a political party is a factor increasingly important in defining dynamics of solidarity and exclusion. This dimension of political belonging overlaps that of the extended family in multiple and complicated ways, according to personal relationships between individuals, and to their particular and contingent interests and strategies. Sometimes the loyalty to a political party strengthens solidarity, alliances and patronage relationships between the members of a family and it is used to express its differentiation from other families. Other times the loyalty to different political parties divides the members of a family and leads to harsh conflicts even between brothers.

The establishment of the PNA has entailed changes in the criteria for the construction of legitimacy, political authority roles and status hierarchies. It has amplified processes of differentiation, discrimination and exclusion among Palestinians, fragmenting Palestinian communities and hindering the national political cohesion facing the Israeli military occupation.

Many times Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council of Wādī Fūkīn, complained the difficulties he faces to solve the problem of the villagers' refusal to pay for domestic water, and the consequent debt with the West Bank Water Department. The PNA urges the Village Council to pay the debt, but Aḥmed and the other members of the Village Council have not the authority to make villagers pay for water, even less to collect from them the money to pay their collective debt. According to the tribal political logics, every repressive and coercive strategy carried out by Aḥmed as head of the Village Council would be locally interpreted as a personal abuse of power of his family towards the other ones living in the village, leading to family conflicts and feuds.

Aḥmed cannot ask the WBWD to close the taps regulating the water flow to some areas of the village. This repressive strategy would affect all families living there, including those paying for water, causing harsh conflicts between them and with his family. Moreover, since most of villagers do not pay for water, the WBWD would have to cut off water supply to almost the whole village.

The Project Team for the building of the new waterworks ascribed the Village's Councils' reluctance to adopt enforcement measures towards people who do not pay the water bills to "tribal and political influence" (State and Peace-building Fund 2012). This is one of the reasons which brought the team to support the JSCPD's taking over as water and wastewater management entity. The team thought that this institution would have carried out a more efficient management, solving the problems of low collection rates. It supposed that, being a professional entity, the JSCPD is not involved in local political dynamics and interests. However, they do not consider that, anyway, the members of this institution are the heads of the Village Councils, belonging to communities, tribal groups and families. These persons themselves opposed the proposal of adopting a prepayment system, asking villagers the payment of domestic water in advance, as a condition of water supply. They thought that this decision would have led to many conflicts between the families living in the villages and with the Village Councils and the other Palestinian Institutions.

Given that the Village Council, as the other PNA's institutions, depends on the PNA's approval and donors' funding, Aḥmed has to balance the obligatory loyalty to the policies of the PNA, locally felt as illegitimate, and the need to be legitimised by local population; between his role of head of a PNA's institution and his social identity as Aḥmed Sukkar, member of the Sukkar extended family, belonging to the Manāšra tribal group and to the community of Wādī Fūkīn. This situation highlights the difficulties and problems of legitimacy faced by the Village Council, while fulfilling the role of mediator between local inhabitants and the PNA.

Villagers compare the illegitimacy and unfairness of the Village Council with the legitimacy of the *muḥtār* (the chosen one), the role in charge of administering the community before the creation of the PNA and the Village Council.

The role of the *muḥtār* consisted in mediating the relationships with the colonial state authorities. Moreover, the man in charge of this office mediated also the conflicts and disputes between tribal groups and families living in the village and represented them as a community while facing outside actors, such as other communities and tribal groups, besides the colonial officials.

This administrative role has been created in 1864 by the Ottoman government, in the framework of the Tanzimat reform program gradually implemented since 1839, in order to increase the direct control over local communities and facilitate the administration of the territory. This program was aimed at turning the Ottoman Empire into a modern State based

on the European model (Reilly 1981), by means of the “modernisation” of the administrative system and land legislation, and in particular through the spread of the private property regime.

The office of the *muḥtār* as local representative of the government authorities had to supersede the power of the dominating sheikhs in the districts. The sheikh was the leader of a *ḥamūla* (tribal group), representing it in the relationships with other tribal groups. Previously, the Ottoman government co-opted the sheikhs of the greater and more powerful tribal groups to rule Palestinian population. However, in the framework of the new reform program, the Ottoman authorities viewed their increased and competitive power as an obstacle to the reform (Reilly 1981). The Ottoman government’s objective to supersede these social actors was achieved only partially, given that people chosen as *muḥtār* were often relatives of *sheikhs*, or they had strong economic relations (and thus shared interests) with them (Reilly 1981).

The British Mandate acknowledged the role of *muḥtār*. The British authorities strengthened direct means of control of the territory and populations, by means of the transfer of, quoting Bocco and Tell, the “political technology” (*technologie politique*) (Bocco and Tell 1995:26) characterising the European nation-states, such as physical territorial borders. In this framework, in order to increase the control over local inhabitants and facilitate tax collection, the British authorities decided the administrative borders of the village of Wādī Fūkīn, defining it as an administrative unit<sup>315</sup> and contributing to the territorialisation of the local community.

Later, the role of *muḥtār* has been acknowledged also by Israel, a State exerting an even higher direct control of the territory and local communities, leading to their increased dependence on the colonial state power structures for their social and material reproduction.

The inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn idealise the last *muḥtār*, Maḥmūd ‘Āṭā ‘Aṭiya, as the hero of the village, as honest and wise. They describe his fairness in the mediation of local families’ conflicting and particular interests (for example concerning water and land access). According to villagers, he was interested in the wellbeing of the community and was very determined in the relations with Israel. His local legitimacy and authority had been strengthened when in 1972 he succeeded to obtain by the Israeli military authorities the *al-*

---

<sup>315</sup> As shown in the map of Wādī Fūkīn dating back to the 1936, during the British administration the village was defined as an administrative unit (map 2).

*'awda* (the return) of the community to the village and to spur its members to follow him, who were afraid.

This does not mean that the community in the village was characterised by general consensus and homogeneity concerning political positions. The relationships between the families comprised in a tribal group have never been egalitarian, as I have highlighted analysing the norms and practices concerning the access to spring water.<sup>316</sup> The relationships between the tribal groups and families living in the village have always been and still are characterised by competition and conflicts for the control of local resources, by hierarchies, patronage ties and alliances. The political authority and the right to exert violence are shared and dispersed at the multiple levels of the tribal organisation, such as the extended family, the tribal group and the confederation of tribal groups which often lived in the same village or area. Each of these dimensions of belonging were characterised by hierarchic relationships.

As in other Palestinian rural areas analysed by Moors (1990), before the creation of Israel each extended family consisted in a cooperative unit with a certain degree of autonomy from the tribal group, concerning farming and herding activities and the consumption of crops and resources, as well as the resolution of conflicts between its members – all organised according to a hierarchical structure.

However, concerning the disputes and conflicts with families belonging to other tribal groups within or outside the village, for example for claims over a territory, tribesmen mobilised greater dimensions of belonging and solidarity, such as the tribal group or the confederation of tribal groups. The mediation of these larger conflicts and the relationships with state power structures and actors was a prerogative of the *muhtār*, who occupied the higher political position.

As today the role of the head of the Village Council, also the office of the *muhtār* itself entailed the competition between tribal groups, extended families and their members for this authority role created by the colonial administrations. These co-opted the most powerful tribal groups and leaders in the historical Palestine to the detriment of others, in order to rule its inhabitants, affecting local hierarchies and socio-economic configurations. The competition between families was limited and affected by the interests of the colonial authorities. Especially since the British Mandate, during which the person fulfilling this role was appointed by colonial authorities, according to his position in local and wider political

---

<sup>316</sup> I analysed the water hierarchies characterising the tribal group and the community in the village in the second chapter.

and economic structures, connected also to his extended family and tribal group's social status.

An elderly couple stressed that in Wādī Fūkīn this role has been fulfilled more times by members of the Manāšra tribal group, and only one time by a Ḥurūb tribeman. These are the most numerous tribal groups in the village, which have always been in harsh competition for land and water resources. Moreover, the Sukkar and 'Aṭiya extended families, the most numerous included in the Manāšra tribal group, competed for this role.

The first *muḥtār* which the elderly remember, during the Ottoman period, was 'Aysā Sukkar, one of the three sons of 'Alī Sukkar, considered as the ancestor of the Sukkar lineage. The second *muḥtār* was in office during the British Mandate and was 'Abd-allah Aḥmed, who belonged, according to villagers, to the second generation of the Ḥurūb tribesmen which came to live in the village. The third one, during the British Mandate, was 'Aṭā 'Aṭiya, one of the seven brothers considered as *aṣl* (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). His successor, the last *muḥtār*, was his son Maḥmūd 'Aṭā 'Aṭiya (even if this charge was not hereditary), who fulfilled this role during the Jordanian and the following Israeli administration. When he died in the first '90s, nobody has been appointed as *muḥtār* and in 1995 this role has been substituted by the PNA's institution of the Village Council.

Therefore, also the role of *muḥtār*, as that of head of the Village Council, was subjected to the state's authority and interference. Why do local people acknowledge legitimacy to the institution of the *muḥtār*, and not to that of the Village Council and its head? According to many villagers, the *muḥtār* was generous and able to mediate fairly the families' particular interests and the conflicts between them, making « *al-kul mabsūṭīn* (all happy) », as a villager said me. However, despite the idealisation of the total consensus achieved by the last *muḥtār*, given the hierarchical character of the society and the competition for this powerful role, it is difficult that all people could be happy. A man in the village admitted that sure, the *muḥtār* was not "perfect", referring to his ability to be always fair.

One has to consider that legitimacy is not something achieved or not achieved. It is a matter of degree. A power position legitimised by some people is not legitimised by others.

As in the Egyptian context analysed by Abu-Lughod (1986), in the tribal political system, the ideal source of legitimacy of authority roles is a behaviour embodying the moral values and norms defining honour and respectability - such as the generosity and hospitality.

A wealthy condition allows a person to carry out generosity practices towards people with a lower status who rely on him for the access to resources, achieving a high status, legitimised by that people.

Power has to be voluntarily acknowledged by people, as the “elementary forms of domination” described by Bourdieu (1976). Therefore, the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the *muhtār* by a great number of families, which allows keeping social control, was grounded also on his ability to mediate and co-opt their particular interests and claims and the conflicts arising between them. A high social status and the ability of mediation allowed the control of the local community, which was strengthened by the increased status and the symbolic, material and coercive power entailed by this administrative role and the related relationships with colonial institutions.

Mediation is a main tribal political pattern of power distribution and dynamics. As some elderly villagers told me, the main principle ruling the tribal negotiations for the resolution of conflicts between families is: « *al-ḥokom bayna an-nās bil-murāḍāa wa laysa bil-muqāḍāa* (the judgement between people through the satisfaction/consent<sup>317</sup> and not through the prosecution) ».

The solution of a conflict has not to be decided by an authority legitimised by abstract principles and it has not to be imposed. It has to be negotiated and voluntarily accepted by both the families in conflicts, to avoid that none of them has a reason to claim vengeance against the other, especially in case of a murder<sup>318</sup>. The agreement has to compensate the weaker family for its loss, and to ideally re-establish balanced power relations between the two families, leading to the satisfaction of both them. The public negotiations do not follow abstract and fixed rules, but are personal and contextual negotiations, depending on the relationships between the concerned families and their interests and attitudes.

This way to view justice is very different from that of the jurisprudence of the Western liberal democracies, which identifies a victim and a guilty person as occupying dichotomous positions, and punishes the latter in a coercive and repressive way, to make him/her weak, dominated and dependent, according to supposed impersonal and objective criteria.

---

<sup>317</sup> In the Palestinian dialect *al-murāḍāa* means satisfaction or consent.

<sup>318</sup> I have analysed the local negotiations and patterns of belonging involve in the negotiation of the solution of a conflict cause by a murder in the paragraph 2 of the second chapter.

Today, while distributing resources and services the head of the Village Council privileges people with whom he has personal relationships such as kinship, marriage ties, patronage and friendship relations, or with whom he shares personal economic interests.

As I shown in the third chapter<sup>319</sup>, the techno-political allocation systems of NGOs and state institutions such as the Village Council are mediated by personal social ties (kinship, friendship, patronage relationships, alliance) with people who hold an important position in these institutions, such as the head of the Council. *Wāsta* (mediation) relationships, viewed through the idiom of the tribal and family's solidarity, still consist in the main local pattern of power distribution. Through these practices local Palestinians adapt to the new bureaucracies and manipulate them from within, attempting to achieve a space for autonomy and decentralising the institutions' control over resources.

Evidently, for most of local inhabitants, the head of the Village Council makes few of them satisfied by his decisions and generosity, compared to the last *muḥtār*. He is not able to mediate the different interests of most of local families, achieving legitimacy and keeping social control. Local inhabitants do not legitimise his intervention to mediate the resolution of the increasing conflicts, tensions and disputes between tribal groups and families living in the village.

As a local middle class man said me:

« The *muḥtār* was better than the Village Council... it represented the village as a single *ṣowt* (voice<sup>320</sup>)... today in the Village Council there are too much voices, which *bisawū mašākil* (make problems) between each other ».

The word *ṣowt* means voice and vote and refers to the right to speak in public negotiations, acknowledged according to status hierarchies.

In the framework of the economic segmentation of the tribal groups and extended families, the Village Council is a source of further conflicts and divisions within the community, fragmented in multiple conflicting political positions and ideas, constituted along tribal dimension of belonging of the extended family, but also along socio-economic class and gender lines and overlapping loyalties to different “modern” political parties. In the context of the global flow of Western middle class's cultural models and the spread of the neo-liberal individualist ideology, the lack of a role mediating the community's collective negotiation of

---

<sup>319</sup> I have deeply analysed this subject in the paragraph 3, Chapter III.

<sup>320</sup> The word *ṣowt* means voice and vote and refers to the right to speak in public negotiations, acknowledged according to status hierarchies.



changing cultural values and of the multiple interpretations of radical political and economic changes, leads to social disintegration.

As I shown in the previous chapter, the tribal groups and extended families are increasingly fragmented by cultural conflicts among its members and by new socio-economic differentiations and competition connected to the global market economy, the villagers' participation to the labour market, and the neo-liberal commoditisation of water.

Finally the multiple voices in the village are dominated by the head of the Council, who monopolises, instead of mediating, the main decision-making processes, legitimised and controlled by the Fatah party. The head of the Village Council monopolises the power to represent the community in the interaction with the PNA's institutions. Given that this local institution has not a great power in the PNA's structure, the head's efforts to claim the community's rights in the name of a common wellbeing are almost ineffective. This further weakens his position. Also, local NGOs and associations compete with the council concerning the representation of the local community in the relationships with international NGOs and donors.

Another issue affects the lack of legitimacy and authority of the Village Council for most of people. This factor explains the reason of the idealisation of the last *muhtār* as legitimised by the whole community, connected also to his success to negotiate with the Israeli military authorities the community's return to the village.

The outside source of legitimacy of the person fulfilling the role of *muhtār* was the authority of colonial institutions, viewed as unfair and illegitimate outside authorities. Today, the choice of the Village Council's head is indirectly constrained by the need of the approval of the PNA, which, also, is viewed as an outside illegitimate authority. However, unlike the Ottoman, British and Israeli colonial authorities, the political and economic elites ruling the PNA claim its legitimacy to represent the community's rights, as well as those of all Palestinians, while betraying their claims. People ruling the Palestinian proto-state are other Palestinians who, as Palestinians, claim their greater legitimacy of the state they control compared to previous and present colonial states. However, according to most of people, they do not respect local political and moral norms, which would allow them to achieve greater legitimacy.

Despite the role of the *muhtār* had been created and controlled by colonial administrations, today it is connected to the tribal political organisation, given that its rule of the community followed changing local tribal norms (affected by wider political and

economic dynamics). Villagers' idealisation of the uncontested legitimacy of the "tribal" institution of the *muhtār* and of tribal resources management and the embodiment of tribal patterns of political organisation emerge as a claim for self-determination and political autonomy, facing the marginalisation by the "outside" authoritarian PNA's power structures, perceived as illegitimate.

As in the private contexts of family hospitality and in public occasions such as weddings and the tribal negotiations for conflict resolution, the tribal identity constructions, patterns of representation, of social practices and of values are mobilised as a political language of self-representation and a strategy to take a role and visibility in civil society.

As also the practices of spring water exchange and use have shown (Chapter II), in the framework of the tribal groups and extended families' dispersion by the Israeli army, the tribal pattern of political belonging are an idiom of solidarity to rebuild and legitimise relationships of cohesion and political alliances, often mediated by water.

Following a deconstructive approach (Dresch 2010), this study highlights that tribalism is a model and a practice used to describe, organise and legitimate economic and political relationships between individuals and social groups. It is a practice to take a role in the civil society and to express rights, obligations and loyalties. This pattern of solidarity is subject to change and is mobilised to express claims related to contemporary economic and political processes and to changing ecological conditions.

The management of domestic water in Wādī Fūkīn brings insights into the relationships between the State and the tribal *'aṣabiyya* (tribal solidarity, group of solidarity). Since Ibn Khaldoun, the latter is defined by political sociologist studies about Muslim world as a solidarity group (the family, the tribal group, the community in a village...) consisting in a network of personal relationships (kinships, marital, patronage or alliance relationships) legitimised by real or "imagined" blood ties (Roy 2004).

In Middle East and North Africa, during the European colonial administration and the following processes of decolonisation and nation-state building, governments, development agencies and social sciences adopted evolutionist and then culturalist and orientalist approaches (Bonte et al. 1991). Tribalism was viewed as a "residue" of a past traditional world, a backward, "traditional" political organisation that hinders the building and development of "modern" states. Since the colonial period state-led water modernisation was aimed at detribalising local societies, by de-legitimising and dismissing tribal patterns of resources management and political organisations.

Since the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the political instability and crisis in the Middle East nation-states and the re-composition or emergence of tribal, ethnic and religious patterns of political belonging have stimulated new studies about the relationships between state and tribalism. In contemporary national political arenas, new tribal, ethnic and religious *'aṣabiyyāt* are mobilised to express very contemporary claims, often connected to the marginalisation of most of populations by the political and economic elites, in the context of radical changes connected to the State “modernisation”, capitalist market globalisation and the global spread of the neo-liberal ideology.

Anthropological studies carried out in the Arab Muslim world, such as Middle East and North Africa (Bocco 1995; Bonte et al. 2001; Roy 2004; Bonte 2004), that address the relationships between state and tribalism within an historical perspective have invited to go beyond the essentialist view of tribal groups, contributing to alternative theorisations of both tribal societies and State. These researches view tribal patterns of belonging as changing socio-political constructions adapting to the new political, economic and ecological life conditions. They highlight the “modern” character of these solidarity and political dimensions, which emerge as the outcome of historical and contemporary interactions between local, regional, and international social actors and institutions, including the state.

According to Bocco and Tell (1995), in the Middle East, since the Ottoman period – in particular following the Tanzimat administrative and land reforms – the state administration entailed the reorganisation of local social structures. It led to the formation of new identity constructions and to the politicisation of tribal identities in opposition to the state or in collusion with it. Following the Ottoman Empire’s downfall and the partition of its territory into different mandates, the introduction of physical borders for the creation of new states according to the European model strengthened these dynamics. The mandates’ policies led to radical territorial reorganisation, to an increased territorialisation of tribal identities and networks of solidarity and to deep changes in local socio-political configurations (Bocco and Tell 1995).

Similar processes occurred in the Middle East and North Africa during the processes of nation-state building. These have often been characterised by the politicisation and manipulation of local tribal dimensions of belonging by state actors and local elites, in the framework of the competition between local social groups for the access to, and control of, the state’s power (Dawod 2004). Some studies have highlighted that tribal political models affected the construction of nation-states and national identities and the functioning of state

bureaucracy, showing that local, regional, national and transnational patterns of belonging are not incompatible (Van Aken 2003; 2012; Shryock 2001; Baram 2001).

Also the creation of the PNA has not led to the detribalisation of local society and it is not incompatible with tribal political organisation and practices. Differently, the PNA's law and procedures incorporates some customary tribal norms, practices and patterns of political representation. The tribal logics of the mediation and co-optation - the main tribal pattern of power distribution – as well as the exclusion of women from public roles, rule the functioning of the PNA's institutions such as the Village Council. They are adapted to the contemporary political framework and contribute to shape the “modern” political organisation of the “tribal” Palestinian nation-state. The state and the tribal political organisation overlap. Palestinians mobilise both the “modern” political language and the tribal one according to the relational context, in order to claim their personal and collective rights.

Following Godelier's theorisation of political-religious power (Godelier 2004), both the State and the “chefferie” – a chiefdom ruled by a tribal aristocracy – are forms of political organisation, in which a minority group exerts the same kind of centralised political power. Their different political structures are grounded only on the scale of power territorialisation. Political power is defined as the ability to represent a society or community as a whole and to mediate particular individual and collective interests and conflicts, in the name of a common wellbeing. Power entails also the ability to put in action the decisions, imposing one's will through persuasive or coercive strategies, and in case it is necessary, by means of material and symbolic, physic and psychological violence. Finally, power is expressed also by the legitimacy accorded by people to the implementation of decisions, and by their compliance with them. In the lack of legitimacy, violence becomes necessary to keep power.

Such approaches refuse the methodological ethnocentrism, which views the State as a homogeneous and coherent entity separated from civil society (Mitchell 1990a, 1990b, 1991; Gupta 1995; Gupta e Sharma 2006b), to consider it as a social actor and a cultural construction. Following Ferguson's (2005) studies in Lesotho, the State is one of the multiple knots of power in a horizontal network of institutions and individuals through which water power is exerted.

In the Palestinian territories, as well as in every country, the water governmental techniques have a historical and cultural character. The supposed universality of the transnational governmentality culture emerges as problematic (Gupta e Sharma 2006a). Indeed, this study has highlighted that behind the institutional and procedural resemblances

highlighted by historical and comparative analysis of the state in social sciences, the hegemonic Western meanings of water and state and the water techno-politics and bureaucracy spread globally in the contemporary neo-liberal framework are appropriated and reinterpreted by local populations, including people working in state institutions. Their local interpretations and the ways they are practised and experienced are shaped by specific historical memories, ideas, interests and expectations, which lead to the production of multiple meanings of water, the state, democracy and authority.

State building processes are therefore political arenas in which the meaning of state, its cohesion and legitimacy are cultural constructions continuously negotiated and contested, produced by hegemonic processes and conflicts, which are all mediated by water flows.

Adopting Trouillot's (2001) theorisation of the state as an ideological project, the investigation of domestic water management shows the key material and symbolic role of water in the cultural construction of the nation-state and in the continuous reconfiguration of power relationships aimed at integrating new spaces and populations in the state's power network.

**CHAPTER V**

**THE STRUGGLE FOR THE WATER FREEDOM FROM THE  
STATE**



*Figure 72: demonstration in Wādī Fūkīn against the expansion of the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement  
(internet 2017)*

## 1. The State Pluralism and its Structural Violence

During the implementation of the water modernisation project in Wādī Fūkīn, a main problematic issue was the connection to the new networks of the public school and the health centre, and the few houses situated in the area C<sup>321</sup> of the village – under the Israeli administration and security control.

Given the complicated and obstructing Israeli permit system, these works have been made mainly during the night, to decrease the risk of the Israeli army's intervention (except concerning the educational and health services). The PNA's institutions have many difficulties to intervene in the area C of the village. Many basic services are provided by Palestinian and international NGOs, which implemented projects such as the extension of the school, the building of two public playgrounds, and the maintenance of springs and irrigation channels.

Also the UNRWA (United Nation Relief and Works Agency) provides basic services for the villagers in Wādī Fūkīn. Despite the community of Wādī Fūkīn succeeded to implement its right of return and few people still live in ad-Dehīša refugee camp, villagers still have the UNRWA's registration card. This card allows them to have access to the UNRWA's health centre and other services in the refugee camp, as well as to projects organised by this international agency in the village, in collaboration with the Village Council<sup>322</sup>, such as projects for the development of work or agriculture.

Despite in the village there is a public health centre<sup>323</sup> organised by the PNA's institutions, villagers continue to refer to the free UNRWA's health services.

In the framework of the Palestinian territories' dependence on Israeli basic services and resources, Palestinians sometimes have access also to Israeli health institutions for specialised services and treatments which are not supplied in the Palestinian public and private hospitals. In order to have access to a health service in a hospital in Israel, Jerusalem, or also in Jordan,

---

<sup>321</sup> The area C of the village includes the 27,1% of the built-up area of the village, including the public primary and secondary school and the health centre.

<sup>322</sup> The UNRWA is authorised to work only with the local PNA's institution of the Village Council, and not with local associations.

<sup>323</sup> The health centre in Wādī Fūkīn hosts a public health clinic which works one day a week, a public centre for childhood and motherhood, and the Health Work Committees which works another day in the week. In emergency cases, and in case of need of specialised treatments or exams, villagers use Bethlehem hospitals and health centres. One of the major health problems is the absence of an emergency crew, clinic or doctor available during the night for the emergency cases (Muamer et al. 2014).

a doctor in a Palestinian hospital has to certify the patient's need of a specialised visit or a service which is not offered in the Palestinian territories. This document is necessary to apply to the Palestinian Health Ministry to have access to this service in a public way (with the Palestinian Ministry covering its cost). If this Palestinian institution decides to send the patient to a hospital in Jerusalem or Israel, it issues a document attesting his needs, which the concerned person has to present in order to ask the Israeli military permit to enter Jerusalem or Israel. This permit is not always granted, since it is issued with a discretionary power. Also the support of the PNA is mediated by discretionary relationships called *wāṣṭa* (mediation) relations<sup>324</sup>.

The few people with the economic possibility to have access privately to an Israeli health centre can avoid these procedures, asking directly the Israeli institution to send him/her a document attesting the appointment for a visit or treatment. Anyway, the Israeli military authorities have the ultimate word.

As an alternative to the PNA, also some NGOs working in health issues, including the Israeli ones, can mediate the access to medical treatments in public hospitals in Israel or Jerusalem, covering most of the costs and bypassing the PNA. In 2015, the director of the Palestinian al-Ḥusīn public hospital in Beyt Ġālā did not want to certify that Yūsef, an adult refugee, needed a neurological visit in an Israeli hospital, despite a Palestinian private doctor previously attested it. Yūsef commented this refusal saying that he had not *wāṣṭa*, referring to personal relationships (solidarity or patronage relationships) with the director.

Therefore, I helped him trying another strategy, thanks to my relation with an Israeli doctor (originally from Italy) working as volunteer in the NGO called Palestinian Medical Relief Society. This NGO offers medical basic services to Palestinians in the West Bank, in particular in the more marginalised areas B and C, by organising a movable medical centre. Some doctors move to small Palestinian inhabited centres to offer free visits, general treatments and medicines.

I went with Yūsef and his wife to the village in which the NGO was working that Friday, to meet my friend and ask a medical visit. Finally the NGO certified Yūsef's need to be visited by a neurologist in a hospital in Tel Aviv, and directly made an agreement with that hospital about the payment of the service. The hospital issued the document attesting Yūsef's appointment with a doctor, necessary to ask the Israeli military permit to enter Israel (only for one day). Yūsef obtained the permit. He was surprised and happy. For many years the Israeli

---

<sup>324</sup> See paragraph 5, Chapter IV.



military authorities refused his requests of a permit to go to Israel to work, or only to pray for one day in the Al-Aqsa mosque in al-Quds (Jerusalem), as all Palestinians wish to do at least one time in their life. They did not allow him even to go with his two years old daughter to a hospital in Jerusalem in which she had a surgery. Differently, the powerful Israeli NGO and hospital allowed Yūsef to enter Israel and have access to the medical service he needed.

The NGOs and UNRWA's intervention in the Occupied Palestinian territories mirrors the way in which these actors often substitute the PNA's role, acting and "seeing like a State" (Scott 1998). As I showed in the previous chapters, development donors and agencies exert a considerable power towards the PNA, which depends on donors' funding for the building and maintaining of the state's infrastructures and institutions. The PNA seeks to co-opt and control these powerful social actors, which both collaborate and compete with it (Hanafi and Tabar 2005).

In the Palestinian territory good health is not a right guaranteed equally by virtue of citizenship. Individuals' access to public resources and services, such as water or medical treatments, is not defined by the normative regime of the modern state and liberal citizenship. It depends on their economic status and personal relationships (kinship, patronage, friendship and economic relationships) with people occupying powerful positions within Palestinian and Israeli state institutions and NGOs. The differentiated access to public resources produces differentiated citizenships, leading to multiple perceptions of the political reality and meanings of the state experienced by local population, which amplify the tensions between Palestinians.

Palestinians are subjected to the Israeli state and the PNA's structural violence, understood as the daily oppression and exclusion entailed by social inequalities created by national, international and global inequitable socio-political and economic structures through the functioning of bureaucratic and technocratic systems (Kleinman et al. 1997; Farmer 2004; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004).

The PNA's institutions have many difficulties in administering the space, infrastructures and domestic water supply in Wādī Fūkīn, in collecting taxes from villagers, as well as in providing educational and health services. Especially given that it has not the possibility to exert its executive power in the village, which is under the Israeli army's security control.

The Palestinian security forces can enter the village only for brief periods and after obtaining the Israel army's permit by the DCO – District Coordination Office<sup>325</sup>. This permit is difficultly issued and, anyway, its issue usually requires two or three weeks, hindering a well-timed intervention. Anyway, the Palestinian security forces are not allowed to enter the area C, closer to the Israeli settlements and the Israel's border.

During my research periods in the West Bank many times I saw or listened about feuds between Palestinian families in rural or urban localities included in areas B and C. In all cases, the long waiting times for the Israeli permit to enter in these areas have hindered the Palestinian security forces' prompt intervention, leaving the feuds involve an increasing number of people, with the outcome of many injured or even dead persons.

Moreover, the long waiting times allow Palestinians to be informed about the Palestinian security forces' intentions and to organise a strategy to avoid their repressive power.

When I was living in Wādī Fūkīn, one time a local inhabitant working as a PNA's employee knew about the PNA's decision to carry out an inspection in Wādī Fūkīn authorized by Israel, in order to look for vehicles not registered (without license plate and insurance), and to punish their Palestinian owners. The day the Palestinian police entered the village, just before it arrived, many villagers carried their cars from their houses, in area B, to the final part of the valley, in area C. Here, the PNA's inspectors could not enter and villagers eluded the PNA's control. *taṣrīḥ* (permit)

Also, during my stay in Wādī Fūkīn, a Palestinian man from the Bethlehem urban area came to live in the village for a brief period, thanks to his solidarity relationships with a local family. He was wanted by the Palestinian security forces for fraud. As many Palestinians often do, seeking to escape the Palestinian security forces, he moved to live temporary in an area B and C, trying to limit his movements within the areas A, where the PNA can exercise its executive power.

The PNA's exercise of its "virtual" authority is not limited only by the administrative and legal conditions imposed by Israel. It is also hindered by Palestinians' strategic use of these conditions, in order to resist to the PNA's control and oppression, to pursue personal interests,

---

<sup>325</sup> The DCO (District Coordination Office) is the Israeli-Palestinian military coordination office established as part of the 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The DCOs has been established in each district of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestinian civilian population is required to apply at its local DCO, which works in tandem with the Israeli Civil Administration, for permits to enter Israel, Jerusalem and the Israeli settlements.

as well as to evade personal duties. For example, Palestinian students frequently use the false excuse of a closed checkpoint to justify a delay or an absence at the University.

During my research experiences in the West Bank, I knew people who escaped even to Israel and lived there clandestinely until they could, in order to not be arrested by the Palestinian security forces or caught by Palestinian families claiming vengeance or the payment of a debt, for example. A man living in Doha municipality, in the outskirts of Bethlehem, included in an area A, had a shop offering informatics technologies and services. Because of serious economic difficulties, he incurred great debts with some Palestinian families. When his economic activity failed, he escaped to Israel, entering and living there illegally. There, the Palestinian families could not find him, claim their rights, and ask the intervention of the PNA's institutions.

The PNA's lack of negotiation power with the neighbouring Israeli State - which does not acknowledge its legitimacy - is an important source of instability and social disorder in the Palestinian society.

Once late at night, I saw three young men leaving a disco in Beyt Ġālā (a historically Christian municipality in the outskirts of Bethlehem) and quarrelling with two boys. Finally, the three men climbed into their car (with an Israeli yellow number plate), ran over the two local boys and escaped quickly. Local people who rushed to the injured boys' aid, called the Palestinian police. They urge the policemen to catch the men quickly, before they crossed the Israeli border. Indeed, the three men were *falaṣṭīniyat ath-thamanya wa-arba'īn* (the '48 Palestinians), as Palestinians with the Israeli citizenship are locally called.

These Palestinians, as well as the *falaṣṭīniyat al-saba'a wa-sittīn* (the '67 Palestinians)<sup>326</sup> - who are Palestinians living in Jerusalem, which is occupied since 1967 - are under the Israeli jurisdiction and cannot be prosecuted by Palestinian legal institutions and security forces, even if they committed a crime in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Palestinian police caught the men and brought them to the police station. A person commented the situation complaining that, anyway, the Palestinian institutions could not

---

<sup>326</sup> The '48 Palestinians are the Palestinians born in the territory included in the State of Israel, who following the creation of Israel, didn't move and have the Israeli citizenship and identity card, even if it is a second level citizenship. The '67 Palestinians are those living in Jerusalem, which in 1967 has been occupied by the Israeli army. They have not the Israeli citizenship, because Jerusalem is not considered as included in the Israeli State. This means that they cannot exercise political rights like voting and have neither the Israeli, nor the Palestinian passport (they have to ask the Jordanian one as document to travel, but it does not entail the Jordanian citizenship).

ensure justice done. Indeed, in case the '48 Palestinians or Palestinians from Jerusalem are involved in legal problems, the Palestinian security forces have to declare it to the Israeli army, and to bring them to the closest DCO.

The PNA's police did it also in this case, and the three men have been jailed in an Israeli prison only for a week, since the judge at the Israeli Court considered the event as an accident.

The PNA's right of extradition is not acknowledged. According to Palestinians, the sentences imposed by the Israeli judicial authorities on Israelis who committed illegal behaviours and crimes in the West Bank to the detriment of Palestinians are less harsh than those imposed for crimes against other Israelis. Palestinians in the West Bank perceive that Israeli citizens' actions against their security and life are devaluated as less negative and immoral than those against Israeli citizens, whose life has a greater value than Palestinians' life.

In fact, the '48 and '67 Palestinians frequently come to the West Bank to have access to cheaper shops, social services, higher education (universities) or places for public meetings and entertainment (like discos, restaurants...). Many of them brag about their greater opportunities and rights as Israeli citizens (for example concerning employment, health and safety). They viewed themselves as privileged compare to Palestinians in the West Bank, even if in Israel they are discriminated by the State's institutions and other citizens, as they have a second class citizenship.

Some of them use their status of Israeli citizens as an opportunity to pursue their personal interests, flouting the Palestinian law without any consequence, as well as the customary norms ruling the relationships between families.

These dynamics further destabilise the dis-order in the West Bank and the PNA's ability and local legitimacy to control the Palestinian society. They also contribute to shape processes of differentiation and discrimination between Palestinians living in the West Bank and those living in Israel or Jerusalem.

In Wādī Fūkīn, at the end of a farming day, local farmers cannot leave in the field their expensive farming instruments such as motor pumps or their mule and sheep. Many times these have been stolen by Palestinians living in other areas of the West Bank and coming back from Israel, where they went to work by crossing illegally the Israeli State's border close to Wādī Fūkīn. In particular, according to villagers' discourses, the '48 and '67 Palestinians are perceived as a main threat. Some villagers advised me to not stay in the valley after the sunset, because of the risk to meet « *nās miš kwaysa* (bad people) ». With this

generic expression, they were referring not only to Israeli soldiers and settlers, but also to Palestinians from Israel, which were said to have immoral and violent behaviours threatening the local population, and in particular, local women's respectability and safety. These stereotypes led a girl that wanted to upset me to say that some Israeli Arabs (Palestinians) coming to the valley kidnap and kill local Palestinians to sell their organs in the Israeli black market.

According to most of inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn these accusations are false and unfounded. However, they highlight the imagination and social construction of the Palestinians living in Jerusalem and Israel as "Palestinian Others", according to processes of social differentiation affected by the administrative and political organisation of the territory and the fragmentation of the legal framework to which Palestinians are subjected.

The PNA claims its authority over local Palestinians, but cannot ensure their security, and civil and political rights. The community of Wādī Fūkīn stands alone facing the aggressions of the Israeli army, which sometimes enters the farmlands in area C in order to hinder farming activities, to uproot hundreds of olive trees, or to protect Israeli settlers who go to swim in the local pools for irrigation water collection, causing damage to the irrigation network and violating local morality<sup>327</sup>.

Along the only entrance road in Wādī Fūkīn, the Israeli army or police often establish a temporary checkpoint, hindering local inhabitants' mobility and controlling them. The Israeli army controls continually the areas B and C in the Occupied Palestinian territories and can enter the areas A without limitations. Before soldiers enter an area A, the Israeli D.C.O. communicates their intentions to the Palestinian security forces, which retreat to their barracks, obligated to not hinder the Israeli military repression of the Palestinian population. Israeli soldiers often enter the Bethlehem urban area (area A), and in particular the refugee camps like ad-Dehīša, to make night (but also daily) raids in some houses. They arrest boys and young men, accused to be potentially dangerous for Israel's security because they threw stones to soldiers, or they are active in non-violent resistance (for example, they expressed their resistance political opinion in public places or they wrote them).

Israel jails many Palestinians without a reason, with the only excuse to consider them as a potential threat for Israel's security, violating every human, political and civil right.

« One can be jailed by Israel if he just thinks about *muqāwama* (resistance) », as a refugee said me. In ad-Dehīša refugee camp, I listened to many histories about youths arrested by the

---

<sup>327</sup> I analyse in detail this subject in the paragraph 2, Chapter V.

Israeli army only because they told to their friends their will to make an *'amaliyya* (operation<sup>328</sup>) – as the attack against Israeli soldiers is locally called. Actually, they did not organise anything, and their speech was only a boast to show off as strong and fearless.

All Palestinians are subjected to Israel's executive and judicial power, which prevails over that of the PNA's institutions, especially when a person is accused to have threatened the Israeli State and citizens' security.

The 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 a Palestinian man named Homām Al-Masālma was travelling by car in the Jerusalem-Hebron road connecting Bethlehem to Hebron, and passing in front of the refugee camp of al-‘Arrūb. When the man was passing in front of this refugee camp, refugees were struggling against the Israeli soldiers' raids in the camp. The tear gas fired by the Israeli soldiers hindered him to see and made him losing the control of his car. He ran over a group of Israeli soldiers and injured them. Then, he escaped quickly, but later he turned himself in to the Israeli police in the Israeli Etzion settlement. He explained to the policemen that he had no intention to attack Israeli soldiers, which had been victims of an involuntarily accident.

In July 2016, after about one year and half of preventive detention in an Israeli jail waiting the verdict of the Israeli Court, the Israeli judge sentenced the man to eighteen years in prison, with the accusation to have voluntary attacked the Israeli soldiers, trying to kill them (The Palestinian Information Centre 2016).

While Israel limits the PNA's rule of the Palestinian territories and population, the PNA has to ensure the control and repression of local resistance practices against the Israeli army and settlers.

In summer 2017, during my last fieldwork, many Palestinians often discussed the case of Bāsil Al-A‘raġ, a Palestinian young pharmacist from the village of al-Walaġa killed by the Israeli army the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Bāsil was politically active. He often participated to demonstrations in protest against the Israeli occupation, he organised political meetings in the whole West Bank, and he urged people to boycott Israeli products. Since three years, he was writing a book about Palestinian revolutions between 1936 and 2000. In the framework of this project, he was bringing Palestinians to visit the places scattered in the West Bank where resistance actions and events occurred. He was well-known by the Palestinian security forces, which hit him many times during the demonstrations, seeking to force him to give up his resistance activities against Israel.

---

<sup>328</sup> *'amaliyya* means operation, surgery. It is used by Palestinians to refer to an attack against Israeli soldiers.

In 2016, the PNA found Bāsil and five of his friends' identity cards in a street. The PNA did not find these men and declared them as wanted by the Palestinian security forces. Given Bāsil's political background, the Palestinian *muḥābarāt* (Intelligence) suspected that these young men were on the verge of carrying out an attack to Israeli soldiers or settlers. The abandonment of their identity cards was viewed as a symbolic act. Given that these documents have been found together and they were not hidden, it was clear that they had not been lost and they had been left to be found.

In April 2016 the young men have been caught by the Palestinian security forces. As they declared later, in the Palestinian jail they experienced the violence of the Palestinian officials, who attempted to make them confessing the supposed thwarted attack. After five months, the six young men began the *iḍrāb 'an aṭ-ṭa'ām* (hunger strike) to protest for their illegal detention – a political tool increasingly used by Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails. Indeed, while the Palestinian Court decided to not issue the preventive detention, and thus to release them, pending the next judicial hearing, the Palestinian *muḥābarāt* (Intelligence) continued to detain them.

During the detention, Bāsil refused to be transferred to another Palestinian prison, because he was afraid that during the travel the Israeli army picked him up. Finally, in September 2016 the six men have been released pending the judicial hearing. However, soon the Israeli army arrested the five friends of Bāsil, who, instead, eluded his capture and began to be wanted by the Israeli army. While one of the five arrested men has been released by the Israeli authorities - because he was not involved in his friends' intentions - the others are still jailed in an Israeli prison. The 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Israeli soldiers found Bāsil and, after a fire-fight, killed him.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian investigation and legal procedure continued, and in October 2017 the Palestinian Court found the six men's guilty only on the charge of illegal possession of weapons (Aš-Šarq al-Awsaṭ 2017).

The case of Bāsil Al-A'rağ and his friends highlights the Palestinian security forces' violation of Palestinians' civil, political and human rights, in the framework of the PNA's authoritarian regime, and of the multiple conflicting positions of the PNA's institutions.

In particular, the Palestinian security forces persecute Palestinians belonging to political parties in competition with the ruling one, the Fataḥ, such as Ḥamās and al-Ġihād al-islāmī, for example. People that are loyal to these political parties and are jailed by the Israeli army

because are accused to be a potential threat to the Israeli State, when they leave the Israeli jail are controlled and arrested many times also by the Palestinian security forces.

According to many Palestinians, the case of Bāsil Al-A‘raġ – as many other cases – highlights also that the PNA is not only powerless and ineffectual against Israel’s power, but it also acts in collusion with it to control and repress local forms of resistance.

The object of discussion and accusation among people was how Israel knew about their case and how it had access to the Palestinian Intelligence’s files was. Many Palestinians viewed this case, as many others, as the evidence of the PNA’s betrayal of the Palestinian cause.

Most of Palestinians experience the PNA as an oligarchy of its President Maḥmūd ‘Abbās – locally called Abū Māzen<sup>329</sup> – and his allies, who collude with Israel and sacrifice the wellbeing and claims of Palestinians for their own interests.

The PNA consists in a power network through which Palestinian political and economic elites maintain their control and privileged access to local resources. The existence of the weak PNA’s state structures depends on its ability to control local territories and population, and to monopolise violence. Local uncontrolled, spontaneous or organised resistance efforts are viewed as a threat to the PNA’s – and in particular the Fataḥ party’s - monopoly of violence, resistance, and national claims. Their control and repression are necessary to ensure the Israeli consent and the international powerful countries and donors’ acknowledgment of the PNA’s (outside) legitimacy to rule the Palestinian territories, and to control the decision-making processes and the negotiations with Israel concerning the future of the Palestinian territories and population.

Seeking to keep the control over the local population, the PNA carries out a performance of power, reproducing Israeli techniques and strategies of control and repression, such as the temporary checkpoints and the *ġawāsīs* (informers), as local informers of the (Israeli or Palestinian) security forces are locally called.

In the Palestinian Territories the security issue legitimises the violations of civil and political rights and drastic repressive policies by both the Israeli and Palestinian state, as it is happening today to illegal immigrants in many Western countries, in the context of political and economic instability.

---

<sup>329</sup> Despite the Palestinian presidential election has to be done every four years, the last elections have been carried out in 2005 (and the first one in 1996), while the last parliamentary elections have been carried out in 2006.



Besides its judicial and executive power, Israel exerts also its administrative power even over Palestinians living in areas under the PNA's civilian administration.

Every Palestinian's change of residence within the West Bank has to be required to the PNA's Ministry of Internal Affairs and authorised by the State of Israel. This is the case, for example, of an inhabitant of ad-Dehīša refugee camp, who married a woman from Wādī Fūkīn and asked the residence in the village.

Also, in 2015, during two nights the Israeli army entered the village's houses in order to make the census of the local population, asking identification documents and registering the dwellers of every house.

Nobody knew the reason of this census. Villagers imagined different scenarios. Some people thought that Israel was organising their displacement to other areas of the West Bank, maybe to a refugee camp. Others hypothesise the possible Israel's will to include the village within the Israeli State's borders and administration.

The unknown plans and strategies of the Israeli State and its army lead to a sense of uncertainty about future, and to multiple views of the present reality which fragment the local collective claims and hinder the community's cohesion.

Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council, told me that the Israeli Environmental Ministry contacted some villagers to speak about local environmental problems, such as the sewage of the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement poured out in the village's valley, causing groundwater and soil contamination.

In this way, this Israeli Ministry does not address environmental issues as a Palestinian community's problems, but as individual problems. It treats local Palestinians, using Aḥmed's words, « as they are Israeli citizens », as individuals under the Israeli administration. According to Aḥmed, this is a new strategy of Israel, consisting in ignoring and bypassing the PNA, as it does not exist.

Most inhabitants think that Israel aims at normalising the relationships between Palestinians and the Israeli State institutions. However, some of the people owning land under the settlement (and, thus, more affected by this problem) accept to try to negotiate individually a solution with the Israeli Ministry, only to solve their problems. They do not necessarily disagree with that view, but they consider that given the present PNA's subordination and "useless" (as most Palestinians say), any strategy to save their land and the whole village from environmental degradation has to be tried.

As an adult farmer in the village said me: « this will not make the political situation worse than how is now ».

All Palestinians are subjected to the Israeli judicial and executive power and military legislation, made up of changing and unpredictable military orders (and their discretionary implementation) concerning every life dimensions.

Like tentacles moving in the threatening sea of the Israeli colonisation, the PNA's power and prerogatives stretch and pull back continuously and unevenly in the Palestinian territories. The PNA's executive power and its administrative prerogatives are extended temporarily in the areas C (under Israeli administration and security control); its judicial and legislative power is exerted towards all Palestinians, including those living in areas B and C, but except those living in Israel and Jerusalem.

The administrative borders fragmenting the Occupied Palestinian Territories are movable and ever changing, in line with the Israeli colonial strategies. The territory is reshaped over and over again, unevenly and partially fragmented and reassembled constantly, composed of jagged pieces always moving and changing their shape and extension.

Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian territories have to face two overlapping centralised power structures, which most of Palestinians perceive as illegitimate, unfair and unjust outside authorities. They are subjected to two state judicial and administrative systems, and experience the power abuses of two executive systems, according to two different legal frameworks and values, and to conflicting and colluding political interests.

While competing to have the social control of the territory and its resources and population, the Israeli state and the PNA establish conflict and collusion relationships, at the expense of most of Palestinians' rights, interests and claims. At the same time, also local and international development actors exert their economic, political and symbolic power and carry out a discriminatory distribution of resources and services<sup>330</sup>, competing and colluding with both the states.

The overlapping, interaction and competition of the Israeli state, the PNA and the development system shape a "state pluralism", which exerts structural power relations (Wolf, 1990) producing multiple daily forms of structural violence, added to those entailed by capitalist market integration and class segmentation.

These national, international and global socio-political and economic power structures create social inequalities and dynamics of exclusion. These shape people's subjectivities and

---

<sup>330</sup> I showed the unequal and discriminatory distribution of services and resources of the development system in the third chapter, paragraph 3.

practices and are reproduced and reshaped in local social relationships and people's acts of violence and lawlessness towards each other.

Healthy, safety and other political and civil rights are dimensions on which hierarchies, social inequalities and forms of social differentiation are built, both between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Palestinians themselves, as shown also in the next paragraphs.

Palestinians have to extricate themselves from these unstable and schizophrenic life conditions defined by a hierarchic legal, administrative and "state pluralism", trying to appropriate and use their inconsistent dimensions to create spaces for manoeuvre to satisfy their daily needs and interests.

According to Abu-Lughod (1990), who studied a Bedouin community in the Egyptian Western desert, all forms of resistance are specific reactions to local and global power relations, connected to the local cultural and historical context. Practices and representations that resist to particular domination strategies can reproduce or undermine certain forms of exclusion and discrimination, or can be appropriated and redeployed tactically within another strategy and configuration of power.

This entails the necessity to avoid a linear conceptualisation of the relationships between power and resistance, to consider the contingent and strategic character of each form of resistance, which exists only in relation to the dynamics with particular domination strategies. The dialectics between power and resistance involve processes of co-optation, manipulation and complicity, which make the cultural outcome of conflicts concerning the construction of the subject and of the meaning of the State unpredictable.

## **2 The Symbolic Distances of Israeli Water Neighbours**

The multiple waters flowing in Wādī Fūkīn mediate the relationships between local villagers and their neighbours.

Today, the neighbourhood of the village includes the Israeli people living in the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah and in the settlements of Beitar Illit and Hadar Beitar, which are developed between Wādī Fūkīn and other Palestinian villages situated in the south-west area of Bethlehem – Naḥḥālīn, Ḥūsān and Battīr.

Villagers watch with resignation the new Israeli dwellings which are being built increasingly close to their houses. It is the Israeli town of Tzur Hadassah, which from the top of the western hills encircling the village develops down towards it, beyond the Green Line.

From Wādī Fūkīn one can hear the voices of the numerous children playing in the small playgrounds built in the settlement of Beitar Illit, and see with necked eyes the settlers moving by foot or by car. The music of the wedding parties celebrated in this Israeli urban settlement resounds through the village's valley, and the lights of the dwellings and streets illuminate the dark nights in the quiet Palestinian village. Sounds and lights cross the physical, administrative and cultural borders, imposing upon the perceptions of the underneath Palestinians, and giving back a sense of closeness to the objectified and depersonalised enemy.

Despite the Palestinian village and these Israeli urban settlements are bordering neighbouring areas, built in contiguous lands, the latter are perceived as distant, stranger areas inhabited by “the Others”. This sense of distance is created morphologically by the strategic elevated position of these settlements, which have clear physical borders made of security fences, walls and cancels, and the access to which is controlled by Israeli guards and by soldiers positioned in the area.

The Israeli architectural and security strategies contribute to create the dis-connection between Palestinian and Israeli neighbours. These strategies strengthen the Israeli and Palestinian national rhetoric, which both claim a shared national identity while reifying Palestinians and Israelis respectively as homogeneous, depersonalized enemies.

The cultural formation of the Palestinian national identity is primarily the product of the relationship of difference from Israelis (Bisharat 1997), viewed as “the Other” for excellence who caused the Palestinian *Nakba* (disaster, catastrophe), as the 1948 creation of the state of Israel is called by Palestinians. At the national level, this process of differentiation is strengthened and naturalised by Israelis' privileged access to most of water resources.

Water actively contributes to divide and differentiate Palestinians and Israelis. However, at the same time, the material and symbolic fluidity of water re-establishes a “social contiguity” between Israeli and Palestinian distant neighbours. In the following paragraphs, I show that, despite the reification of Israelis as distant strangers, fuelled by the spatial and “water segregation” of Palestinians, the local water dynamics give life and subjectivity again to them, highlighting the multiple degrees of “otherness” and closeness which they bear in daily interdependent relationships with the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn.

As I showed, in the village there is not only a kind of water, the H<sub>2</sub>O. There is a “diversity of waters” (Van Aken 2012): multiple waters that convey different power and solidarity relationships and conflicting and colluding global, national and local dynamics, highlighting the “embeddedness” (Casciarri 2008) of water within the society. The flows of different waters, such as spring water, domestic water and the settlers’ wastewater, bring insights into the problematic character of the dichotomous view of the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians.

## **2.1 The Symbolic Violence of Religion and Immorality Conveyed by Spring Water**

Many Saturdays I saw groups of Israeli citizens descending into the village’s valley to swim in the Palestinians' pools for irrigation spring water collection.

These Israeli citizens usually come from the above settlement of Beitar Illit, from other Israeli settlements in the West Bank and sometimes from Israel, during the Sabbath (the day of worship and rest observed by Jews on Saturday). Some *mustawṭinīn* (settlers) come to the village armed with M16s, and Israelis soldiers in the area are always ready to intervene to protect them. Sometimes, they even escort Israelis coming to the village. In these occasions, the inhabitants of the village suggested to me to be careful and to stay far from Israelis because they were *ḥaṭar* (dangerous).

The hostility, violence and dangerousness of all Israeli settlers is an idea spread among Palestinians, justified by the frequent violence enacted by many settlers against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian territories and Jerusalem.

However, when I asked villagers if they were afraid, they proudly denied it. Their answers consisted in a performance of the masculine, but also feminine “bravery culture” handed down over generations, as part of the habitus (Bourdieu 1984) which Palestinians embody since they are children. As a father said to me, « Palestinians cannot be afraid... to be afraid would mean to bow to Israel, thus losing all Palestine ».

As highlighted by Abu-Lughod (1986), the self-control of the body’s needs, suffering, passions and sentiments is one of the values included in the honour moral code. According to this code, physical and emotional pains have to be endured without complaining. Self-control, strength, bravery and the ability to resist to the others are qualities contributing to define a person’s autonomy and power, and thus, his/her honour and social status.

In the context of the Israeli occupation and physical and symbolic violence, these qualities are even more valorised and are elected as Palestinian national features.

To be subjugated by pain and discouragement or to be afraid of Israelis, as of other people, means to be dominated by the source of these feelings (such as the Israelis), showing lack of independence. Independence is both a central value defining one's honour and respectability, and the main objective of the Palestinian national struggle to free the Palestinian territory.

More than physical violence, the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn complain that some Israelis coming to the village enter their private pools for irrigation water collection without asking their permission and many times they damage them and the irrigation network.

Local Palestinians usually do not confront them openly and stay far from them. Given the impossibility to react and defend their own honour (farmers are not armed), they seek to avoid disputes and clashes which may threat not only their safety, but also their respectability and self-esteem. Therefore, open conflicts are not frequent.

However, sometimes some local men tried to make these Israelis go away, with the consequent tensions and intervention of the Israeli soldiers, which escorted away their compatriots. In these occasions, local Palestinians were motivated to intervene by a behaviour which is felt even more threatening than physical violence and vandalism. Men and women were swimming together without clothes, violating the local moral values concerning sexuality and gender relationships.

The irrigation water in the pools is at the centre of the struggle for the cultural reproduction of the local community, threatened by these settlers' symbolic violence, exerted through a use of irrigation water that convey values and normative systems locally viewed as "immoral".

These behaviours affect the inhabitants' ideas about (Jewish) Israelis, who generally are stereotyped as lascivious and promiscuous. The immorality of Israelis, some of which are of Western origins, is connected also to Western people and cultures and especially to Western women. These ideas are affected by the stories about Palestinians' experiences in Western countries, and maybe are amplified by the media such as the television and internet, to which everyone can have easy access.

Despite these generalisations, not all Israelis coming to the village are the same, as local villagers themselves declared to me. One time, a group of people from the Beitar Illit settlement came to the valley in Wādī Fūkīn with a guide, the only person in the group who was able to speak in English. He told me to be a tourist guide bringing people to visit the springs in the area.

The interaction with this person has been brief, affected by a reciprocal distrust<sup>331</sup>. Seeking to not attract his attention towards my research intentions, I said to him that I was visiting the village. I did not want to show my involvement in the village's life, since I did not know his political position and intentions. At the same time, I wanted to keep a sort of symbolic distance, to not arouse the suspect and distrust of local Palestinians. My behaviour was constrained by both the methodological need of building trust relationships with local people – making them sure that I was not an informer of Israel - and the need of a cautious distrust, in order to avoid the censorship and repression exercised by the Israeli army towards people bringing images and information outside Israel (as researchers or tourists).

The people that were visiting the village wore long and black tunics and a black hat, and had long beards. Local Palestinians called them *mustawṭinīn mutadayynīn* (religious settlers). They were Haredim, belonging to Jewish orthodox and ultraorthodox Haredi communities.

These men walked in the paths between the fields and stopped to pray at a spring or a pool for spring water collection. They consider *mayyat al- 'uyūn* (the water of the springs) in Wādī Fūkīn as sacred water for Jewish people. According to the religious and national rhetoric, these springs were included in a Jewish city lying in this area in ancient times, as mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud dating around 500 A.D. (Shilhav 1998).

These settlers were not armed, and they did not break local moral norms. According to local inhabitants, these religious Israelis usually have not a violent behaviour when they go to the village's valley. They usually ignore local Palestinians, as they are not present or are objectified as elements of the landscape. They move in the paths avoiding local people as much as possible, without speaking with them. They do not damage the irrigation network and fields, but they also do not consider the private character of pools, as these are “natural” container of a natural and sacred resource alienated from local social dynamics.

These Israelis do not go to the built-up area of the village, where they would meet more local inhabitants. Differently, other armed settlers sometimes enter the village from its main entry and pass from its built-up area to go to the valley, as I could see during my research periods. The Haredi settlers' reserved attitude may be affected by their religious beliefs and moral code which bring them to live segregated - geographically and especially symbolically - also

---

<sup>331</sup> To understand this Israeli man's distrust of me would have required a deep investigation about his view of world and society, women and foreign people (in particular middle class Europeans) and about his position and interests within the Israeli society. Maybe this person's behaviour was affected by his ideas about gender relationships connected to his belonging to an orthodox Haredi community, as explained later in this paragraph. The colonization, globalization and development processes affecting my research postures and ethics have been deeply analysed in the paragraph 1, Chapter I.

from the Israeli secular society, life styles and practices. These are viewed as threatening the social and cultural reproduction of their Haredi communities.

Despite their quiet behaviour, also these settlers are viewed as dangerous by local Palestinians. Another time, the dangerousness that worries them is eminently symbolic.

A local farmer told me proudly to have conned a group of Haredi settlers into not praying at his pool. Speaking in English, he said them that the water collected in his pool was not spring water, but another, dirty and contaminated water. It is uncertain if the settlers really believed to these words. However, this strategy was effective, since they gave up praying at his pool. As the local farmer said me, « first they pray, later they take the land, saying that spring water is sacred and belong to them... ».

By praying at a spring or a pool, Israelis inscribe new meanings in the local territory, as a territory belonging to Jewish people. They reinvent the memory of the ancient history of water flows in this area, contributing to its territorialisation by means of the symbolic appropriation of its historical water flows.

The purity, naturalness, sacredness and ancestral character of the spring water flowing in Wādī Fūkīn are contended between Palestinian villagers and the neighbouring Israeli Haredi settlers living in Beitar Illit.

Similarly to these Israeli interest group, the Palestinian inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn claim the purity of spring water, viewed as a gift of God, and the ancient reciprocal ties between the local community and the multiple springs, as the evidence of their autochthony and legitimacy to resist to the Israeli and Palestinian states.

These dynamics affect and are shaped by Israel and the PNA's<sup>332</sup> national historical narratives about water and territory and by their construction of forms of cultural heritage that compete to assert the cultural "authenticity" and legitimacy of Palestinians and Israelis, both claiming their historical roots in the territory.

The Haredi communities living in Beitar Illit contest the legitimacy of Israel's sovereignty. Indeed, local villagers ignore what I knew by reading a study carried out in 1998 by Yosseph Shilhav<sup>333</sup> (1998) about the relationships between the Haredi municipal

---

<sup>332</sup> I analysed the PNA's reification of Palestinian peasants and of their tribal water management as a form of cultural heritage in the fourth chapter, paragraph 4. The Israeli narratives about water are explained in the first chapter, in the paragraph 4.1.

<sup>333</sup> Yosseph Shilhav is an Israeli geographer whose main research interests are in political, cultural and urban geography.



administration, characterised by a particularistic approach, and the universal approach of policies and norms of the Israeli nation-state. Differently from other settlers going to the village, most of Israelis coming from the Beitar Illit settlement belong to orthodox and ultra-orthodox Haredi communities, which do not give any nationalist value to the Palestinian lands, and even refuse the secular concept of sovereignty, viewed as religiously invalid. Nevertheless, their religious narratives are appropriated by the state of Israel as a strategy of co-optation of these interest groups and of legitimisation of the Israeli nation-state building and the material appropriation of the Palestinian territories. In the framework of the cultural creation of a Jewish nation and rooted national identity, Israel produces historical narratives about water and territory, reinventing the memory of the ancient Jewish history in the historical Palestine and connecting to it new selected religious and nationalist meanings, while omitting and removing centuries of local Palestinians' history. Israel refers to the West Bank with its biblical name "Judea and Samaria", and imposes a Hebrew geographical nomenclature for Palestinian historical places and territories, connecting to them new selected and re-invented memories and religious and nationalist meanings.

Water is a political arena where different Israeli and Palestinian local, national, international interest groups meet, conflict and collude to assert the validity of their construction of historical memory.

Palestinians are aware of the material implications of Israel's symbolic appropriation of the territory, since they experienced them many times, directly or indirectly. The Israeli state expropriated many lands and symbolic resources, claiming their sacred character for Jewish people. It appropriated half of the Abram Mosque and turned it into a synagogue, after a violent terrorist attack carried out by an Israeli settler, who killed all Palestinians who were praying in the mosque. The national struggle against Israel's appropriation of Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa mosque - which Israelis claim it was a synagogue in ancient times - is well-known all over the world.

Therefore, local (and non-local) Palestinians connect every religious attitude towards their land, springs, or symbolic resources, to Zionist interests in the occupation of all Palestinian territories.

Given the usual physical and symbolic distance maintained by both local Palestinians and Israelis coming to pray, the personal motivations, intentions and interests of the latter in praying at local springs are only imagined by Palestinians. All Israelis coming to pray are stereotyped as religious Zionist settlers seeking to occupy local land.

This idea is justified by the fact that despite these Jewish communities contest the legitimacy of Israel's sovereignty, they live in one of the largest and most rapidly growing Israeli settlements. Israel considers it as a Haredi suburb in the Jerusalem metropolitan area, as if the Palestinian localities situated between the sacred city and the settlement, such as Wādī Fūkīn, did not exist.

This settlement was founded in 1990, as a result of the partially compatible encounter of different interests and ideologies: the settlements' policy of the right-wing ministries, aimed at expanding Israeli control over the West Bank, and the need to solve housing problems of the large Haredi population living in Jerusalem (Shilhav 1998).

In the early 1980s, the Haredi quarters of Jerusalem could not host the growing Haredi population, characterized by a low socioeconomic level and, thus, unable to buy the few available, expensive apartments in Haredi areas. Individual housing solutions failed to solve this problem, since the cheaper apartments available to Haredim were scattered throughout the city, in secular neighbourhoods in which these religious people did not want to live.

Therefore, the Mishkenot Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Residence), a Haredi association addressing Haredim's housing problems, and the Israeli Housing Ministry agreed to plan a community solution consisting in the creation of a Haredi segregated town<sup>334</sup>.

The segregated character of the Haredi communities, often claimed as illegitimate by state institutions, and their members' low economic status and need of housing have been a tool for the implementation of a right-wing government's ideological, territorial policies.

This solution has been contested by many Haredi communities and leaders, which viewed it as a strategic way to coerce Haredim to move from Jerusalem, thinning out them from the sacred city, and to contribute to the state's settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, in which these orthodox communities were not interested.

In order to co-opt Haredim to settle in a new settlement in the Palestinian territories, the Housing Ministry used a marketing policy, offering to them incomparable economic incentives, such as very cheap housing and a preferential financial support, compared to those usually warranted concerning public land allocation.

The ideological conflict between the Israeli ministries' will to settle in that area and the lack of interest – or even the refusal – of the Haredi communities in doing it has been solved by

---

<sup>334</sup> Beitar Illit is not the planned first Haredi city. However, it is the first Israeli urban settlement built within the framework of public housing for the Haredi population - considered for the first time as a separate sector of the Israeli society for public housing - with such a great involvement of Israeli state institutions (Shilhav 1998).

tempting a large segregated sector of the Israeli society with a low socio-economic status with marketing incentives which it could not refuse<sup>335</sup>.

When the first low income residents strengthened the establishment of the new town, the Housing Ministry began to plan freestanding houses for a wealthier population without the need of financial assistance, especially since 1996. Therefore, to ensure the development of a new Israeli settlement in the Palestinian territories, the Israeli ministries used the needs of a weak population, which, instead, was interested to settle in that location only for economic reasons.



Figure 73: the Israeli Beitar Illit settlement (De Donato, 2017)

When I told this information to a local farmer, he answered to me that it did not matter: «Finally, they are *mustawṭinīn* (settlers) who are taking our land... ».

Local Palestinian men who worked in the building sector in the Beitar Illit settlement speak about these settlers in a derogatory way, defining them as *ḥayawanāt* (animals), because of

---

<sup>335</sup> The birth rate in Beitar Illit is one of the highest in Israel and stands at 1,800 annual births. Beitar Illit has the fastest population growth among the West Bank settlements. Approximately, 63% of the population of this Israeli settlement is under the age of 18. This is the highest percentage of children in any Israeli settlement or city. The number of residents between the ages of 22-40 currently stands at 8,161. The city of Beitar Illit is ranked at no. 1 in the socio-economic poverty scale (Beitar Illit Official website: <http://betar-illit.muni.il/eng/?CategoryID=0>. Accessed on 03/02/2017).

their life style and conditions, viewed as uncivilised. In their speeches, they stress the overcrowding conditions of the dirty houses in the settlement, which are full of dirty children left to their own devices<sup>336</sup>. A Palestinian worker told me that one time a child was crying because he was hungry. After the worker saw Israeli adults ignoring him for many hours, he went to buy something to eat for him.

Besides of considering the settlers in Beitar Illit as uncivilised, Palestinians are very diffident towards them. They do not trust also their non violent behaviour: «Today, they do not attack us, but we cannot be sure about what they will do tomorrow... ». Indeed, some young men who worked in Beitar Illit experienced the violence of children living there, who threw stones to them. As a Palestinian worker said to me, « in the settlement we have always to move together... I never walk in the street alone... ».

Moreover, as I read later in a report of ARIJ (Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem), the 25th February 2015 settlers from Beitar Illit opened fire towards Palestinian houses in the neighbouring Nahhālīn village (ARIJ February 2015).

This event may be connected to the composition of the population in Beitar Illit, and to cultural changes undergone by the new generations of Haredim, which the mentioned study explains (Shilhav 1998). Most of the inhabitants of Beitar Illit are Haredi, but the settlement hosts also newly religious Jews, and non-Haredi religious defining themselves as “national religious” or “religious Zionists” (called also moderate religious).

The relationships between the Haredi majority and these minority groups are characterised by tensions and sometimes violence. Tensions arise in the framework of the Haredim’s attempts at “strengthening the boundaries of modesty” (Shilhav 1998:86), by imposing their moral norms (such as gender segregation and women’s modest clothing) and limiting the socio-cultural behaviours which threaten the cultural and social reproduction of Haredi communities (such as light clothing in summer, or boys and girls playing together in the streets).

---

<sup>336</sup> According to the official website of Beitar Illit, the overcrowding conditions of houses and domestic violence are two main problems in the settlement. The number of children at risk, between the ages of preschool and high-school, is 2,136 (Beitar Illit Official website: <http://betar-illit.muni.il/eng/?CategoryID=0>. Accessed on 03/02/2017).

These problems consist in the encounter between the different values and normative systems conveyed by these groups, which lead them to have a different position towards the state and its requirements concerning the administration of the settlement<sup>337</sup>.

The 1986 article 36 of the Security Service Law established that Haredim involved in Jewish learning and Torah study are exempted from the Israeli obligatory military service. At least until 1996 – at the conclusion of Shilhav’s research – 70 percent of men in Beitar Illit were Haredim without any training in weapons use or in guarding.

Since the 1990 definition of Beitar Illit as a municipality with its local council, this constituted a main problem concerning the security administration of the settlement. Indeed, the IDF’s (Israel Defence Forces) military order for the management of local councils in Judea and Samaria concerning the coordination of guard duty in the settlements requires that in settlements with more than 4,000 inhabitants, residents are responsible of the guard duty.

Only 30 percent of men in Beitar Illit could be involved in the security staff. These men were the newly religious Jews who served in the IDF before to becoming Haredi, and the non-Haredi religious, such as the “religious Zionists”. Therefore, differently from other settlements in the Palestinian territories, Beitar Illit highly depends on secular state’s institutions for its security (the IDF), as well as it depends on ministerial funding and approval<sup>338</sup>.

The IDF’s attempt to offer special military training to young Haredim, in collusion with the head of the settlement’s council, have been strongly opposed by Haredi communities, which viewed it as a threat to the social structure and cultural reproduction of Haredi communities. Indeed, it would have brought about the weakening of the religious leadership’s control of young Haredim, increasing also the risk of introducing state-religious education and values (Shilhav 1998).

However, in the framework of the increased involvement of Haredi communities in the state political system, the gradual introduction of secular and “modern” cultural values conveyed

---

<sup>337</sup> The Haredi society in Beitar Illit is divided also by internal conflicts, such as those between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Haredi communities, and the socio-economic competition with a growing middle class Haredi population.

<sup>338</sup> Given the high birth rates and the high rates of people engaged in the study of the Torah, who, therefore, do not participate to the labour market, the Haredi communities in Beitar Illit and its municipality highly depend on the external support of the secular society, and in particular on state institutions.

by mass media, and the increasing participation of young Haredim to the labour market<sup>339</sup>, have led to important socio-cultural changes affecting in particular the new generations of Haredim. Young Haredim carry out greater and more frequent spatial movements and have more contacts with the Israeli reality and a greater awareness of Israeli political affairs. According to Shilhav, they are less tied to the Haredi ideological and religious opposition to Zionism which characterised the previous generations.

The changes of the society living in Beitar Illit, and its internal, political and socio-cultural differentiations may affect also the relationships between its members and the inhabitants of the Palestinian neighbouring villages such as Wādī Fūkīn.

They may explain young settlers' increasing throwing of stones at Palestinians farmers collecting olives or at Palestinian workers within the settlement, and the armed attack against Palestinians in the Naḥḥālīn village. They may also be connected to the settlers' different behaviours in the village of Wādī Fūkīn. Armed settlers threatening the physical and "moral safety" of the Palestinian community in Wādī Fūkīn may be the newly religious and the Zionist non-Haredi religious who threat also the cultural reproduction of the Haredi communities in Beitar Illit, and engage in the security duties in Beitar Illit (those who know how to use a gun).

These may be interesting dimensions of a further investigation, which may bring insights about the interconnected dynamics and relationships between the heterogeneous Israeli society and the Palestinian one. In particular, about the Israeli forms of belonging which contest and resist the Israeli state's control and legitimacy, and the potential ways in which these may affect and maybe even collude with Palestinians' claim of independence.

The springs in the village and the pools for spring water collection are a public arena where multiple dynamics contribute to the villagers' construction of imagined differences between armed immoral settlers and religious uncivilised settlers coming to the village, according to their daily experiences. However, the Israeli and Palestinian national narratives, the Israeli state's structural violence and the direct or indirect (only listened) experience of Israeli Zionist settlers' physical and symbolic violence, affect local Palestinians' ideas about "The Israeli Settler". They arouse Palestinians' mistrust and suspicion of all Israeli settlers, contributing to create a reciprocal symbolic distance and ignorance, performed also when

---

<sup>339</sup> Young Haredim attempt at overcoming the growing economic difficulties of their families, due to the high birth rates and the great number of people engaged in the study of the Torah, who, therefore, are not involved in waged jobs.

they meet each other. These dynamics further fuel tensions and strengthen the Palestinian state's cultural construction and reification of settlers as the absolute enemies, as well as the Israeli one.

## 2.2 Normalising Settlers in Conflict with Israel

Sometimes local inhabitants distinguish between the Beitar Illit settlers and those living in the other neighbouring *mustawṭana* (settlement), called Hadar Beitar.

According to them, in the 1990s the Hadar Beitar settlers built an illegal connection with the waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn, by using rubber pipes, to convey domestic water to their settlement. First they stole water, but later they began to pay villagers for the consumed *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water). For this reason, few villagers stated that these settlers are *aḥsan šwaya* (a little better).

The small Hadar Beitar (the Glory of Beitar) settlement is made up of a few trailers and huts. Despite it has been founded in 1985, before the Beitar Illit settlement, it seems to be an Israeli outpost still waiting to be developed.



Figure 74: the Israeli Hadar Beitar settlement (De Donato, 2017)

Almost all villagers ignore the origins of these settlers and the history of the creation and non-development of this settlement. Just few people tried to answer to my questions about this subject, stressing the uncertain veracity of their information.

Some people (like the head of the Village Council) told me that this settlement developed in a Palestinian land, which had been bought or occupied (there are different versions) in a private way by an Israeli citizen of American origins. Other people told me that by creating this settlement, its Israeli founder aimed at collecting votes to enter the Israeli Parliament (a strategy often implemented), but because he failed, the settlement has not been expanded.

Anyway, all inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn are sure that the other larger settlement of Beitar Illit is threatening to evacuate the Hadar Beitar settlers.

This certainty is conveyed by the “water relationship” which for many years has connected the inhabitants of the two dis-connected neighbouring places of Wādī Fūkīn and Hadar Beitar. Until 2015, the Israeli settlers in Hadar Beitar paid local Palestinians for the water, which Israel controls and sells to Palestinians at a higher price than that for Israelis. They paid a greater price (7 Nis/m<sup>3</sup>) than that paid by villagers in Wādī Fūkīn (5 Nis/m<sup>3</sup>).

These settlers gave the money for the consumed domestic water to the Beitar Illit municipality, which gave it to the Village Council.

The Mekorot (the Israeli national water agency) did not build the waterworks in Hadar Beitar. It did not connect it to the water network supplying domestic water to the Beitar Illit settlement, as it usually does, instead, in new Israeli outposts, and as it did also in Wādī Fūkīn. For the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn this clearly mirrors the Israel State’s refusal to acknowledge its legitimacy, and the illegal water connection with the waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn consisted in a strategy to resist to the displacement by the Israeli State. Some villagers told me to have listened to Israeli news confirming these ideas. However, villagers ignore the reason of this conflict.

To find information about this settlement has not been easy. I could find it only<sup>340</sup> in the study concerning the Haredi municipal administration, which I mentioned previously (Shilhav 1998). According to it, the Hadar Beitar settlement has been established in 1985<sup>341</sup> by a small group of Zionist orthodox families – associated with the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva and Machon Meir for newly-religious Jews – under the initiative of Joseph Rosenberg, an orthodox immigrant from South Africa belonging to the right-wing Beitar movement.

---

<sup>340</sup> Differently of Beitar Illit, I did not find any website and document (at least translated in English or Arabic) concerning Hadar Beitar (except few and general mentions of it) made by Israeli, Palestinian or international institutions and organizations.

<sup>341</sup> The Hebrew date of Lag B'Omer, a date commemorating Bar-Kochba's revolt against the Romans (132-135 A.C.), in which the historic Beitar was the last stronghold. Right-wing Beitar movement connects the historic Beitar (and this revolt) to Hebrew heroism.



These religious right-wing nationalists belonged to the orthodox stream which adopted the new Zionist<sup>342</sup> concept of national sovereignty – in its secular European meanings – as linked to the religious attachment of Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). This orthodox approach viewed the religious meanings connected to the political idea of sovereignty, the Jewish nationalism, as the basic idea of a nationalist extremism based on religious motives.

The new Hadar Beitar settlement was connected ideologically and, thus, created close to the historical site of Beitar, which in the Babylonian Talmud dating around 500 A.D. was referred to as a great Jewish city.

For a long time, this settlement has been neglected by Israel and characterized by the lack of permanent building and development, because of the failure in finding suitable potential residents<sup>343</sup> and the lack of resources to recruit them. Its few settlers have always lived in harsh physical conditions and since 1990 were moved from hilltop to hilltop, to leave space for the expansion of the new, legitimate (for Israel) Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit, a Haredi city planned and financed by the Israeli Housing Ministry.

The Israeli government was trying to force these orthodox settlers to move from the area, by means of the same water strategies often adopted towards Palestinians.

Despite in mid-1994 the group of pioneers which founded Hadar Beitar, organized as a cooperative, left the site, other few Israelis moved there in a spontaneous way, without any organizational framework (Shilhav 1998).

In 2014-2015, during my first fieldwork period, Hadar Beitar was still resisting to the Israeli government. However, in 2017 Aḥmed Sukkar, the head of the Village Council in Wādī Fūkīn, told me that even if the trails and hugs were still present, almost all settlers moved away (and I could not find other information).

According to Aḥmed, since 2015 the Village Council decided to stop the water relationship with these settlers, refusing to give them domestic water, in accord with the PWA. As a reaction, some settlers menaced the safety of a member of the Village Council.

First Aḥmed asserted that the new members of the Village Council, including him, took this decision because they view the illegal water transactions with settlers as a process of *taḥbī'a* (naturalisation). This is the word used by Palestinians to refer to the normalisation of the

---

<sup>342</sup> Political Zionism was born as a national liberation movement aiming to achieve the political independence and sovereignty of the Jewish people.

<sup>343</sup> Indeed, the settlement was planned as a suburb of Jerusalem and, therefore, none economic base for the development of the settlement was proposed.

Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and of Israelis' colonial relationships with Palestinians. These strategies of representation of social reality contribute to maintain occupation. Aḥmed's opinion is shared by most of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn.

However, the previous members of the Village Council accepted the agreement with these settlers for many years, even if it was contested by many other villagers. According to Aḥmed, they viewed it as a personal profitable business and a way to avoid conflicts with armed settlers who are locally said to be aggressive.

Like the other local inhabitants, these villagers view the Hadar Beitar settlement as illegitimate. However, for them the illegal water connection consisted in the establishment of a dependence relationship with Israelis, this time in favour of Palestinians. They established a water tie allowing them to achieve a small personal advantage from the unchallenged power of the Israeli enemy – since anyway Hadar Beitar settlers are protected by the Israeli army and are also armed – using the conflicts within the Israeli society.

They did not consider that finally domestic water is paid to Israel, which exerts ultimate control over water resources.

The changed position of the Village Council towards the domestic water relationship with Hadar Beitar is not connected only to the different ideas of the new members and head of this local institution.

When I tried to understand better this dynamic during other interviews, Aḥmed explained to me that another factor affected this decision. The municipality of Beitar Illit began to refuse to mediate the payment for the domestic water consumed by the Hadar Beitar settlers. Therefore, to give water to the only neighbouring settlement which even Israel considers as illegitimate, helping it to resist to its displacement from Palestinian land, entailed a greater compromise.

Despite their reification and homogenisation of the Palestinian and Israeli societies, often conveyed also by the dominating official discourses of the international community, the daily dynamics of contention and forced sharing of different waters' flows in the village between its Palestinian inhabitants and their Israeli neighbours highlight some of the contradictory dynamics, interests and conflicts characterising both the Palestinian and Israeli heterogeneous society and the relationships between them.

Despite the orthodox settlers living in Hadar Beitar shared the Israeli state's territorial, nationalist aim of expanding its control over the West Bank, the Israeli

government forced them to move from the area in order to leave it to Haredi people, who instead were interested to settle in that location only for economic reasons.

In the framework of the Israeli State's re-invention and administration of the territory, the control of local people's mobility and access to resources has a strategic role. By means of water policies, the Israeli army forces large-scale displacements of the Palestinian population, but if necessary, also of Israeli groups.

In this case, Israelis with Zionist motivations to settle in that area of the West Bank have been forced to move away, in order to displace Israeli communities living in Jerusalem which did not want to move there.

Also, the Hadar Beitar Zionist settlers co-opted local Palestinians, establishing commercial relationships with them, to struggle against the Israeli State for the survival of a settlement occupying land of the same Palestinians.

The illegal connection to the waterworks in Wādī Fūkīn was not only aimed at obtaining the access to the essential drinking water allowing them to resist in the settlement. The payment for water through the mediation of the legitimate (for Israel) Beitar Illit municipality consisted in the establishment of a semi-legal access to the domestic water controlled by the Israeli State, by means of a normalising water relationship with the Palestinian village of Wādī Fūkīn (useful since the settlement is at the entrance of the village, along the path of its waterworks).

In this way the illegitimate settlers of Hadar Beitar (from the point of view of Israel) sought to legitimise the presence of their settlement, by normalising their relationships with the legitimate settlement of Beitar Illit. Therefore, this dynamic consists in the normalisation of the relations between an Israeli group of settlers and the state of Israel, by means of the normalisation of the relations between this group and a Palestinian community.

I could not understand the reasons leading the Beitar Illit municipality to act in collusion with these illegitimate settlers, and later to change this position. Maybe also the Israeli state allowed this strategy, by leaving its citizens have access to the life resource of water, while negotiating their inevitable displacement. To understand these dynamics would have required a deep investigation in both these settlements.

However, the Beitar Illit municipality's refusal to continue to endorse the other settlers' strategy affected the local Palestinians' positions towards this issue.

The *muqāwama* (resistance) to the Palestinian land's occupation by Israeli settlers was indirectly fostered and legitimised by an Israeli institution under the authority of the Israeli State.

At the same time, Palestinians' resistance indirectly favoured the state of Israel's control of an Israeli group which destabilised it and contested its decisions. They indirectly helped the Israeli state to overcome an obstacle to the further expansion of one of the largest Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

### **2.3 Environmental Claims for Spring Water Protection and Enemy Wastewater Flows**

While pointing at the Israeli urban settlements encircling the village, a young boy told me that according to his father the *isrā'īlyyn* (Israelis) in Tzur Hadassah are *kwaysīn* (good), while those living in Beitar Illit and Hadar Beitar are *miš kwaysīn* (not good).



*Figure 75: the Israeli settlement of Tzur Hadassah (De Donato 2017)*

First, I thought that this distinction was connected to the international community's definition of the illegal status of the Israeli settlements built in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, adopted also by many NGOs. Tzur Hadassah differs from the other two settlements because it is situated within the Israeli state's borders.

In the PNA's discourses, all Israelis are represented as the enemies against which the Palestinian nation has to struggle. However, with the Oslo Accords the PNA accepted this international definition, acknowledging the Israel's sovereignty within its borders. This is a major reason leading Palestinian refugees to refuse the PNA's legitimacy. Especially the *lāğ'iīn ath-thamanya wa-arba'īn* ('48 refugees)<sup>344</sup>, whose right to return to their evacuated villages in Israel has been denied by this representation of the social reality.

Also for Palestinians living in Wādī Fūkīn the distinction between legal and illegal Israeli settlements is almost ambiguous. Also Tzur Hadassah develops in land which belonged to their village and has been occupied and expropriated illegitimately.

When they refer to the neighbouring Israeli urban areas they use always the same term, *mustawṭana* (settlement), without distinguishing between them (between settlement and town, for example).

Once again, the local construction of the symbolic differences between the Israeli neighbours is mediated by the active role of another kind of water.

The sewage treatment facilities in Beitar Illit cannot treat the amount of wastewater produced by settlers, which local Palestinians call *mayyat mağārī bītār 'īlīt* (the water of the sewer of Beitar Illit)<sup>345</sup>. Therefore, the untreated wastewater overflows and is poured out in the farmlands in the valley of Wādī Fūkīn, causing the pollution of underground water and soil contamination (Fortunato 2012). Moreover, this settlement is responsible also of the unauthorised disposal in the Palestinian farmlands of the solid waste produced by construction works in the settlement.

The Beitar Illit settlers « *būklū al-arḍ* (eat the land) » - as some people said me - and threaten the local environmental sustainability. They externalise the environmental costs of the aggressive occupation and urban development, organised and supported economically by the Israeli State. These costs are "paid" by Palestinians, and their responsibility is often taken on by international NGOs, which contribute to maintain the Israeli occupation.

---

<sup>344</sup> The '48 refugees are Palestinian refugees whose villages of origins were situated within the present Israel's borders and have been evacuated in 1948.

<sup>345</sup> I addressed this subject in the paragraph 1 of the Chapter IV.

Differently, many local inhabitants know the successful efforts (at least temporarily) of green groups from Tzur Hadassah to protect the valley in Wādī Fūkīn. These groups lobbied the Israeli government for the change of the path of the Separation Fence (the Israeli segregation wall) which is planned to be built between the village and this Israeli town.

This initiative was aimed at the conservation of the springs in Wādī Fūkīn, avoiding the destruction of the local hydrological system entailed by the building of the foundations of the Israeli wall<sup>346</sup>. It has been carry out by some inhabitants of Tzur Hadassah and few ones of Wādī Fūkīn, in the framework of a common project organized by the joint Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmental NGO called Friends of the Earth - Middle East (FOEME).

The project focused on the protection of the socio-natural environment in Wādī Fūkīn, through the patrimonialisation of both the environment and local Palestinians's farming and irrigation practices, as a unique natural and cultural heritage in the Judean Mountains, shared by Israelis and Palestinians living in the two inhabited centres.

The few local Palestinians who participated to this project viewed the actions shared with Israelis as a contingent and strategic choice to protect local collective interests, in the framework of the perceived powerlessness against the Israeli occupation and "usefulness" of the PNA. As the other villagers, they ascribe the destruction of the local socio-ecological system to Israel's development of the town of Tzur Hadassah. However, they used in a strategic way the status of Israeli citizens - who have more rights and voice in the Israeli State – and their environmentalist approach to local problems, to accomplish the local objective of protecting the village from the Israeli State.

These villagers are criticised by the others who assert that these water relationships contribute to the *taṭbī'a* (naturalisation) of the relations between the village and the Israeli town, as normal and egalitarian neighbourhood relationships. They argue that the activities proposed by FOEME hide the political causes of local environmental problems and normalise the Israeli occupation, while the town of Tzur Hadassah continues to be expanded in the lands of the village, causing local springs' drying. These water relationships

---

<sup>346</sup> As I explained in the first chapter, Paragraph 4.1, the digging for the foundations of the wall might further damage the local hydrological and ecological system, destroying the underground paths of water feeding the springs in the village. Therefore, it would deprive local inhabitants of their historical agricultural livelihood.

As was told me, despite these Israelis' actions to protect the village, finally Tzur Hadassah municipality's strategies do not differ so much from those adopted by the "illegal" Beitar Illit municipality.

Indeed, the NGO FOEME proposed the joint building and administration of a sewage treatment facility common to Wādī Fūkīn and Tzur Hadassah - contested by local Palestinians also because it was supposed to be built in Wādī Fūkīn lands. However, in the 2016 summer the municipality of the Israeli town began to test pipes, which allow the spills of the winter *maṭar* (rainwater) and of *mayyat mağārī tsūr hadāsā* (the water of the sewer of Tzur Hadassah) to the underlying north-western part of the village. This infrastructure would increase rainwater-floods, and the environmental pollution and risks of diseases which are already caused by *mayyat mağārī bītār 'īlīt*.

As was said to me many times, Israelis from Tzur Hadassah are a little better than those in the settlements, but « finally, they are all *mustawṭinīn* (settlers)! ».

Moreover, many villagers think that, even if motivated by good intentions, today the Israeli green groups in Tzur Hadassah want to preserve what tomorrow the Israeli State will take. Indeed, most of local Palestinians are aware that the expropriations of many Palestinian lands have been justified by Israel with the need of environmental protection, by declaring the land as "nature reserve" or "forest reserve"<sup>347</sup>.

Studying in a small town in Sicilia (Italy), Palumbo (2003) has analysed the processes of patrimonialisation as a social construction, the outcome of the arbitrary selection, manipulation and representation of history, connected to the social production of memory and identity politics, as well as to politics of space and time.

The social, political and economic dynamics involved in the social construction of heritage are masked by its essentialisation and naturalisation, by processes of reification of culture which can be manipulated and appropriated to legitimise multiple political rhetorics and strategies.

The patrimonialisation of environments and cultures entails changes in the management of space and the connected local social, cultural, political and economic implications, highlighting the relationship between heritage construction and power.

The policies for the protection of an environment or a culture involve dynamics of valorisation, regulation, control and manipulation, which change the relationships between

---

<sup>347</sup> I analysed the Israeli environmental strategies for land appropriation in the paragraph 4.1 of the first chapter.

that environment and socio-cultural configuration with those identified with them. These policies are often contested by local populations, since they often entail the loss of their right of access to the patrimonialised environment or cultural good.

Villagers' imagination and reification of all Israelis as the dangerous and unjust enemies is affected by the structural violence exerted by the Israeli State through water, architectonic and environmental techno-politics, as well as the legal and symbolic devices for land expropriation. The history of the village and the present Israeli strategies make the differentiation between Israelis living in Israel and those living in the West Bank meaningless.

In line with a post-structuralist approach (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Zureik 2003), the identity emerges as a process of social construction of difference entailing multiple forms of exclusion and construction of "the other", produced by the state's hydro-politics (Trottier 1999) and water ideologies. Structural power relationships exerted through water and territory planning affect the life, daily practices and relationships, shaping the contexts of social interactions and defining which are the possible behaviours and meanings. The dialectics between these structural relationships, local practices of resistance and colluding strategies of different Palestinian and Israeli interest groups affect the subject and identity construction producing multiple processes of differentiation conveyed by multiple waters.

In the context of the daily dynamics concerning water, villagers define symbolic differentiations between the Israeli "Others", who bear multiple degrees of "otherness" and closeness within interdependence. These dynamics and processes of social differentiation, grounded on local interactions, experiences and negotiations mediated by the multiple waters flowing in the village, make problematic the dichotomous and oppositional view of the relationships between Palestinians and Israelis.

In the framework of the local water encounters between Israeli and Palestinian distant neighbours, multiple colluding and conflicting ideas, interests and strategies highlight the complexity and heterogeneity of both the Palestinian and the Israeli society, and the often contradictory relationships between them.

Israelis living in the three settlements encircling Wādī Fūkīn – Beitar Illit, Hadar Beitar and Tzur Hadassah – including those working in Israeli state institutions, have different and conflicting interests, ideologies, views, normative systems and political positions towards both the waters in the village and the Israeli State. Israeli Zionist interests, claims for environmental protection and religious beliefs are all conveyed by water to the little village of



Wādī Fūkīn, where they meet and overlap producing paradoxical outcomes. Finally, these interests are often co-opted and dominated by Israel, channelled into its project of planned extension of control over the whole historical Palestine and its waters.

These processes shape the cultural politics of water (Mosse 2008), that is revealed as a symbolic resource with an active role in the mediation of power dynamics and resistance strategies and in the definition of multiple processes of social differentiation.

In the context of the territorial fragmentation planned by the Israeli State, the physical and cultural fluidity of water – which takes multiple shapes and meanings according to the socio-ecological and political relationships that convey and mediate its use and access – re-establishes a social contiguity between Palestinians and Israelis, who are connected by many interdependent, cultural, political, and economic ties (unbalanced in favour of Israelis), both at the local and the national level (as shown in the next paragraph).

### 3 Segregated Interdependent Subordination

Since the creation of the PNA in 1994 and the establishment of the administrative conditions decided by the Oslo Accords, the Israeli segregation wall and the adoption of the permit politics, the Israeli architectonic, administrative and security strategies restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians, who previously were freer and less controlled by the Israeli army, even while moving in Israel and Jerusalem<sup>348</sup>. As many Palestinians told me, previously personal relationships between Palestinians and Israelis were more frequent and usual.

However, despite the present context of spatial segregation of Palestinians, the relationships with Israelis are characterised by a high degree of interdependence.

Some Israeli urban citizens, especially from the neighbouring Tzur Hadassah, come to the valley to buy *ḥoḍār* ‘*oḍowiyya* (organic vegetables) from some local Palestinian farmers. Many villagers disapprove these commercial relationships, viewing them as another form of *taṭbī‘a*.

Trying to justify himself, one of the farmers selling vegetables to Israelis told me that these relations are only commercial relationships without a personal involvement. « I only sell my

---

<sup>348</sup> The Israeli architectonic, administrative and security strategies fragmenting the Palestinian territories and hindering Palestinians’ movements are deeply analysed in the paragraphs 3 and 3.1 of Chapter I.

vegetables to them », as he said me. He appropriated the neo-classical economics' view of market transactions as impersonal, detached from the political and cultural dimensions, and ruled only by free market laws.

Palestinians involved in these commercial relationships seek to gain space in the crops' market, appropriating the rhetoric about organic food spread among the Western, Israeli and Palestinian urban middle class. They consider these practices as an individual economic strategy carried out by using the new needs perceived by these Israelis and their imagination of Palestinian agriculture. They do not necessary engage only in organic farming but they represent themselves as doing so.

As another farmer said me, « I know that they [pointing with his hand to Beitar Illit] give us slaps, while them [pointing with his hand to Beitar Illit], they give us caresses... I only take also caresses<sup>349</sup> ... why I have not to do this, while all people buy from Rami Levy? ».

With these words, he was referring to the many Palestinians living in the village or outside it, who buy cheaper Israeli products in the Israeli supermarket chain called Rami Levy, in particular in that one situated at the entry of the close Israeli Etzion settlement, accessible to all Palestinians (since it is not within the borders of the settlement).

Also in the Palestinian shops and markets many products are imported from Israel, including vegetables. The Israeli State controls most of local resources, and Palestinians are highly dependent on the Israeli market and services.

Given the constraints of the Palestinian economy imposed by Israel, Palestinians have to refer to many Israeli institutions supplying services and resources which are not offered in the Palestinian territories both by public and private institutions - such as medical services, or wastewater treatment, for example.

In the framework of the high dependence of Palestinians' life from the resources, services and labour opportunities controlled by Israel, the sale of crops to Israelis consists in a local contingent overturn of these dependence relationships, which favours their personal interests.

The Israeli citizens buying crops from Wādī Fūkīn depend on the Palestinian products and valorise them, contrary to the Israel State's rhetoric about the backward character of Palestinian agriculture and its subordinated value compared to the Israeli "modern", high-tech agriculture.

---

<sup>349</sup> The meaning of this sentence can be expressed by the Italian saying "to use the cane and the carrot".

This overturn of values and dependence positions are not grounded on a deep knowledge about local farming practices and techniques but on these Israelis' blind trust, imagination and reification of local Palestinians' farming as "traditional", independent of regional and global economic dynamics, never changing and thus implicitly healthy. This rhetoric is similar to the past social sciences' myth of the naturalised "good savage" – the idea that the natives of the colonial territories embodied a pristine goodness<sup>350</sup>.

Israelis coming from Tzur Hadassah go to the village also to bring their car to the local cheap car repair garage saving money. Many Israeli citizens from Israel and the settlements go to the areas B and C of the West Bank – under Israeli security control and close to the settlements and the bypass roads connecting them to Jerusalem and Israel – to have access to some cheaper services offered by Palestinians. Jewish Israelis from Israel go to Beyt Ğālā to eat at local restaurants or to enjoy in local discotheques, which are cheaper than those in Jerusalem and Israel. Also, Israeli settlers and soldiers go daily to a Palestinian's shop situated at the border between an area B and C, in the Palestinian municipality of Beyt Ğālā, close to the Israeli Har Gilo settlement and to the local DCO.

Despite the structural dependence of the Palestinian economy from Israel, the economic relationships between Palestinians and Israelis are characterised by high interdependence, even if highly unbalanced in favour of Israelis.

In the framework of the high unemployment rate in the West Bank, Palestinians are strictly dependent on the labour market in Israel (Kurzom 2001), even more than before the creation of the PNA and the spatial segregation of Palestinians. At the same time, the Israeli economy depends on the low-paid workers from the Palestinian territories, who carry out the less prestigious jobs for lower wages than Israelis, and whose need to work is exploited by Israelis, especially if they are illegal workers (without the Israeli military permit to enter Israel to work).

Paradoxically, the development of the Israeli settlements occupying Palestinians' lands highly depends on the vulnerable, precarious and discriminated Palestinian labour force largely employed in the Israeli building sector.

As I wrote in the first chapter, in Wādī Fūkīn many male inhabitants work in the building sector in Israel, Jerusalem or in the Israeli settlements, both legally and illegally. To work in

---

<sup>350</sup> I addressed this subject in the second paragraph of the third chapter.

Israeli urban areas, even if temporarily, is more profitable than local agriculture. The Israeli wages are also higher than those in the West Bank, especially in Jerusalem and Israel.

According to local Palestinians', wage is another criteria of differentiation between Tzur Hadassah and Beitar Illit. In the Israeli town they are higher than those in the Beitar Illit settlement, which Palestinians cannot enter illegally, given the high security controls. Again, Palestinians' differentiation between these two urban settlements does not refer to the international community's definition of the illegal status of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories.

Therefore, villagers working in the Israeli building sector contribute to build the settlers' houses in the same lands expropriated from their families. In the context of unemployment and difficult conditions of local agriculture, most of villagers justify the choice to work in Israel with the challenges they have to face in satisfying their families' private economic needs. These are increasingly expensive, due to the urban middle-class life styles and expectations spread among villagers, which can be difficultly sustained only by the increasing unprofitable farming activities.

The interdependent economic relationships between Palestinians and Israelis are strictly connected to cultural dynamics and interactions between them, at the local and national level.

Many Palestinians do not buy only the Israeli products which are not produced in the West Bank, or imported from other countries. They often buy Israeli products, such as food industry products, because they prefer them. They think that, for example, Israeli soft drinks such as Coca Cola or industrial food such as *hummus* (mashed chickpeas and sesame food) have a better taste and are healthier, regardless of their possibility of, or diligence on verifying this belief.

Israel is imagined as a modern and democratic state in which there is a greater control of the products' quality, compared to those carried out by the PNA: « The State of Israel really takes care about its citizens », as a Palestinian man said me. These ideas are affected by the Israeli national narratives which represent the state of Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East, and are fed by the PNA's structural exclusion and discrimination of most of Palestinians.

This belief may be contested by Israelis going to Wādī Fūkīn to buy organic vegetables, instead of buying the products of the Israeli high-tech, intensive agriculture. Only concerning vegetables and fruits, the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, as well as other Palestinians living in

rural and urban areas, they all agree that local products are better than the Israeli ones. As I shown in the second chapter, the ideas of the implicit greater “naturalness”, healthy character, and better taste of Palestinian crops are connected to local claims for socio-ecological justice (Schlosberg 2013), autonomy and resistance against the Israeli State’s threat of land expropriation and displacement. However, Israeli crops are largely bought by Palestinians because of their cheaper price; the boycott of Israeli products is a political strategy carried out by few Palestinians.

While some Israelis want to consume Palestinians’ “natural” and authentic agricultural products, in the struggle for survival Palestinians claim the greater quality of Israeli industrial products, within a process of reciprocal reification grounded on reciprocal ignorance<sup>351</sup>.

Palestinians’ choices about consumption, education and other daily life dimensions are affected by the widespread cultural models of the Western and Israeli middle class (especially of Israelis with Western origins).

The showcase for the Israeli middle class wellbeing and cultural models and dynamic global flows of Western cultural models, knowledge and values fostered by satellite television, internet and development NGOs, lead to the spread of the economic and consumerist view of wellbeing, the neo-liberal individualist ideology and different interpretations of sexuality and gender relationships.

These processes amplify social and cultural changes, the creation of new desires and prospects, and the spread of conflicting views of the social and political reality.

At the same time, the Israeli army’s censure, repression and control of Palestinian public spaces hinder the collective negotiation of changing cultural meanings and values, and of the interpretations of the radical political and economic changes. In this way, it threatens the social and cultural reproduction of local groups of belonging, and hinders the construction of networks of solidarity relationships for the mediation and negotiation of the increasing cultural, political, economic, intergenerational and gender conflicts.

The internalisation of the consumerist culture is not always connected to the economic possibility to achieve this life style. The gap between desires and possibilities is often exploited by the Israeli secret service. This institution co-opts poor and marginalised Palestinian *ḡawāsīs* (informers, spies) by using their needs and desires, as well as local moral norms. Sometimes it promises them simple rewards in return for their collaboration – such as

---

<sup>351</sup> I addressed these commercial relationships between villagers and Israelis from Tzur Hadassah in the paragraph 2, Chapter III.

money, the permit to enter Israel or even a sexual intercourse with a woman. Other times the Israeli secret service coerces Palestinians to collaborate by menacing them to not issue the permit to enter Israel to work, or to reveal to people their previous collaboration with the Israeli Intelligence, their adultery, or that they had an “illegitimate” sexual relation (before marrying).

Since the building of the Israeli segregation wall and the permit policies, these strategies are increasingly effective. Despite these dynamics, also the cultural relationships between Israelis and Palestinians are not unidirectional.

The Israeli cultural colonisation of the Palestinian territories does not consist only in the spread of the Israeli middle class values, models and knowledge.

In the cultural construction of the Israeli State, many elements of the historical Palestinian material, culinary, and symbolic cultures are appropriated as symbols of the Israeli national identity, by connecting them to a new and reinvented histories and meanings.

To make a simple example, the *hummus* is part of people’s diet in Turkey and the Middle East and North-African countries, among others, since a far past. However, Israelis refer to it as one of their typical national product, saying to have invented it.

Despite the Israeli state’s strategies of spatial segregation of Palestinians, Israelis and Palestinians are tied by daily economic, cultural and political interdependent relationships, surely highly unbalanced to the detriment of Palestinians. The structural subordination of Palestinians does not entail their exclusion from the sharing of Israeli material and symbolic resources and power structures. On contrary, it is grounded on their inclusion in a very subordinate position, by means of the creation of increasing dimensions of interdependence, which allow Israel to keep the present economic, political, social and cultural hegemony of the state of Israel.

### **3.1 Israeli Sources of Power and Changing Political Morality**

In Wādī Fūkīn some conjugal families have a high socio-economic status achieved thanks to a successful long-time job in Israel.

The high social status of Bassām Maḥmūd ‘Aṭiya is connected to the status and respectability of his father, who was the last *muḥtār* in the village, led the community’s return to Wādī Fūkīn and before the village’s evacuation controlled a great amount of land.

When in 2014 Ğamāl, the firstborn of Bassām, married, his father hung a great tarp with the *muḥtār*'s picture on the facade of his house, as to remember to people the importance of that event and of Bassām's family. *Ibn al-muḥtār* (the son of the chosen one), as Bassām is locally called, does not farm. Most of land his father owned before the village's evacuation has been included within the Israeli State in 1948. As he said to me, « from the about 6.000 dunams<sup>352</sup> of my grandfather<sup>353</sup>, today I have only 150 meters! ». Therefore, he leaves one of his brother farms the land, given that he has another job.

Today, Bassām's conjugal family's high status is connected to its high socio-economic conditions, achieved thanks to Bassām's long-time job in the building sector in Israel, where « one can make good business », as he explained to me. From being a worker, over time he established personal work relationships with Israelis and became a *mita'ahhid* (entrepreneur) in the building sector in Israel. This person is one of the few ones in the village who declared to me to have some *aṣḍiqā'* (friends) in Israel, showing to me the presents his young sons and daughters received from them.

Most of the few villagers (but not all) who have established informal, personal solidarity relationships with Jewish Israelis belong to the middle class, they do not farm, have a more comfortable lifestyle, and an easier access to Israel and its symbolic and material resources, including other relationships with Israelis.

One of the conditions required to ask a military permit to go to Israeli areas to work, or to carry out market transactions (to buy Israeli products), is the official invitation by an Israeli citizen. Personal relationships with Jewish Israelis are an important source of access also to other resources and services, such as work or medical treatments in Israel, obtained thanks to Israeli citizens' support. Since the building of the Israeli segregation wall and the adoption of the permit politics, this important social capital is increasingly scarce, owned by few Palestinians usually belonging to the middle class.

Thanks to personal work relationships with Israelis, some Palestinians can facilitate other Palestinians' access to Israel, to make they work as their dependent workers. This possibility allows them to create a large group of people who depend on them for the access to the resources to live. In this way, these privileged Palestinians strengthen their work position in Israel and increase their status, and economic and political power in the Palestinian society.

---

<sup>352</sup> 1 dunam = 1000 m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>353</sup> His grandfather, the father of the *muḥtār*, was one of the seven brothers considered as the ancestors of the 'Atiya extended family.

The possibility to have access to the Israeli labour market and to personal relationships with middle-class Israelis has become a criterion of social differentiation, a source of economic and political power and a potential opportunity of social mobility in the Palestinian society.

Some people in the village disapprove the choice to work for Israelis. One of them stated that « agriculture means self-respect and *ḥorriya* (freedom)... while to work for Israelis means being *tābi* ' (dependent)... ». When I knew this farmer better, he told me that he could not have access to the Israeli labour market. Because of his detention in an Israeli jail during the second Intifada, the Israeli military authorities have always refused to give him the permit to enter Israel to work. Given his situation, to go there illegally was too much risky, even more considering that he sustains alone his wife and many sons and daughters: « Who would take care of them, if the Israeli army jailed me? », as he asked me.

Therefore, despite his political condemnation of local Palestinians' participation to the Israeli labour market, actually he tried and wished to do it, but without abandoning totally agriculture, as he told me.

As I state in my previous researches carried out in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša (De Donato 2013a), situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem (in an area A), by fragmenting the territory Israel's water and territory planning and security policies constitute material and symbolic borders. The permeability of these borders and the connected possibility to get access to the territory and its material and symbolic resources like water are linked to the nationality (Israeli or Palestinian), class of belonging, place of dwelling (Israel or Occupied Territories; area A, B, C, urban area, rural one or refugee camp), religious belonging (Jewish, Islamic, or Christian) and criminal record.

These terms of differentiation are resources increasingly important in defining local patterns of belonging and exclusion, hierarchies and social identities, and the construction of the self and the "other". People excluded from the access to the resources in Israel (such as work or relationships) express the status competition in moral and political terms, claiming the "political immorality" of working in Israel, as well as of selling crops to Israelis.

Before the creation of the PNA, in the widespread national rhetoric, to work in Israel was viewed as the betrayal of the national political struggle against the Israeli colonial occupation. Today, in the framework of the dense interdependence relationships between Israelis and Palestinians at the local and national level, of the perceived PNA's collusion with the Israeli State, and the increasing pauperization of the Palestinian society, the Palestinians' perception of the meaning of the participation to the Israeli labour market has changed.



For most of Palestinians it consists in a necessity and a strategy of manoeuvre to have access to a livelihood and to medical and other vital services and resources, in the context of the many constraining, discriminatory and marginalising policies exerted by both the Palestinian and the Israeli state. As many Palestinians said me: «finally, we have to live...».

Palestinians seek to have access to the resources, services, knowledge, and opportunities in the whole territory of the historical Palestine, under Palestinian or Israeli control, since actually also the Occupied Palestinian Territories and their resources and institutions (including the PNA's ones) are controlled by the state of Israel.

According to the local changing “political morality”, the political distinction between a moral work (or a resource) carried out in the West Bank, and an immoral work in Israel blurs and is increasing meaningless. Almost every work is involved in a network of interdependence relationships, which finally bring to the ultimate control of Israelis and the Israeli state, with its economic, administrative, and political hegemony.

The spatial segregation of Palestinians and the economic constraints imposed by Israel have increased Palestinians' precariousness and dependence on the Israeli market, bringing about a change in the local “political morality”. Israeli strategies of domination have led to the creation of new sources of economic and political power and terms of symbolic differentiation, amplifying the socio-economic segmentation and symbolic differentiations between Palestinians.

#### **4 Multiple Water Countries and a Main Claim for Water Freedom**

The inhabitants of the rural village of Wādī Fūkīn and those of the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša, situated in the outskirts of Bethlehem, are tied by many long-time relationships dating back to the creation of Israel. When Wādī Fūkīn had been evacuated by the Israeli army in 1956, most of villagers went to live in this refugee camp for sixteen years, sharing the deprivations and harsh living conditions of the other refugees.

However, the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn have been luckier than the others, since they succeeded to return to their village. Today, after about forty-five years, they are threatened again by the risk of being displaced by the Israeli army. Having experienced the refugee status, today villagers strongly refuse this marginalised condition and claim their rights by means of an identity politics built also through the definition of their symbolic distance from refugees.

In the local collective imagination, the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša is idealised as a place characterized by strong solidarity ties between its dwellers, according to tribal norms and values. “It is like a village”, as many people told me. Refugee camps are viewed as places characterized by the ethics of the rural villages, connected to tribal belonging, ties and values, and idealized as an expression of the Palestinian cultural “authenticity” (De Donato 2013a; 2013b).

The inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn and those of the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša share the evaluation and embodiment of tribal forms of political organisation and resources management as a language to build the meaning of “home” and community, to express identity claims and the struggle for justice, against the Israeli occupation and the PNA’s marginalisation.

Despite the common conditions of marginalisation, the different material life conditions and dynamics of water deprivation experienced by refugees in ad-Dehīša and by the villagers in Wādī Fūkīn contribute to the reciprocal social construction of differences.

The village of Wādī Fūkīn benefits from a continuous domestic water supply delivered by Mekorot (the Israeli national water company) – at least until the building of the new waterworks. At the same time, the Israeli urban development is causing the springs’ drying.

Differently, in ad-Dehīša camp, situated in an area A<sup>354</sup>, domestic water is supplied by the PNA. This refugee camp differs from the surrounding urban area of Bethlehem for the presence of metal cisterns on the roof of each house, in which families store water to cater for the long periods when the PNA’s water supply is cut off (up to one month at a time).

Refugee status is associated with economic and social rights established by the Arab states and adopted by the PLO since decades, such as the waiving of domestic water charges. The PNA has been trying to force refugees to pay for water, by restricting water supplies to the houses in the refugee camp. It seeks to integrate refugees as citizens in proletarian suburbs, by extending the “hydraulic citizenship” (Anand 2011) to them, understood as a form of belonging to the city conveyed by the legitimate access to water from municipal networks.

The scarce availability of *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water) – as domestic water is called also by refugees – mirrors the economic and political marginalization of refugees in the building of the Palestinian state.

In the opinion of ad-Dehīša inhabitants, being a refugee means suffering to a great extent for the lack of water compared to citizens, who are considered luckier than refugees.

---

<sup>354</sup> The areas A are under the administration and security control of the PNA.

Some refugees view the easier access to Israel of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn as a privilege connected to their political behaviour. These villagers are told to be less rebel than refugees and more submissive and compliant with the Israeli occupation.

Refugees know that the villagers' access to a greater amount of *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water) – as domestic water is called also by refugees – depends on top-down decisions that are not connected to villagers' will.

Also the refugees living in the camp of al-'Arrūb, included in an area C (in the Hebron district), benefit from the same privileged condition of continuous domestic water supply delivered by the Mekorot, even if they are subjected to the Israeli soldiers' daily violent raids, also in daytime. However, refugees appropriate the marginality and oppressive conditions in the refugee camp, especially their greater suffering for water stress, and give them the value of symbol of the refugees' bravery, honour, important role, greater sacrifice in the national resistance, and thus, of the greater legitimacy of their collective claims.

Differently, both Palestinian urban citizens and some villagers complain as unjust the economic and social rights connected to the refugee status, such as the waiving of domestic water charges. Many citizens consider the water rights of refugees as privileges that increase the government taxes they have to pay. The situation and problems of refugees connected to the Israeli colonisation are not considered (De Donato 2013a).

However, as refugees, most of villagers refuse to pay the PNA for domestic water supply as a form of political resistance to the PNA's illegitimate authority. Even water thefts represent political strategies spread both in the refugee camp and the village, as well as in many other refugee camps and villages under the PNA's administration.

However, differently from the refugee camps, in Wādī Fūkīn these decentralising practices consist in individual political actions carried out by some villagers, which are not coordinated and view as collective resistance. The refusal to pay for water is often used as a political tool in the competition between extended families for the role of head of the Village Council. The individual patterns of water access and distribution entailed by water modernisation have brought about the fragmentation of the community and the individualisation of villagers' practices of resistance, disempowering their collective action.

For refugees the situation is different. The refusal to pay for water and its thefts are collective responses to the PNA's structural discrimination and denial of their right of return to their original homes (now in Israel), a claim collectively shared. Being refugee means free water, a right defining the individual and collective social identity of refugees.

Anyway, the reason of villagers' feeling of a sense of injustice is that differently from refugees, they are incurring a great debt with the PNA, which in the next future might cause serious conflicts with it.

Villagers and refugees' different claims for water justice express the competition between two interest groups for the acknowledgment of rights and local particular claims, facing common power structures marginalising both of them. Quoting an Italian saying, it is "a war between the poor".

Compared to the villagers in Wādī Fūkīn, most of refugees in the West Bank have a more difficult access also to the territory included in Israel and to its symbolic and material resources, to its services and labour market. Israeli authorities are more reluctant to give them permits to enter Israel, even for medical treatments. Indeed, the Israeli material and symbolic borders and permit politics create discrimination among Palestinians, in particular to the detriment of most of the inhabitants of the refugee camps, categorised as more rebel (Peteeet 1994).

This idea, spread also among Palestinians, is connected to the history of resistance of refugees, especially during the first and second Intifada. Many *fidā'iyyin* (fighters, partisans) came from refugee camps, in which the building of networks of solidarity and cohesion allowed refugees to survive to the Israeli politics of discrimination and repression.

Even today, the *muḥayyam ad-Dehīša* (the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša), situated in the Bethlehem outskirts, is subjected to Israeli soldiers' nightly raids to a greater extent than the surrounding Bethlehem urban area, and in particular the village of Wādī Fūkīn, which is known to be a more quiet place. Almost every two nights, Israeli soldiers enter the camp and shoot tear gas in the street and inside the houses. They arrest young refugees (since they are about 14 years old) and jail them because they threw stone to soldiers, or they only expressed verbally ideas about resistance.

Many refugees experience the administrative detention, a prison sentence in an Israeli prison for a period usually comprised - according to the experiences of Palestinians - between six months and two or more years, without committing any crime but only justified with the suspect that a person is potentially dangerous for the Israeli national security.

When Israeli soldiers go to the camp to arrest people (or only to provoke Palestinians), many young refugees go to face them by throwing stones, while soldiers film, shoot and try to catch them. The next nights they come back to arrest the youths they recognised (thanks to the

videos or to local Palestinian informers), in a vicious circular dynamic of violence, resistance and repression.

These young Palestinians' practices consist in a symbolic performance of resistance, which usually does not cause injuries or damages to soldiers, given the unbalanced power. However, quoting a refugee boy's words, « it is a way to say them that we resist and we do not want them ». These practices are also viewed as training in resistance and a sort of ritual of initiation into manhood, which includes the experience in Israeli jails (Peteet 1994).

In the refugee camps, the ability to resist psychologically and physically to the Israeli army's oppression is a criterion for the definition of both men and women's social identity and honour.

The competition between the interest groups of refugees, villagers and urban citizens is expressed also in moral and cultural terms.

Refugees criticise as immoral the well-known conflicts and tensions for land ownership which disintegrate the "large family" living in Wādī Fūkīn. Similarly, they interpret the urban area of Bethlehem as an immoral place, where people are more individualistic and establish weak solidarity relations because of the influence of western middle class culture.

Differently, many middle class Palestinians living in urban areas consider tribal practices, connected to the refugee camps and rural villages, as a sign of backwardness which hinders the construction of a modern democratic State (De Donato 2013a). These citizens appropriate the dichotomous conception of the relation between citizenship and tribal belonging, affected by social evolutionism and modernization theories. This representation of the social reality is a tool to legitimise the marginalisation of refugees and the inhabitants of rural villages by urban political and economic elites.

However, also some villagers belonging to the middle class, especially the new generations who never lived in the refugee camp, view refugees as disrespectful of laws, uncivilised and unpolished, even if their own relatives lived in the refugee camp or still live there.

Local communities are not homogeneous entities but characterised by internal hierarchies and increasing dynamics of differentiation connected to the growing economic segmentation, to different views and embodiment of the Western and Israeli middle class culture – such as the neo-liberal individualistic ideology – and to the different access to the territory and its resources: as a man from Wādī Fūkīn asserted, "today, also ad-Dehīša has changed..."

As the community in Wādī Fūkīn, also that of refugees is increasingly characterized by economic and political competition and tensions between its members, which fragment tribal groups and families (De Donato 2013a).

In the framework of the competition for the control and access to material and symbolic resources such as water, political power and public spaces, many Palestinians belonging to the middle class – in the urban and rural areas but also in the refugee camps – embody elements of the Israeli and Western middle class culture, knowledge and life style (such as clothes, music and gender relationships..) as markers of social standing. These are new terms of differentiation from Palestinians with a marginalised status, such as most of refugees and many villagers living in low socio-economic conditions.

In particular, Palestinians belonging to the economic and political elites idealise and embody a sort of “myth of Israel”. One day, I was speaking with a woman living in Beyt Ğālā and belonging to the local Christian economic elite about water conditions in the Palestinian Territories. The young woman asserted that without Israel, Palestine would be even more underdeveloped. These ideas are affected by the Israeli state’s “politics of nature” that naturalise water and the ideological construction of the modernity and civility of Israelis compared to the backward and uncivilised Palestinians, which also legitimises Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian Territories and its appropriation of most of water resources in the local semi-arid context. The identification with the dominating middle-class Israelis allows these people to maintain a semblance of independence and to build their own self-esteem and high social status.

Also Palestinians living in Israel or Jerusalem (the ‘48 and the ‘67 Palestinians) often express a condescending attitude to Palestinians living in the West Bank, treating them as backward and less “modern”.

This does not mean that these people never engage in tribal practices and relationship patterns, which actually shape their daily life. Individuals select and embody Western models, ideas and material culture or tribal practices and values, according to the relational context, to their personal contingent interests, political and economic strategies and claims.

In the competition for water and other material and symbolic resources, the interest groups of urban citizens, that of refugees and the community in Wādī Fūkīn mobilise water discourses, practices and claims, as well as moral and cultural criteria, as idioms to express differences related to multiple dimensions of belonging, such as that connected to the place of dwelling and the economic segmentation which overlaps with it.

The overlapping of the Israeli state, the PNA and the development agencies' territorialising hydro-politics (Trottier 1999) – but also the social actors selling tank water – fragments the Palestinian Territories in different hydrosocial networks and territories. It has led to situations of 'territorial pluralism', created by "overlapping, often contested, and interacting hydroterritorial configurations in one and the same space, but with differing material, social and symbolic contents and different interlinkages and boundaries" (Boelens et al. 2016:8).

The water fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories shapes differentiated spatialised water citizenships and processes of marginalisation, creating multiple "islands of water experience", characterised by different conditions and experiences of water deprivation. In such a context, the place of dwelling – like the refugee camp, the village or the city – is an important dimension of belonging that shapes the image of the self and the "other", leading to multiple constructions of collective belonging. It is a criterion of social identification and differentiation grounding on the sharing of the local history, of water access and other living conditions, as well as of daily relationships of solidarity between its inhabitants and specific practices of resistance to particular domination strategies.

The differentiated experiences of water conditions affect the construction of different ideas about the political and water reality, leading to the imagination of multiple Palestinian "water countries", called *bilād* (countries), and of multiple Palestinian "others". Water flows contribute to the production of growing social differences, disaffection and estrangement among the Palestinian population, as well as to the spread of multiple claims for water justice.

In political arenas characterised by unequal power structures and the increasing competition for water resources, different interest groups struggle to concretise their views of justice and equity in particular technological, normative and organisational systems. Narratives and perceptions toward water justice are not constituted only along national lines, but also along class and gender lines, as well as they are affected by the level of education and place of residence (urban, rural or refugee camp).

Most of Palestinians are marginalised from the sharing of resources and sources of power such as water by the Palestinian political and economic elites. However, their cohesion in the resistance to the Israeli colonial strategies is hindered by the spread of different political perspectives, prospects and hopes for future. Many refugees, especially those with a low socio-economic status, think that they would prefer to come back to the "direct Israeli

occupation” of the Palestinian territories, without the PNA. They complain that life was better and Palestinians were freer. Indeed, the movements in the whole historical Palestinian territory and the access to its resources were less restricted. Even more important, life was better and freer also because «one knew who was the enemy », as was said me.

Today, the severe Israeli restrictions and permit politics, together with the PNA’s unfairness and collusion with the Israeli occupation, have amplified social differentiations, forms of discretionary power and corruption, and dynamics of marginalisation and exclusion. They have led to the spread of reciprocal mistrust and suspicion and to the fragmentation of local networks of solidarity.

This view is shared also by other marginalized Palestinians living in Wādī Fūkīn and other rural and urban areas. Sure, it is not shared by privileged Palestinians belonging to the political and economic elites and occupying high positions in the PNA’s institutions. Differently, some inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn have a different hope for the future of the village. They wish that the village will be included within the Israeli borders in order to obtain the Israeli citizenship. This idea is not declared openly, since it is considered as a “public secret” by Palestinians. However, it is well-known also by people living outside Wādī Fūkīn, which ironically criticise it, sometimes induced by the envy of these Palestinians’ possibility to hope it because of the particular geographical position of their village. With the same hope, a refugee who married a woman from Wādī Fūkīn asked and obtained to have residence in Wādī Fūkīn.

Since the PNA’s creation, the desire of the Israeli citizenship is increasingly spread among Palestinians. Given the actual situation, the Israeli citizenship is the guarantee of a better life quality, of the access to vital services and resource such as medical treatments, water or work and a higher degree of freedom and security against the Israel State’s violence and abuse of power. Even if Palestinians know that in the Israeli society they are discriminated as third class citizens, one has to consider that, for example, in the West Bank, many Palestinians, included children, dye for the lack of the necessary medical treatments.

In a context such as the West Bank, in which the access to public services and resources, such as a vital surgery, depends on the socio-economic status, on patronage relationships, and on the limited resources of Palestinian institutions constrained by the Israeli colonisation, the Israeli citizenship means a greater hope to live and to secure a future to one’s family.

Many Palestinians seek to establish long-time work relationships with Israelis, others try to obtain the *taṣrīḥ iqāma* (residence permit) thanks to his/her marital relationship with a ‘67 or a ‘48 Palestinian, while other people wish the Israeli citizenship.



This does not mean that these people do not express Palestinian national belonging and patriotic sentiments. Most of them are proud and claim to be Palestinian. When I spoke about this issue with a villager, he said me: « I love *Falastīn* (Palestine), but I have to live... ».

Indeed, most of Palestinians view the territory included within the Israel's borders and that included in the West Bank (and Gaza Strip) as a whole Palestinian territory occupied by Israelis and fragmented in multiple areas (Israel, Jerusalem, the areas A, B, C in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) characterized by different administrative systems, conditions of access to resources, and security constraints, but all under the same Israel's ultimate and inescapable control.

The Israeli citizenship is a “guest pass” to come back to experience the whole Palestinian territory, even if occupied. These different and seemingly conflicting perspectives actually are grounded on the same feeling. As many Palestinians said me: « *baḥib falastīn, bas miš as-sulṭa* (I love Palestine, but not the authority – meaning the PNA representing the Palestinian proto-state).

Palestinians resist to the atomisation of the society entailed by global, colonial and national power strategies by recomposing and reinventing their socio-ecological worlds through water, whose fluidity resists to the attempts to fix and reify it as the materialisation of the state's power. They carry out different and conflicting strategies of manoeuvre to survive and achieve their own personal interests and expectations.

Nevertheless, most of Palestinians living in conditions of marginalisation share a same fundamental meaning of *ḥorriya* (freedom), well expressed by a sentence of an inhabitant of ad-Dehīša refugee camp, situated in an urban area:

« I do not want the Palestinian State, neither the Israeli State. I only want to be free to bring my herds to graze and to cultivate my land ».

The claim of the international acknowledgement of an independent Palestinian nation-state is the only language understood and shared globally to ask the acknowledgement of the Palestinians' right of self-determination and freedom. Nevertheless, most of Palestinians perceive the State, every State, as an outside, illegitimate, unfair political organisation controlled by a minority group. These ideas are affected by their historical and present experiences of the modern state's domination and repression, since the late Ottoman period and British colonial administration until the present Israeli occupation, which are all perceived as illegitimate foreign authorities. Today, the unfairness, corruption and collusion

with Israel of the Palestinian elites ruling the PNA – viewed as illegitimate inside authorities – have led to the disenchantment towards the state as the political organisation which can ensure the freedom they wish and for which they have struggled for so long time.

The freedom marginalised Palestinians want is not the abstract liberal individual freedom, connected to the supposed equal abstract individual rights acknowledged to every human being. It is not the negative idea of freedom which makes people as individually free “from” the constrictions and tyranny of the state, within a state. Differently, it is the positive, material and social freedom to collectively share the management of waters and other resources in an autonomous way and to move in the whole territory of historical Palestine defining its organisation and meanings. It is the freedom to negotiate the values, norms and institutions ruling the administration of justice and the resolution of conflicts and to build networks of solidarity relationships. It is the freedom to share, organise and exert political power over historical Palestine, to represent Palestinians’ claims, to organise collective actions and to decide about their proper collective life. In other words, marginalised Palestinians struggle for the water freedom: the Palestinians’ concrete freedom “of” sharing power over water without the state.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis contributes to the anthropological theoretical study of water (Casciarri and Van Aken 2013), showing the “embeddedness” of water within the society (Casciarri 2008). In Wādī Fūkīn water is not considered as H<sub>2</sub>O, a "natural" and univocal resource to be managed by means of technical-economic strategies, as in the modern positive sciences and western ideologies about “nature”, characterizing the engineering, management and economics approaches. Differently, there is a “diversity of waters” (Van Aken 2012), multiple waters that take multiple shapes and bear different meanings according to the socio-ecological and political relationships that convey and mediate their use and access.

Water is *mayyat al-‘uyūn* (the water of the springs), used for irrigation; *maṭar* (rainwater), more abundant in the winter season; *mayyat baladiyya* (municipal water), the domestic drinking water supplied by the Israeli state and the Palestinian National Authority; *mayyat al-khazzānāt* (the water of the cisterns), the domestic water harvested in private cisterns; *tank mayya* (tank water), the domestic water sold by private owners of water tankers; *mayyat al-mağāry* (the water of the sewer) produced by the inhabitants of the village and collected in private cesspits, *mayyat mağāry bītār ‘ilīt* (water of the sewer of Beitar Illit), which settlers pour out in the underlying Wādī Fūkīn valley. Further, there is not only one spring water but many spring waters, given by different springs that have different names and personal historical relationships with the extended families of the local community.

Thanks to their material and symbolical fluidity, the waters in the village convey the conflicting and colluding governmental strategies of the Israeli state, the PNA and development actors, fostering a new political and economic order and new identity constructions; their water technologies and policies are legitimised by water ideologies, by knowledge and “regime of truths” naturalising power relationships while ensuring particular political and economic interests. These flows of meanings and power are resisted, deviated, appropriated and manipulated by local Palestinians’ daily practices and embodiment of alternative patterns of belonging and values systems connected to the multiple local, nationalised and globalised waters.

In this thesis, water is revealed as an intercultural battlefield between epistemic communities (Long 1992), a political arena where multiple local, national and global interest groups are bearers of different water knowledge and normative systems conveying

conflicting imaginations of space and time and ideas about the individual, the community and the environment, as well as about politics, agriculture, state and citizenship.

By showing the inscription of water in local social logics (Aubriot 2004), this study has highlighted how water is a political interface, a place for community building through the negotiation of hierarchies, of patterns of belonging and differences, mediated by regional, national and transnational processes of construction of the locality.

### *Israel's territorial planning and water domination of Palestinians*

The analysis of the spatial, environmental and material implications of the Israeli water and territory planning in Wādī Fūkīn (Chapter I) has brought insights into the theorisation of technical planning as a new dimension of politics that expresses the “authoritarian modernism” of the modern state (Scott 1998).

The creation of Israel in 1948 has radically changed the life of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, as that of all Palestinians. Israel's territory planning and juridical and administrative policies have affected the spatial configuration of the village and the surrounding area, as well as local socio-ecological processes. These dynamics have led to deep changes in the local community's livelihood and economic and socio-cultural configuration.

The establishment of Israel has entailed the loss of most of land in the village, which has been included within the Israeli borders. In 1956, the Israeli army displaced the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn and demolished the village with the excuse of the need to protect the Israeli border, which crosses the village. Most of its inhabitants went to live in the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša while others moved to Jordan or other countries. This has been the destiny of most of Palestinian communities living in villages situated in the territory included within the Israeli borders. In order to create a nation-state for Jewish people, Israel forced large-scale displacement of Palestinians, who escaped in the Middle East and other countries, with the consequent scattering of groups of solidarity such as tribal groups or extended families.

However, differently from most of these villages, Wādī Fūkīn has a particular history. In 1972, after about fifteen years of life as refugees, most of them succeeded to return to live in the village and to rebuild their houses. Nevertheless, the return to the village did not imply the end of the Israeli repression. Since the late 1980s, other lands are continuously confiscated by the Israeli army to develop Israeli settlements built on the top of the hills

encircling the village. The development of these urban areas redefines continually and strengthens the territorial borders of Wādī Fūkīn, which previously were more permeable.

Before the creation of Israel, the livelihood of the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn was grounded on the complementary integration of agricultural and herding activities. Given the central role of agriculture, the life was mainly sedentary. However, as in many other rural production systems in the Middle East (Fabietti and Salzman 1996; Fabietti 1984), herding activities entailed a certain degree of mobility, as a necessary condition for securing the access to pasture lands and water. As shown by Cohen (1965), the relational notion of space - imagined and socialised through the movements of people and flocks - allowed the resilience of local productive systems, which adapted to the seasonal and yearly variability of water in a difficult arid and semi-arid context, decreasing the economic risks and social differentiations. The Middle East and Nord Africa societies are historically characterised by the ever changing alternation of sedentary and nomadic way of life, as a strategy to adapt to changing ecological, political and economic conditions (Fabietti and Salzman 1996; Fabietti 1984). Sedentary and nomadic way of life are two models of adaptation to the environment that have to be considered as opposite poles of a continuum of realities characterised by different degrees of stability and mobility (Salzman 1980).

The previous British colonial administration demarked the village's administrative borders in the framework of the 1930s large-scale surveying of land and granting of titles, known as “systematic settlement” (Attallah et al. 2006). However, the borders of Wādī Fūkīn were still traversed by tribal groups and herders’ movements and sharing of regional water resources and pastures, which shaped social geographies (Rothenberg 1998) wider than the village's administrative unit. Tribal groups moved according to changing interdependent socio-ecological relationships, such as the seasonal variability of water resources and pastures and political conflicts and alliances for the access to them.

Today, the village looks like an island, an enclave separated from the surrounding Palestinian territory by the neighbouring Israeli urban areas, whose access to Palestinians is strictly limited and controlled. The new borders of the village have entailed the restriction of villagers’ movements and the loss of the access to many pastures and water resources. The consequent high market dependence and unsustainable and dangerous character of herding activities has led to their marginalisation and gradual disappearing. Today, in the village mobile herding practices are almost abandoned and villagers are completely sedentarised.

Moreover, the expansion of paved impermeable lands in the hills encircling the village for the development of the Israeli urban settlements hinders the local historical hydro-social cycle (Linton 2010), thus weakening the springs, some of whom dried completely. The present conditions of spring water and land scarcity threaten the survival of the local intensive and commercial family farming.

The local commercial family farming is increasingly unsustainable and unprofitable, due to the lack of manure and other resources that were produced through herding activities and to the adoption of intensive farming techniques, in the context of the harsh competition with the Israeli subsidised high-tech agriculture. In the framework of these radical ecological, economic and political changes, villagers increasingly participate to the labour market, especially in the Israeli building sector in order to satisfy the increasingly expensive needs of their family, connected to the spread of Western middle class values, to urban life styles and to growing economic competition.

Israel adopts similar juridical, architectural, economic and water policies to sedentarise and control Bedouin groups living in the Negev, within the Israeli borders. Also there, the Israeli state expropriates Bedouins' lands and allocates them to the Jewish urban and rural settlements' development and commercial interest groups, or to the army (Marx and Meir 2005). In the common framework of the increasing integration in the labour market and commoditisation of pastoral and agricultural production, today both the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn and of other rural villages in the West Bank as well as many Bedouin groups in the Negev are engaged in similar multi-resources economies (Salzman 1980), in which the economic role of pastoral production and farming is marginalised.

By hindering the material, social and cultural reproduction of pastoral and peasants' societies, Israel seeks to completely sedentarise Palestinians herders and Bedouin pastoral groups, to coerce them to move to urban areas and integrate them in the lower rungs of the Israeli national economy. This allows Israel to expropriate their land and to increase their segregated interdependence on the Israeli market, services and resources, thus dominating them as subordinated individual colonial subjects.

Despite the deep changes in the socio-economic configuration of the local community of Wādī Fūkīn, as a response to the colonial strategies of de-peasantisation and land expropriation, villagers claim their belonging as farmers. Farming activities bear a strong political meaning for local inhabitants. They are viewed as practices of self-representation and resistance as a rural community. Villagers carry out many strategies to continue to farm despite the economic and ecological constraints. They carry out a “defensive agriculture”,

consisting in the embodiment of identity claims against the threat of becoming again refugees, an even more precarious and marginalised status.

The processes affecting the life in Wādī Fūkīn can be considered as representative of Israel's techno-politics (Mitchell 1990a, 1990b, 1991) aimed at the creation of the Israeli nation and at the domination of Palestinians. Israel exerts "a very direct rule" of Palestinian bodies, whose mobility, security and access to the territory and its resources such as water are under the strict control of the Israeli army. A control exerted by means of the multiplication and continuous redefinition of physical, administrative and symbolic territorial borders, especially since the 1993 Oslo Accords establishing the 1994 creation of the PNA.

While creating a contiguous national territory, the Israeli territory planning fragments the Palestinian territories into a layered and overlapping series of ethnic and political alienated national islands, hindering the possibility of a territorial formal coherence and the establishment of a potential continuous border between Israel and the Occupied Territories. These strategies erode the basics of the Palestinian national sovereignty, whose legitimacy is not recognised by the Israeli State, which associate it to the negation of the Zionist myth and identity (Swedenburg 1990).

The movable and always changing borders arouse Palestinians' perception of living in a territory that is reshaped over and over again, unevenly fragmented and reassembled, composed of jagged pieces always moving and changing their shape. This situation hinders the Palestinians' orientation in the territory and makes the perception of any stable sense of place difficult. By reshaping and fragmenting continuously the space, also the temporal dimension is fragmented, dilated or compressed by the Israeli territory planning and security policies. The perception of time and space, and of their relation, is very relative, affected by the changing and uncertain possibility to move in the territory crossing the borders created by Israeli administrative and security policies.

The imagination and materialisation of the Israeli nation and the building of a strong centralised political structure have been grounded on water centralisation and modernisation. Israel appropriates most of the regional water resources to create the Jewish nation-state and national identity, through unsustainable agronomic intensive techniques and urban sprawl in an arid and semi-arid context. At the same time, as shown in the case of Wādī Fūkīn, it externalises the environmental costs and risks (Alatout 2006) of these socio-ecological domination processes in the Palestinian Territories, creating increasing conditions of water stress and groundwater pollution (Alatout 2006).

As shown in the case of Wādī Fūkīn (Chapter IV), the inadequate sewage treatment facilities in the growing Israeli settlements and the Israeli military authorities' denial of the building and maintenance of infrastructures in the Palestinian territories (especially in the areas B and C) – such as sewer systems, drinking water networks and wastewater treatment plant – cause groundwater (and, thus, spring water) pollution and quality deterioration at the regional level, threatening the drinking water supply in the West Bank.

The case of Wādī Fūkīn has highlighted that in the Palestinian territories water scarcity is a hybrid socio-natural process (Latour 1991). It is produced by the interrelation between changing ecological conditions and socio-economic and political dynamics (Mehta 2001), in particular the Israeli discriminating water development policies.

The production of increasing conditions of water scarcity and groundwater pollution actively contributes to obstruct the Palestinian agricultural and industrial sectors, thus hindering the Palestinian territories' economic development (Dillman 1989; Hilal and Khan 2004). It creates Palestinians' structural subordination on the Israeli economy and their interdependence on the Israeli water resources, basic water services, infrastructures and technologies.

The Israeli hydropolitics (Trottier 1999) show that the structural subordination of Palestinians is grounded on their inclusion in a very subordinate position, by means of the creation of increasing dimensions of interdependence, highly unbalanced in favours of Israelis, which allow Israel to keep its present economic, political, social and cultural hegemony.

As the case of Wādī Fūkīn highlights, despite the Israeli state's architectural and security strategies of spatial segregation of Palestinians, the physical and symbolic fluidity of water re-establishes a social contiguity between Palestinians and Israelis, who are tied by many interdependent, cultural, political, and economic relationships, both at the local and the national level (Chapter V).

The investigation of the Israeli water and territory planning in the area of Wādī Fūkīn, as well as of the colonial legacy of Israel's policies, has highlighted that the Zionist project of construction of a new sovereign Jewish nation-state and national identity is grounded on the "environmental colonisation" of Palestine: the reinvention of the territory through the appropriation and centralisation of most water resources, through legal devices for systematic land expropriation and large-scale displacements, through radical water and landscape



planning and territorial policies, as well as urban development and architectural strategies. These strategies are aimed at erasing Palestinians' landscape, history and presence, uprooting Palestinians and removing the connected moral responsibilities, while naturalising these processes. A clear example is the Israeli politics of planting (Cohen 1993) consisting in the uprooting of Palestinian olive trees – identified with Palestinians – to enroot non-local pine trees transforming the territory in a European-type landscape characterised by legibility, and arousing a sense of home in Jewish Israelis with European origins (Braverman 2009b; 2009c).

While the Israeli nationalist water rhetoric imagines a symbolic continuity between the present “Jewish nation” and the imagined Biblical time of Israel, the Israeli military authorities restore land policies dating back to the previous Ottoman and British colonial administrations. In this way, they create a colonial temporal continuum, as asserting the “natural” character of Palestinians' subordination as colonial subjects.

However, the Israeli state does not only adopt the Western states' techno-politics of control, but it also strengthens, multiplies and renews them, in the framework of a continuous experimentation of new technologies and strategies and a new imagination of the territory which, as noted by Van Aken (2012; 2015), are exported globally.

These planning strategies bring to the extreme edges the nation-state politics of de-socialisation of space and time. While they make local territories and populations comprehensible, exploitable and controllable, they lead to the disorienting alienation of Palestinians from local space and time, to their detachment from the territory, which has become unknown and uncanny. Through these technologies of domination, Israel seeks to atomise the Palestinian society, to alienate Palestinians between each other, separating them and creating disempowered and subordinated colonial individual subjects.

*Domestic water networks and management: a political arena for the building of the Palestinian nation-state*

The investigation of domestic water management in Wādī Fūkīn (Chapter IV) contributes to theorisation of the state as a social actor and to the understanding of the role of water in the nation-state construction and its contemporary patterns of discipline of territories and populations.

The analysis of the change from the Israeli to the PNA domestic water administration and of the building of a PNA's new water system in Wādī Fūkīn highlights that the unfair competition between the Palestinian proto-state and Israel for the control over the local territory and population is carried out through conflicting water infrastructures development. The management of domestic water has emerged as a political arena where the meaning of state, its cohesion and legitimacy are continuously negotiated and contested, produced by hegemonic processes and practices of resistance between the PNA, the Israeli institutions and local communities.

Since its creation in 1994, also the PNA seeks to achieve national water centralisation and modernisation as a key part of the Palestinian State building, according to the hegemonic models of state, water management and development imposed by Western donors as a condition of their economic support, on which the building of the PNA's institutional and infrastructural system highly depends. The PNA's extension of its water networks and the centralisation of the water resources available to Palestinians are essential to its attempt to extend control over the local Palestinian population. It composes a way to make their bodies progressively more dependent on the PNA's administration, especially in the lack of independence, jurisdiction and ultimate control over a continuous territory and its resources.

The analysis of the local implications of the Israeli and later the PNA's domestic water administration and of the building of a PNA's new water system in Wādī Fūkīn highlights that water modernisation is a strategy of hydro-territorial governmentalisation (Boelens et al. 2016) that is aimed at the integration of the local territory and communities in the Israeli and later the PNA's power structures and "modern" national economy. Water modernisation reshapes the local hydro-social networks and territories – viewed as the spatial configurations of the socio-natural networks of people, institutions, water flows, hydraulic technology and the biophysical environment, which are involved in the control of water. As observed by Casciarri (2008) in the south-eastern Moroccan village of Tiraf, also in Wādī Fūkīn the introduction of individualised water taps brought about the demise of public spaces and tribal patterns of cooperation, which historically characterised the women's management of the spring water used for domestic purposes, according to a communal management and property regime. This led to the spread of the Western dichotomous view of private and public dimensions, to the connected greater segregation of women inside the home and to the change of her social role in the community (Van Aken and De Donato 2018).

From being an unmarketable good from God to which all human and not human beings have the right of access, domestic water has become a commercial commodity. The access to this resource is individualised and connected to the economic possibilities of each family: it depends on the state water bureaucracy, technologies, hydraulic expertise and normative system. The change of the criteria of access to domestic water strengthens local socio-economic differentiations and patterns of exclusion.

Therefore, similarly to the British colonial period (Van Aken 2012), water modernisation projects are aimed at the detribalisation and atomisation of the local society, in order to detach individuals from loyalty patterns that differ from, and compete with, that to the nation-state. This objective is fostered by means of the de-socialisation and naturalisation of the essential economic and symbolic resource of domestic water, on which the local patterns of cooperation, solidarity and identification have always been grounded – such as the tribal groups, extended families, neighbourhoods and the whole community.

As highlighted by Kaika (2005), besides the material and discursive production of the naturalised and commoditised water, also the building of underground water networks contributes to de-socialise water and to mask the social and power relationships involved in the production and distribution of water, naturalising them. In Wādī Fūkīn and the Occupied Palestinian Territories this water alienation engenders the spread of domestic water ignorance among local inhabitants, most of whom do not know the system and the relationships involved in domestic water management. It often creates a sense of water fatalism: a view of domestic “waterworld” and management as ruled by an irrevocable fate, woven by illegitimate outside authorities and their “transcendent” scientific knowledge.

The underground water pipes hide the path of domestic water, which reveals that the independence of the Palestinian water systems is only apparent. Domestic water flows bring to light the contradictions and problems of legitimacy entailed by the creation of a State in a colonial context. The creation of the PNA actually consists in the establishment of a network of institutions for Israel’s colonial indirect rule of the Palestinian territory, resources and inhabitants, sustained by international and in particular Western development donor and agencies.

The underground domestic water pipes hide also the PNA’s discriminating water policies. Despite the PNA’s modernist discourses about the state’s equitable technical water distribution, the PNA’s domestic water allocation favours the main cities, at the expense of the villages and in particular the refugee camps. The water reallocation from irrigation to

domestic use is one of the conditions imposed by international donors on their funding. This water distribution pattern is appropriated by the PNA to ensure the loyalty and support of the urban political and economic elites (Tamari 2002).

The PNA's distribution of domestic water produces "spatial water hierarchies" among the spaces under its administration (De Donato 2013a), characterised by different conditions of water stress. It creates spatial structures of privilege and conceptualisations of water justice and injustice and multiple differentiated citizenships.

Domestic water is an active symbolic resource mediating the construction of the hegemony and legitimacy of the Palestinian elites ruling the PNA. These dynamics highlight that building the Palestinian nation-state is a vehicle for these urban elites' interest in detaining the control of local resources such as water, public spaces, and access to international donor funding and the official negotiations with Israel.

Following James Ferguson's insights about the state's power functioning (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) in the context of Zambia, by means of mechanisms regulating water distribution and the reproduction of the power relations involved in its distribution, the state conveys cultural processes allowing to produce and to keep social inequalities (like those of class and gender) and the exploitation conditions necessary for the maintenance of the present order.

As Anand (2011) showed while studying water conflicts in Mumbai (India), the case of Wādī Fūkīn highlights that the access to water is not defined by the normative regime of the modern state and liberal citizenship. Citizenship is not just a discrete extension of the state bureaucracy; on the contrary, it is a public process of construction that entails the negotiation of values, meanings and claims among different interest groups.

In national legislations, positive legal justice constructions claim the uniformity of values of justice and property frameworks, based on the idea of the equality of all citizens with regard to the law. However, as shown also by political ecology perspectives addressing water problems as issues of justice (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998; Schlosberg 2013; Goff and Crow 2014) the supposed "general and universal principle of rightness" (Boelens 1998b:21) express particular principles of powerful interest groups, who seek to universalise their version of justice while hiding the existing social hierarchies and power relations.

The water discrimination experienced by many inhabitants of rural areas and refugee camps under the PNA's water administration mirrors their marginalisation in state's political and economic structures, as well as that of their political claims. In the Oslo Accords the

PNA acknowledged Israel's sovereignty within its borders, accepting the international community's differentiation between the legal Israeli settlements and the illegal ones built in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Even most of NGOs adopt this differentiation, which is an Israeli condition to work in the Palestinian territories. This representation of the social reality denies the right to return to their original homes of refugees whose villages of origins were in the present Israeli territory (the '48 refugees). This is a major reason leading Palestinian refugees to refuse the PNA's legitimacy. Also the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, as well as those of many other villages situated along Israel's borders, contest the PNA's position, since most of their land has been included within the Israeli nation-state.

The inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn resist to the PNA's water centralisation by means of daily water practices such as domestic water thefts and the refusal to pay for it – which are strategies of resistance adopted by many other marginalised inhabitants of rural areas and by refugees living in areas under the PNA's water administration, as shown in the case of the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša. Domestic water thefts show the ability of some Palestinians to appropriate, manipulate and re-socialise the commoditised water and the new hydraulic expertise and technologies, despite the development ideology supposes that the “underdeveloped” and “traditional” character of indigenous populations hinders their technological and economic progress.

By means of these water practices Palestinians compete with the vertical management of the water bureaucracies and re-politicise domestic water as medium of the public debate around the Palestinian state-building, its meanings, its relationships with citizens and its legitimacy to govern and represent Palestinians' claims for justice. According to most of marginalised Palestinians, such as villagers or refugees, the PNA's waterworks and administration consist in the imposition of another illegitimate and unfair authority that, attempting to extend its power, favours the Palestinian urban elites and collects taxes used to maintain the Israeli occupation. Marginalised Palestinians claim their political participation in decision making and the sharing of control and authority at all scales of water and state governance.

### *Competitive water narratives and the heterogeneity of Israelis flowing in local waters*

Adopting Trouillot's (2001) theorisation of the state as an ideological project, this study has highlighted the key material and symbolic role of water in the cultural construction of the Israeli and the Palestinian nation-state and in the legitimacy construction and

“naturalisation” of the hegemony of the Palestinian urban elites. These are represented as disinterested by means of the imposition of water meanings and discourses, identity constructions and historical narratives.

The exploration of the multiple water discourses flowing in Wādī Fūkīn showed that in the Palestinian Territories water is at the centre of the Israeli and Palestinian national historical narratives and construction of forms of cultural heritage that compete to assert the cultural “authenticity” and legitimacy of Israelis and Palestinians, both claiming their historical roots in the territory.

Besides these historical narratives about territory and water, the Israeli state, the PNA and other interest groups adopt competitive ideological constructions of water scarcity, which convey different representations of water reality and conceptions of space and of the relationships with the environment, as well as different identity constructions (Chapter I). These are aimed at ensuring conflicting interests, while legitimising multiple dynamics of domination at the local, national and global level, which contribute to increase marginalised people’s experience of water scarcity conditions in the local semi-arid context.

The purity, naturalness, sacredness and ancestral character of the spring water flowing in Wādī Fūkīn are contended between Palestinian villagers and the neighbouring Israeli Haredi settlers living in Beitar Illit (Chapter V). The latter go to pray at the springs in the village, claiming the purity and sacredness of that spring water. According to them, this water was used by the inhabitants of a Jewish city lying in that area in ancient times, as mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud dating around 500 A.D. (Shilhav 1998) and claimed by Israeli religious and nationalist narratives. These narratives inscribe new meanings in the local territory as a territory belonging to Jewish people, contributing to the territorialisation of the area by means of the symbolic appropriation of its historical water flows.

Similarly, the Palestinian inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn claim the purity of spring water, viewed as a gift of God, and the ancient reciprocal ties between the local community and the multiple springs, as the evidence of their autochthony and legitimacy to resist to the Israeli and Palestinian states.

These dynamics affect and are shaped by wider national power dynamics aimed at the construction of the Israeli and Palestinian nation-state.

The Haredi communities living in Beitar Illit contest the legitimacy of Israel’s sovereignty. However, their religious narratives are appropriated by the state of Israel as a strategy of co-

optation of these interest groups and of legitimisation of the Israeli nation-state building and the material appropriation of the Palestinian territories. In the framework of the cultural creation of a Jewish nation and rooted national identity, Israel reinvents the memory of the ancient Jewish history in the historical Palestine, connecting to it new selected and re-invented religious and nationalist meanings, while omitting and removing centuries of local Palestinians' history.

Water is a political arena where different Israeli and Palestinian local, national, international interest groups meet, conflict and collude to assert the validity of their construction of historical memory.

Israel's environmental discourses about water scarcity have a key role in these processes (Chapter I). Since the early years of the Israeli State, Israel's narratives define water scarcity as a natural condition characterizing the local semi-arid environment and climate changes. The naturalisation of water scarcity legitimises the Israeli national construction and colonial occupation. Only Israel's technical ability to overcome the environmental limits of a hostile "nature" can restore the lost prosperity of the Promised Land making "the desert bloom" through an efficient, centralized water modernisation and agriculture development. In these narratives, the Palestinian Territories are imagined as a "desert" landscape, degraded by the "underdeveloped" and immoral Palestinians. These modernist and messianic discourses mask the political and social implications of Israel's hydropolitics (Trottier 1999) and their responsibilities in the creation of the increasing conditions of water stress experienced by Palestinians.

As a response to these Israel's strategies of territorialisation and legitimisation, the PNA produces alternative historical and environmental narratives and processes of cultural reification, which, however, convey other political interests.

The Palestinian national narratives and collective imagination reify and idealise peasants' life and farming activities as a symbol of the Palestinian national identity (Chapter IV). The reified peasants' "traditional" culture and practices, including spring water management in villages such as Wādī Fūkīn, are viewed as an expression of Palestinians' of cultural "authenticity" and of historical "natural" roots in the territory (Swedenburg 1990) and, thus, as a main legitimacy to resist. Besides land, also water is an important symbolic and material resource in the cultural construction of the nation-state, which is used to naturalise the historical ties of the Palestinian population with the territory.

Nevertheless, these narratives are also a strategy for the construction of the hegemony and legitimacy of the local Palestinian elites that masks peasants and refugees' inclusion in a subordinated position within national power structures and economy, behind the shared reified national identity. Indeed, the PNA claims the "traditional" character of peasants' farming activities and resources management also to legitimise its attempts at water centralisation and modernisation. The public regime of water management is fostered by Western donors as a condition of their economic support, on which the building of the PNA's institutional and infrastructural system highly depends. In the framework of the competition with local customary institutions for the social control of water management, the PNA appropriates the development paradigm dominating until the '80s to de-legitimise decentralised forms of resources management as backward and as a threat to national security.

In the PNA's discourses the public regime of water management is considered to be the only guarantee of an equitable and efficient water management among Palestinians (Trottier 1999; 2013), especially in the context of increasing conditions of water scarcity. In the environmental justice discourses of Palestinian governmental institutions and some environmental NGOs, water stress and groundwater pollution are defined as produced by the Israeli occupation, which has appropriated the greater part of water resources and land and denies Palestinian infrastructures development, thus hindering the Palestinian territorial sovereignty (Chapter I). These discourses focus on property rights and the unequal spatial distribution of environmental costs and risks, which are externalised in the Occupied Palestinian territories (Alatout 2006).

At the national level, the struggle for the access to water and for water quality symbolises the Palestinians' struggle for justice, viewed as their collective right of independence and self-determination. Palestinians' shared experience of water scarcity and problems of water pollution – even if to a different extent – compared to Israelis' privileged access to water strengthens and naturalises the cultural formation of a Palestinian national identity, which is primarily the product of the relationship of difference from Israelis (Bisharat 1997), reified as the enemies for excellence.

Nevertheless, the PNA emphasises the Israeli responsibilities concerning water stress to legitimise its attempts at centralising water and to mask forms of discrimination and exclusion entailed by its patterns of water distribution. As shown in the case of the refugee camp of ad-Dehīša and the surrounding Bethlehem urban area, besides Israel's water policies, even those carried out by the PNA lead to the unequal access to domestic water among



Palestinians, and to the related multiple local perceptions and meanings connected to water, water scarcity and water justice.

A different view of water reality is proposed by the joint Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmental NGO called FOEME, another social actor which addresses environmental problems in the village caused by the Israeli urban development planning – such as the damage and drying up of the springs causing irrigation water stress and spring water pollution (Chapter I).

Adopting an economic notion of water scarcity and a capability approach to environmental justice, this NGO defines water and other environmental problems as issues concerning the “quality of life” of both Palestinians and Israelis living within a shared ecology, independently of the sovereignty status. These environmental narratives convey a depoliticised conception of space, seeking to shape new regional identities by avoiding the acknowledgement of the territoriality of the power dynamics that contribute to cause environmental problems. This NGO claims the Israeli state’s protection of the socio-natural environment in the village, through the patrimonialisation of both the environment and local Palestinians’ farming and irrigation practices and techniques. These are defined as a unique natural and cultural heritage in the Judean Mountains, shared by Palestinians and Israelis living in neighbouring inhabited centres. As the Israeli and Palestinian state, also this environmental approach reifies local Palestinians and their agricultural activities as “traditional” and connects to them a reinvented historical memory.

For villagers these narratives consist in dangerous processes of normalisation of the colonial relationships that may entail the loss of their land. Indeed, the Israeli legal and physical appropriation of Palestinian lands, denying local people’ territorial rights, and the large-scale displacements of the local population are often justified by environmental protection (Braverman 2009b; 2009c). This is a state’s strategy of land expropriation globally spread, as shown by the case of the Maasai in Tanzania (Goldman 2011) and by that studied by Palumbo (2003) in Sicilia, in Italy. As stated by Palumbo, the processes of patrimonialisation is a social construction, the outcome of the arbitrary selection, manipulation and representation of history. It is connected to identity politics, as well as to politics of space and time that entail the regulation of the management of space, changing the relationships between local people and the concerned environment (or socio-cultural configuration). Local populations usually contest these processes, since they entail the loss of their right of access to the patrimonialised environment or cultural goods.

As the Palestinian case clearly shows, processes of reification of cultural dimensions or environments can be manipulated and appropriated to legitimise multiple political rhetoric and strategies, which seek to shape different meanings of space and identity constructions.

Both the Israeli and Palestinian national rhetoric claim a shared national identity, while reifying Palestinians and Israelis respectively as homogeneous, depersonalized enemies. These national narratives affect villagers' ideas about "the Israelis" as "the other" for excellence, arousing Palestinians' mistrust and suspicion. These dynamics contribute to create a reciprocal symbolic distance and ignorance between Palestinians and Israelis, which further fuel tensions and strengthen both the Israeli and Palestinian state's reification of Palestinians and Israelis.

However, the analysis of the forced sharing of the multiple waters flowing in the village between its Palestinian inhabitants and their Israeli neighbours has brought insights into the problematic character of the dichotomous view of the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians (Chapter V). Despite their reification and homogenisation, often conveyed also by the dominating official discourses of the international community, in the context of the daily interdependent water relationships between local Palestinians and Israelis, the latter bear multiple degrees of "otherness" and closeness. Also, these daily water interactions show some of the contradictory dynamics, interests and conflicts characterising both the Palestinian and Israeli heterogeneous societies and the relationships between them.

The analysis of the interconnected dynamics between the heterogeneous Israeli and Palestinian societies has been limited by the choice of the only Palestinian areas as field of ethnographic research, whose reasons are addressed in the introduction of this thesis.

The understanding of the relationships between Palestinians and Israelis may be deepened by analysing how the Israelis' political and socio-cultural differentiations and economic segmentation, their conflicting interests, patterns of belonging and normative systems affect the daily relationships between different Israeli and Palestinian subjects. Another important dimension of further investigation may be the implications of the Israeli state's structural relationships and discriminations towards its citizens, concerning the way the latter view themselves and the Palestinian others.

The study of these interconnected dynamics may allow to highlight the potential collusion and (being optimist) collaboration between Israeli patterns of belonging and political claims

contesting the Israeli state, such as those of the Haredi communities, and Palestinians' claim for independence. However, such investigation would need to carry out a multi-situated research, a research "at the borders" overcoming the limits of most of the present "segregated researches" investigating or the Palestinian or the Israeli society.

*Spring water management: the water meaning of tribalism and the Palestinian "tribal state"*

The analysis of spring water management in Wādī Fūkīn (Chapter II) has identified two interconnected dimensions of spring water management, emphasised by local inhabitants themselves: the representation of an "official" and legitimate allocation of spring water rights and the actual use of water shares, which is considered as temporary, subject to change and highly contested. These two dimensions highlight the "synchronisation" and "de-synchronisation" (Fabiatti 1997) of the system of spring water management, which mirror its high flexibility and negotiated character, its adaptation to changing social relationships and ecological conditions and to wider political and economic processes. The flexible character of the system of access to spring water allows the resilience of the local productive system, facing the ecological, political and economic changes.

The investigation of both the theoretical and practical rights – as are defined by other authors analysing similar processes in Nepal (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998) – has shown two important interconnected dynamics: first, the villagers' production of historical social memories and their cultural construction and reifications of tribal identities as a strategy to resist to the power relationships of Israel and the PNA. Second, the connected "modern" character of tribal patterns of political cohesion, viewed as changing socio-political constructions affected by historical and contemporary interactions between ecological processes and local, regional, and international social actors and institutions, including the state (Bonte et al. 1991; Bonte et al. 2001). In this work, the analysis of both spring water and domestic water management (Chapter IV) has brought insights into the important debate about the relationships between the State and the tribal organisation.

Moreover, the investigation of daily local water practices and discourses of resistance has contributed to the conceptualisation of the relationships between power and resistance. It has highlighted that every form of resistance have a contingent and strategic character and exist only as specific reactions to particular domination strategies, affected by the local cultural and historical context.

Finally, this study has also brought to light the central role of spring water, used for irrigation, in the material and social reproduction and cultural creation of the local rural community, a dimension of belonging expressed through the idiom of kinship and legitimised by a thick network of marriage relationships between members of the different tribal groups and extended families in the village. The different spring waters flowing in the village contribute to the definition of the multiple representations of the self and the other, on which the individual and collective social identities are grounded, highlighting their contextual and multidimensional character.

The inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn feel that the village is in danger, caught in the grips of the Israeli urban development. Soon, it may disappear, devoured by the devastating Israeli urban settlements encircling it and expanded daily. Spring water is its only anchor. Its flow ties local Palestinians to land. It is the life-blood of the village, which quenches their bodies' thirst for identity and justice.

According to the inhabitants of Wādī Fūkīn, the individuals' right of access to spring water is negotiated and acknowledged following inheritance relationships legitimised by supposed patrilineal genealogical ties between present individuals and the "ancestors" of their extended families. As highlighted by anthropologists addressing water issues in Morocco (Casciarri 2008), Tunisia (Bédoucha 1987), India (Mosse 2003) and Nepal (Aubriot 2004), in Wādī Fūkīn the management of spring water is organised according to real or imagined kinship relationships. Spring water shapes changing dimensions of identification and differentiation connected to the tribal political organisation, such as the tribal group and the extended families composing it. However, spring water management mirrors also the economic segmentation and political dynamics fragmenting tribal dimensions of belonging, connected to wider socio-economic and political processes, highlighting the inscription of water in ever changing local logics.

Despite the local ideological representations of the tribal group as a patrilineal lineage, the negotiation of spring water rights and the practices of exchange of spring water shares show that inheritance and kinship are not strictly grounded on the agnatic paradigm. The negotiation of water rights consists in the continuous reinvention of multiple and conflicting memories about local genealogies, which are censored, reinvented and adapted to the changes of the local context, through economic and political alliances between extended families, often legitimised by marital relationships. The negotiations and exchanges of spring

water shares show that the family's borders are flexible. They are broadened and manipulated through many strategies such as marriage relationships, which are aimed at including in the pattern of the familiar solidarity other closeness relationships, far and spatially dispersed genealogic relations, as well as the ties between the members of the whole community. Marriage relationships and alliances are organised according to the reciprocal political and socio-economic status of the concerned extended families and to their particular interests in keeping or increasing this status.

In the framework of the tribal groups and extended families' dispersion by the Israeli army, kinship is an idiom of solidarity to rebuild and legitimise relationships of cohesion and political alliances. In a context in which the access to economic capital is strictly connected to the access to social capital, a wide network of solidarity relationships legitimised as paternal kinship or marriage ties is a main resource for the satisfaction of a family's needs, especially in low socio-economic conditions.

In line with a deconstructive approach (Dresch 2010), spring water management shows that the tribal group is not a social and political entity, a corporate group that has been preserved as a remnant of the past. Tribalism is a language used to describe, organise and legitimate changing economic and political relationships between individuals and social groups, and to express rights, obligations and loyalties.

Villagers idealise and reified the local tribal cooperative management of spring water as unchanged over time, resisting to the economic, political and cultural processes and changes entailed by the Israeli colonial occupation, viewed as a temporary event in the long-lasting Palestinian history.

In order to legitimise the local spring water management, villagers claim the fairness of the supposed tribal norms ruling it, by connecting them to reinterpreted Islamic laws concerning water management, such as the illegitimacy and immorality of the monetised access to any kind of water. The supposed Islamic laws ruling water management are idealised as guaranteeing social justice and fairness, in opposition to the increased unequal access to spring water and domestic water, connected to water commoditisation and the illegitimate domestic water administration and knowledge of the Israeli and PNA's water bureaucracies.

As stated by political ecologists addressing water irrigation issues in the Nepal (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998), in the framework of the struggles for the control and access to water against state institutions, local people claim the legitimacy of their normative rules concerning the access to water and land, by reifying and idealising them as a system of "customary" and religious law based upon the supposed continuity of local legal tradition.

The rota system of access to spring water is frozen in the time before the creation of Israel, the village's evacuation and local tribal groups and families' dispersion, before the loss of most of land in the village, the integration in the labour market and the increasing abandonment of agriculture. It is reified as not affected by water commoditisation, the increasing land and water hours fragmentation connected to the growth of the local population and by the many conflicts concerning the access to spring water and land entailed by these processes and fragmenting tribal groups of solidarity. By means of the idealisation of water relationships, the ties between the inhabitants are naturalised to mitigate these conflicts and fragmentation, to negotiate the meaning of home and community, seeking to recompose the historical, identity and cultural splits caused by the traumatic event of the creation of Israel.

In local social memories, the time before the creation of Israel is constructed as a mythical, cyclical time eternally present, which goes back to a far past identified with the Ottoman period, but also encompasses the present and future time. It is the idealised past of the pre-modernity and moral purity in which the community is reified, the founding moment of the community and of its identity.

The supposed ancestors of each extended family who lived during the Ottoman period are mentioned as they are still alive, as the community never changed. They embody the long-time ties between the community and local land and spring water flows. The reified tribal water management and rural community are a symbol of their identity claims, of their supposed cultural authenticity, autochthony and "ancestral" belonging to local lands, which legitimise their struggle for autonomy and their resistance as an "authentic" rural community. In villagers' discursive strategies to claim their autochthony, the historical period of the Ottoman Empire has a key role, in response to the Israeli land legislation and legal devices allowing land expropriation, which restore the land tenure system introduced at that time.

The social memories about the "past" of the community in the village are selected and their meanings and values are shaped through the lens of the present perceptions, seeking to give a sense to the present struggle against land expropriation. For villagers, the oral memories about the history of the village's evacuation and the return to it became a sort of foundational myth of the present community with a central role in the collective and individual identity's construction. Differently, the oral histories about the different origins of the extended families living in the village, which arrived from other areas of the Palestinian territories, are guarded as part of the community's cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997). Indeed,

they are viewed as a threat to the claim of its autochthony, facing the land expropriations by Israel legitimised by the rhetoric about Israelis' presence in the area since the Biblical times.

Despite the socio-economic segmentation and competition fragment the tribal solidarity networks, the tribal group is re-invented to bear a renewed important role. It is a practice and dimension of political representation that is mobilised in the public negotiations for conflicts' resolution, as well as to claim personal and collective rights facing outside authorities such as Israel and the PNA. Tribal political patterns are strategic practices to express very contemporary claims, to take a role and visibility in civil society, to struggle for water justice, self-determination and autonomy, facing both the Israeli and the PNA's power structures marginalising them and the uncertain economic and political conditions.

As the previous Ottoman and British colonial administrations in the Middle East (Bocco and Tell 1995), also the Israeli nation-state and the PNA lead to new identity constructions and to the politicisation and increased territorialisation of tribal identities and networks of solidarity, in opposition to the state or in collusion with it.

Despite the reification of the local spring water and land management system as unchanged over time, "customary" and "traditional", the analysis of the actual practices of division and use of this resource highlights that the access to spring water and land is affected by tribal norms and values and by national and global processes: the global spread of the neoliberal water commoditisation and of private property regimes, as well as the new moral norms regulating market transaction as a response to the Israeli strategies of land grabbing – such as the moral ban on selling land (and water) to Israelis, ratified by the Palestinian law recovering the pre-1967 Jordanian regulation.

As in other Middle East (Van Aken 2003; 2012), African (Bernal 1997) and Asian (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998:60) countries, in the Palestinian territories land tenure conditions and water rights are characterised by a legal pluralism, which consists in the co-existence and reciprocal influence of multiple normative systems. These have different sources of authority and legitimacy and different spheres of validity and applicability and are connected to different temporal dimensions. The multiple constructions of local law consist in "the locally dominant mixtures of interpretations and transformations of the surrounding universe of plural legal repertoires" (Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1998:60).

The moral economy – viewed as a shared set of normative attitudes and values regulating economic relations and behaviours – is not a remnant of a past “traditional” culture, but the hybridised outcome of present, ongoing negotiations and conflicts. It is connected to local political and economic hierarchies and gender relationships, to broader normative and production systems and to wider socio-political organisations and economic stratifications. The local moral economy adapts to both the local agro-climatic and geophysical features and to changing social relationships, seeking the political and “social efficiency” (Boelens and Vos 2012:21), instead of the only technical and economic one conveyed by water modernisation and rural development.

Despite villagers idealise the local spring water management as a fair and just system, the investigation of both the idealised water rights and the actual allocation of water (Chapter II) brings to light long-time and changing “spring water hierarchies” between the tribal groups and families living in the village.

The social memories about the division of spring water between the past generations of villagers highlight that the relationships between the tribal groups and the extended families comprised in each of them have always been characterised by hierarchies, competition and conflicts for the control of land and spring water. This suggests that even if the ties between the members of a tribal group are expressed through the egalitarian family language, the tribal organisation is not egalitarian, as supposed by some anthropological studies about the segmentary lineage systems: first of all, those of Evans-Pritchard (1940) about Nuer people, later re-elaborated by Gellner (1969) concerning the tribal societies in Morocco and by the anthropological literature about Muslim tribal societies in the ‘70s. Differently, as highlighted also by many studies about tribal political organisation in Palestine (Cohen 1965), as well as in other Middle East and North African countries (Bonte and al. 2001; Bonte and al. 1991), the tribal political system is hierarchic. Following Bonte’s (2004) insights about the tribal organisation in North Africa, I showed that hierarchies concerning the access to spring water in Wādī Fūkīn are connected to the marriage strategies of the extended families, which highlight the ban of female hypogamy ruling marriage practices, connected to women’s subordination on men.

The networks of marriage relationships between the extended families in the village have established a “dualist political system” (Bonte 2004) organising the community in two main antagonistic, contingent and contextual groups of solidarity: the Manāšra and the Ḥurūb tribal



groups, which since the past are in competition for the control of local material and symbolic resources, such as land and spring water, but also for the new sources of power.

Spring water's flows highlight that women have the key role of mediating the building of solidarity dimensions expressed through the idiom of kinship, which legitimises the sharing and exchange of spring water. They are an important symbolic capital, whose control allows men to establish alliances seeking to strengthen or increase their status.

According to Bonte and Conte (1991), the segmentary tribal organisation is not grounded on complementary oppositions but on "competitive oppositions". In line with their theorisations, in Wādī Fūkīn the tribal group is the outcome of marriage strategies consisting in alliances aimed at increasing the social status of each group, within a hierarchic organisation.

Nevertheless, the decentralised negotiation of water rights highlights the decentralised character of the local tribal political organisation. The political authority and the right to exert violence are not centralised. Differently from cases of "chefferies" analysed by Godelier (2004) – chiefdoms ruled by a tribal aristocracy – spring water division shows that political authority is shared and dispersed at the multiple levels of organisation, such as the extended family, the tribal group and the community in the village. These dimensions of identification are all characterised by hierarchic relationships legitimised by the conformity to moral norms defining honour.

Today, the access to spring water and land is at the centre of increasing tensions and competition even between people belonging to the same extended family. These conflicts are connected to the increased competition for the scarce spring water and land, to the individual strategies to overcome job insecurity and precariousness, but also to the lack of shared rules in the framework of the overlapping of different and contested water norms, rights, meanings and values. As a consequence of these processes, villagers endure problems of spring water stress and land shortage to a different extent. The sustainability and local legitimacy of the local resources management and the cohesiveness in the resistance to the Israeli colonial strategies are threatened by the spread of multiple and uncertain perceptions and views about the present political, social and ecologic reality and by conflicting individual and collective water interests and claims for water justice.

The dynamics of distribution, exchange, conflict and competition for the access to spring water mirror the change of the socio-political configuration of the local community caused by wider processes such as the creation of Israel, the establishment of the PNA, the integration in the labour market and the global flow of symbolic and material resources

conveyed by development actors. The integration in the colonial, national and global power structures has brought about changes in local hierarchies connected to new sources of economic and political power.

Besides land ownership and access to spring water, today the status competition between families and tribal groups is grounded mainly on the socio-economic class of their members and their position in wider power structures such as the PNA's institutions and the Palestinian and international NGOs, on the access to “modern” expertises and bureaucratic knowledge and language, as well as to the Israeli territory, labour opportunities, services and resources.

The hierarchic organisation of the family and the whole society are still viewed as grounded on the moral system and rules defining honour, according to the local tribal political organisation. However, honour is the product of reciprocity and exchange relationships: it is the outcome of a continue negotiation of changing symbolic resources defining the status and social reputation, which are shaped by global, colonial and national dynamics and affect the local access to resources, services and forms of solidarity.

The new hierarchies and sources of power amplify dynamics of competition and marginalisation, social inequalities, patterns of differentiation and perceptions of injustice. They entail the overturn of intergenerational power relationships, given the eldest generations' marginalisation in the access to the new centres and sources of power. Moreover, since women are discriminated in the labour market, their dependence on men, grounded on the lack of control of economic and productive resources, is strengthened. These dynamics fragment the tribal networks of solidarity, the community in the village, as well as the whole Palestinian population.

While the investigation of spring water management has highlighted that the creation of Israel and the PNA has not led to the detribalisation of the local society, the analysis of the domestic water (Chapter IV) and land management (Chapter II) in Wādī Fūkīn has brought to light that the PNA is not incompatible with tribal political organisation, practices and logics. The PNA's law and procedures incorporate some customary tribal norms, practices and patterns of representation.

At the same time, as shown also by Van Aken (2003) studying in the Jordan Valley, the functioning of domestic water administration and the techno-political allocation systems of other resources adopted by the PNA's national and local institutions (the Village Council), by international humanitarian agencies (like the UNRWA) and by Palestinian and international

NGOs are mediated by tribal practices and personal relationships. Local actors mediate the distribution of resources and services and public offices according to personal social ties (kinship, friendship, patronage relations, economic alliances), viewed through the tribal idiom of the family's solidarity. The tribal logics of the mediation and co-optation - the main tribal pattern of power distribution – as well as the exclusion of women from public roles, rule the functioning of the PNA's institutions such as the Village Council. They are adapted to the contemporary political framework and contribute to shape the modern tribal political organisation of the Palestinian nation-state.

Domestic water mediates the competition between local groups, organised according to the tribal dimension of political belonging of the extended family, for the new authority roles and spaces of power created by the new state institutions and water bureaucracy (such as that of the Village Council's head). This competition strengthens the dimension of political belonging of the extended family, expressed mobilising both the tribal political language and that of the "modern" loyalty to political parties.

This study has highlighted that behind the institutional and procedural resemblances highlighted in different cultural contexts by historical and comparative analysis of the state in social sciences, the hegemonic Western meanings of water and state and the water techno-politics and bureaucracy spread globally in the contemporary neo-liberal framework are appropriated and reinterpreted by local populations, including people working in state institutions. Their local interpretations and the ways they are practised and experienced are shaped by specific historical memories, ideas, interests and expectations, which lead to the production of multiple meanings of water, the state, democracy and authority.

#### *Intensive farming and irrigation techniques: the individualisation of resistance farming practices*

The analysis of the local implications of the spread of the intensive farming and irrigation techniques fostered by rural development NGOs to manage water scarcity and to increase agricultural production (Chapter III) has shown that despite the supposed political neutrality and universality of these new scientific techniques, the intensive irrigation and farming techniques consists in techno-politics. By means of the alienation of irrigation and farming activities from local patterns of political belonging, cooperation and resources management, the main development agencies aim at the integration of local productive

systems in the global capitalist market, seeking to create new individualised and “developed” farmers, as conform to a pre-existing model of agricultural entrepreneur, grounded on Western experience.

Through the spread of intensive farming techniques, development actors bring to the Palestinian farmlands very political ideas about agriculture, irrigation and water, as well as particular conceptions of public and private space, of the relationship with the environment and of politics and rural development.

The new intensive farming techniques – such as hybrid seeds, chemical pesticides and fertilisers and greenhouses – and the market logic of production convey the dis-connection between farming activities and local ecological processes, increasing irrigation water stress and threatening the historical environmental and economic sustainability of local agriculture.

They foster the spread of a new meaning connected to agriculture, viewed as an economic activity detached from socio-political and cultural dimensions, consisting in the exploitation and domination of land and water. Agricultural development means the maximisation of the productive efficiency and profit of farming activities, through the adoption of “modern” expertise and technical solutions adapt to all contexts.

The modernist view of agriculture, irrigation and water as a mere technical and economic matter is a discursive construction which entails the de-politisation and “naturalisation” of development actors’ farming and irrigation technologies, models and ideas, imposed as “regime of truth” (Escobar 1995). Historical local techniques, such as the production of local rain-fed seeds, are increasingly abandoned, threatening the local agricultural biodiversity and leading to the increasing loss of the local farming knowledge, which since a far past has allowed to cultivate despite the difficult ecological conditions which characterise the local semi-arid context.

The technical solutions spread in Wādī Fūkīn to manage water scarcity – such as drip irrigation and the private pools for irrigation water collection – convey a network of values, norms and social interests, which shape the “planners’ moral economy” (Bernal 1997).

In particular, they convey water commoditisation and privatisation and the individualistic ideology characterising the dominant neo-liberal paradigm. The individual is viewed as isolated, independent and opposed to the community, while pursuing its own economic interest. Irrigation water stress and other agricultural problems are considered as an individual responsibility and are ascribed to farmers’ adoption of inefficient and backward irrigation and farming techniques. The solution of these problems and, thus, agricultural

development, can be achieved by increasing the abilities and social power of disadvantaged individual farmers, by fostering their adoption of “modern”, efficient intensive techniques. The economic and political structural relationships and ecological constraints producing water stress and local farmers’ marginalisation – connected to local and national political structures, to the Israeli colonial occupation and to global economic and cultural processes – are not taken into account. Also some NGOs that propose alternative model of rural development, fostering the spread of more sustainable organic farming techniques, do not address the political structural relationships hindering the success of this strategy.

By conveying “social requirements for usage” (Boelens 1998:93), the new irrigation techniques contribute to change the local tribal patterns of solidarity related to the meaning of family and authority roles, which have always been involved in irrigation water management. This process is affected by the spread of new sources of power and hierarchies, connected to the integration in the labour market and the globalisation of Western middle class’ values and ideas about family.

Drip irrigation and the private pools for irrigation water collection have led to the individualisation of irrigation water management and farming practices and strategies, whose differentiation mirrors the socio-economic segmentation and the competition for the resources allocated by development actors, which fragment the extended family and the local community.

This is clear while considering the building and maintenance of the irrigation network in the village, which once was a collective responsibility whose fulfilment expressed the meaning of “water community”. Today, the maintenance of the irrigation network consists in the sum of individual efforts and responsibilities, whose fulfilment depends on each individual’s differentiated access to economic capital and to the resources conveyed by Palestinian and international development actors, whose unfair allocation is at the centre of tensions between them.

Together with farming activities, viewed as resistance practices, also the resistance to the Israeli occupation has been individualised and disempowered. Local farmers seek to contrast the fragmentation of local patterns of belonging, by means of solidarity practices such as the exchanges of irrigation water shares, of work in the fields and of vegetables with relatives or neighbours.

This research adds insights into the study of the irrigation network as a social and symbolical construct (Van Aken 2012; Boelens 1998), connected to changing political

relationships, hierarchies, patterns of belonging and authority roles. I showed that the changes of irrigation infrastructure and techniques are the materialisation of always changing social and normative relationships. These shape the organisation of irrigation and water distribution practices, while creating a “hydraulic property” (Boelens and Vos 2014). Moreover, I highlighted that the irrigation system in Wādī Fūkīn consists in the cultural and social organisation of the space and of the environment in the village (Chapter II).

Besides the meanings, values and identity constructions conveyed by intensive farming techniques fostered by development agencies, this study has also investigated how donors affect local organizations and social action, as well as local hierarchies and dynamics of marginalisation.

Since the ‘90s, Western donors and agencies impose the professionalisation of Palestinian grassroots organisations as a condition for their funding. For development actors professionalisation means the de-politicisation of the organisations’ internal practices and outward action models, conveying the dichotomous view of the relationship between professional and activist organisations. A new concept of politics is imposed, together with a de-politicised concept of development and agriculture, contrary to local views.

Most of Palestinian grass-roots organisations that previously attempted to involve and organise the mass of the social base by channelling it into a single national movement (Hanafi and Tabar 2003), have become a new source of political and economic power for few people, hiding the marginalisation and exclusion of the others.

Palestinian organisations’ adoption of more complicated and bureaucratised administrative and financial structures, which not all people are able to manage, has favoured the emergence of a new “globalized elite” (Hanafi and Tabar 2005: 247) characterized by the sharing of development global agendas, paradigm, language and expertise and legitimised by a favoured access to the relationships with Western development actors. This new elite is mainly composed of the directors of Palestinian organisations. In Wādī Fūkīn, as well as in the whole Occupied Palestinian territories (Hanafi and Tabar 2005), these people manage local organisations as private enterprises, distributing the resources conveyed by international donors according to personal relationships such as kinship, patronage relationships and political and economic alliances increasingly affected by socio-economic segmentation. By appropriating and manipulating global agendas, they achieve a high status and pursue their own political interests, which sometimes collude and sometimes conflict with those of the local political elite ruling the PNA.

Despite donors encourage the normalisation of established patterns of behaviour as organisational norms – such as that of the instrumental rationality applied to the social context (Hulme and Edwards 1997) – the relationship between them and local organisations are not deterministic, as it would be in what Peter Haas (1992) called the "epistemic communities". Local actors working in local associations and NGOs appropriate the global development agenda, by decoding and recoding the hegemonic development discourses and symbols. In Palestine, within the creative overlapping of the development paradigm with the local power system, donors and NGOs' directors agree in the institutional form through which to obtain their own different interests.

The local associations' past ability to organise cohesive collective actions facing daily problems and the Israeli colonisation is compromised, disempowering the local community and leading to its de-mobilisation (Hanafi and Tabar 2005; 2003).

The NGOs' resources supply leads to the increasing perception that individual strategies to continue to farm, resisting to the Israeli attempts at de-peasantisation and land expropriation, highly depend on development actors' resources. This has led to the spread of a passive and dependence attitude and lack of initiative.

Instead of contributing to the democratisation of the local Palestinian society or to its fight for independence, most of rural development models fostered in the village contribute to the integration of local social groups (farmers or woman) in a new network of dependence relationships. Marginalised people are increasingly disempowered and further marginalised.

This is the case of women, whose life changed radically since water and farming modernisation. The development of a commercial and intensive agriculture conveys a process of masculinisation of agriculture, viewed as male domain of science and technology (Van Aken and De Donato 2018). The social construction of the agricultural space as a masculine public space has led to the marginalisation of women's role in agricultural activities and public spaces. This process, together with domestic water modernisation, brings about the increasing "domestication" (Layne 1994:202) of women's work and contributes to their greater segregation inside the home. This leads to the increasing privatisation of the social places in which women establish networks of solidarity and mutual assistance that are critical to satisfying the needs of their entire family and to opposing the marginalisation of women. Compared to the life before water modernisation, today the women's visibility in public context is less tolerated and its moral evaluation is affected by the socio-economic segmentation and the connected hierarchies between public spaces. Women's daily

involvement in farming activities has become a sign of immorality and low social status, increasingly connected to low socio-economic conditions. The flow of farming and water modernisation widens the gap between gender roles.

This study suggests that in order to foster the democratisation of the local society, international donors and NGOs have to include in their interventions social scientists' long-time studies of local societies. These would bring insights into local power dynamics and processes of marginalisation affecting the local associations' decision-making processes and implementation of projects, as well as their implications, favouring the attempt to empower and to involve marginalised people in the projects for social changes.

*Farming the development: claims for socio-ecological justice and “hybrid agricultures”*

The analysis of daily farming practices and discourses about agriculture and environmental problems in Wādī Fūkīn has shown that local farmers' claims for justice and identity against Israel, the PNA and economic marginalisation are expressed by means of alternative discursive and embodied patterns of water and farming knowledge and relationships with the environment.

Local social actors, included NGOs' employees, act as “brokers of meanings” (Islah 2007). They appropriate, mediate, reinterpret and articulate the new irrigation and farming governmental techniques, symbols and meaning of water, agriculture and land. They also carry out a re-conceptualisation of local farming techniques and ideas in relation to the radical social and economic changes. If it does not happen at the discursive level, this process occurs at the level of the embodied farming practices.

The analysis of the daily farming practices has allowed me to go beyond the reified representation of local farming practices as “traditional”, which Israel, the PNA, some development agencies and local Palestinians themselves convey to claim different particular interests.

The creation of Israel is perceived as a traumatic event which fragmented the life's continuity in the village. It is perceived as establishing an epochal division, a fundamental change of civility, which is connected to the present identity dialectics between what the community was before, and what is now, expressed in the reification and symbolic opposition between past peasants and present farmers (Chapter III).



Before the creation of Israel, Palestinian peasant economy was characterised by self-sufficiency, lack of external input and capital and labour-intensive activities like the cultivation of terraces (Cohen 1965).

In Wādī Fūkīn this mythical time is imagined and idealised as a time of simplicity, morality, solidarity, justice and happiness. Farmers describe the sustainability and self-sufficiency of past peasants' agriculture, which consisted in the autonomous, cooperative and circular use of local resources, adapting to climate changes and seasonal rainwater availability, and characterised by the awareness of the relationality between human communities and non-human actors.

Historical local farming techniques are idealised and legitimised as connected to a “moral economy” described as following the Islamic obligation of human beings to protect the environment (water, land, fauna and flora), to respect the reproductive capacity and limits of resources, reducing pollution and using water and other resources in a sustainable way (Faruqi et al. 2003).

According to the villagers' idealised social memories since the creation of Israel the community fell towards the present moral corruption and fragmentation, mirrored by the increasing abandonment of agriculture, by the Israeli settlements causing springs' drying up and “eating” land, as well as by the “modernity's” irruption in the village's life. The latter is identified in new urban middle-class lifestyles, in the global flow of Western middle class models conveyed by the media, in the individualism that fragments the community, in the entering of water taps in all private houses, as well as, above all, in the development of the present commercial intensive agricultural production.

In the struggle for autonomy against the Israeli and Palestinian state's institutions and market dependence of agriculture, villagers appropriate the Western ontological separation of nature and culture to express a different symbolic divide (Chapter IV). The local, historical, reciprocal and sharing relationships between human beings and not-human beings (including “natural” elements such as spring water) and the related local forms of knowledge, are naturalised as part of local historical socio-ecological processes. Spring water, land and seeds, local farming activities, as well as plants and crops are viewed as “natural,” implicitly healthy and resisting to the deterioration caused by state domination. Differently, the Israeli and the PNA's state-led urbanisation, production and commoditisation of a new kind of water, the intensive farming activities and their destructive exploitation of “nature” – including both human and non-human beings – are viewed as “unnatural”, unhealthy,

immoral stranger practices, threatening the local socio-ecological environment and antithetical to the essence of the peasants' life in the village before its evacuation.

Villagers use the moral language to re-politicise and re-socialise the intensive farming techniques which development actors propose as technical solutions. Intensive farming techniques are viewed as political strategies creating new relationships of dependence and the connected loss of autonomy. Instead, as noted also by Van Aken (2015) studying in the close village of Battir, in farmers' discourses, local seeds, as well as the local kind of courgette, bear a political value, idealised as a symbol of their cultural "authenticity" and roots in the local territory, of specific historical, "healthy" and "moral" reciprocal relationships between the local people and the environment.

Most of farmers in Wādī Fūkīn view agricultural production as an interaction, exchange and reciprocal transformation between human and not-human beings (Van der Ploeg 2009) such as land, water, seeds and plants, which are subjectified. In local speeches land is anthropomorphic and has a morality. Farmers speak about land as a human body, whose blood is spring water. Land is sincere because she gives back what is given to it. The healthy conditions of land and human beings are strictly connected in a reciprocal relationship. Each spring in the village has its proper name and particular historical relationships with the tribal groups and extended families in the village. They express sentiments, will and attitudes. Sometimes they are sincere and sometimes they are said to lie, as when one cannot be sure about the amount of water "it gives".

Together with farmers, non-human subjects such as land and water react emotively to the present destructive farming strategies. According to villagers, spring water scarcity, rainwater floods and groundwater pollution in the village consist in the active response of the environment to Israel's disrespectful domination, characterised by resources' over-exploitation and the drastic re-modelling of the territory, while destroying local, secular Palestinian harmonious and sustainable eco-social systems.

Human being is one of the bio-physical actors composing the environment, viewed as a network of reciprocal relationships and interactions between human practices and culture and the non-human actors like water and land.

Spring water, seeds, vegetables and other non-human beings are active actors contributing to produce local knowledge and meanings and to shape local patterns of cultural belonging and differentiation and identity claims.

By means of these discourses and embodied knowledge about the relationships with the environment, local farmers claim for socio-ecological justice (Schlosberg 2013), that is to

say, they struggle for their right to preserve the local socio-ecological system and network on which the material and cultural reproduction of the local community are grounded.

The investigation of daily farming activities in the village (Chapter III) has highlighted that local farming techniques and meanings of agriculture and the environment consist in a “counterculture” (Van der Ploeg 1998:43; 2009). These alternative knowledge patterns are embodied to gain spaces of autonomy and manoeuvre, especially by people with a low socio-economic status. They are strategies to continue to farm and feed the family despite the marginalisation entailed by commercial agriculture, seeking to achieve the eco-social sustainability (Van der Ploeg 2009).

In order to contest the utilitarian values systems conveyed by intensive farming techniques, agriculture development is often connected to organic farming by some farmers, who appropriate the new rhetoric about organic food spread among the Western, Israeli and Palestinian urban middle class. Once again, some farmers give to farming development a political meaning and scope. The spread of organic farming is viewed as a strategy to make Palestinians return to farm, in order to struggle for autonomy. However, for some farmers these discursive and embodied forms of self-representation consist also in a strategy to seek to gain space in the crops’ market, by using the new needs perceived by these Israelis and their imagination and reification of Palestinian agriculture as implicitly “natural” and healthy. These farmers do not necessary engage only in organic farming but they represent themselves as doing so, using in a strategic way Israelis’ ignorance about local reality. Indeed, in the context of the high competition with the Israeli agriculture and increasing soil infertility and parasites’ infestations, some local farmers increasingly perceive the need of the intensive techniques and agronomic expertise, affected by the global spread of universalistic, technical efficiency concepts (Boelens and Vos 2012).

Farmers appropriate the different globalised ideas about agriculture development and connect to them different meanings, while they mobilise the local and new farming techniques as multiple contextual strategies to “farm the resistance” against land expropriation and for survival. In daily practices, the intensive farming techniques and the local ones are juxtaposed and articulated, leading to the creation of a sort of “hybrid agriculture”, negotiated practices produced by the interactions between global and local processes.

### *Multiple water countries and a main claim for water freedom*

This research has highlighted that Palestinians are subjected to the overlapping, interaction and competition of the Israeli state, the PNA and the development system's power networks, which shape a "state pluralism" exerting structural power relations (Wolf, 1990) through water modernisation projects (Chapter V).

The hydro-politics of these power structures are aimed at achieving conflicting and colluding social and economical orders, creating new individual and alienated colonial subjects, or "modern" farmers or citizens, by affecting local people's experiences, social interactions and perceptions.

Palestinians has to live in such unstable and schizophrenic life conditions, trying to appropriate and use their inconsistent dimensions to create spaces for manoeuvre to satisfy their daily needs and interests.

Daily practices of water resistance have shown that the PNA's exercise of its "virtual" authority is not limited only by the administrative and legal conditions imposed by Israel, but also by Palestinians' strategic use of these conditions. For example, the impossibility of the Palestinian security forces to enter the areas B and C of the West Bank allows Palestinians to avoid the repression of the PNA.

The forms of symbolic, physical and psychological violence, the dynamics of exclusion and inequality exerted by Israel shape people's subjectivities and practices and are reproduced in local social relationships and people's acts of violence and lawlessness towards each other: especially by those occupying high positions in the PNA's institutions, who enjoy impunity, and by Palestinians living in Israel, whose Israeli citizenships protects them from the PNA's juridical and executive power.

These dynamics have highlighted that Palestinians' practices and representations that resist to Israel and the PNA both reproduce and undermine the processes of exclusion and discrimination produced by the domination strategies of these power structures. The Israeli forms of structural violence are appropriated and redeployed tactically by Palestinians within other strategies and configurations of power, such as in the PNA's power network, as well as in local power dynamics. The dialectics between power and resistance at the local and national level involve processes of co-optation, manipulation and complicity by different actors, which make the cultural outcome of conflicts - concerning the construction of the subject and of the meaning of the State - unpredictable.

The overlapping of the Israel state, the PNA and development actors' water policies fragment the Palestinian Territories in different hydrosocial networks and territories. It has led to situations of 'territorial pluralism', created by "overlapping, often contested, and interacting hydroterritorial configurations in one and the same space, but with differing material, social and symbolic contents and different interlinkages and boundaries" (Boelens et al. 2016:8).

This fragmentation of the water reality shapes differentiated citizenships and processes of marginalisation, creating multiple "islands of water experience", characterised by different conditions and experiences of water deprivation. In such a context, the place of dwelling – like the refugee camp, the village or the city – is an important dimension of belonging that shapes the image of the self and the "other", leading to multiple constructions of collective belonging. It is a criterion of social identification and differentiation grounding on the sharing of the local history, water access and other living conditions, as well as daily relationships of solidarity between its inhabitants and specific practices of resistance to particular domination strategies.

The differentiated water experiences affect the construction of different ideas about the political, social and water reality, leading to the imagination of multiple Palestinian "water countries" and Palestinian "others". They contribute to the production of growing social differences, disaffection and estrangement among the Palestinian population, as well as to the spread of multiple claims for water justice.

In political arenas characterised by unequal power structures and the increasing competition for water resources, different interest groups struggle to concretise their views of water justice and equity in particular technological, normative and organisational systems. Narratives and perceptions toward water justice are not constituted only along national lines, but also along class and gender lines, as well as they are affected by the level of education and place of residence (urban area, rural village or refugee camp).

Palestinians resist to the global, colonial and national power structures by recomposing and reinventing their socio-ecological worlds through water, whose fluidity resists to the attempts to fix and reify it as the materialisation of the state's power.

Despite the different path of the flows of resistance, the multiple and different waters in the Palestinian Territories bring most of marginalised Palestinians to the same mouth: the common claim for the freedom from the state, perceived as an outside, illegitimate, unfair political organization controlled by a minority group. These ideas are affected by their

historical and present experiences of the modern state's domination and repression, since the Ottoman and British colonial administrations until the present Israeli occupation, all perceived as illegitimate foreign authorities. Today, the unfairness, corruption and collusion with Israel of the Palestinian elites ruling the PNA – viewed as illegitimate inside authorities – have led to the disenchantment towards the state as the political organisation which can ensure the freedom they wish and for which they have struggled for so long time.

The freedom they want is not the abstract liberal individual freedom, connected to the supposed equal abstract individual rights acknowledged to every human being. It is not the negative idea of freedom that considers people as individually free “from” the constrictions and tyranny of the state, within a state. Differently, it is the positive, collective, material and social freedom to collectively share the management of waters and other resources in an autonomous way, to have access to the territory defining its organisation and meanings. It is the freedom to share, organise and exert political power over historical Palestine, to represent Palestinians' claims and to decide about their proper collective life. In Palestine, the roar of water flows speaks about water freedom, the Palestinians' concrete freedom “of” sharing power over water without the state.

The fate of Palestinians strongly depends on their ability to re-build wide solidarity networks allowing to overcome social disintegration and to socially reconnect the multiple Palestinian islands and hydrosocial territories, in which the Palestine is fragmented.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABU-LUGHOD L. (1986) *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California.

ABU-LUGHOD L. (1990) "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women", *American Ethnologist*, 17(1): 41-55.

AGAMBEN G. (2005) *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ALATOUT S. (2006) "Towards a Bio-Territorial Conception of Power: Territory, Population, and Environmental Narratives in Palestine and Israel", *Political Geography*, 25: 601-21.

ANAND N. (2011) "Pressure: The PoliTechnics of Water Supply in Mumbai", *Cultural Anthropology*, 26(4): 542-564.

ANDERSON B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York: Verso.

APPADURAI A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

ARCE A., LONG N. (1993) "Bridging Two Worlds: An Ethnography of Bureaucrat-Peasant Relations in Western Mexico", in M. Hobart (ed), *An Anthropological Critique of Development. The Growth of Ignorance*. London/New York: Routledge: 179-208.

ARIJ - Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (2010) Wadi Fukin Village Profile.

ARIJ - Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (2014) Report on the Israeli Colonization Activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Volume 194 (September).

ARIJ - Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (February 2015) Report on the Israeli Colonization Activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Volume 199.

ARIJ - Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (September 2015) The Israeli Settlement Enterprise and its Impacts on the Two-State Solution.

ATRAN S. (1986) "Hamula Organization and Masha'a Tenure in Palestine", *MAN New Series*, 21(2): 271-295.

ATTALLAH A, MUQBEL J., HEINONEN T. (2006) TS 39 - Land Administration Organisations and the Future Piloting of Systematic Land Registration in Palestine. Shaping the Change, Paper for XXIII FIG Congress. Munich, Germany, October 8-13.

AUBRIOT O. (2004) *L'Eau, Miroir d'une Société: Irrigation Paysanne au Népal Central*. Paris: CNRS.

BARAM A. (2001) "La « Maison » de Şaddām Ḥusayn", in P. Bonte, É. Conte, P. Dresch (eds), *Émirs et Présidents. Figures de la Parenté et du Politique dans le Monde Arabe*. Paris: CNRS ÉDITIONS: 301-329.

BARRON J.B. (1923) "*Palestine: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1922. Government of Palestine*". <https://archive.org/details/PalestineCensus1922>

BÉDOUCHA G. (1987) *L'eau, l'amie du puissant: une communauté oasienne du Sud tunisien* Paris: Éd. des Archives Contemporaines.

Basha Qadri (1931) باشا قادري، مرشد الحيران إلى معرفة أحوال الإنسان، الطبعة الرابعة، المطبعة الاميرية، ص 22[Guide for the Knowledge of Human Conditions, 4th edition, al-Amiria Press, p.22]

BELLISSARI A. (1994) "Public Health and the Water Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 23(2): 52-63.

BENNET J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter a Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, London: Duke University Press.

BERNAL V. (1997) "Colonial Moral Economy and the Discipline of Development: The Gezira Scheme and "Modern" Sudan", *Cultural Anthropology*, 12(4): 447-479.

BISHARAT G. E. (1997) "Exile to compatriot: transformations in the social identity of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank", in Gupta, Ferguson (eds), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*: 203-233.

BOCCO R. (1993) "De la Sécurité Politique à l'Autonomie Alimentaire dans les Steppes: Experts Internationaux et Programmes de Développement (1950-1990)", in R. Bocco, R. Jaubert, F. Mètral (eds), *Steppes d'Arabies*. Genève: Cahiers de l'I.U.E.D.



- BOCCO R. (1995) “Asabiyāt Tribales et États au Moyen-Orient. Confrontations et Connivences”, *Monde Arabe Maghreb Machrek*, 147: 3-12.
- BOCCO R., TELL T. (1995) “Frontières, Tribus et Etat(s) en Jordanie Orientale à l’Époque du Mandat”, *Monde Arabe Maghreb Machrek*, 147: 26-47.
- BOELENS R. (1998) “Collective Management and Social Construction of Peasant Irrigation Systems: a Conceptual Introduction, in Searching for Equity”, in R. Boelens, G. Davila (eds), *Conceptions of Justice and Equity in Peasant Irrigation*. Assen: Van Gorcum: 81-99.
- BOELENS R. (1998b) “Equity and Rule-Making in Searching for Equity”. in R. Boelens, G. Davila (eds), *Conceptions of justice and equity in peasant irrigation*. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum: 6–34
- BOELENS R., VOS J. (2014) “Legal Pluralism, Hydraulic Property Creation and Sustainability: The Materialized Nature of Water Rights in User-Managed Systems”, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 11: 55–62.
- BOELENS R., GETCHES D., GUEVARA-GIL A. (2010) *Out of the Mainstream. Water rights, politics and identity*. London: Earthscan.
- BOELENS R., HOOGESTEGER J., E. SWYNGEDOUW E., VOS J., WESTER P. (2016) “Hydrosocial Territories: a Political Ecology Perspective”, *Water International*, 41(1): 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/02508060.2016.1134898.
- BOELENS R., VOS J. (2012) “The Danger of Naturalizing Water Policy Concepts: Water Productivity and Efficiency Discourses from Field Irrigation to Virtual Water Trade”, *Agricultural Water Management*, 108: 16–26.
- BONTE P. (1976) “Les Modes de Domination. Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales”, *La production de l’idéologie dominante*. 2(2-3), 122-132.
- BONTE P. (1984) *Le Sens Pratique*. Paris: Minuit.
- BONTE P. (2004) “Tribus, Hiérarchies et Pouvoirs dans le Nord de l’Afrique”. in H. Dawod (ed), *Tribus et Pouvoirs en Terre d’Islam*. Paris: Armand Colin/SEJER: 81-112.
- BONTE P., CONTE E. (1991) “La Tribu Arabe. Approches Anthropologiques et Orientalistes”; in P. Bonte, E. Conte, C. Hamès, A.W. Ould Cheikh (eds), *Al-Ansâb, la quête*

*des origines. Anthropologie historique de la société tribale arabe.* Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

BONTE P., CONTE E., HAMÈS C., OULD CHEIKH A.W. (1991) *Al-Ansâb. La Quête des Origines. Anthropologie Historique de la Société Tribale Arabe.* Paris: Editions de la MSH.

BONTE P., CONTE E., DRESCH P. (2001) *Emirs et Présidents. Figures de la Parenté et du Politique dans le Monde Arabe.* Paris: Editions CNRS.

BRAVERMAN I. (2009a) *Planted Flags. Trees, Land, Law in Israel/Palestine.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

BRAVERMAN I. (2009b) "Planting the Promised Landscape : Zionism, Nature, and Resistance in Israel/Palestine", *Natural Resources Journal*, 49(2010-012): 317-361.

BRAVERMAN I. (2009c) "Uprooting Identities : The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank", *PoLAR (Political and Legal Anthropology Review)*, 32(2): 237-264.

BROOKS D. (2008) "Human Rights to Water in North Africa and the Middle East: What Is New and What Is Not; What Is Important and What Is Not", *Water Resources Development*, 23(2): 227-241.

BROOKS D., TROTTIER J. (2010) "Confronting Water in an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement", *Journal of Hydrology*, 382: 103-114.

CASCIARRI B. (1999) "Essere 'Arab tra gli Ahamda del Sudan Centrale: Riflessioni sull'Identità Nomade tra Africa e Medio-Oriente" [In Italian, Being 'Arab among the Ahamda of Central Sudan: Considerations on the Nomadic Identity between Africa and the Middle East]. M. Ariotti, B. Casciarri (eds.), *Società pastorali d'Africa e d'Asia, Special issue of La Ricerca Folklorica.* Italy: 40: 117-134.

CASCIARRI B. (2008) "Du Partage au Clivage: Marchandisation de l'eau et des Rapports Sociaux dans un Village du Maroc Présaharien (Tiraf, Vallée du Dra)", in E. Baumann, L. Bazin, P. Ould-Ahmed, P. Phélinas, M. Selim, R. Sobel (eds.), *Anthropologues et Economistes Face à la Globalisation.* Paris: L'Harmattan: 87-127.

CASCIARRI B., VAN AKEN M. (2013) "Anthropologie et Eau(x): Affaires Globales, Eaux Locales et Flux de Cultures", *Journal des Anthropologues Anthropologie et eau(x)*, 132-133(1): 15-44.

CHATTY D. (2006) *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century*. Leiden: Brill.

COHEN S.P. (1993) *The Politics of Planting. Israeli-Palestinian Competition for Control of Land in the Jerusalem Periphery*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

COHEN S.P., ABNER (1965) "Arab Border-Villages in Israel. A study of Continuity and Change in Social Organization". 1065. Manchester University Press.

CONDER C.R., KITCHENER H.H. (1883) "The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of the Topography, Orography, Hydrography, and Archaeology", *Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund Vol 3*: London: <https://archive.org/details/surveyofwesternp03conduoft>

DAUPHIN C. (1998) *La Palestine byzantine: peuplement et populations*. BAR international series 726. USA: Archaeopress University of Michigan.

DAWOD H. (2004) "Tribus et Pouvoirs en Irak" in H. Dawod (ed), *Tribus et Pouvoirs en Terre d'Islam*. Paris: Armand Colin/SEJER: 237-258.

DE DONATO A. (2013a) "Water politics within the Palestinian nation-state building. The case of the Dheisha refugee camp and the Bethlehem district (West Bank)", *Journal des Anthropologues, Anthropologie et eau(x)*, 132-133(1): 169-195.

DE DONATO A. (2013b) "Il Villaggio senza Tempo. Dinamiche Politiche nella Produzione del Campo Rifugiati di Dheisha (Cisgiordania) come Luogo della Memoria – The Timeless Village. Political Relations in the Construction of the Refugee Camp of Dheisha (West Bank) as a Place of Memory", in P. Branca, M. Demichelis (eds), *Acts of the X Conference of the Società per gli Studi sul Medio-Oriente (SeSaMO) "Memorie con-divise. Popoli, Stati e Nazioni nel Mediterraneo e in Medio Oriente"* (9-11/06/2011).

DILLMAN J. (1989) "Water rights in the Occupied territories", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 19(1): 46-71.

DOMBROWSKY I. (1998) "The Jordan River Basin: Prospects for Cooperation within the Middle East Peace Process?", in W. Scheumann W, M. Schiffler (eds), *Water in the Middle East: Potentials for Conflicts and Prospects for Cooperation*. Berlin: Springer: 91-112.

DRESCH P. (2010) “Les Mots et les Choses. L’Identite Tribale en Arabie”, in *la Tribu à l’Heure de la Globalisation, Etudes Rurales* 184: 185-201. (Éditions de l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales).

EIFLER C., SEIFERT R. (2009) *Gender Dynamics and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

ELAZARI-VOLCANI I. (1930) *The Fellah’s Farm*. The Jewish Agency for Palestine. Institute of Agriculture and Natural History, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 10. Tel-Aviv: Hapoel-Hazair.

EPSTEIN Y. (2002) “The Palestinian Labor Market in Israel: between Globalization and Intifada”, *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics Economics and Culture*, 8(4): 149-154.

ESCOBAR A. (1995) *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

EVANS-PRITCHARD E. (1940) *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

FABIETTI U. (1984) *Il Popolo del Deserto. I Beduini Shammar del Gran Nefud, Arabia Saudita*. [The Desert People. The Shammar Bedouins of the Great Nefud, Saudi Arabia]: Laterza.

FABIETTI U. (1997) *Etnografia della frontiera. Antropologia e storia in Baluchistan*. Roma: Meltemi.

FABIETTI U. (2000) “Il Traffico delle Culture”, in U. Fabietti, R. Malighetti, V. Matera (eds.) *Dal Tribale al Globale. Introduzione all’Antropologia*. Milano: Bruno Mondatori.

FALESTIN N. (2009) “Memories of Home and Stories of Displacement: The Women of Artas and the Peasant Past”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 38(4): 63-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2009.38.4.63>

FARAH R. (1998) “Palestinian Identity, Refugees and UNRWA: Changing Political Context and Issues”, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Chicago, December. Amman, CERMOC-Paris, EHESS.

- FARUQUI NASER I., BISWAS ASIT K., BINO MURAD J. (2003) *La Gestion de l'Eau Selon l'Islam*. [Water Management in Islam]. Paris: Karthala Editions.
- FAWZI A., ABU DHABI A. (1990) "How Viable Will the Agricultural Economy Be in the New State of Palestine?", *GeoJournal*, 21(4): 375-383.
- FERGUSON J. (2005) *Sviluppo e Potere Burocratico nel Lesotho*. In: *Oltre lo Sviluppo. Le Prospettive dell'Antropologia*. Roma: Meltemi editore.
- FOEME (Friends of the Earth - Middle East) (2006) *Wadi Fukin –An Alternative Master Plan*.
- FOUCAULT, M. (1977) *Microfisica del Potere: Interventi Politici*. A cura di Alessandro Fontana e Pasquale Pasquino, Einaudi, To.
- FRATKIN E., MEIR A. (2005) "Pastoralists and the State: An Editorial Introduction", in E. Fratkin, A. Meir (eds), *Pastoralists and the State Special issue of Geography Research Forum*, 25: 1–13.
- FREEDMAN L.P. (1999) "Reflection on Emerging Frameworks on Health and Human Rights", in Mann et al. (eds), *Health and Human rights*. New York: Rutledge.
- FREIJAT F. (2003) "Impact of Jewish Settlements on Palestinian Water Resources", in F. Daibes (ed), *Water in Palestine. Problems - Politics – Prospects*. Jerusalem: Passia: 153-182.
- FRÖHLICH CHRISTIANE and IDE TOBIAS (2008) *Water conflict or water cooperation? A discursive understanding of water conflict and cooperation in Israel and Palestine*.
- GASTEYER S., ISAAC J., HILAL J., WALSH S. (2012) "Water Grabbing in Colonial Perspective: Land and Water in Israel/Palestine", *Water Alternatives*, 5(2): 450-468.
- GEERTZ C. (1972) "The Wet and the Dry: Traditional Irrigation in Bali and Morocco". *Human Ecology* 1(1): 23-39.
- GEERTZ C. (1973) "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States". *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books: 255-310.
- GILSENAN M. (1982) *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- GODELIER M. (2004) “À Propos des Concepts de Tribu, Ethnie et État. Formes et Fonctions du Pouvoir Politique” in H. Dawod, *Tribus et Pouvoirs en Terre d’Islam*. Paris: Armand Colin/SEJER: 287-304.
- GOFF M., CROW B., (2014) “What Is Water Equity? The Unfortunate Consequences of a Global Focus on ‘Drinking Water’”, *Water International*, 39(2): 159-171.
- GOLDMAN M. J. (2011) “Strangers in Their Own Land: Maasai and Wildlife Conservation in Northern Tanzania”, *Conservation and Society*, 9(1): 65-79.
- GRANQVIST H. (1975) *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*. New York: AMS Press.
- GUPTA A. (1995) “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State”, *American Ethnologist*, 22(2): 375-402.
- GUPTA A., FERGUSON J. (1992) “Beyond ‘Culture’: Space, Identity, and Politics of Difference”, *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1): 6-23.
- GUPTA A., FERGUSON J. (1997) *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. USA: Duke University Press.
- GUPTA A., SHARMA A. (2006/a) “Globalization and Postcolonial States”, *Current Anthropology*, 47(2): 277-307.
- GUPTA A., SHARMA A. (2006/b) *The Anthropology of the State*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- HAAS P. (1992) “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination”, *International Organization*, 46(1): 69-108.
- HADAWI S. (1970) “Village Statistics of 1945: A Classification of Land and Area ownership in Palestine”, *Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center. Beirut (Lebanon)*.
- HALL S. (1992) “The Question of Cultural Identity” in S. Hall, H. David, M.C.G. Anthony M. (eds), *Modernity and its Futures*. Cambridge: Polity Press: 274-316.

HAMMAMI R. (2000) "Palestinian NGOs Since Oslo: From NGO Politics to Social Movements?" *Middle East Report*, No.214, Critiquing NGOs: Assessing the Last Decade (Spring).

HANAFI S., TABAR L. (2003) "The Intifada and the Aid Industry: The Impact of the New Liberal Agenda on the Palestinian NGOs", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23: 1-2.

HANAFI S., TABAR L. (2005) *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite. Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*. Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies. Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy.

HANNOYER J. (1989) "L'Hospitalité, Economie de la Violence", *Dans Maghreb-Machrek Monde Arabe Special: 'Espaces et Sociétés du Monde Arabe'*, Paris: La Documentation Française 123: 226-240.

HAVIV I., ASAF L. (2005) "The hydrological system of Wadi Fuqeen springs", *Institute of Earth Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies*.

HEATHER J. (2004) "Subsistence and Control: the Persistence of the Peasantry in the Developing World", *Undercurrent*, 1(1): 55-65.

HERZFELD M. (1997) *Cultural Intimacy. Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. New York-London: Routledge.

HILAL J. (2002) *The Formation of the Palestinian Elite. Ramallah and Amman: Muwatin*, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy and Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Centre.

HILAL J., KHAN M. H. (2004) "State Formation under the PNA: Potential Outcomes and their Viability", in M.H. Khan, I. Amundsen, G. Giacaman (eds.), *State Formation in Palestine: Viability and Governance during a Social Transformation*. London: Routledge: 64-119.

HOBART M. (1993) *An Anthropological Critique of Development. The Growth of Ignorance*. London, New York: Routledge.

HOODFAR H. (1998) "Volunteer health workers in Iran as social activists: Can 'governmental non-governmental organisations' be agents of democratisation?", *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*, Occasional Paper n.10.

HULME D., EDWARDS M. (1997) *NGOs, States and Donors, Too Close for Comfort?*. London: MacMillan.

HUSSEINI H. (2008) *Legal Report. Palestinian National Authority. Land Administration Project*. Ministry of Planning, PNA. Report prepared by: Land Equity International, Australia

INGOLD T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London, New York: Routledge.

ISLAH J. (2007) "NGOs: between buzzwords and social movements. Development in Practice" *Birzeit University, Palestine: Institute for Women's Studies*, 17(4-5).

KAPLAN R., KARATNYCKY A. (1998) "Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1997-1998", *Transaction Publishers*: 577. ISBN 0-7658-0476-X.

KATZ-MINK E. (2012-2013) "Dangerous Separation: An Ecosystem and Way of Life in the West Bank at the Brink of Destruction", *Sustainable Development Law & Policy*: 47-70.

KAIKA M. (2005) *City of Flows. Modernity, Nature, and the City*. New York, London: Routledge.

KHALIDI R. (2010) *Palestinian Identity. The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. USA: Columbia University Press.

KIRSHBAUM D.A. (2007) *ISRAELI APARTHEID – A Basic Legal Perspective*. Israel Law Resource Center.

KLEINMAN A., DAS V., LOCK M.M. (1997) *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California.

KURZOM G. (2001) *Towards Alternative Self-Reliant Agricultural Development*. Birzeit University, Development Studies Programme.

LATOUR B. (1991) *Nous n'avons jamais été Modernes. Essai d'Anthropologie Symétrique*. Paris: La Découverte, coll. L'armillaire.



- LATOUR B. (1999) *Politiques de la Nature. Comment Faire Entrer les Sciences en Démocratie*. Paris: La Découverte.
- LAYNE L. (1994) *Home and Homeland. The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan*. USA: Princeton University Press.
- LEACH E.R. (1959) "Hydraulic Society in Ceylon", *Past and Present*, 15: 2-26.
- LINTON J. (2010) *What Is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction*. Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.
- LONG N., LONG A. (1992) *Battlefields of Knowledge. The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development*. London: Routledge.
- LONG N., VAN DER PLOEG J.D. (1989) "Demythologizing Planned Intervention: an Actor Perspective", *Sociologia Ruralis*, 29(3/4): 326-349.
- MA'AN DEVELOPMENT CENTER (2005) Wadi Fukin under threat.
- MAFFI I. (2004) *Pratiques du Patrimoine et Politiques de la Mémoire en Jordanie*. Lausanne: Payot.
- MALKKI L. (1992) "National Geographic: The Rooting of People and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees", *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1): 24-44.
- MALKKI L. (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: The University Chicago Press.
- MARX E. (1977) "The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East", *American Anthropologist*, 79: 343-363.
- MARX E., MEIR A. (2005) "Land, Towns and Planning: The Negev Bedouin and the State of Israel", in E. Fratkin, A. Meir (eds), *Pastoralists and the State Special Issue of Geography Research Forum*. 25: 43-61.
- MEHTA D. (2001) "The Manufacture of Popular Perception of Scarcity: Dams and Water-Related Narratives in Gujarat, India", *World Development*, 29(12): 2025-2041.
- MITCHELL T. (1990a) "The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22(2): 129-150.

MITCHELL T. (1990b) “Everyday Metaphors of Power”, *Theory and Society*, 19(5): 545-577.

MITCHELL T. (1991) “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics”, *American Political Science Review*, 85(1): 77-96.

MITCHELL T. (2002) *The Rule of Experts. Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. London: University of California Press.

MOORS A. (1990) “Gender Hierarchy in a Palestinian Village: The Case of Al-Balad. In: The rural Middle-East: Peasant Lives and Modes of Production” in K. Glavanis, P. Glavanis (eds.). London: Zed Books: 195–209.

MORRIS B. (2004) *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

MOSSE D. (2003) *The Rule of Water. Statecraft, Ecology, and Collective Action in South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

MOSSE D. (2008) “Epilogue: the Cultural Politics of Water – A Comparative Perspective”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34(4): 939-948.

MOSSE D. (2009) “The Rule of Water: Uncertainty and the Cultural Ecology of Water in South India”, in T. Tvedt, T. Oestigaard (eds), *A History of Water. Series II, vol. 1: Ideas of Water from Ancient Societies to the Modern World*. London: I. B. Tauris.

MUAMER H., KHATIB N., HROUB M. (2014) *West Bethlehem Springs Protection Plan*. WEDO (Water and Environmental Development Organisation) (October).

NAGUIB N. (2009) *Women, Water and Memory: Recasting Lives in Palestine*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

OLIVIER DE SARDAN J.P. (1995a) *Anthropologie et développement. Essai en socio-anthropologie du changement social*. Paris: Khartala.

OLIVIER DE SARDAN J.P. (1995b) “La politique du terrain. Sur la production des données en anthropologie”, *Enquête. Archives de la revue Enquête*, (1): 71-109.

ONGLEY F. (1892) *The Ottoman Land Code*. London: William Clowes and Sons.

- Palestinian Water Authority. 2002. Water Law No. 3/2002.
- PALLOTTI A., ZAMPONI M. (2014) *Le Parole dello Sviluppo. Metodi e Politiche della Cooperazione Internazionale*. Roma: Carocci Editore.
- PALUMBO B. (2003) *L'Unesco e il Campanile*. Roma, Meltemi.
- PATAI R. (1949) "Musha'a Tenure and Co-Operation in Palestine", *American Anthropologist New Series*, 51(3): 436-445.
- PAUL FARMER (2004) "An Anthropology of Structural Violence", *Current Anthropology*, 45(3): 305-325.
- PCBS - Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2008)
- PCBS - Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2013)
- PETEET J. (1994) "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian "Intifada": A Cultural Politics of Violence", *American Ethnologist*, 21(1): 31-49.
- PLO Negotiations Affairs Department (2008) Property transactions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory—Legal brief. October.
- POSTEL S., POLAK P., GONZALES F., KELLER J. (2001) "Drip Irrigation for Small Farmers", *Water International*, 26(1): 3–13.
- QUMSIYEH M. (2017) Wadi Fukeen: Biodiversity and Environmental Threats. Team of Palestine Museum of Natural History. File sent by Mazin Qumsiyeh on August 2017.
- REILLY J. (1981) "The Peasantry of Late Ottoman Palestine", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 10(4): 82-97.
- RINAT Z. (2005) "A Death Sentence to This Valley", *Haaretz*.
- ROMANO S. (2016) "Democratizing Discourses: Conceptions of Ownership, Autonomy, and 'the State' in Nicaragua's Rural Water Governance", *Water International*, 41(1): 74–90. DOI: 10.1080/02508060.2016.1107706
- ROSENFELD H. (1960) "On Determinants of the Status of Arab Village Women", *Man*, 60: 66–70.

- ROTHENBERG C. (1998) “A Review of the Anthropological Literature in English on the Palestinian Hamula and the Status of Women”, *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 2:24-48.
- ROY O. (2004) “Groupes de Solidarité, Territoires, Réseaux et État dans le Moyen-Orient et l’Asie Centrale” in H. Dawod (ed), *Tribus et Pouvoirs en Terre d’Islam*. Paris: Armand Colin/SEJER: 39-80.
- SA’AR A (2006) “Feminine Strength: Reflections on Power and Gender in Israeli-Palestinian Culture”, *Anthropol Q*, 79(3): 397.
- SAID E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- SAID E. (2002) “Invention, Memory, and Place”, in W.J.T. Mitchell (ed), *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 241-261.
- SALZMAN P.C. (1980) “Introduction. Processes of Sedentarization as Adaptation and Response”, in P.C. Salzman (ed), *When Nomads Settle*. New York: Bergin Publishers: 1–19.
- SCHEPER-HUGHES N., BOURGOIS P. (2004) “Introduction: Making sense of violence” in N. Scheper-Hughes, P. Bourgois (eds), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell: 1-27.
- SCHLOSBERG D. (2013) “Theorising Environmental Justice: The Expanding Sphere of a Discourse”, *Environmental Politics*, 22(1): 37–55.
- SCOTT J.C. (1998) *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.
- SERRES M. (1995) *The Natural Contract*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- SHILHAV Y. (1998) *Ultra-Orthodoxy in Urban Governance in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies.
- SHRYOCK A. (2001) “Une Politique de « Maisons » dans la Jordanie des Tribus: Réflexions sur l’Honneur, la Famille et la Nation dans le Royaume Hashémite”, in P. Bonte, E. Conte, P. Dresch (eds), *Émirs et Présidents. Figures de la Parenté et du Politique dans le Monde Arabe*. Paris: CNRS ÉDITIONS: 331-356.

- SIMMONS P. (1997) “Women in Development: A Threat to Liberation”, in M. Rahnema, V. Bawtree (eds), *The Post-Development Reader*. London: Zed Books.
- SOJA E. (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- STATE AND PEACE-BUILDING FUND (2012) *West Bank and Gaza: Water supply and Sanitation Improvements for West Bethlehem Villages*. Water Unit, Sustainable Development Department, Middle East and North Africa Region.
- SWEDENBURG T. (1990) “The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier”, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 63(1): 18-30.
- SZE J., J. K. (2008) “Environmental Justice at the Crossroads”, *Sociological Compass*, 2(4): 1331-1354.
- TAMARI S. (2002) “Who Rules Palestine?”, *Journal of Palestine Study*, 31(4):102–113.
- TEMPER L. (2009) “Creating Facts on the Ground: Agriculture in Israel and Palestine (1882-2000)”, *Historia Agraria*, 48: 75-110.
- TROTTIER J. (1999) *Hydropolitics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Jerusalem: Passia Publication.
- TROTTIER J. (2000) “Water and the Challenge of Palestinian Institution Building”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 29(2): 35-50.
- TROTTIER J. (2013) “The Social Construction of Water Management at the Intersection of International Conflict: the Case of Al Auja”, in P. Berthelot (ed), *La Géopolitique de l'eau dans le Monde Arabe: entre Constantes et Changements, Eurorient*. Paris: L'Harmattan (44): 161-188.
- TROUILLOT M.R. (2001) “The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind”, *Current Anthropology*, 42(1): 125-138.
- UNITED NATIONS (1949) *Final Record of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva*, Vol. I, Federal Department, Berne, pp.195-341; 75 United Nations Treaty Series 5-417.
- VAN AKEN M. (2003) *Facing Home. Palestinian Belonging in a Valley of Doubt*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.

VAN AKEN M. (2012) *La Diversità delle Acque. Antropologia di un Bene Molto Comune*. Lungavilla: Altravista.

VAN AKEN M. (2015) “Immagini di Natura. Mangiare e Coltivare Cibo Baladì (Locale) nei Territori Palestinesi”, *Im@go, Rivista di Studi Sociali sull’Immaginario*, 5: 39-65.

VAN AKEN M., DE DONATO A. (2018) “Gender and Water in the Middle East. Local and Global Realities”, in C. Fröhlich, G. Gioli, R. Cremades, H. Myrntinen (eds), *Water Security Across the Gender Divide, Springer Book Series « Water Security in a New World”*. Springer International Publishing: 61-82.

VAN AKEN M., MOLLE F., VENOT J. (2009) “Squeezed Dry: the Historical Trajectory of the Lower Jordan River Basin”, in F. Molle, P. Wester (eds), *River Basin Trajectories: Societies, Environments and Development. Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture Series*. Cambridge: CABI: 8: 20-46.

VAN BRUINSEN M. (2004) “Les Kurdes, États et Tribus”, in H. Dawod (ed), *Tribus et Pouvoirs en Terre d’Islam*. Paris: Armand Colin/SEJER: 145-168.

VAN DER PLOEG J.D. (1998) ‘Peasants and Power’, in R. Boelens, G. Davila (eds), *Searching for Equity. Conceptions of Justice and Equity in Peasant Irrigation*. Assen: Van Gorcum: 39–45.

VAN DER PLOEG J.D. (2009) *The New Peasantries: Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalization*. London: Routledge.

VON BENDA-BECKMANN F., VON BENDA-BECKMANN K., SPIERTZ J. (1998) “Equity and Legal Pluralism: Taking Customary Law into Account in Natural Resource Policies.” in R. Boelens, G. Davila (eds), *Searching for Equity. Conceptions of Justice and Equity in Peasant Irrigation*. Assen: Van Gorcum: 57–69

WALKER G. (2011) *Environmental Justice: Concepts, Evidence, and Politics*. London: Routledge.

WARRINER D. (1948) *Land and poverty in the Middle East*. London, New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Middle East Economic and Social Studies.

WEIZMAN E. (2007) *Hollow Land. Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. London, New York: Verso.

WEIZMAN E. (2003) “The Politics of Verticality. The West Bank as an Architectural Construction”, in K. Biesenbach, A. Franke, R. Segal, E. Weizman (eds), *Territories: Islands, Camps and Other States of Utopia*. Berlin: KW Institute for Contemporary: 64-118.

WOLF E.R. (1990) “Facing Power – Old Insights, New Questions”, *American Anthropologist New Series*, 92(3): 586-596.

World Bank (2004) *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Learning and Innovation Loan in the amount of US\$3 Million to West Bank and Gaza for a Land Administration Project – PAD – Private and Financial Sector Development / Department Middle East and North Africa Region*. December 14.

WORLD HERITAGE ENCYCLOPEDIA (1949–56) *Palestinian exodus*. Article Id: WHEBN0018292055

ZUREIK E. (2003) “Theoretical and Methodological Considerations for the Study of Palestinian Society”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23: 1-2.

ZWARTEVEEN M. (2010) “A Masculine Water World: the Politics of Gender and Identity in Irrigation Expert Thinking”, in R. Boelens, D. Getches, A. Guevara (eds), *Out of the Mainstream: Water Rights, Politics and Identity*. London: Earthscan: 75–98.

ZWARTEVEEN M., BOELEN R. (2014) “Defining, Researching and Struggling for Water Justice: Some Conceptual Building Blocks for Research and Action”, *Water International*, 39(2): 143–158.

## WEB REFERENCES

ARIJ - Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (2005) *Settlement Expansion and Loss of Wadi Fukin's Land*. May 23, 2005. <http://poica.org/2005/05/settlement-expansion-and-loss-of-wadi-fukins-land/>. Accessed on 02/03/2017.

ARIJ (2004) *GIS Database* <http://poica.org/2005/05/settlement-expansion-and-loss-of-wadi-fukins-land/>. Accessed on 10/09/2017.

AŠ-ŠARQ AL-AWSAT (2017) (Lebanese newspaper), n. 13980, 08/03/2017.

<https://aawsat.com/english>. Accessed on 15/09/2017.

BEAUMONT P. (2014) "Huge New Israeli Settlement in West Bank Condemned by US and UK", *World news, The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/israeli-settlement-west-bank-gvaot-conde>. Accessed on 01/09/2014.

BEITAR ILLIT OFFICIAL WEBSITE (2017) <http://betar-illit.muni.il/eng/?CategoryID=0>. Accessed on 03/02/2017.

ECOPEACE / FRIENDS OF THE EARTH MIDDLE EAST (2008) *Peacebuilding Theory and Practice. A Case Study of the Good Water Neighbours Project and In Depth Analysis of the Wadi Fukin / Tzur Hadassah Communities*. Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel Aviv (January 2008).

FORTUNATO M. (2012) *Les Eaux Usées d'une Colonie Israélienne Contaminent l'Environnement de Villages Palestiniens* - Collectif 69 de soutien au peuple Palestinien - Association... (Samedi 11 août 2012) <http://collectif69palestine.free.fr/spip.php?article482>

GUÉRIN V. (1869) *Description Géographique Historique et Archéologique de la Palestine* (in French) 1: Description de la Judée, pt. 3. Paris: L'Imprimerie Nationale. <https://archive.org/details/descriptiongogr06gugooq>

ICBS - Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2016) *List of Localities, in Alphabetical order*. <http://www.cbs.gov.il/ishuvim/reshimalefishem.pdf>. Accessed on 16/10/2016

LANDac (Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development) (2012) *Palestinian Territories. Food Security and Land Governance Factsheet*. IS Academy on Land Governance. <http://www.landgovernance.org/assets/2014/09/Palestinian-Territories-Factsheet-20121.pdf>. Accessed on 15/09/2017.

LEVY E., BLUMENTAL I. (2014) *Israel Recognizes 4,000 dunam in Gush Etzion as State Land*. Israel News, Ynetnews. Published: 31/08/2014.

MILLS E. (1932) *Census of Palestine 1931. Population of Villages, Towns and Administrative Areas*. Jerusalem: Government of Palestine. <https://ia800304.us.archive.org/18/items/CensusOfPalestine1931.PopulationOfVillagesTownsAndAdministrativeAreas/PalestineCensus1931.pdf>



PALESTINIAN INFORMATION CENTRE - *Al-Markaz al-Falastīnī l-il-I'lām* –  
14/07/2016. <https://english.palinfo.com>. Accessed on 15/09/2017.

PCBS - PALESTINIAN CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2016) *Main Statistical Indicators in the West Bank*.  
<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/Rainbow/StatInd/westbankInd2016E.htm>. Accessed on 30/03/2016

RAVID B. (2014) *Five EU States Lodge Joint Protest with Israel Expropriation of West Bank Land*. Diplomacy and Defense. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.614959>. Accessed on 09/09/2014.

RURAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (RWDS) <http://rwds.ps/about-rwds/>.  
Accessed on 20/09/2017.

TOVAH L. (2017) "Netanyahu: 'We're connecting the Beitar Illit settlement to Jerusalem'". *The Jerusalem Post* (August 3, 2017 12:51) <http://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/netanyahu-were-connecting-beitar-illit-settlement-to-jerusalem-501512>. Accessed on 03/10/2017.

WEDO website: <http://wedo-pal.org>. Accessed on 30/09/2017.



## GLOSSARIO

'ā'ila kabīra	big family	عائلة كبيرة
'ā'ila wāhida	a single family	عائلة واحدة
'ā'ila, 'ā'ilāt	extended family/ies	عائلة، عائلات
'amaliyya	operation, surgery - it is used by Palestinians to refer to an attack against Israeli soldiers.	عملية
'aql	good sense, common sense or rationality	عقل
'arīs	groom	عريس
'arūs	bride	عروس
'assāf,	sheep's breed created by the Israeli Agriculture Research Organisation	عساف
'ayd al-aḏḥa	the Sacrifice feast	الأضحى عيد
'ayd al-fuṭr	feast of the interruption [of the fast, at the end of the Ramadan]	الفطر عيد
'ayn al-balad	the spring of the inhabited centre	عين البلد
'ayn al-farāš	the spring of the butterflies	عين الفراش
'ayn al-fawwār	the spring of the gush	عين الفوار
'ayn al-kanīsa	the spring of the church	عين الكنيسة
'ayn al-maghāra	the spring of the grotto	عين المغارة
'ayn al-Quds	The spring of Jerusalem	عين القدس
'ayn aṣ-ṣubeḥ	the spring of the morning	عين الصبح
'ayn at-tīna	the spring of the fig	عين التينة
'ayn maḏīk	the spring of the pass	عين المضيق
'ayn ṣiddīq	the sincere spring	عين صديق
'ayn, 'uyūn	spring(s), eye(s)	عين، عيون
'oros	wedding party	عرس
'ummāl	workers	عمال
abū	father	أبو
ad-dawla al-islāmiya	the Islamic State	الدولة الإسلامية
ad-dawra az-zirā'iyya at-taqālīdiyya	the traditional agricultural rotation	الدورة الزراعية التقليدية
aḥsan šwaya	a little better	أحسن شوية
al arḍ ta'abāna	the land is tired	الأرض تعبانة
al-'uyūn ḍa'īfa	the springs are weak	العيون ضعيفة
al-aġnabiyya	the foreigner	الأجنبيّة
al-aġnabiyya al-maġnūna	the crazy foreigner	الأجنبية المجنونة

<i>al-aġnabiyya al-maḥalliyya</i>	the local foreigner	الأجنبية المحلية
<i>Al-arḍ hiya al-aṣl, wa al-aṣl huwa aš-šaraf</i>	the land is the origins, and the origins are the honour	الأرض هي الأصل، والأصل هو الشرف
<i>al- 'awda</i>	the return	العودة
<i>al- 'ayn bi-l- 'ayn wa as-sin bi-s-sin, wa-l-bādī azlam</i>	an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and who begins is more unjust	العين بالعين والسن بالسن، والبادئ أظلم
<i>al-Badū</i>	the Bedouins	البدو
<i>al-buḍūr min barra</i>	the seeds from outside	البذور من بره
<i>al-ġām 'a al-kabīr</i>	the big mosque	الجامع الكبير
<i>al-ġām 'a al-kabīr</i>	the big mosque	الجامع الكبير
<i>al-ġām 'iyya al-ta 'āwniyya az-zirā 'iyya</i>	the Agricultural Cooperative	الجمعية التعاونية الزراعية
<i>Al-ġanam min barra</i>	the sheep from outside	الغنم من بره
<i>al-ġibāl</i>	the mountains	الجبال
<i>al-ġīrān</i>	the neighbours	الجيران
<i>al-ḥaġ</i>	the pilgrim	الحج
<i>al-ḥokom bayna an-nās bil-murāḍāa wa laysa bil-muqāḍāa</i>	the judgement between people through the satisfaction/consent and not through the prosecution)	الحكم بين الناس بالمرضاة وليس بالمقاضاة
<i>al-jār qabla ad-dār</i>	the neighbour is before the house	الجار قبل الدار
<i>al-kul mabsūṭīn</i>	all happy	الكل مبسوطين
<i>al-maġlis</i>	the council	المجلس
<i>al-maġlis al-qarawī</i>	the Village Council	المجلس القروي
<i>al-mandīl</i>	the veil	المنديل
<i>al-mu 'assasāt</i>	the organisations	المؤسسات
<i>al-muntazah</i>	the park	المنتزه
<i>al-murāḍāa</i>	satisfaction or consent	المرضاة
<i>al-wādī</i>	the valley, the river	الوادي
<i>an-nādī an-nasawī</i>	the women's club	النادي النسوي
<i>an-naḥaq</i>	the tunnel	النفق
<i>arḍ amīriya</i>	shared by different families or villages	ارض أميرية
<i>arḍ dawla</i>	state land	أرض دولة
<i>arḍ māliyya</i>	financial land - as private property is defined by the PNA's land legislation	أرض مالية
<i>'aṣabiyya</i>	tribal solidarity, group of solidarity	عصبية
<i>aṣl</i>	origins, genealogia, nobiltà	أصل
<i>'aṣriyya</i>	modern	عصرية
<i>as-sukkān</i>	the inhabitants	السكان
<i>as-sulṭa</i>	the authority	السلطة

<i>as-sūq al-markazy</i>	the central market	السوق المركزي
<i>at-tawzī' al-musta'mal</i>	the used distribution	التوزيع المستعمل
<i>az-zirā'a</i>	the agriculture	الزراعة
<i>bādiya</i>	desert, steppe	بادية
<i>bādyat aš-šām</i>	the desert of the Levant	بادية الشام
<i>baḥib falasṭīn, bas miš as-sulṭa</i>	I love Palestine, but not the authority – meaning the PNA representing the Palestinian proto-state	بحب فلسطين ، بس مش السلطة
<i>balad, bilād</i>	the country , the territory – used to refer to an inhabited centre	بلد, بلاد
<i>Baladī</i>	local	بلدي
<i>Bāmya</i>	okra	بامية
<i>bank al-buḍūr al-baladiyya</i>	the bank of local seeds	بنك البذور البلدية
<i>baqar</i>	cows	بقر
<i>bidūn aṣl</i>	without origins	بدون أصل
<i>bi'r</i>	well	بئر
<i>Birka, burak</i>	pool, pools	بركة، برك
<i>birkat al- ā'ilāt</i>	the pool of the families	بركة العائلات
<i>birkat al-ḡisr</i>	the pool of the bridge	بركة الجسر
<i>birkat at-tīna</i>	the pool of the fig	بركة التينة
<i>birkat az-zeytūna</i>	the olive's pool	بركة الزيتون
<i>birkat Fahīma</i>	the pool of Fahīma	بركة فهيمه
<i>bisawū mašākil</i>	make problems	بسوو مشاكل
<i>buḍūr baladiyya</i>	local seeds	بذور بلدية
<i>buḍūr muhaḡḡana</i>	hybrid seeds	بذور مهجنة
<i>būklū al-arḍ</i>	eat the land	بوكلو الأرض
<i>buyūt blāstīkiyya</i>	greenhouses	بيوت بلاستيكية
<i>dam</i>	blood	دم
<i>dār</i>	house	دار
<i>dawā'</i>	medicine	دواء
<i>dibes</i>	a type of molasses made with grapes	دبس
<i>dīnār</i>	the Jordanian currency	دينار
<i>diya</i>	death compensation, blood price	دية
<i>Falasṭīn</i>	Palestine	فلسطين
<i>falasṭīniyat al-saba'a wa-sittīn</i>	the '67 Palestinians (Palestinians living in Jerusalem, which in 1967 has been occupied by the Israeli army)	فلسطينية السبعة وستين
<i>falasṭīniyat ath-thamanya wa-arba'in</i>	the '48 Palestinians (the Palestinians born in the State	فلسطينية الثمانية وأربعين

	of Israel, who have the Israeli citizenship and identity card)	
<i>faṭriyāt</i>	Fungi	فطريات
<i>fellāh, fellāhīn</i>	peasant, peasants	فلاح، فلاحين
<i>fidā'iyyin</i>	fighters, partisans	فدائيين
<i>fy-l-arḍ</i>	in the land	في الأرض
<i>ġabal al-ḥalīl</i>	the mountain of Hebron	جبل الخليل
<i>ġam'iyyat al-muzāri 'īn</i>	the farmers' cooperative	جمعية المزارعين
<i>Ġama'iyyat at-tanmiyya az-zirā'iyya</i>	Palestinian Agricultural Development Association	جمعية التنمية الزراعية
<i>Ġama'iyyat muzāra'ī beit-leḥem</i>	bethlehem Farmers' Society	جمعية مزارعي بيت لحم
<i>Ġama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-ḥākūra</i>	vegetable gardens' Development Cooperative	جمعية تنمية الحاكرة
<i>Ġama'iyyat tanmiyyat al-mar'a ar-rīfiyya beit-leḥem</i>	rural Women's Development Society of Bethlehem	جمعية تنمية المرأة الريفية- بيت لحم
<i>Ġama'iyyat tanmiyyat aš-šabāb</i>	youth Development Association	جمعية تنمية الشباب
<i>Ġam'iyyat naẓra mustaqbaliyya al-khayriyya</i>	future Outlook Association	جمعية نظرة مستقبلية الخيرية
<i>ġanam</i>	sheep and goats	غنم
<i>ġanam al-'awāsy</i>	local sheep's breed	غنم العواسي
<i>ġanāza</i>	funeral	جنازة
<i>ġawāsīs</i>	informers, spies	جواسيس
<i>ġidār</i>	wall	جدار
<i>ġidī, ġidiān</i>	goat, goats	جدي, جديان
<i>ġinīh</i>	the Palestinian currency before the creation of Israel	جنيه
<i>ġunūd</i>	soldiers	جنود
<i>ġūra</i>	pit, hole	جوره
<i>ḥadīth</i>	the documented narrations about what Moḥammed said and did, as written by his followers	حديث
<i>ḥaġ Ibrāhīm</i>	the pilgrim Ibrāhīm	حج إبراهيم
<i>ḥalṭa</i>	mixture	خالطة
<i>ḥamūla, ḥamāil</i>	tribal group, tribal groups	حمولة، حمائل
<i>ḥaqq al-mulkiya</i>	property right	حق الملكية
<i>ḥaqq aš-šafā'a</i>	the right of intercession or safeguarding	حق الشفاعة
<i>ḥaqq at-taqādum</i>	right of prescription	حق التقادم
<i>ḥāra</i>	neighbourhood	حارة
<i>ḥarām</i>	illicit	حرام
<i>ḥarām</i>	illicit	حرام
<i>ḥarūf, ḥirfān</i>	sheep	خروف, خرفان
<i>ḥašarāt</i>	insects	حشرات

<i>ḥaṣba</i>	measles	حصبة
<i>ḥasham</i>	shame, modesty	حشم
<i>ḥaṭar</i>	dangerous	خطر
<i>ḥawāt</i>	sisters	خوات
<i>ḥayawanāt</i>	animals	حيوانات
<i>ḥayy'et muqāwamat al-ḡidār wa-l-istītān</i>	wall and Settlement Resistance Committee	هيئة مقاومة الجدار والاستيطان
<i>ḥazzānāt</i>	cisterns	خزانات
<i>ḥodār 'oḍowiyya</i>	organic vegetables	خضار عضوية
<i>ḥorriya</i>	freedom	حرية
<i>hudna</i>	truce	هدنة
<i>hudū'a</i>	quiet	هدوء
<i>ḥummuṣ</i>	mashed chickpeas and sesame food	حمص
<i>Ibn al-muḥtār</i>	the son of the chosen one	ابن المختار
<i>ibtinebset</i>	it becomes happy	بتتبسط
<i>iḍrāb 'an aṭ-ṭa'ām</i>	hunger strike	إضراب عن الطعام
<i>iḥtilāl</i>	occupation	احتلال
<i>Illī bitḡawwaz bibalāš biṭalliq bibalāš</i>	who marries for free, divorces for free	إلى بتجوز ببلاش بطلق ببلاش
<i>Intifāḍat al-Aqṣā</i>	al-Aqsa Intifada, as the second Intifada is called by Palestinians	انتفاضة الأقصى
<i>kadḍāba</i>	lying, untruthful	كذابة
<i>karbūn</i>	carbon	كربون
<i>kasūlīn</i>	lazy	كسولين
<i>Kilma</i>	word	كلمة
<i>kūsā baladiyya</i>	local courgettes	كسا بلدية
<i>kwaysīn</i>	good	كويسين
<i>Laban</i>	yogurt	لبن
<i>lāḡ'īn</i>	refugees	لاجئين
<i>lāḡ'īn ath-thamanya wa-arba'īn</i>	the '48 refugees - Palestinian refugees whose villages of origins were situated within the present Israel's borders and have been evacuated in 1948	لاجئين الثمانية وأربعين
<i>laḡnat al-ḥadamāt al-'amma</i>	General Services Committee	لجنة الخدمات العامة
<i>madīna</i>	old-town	مدينة
<i>mafīš rabī' lil-ḡanam</i>	there is not spring for sheep and goats	مفیش ربيع للغنم
<i>maḡārī</i>	water flow, channel, riverbed, stream, aqueduct - it is used	مجري

	by Palestinians to refer to the sewer	
<i>Mahr</i>	bride price	مهر
<i>maḥsūm</i>	checkpoint	محسوم
<i>maḥsūm an-nafaq</i>	the checkpoint of the tunnel	محسوم النفق
<i>mal'ab</i>	soccer field	ملعب
<i>malban</i>	a product derived from grapes	ملبن
<i>marīd</i>	sick	مريض
<i>mašā'</i>	historical Palestinian communal land tenure form	مشاع
<i>mašākib</i>	Palestinian historical irrigation technique	مشاكب
<i>maṭar</i>	rainwater	مطر
<i>mawāt</i>	lands used for grazing and in part for cultivation with frequent fallow, under customary rights	موات
<i>mayya</i>	acqua	مِيّة
<i>mayyat al-'ayn, mayyat al-'uyūn</i>	the water of the spring, the water of the springs	مِية العين , مِية العيون .
<i>Mayyat al-'uyūn ṣaḥḥīa 'ašān btīḡī min al-arḍ... binišrahā min zamān</i>	the water of the springs is healthy because it comes from the land... we drink it since a far past	مِية العيون صحِية عشان بتِجي من الأرض ... بنشربها من زمان
<i>mayyat al-ḥazzānāt</i>	the water of the cisterns	مِية الخزانات
<i>mayyat al-maḡārī</i>	the water of the sewer	مِية المجاري
<i>mayyat 'ayn al-balad</i>	the water of the spring of the inhabited centre	مِية عين البلد
<i>mayyat baladiyya</i>	municipal water	مِية بلدية
<i>mayyat baladiyya</i>	municipal water	مِية بلدية
<i>mayyat maḡārī bitār 'ilīt</i>	the water of the sewer of Beitar Illit	مِية مجاري بيتار عيليت
<i>mayyat maḡārī tsūr hadāsā</i>	the water of the sewer of Tzur Hadassah	مِية مجاري تسور هداسا
<i>mayyat Mekūrūt</i>	the Mekorot's water	مِية ميكروت
<i>min al-bazan 'ilā-l-waḡah</i>	from the belly to the face	من البطن إلى الوجه
<i>Mīrāth</i>	Inheritance	ميراث
<i>mīrī</i>	land shared by different families or villages, outside the municipal borders.	ميري
<i>miš kwaysīn</i>	not good	مش كويسين
<i>mita'ahhid</i>	entrepreneur	متعهد
<i>mnīḥa bas lil-zirā'a</i>	good only for farming	منيحة بس للزراعة
<i>mubīdāt</i>	Pesticides	مبيدات
<i>muḥābarāt</i>	Intelligence	مخابرات



<i>muḥayyam ad-Dehīša</i>	the refugee camp of Dheisha	الدهيشة مخيم
<i>muḥtār</i>	the chosen one (an administrative role created by the Ottoman authorities)	مختار
<i>mulk</i>	land privately owned, included within municipal borders	ملك
<i>mulūḥiya</i>	plant cooked to make a typical Palestinian soup	ملوخية
<i>Munazzamat al-taḥrīr al-filasṭīniyya</i>	Palestine Liberation Organisation	منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
<i>muqāwama</i>	resistance	مقاومة
<i>muṣādara</i>	confiscation	مصادرة
<i>muškila, mašākil</i>	problem, problems	مشكلة، مشاكل
<i>mustawṭana</i>	settlement	مستوطنة
<i>mustawṭana, mustawṭanāt</i>	settlement, settlements	مستوطنة، مستوطنات
<i>mustawṭinīn</i>	settlers	مستوطنين
<i>mustawṭinīn mutadayynīn</i>	religious settlers	مستوطنين متدينين
<i>muzāri‘</i>	farmer	مزارع
<i>nādī al-wādī al-aḥḍar</i>	the Club of the Green Valley	نادي الوادي الاخضر
<i>nādī aš-šabāb</i>	Youth’s club	نادي الشباب
<i>Nādī nasawī Wādī Fūkīn</i>	Women’s club of Wadi Fukin	نادي نسوي وادي فوكين
<i>naḥar</i>	person	نفر
<i>Nakba</i>	disaster, catastrophe - Palestinians use this word to refer to the creation of Israel	نكبة
<i>nās miš kwaysa</i>	bad people	ناس مش كويسه
<i>naẓīfa</i>	clean	نظيفة
<i>niẓām</i>	system	نظام
<i>qā‘a</i>	hall	قاعة
<i>qal‘a</i>	castle, fortress - local Palestinians use it to refer to a big stone	قلعة
<i>qal‘at al-mā‘</i>	the castle of water	قلعة المي
<i>qalb al-qarya</i>	the heart of the village	قلب القرية
<i>qamḥ</i>	wheat	قمح
<i>qanā</i>	channel	قناة
<i>qerš</i>	1/1000 <i>ḡinīh</i> (the Palestinian currency before the creation of Israel)	قرش
<i>quṭṭā‘at-ṭuruq</i>	bandits	قطاع الطرق
<i>rabī‘ aḡ-ḡama‘iyya</i>	the spring of the cooperative	ربيع الجمعية
<i>ramād</i>	ash	رماد
<i>ša‘īr</i>	barley	شعير
<i>šabaket al-maḡāry</i>	the network of the sewer	شبكة المجاري


<i>šabaket al-miāh</i>	water network	شبكة المياه
<i>šādiqa</i>	Sincere	صديقة
<i>šafi‘</i>	pair number, pair or couple	صافي
<i>šaḡar az-zeytūn</i>	olive tree	شجر الزيتون
<i>šāhid</i>	witness	شاهد
<i>samād</i>	compost	سماد
<i>samād kīmāwy</i>	chemical fertiliser	سماد كيميائي
<i>šaraf</i>	honour	شرف
<i>šarī‘a</i>	the Islamic law	شريعة
<i>sayl</i>	torrent	سيل
<i>šetl</i>	Seedlings	شتل
<i>sīnama</i>	cinema	سينما
<i>šowt</i>	voice, vote - used also to refer to the right to speak in public negotiations	صوت
<i>sulṭat al-bī‘a</i>	the authority of the environment – used to refer to the Israeli environmental ministry	سلطة البيئة
<i>Sunna</i>	the way to live of the prophet Moḡammed, according to the <i>ḡadīth</i> , the documented narrations about what Moḡammed said and did, as written by his followers	سنه
<i>ta‘abāna</i>	tired	تعبانه
<i>tābi‘</i>	dependent	تابع
<i>ṭābū</i>	the Ottoman document attesting the individual land ownership	طابو
<i>takḡib</i>	it lies	تكذب
<i>tank mayya</i>	tank water	تنك مية
<i>taqālīdī</i>	traditional	تقاليدي
<i>taqālīdiyya</i>	traditional	تقاليدية
<i>ta‘qīm</i>	sterilisation	تعقيم
<i>taqsīm mayyat al-‘uyūn</i>	the division of the water of the springs	تقسيم مية العيون
<i>tarkīb</i>	graft	تركيب
<i>tasḡīl</i>	registration	تسجيل
<i>taṣrīḡ</i>	permit	تصريح
<i>taṣrīḡ iqāma</i>	residence permit	تصريح إقامة
<i>taṭbī‘a</i>	naturalisation - Palestinians use this word to refer to the normalisation of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian	تطبيع

	territories	
<i>tawġiħy</i>	the high-school diploma	توحيهي
<i>thaub</i>	dress	ثوب
<i>tiz'al</i>	it becomes sad	تزعل
<i>'ūd</i>	stick	عود
<i>usra, usar</i>	conjugal family/ies	أسرة، أسر
<i>waqf</i>	Islamic charitable organisation - it is used to refer to inalienable real estate used as usufruct or collective ownership for religious aims or public services	وقف
<i>waraq dawāly</i>	a Palestinian dish made of vine leaves, filled up with rice and minced meat, and cooked with chicken	ورق دوالي
<i>wāṣṭa</i>	mediation	واسطة
<i>wizārat al-'amal</i>	Work Ministry	وزارة العمل
<i>wizārat al-awqāf</i>	Ministry in charge of religious endowments	وزارة الأوقاف
<i>zamān</i>	time - it is used to refer to a far past	زمان .
<i>zawāġ</i>	marriage	زواج
<i>zibel</i>	manure	زبل
<i>zirā'a bī'ā</i>	environmental agriculture	زراعة بيئية



**TABLE 1: THE ROTA SYSTEMS OF ACCESS TO THE SPRINGS IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN**

**Legend:**  The “legitimate” rota systems of access to spring water

 The actual access and use of spring water

**ROTA SYSTEM OF ACCESS TO ‘AYN AL-BALAD (THE SPRING OF THE INHABITED CENTRE): 192 h**

SCHEDULE	N. of HOURS	EXTENDED FAMILY	PERSON(S)	ACTUAL USE
16:00-04:00	12h	Ḥurūb	Rātib	For many years, he left the use of his water (and the land to which is allocated) to his relative Ṣāliḥ Slimān for free. Then, he began to give it to Māğdī Ḥurūb.
04:00-08:00	4h	Ḥurūb	Ṣāliḥ Slimān (called Abū Fāyq)	Used by Ṣāliḥ Slimān, who still farms despite he is about ninety years old. He belongs to the third generation of Ḥurūb who arrived to the village.
08:00-10:00	2h	Ḥurūb	Mūsā Muṣṭafā	He died and his sons do not farm and leave Ṣāliḥ Slimān uses these hours of water (and the land to which are allocated) for free.
10:00-12:00	2h	Ḥurūb	‘Aysā Aḥmed	He died and his sons do not farm and leave Ṣāliḥ Slimān uses these two hours of water (and the land to which are allocated) for free.

TRIBAL GROUP

Ḥurūb : 48 h

TRIBAL GROUP				
Hürüb : 48 h				
12:00-11:00	23h	Hürüb	Moḥammed ‘Abd-Allah	<p>He was the son of ‘Abd-Allah Aḥmed, who has been the second <i>muḥtār</i> in the village, during the British Mandate. His father Aḥmed belonged to the first generation of the Hürüb tribesmen who arrived to the village.</p> <p>In 1972 Moḥammed ‘Abd-Allah did not returned to the village and continued to live in the refugee camp of Dheisha. He never farmed. Once he was renting his land and spring water share. He died in the 1990s and his sons still live in the refugee camp. They leave the water to Şāliḥ Slimān, but not all their land, most of which is uncultivated.</p>
11:00-16:00	5h	Hürüb	‘Izāt ‘Othmān Ḥālīd ‘Othmān ‘Omar ‘Othmān Yūsef ‘Othmān	Ḥālīd, ‘Omar and Yūsef do not farm and leave their water shares to ‘Izāt (about 80 years old), who farms a little part of land using few water, and rents a part of them to Ḥālīl Aḥmed Ġuma‘a ‘Assāf.
Manāşra : 48 h				
16:00-04:00	12h	Sukkar	‘Abd-al-Qādir Aḥmed and his brother	They died. The water is used by some of the five sons of ‘Abd-al-Qādir.
04:00-08:00	4h	Sukkar	Aḥmed Muştafā	He died. His water share is used by some of his sons and grandsons.
08:00-12:00	4h	Sukkar	‘Abd-al-Qādir Rāsīm	He died and in 2015 his grandsons were not

↕  
Second degree  
cousins  
↕


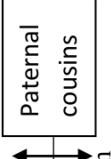



		04:00-10:00	6h	Mufarraḥ	Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd	He died. His water share and land are used by one of his sons, Maḡdī Ibrāhīm (his other sons do not farm).
<b>TRIBAL GROUP</b>	Manāṣra : 48 h	10:00-16:00	2h	'Assāf	'Ōdā and his brothers <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Paternal uncles</div>             ↑         </div> Ğuma'a Yūsef and his brother Ibrāhīm Yūsef, belonging to the 'Assāf second generation of the 'Assāf who came to the village.	These 6 hours of water are used by the family of 'Ōdā, who is the paternal cousin of Aḥmed Ğuma'a Yūsef, who died and was one of the nine sons of Ğuma'a Yūsef.
		16:00-18:00	2h	'Aṭiya	Ibrāhīm Dāwwud <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Second degree paternal uncle</div>             ↑         </div> Mūsā 'Aṭiya	He farms and uses this water share. He is one of the sons of Dāwwud Moḥammed (the brother of Ḥasan Moḥammed), who is the son of Moḥammed 'Aṭiya, one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Āliya).
	'Amārra : 48h	18:00-01:00	7h	'Aṭiya	Mūsā 'Aṭiya <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Paternal uncle</div>             ↓         </div>	He was one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Āliya). His water share and land were once used by the ex-wife of his son Moḥammed Mūsā (the paternal cousin of Ğamīl 'Abd ar-Raḥmān and Ḥasan Moḥammed), who divorced and moved from the village. Later



TRIBAL GROUP		'Amānra : 48h	
01:00-06:00	5h	'Aṭiya	<p>he came back and in 2015 he was using his father's land and water share.</p> <p>He is one of the sons of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān 'Aṭiya, who is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). He is elderly and does not farm. He leaves his water share and land to Ishāq Ḥasan, one of the sons of his paternal cousin Ḥasan Moḥammed</p>
06:00-08:00	2h	'Aṭiya	<p>He is one of the sons of Moḥammed 'Aṭiya, who is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya).</p> <p>He is about 90 years hold. His water share and land are used by his son Ishāq Ḥasan.</p>
08:00-15:00	7h	Sukkar	<p>His grandfather Maḥmūd belongs to the second generation of descendants of 'Alī Sukkar Manāṣra, the "ancestor" of the Sukkar family.</p> <p>He farms and uses this water.</p>
		<p>Ḥasan Moḥammed</p>	<p>Paternal cousins</p>
		<p>Maḥmūd Rabāḥ Maḥmūd</p>	


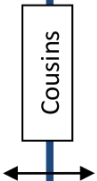


TRIBAL GROUP		Iḥṣinat : 48h		
09:00-16:00	7h	Ḥurrūb	<p>‘Aysā Aḥmed</p> <p>‘Alī Aḥmed</p> 	<p>‘Aysā and ‘Alī died. ‘Alī lived in Jordan. His sons still live there, but his daughter Sumeyyah married her cousin Ḥātim, who is ‘Aysā’s son and died.</p> <p>This water share and the land to which is allocated are used by one of their sons, Firās Ḥātim ‘Aysā, called Abū Aḥmed (Aḥmed’s father).</p>
16:00-21:20	5h,20m	Mufarraḥ	<p>The five brothers:</p> <p>Badr Maḥmūd</p> <p>Rasād Maḥmūd</p> <p>‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Maḥmūd</p> <p>Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd</p> <p>‘Abd al-Min‘im</p>	<p>They died (they belonged to the third generation of Mufarraḥ that lived in Wadi Fukin). This water share is used by Badr’s son, named Maḥmūd Badr (his brothers farm less).</p>
21:20-06:40	9h,20m	Sukkar	<p>Ibrāhīm ‘Awwaḍ ‘Othmān</p> 	<p>This elderly farmer and his son Moḥammed Ibrāhīm farm using also the water of his paternal cousins (see below).</p>
06:40-11:20	4h,40m	Sukkar	<p>Mūsā Ḥalīl ‘Othmān</p> 	<p>His grandfather ‘Othmān was one of the three sons of ‘Alī Sukkar, considered as the ancestor of the Sukkar lineage.</p> <p>He died in 2017 and his sons live in foreign countries. In 2015 his water share was used by his paternal cousin Ibrāhīm ‘Awwaḍ ‘Othmān.</p>



							His father Ya'qūb, who is the brother of Yūsef Abū Ya'qūb (see above) went to live in Jordan and did not farm. Nāṣer first lived in Jordan and later returned to live in the village, but he does not farm. He rents this water share to Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ğuma'a 'Assāf, but since about 2014 he does not rent also his land to him, but he leaves the husband of the sister of Fahīma 'Aṭiya uses it for free (without the spring water allocated to it), to cultivate wheat used as forage for the sheep.
						Nāṣer Ya'qūb	
						Ḥurūb	
			4h				
		04:00-08:00					
						Mūsā Muṣṭafā	
			4h				
		08:00-12:00					
						Muṣṭafā Moḥammed	
			4h				
		12:00-16:00					
							He died and his sons do not farm and rent this water share.
							He died and his sons rent this water share.

**ROTA SYSTEM OF ACCESS TO 'AYN AT-TĪNA (THE SPRING OF THE FIG): 192 h**

SCHEDULE	N. of HOURS	EXTENDED FAMILY	PERSON(S)	ACTUAL USE
16:00-08:00	8h	Ḥurūb	Şāliḥ Slimān (called Abū Fāyq), belonging to the third generation of Ḥurūb who arrived to the village.	Ibrāhīm died. He belonged to the third generation of the Ḥurūb which moved to live in Wadi Fukin (on the total six generations). He was living in Jordan, and his sons are still there. His daughter lives in Wadi Fukin and takes her father's 8 hours, which are controlled by her husband and paternal cousin Aḥmed Şāliḥ (the son of Şāliḥ Slimān).
	8h	Ḥurūb	Ibrāhīm Slimān 	
08:00-10:00	2h	Ḥurūb	Mūsā Muştafa 	He died. He belonged to the past generations of villagers. His sons do not farm and rent these two hours of water to Maḥmūd Badr Mufarraḥ, called Abū Dīa'. The land to which water was allocated is used by Ḥālid 'Abd al-Qādir Sukkar for free (given that it has not access to water).

TRIBAL GROUP

Ḥurūb : 48 h

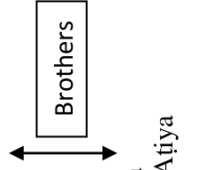
TRIBAL GROUP			
Ḥurūb : 48 h			
10:00-12:00	1h	Ḥurūb	<p>‘Aysā Aḥmed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↕ Brothers ↕</p> <p>‘Alī Aḥmed</p>
12:00-11:00	23h	Ḥurūb	<p>Moḥammed ‘Abd-allah</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↕ Second degree cousins ↕</p>
<p>They belonged to the past generations of villagers (they are dead) and their sons do not farm. ‘Alī was living in Jordan, as his sons still do it.</p> <p>‘Aysā’s sons rent these two hours of water to Maḥmūd Badr Mufarraḥ, called Abū Dīa’.</p>			
<p>He was the son of ‘Abd-allah Aḥmed, who has been the second <i>muḥtār</i> in the village, during the British Mandate. His father Aḥmed belonged to the first generation of the Ḥurūb tribesmen who arrived to the village.</p> <p>Moḥammed ‘Abd-allah died in the 1990s and never farmed. His sons live in the Dheisha refugee camp and leave the water to their relative Ṣālīḥ Slimān, called Abū Fāyq, who rents it to Maḥmūd Badr Mufarraḥ, called Abū Dīa’.</p>			





						90 years old) who stopped to farm.	
						All these 12 hours of water (but not the corresponding land because water is not enough) are used by Rabāḥ's son, Maḥmūd Rabāḥ Sukkar, called Abū Fādi.	
						The water is used by its elderly owner, while the land is owned by Abū Dīb's sons, who live in Jordan and rent it to Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd Mufarraḥ, their paternal aunt's husband (even if the land has not access to this water share).	
						They died. They are two of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the present 'Aṭiya families (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Āliya). 'Aṭā's grandsons do not farm and leave their water share for free to their paternal cousins - the sons of Ḥasan Moḥammed and Dāwd Moḥammed, who are Moḥammed's sons.	
						He died. He belonged to the past generations of villagers. His sons sold 15m <sup>2</sup> of water and 50m <sup>2</sup> of land to Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ġuma'a 'Assāf, whose grandfather was Ġuma'a, the paternal cousin of 'Ōda.	
						He died. His water share and land are used by some of the sons of Aḥmed Ġuma'a	
						<p>Abū Dīb Muṣṭafā 'Assāf lived and died in Jordan. He sold his water share to Moḥammed Rašād Mufarraḥ and his brothers (whose mother is the sister of Ġuma'a 'Assāf, and thus belonged to the 'Assāf's family).</p> <p>'Aṭā 'Aṭiya ↔ Brothers</p> <p>Moḥammed 'Aṭiya</p>	
						<p>'Assāf sold to Mufarraḥ</p> <p>'Aṭiya</p> <p>'Aṭiya</p>	
						<p>6h</p> <p>9,5h</p> <p>2,5h</p>	
						<p>16:00-22:00</p> <p>22:00-10:00</p>	
						<p>'Ōda</p> <p>'Assāf</p>	
						<p>2h</p> <p>2h</p>	
						<p>10:00-16:00</p> <p>Paternal uncles</p> <p>Ġuma'a Yūsef and his brother</p>	
						<p>'Assāf</p>	
						<p>2h</p>	
						<p>Manāṣira : 48 h</p>	
						<p>TRIBAL GROUP</p>	



15:00-09:00	18h	'Aṭiya	'Alī 'Aṭiya 'Aṭā 'Aṭiya 'Aysā 'Aṭiya Šālīḥ 'Aṭiya Moḥammed 'Aṭiya 'Abd ar-Raḥmān 'Aṭiya Mūsā 'Aṭiya	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Brothers</div> 	These people died. They are the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of "the ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Āliya). Only some of their grandsons farm and use this water share, like Maḥmūd 'Alī ('Alī's son). Other 'Alī's sons farm the family's land and spring water at <i>'ayn al-balad</i> (the spring of the inhabited centre), <i>'ayn at-tīna</i> (the spring of the fig) and <i>'ayn al-fawwār</i> (the spring of the gush). 'Aṭā lived in Jordan and his sons still live there.		
09:00-16:00	7h	Ḥurūb	'Aysā Ahmed 'Alī Ahmed	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Brothers</div>	'Alī lived and died in Jordan. His sons still live there, but his daughter Sumeyyah married her cousin Ḥātim, who is 'Aysā's son. This water share and the land to which is allocated are used by one of their sons, Firās Ḥātim 'Aysā, called Abū Ahmed (Ahmed's father).		
16:00-21:20	5h,20m	'Aṭiya	Mūsā 'Aṭiya		He died. He was one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Āliya). Once this water share (and the land to which is allocated) was used by one of his grandsons Ibrāhīm 'Othmān Mūsā (the head of the Farmers' Cooperative since 2010). His father 'Othmān never farmed and still does not farm. Since Ibrāhīm abandoned farming, they rent this water share (but not		
							<b>TRIBAL GROUP</b>

TRIBAL GROUP					Iḥsināt : 48h	
21:20-16:00	18h,4m	Sukkar	Ibrāhīm Moḥammed ‘Awwaḍ ‘Othmān and his paternal cousins (second degree) Mūsā Ḥalīl ‘Othmān and his brother Ismā‘īl Ḥalīl ‘Othmān	the land) to Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ġuma’a ‘Assāf.  In 2015 Mūsā Ḥalīl was elderly (he died in 2017) and his brother Ismā‘īl Ḥalīl was died. Their numerous sons live in foreign countries. All this water share, and the land to which it is allocated, are used by Ibrāhīm Moḥammed ‘Awwaḍ ‘Othmān, called <i>ḥaġ Ibrāhīm</i> (the pilgrim Ibrāhīm), and by his son Moḥammed Ibrāhīm Moḥammed, called Abū Ibrāhīm.		
16:00-08:00	16h	Ḥurūb	Sulaymān Muṣṭafā	He died and his sons stopped to farm. His daughter is married with Abū Niḍāl Ḥurūb, who returned to farm and uses this water share and the land to which it is allocated.		
08:00-12:00	4h	Ḥurūb	Mūsā Muṣṭafā	He died and his sons, who do not farm, rent this water share (but not the land) to Ḥalīl Aḥmed Ġuma’a ‘Assāf.		
12:00-16:00	4h	Ḥurūb	‘Aysā Aḥmed ‘Alī Aḥmed	‘Alī lived and died in Jordan. His sons still live there, but his daughter Sumeyyah married her cousin Ḥātim, who is ‘Aysā’s son. This water share and the land to which is allocated are used by one of their sons, Firās Ḥātim ‘Aysā, called Abū Aḥmed (Aḥmed’s father).		

**ROTA SYSTEM OF ACCESS TO 'AYN MADĪK (THE SPRING OF THE PASS): 192 h**

		<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>N. of HOURS</b>	<b>EXTENDED FAMILY</b>	<b>PERSON(S)</b>	<b>ACTUAL USE</b>
<b>TRIBAL GROUP</b>	Ḥurūb	05:00-17:00	12h	Ḥurūb	Şālīḥ Slimān (called Abū Fāyq)	He is about ninety years old and belongs to the third generation of Ḥurūb who arrived to the village. He farms in the upper part of the valley (at 'ayn <i>al-balad</i> ). He rents these hours of water to a farmer belonging to the 'Aṭiya family (but not the land, because water is not enough).
	Manāşra	17:00-05:00	12h	Sukkar	Mūsā Ḥalīl 'Oṭhmān Ismā'il Ḥalīl 'Oṭhmān <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 20px;">Brothers</div>	They died. They belonged to the third generation of descendants of 'Alī Sukkar, the "ancestor" of the Sukkar family. The sons and grandsons of Mūsā live in foreign countries. This water share and the land to which is allocated are used by Šādī Sukkar, one of the grandsons of Ismā'il Ḥalīl 'Oṭhmān.
		05:00-14:20	9h,20m	al-Aqra'a	Ḥasan Maḥmūd	He died (he belonged to the second generation of the al-Aqra'a family which arrived to the village). His grandsons rent this water share to a farmer belonging to the 'Aṭiya family.
		14:20-23:40	9h,20m	al-Aqra'a	'Abd al-Wāḥid Maḥmūd <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 20px;">Brothers</div>	He died (he belonged to the second generations of the al-Aqra'a family). His grandsons rent this water share to a farmer belonging to the 'Aṭiya family.

TRIBAL GROUP						
Manāsra	23:40-12:40	13h	Sukkar	'Izāt Maḥmūd	He died and one of his sons uses this water share and land.	
	12:40-14:30	25h,50m	'Alayān	Moḥammed Ḥisīn 'Alayān	They died (they belonged to the past generations of villagers). Their grandsons rent these water shares and a part of their land to Māher Sukkar.	
	14:30-06:50	40h,20m	'Alayān	'Aṭā Ḥisīn 'Alayān		
	06:50-24:45	17h,55m	'Alayān	Moḥammed Šākīr Alayān		
	24:45-04:10	3h,25m	'Aṭiya	'Aṭā 'Aṭiya	These people died. They are the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya).  All these water shares and the land to which are allocated are used by three farmers Ibrāhīm Dāwwud, his paternal cousin Fahīma Ḥasan and Moḥammed Yāsīr.	
	04:10-07:35	3h,25m	'Aṭiya	'Alī 'Aṭiya		
	07:35-20:00	12h,25m	'Aṭiya	'Aysā 'Aṭiya		
	20:00-23:25	3h,25	'Aṭiya	Šālīḥ 'Aṭiya		
	23:25-22:10	22h,45m	'Aṭiya	Moḥammed 'Aṭiya		
	22:10-01:35	3h,25m	'Aṭiya	'Abd ar-Rahmān 'Aṭiya		
01:35-05:00	3h,25m	'Aṭiya	Mūsā 'Aṭiya			
Manāsra						

**ROTA SYSTEM OF ACCESS TO 'AYN ŞİDDİQ (THE SINCERE SPRING): 192 h**

SCHEDULE	N. of HOURS	EXTENDED FAMILY	PERSON(S)	ACTUAL USE
05:00-11:00	6,5 fuşül (12h)= 78h	Sukkar	'Abd al-Qādir	He died. The water is used by some of his grandsons. Once this spring water had been handed down by a man belonging to the 'Alayān extended family to his daughter. This woman married a Sukkar man and handed down this spring water to their sons, belonging to the Sukkar lineage.
11:00-5:00	5,5 fuşül (12h)= 66h	Sukkar	'Alī Hīsīn	He died. The water is used by some of his grandsons. Once this spring water had been handed down by a man belonging to the 'Alayān extended family to his daughter. This woman married a Sukkar man and handed down this spring water to their sons, belonging to the Sukkar lineage.
5:00-5:00	4 fuşül (12h)= 48h	Sukkar	Muṣṭafā	He died. The water is used by some of his grandsons. Once this spring water had been handed down by a man belonging to the 'Alayān extended family to his daughter. This woman married a Sukkar man and handed down this spring water to their sons, belonging to the Sukkar lineage.
Manāşra: 192 h				
<b>TRIBAL GROUP</b>				

**ROTA SYSTEM OF ACCESS TO 'AYN AL-FAWWĀR (THE SPRING OF THE GUSH): 192 h**

SCHEDULE	N. of HOURS	EXTENDED FAMILY	PERSON(S)	ACTUAL USE
05:00-13:00	8h	'Aṭiya	'Aṭā 'Aṭiya	He is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of "the ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). Some of his sons and grandsons farm using this water share.
13:00-20:00	7h	'Aṭiya	'Alī 'Aṭiya	He is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). Some of his sons and grandsons farm using this water share.
20:00-04:00	8h	'Aṭiya	Ṣāliḥ 'Aṭiya	He is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). Some of his grandsons farm using this water share.
04:00-10:00	6h	'Aṭiya	Ġamīl 'Abd ar-Raḥmān	His father 'Abd ar-Raḥmān is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). He leaves his water share and land to Iṣḥāq Ḥasan, one of the sons of his paternal cousin Ḥasan Moḥammed.
Manāṣira				
TRIBAL GROUP				



TRIBAL GROUP					
Manāšra					
10:00-15:00	5h	'Aṭiya	Mūsā 'Aṭiya	He is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of "the ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). Some of his sons and grandsons farm using this water share.	
15:00-13:00	22h	'Aṭiya	Dāwwud Moḥammed and his brother Ḥasan Moḥammed	They are elderly and stopped to farm. Their father Moḥammed is one of the seven brothers considered as <i>al-aṣl</i> / (origins) of the 'Aṭiya lineage (sons of the "ancestor" 'Aṭiya Moḥammed Abū 'Ālya). Their water share is used by Ḥasan's son and daughter, named Ishāq Ḥasan and Fahīma Ḥasan, and by their paternal cousin, Dāwwud's son, named Ibrāhīm Dāwwud. In 2018 Ḥasan Moḥammed died.	
13:00-03:45	14h,45m	Sukkar	Ṭaha	He died. His water share is used by his relative Māher Sukkar (his brothers do not farm).	
03:45-11:45	8h	Ḥurūb	Abū Sa'dī	He died. His sons rent this water share to 'Izzū Sukkar.	
11:45-06:30	18h,45m	Sukkar	Abū 'Izzū and 'Izāt Maḥmūd	They died. This water share is used by 'Izāt's son.	
Manāšra					
Ḥurūb					

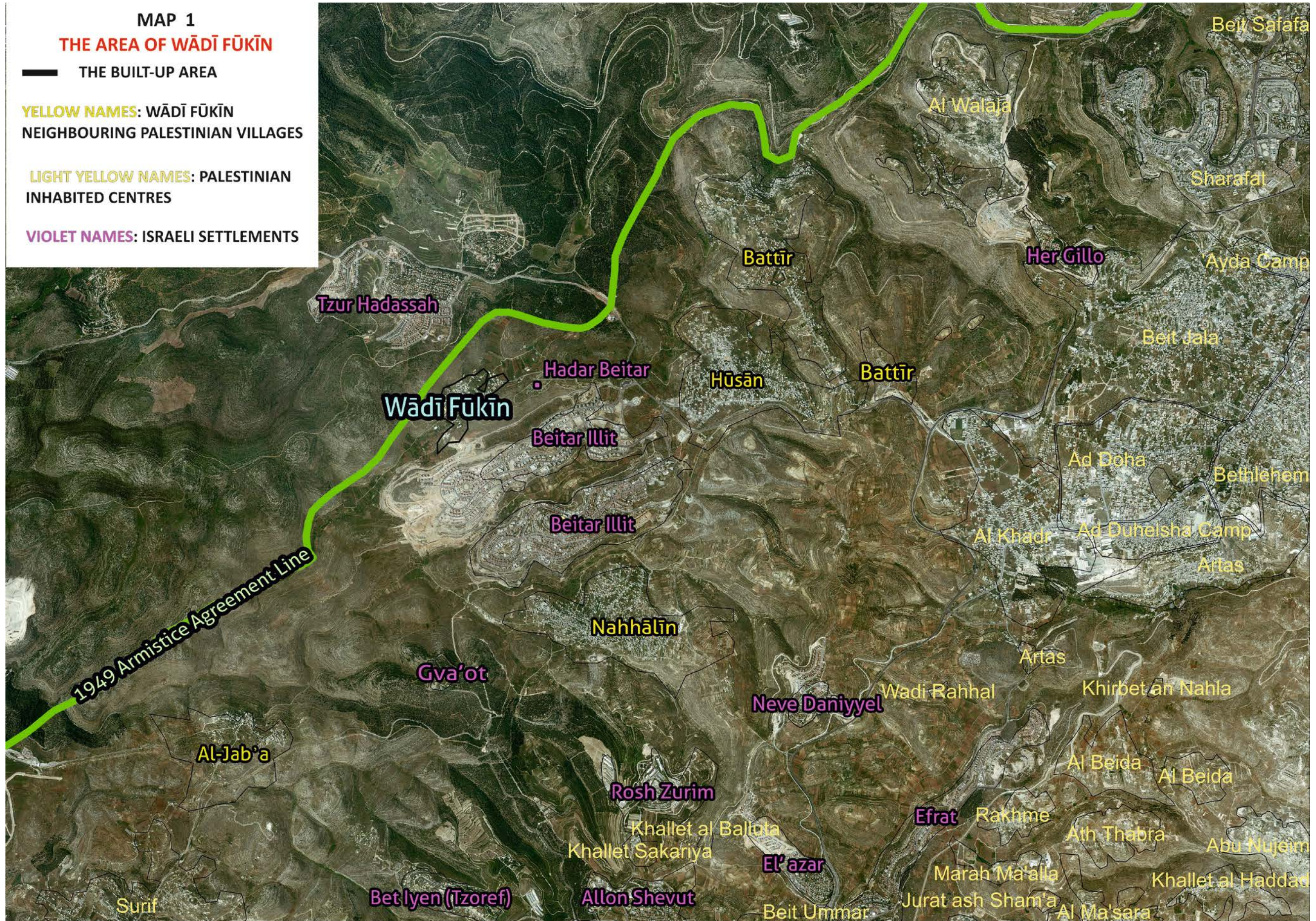
TRIBAL GROUP				
06:30-08:30	2h	al-Aqra'a	Qāsim Moḥammed	He is elderly and still farms using this water share. He belongs to the third generation of the al-Aqra'a family which arrived to the village.
08:30-10:30	2h	al-Aqra'a	Ibrāhīm Moḥammed	He died. He belonged to the third generation of the al-Aqra'a family which arrived to the village. His water share is used by some of his sons.
10:30-12:30	2h	al-Aqra'a	Miyāda Zakariyā Moḥammed	She inherited her father's (Zakariyā) water share and land, which are used and controlled by her husband Ġamil 'Assāf.. Zakariyā Moḥammed was the brother of Qāsim Moḥammed and Ibrāhīm Moḥammed.
12:30-18:00	5h,30m	al-Aqra'a	'Abd ar-Raḥīm	He died. Some of his grandsons use his water share and land.
18:00-13:20	19h,20m	'Alayān	Moḥammed Šākir Ḥalīl and his paternal uncles	He died and his sons do not farm. They rent this water share and a part of their land to Māher Sukkar.
13:20-04:30	39h,10m	'Alayān	'Aīā Ḥisīm 'Alayān and his paternal cousins	He died and his sons do not farm. They rent this water share and a part of their land to Māher Sukkar.
			Brothers	
			Brothers	

		04:30-05:00	24h,30m	'Alayān	Moḥammed Ḥisīn 'Alayān	He died and his sons do not farm. They rent this water share and a part of their land to Māher Sukkar.
--	--	-------------	---------	---------	------------------------	--

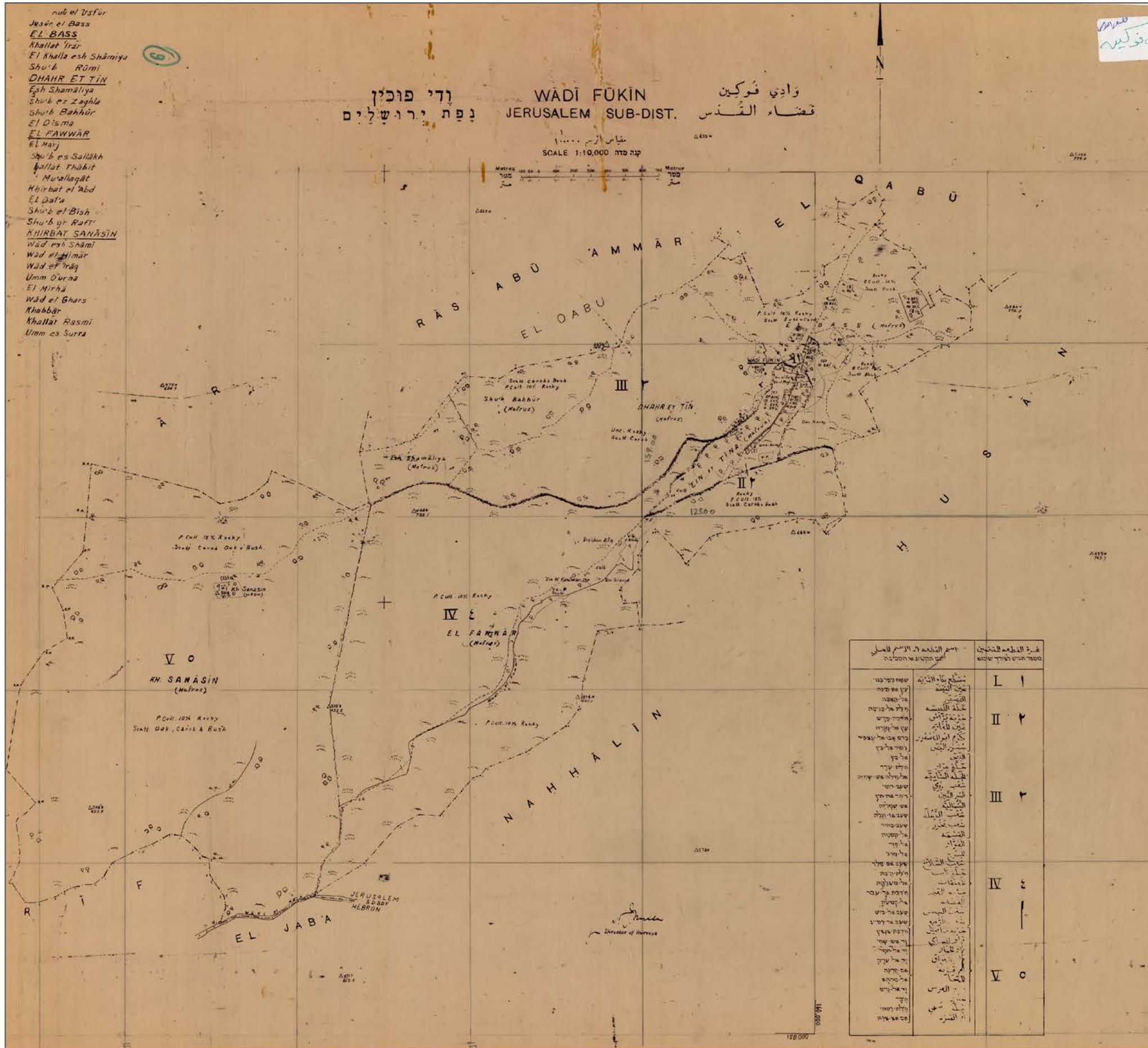


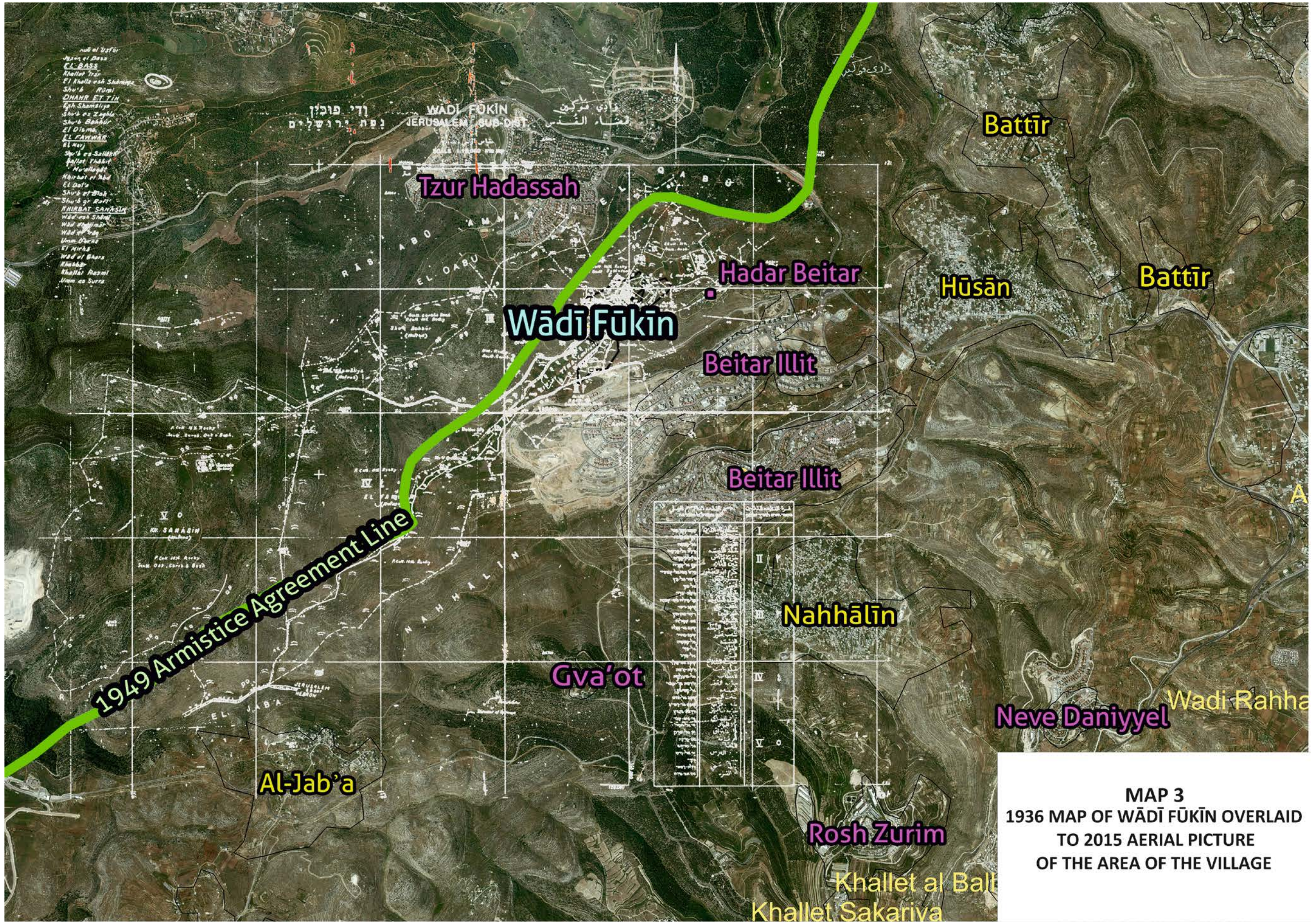
**MAP 1**  
**THE AREA OF WĀDĪ FŪKĪN**

- THE BUILT-UP AREA
- YELLOW NAMES:** WĀDĪ FŪKĪN  
NEIGHBOURING PALESTINIAN VILLAGES
- LIGHT YELLOW NAMES:** PALESTINIAN  
INHABITED CENTRES
- VIOLET NAMES:** ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

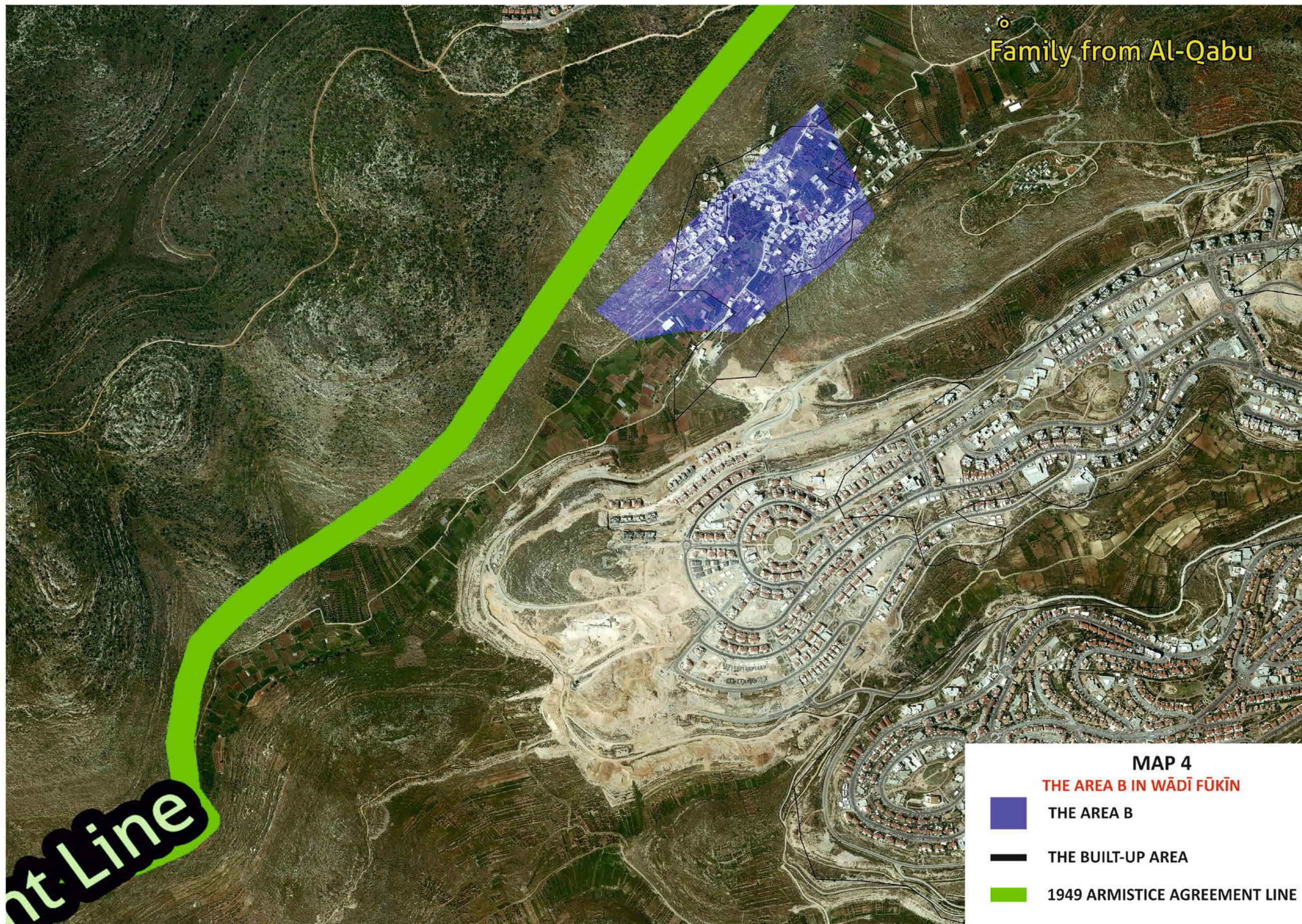


**MAP 2**  
**MAP OF WĀDĪ FŪKĪN IN 1936**  
**(BRITISH MANDATE)**  
**SOURCE: PALESTINIAN MINISTRY OF LAND**

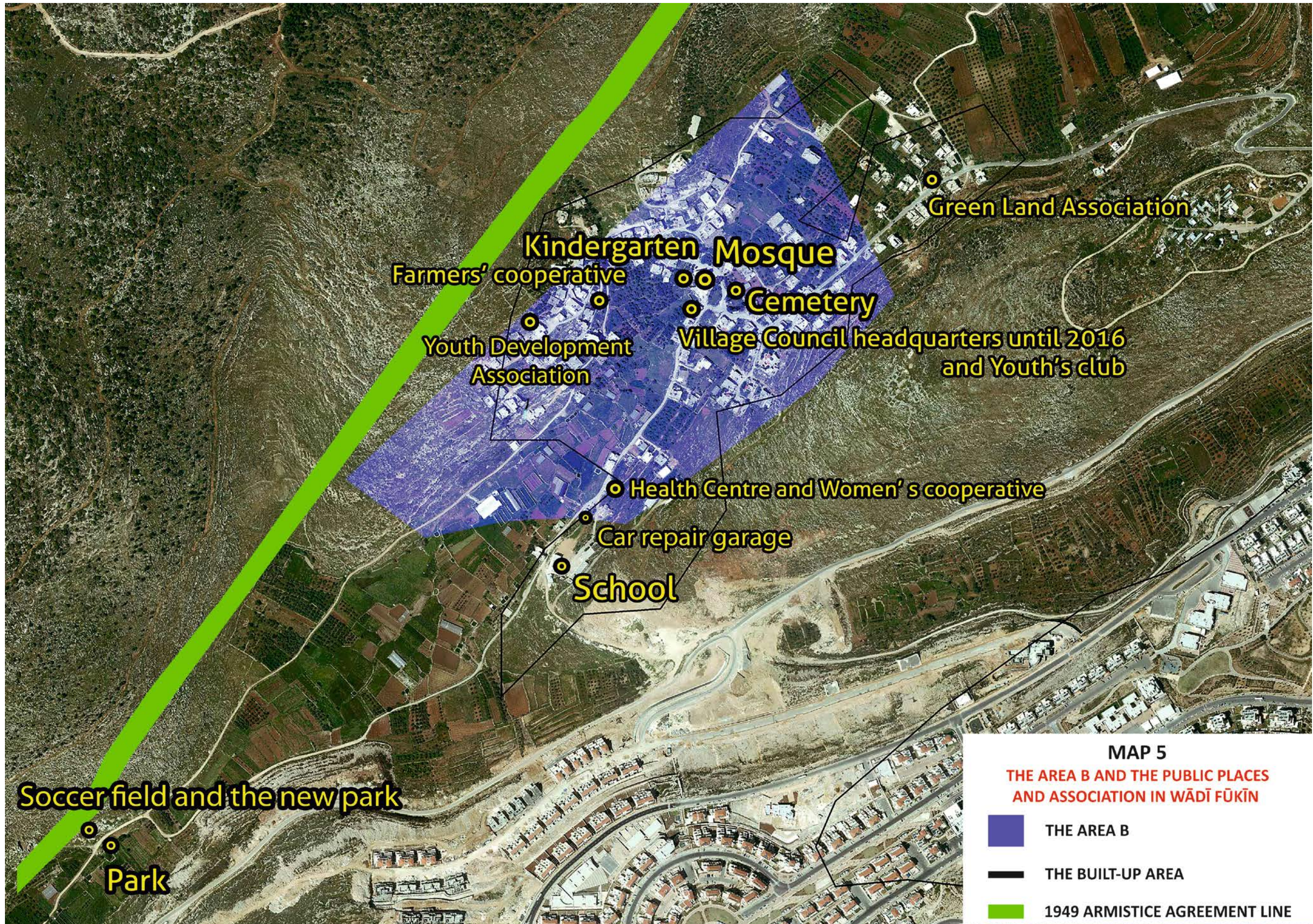


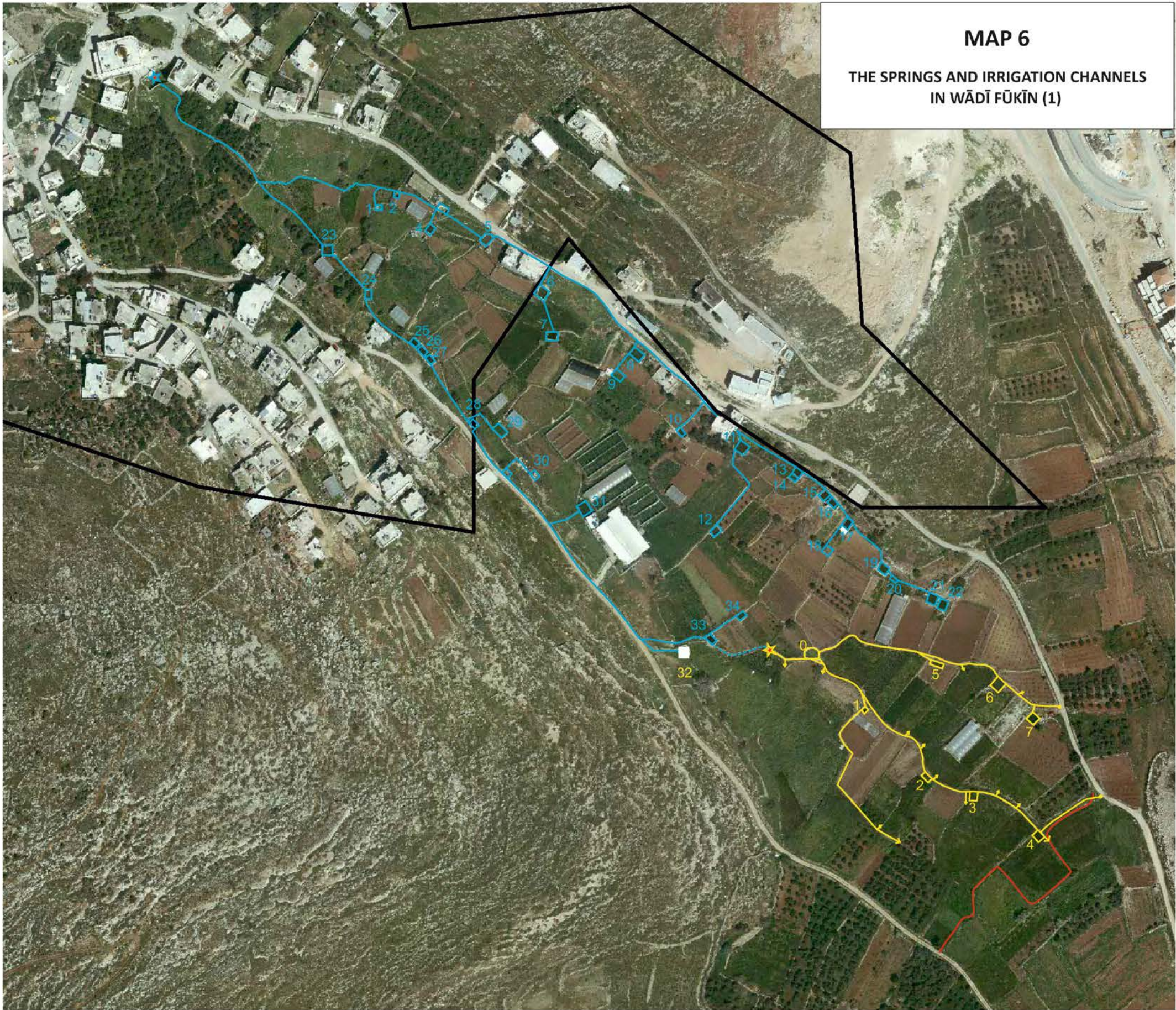


MAP 3  
 1936 MAP OF WĀDĪ FŪKĪN OVERLAID  
 TO 2015 AERIAL PICTURE  
 OF THE AREA OF THE VILLAGE


















**MAP 6**  
**THE SPRINGS AND IRRIGATION CHANNELS**  
**IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN (1)**

- 
- 'AYN AL-BALAD  
(THE SPRING OF THE INHABITED CENTRE)
- 
- IRRIGATION CHANNEL FROM 'AYN AL-BALAD  
(THE SPRING OF THE INHABITED CENTRE)
- 
- POOL FOR COLLECTION OF WATER FROM  
'AYN AL-BALAD  
(THE SPRING OF THE INHABITED CENTRE)
- 
- 'AYN AT-TĪNA (THE SPRING OF THE FIG)
- 
- IRRIGATION CHANNEL FROM 'AYN AT-TĪNA  
(THE SPRING OF THE FIG)
- 
- POOL FOR COLLECTION OF WATER FROM  
'AYN AT-TĪNA  
(THE SPRING OF THE FIG)
- 
- WATER EXIT
- 
- THE PERCEIVED DIVISION OF THE VALLEY  
IN TWO PARTS, ACCORDING TO  
THE SPRINGS SITUATED WITHIN EACH OF THEM
- 
- THE BUILT-UP AREA



**MAP 7**  
**THE SPRINGS AND IRRIGATION CHANNELS**  
**IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN (2)**

- 

'AYN MAḌĪK (THE SPRING OF THE PASS)
- 

IRRIGATION CHANNEL FROM 'AYN MAḌĪK
- 

POOL FOR COLLECTION OF WATER FROM 'AYN MAḌĪK
- 

'AYN AL-FAWWĀR (THE SPRING OF THE GUSH)
- 

IRRIGATION CHANNEL FROM 'AYN AL-FAWWĀR
- 

POOL FOR COLLECTION OF WATER FROM 'AYN AL-FAWWĀR
- 

'AYN ṢIDDĪQ (THE SINCERE SPRING)
- 

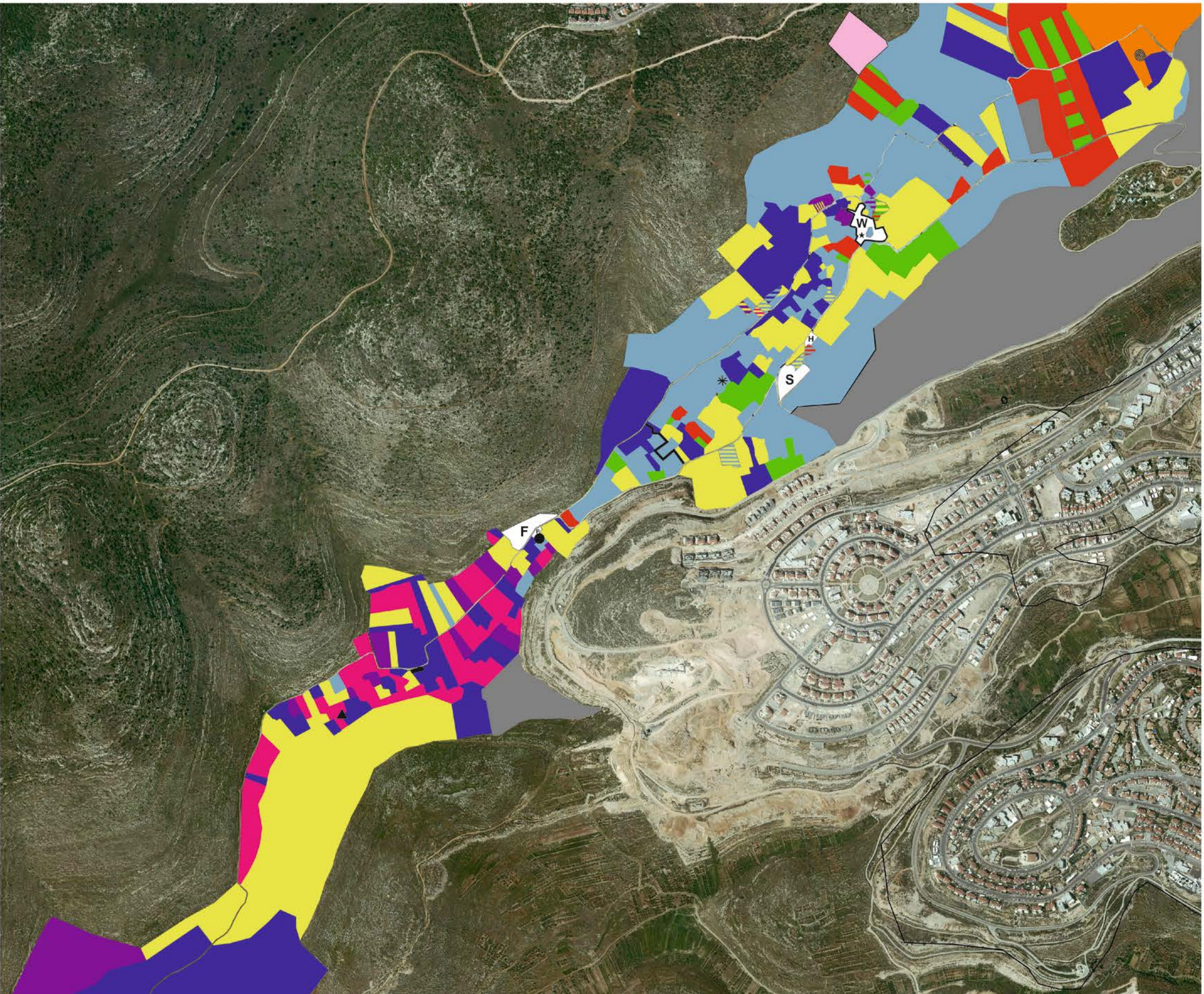
IRRIGATION CHANNEL FROM 'AYN ṢIDDĪQ
- 

POOL FOR COLLECTION OF WATER FROM 'AYN ṢIDDĪQ
- 

PLASTIC OR RUBBER PIPE
- 

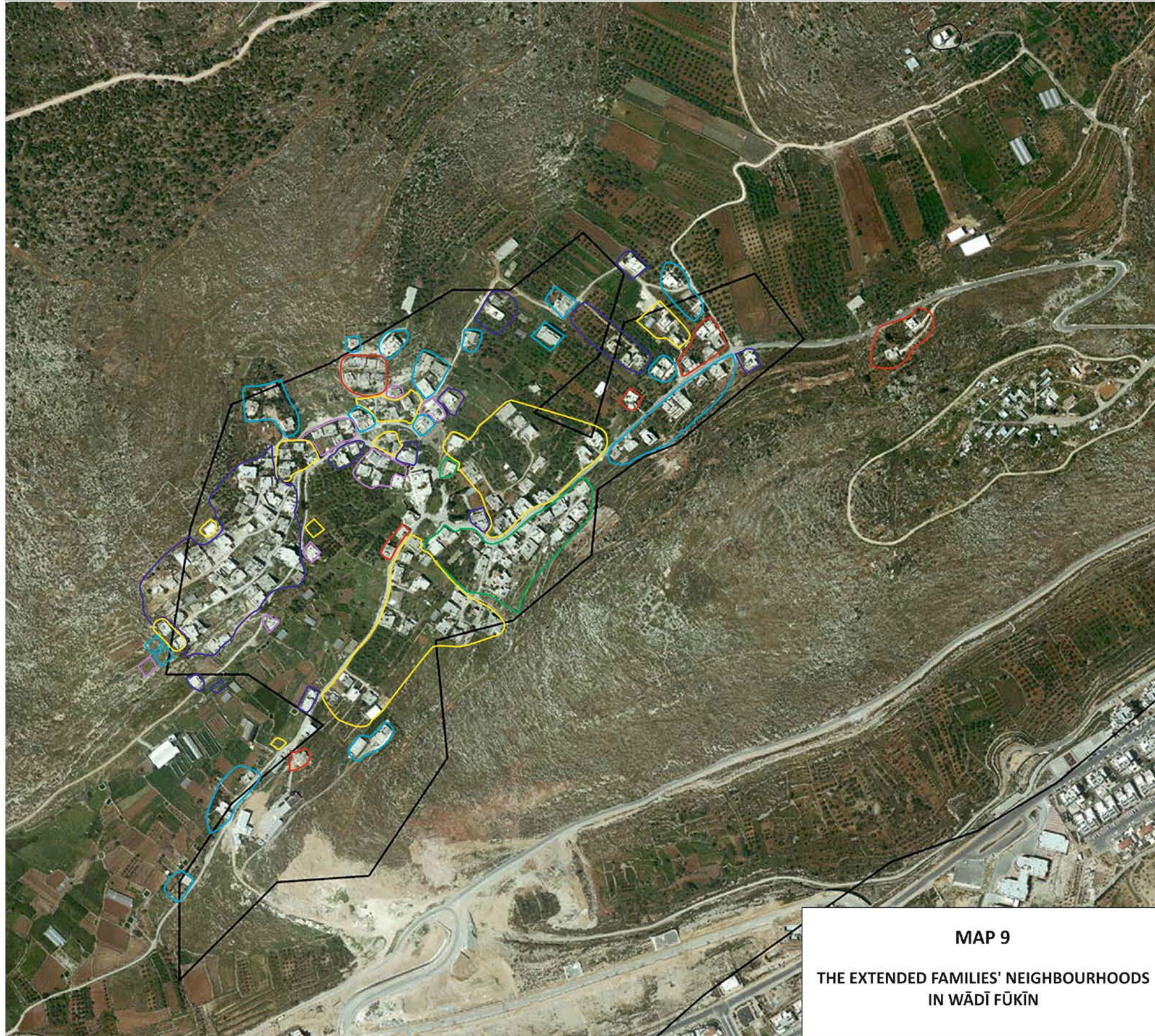
WATER EXIT

MAP 8  
EXTENDED FAMILIES' LAND OWNERSHIP IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN (WEST BANK)



**LEGEND OF THE MAP: EXTENDED FAMILIES' LAND OWNERSHIP IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN**

	ḤURŪB		ḤURŪB bought from MUFARRAḤ
	'AṬIYA		'SUKKAR bought from ḤURŪB
	SUKKAR		'AṬIYA bought from ḤURŪB
	MUFARRAḤ		AL-AQRA'A bought from SUKKAR
	'ASSĀF		'ALAYĀN bought from SUKKAR
	AL-AQRA'A		'ASSĀF bought from ḤURŪB
	'ALAYĀN		MUFARRAḤ bought from 'ASSĀF
	FAMILY FROM AL-QABŪ VILLAGE		WAQF (religious endowment) with the MOSQUE AND CEMETERY
	FAMILY FROM ḤŪSĀN VILLAGE		MUNICIPAL land with the HEALTH CENTRE
	FAMILY FROM 'AYZARIYA VILLAGE		MUNICIPAL land with the SCHOOL
	Common ownership of 'ALAYĀN and 'AṬIYA		MUNICIPAL land with the old PARK
	SUKKAR bought from MUFARRAḤ		MUNICIPAL land with the SOCCER FIELD and the new PARK
	AL-AQRA'A bought from ḤURŪB		
	'ayn al-balad (spring)		'ayn maḍīk (spring)
	'ayn ṣiddīq (spring)		THE PERCEIVED DIVISION OF THE VALLEY IN TWO PARTS
	'ayn at-tīna (spring)		'ayn al-fawwār (spring)
	'ayn al-Quds (spring)		



ḤURŪB

'AṬIYA

SUKKAR

MUFARRAḤ

'ASSĀF

AL-AQRA'A

FAMILY FROM AL-QABŪ VILLAGE

**MAP 9**  
**THE EXTENDED FAMILIES' NEIGHBOURHOODS**  
**IN WĀDĪ FŪKĪN**