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# The Cultural Politics of Water Privatization in an Arab Israeli Town

By

Glenna L. Anton

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Geography

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Jake Kosek, Chair
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Abstract

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From Theodor Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland*, to Seth Siegel's recent bestseller, *Let There be Water*, Israeli water development has preoccupied the Israeli and Jewish imagination. Traditional scholarship on water in Israel focuses on high politics and international relations; official policy and its associated techno-logics; or views water problems through a purely economic lens. My dissertation takes a "bottom-up" ethnographic approach to examining water politics. It offers a new framework for thinking about natural resources, and "nature" in Israel by demonstrating the role of struggles over "nature" in linking and shaping two processes that are often assumed to be separate and opposed: nation building on the one hand, and global capitalism on the other.

Drawing on five years of ethnographic and historical research in Israel, my dissertation, The politics of water privatization in an Arab-Israeli town, argues that local struggles over access to water in the context of water privatization, reveals the contradictory relationship between nation building with its rigid delineation of territorial boundaries on the one hand, and global capitalist development on the other. I show how connections between processes of water privatization and ongoing discrimination in the realm of planning have come together in distinctive ways in Kafr-al-Bahar, the Israeli-Arab town where I conducted my research. These convergences are forged at the level of ordinary practices. I emphasize, in particular, the way that notions of "nature" are central to these processes and connections. For instance, I focus on alternative local water histories that residents have revived in the context of water cutoffs and indebtedness, and how they provide a framework for understanding, contesting and engaging with water privatization and the notions of nature that inform these policies. Such notions include taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of Arab political culture, of national service, and of market logic. The alternative water histories that residents have revived, challenge the national narrative about the nature of Kafr-al-Bahar's relationship to water and to the nation. Such an approach to water politics in Israel advances emerging scholarship on the interconnections of nationalism with globalization in Israel by bringing it into conversation with geographical and anthropological literature on the cultural politics of nature and difference in Israel.

Everyday water politics, homely as they may seem, are forcing front and center the issue at the heart of Israel's current legitimation crisis; namely, the tensions between the values and institutions of liberal egalitarianism and the ongoing realities of dispossession, exclusion, and segregation.

Dedicated to Bette Anton and Watfa

The Cultural Politics of Water Privatization in an Arab-Israeli Town


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## Chapter 1: Introduction

## "Nature:" Culture, the Nation, & the Market

Pisgah University sits on the summit of Mount Pisgah, overlooking City below. Slightly outside the City itself, and high above it, the tall rectangular structure of the main University building projects the authority and objectivity of science. It was here where I was first informed that the place – Kafr al Bahar - where I planned to conduct my research on Israeli water politics was not a suitable place to learn about the politics of water privatization. Kafr al Bahar is an Arab Israeli town of approximately ~14,000 inhabitants located along Israel's northern Mediterranean Coast. According to the social science scholars I came to know there, the problems that Kafr al Bahar residents faced in relation to water debt, water cutoffs, and in relation to the takeover of their municipal council by an unelected emergency management team, was not indicitive of the reforms underway in the water sector. From their perspective, Kafr al Bahar's history and its location made it "atypical." Most importantly, from their perspective, what distinguished the town from one that would have been a more suitable research site, was that it had not yet introduced a private water corporation. Indeed, during my fieldwork, the widespread view among water professionals and scholars was that the representative and most significant change happening in the water sector, aside from the incorporation of desalination into the national water system that had occurred at the end of the 2000s,[1] was a 2004 amendment to the 2001 water law – what might be called a water privatization law. The law obligated all non agricultural communities throughout Israel to introduce regional or local private water corporations to manage water provisioning in towns, villages, and cities throughout Israel in place of local governments that had previoulsy been responsible for local water provisioning. Such corporations were required by law to operate according to the principles of cost-recovery.

Kafr al Bahar had been unable to introduce a private water company despite several attempts to join a regional water company in the area. Thus, the municipality's water problems, according to social science scholars and water professionals with whom I became acquainted during the course of my research, could not be measured or assessed in relation to ongoing transformation of the water sector as a whole. Water management in Kafr al Bahar remained in the hands of the municipal government.

My first glimpse into this way of analyzing the water crisis and interpreting the new water sector reforms purely through the success or failure of communities in introducing private water corporations, occurred at a meeting with Professor Walid Odeh in the Geography Department at Pisgah University. After a short wait in the hallway of the Geography Department, Professor Odeh called me into his office and directed me to sit across from him in the student seat that was separated from his chair by his large tidy desk. Leaning back into his chair, Professor Odeh inflated his large belly and rubbed it, unconsciously assuming what seemed to be his familiar authoritative manner that he adopted with students, especially those not familiar with Israel. "You have to understand," he began with a self-confident smile, that "Kafr al Bahar is not a typical Arab town. It is not like the towns in the Galilee (Israel's northern frontier) that are clustered together. It is isolated, and there is a lot of fear in the surrounding Jewish communities about joining with Kafr al Bahar in a regional water company because of financing...." "You see," he went on "it all depends on how one defines oneself in terms of national affiliation (e.g. Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian,

Bedouin, various Christian Arab communities, Mulsim Arab, Druze, etc.)." What this statement signified to me was that the question of "national affiliation" was also about class. That is, it was also about the ability of the municipality to collect taxes from the community and for residents to pay their taxes. Low tax collection rates, a problem in Arab communities that policymakers constantly complained about and attributed to such communities' inability to attract private water companies, impeded infrastructural improvements in many Arab Israeli communities. The crumbling state of infrastructure scared off private water corporations and the surrounding wealthy Jewish communities from including Kafr al Bahar in the regional water corporation.

This run of the mill comment revealed more about the contradictions of Israeli water sector restructuring than I could have known at the time. It was an indication of the central place of water politics, environmental politics, and resource struggles more generally, in linking together and shedding light on the tension-ridden relationship between nation building with its rigid delineation of territorial and social boundaries on the one hand, and global capitalist development on the other. This dissertation begins from this insight and examines how this tension is lived out through water politics in the town of Kafr al Bahar where I conducted my research.

My focus is on the interconnections between processes of water privatization that are often construed as purely economic, and ongoing discrimination in the realm of planning that is often seen as an instrument of settler colonialism, or nationalism, separate from the realm of economics. By focusing on the questions of "nature" that connect questions of resource management with notions about "natural" differences between peoples, I illuminate the distinctive ways that water sector restructuring and spatial compression associated with discriminatory planning, have come together and are feeding into new ways of understanding and engaging with water resources in Kafr al Bahar. Such developments are pushing ethical questions about the meaning of responsibility in relation to the nation, to the individual, to the public, and to the collective good to the forefront of debate in the town where I conducted my research.

The convergence of forms of fiscal discipline that have emerged in the course of water privatization with ongoing spatial compression in Kafr al Bahar are forged at the level of ordinary practices. Thus, graspng the way that these forces come together requires a "bottom-up" ethnographic approach. As I said, I emphasize, in particular, the way that notions of "nature" are central to these processes and connections. For instance, I focus on alternative local water histories that residents have revived in the context of water cutoffs and indebtedness, and how they provide a framework for understanding, contesting and engaging with water privatization and the notions of nature that inform these policies. Such notions include taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of Arab political culture, of national service, and of market logic.

The challenges that these water histories raise for conventional analysis of water restructuring on the one hand, and Arab local politics on the other, draw on, and rework a tradition of resistance to dispossession among Palestinians and Arab Israelis known as *sumud*. *Sumud* is a political practice that is located in a longer lineage of resistance to erasure. It is a form of resistance to dispossession that entails "staying in place," rooting oneself to the earth, and refusing to be erased.[2] It signifies a community's insistence upon holding onto its

cultural heritage through steadfast determination to remain on its historic lands, even if it means continually rebuilding demolished homes, replanting uprooted trees, or illegally connecting to water infrastructure (Cohen 2008; Falah 2012; Najjar 2014; Rijke & Teffeelen 2014; Wick 2008). It has continuously undergone redefinition in relation to shifting pressures placed on Arab Israeli citizens, Palestinians living in West Bank and Gaza (WBG) and in refugee camps by limited and fragmented land reserves, and discrimination in the realm of building and construction.[3] Yet what has remained central to *sumud* is its rootedness in notions belonging, and attachments to natural resources associated with one's birthplace, at the same time as it has come to be associated with everyday practices in contrast to high-minded acts of anti-colonial heroism (Rijke, A. & Teffeelen 2014). In Kafr al Bahar, as we shall see, this lineage was inextricably intertwined with the community's relationship to water, to the nation, and is central to local politics. Today, in the context of water crisis, residents are engaged in a contentious process of reworking the meaning of *sumud* in light of their water history and in relation to the significance this history has for the future of the town.

Privatization of water provisioning in Israel, and the politics emerging out of the privatization process in Kafr al Bahar, thus, transcends immediate local-level water politics. It is through seemingly mundane practices of on-(and under) the-ground struggles over water debt and hydraulic infrastructure that ongoing forms of racialized dispossession are getting reformulated and informing everyday struggles today. The reappropriation of the water history of the area as it has been harnessed by residents of Kafr al Bahar in the present moment of struggle over water cutoffs and debt, points to the way in which contemporary processes of economic restructuring are actually lived out, understood, and fought over in terms of the experience of racialized dispossession. In other words, struggle over basic service provisioning is also a struggle over history, over the meaning and boundaries of the nation, and is inextricably intertwined with struggles against what some have referred to as the technologies of settler colonialism. Water is central to residents struggle to remain in place and to resist erasure. Because of this, Kafr al Bahar's water politics provides a key vantage point from which to grasp the way that the new water laws have converged with ongoing methods of spatial compression in ways that are feeding into and shaping segregation, as well as resistance to such segregation, spatial compression, and erasure. Kafr al Bahar's water crisis, in short, offers tremendous insight into the key forces and connections shaping state-local relations in Israel today.

After my meeting with Professor Odeh, in which I became acquainted with the dominant framework for analyzing water crisis and water privatization in Israel, I learned that he was also a chief consultant and one of the founders of the private water company in the town of Kafr Noor, where he lived in the Galilee. As he stated in his policy report on MeiGalil, a regional private water company serving seven Arab towns northeast of Nazareth, "a secondary objective" of his research is to document the establishment of public, professional institutions that provide municipal services to Arab residents." In his words, doing so aims, "to break down images and stereotypes" that Arab communities cannot manage themselves efficiently and do not concern themselves with issues of public welfare. Samir Hamdan, a Political Scientist at Pisgah University, expressed similar views when I visited him. Later that year, during a conference on reforms in Israel's water sector, also at the University, I realized that Hamdan, like Odeh, was working for many of the same reasons that Odeh was, to survey and document the successes of Arab private water

companies in the Galilee.

From their perspective, Kafr al Bahar, and its water debt problems were a humiliating example of mismanagement. Water debt problems in Kafr al Bahar, in their view, fueled Jewish water professionals and the Jewish public's disparaging representations of retrograde Arab politics and inability to manage resources properly. That is, for them the fiscal problems that Kafr al Bahar faced in the realm of water reinforced condescending and self-serving arguments about the need for national state intervention in the affairs of Arab local government and provided means to embolden planning policies that imposed limits and exclusions on Arab communities physical expansion and development. Such discursive framings of water debt problems in places such as Kafr al Bahar frustrated Odeh and Hamdan's efforts at proving Arab-Israeli citizens' ability to engage in modern forms of management and governance because, in their analytical and methodological framework, water management in Kafr al Bahar deviated from a pure market logic. It remained enmeshed in "premodern" forms of politics based on clan affiliations. Thus, it reinforced explanations for local government failure such as the one put forward by political scientist Rami Zeedan who asserted that the urbanization process that 1948 imposed upon Arab society ought to have eventually led to modernization. Yet, in his view what happened instead was that this progressive momentum was "reversed" because urban intellectuals and the Arab intelligentsia with money left, abandoning the poor villagers that remained inside Israel to their traditional leaders.[4] Thus, in a 2014 article entitled "Causes of (and solutions for?) Financial Crisis in Local Governments: Insight From Local Arab Authorities in Israel," that Rami Zeedan co-authored with Eran Vigoda-Gadot and Yossi Ben-Artzi, they painstakingly separate internal and external factors in order to advance their argument that internal factors resulting from local mismanagement have a far greater effect on financial crises in Arab local authorities than do external factors which they define as "socioeconomic characteristics,...and structural circumstances that are beyond the control of local officials" (2014: 1067). Asa'ad Ghanem, meanwhile, has described the contemporary return of traditional leaders to the helm of Arab Israeli local politics as a typical case of "incomplete modernisation."[5] [6]

Indeed, when the more conservative candidate who advocated for a religious, and locally bounded conception of Kafr al Bahar's heritage and identity, defeated his liberal "Zionist" rival during the 2013 local elections in the town, the outcome of the election seemed to support the "incomplete modernisation" thesis elaborated by Asa'ad Ghanem at a conference hosted by the Konrad Adenauer program at Tel Aviv University shortly after the 2013 local elections.[7] At the conference, Ghanem described what he took to be the larger significance of the 2013 local elections in Arab communities in the following terms:

> "The local government elections [of 2013] caused a catastrophe that is similar to the Nakbah of 1948…In research literature, this is known as 'incomplete modernization': A mayor may have a doctoral degree, but he handles the problems in local governments as if they were tribal affairs. Instead of putting the interests of citizens in top priority, he follows the agenda of the people who elected him. He belongs to a specific tribe, clan, or family…Such a reality does not promote the growth of a politically aware society living in a modern city…The clan phenomenon remains clearly widespread and is deeply rooted in our Arab towns. Not only is this preventing our progress and our becoming democratic, but this phenomenon also

> leads to withdrawal into ourselves and regression. After we have already established and led political parties and managed to create a dramatic change in our favor, we have now taken several steps backward by solidifying sectarian clan-based loyalties, with all their negative implications….This brings us back to the nineteenth century or even earlier. Although we see that the mayor wears a suit and a tie, and has a car and an office, his conduct reflects a return to the past." […]" (Quoted in Rudnitzky 2014: 16).[8]

The national press reinforced this view of Arab local politics as entirely internal, fixed, and as an automatic outgrowth of Arab culture. For example, after Israel's 2008 local elections, the conservative newspaper, The Jerusalem Post, ran an article by Collumnist Larry Derfner that asserted,

> "the belief had been that with modernization, Israeli Arabs would stop voting for the *hamula* [clan] and start voting for ideology, or for good government, but with Arabs disappointed by ideology and meritocracy, the *hamula* remains the chief determining factor in local Arab politics...Israel Arab politics, locally as well as nationally, has reached a state of inertia. If anything, it's going backwards. (Derfner 2008)[9]

Later in the article, the Derfner cites Northwestern University Israel Studies professor Elie Rekhess in order support his claim that the key reasons for the collapse of Arab municipal government has to do with "…local Arab politicians' corruption and incompetence[,]….. the state's land expropriations and budgetary discrimination against Arab municipalities[,]….[and] the Arab population's soaring rate of poverty and resistance to paying municipal taxes…." Although Derfner lists land and budgetary discrimination as reasons for so-called local government failure, his list does not illuminate in any way, the connections between these the three dimensions of local government. Instead he implicitly reinscribes the notion that what is happening in Arab local politics can be explained by several discrete variables of more or less equal weight, some of which are entirely internal to Arab political culture, and some of which come from the outside. He goes on to argue that "….with ideology hardly a factor in next week's elections, with 'good government' basically a joke, with cynicism everywhere, what principle will guide Israeli Arab voters? What is the driving force behind local Arab politics today? Mainly, said both Rekhess and Abu Rajab, it's the hamula - the Arab clan, the extended family, the traditional source of Arab group identity." (Derfner 2008)[10]

Even Meirav Arlosoroff's recent article for the center-left newspaper Ha'aretz, asserts that "Kafr al Bahar is a poor town because its people don't know how to stop being poor." She goes on to argue that because of this, "…[i]t is up to the state to extend a hand and help them help themselves." She continues that Kafr al Bahar residents "…may bear the brunt of the blame for the violence, low debt payment rates and lousy education – but it is the nature of weak population groups not to know how to help themselves. If the poor knew how to stop being poor, there wouldn't be poor people any more." (Arlosoroff 2016)[11]

Each of these statements reflect what seems to me to be a kind of argument that emerges from a logic that makes the causal connections between the variables they list obscure and un-dialectical and, in doing so, sidesteps responsibility for the production of such problems. But as we shall see, it is such assertions that provide the moral basis that

allow water policy professionals to withhold funding for infrastructure upgrades and to subject municipalities that are unable to commodify water provisioning to various forms of fiscal discipline and other punitive measures.

In this dissertation I rethink these standard explanations for water crisis in Arab communities by focusing attention on the role of everyday struggles over "nature," or water politics, in producing, maintaining, and challenging the exclusions that have been reinforced by the seemingly technocratic, economically oriented water policies. Doing so undermines the widespread notion that political dynamics at the level of Arab local politics or at the national scale are mere byproducts of discrete cultures or of discrete governing logics that are opposed to the dynamic market forces. It also challenges the notion that water privatization, settler colonialism and nationalism are separately opposed.

Pisgah University's elevated position in the Pisgah Hills, overlooking the network of buildings and streets that opened out before it, was a fitting symbol of the epistomological framework within which Pisgah University social science scholars in Geography and Political Science analyzed the successes, failures, and challenges of the changes underway in the water sector. The University stood confidently above the commotion of the City, high on the firm foundations of progress in the name of science and economic truth. Those working on understanding national and local politics deployed descriptive typologies, pre-given classifications, and made discrete distinctions between technologies of settler colonialism, various types of non-liberal or semi-liberal ethnic democracies (see, for example, Ghanem, A., Rouhana, N., & Yiftachel 1998; Peled, Y. 2005; Smooha, S. 1998; Yiftachel 2006) and the "economic paradigm" that, according to water scholars, now predominated in the water sector.[12]

Rather than shedding light on the way that these political regimes form and are evolving through everyday practices and are related to other dimensions of life, we get snapshots of Israel's gargantuan bureaucratic structure, the strategic and exclusionary plans of various planning agencies, and the futility and injustice of Palestinians living inside Israel as well in the West Bank and Gaza's unending struggles to engage with with callous government officials and procedures. Such snapshots leave out all sorts of connections that are necessary for grasping how Israeli nationalism or its ethnic regime is unfolding and changing through its relations to other elements of social life, as well limit insight into possibilities for social change.

Focusing on coming up with predictible models and typologies leaves little room for understanding the way that such governing logics get constituted in the first place, their dynamic interaction with other forces at play within Israeli society and throughout the world, and how they change. Attention to the practices through which such governing logics are shaped and reworked in practice reveals their dynamic interaction and the tensions at work in such processes.

A fine grained approach to studying water privatization in Kafr al Bahar, as it comes together with the forces of spatial compression, undermines any attempt to define Kafr al Bahar or the Israeli land regime as irrelevant to the way that water privatization is unfolding in Israel today. That is, it undermines the widespread notion that political dynamics at the level of Arab local politics or at the national scale are mere byproducts of discrete cultures or

of discrete governing logics. Instead, it focuses our attention on the role of struggles over "nature," or water politics, in producing, maintaining, and challenging such logics and on the exclusionary tendencies inherent in seemingly apolitical economically oriented resource policies. It challenges the notion that water privatization, settler colonialism and nationalism are separately opposed.

## The connection between analysis of local government and water sector restructuring

While political theorists focused on government logics, and political structures, water professionals and scholars argued that contemporary water sector restructuring and particularly private water corporations role in providing water to local communities, marked a new era of apolitical/ technical water management.[13] Such work contended that water sector restructuring reduces the likelihood of struggle over water and lessened the water sector's dependence on the whims of a centralized state (Feitelson 2002, 2005, 2006; Kislev 2006; Menahem 2001; Mossenson 1991).[14] This modern form of management, supposedly free of the political and historical baggage of previous water development eras, was, in their view, a sign of progress in the field of water management against which counter-cases, which happened to be mostly in Arab communities, could be measured.

Such a view echoed popular sentiments expressed in the national press. Indeed even the "left-leaning" newspaper Ha'aretz, ran an editorial about the introduction of a private water company to the "Arab" section of a "mixed" town called Lod. In it, Zafrir Rinat, one of the newspapers' water columnists proudly proclaimed that:

> "…the most significant change in water supply [as a result of the introduction of the new water corporations] occurred in the Arab neighborhoods, the water corporation has decided to change the access and connect them to the modern world… In return we're charging money for the services we provide, and that way we stop the phenomenon of pirated works.[15]

Kafr al Bahar, it appeared from this official vantage point, had not been able to "connect to the modern world."

What becomes clear from this focus on Kafr al Bahar's water politics, is that far from a clean break from the past, contemporary water provisioning practices and policies are reworking older understandings about Arab citizens use/mis-use of the nation's natural resources in a way that legitimizes the continued dispossession of Arab citizens from water and land inside Israel's 1948 borders. In Kafr al Bahar, the Muslim Arab Palestinian town where I conducted my research, we see these new water policies and institutions continuing to force front and center the issue at the heart of Israel's current legitimation crisis; namely, the tensions between the values and institutions of liberal egalitarianism and the ongoing realities of racialized dispossession, exclusion, segregation, and violence.

## The Town of Kafr al Bahar

Kafr al Bahar sits on 1.5 square kilometers of land located on a sand-stone ridge along the Mediterranean coast in Israel's Haifa District. It takes a half an hour driving south along the coast to get from Haifa to Kafr al Bahar. Kafr al Bahar, like most Arab

communities inside Israel, is only partially recognized by Israeli officials. That is, there are large areas of buildings in the town that are illegal because they are located on areas that the Israeli Lands Administration has designated as state-land. Because of this, there is a sense of suffocation and siege among Kafr al Bahar residents that I befriended during my research. Indeed, from the highway Kafr al Bahar appears as a dense mass of dilapidated buildings crammed upwards by the zoning laws that privilege the surrounding Jewish communities comprised primarily of large low-lying subdivisions that are spaciously arranged with room between homes. In addition to the residential areas circumscribing the town, the area in which residents can move and plan, is bounded on its northern edge by the fish ponds of Neve Yarok, the neighboring kibbutz, that sits on top of Kafr al Bahar's cemetery. The coastal highway, which has exits for all the coastal communities except Kafr al Bahar, which not-coincidentally is also the only non-Jewish community that sits along the highways path, forms its eastern boundary. A state nature reserve runs along the western shore of the town that borders the Mediterranean Sea. The Jewish resort town of Beit Etzion to the north has built an earthen embankment between the two towns. Taken together, these surroundings hem the town in on all sides, cutting it off from public transportation as well as from access to the main coastal highway. In fact, there are only two entrances/exits to Kafr al Bahar. The main entrance is a one lane tunnel that delivery trucks often cannot clear. The smoke that frequently rises from Kafr al Bahar's burning landfill that lies between the highway and the buildings that line Kafr al Bahar's eastern edge, and the periodic attempts of residents to short cut the lengthy road entering the town by jumping the highway fence, testifies to the limits of basic services in the town as compared to its neighbors.

I arrived in Kafr al Bahar in 2011 in the midst of water cutoffs that the National Water Company (Mekorot) had imposed as punishment for non-payment of the town's municipal water debt. The town was reeling from the 30 to 40% water rate hike that made collection of water tariffs even more difficult than they had been already. As we shall see, new laws governing tariff payment and a law that penalized communities such as Kafr al Bahar that had been unable to comply with the 2001 Water Law that required that all non-rural communities introduce a water corporation by 2010, had caused Kafr al Bahar's water debt to spiral out of control. The water professionals and planning experts I spoke with about the situation seemed to reiterate popular opinion that such crises of municipal indebtedness was the result of a regression in the realm of local politics in Arab communities into pre-1948 forms of communalism/"familiocracy." These conditions, the way they contrasted with the surrounding Jewish communities, and policy experts' analysis of the situation that advocated for an outside committee to intervene in order to help the Council manage its water debt, eventually became my entry point for understanding the role of basic infratructure, particularly struggles over water debt and the way that they were part of a mutually constitutive process through which segregation and spatial segregation was being reinforced and shifting. The seemingly technocratic process of water privatization and the way that local politics are wrapped up with wider scale processes associated with spatial compression, as this sketch reveals, cannot so easily be bounded and compartmentalized as something that rids itself of the complex entanglements with contemporary and historical forms of settler colonialism and nationalism in Israel. In order to re-interpret the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar and its relationship to local politics in a different way, however, I need to return to several earlier turning points in which methods of *sumud* became popular within Palestinian society.

**Situating contemporary water politics in Kafr al Bahar in a conjunctural framework**

Taken together, these earlier turning points that begin in 1948, to which I now draw our attention, provide a conjunctural framework for understanding the political divides within Kafr al Bahar that came to the fore in relation to the water crisis during the 2013 elections. Here I sketch the main contours of the changes that occurred in the interrelations among Israeli government policies of spatial compression, Israeli capitalist development, and *sumud* politics and practices during four key turning points. I work through the complexities of these relations in greater detail in chapter four. Situating the contemporary water crisis in this way allows me to connect water politics, political divides in Kafr al Bahar, and the divergent water histories associated with them that became apparent through my ethnographic work in the town, with wider political and economic dynamics in Israel today.

The periodization of Israeli land policies towards Arab Israelis that I summarize below is not new, but, as we can already detect, more often than not, Israeli land and infrastructure policies and Israeli capitalist development are understood as distinct self-contained processes that encounter one another, but that are not dialectically intertwined. Moreover, introducing *sumud* practices and politics as a third element into this dialectical relationship allows us to grasp the constitutive role that struggles against dispossession, in the form of struggles over "nature," play in the way that Israeli capitalism is being produced.

Between 1948 and 1966 Israel imposed a regime of military rule upon all Arab communities that remained within Israel's borders and sought to confiscate any remaining Arab-Israeli land. It also sought to use planning policies to advance Israeli economic development by settling Middle Eastern Jewish immigrants in Development Towns on the frontier and subsidizing industrial growth nearby to these housing developments. Government subsidized low-wage labor and industry fueled this early stage of state-led industrial development (Hanieh 2003). These conditions, however, led to the emergence of a new form of *sumud* among a new generation of Arab Israeli citizens. The new forms of *sumud* rejected Israeli land confiscation policies as well as the patronage relations that were central to the way that the elder generation's *sumud* strategies aimed at remaining in place.

Between 1966 when Israeli military rule was lifted and 1977 this fledgling form of *sumud* came to the fore in explicit protest against dispossession and continuing land confiscation. It culminated in the Land Day strike in which the Israeli military responded with force and killed six protesters.

Between 1977 and 1989 the increasingly conservative government responded to such politicization among Arab Israeli citizens by criminalizing leaders who were key to what Hatim Kanaaneh refers to as "the emergence of Palestinian civil society" occurring at the time. In concert with the criminalization of newly independent Arab Israeli political organizing, Ariel Sharon as Defense Minister developed new military inspired Judaization policies that entailed settling middle class Jews in hilltop lookouts known as *mitzpim*. The *mitzpim* on the frontier served to offset the painful measures imposed by the Israeli government in response to the economic downturn of the 1980s by offering huge subsidies for Jewish families to move to these newly constructed American style suburban home and garden plots (Hanieh 2003). In this context, new *sumud* policies sought to get around the criminalization of Arab Israeli political activity and to confront the disparities made apparent

by the emergence of well-resourced *mitzpim* adjacent to and cutting through Arab Israeli communities without access to infrastructure, by focusing on basic infrastructure, particularly water infrastructure and "pressing needs." In the process, the struggle for basic infrastructure got linked to struggles against erasure (Beidas 2001).

By 1989, with the confluence of the end of the Cold War, the Oslo Peace Accords, and the rhetoric about the triumph of the market and the falling away of national borders, the revolution in methods of *sumud* that had taken place throughout Arab Israeli society during the earlier eras emerged in Kafr al Bahar. During the 1989 local elections in Kafr al Bahar, a group of people within the community that had been influenced by these larger currents of thought and forms of *sumud*, propelled a new leader to power that would help advance many of the infrastructure projects that residents felt were key to the community's modernization. This movement of also fueled a new interest in the community's history. Out of this moment, came new narratives that rejected the standard narrative about the town, that erased its active role in producing the waterscape and discounted the community's connection to the land. These new narratives sought to make visible the town's heritage, its role in transforming the waterscape of the area, and its long-standing claims to the land.

During the 2013 elections, the divides that first appeared in the realm of public deliberation during the 1989 elections, reappeared, splintered, and took new forms in the context of the water crisis. My aim in framing the 2013 elections and the water crisis in terms of this conjunctural anlaysis, is to situate the the divides that tore apart Kafr al Bahar and other Arab communities during the 2013 elections, that appeared to many political analysts to be entirely driven by internal cultural tendencies, in a larger context. In the process, I am trying to draw attention to the active role of ordinary Arab Israeli citizens in shaping contemporary political and economic dynamics in Israel today and to the role that struggles over "nature" play in the process.

**<u>Positioning my argument</u>**:

Before laying out the way that I have structured the chapters of this dissertation, let me briefly turn to the way that I am thinking about *sumud* in relation to the bodies of literature on the cultural politics of nature, Israeli capitalist development, settler colonialism, and on environmental politics in Israel with which this dissertation is in converstation. I am formulating *sumud* as part of an ongoing struggle over "nature" aimed at resisting dispossession and erasure. The politics of "nature" and the environment, in the way that I am approaching them, are about far more than natural resources. Focusing on environmental politics, from this perspective, entails paying particular attention to the historically and geographically situated practices and political contexts through which ideas and practices associated with "nature" are produced and change, and it draws on a long tradition of scholarship on the cultural politics of nature and difference that sees the production of ideas and practices of "nature" as shaped by power-laden practices and meanings (Gregory, D. 2001, Hart, G. 2004, Kosek 2005, Moore 2007, Moore et al. 2003).[16] Knowledge production about "nature," from this perspective, are boundary projects in which differences are implemented and fixed, and through which various forms of inequality and notions of difference often come to appear as "natural," or automatic. Such an approach to theorizing "nature" acknowledges the social, economic, and political contexts through which knowledge about nature has been produced, how such knowledge is situated in time

and space, as well as the way that social and spatial boundaries through which we understand and forge relations to "nature" get reproduced and change through everyday practices and relations including through water politics in Kafr al Bahar.

As we shall see, *sumud* is one of the key ways that Kafr al Bahar's residents are contesting naturalized notions about their inferior status as "swamp dwellers" and are engaging with the fiscal restraints that policy professionals justify through naturalized explanations about the community's premodern political culture and resource management practices, especially when it comes to water. As I see it, *sumud* is evident in Kafr al Bahar's contemporary water politics in the contentious processes of knowledge production about natural resources and their infrastructures, social differentiation, and landscape production and the way that this knowledge is anchored in history as it speaks to the contemporary moment.

By including *sumud* as a central agent involved in producing Israeli capitalism I am suggesting that focusing on the various forms that *sumud* take, offers a critical lens for grasping the concrete and relational character of nation building, settler colonialism, and global capitalism in producing Israel today. This focus on "nature" and on everyday practices builds on work within settler colonial studies that insists that settler colonial politics always implies questions related to nature and land and that the nation must be understood through such settler colonial histories rather than through the constitution of citizenship alone.

It is important to point out, however, that several scholars engaged in the study of Israeli settler colonialism in Israel-Palestine have raised questions about the challenges that deploying a settler colonial framework to explore dynamics in Israel-Palestine poses (see, for example, Bhandar, B. & Ziadah, R. 2016; Busbridge, R. 2018; Peteet, J. 2016; Ritskes, E. 2017). In my view, most of the concerns these authors raise revolve around the modes of comparison that have become more widespread as the field of settler colonial studies has consolidated itself and taken up a structural approach to comparing different settler colonial regimes. Indeed the key scholars that have shaped settler colonial studies in its contemporary form have defined settler colonialism in contrast to other colonialisms as a system of domination that does not rely on indigenous labor, and instead demands the removal or emptying the land of indigenous inhabitants (see, for example, Veracini, L. 2007; Wolfe, P. 1999). Some of the concerns of those who wonder about the usefulness of applying a settler colonial framework to Israel-Palestine include whether such a framework offers room for political de-colonial transformation (Busbridge, R. 2018), whether Israel-Palestine fits neatly into a settler colonial framework (Peteet, J. 2017), whether this framework excludes the work of earlier scholars that focused on settler colonial issues but used different conceptual tools than the ones put forward by the seminal authors in the field today (Bhandar, B. & Ziadah, R. 2016). In Israel-Palestine, for example, many of the seminal works on settler colonialism come out of history departments and, perhaps because of this, they are less cited in the contemporary revival of settler colonial literature (for such work see: Jiryis 1976; Kimmerling 1982, 1989; Lockman 1996; Rodinson 1973; Shafir 1989, 1996; Zureik 1979).[17]

Eric Rifkes, for his part, argues that the stark division between colonialism and settler colonialism forecloses possibilities for "...embracing the slippages and interplay within colonialism and settler colonialism" (2017: 80). He wants to think about the land not only in settler colonial terms of knowing, fixing, eliminating, and demarcating, but also in the ways

that Palestinian artist Amir Nizar Zuabi[18] and cultural theorist Gerald Vizenor and other anti-colonial figures conceive of it as alive and to make room for agency even when the battle appears to be lost. Bhandar and Ziadah, see promise in the burgeoning field but want to emphasize that for a comparative approach to remain relevant it must "attend to the political-economic and juridical formations that subtend colonization as a process and benefit from nuanced scholarship on the realties of settler colonialism in Canada, the United States, Australia, and for that matter, Palestine by indigenous scholar-activists." (2016)[19]

As I see it, my dissertation draws from work within the field of settler colonialism that focuses on everyday practices associated with nature, and the politics of recognition, refusal, and inclusion as well as those that attend to the ongoing role of dispossession in producing contemporary capitalism (Coulthard, G. 2007 & 2014; Goldstein, A. 2017; Salamanca, O. 2014; Simpson, A. 2007 & 2014; Vizenor, G. 1998) and brings it into conversation with Gillian Hart's work on relational comparison (2016). It builds on work within indigenous settler colonial studies, for example, that explore everyday politics among indigenous communities that center on a refusal to accept the terms of recognition, inclusion, and bounding set by settler colonial policies, laws, and norms (Coulthard, G. 2007 & 2014; Simpson, A. 2007). The notion of *sumud* resonates in particular with indigenous scholar Gerald Vizenor's formulation of the notion of "survivance" which signifies a multi-dimensional relationship with the earth – mental, spiritual, physical – through which North American indigenous communities have managed not only to endure hardship and continue to live, but to root their active presence in the landscape even as standard discourses about the "dead Indian" seek to represent their presence and shaping of the world in which we live as having ended long ago (Vizenor, G. 1998). Thus, the particular attention that a settler colonial framework pays to land and nature, understood as a product of violent colonial histories, and the way it foregrounds this history as central to contemporary indigenous politics in which land and nature, as well as indigenous people are seen as historical-geographical agents, provides key insights into the way that Judaization's demarcation of space is inseparable from the politics and practices of *sumud*.

Drawing such insights from this work, and placing it in relation to Hart's elaboration of relational comparison, I believe, allows me to address the questions of comparison that the scholars of Israel-Palestine indicated above have raised about the settler colonial framework as a whole. This is because bringing Bertell Ollman's philosophy of internal relations (1971 & 2003) together with Lefebvre's theory of the production of space with its emphasis on everyday practices (1991 [1974]), offers a way to attend to historical and geographical specificities at the same time as it allows us to grasp these specificities through their interconnection to what is going on elsewhere. In doing so, I am able to make larger claims about the particular situation on which I am focused without dimishing its specificity. Thus, the aim is not to try to capture the whole from a universal standpoint outside of the sets of relations we are exploring, but to try to grasp internal ties between the parts from specific vantage points. In this dissertation I illuminate the distinctive ways that water sector restructuring and spatial compression associated with discriminatory planning, have come together and are feeding into new ways of understanding and engaging with water resources in Kafr al Bahar. Such developments are pushing ethical questions about the meaning of responsibility in relation to the nation, to the individual, to the public, and to the collective good to the forefront of debate in the town and, as we shall see, are also connected to larger political and economic dynamics in Israel today.

The other insight that a settler colonial lens offers for thinking about Israel-Palestine is that, unlike the majority of work on Israel's national character and political structure, a settler colonial framework does not set up the forces of global cosmopolitanism associated with global capitalism as separately opposed to Israel's national bounding project (see, for example Rouhana, N., & Yiftachel 1998; Peled, Y. 2005; Smooha, S. 1998; Yiftachel 2006).[20] Andy Clarno who situates his work within the field of settler colonialism tries to counter this tendency by highlighting the paradox of proliferating walls, enclaves, and security forces aimed at policing the poor and marginalized in Johannesburg and Jerusalem that emerged during periods of ostensible peace when Apartheid was ending, the Oslo Accords were underway, the Cold War had ended, and both country's were ushering in neoliberal forms of capitalist development using the rhetoric of open borders. In his view, critical analysis of the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict focuses "...almost entirely on unequal power relations and the overwhelming ability of Israel to shape and manipulate the Oslo process," but does not recognize the constitutive role that neoliberal forms of capitalism play in this process (Clarno 2009).[21]

Evidently, the problem is similar when it comes to comparative political economic analysis of Israel. For example, in the forward to the recent book edited by Political Economists Asa Maron & Michael Shalev, John L. Cambell suggests that the reason that comparative political economists have neglected Israel in their studies of globalization and neoliberalism, is because "[n]ationalism is not something with which most comparativists are concerned or that fits neatly into their analytic framework ...." (2017: ix). Thus, the way that I am conceiving of *sumud* draws on work within the realm of settler colonial studies that sees questions of dispossession, segregation, and differentiation associated with the water and land, as ongoing and central to the way that capitalism operates in many parts of the world (Algazi, G. 2006; Clarno, A. 2017; Goldstein. A. 2017, Salamanca, O. 2014). This body of work has, in different ways, shown how contemporary militarized strategies of separation, segregation, and violence, actually articulate with current processes of neoliberal restructuring in Israel. However, I seek to put everyday practices associated with "nature" at the center of my approach.

Lastly, the benefit of focusing a settler colonial lens on Israel-Palestine is that it undermines the notion of the exceptionalism of Zionist/Israeli forms of domination, as well as the exceptionalism that is sometimes evident in Palestinian anti-colonial discourse that, in Bhandar and Zadiah's words establishes "...a temporal distinction that posits settler colonialism in Canada...as something that happened to the First Nations, and continues to happen in Palestine. Thereby presenting Israel as the exceptional and 'unfinished' settler colonial project" (2016). Omar Jabary Salamanca's work, it seems to me, suggests a way to use the comparative tools of settler colonialism in a way that illuminates interconnections without reducing historical and geographical dynamics of settler colonialism in specific sites. In his 2014 article entitled "Hooked on Electricity: The charged political economy of electrification in Palestine," he highlights the entanglements of settler colonialism and neoliberal forms of capitalist development as they play out through struggles over the electrical grid and rising electricity prices in the West Bank.[22] In his view, the focus on infrastructure offers a way to reconnect Palestine "...to a larger set of colonial contexts where infrastructure constitute essential tools of dispossession..., as well as to global capitalist forces that shape this region..." (2014: 19). As he sees it, this focus allows him to counteract the problematic tendency of studies of the Palestine-Israel conflict to reify the spatial

delineation of the Green Line as well as the temporal distinction between the pre and post 1967 eras. In his words, such reification reinforces "...the fragmentation of the Palestinian polity [by] representing its populations as isolated and analytically separate." He asks us instead to focus on the political economic and colonial structures that both extend across and tie together both sides of the Green Line as well as link the pre and post 1967 periods. Focusing on infrastructure in his view reveals the way that "socio-technical assemblages" of which infrastructure is a part are "constituted within a broader array of histories and geographies that exceed rigid spatial and temporal boundaries, both literally and conceptually" (2014: 4).

What I seek to contribute to this framework, is a focus on how such connections are forged at the level of ordinary practices, and how it happens through notions of "nature." Everyday struggles over "nature" and water politics in particular are illuminating because such struggles are focused on connecting practical questions of material survival in terms of access to water and water infrastructure with questions of dispossession, displacement, erasure, and civil rights. Thus, I bring this distinctive settler colonial framework that places struggles over "nature" in Israel at its center, into dialogue with geographical and anthropological literature on the cultural politics of nature and difference that specifically focuses on Israel (i.e. Abufarha, N. 2008, Alatout, S. 2007, Bardenstein, C. 1999; Braverman, I. 2009; Lavi, M. 2008; McKee, E. 2015; Sufian, S. 2007).[23] Such work draws our attention to the fact that far from merely playing a neutral, passive and technical role in Israeli society, concepts of nature, and techno-environmental discourses have been integral to the Zionist project from the beginning. Through her focus on everyday gendered discourses and practices of environmentalism in Israel, Miri Lavi's work, in particular, has demonstrated how settler colonial strategies of segregation and violence are linked to nationalism on the one hand, and neoliberal restructuring on the other (2008). Moreover, Samer Alatout, who focuses specifically on water in Israel, has been central to my understanding of water as a key arena of scientific knowledge production that has served to render water technical at the same time as these renderings of water have reinforced the boundaries of the nation, shaped Israeli forms of governance and surveillance, fed into asymmetrical power relations between Arabs and Jews, and has conditioned Jewish-Israeli subjectivity (2007). In this dissertation I build on Alatout's work and extend it through an ethnographic engagement with everyday practices understood through the lens of settler colonialism. Doing so, allows me to shed light on the way that political ideologies and modes of governance associated with water that Alatout elaborates, gain traction in particular places and, in the process, are transformed through their interactions with other forces at play in Israel today.

## Chapter Organization

I have structured my dissertation chapters in a somewhat unconventional manner in which the chapters' writing styles differ from one another and not all the chapters are organized around the same principles (e.g. one chapter focuses on analytical categories, another is organized according to historical periods, another according institutional structures). However, as I will explain below, the reason for this unusual organization, has to do with the method that guides the presentation of my results. I begin and end with chapters that are primarily ethnographic (chapters 2 & 5) and that focus on the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar in the present moment. These chapters are separated by two historical chapters in the

middle (chapters 3 & 4). Chapter three is an interpretation of subjective historical accounts of water relations in Kafr al Bahar in terms of the significance they have for transforming *sumud* politics to fit with the present moment. Much of what constitutes *sumud*, is directed against the inhumane, indifferent, yet banal and often unintentional administrative injustices enacted by Israel's enormous bureaucratic structure, often in the realm of access to basic services especially water which holds symbolic significancet.[24] I follow this chapter up with one that situates Kafr al Bahar's water history in a broader institutional historical context that I summarized above (chapter 4). It draws on secondary sources in order to rethink the standard periodization of spatial planning policies by interpreting turning points in planning policies in terms of their shifting relations with *sumud* politics on the one hand, and the dynamics of Israeli capitalist development on the other. That is, Arab Israeli citizens facing pressures related to spatial compression have, through contentious struggle, periodically redefined *sumud* in order to respond to shifting discriminatory planning policies in the realm of land, and water. These policies have themselves changed in relation to to Israeli economic development. In other words, chapter four offers an interpretation of *sumud* as dialectically related to spatial compression on the one hand, and Israeli economic development on the other.

Together these two middle chapters, lay the groundwork for grasping the full significance of the place of water in the political struggle that erupted during Kafr al Bahar's 2013 elections that I focus on in chapter 5. Indeed during the 2013 elections the more conservative candidate who advocated for a religious, and locally bounded conception of Kafr al Bahar's heritage and identity, defeated his liberal "Zionist" rival. The outcome of the elections seemed, on the surface, to support the "incomplete modernization" thesis elaborated by Political Scientist Asa'ad Ghanem (mentioned above).

However, given the relational understanding and background provided by chapters 2, 3, and 4 we are able to read the tensions that arose, and the election results, in light of the complex history of *sumud* that permeated water politics and residents' understandings of water privatization in the town. That is, I begin with the present, work back to the past in order to decipher the preconditions out of which the present crisis has evolved, and reconsider the present in light of this past. I end by suggesting a way to think about how we might bring this "present as history" to bear on possibilities for Kafr al Bahar's future.

This organization comes out of Lefebvre's 'regressive-progressive' method (1991 [1974]) and Bertell Ollman's elaboration of the philosophy of internal relations (2003)found in Marx's lesser read works such as the Grundrisse and the 1844 Manuscripts. It is a dialectical method that employs both critical ethnography as well as spatio-historical analysis.[25] The way that I engage with this methodology in my fieldwork is by drawing on the critical ethnography tradition that takes seriously the historically and geographically relational and situated discourses and practices through which knowledge is produced and enacted (Comaroff & Comaroff 2003, Hart 2006, Lave 1992, Pred 2000, Willis 1977 & 1981). This approach focuses on the role of everyday practices in the production of space, place, and difference, and the part they play in reproducing, maintaining, and challenging naturalized socio-political, economic, cultural, and ecological boundaries and conditions that too often appear to be unfolding automatically through a single logic (e.g. territorial/political, economic, cultural, ecological, etc.). Critical ethnographic practice allows us to focus in on the way that, far from automatic, such processes, relations, and understandings have been

actively produced through participation in social life in which those involved are prompted to behave and understand their conditions in the way they do, not because of a single logic, but are influenced by all sorts of sources, some of which are more dominant at particular moments. In the process, we come to see how ordinary people are not mere recipients of structures that often appear to be unfolding automatically. They are also molding those structures, even if in partial ways, that are constrained by the limits of their environment and categories of understanding. As I explain in more detail in the conclusion to chapter five, this ethnographic focus is heavily indebted to the work of Paul Willis (1981) and his elaboration of the active work involved in cultural production and reproduction.

The complementary, if contrasting style and forms of organization of the spatio-historical analysis that I present in the middle two chapters, are designed to draw our attention to the constantly evolving spatial and historical water relations among Kafr al Bahar residents. This focus on perpetually developing relations helps us grasp the preconditions of the present moment as the historical and geographical basis out of which possible futures will be opened up and/or foreclosed. This method of doing research and clarifying results for myself refuses to interpret water indebtedness and contemporary local politics in Arab Israeli communities as islands standing outside of the larger currents of history, economics, and politics. Drawing out the links between past and present and the spatial unevenness and interconnections through which water relations are unfolding, challenges the assumption about separate premodern and modern domains that pervade analysis of Arab Israeli municipal indebtedness and local politics.

In short, the organization of my dissertation chapters reflects the larger spatio-historical dialectical method that guides it. The ethnographic and spatio-historical dimensions of this methodology draws attention to the way that residents live out water privatization in relation to planning, zoning, and building and contruction laws that severely limit where they can build and install water pipes and that activists and settler colonial scholars often characterize as instruments of settler colonialism and nationalist imperatives. It also draws attention to how they grasp these conditions through the lens of their particular water history and their sense of themselves in relation to the nation, and to the question of "national-affiliation" [Muslim Arab-Israeli citizens, semi-rural, Palestinian].

This dialectical method, with its approach to doing research, clarifying results, and presenting my results in the form of this dissertation, are the interconnected steps through which I have come to the conclusion that that struggles over "nature" reveal surprising convergences between neoliberal restructuring in Israel on the one hand and the persistence and deepening of the seemingly separate and opposed process of spatial compression in Arab-Israeli locales on the other. In bringing this introductory chapter to a close, I turn now to an outline of the chapters in terms of how the sub-arguments of each chapter build on one another and, together, help illuminate the larger argument of the dissertation that I have just laid out.

<u>Chapter 2</u>: In chapter two I trace the routes of debt payment, collection and tensions that have arisen in the context of water sector restructuring in Kafr al Bahar. Doing so allows me to illustrate the actual ways that mundane practices have played out in contradictory ways. What emerges in the process, is how the new water sector reforms intertwine with limits on building and construction in ways that undermine the municipality's ability to join a private

water corporation, to raise tax collection rates, and to receive government subsidies for water infrastructure upgrades.

Instead, we see the way that the existing limits on building and construction actually create the conditions through which the National Water Company (Mekorot) and the National Water Authority are able to impose fiscal discipline in order to punish the town for its inability to comply with new water laws, and in the process, intervene in the town's electoral process. Such forms of punishment, moreover, further undermine Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer efforts to expand the town's land reserves. The result has been to amplify the compressional stress that threatens to make life in the town impossible. That is, this chapter reveals the process of water privatization to be central to Kafr al Bahar's deepening isolation, separation from the rest of Israel, and the sense of siege in which limits on expansion force the town to grow upwards rather than outwards. What becomes apparent is that ongoing spatial compression combines with new water laws in ways that produce conditions that frustrate the ability/ desire of community members to become individualized water consumers and respond in predictable, prudent ways to price signals.

Chapter 3: The political divides within the community that became apparent almost immediately necessitates my digging deeper. Thus, in chapter three I explore the alternative local water histories through which two residents recounted their present conditions to me in order to better understand the contradictory way that the town's deepening isolation has emerged from the way that water reforms have intertwined with limits on building and construction. Both histories reflect differing understandings of *sumud* that became popular among Arab Israeli citizens after 1948 and that gained traction in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) during the 1970s.

In Kafr al Bahar, the differences in the histories that these two residents recounted, point to two different kinds of *sumud* politics, both of which revolve around the community's historical engagements with water – with the Mediterranean Sea on the one hand, and with Takbir Marshes on the other. The history told by the fisherman who organized his account in relation to the sea, and the politics and practices of *sumud* it illustrates emerged in the context of an emergency (the war of 1948 and the period of Military Rule over Arab Israeli communities that remained after 1948 and lasted from 1948 to 1966). This history and the form of *sumud* it communicates is framed by a sense of crisis and the way that in order to survive such crisis Palestinians who remained in Israel, and who survived 1948, were increasingly thrust upon their narrow circle of the extended family. The other alternative history came out of the period of generational rebellion that followed on the heels of military rule (post-1966). By the 1980s it had consolidated around the question of access to basic services, especially water infrastructure, and it linked these issues to struggles for civil rights and against erasure.

The interplay of these histories in local politics and its implications for residents understanding of present conditions in the town, reveals the way that the community's water resources have shaped both understandings of the contemporary water situation, and are part of a contentious process of reformulating *sumud* to fit with present circumstances in the town. Moreover, it highlights the centrality of water resources to notions and practices of *sumud* that, in Kafr al Bahar, is associated specifically with resistance to dispossession from water resources. The tensions in the relationship of the two alternative histories to one

another, is apparent in the political divides within the community that we explore in chapter five. Finally, this chapter demonstrates that, despite their differences, both alternative natural histories foreground the community's active role in constituting the local waterscape as a way of defending against claims that the community has no real historical and, hence, contemporary right to the land and water resources of the area. In short, this chapter establishes the significance of water to *sumud* on the one hand, and the importance of *sumud* to revealing the active role of Kafr al Bahar residents are molding their environment as best they can within the limits imposed by the rules and regulations of Israel's land regime, and its role in nation-building.

Chapter 4: This chapter traces the longer lineage of the tradition of *sumud* and ties this longer lineage to signficance of the water histories presented in the previous chapter. In doing so, it continues the effort of chapter three to write the history of the present conjuncture, but brings it into conversation with questions of political economy and Israeli capitalist development. In order to do this, it situates the two alternative histories recounted in chapter three in a series of turning points after the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 in which the institutional structures, particularly those that are part of complex bureaucratic web that has become known as Israel's land regime, shifted in its methods of containment of Arab Israeli communities inside Israel. Indeed, the two alternative histories, and the way they express differing interepretations and visions of *sumud*, came out of several different periods of transformation in the lives of Arab Israeli citizens that developed in relation to shifts in planning policies on the one hand, and Israeli capitalist development on the other.

In the last section of this chapter I demonstrate how the series of turning points through which *sumud* was redefined came to the fore in Kafr al Bahar in 1989, when the entrenched political leader that had headed Kafr al Bahar's local council since its establishment in 1965, was defeated by a rival who saw himself as upholding the liberal values of the younger generation. These values centered on the idea that given Kafr al Bahar's ongoing dispossession from its water-based methods of subsistence, and the increasing commodification of Kafr al Bahar residents' livelihoods, particularly in the context of limits on the town's expansion, water infrastructure ought to be linked to dicourses of civil rights and entitlement or citizenship privileges rather than to national service or citizenship obligations. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to this political movement as the 1989 generation.

The institutional-conjunctural framework that I lay out in this chapter provides a way of grasping the tensions that arose in relation to water cutoffs and water debt during Kafr al Bahar's local elections that I focus on in the subsequent chapter. By focusing on periods of redefinition of *sumud* in relation to shifts in the institutional structures that govern the lives of Arab citizens of Israel, it draws attention to the connection between the tensions within Kafr al Bahar to Arab Israeli citizens longer history of struggle against erasure and the role of the notion of water as a public good in this broader struggle. It elaborates the way that a non-national version of the public that emerged after 1948 came into conflict with the conception of the nation as the key determinant and form of legitimation for how water/resources would be allocated. Presenting this broader context of *sumud* allows us to grasp its resonances in the present moment and in the political divides in the town that have deepened and splintered in the context of the contemporary water crisis. In short, it offers a historical-geographical framing of contemporary tensions in Kafr al Bahar that, I have

contended, are part of a contentious process of translating the politics *sumud* in order to address and engage with the challenges of the present conjuncture.

Chapter 5: In this chapter I bring the framework laid out in the previous chapters, to bear on the tensions that arose around water cutoffs and on the tensions that erupted during Kafr al Bahar's the 2013 local elections. This chapter describes how the historical lines of division that arose after Israel's establishment have remerged in a new form in the context of Kafr al Bahar's contemporary water debt crisis. In this environment, a political split has occurred within the ranks of the 1989 generation. This split has occurred as the Mayor, who had once been the front man for the 1989 rebellion, increasingly appeared to be embracing neoliberal restructuring of the water sector, blaming his own people for their lack of compliance with the new water rules, and justifying the National Water Company's punitive water cutoffs. In the process, I try to bring out the way that the Mayor's rhetoric and the disorder that his leadership seemed to bring about, was not simply the result of his personality flaws or a sort of lack of public spirit to which Arab communities are prone, as is often claimed by policy experts. It had to do with the intense pressure that the Mayor was under as a result of local budget restructuring that, since 2001, had plunged Arab local governments into fiscal crisis and the debilitating position this placed him in.

In the context of rising discontent with the Mayor, the splinter group that by that time, had defected from the 1989 generation, launched a campaign to protest water cutoffs. This organizing activity became known as the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign. At first the Campaign gained widespread support, but it sooned fizzled out when the Ministry of the Interior responded by dismantling the Local Council, replacing it with its own appointed officials, and imposing debt restructuring conditions on the Council. Such conditions included raising water tariff collection rates. This reinforced the notion that the community could not govern itself.

During the local elections that occurred shortly after this, the conservative political faction that was descended from the Mukhtar (local non-religious clan leader) mobilized memories of life under military rule (1948-1966) to frame and make sense of contemporary punitive measures that manifested in water cutoffs and fused this with new ideas coming out of Israel's Islamic Movement about the need to foster the autonomy and independence of Arab Israeli society against the onslought of increasingly conservative politics of Jewish-Zionist political parties. In doing so, the Mayor's rival positioned himself as better than his opponent at protecting the community from arbitrary punishment imposed by the Israeli state, and argued that public demonstration and organizing in civil society was ineffective, and perhaps risky. As we shall see the overall effect of the tensions between political camps in the period leading up to the elections was to exacerbate a sense of the precarious place of the town within Israel and in relation to the nation. Public policy professionals and scholars from Haifa University described the return to power of leaders such as he, as part of a new retrograde political movement expressed in the return to pre-modern (pre-1948) politics governed by clan-based loyalties in Arab communities.

The context provided by the previous chapters, however, enables me to provide a different interpretation of the return to power of the conservative mayor and the political tensions that tore the community apart during the elections. In the context of contempary fiscal restraints and the longer lineage of *sumud*, we can interpret the return to power of the

conservative mayor as part of an effort of the community to organize in such a way so as to provide social welfare, security and meet basic needs in profoundly insecure circumstances.

As the previous chapters makes clear, part of the contemporary need to redefine water politics in relation to *sumud* is that even though water is still a public resource in Israel, the new water laws have attempted to place its allocation in the hands of private water companies. The National Water Company still provides water to Kafr al Bahar. However, according to the new water corporation law introduced in 2001, the municipality has botched its chances at introducing a private water company and this is one reason it is not eligible to receive central government subsidies to upgrade its dillapidated infrastructure. Thus, even though water remains a public good, criticism of exclusion in the realm of provisioning cannot rely on a normative notion of water as a public good from which no member of the public can be excluded. This has made it harder for the 1989 generation that elaborated a historically inflected model of the public/ citizen to produce a sense of unity in order to contest water cutoffs and associated forms of fiscal discipline. Thus, a contentious process of redefining *sumud* is now underway that is shaped both by the profoundly insecure material circumstances in which the residents find themselves, and the increasing difficulty of making demands for inclusion in the name of democratic and public welfare.

The second part of this chapter shifts from a focus on local politics, to a focus on how ordinary residents are making sense of both the water crisis, as well as the political turmoil that it produced. In doing so, it seeks to highlight the role of ordinary residents in shaping public political outcomes in Kafr al Bahar in order to challenge the standard accounts of Arab local politics that treat local residents as passively subservient to authoritarian leaders and clan divides. Everyday practices of illegal and unmetered piping connections and community efforts to restore non-state water resources such as the wells and springs, in the context of water privatization, has lead to a reformulation of the meaning of these practices among ordinary people in Kafr al Bahar. Through personal accounts of the sense of duty and responsibility of residents to one another that are evident in existing water piping and debt sharing arrangements and residents' justifications for them, we begin to perceive alternative rationalities that residents are developing to make sense of these arrangements. Such logics, moreover, contradict liberal notions of personal responsiblity embedded in today's water policies and are influenced, as well, by new forms of organizing initiated by the Islamic Movement, that have emerged out of conditions of fiscal crisis in Arab communities throughout Israel. The conservative candidate for his part, was affiliated with the Islamic Movement even though the Movement stopped officially participating in elections long ago. Today the Islamic Movement is involved in developing its own interpretation of Islamic values that incorporates liberal notions of democratic citizenship rights, a commitment to defending the collective and individual rights of ordinary Arab Israelis across differences of religion and sects. What becomes clear is the role that ordinary residents shifting "common sense" has in shaping the outcome of the local elections. The victory of the more conservative candidate during the 2013 elections could not have occurred if he had not, to some degree, been carried by the tide of popular feeling in the town.

To put it differently, the connections between internal politics that appear, at first glance, to be unconnected to supposed apolitical water reforms become clear in this chapter. They are no longer obscured by a technocratic logic. Recognition of the common sense

understandings, moreover, reminds us that there is nothing automatic about the victory of the Mukhtar's descendent. Indeed, the understandings that the victorious candidate seized upon and the way he put them to work are far from etched in stone. As we shall see, the struggle to redefine *sumud* in relation to water and in light of the town's water history continues. The efforts of ordinary residents to grasp the conditions produced by new water rules and regulations are, just as with local politicians vicious struggle to lead the community into the future, part of an effort to organize and transform received worldviews associated with the place of Kafr al Bahar residents in relation to the nation, and in relation to Israeli democracy.

## <u>Chapter 2</u>: The social relations of water debt: practices & tensions

One warm summer evening, after strolling through the town of Kafr al Bahar observing the crumbling water infrastructure and pointing out the places where sewage overflows during rains, Nadim invited me to his family home to give him a better sense of how he could "help" me collect the water data that I wanted. Nadim was an aspiring politician in his mid-30s who spearheaded the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign that led the community protests during the water cutoffs. He described himself as a member of Kafr al Bahar's younger generation. In his view this affiliation helped inform his stance in opposition to the clan-based interests of his seniors who concerned themselves with self-aggrandizement, rather than with Kafr al Bahar's public good.

Upon our return to his family home that day we found his mother and his youngest sister preparing the evening meal in the kitchen. The kitchen had been built as an addition to the original home in order to accomodate the growing family. Like all the rooms of the house, it was an isolated structure, and was adjacent to the one that housed Nadim and his unmarried brother's bedroom. The ad-hoc construction of the home matched the unplanned appearance of the town. As we shall see, however, these conditions were not due to the municipality's lack of plans or want of trying to plan. It had to do with persistent obstacles that the Interior Ministry placed before the municipality everytime the municipality proposed modifying zoning regulations, and expanding the borders of the town. This setting framed the literal and figurative explanation that Nadim offered that evening of the roots of the water crisis that Kafr al Bahar faced and that I recount shortly.

In this chapter I focus on the relationship between the water cutoffs that the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign protested, and the way Kafr al Bahar's constricted boundaries shape and intertwine with common debt payment and common, often complex debt collection strategies. Such strategies have developed in order to serve the needs of poor residents who cannot always afford to pay their water bills, and who lack the adequate physical infrastructure that would, in theory, enable smooth water delivery. My purpose in laying out such water payment and collection strategies, is to shed light the convergence of new water pricing reforms with ongoing limits on building construction, and constraints upon the physical expansion of the town. I argue that this convergence is one of the key elements feeding into Kafr al Bahar's water crisis and is central to the way that Kafr al Bahar residents live out water privatization and participate in the the contradictory process through which it water privatization is unfolding in practice.

More specifically, severe spatial compression emanating from policies aimed at strengthening Israel's sovereignty through territorial demarcation have combined with a 2009/10 spike in water rates, and an associated ban on discounts for water bills in a way that has thwarted efforts to enforce water tariff collection and intensified the water crisis. In the process, informal attempts to distinguish those who cannot afford to pay their water bills from those who refuse to pay their water bills have become increasingly contentious. Tracing the contradictory strategies of water debt payment and collection and the understandings of those participating in these strategies, reveals the way that water privatization in Kafr al Bahar is playing out in practice in relation to settler colonial strategies of segregation, and the delineation of ongoing national identities. Studying water privatization from the vantage point of Kafr al Bahar allows us to grasp the interconnections between economic

restructuring in Israel and the new forms of nationalism thus challenging the widespread notion that water privatization has not reached Kafr al Bahar and that water crisis in the town is the "natural" consequence of premodern resource management practices and politics

What we find is that the channels of payment and collection that underpin relations of water debt are made and remade in relation to central government policies regarding private water provisioning. In Kafr al Bahar, these channels have been continually remade to preserve some measure of social security within the community. In other words, they have been made, remade, and maintained to serve ends vastly different from what policy professionals understood to be possible. What appears to be an inability to respond to price signals, and hence, conserve and efficiently allocate water and financial resources in the name of the public good, masks the actual collective ways that people manage their debt under circumstances of increasing confinement and hardship.

**Chapter organization**

Part 1 of this chapter, explores the complex dynamics of debt payment and decision making processes. In part 2 I move from the consideration of issues involved in payment of water bills, to a consideration of the dilemnas associated with collecting water payments. I begin part 1 by laying out the contemporary discursive framework emanating from within the water sector that frames water development in the dichotomous terms of efficiency versus waste. In the second section I explore the way that such dichotomous framings surreptitiously, and sometimes more blatantly, creep into analysis of basic statistics about the town's socio-economic conditions, its water debt, and how such understandings pervade efforts to distinguish between those who cannot afford to pay, and those who refuse to pay. What is missing from such analysis, I contend, are the actual conditions shaping residents' decision making processes through which they determine when and how to pay their water tariff bills. I challenge conventional analysis of the water crisis by drawing attention to the way that payment strategies are entangled with existing limits on building and construction and the process of spatial compression that permeate all aspects of everyday life in the town. Discriminatory construction regulations have led to a situation in which households in Kafr al Bahar tend underreport the number of people living together under one roof. As a consequence, many residents water bills indicate the rates that apply to high volume water users. Such charges are interpreted by outsiders as another example of the community's mismanagement of national environmental and local fiscal resources. These conceptions reinforce old notions of the community as wasteful, profligate, and unfit for self-government.

I then turn in the third section to an elaboration of the new pricing reforms in order to further illustrate the limits of the claims of water economists and professionals that reduce the privatization process to the apolitical realm of behavioral economics. These observers see the privatization process as separately opposed to "competing" national-scale or "political" water discourses, policies and practices (see for example Kislev 2011, Feitelson 2002, Feitelson & Fischhendler 2009). From this perspective, the reasons for low tax collection rates and the failure of Arab communties to respond rationally to price signals, and hence to conserve of precious water resources are clan-based culture and resistance to the Jewish state (e.g. Ghanem 2001). Having laid out some of the concrete conditions shaping water tariff payment practices allows me to point out the contradictions inherent in

the process of privatization itself that are not apparent in the uniform logic that policymakers use to justify water sector restructuring.

In the fourth section I trace the the stop-and-go routes through the town in order to illustrate a process of socio-spatial production in which residents are engaged in a process of molding their constricted environment as best they can to meet the social needs of the community as a whole in the realm of water. My aim is to highlight the routes of water payment in the town in order to demonstrate concretely the complex and contradictory relations that are obscured and distorted by efforts to interpret statistical data and responses to price signals separately from material conditions shaped by limits on building and construction. That is, I turn to the way that building restrictions and the new pricing reforms come together in distinct and perhaps unexpected ways. We see how personalized social relations, despite state efforts to discourage such relations in the realm of water tariff payment, remain fundamental to the way that people in Kafr al Bahar pay and manage their water bills/debt. Attention to the actual material conditions shaping water tariff payment in the town highlights the deeply conflictual and troubling problems that have arisen out of efforts to distinguish those who refuse to pay their bills from those who cannot afford to pay their bills and the difficulties associated with efforts to pinpoint the institutions and forces responsible for increasing hardship in Arab communities such as Kafr al Bahar. From within the community, shaped as it is by building restrictions, we see that dominant explanations for low tax collection rates do not speak to the actual experience of Arab citizens in relation to the new pricing reforms. In short, in-depth attention to the actual conditions and practices determining water debt payment and collection among residents draws our attention to the distinctive way that ongoing methods of spatial compression have intertwined with new rules and laws governing water tariff payment and provisioning in Kafr al Bahar.

In Part 2 I explore the conflictual dynamics of water tariff collection by focusing on the difficulties that Ibrahim, Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer, confronted as he attempted to tread the fine line between the new impersonal requirements of the state, and the requirements and needs of his community in which he was born and raised. He felt that the modernizing role he had hoped to play when he took the job in the 1980s were now farther out of reach than ever before. Through infrastructure he hoped modernize the community and connect it to the opportunities for freedom and mobility that appeared, for a time, to be available to all citizens of Israel regardless of what Israelis refer to as "national affiliation" and religion. These dreams have been frustrated and he now spends his time figuring out how and when to enforce punishment for lack of compliance with state laws that no longer allow discounts or personal judgement when it comes to paying water bills. Ibrahim's attempts to improvise solutions in order to address the tensions that the convergence of the new water rules with ongoing spatial compression has produced, makes vividly clear the way that intra-community conflicts are connected to forces that extend beyond Kafr al Bahar’s borders and that are intimately tied to questions of nationalism, and the demarcation of borders.

## PART I: Water Payment

### 1. Discursive dichotomies & the nation: waste vs. efficiency

Popular discursive constructions

To understand the culturized views dominated popular and scholarly discussion about water sector restructuring, it is useful to locate such views in relation to the Israeli Water Authority's intensive public relations campaign aimed at encouraging water conservation and building public support for the new water reforms (the most intense phase was from 2005-2012). The education component of the campaign was part of a larger demand-side management scheme that, in addition to its focus on education, included television and radio ads, water pricing, and the introduction of water saving technologies in the home (Katz 2016).[26] Despite the campaign's rhetoric about pure economics, and environmental efficiency, it operated in a nationalist register.

In the words of the Water Authority, its education and ad campaign "..focused on the national motivation in order to assist the nation in coping with the crisis in the water sector. It is estimated that explanatory actions alone may save 10-15% of the domestic water consumption" (Water Authority).[27] One particularly popular educational ad showed Jewish Israeli celebrities calling on Israelis to "rescue the Kinneret" (aka the Sea of Galilee & Lake Tiberias). The Kinneret is a lake in northern Israel that serves as a reservoir for the network of pipes and pumping stations that carry water from the headwaters of the Jordan River in the north, to the Negev Desert in the south. Prior to the widespread introduction of desalinized water into the national water grid at the end of the first decade of the 2000s,[28] the Kinneret provided the bulk of Israel's drinking water. Widespread popular interest in the Lake's water level emerged in the 1980s when the Committee of Scientists for Water Affairs and the Israeli State Comptroller revealed the degraded condition of the Lake to public (Tal, A. 2004). Citizens began paying close attention to its level. A monitoring system which divided the Lake level into an upper red line, lower red lines, and a black line indicating severe drought and degredation of the Kinneret, became a matter of public concern. The health of the Kinneret soon became widespread symbol of the well-being of the country as a whole. Indeed, the agricultural ethic of the early Zionists in combination with the sense of the need for self-sufficiency in the face of looming geopolitical threats, made the Kinneret into a strategic national resource on which citizens felt that the survival of the Israeli state depended (Siegel, S. 2015; Tal, A. 2002).

Water professionals, economists, and popular proponents of private water provisioning that I encountered during my research were at great pains to demonstrate that the new era of water development was irrevocably cut off from earlier eras in which Zionist and nationalist imperatives associated with agricultural self-sufficiency and Jewish settlement guided water development. Yet, the way that the water saving campaign mobilized previous nationally based water ideology was evident in the calculated ways that ad campaigns played upon a sense of national spirit and duty often associated with military service. I got a first-hand glimpse of the taken-for-granted relationship between the notions about economic and environmental efficiency in relation to military national service from a Jewish radio personality who was prominent among the residents of the artists' village where I was living. This man was known for as having had a high-ranking position as an IDF (Israel Defense

Forces) fighter pilot and was proud to remind village residents of his pioneer (*halutz*) heritage that extended back to his father who had died fighting in the 1948 war that established the state of Israel. He was also an enthusiastic defender of "the environment." He often spearheaded village efforts to stop military and real-estate development along the mediterranean shore where so many Israelis living along the coast sought relief from the overpowering summer heat. Upon learning about my focus on water in Israel, he revealed that he had created his own computer program that calculated household water savings as national service. He explained that "...all you have to do is log into your account, enter amounts of water used and then it will show you how much water you've saved for the nation. Each drop saved shows up as your contribution to the nation." His computer program, thus, deployed the notion that water saving was an act of national service, and that, by extension, high-volume water use was not only environmentally destructive, but also unpatriotic. Although perhaps he is an extreme example of the articulation of the environment with the (Jewish) nation, his computer program reproduced precisely the rhetorical effect that the the Water Authority intended with its public relations ads. His explanation of his computer modeling system resonated with a deeply held sense of duty and obligation among Jewish citizens that had emerged in the early years of Israeli water development and intensified with the Water Authority's public relations ads about the Kinneret.

Environmental Sociologist Samer Alatout's work illuminates the political, and power-laden context in which scientific and technological water expertise in Israel has been produced and has shaped the Israeli state, its forms of governance, Israeli Jewish subjectivities, as well as power relations that pervade Israel society more generally (2009). He elaborates the paradoxical and shifting ways in which discourses of water conservation, abundance, and scarcity have historically worked together with discourses of water waste. Such discourses, he shows, have been produced through the very technoscientific debates, technologies, and institutions that were developed in order to render water purely technical. In the process, he highlights the role of that water engineers have played in popular and scholarly narratives about water development in which they were represented as agents of progress who designed the technology necessary to realize the "...'heroic' greening of the desert,....[turning] the land into a living space bustling with agricultural activity after centuries of neglect and destruction under Arab political and cultural regimes...." (Alatout, S. 2008: 960).[29] Such greening of the desert was only possible because the network of pipes known as the National Water Carrier channeled water from the Kinneret in the semi-arid north to the arid south of the country. As American-Israeli environmentalist Alon Tal humorously remarks in his environmental history of Israel, the construction of the National Water Carrier was a "herculean" task that fulfilled the "'sacred' mission, which had started with Herzl's romantic vision" (2004: 212). The vision he refers to is the one that Herzl developed in his futuristic utopian novel, Altneuland (Old New Land; 1902), that painted a picture of Israel with tree-lined boulevards, a cultivated desert, and a gigantic canal that brought water from northern Jordan River, outside the basin to provide water to coastal cities and to the Negev Desert in the southern part of the country. The resonance of this earlier era of water development and the political debates through which knowledge about water in Israel has historically been produced was palpable in the water authority's public relations campaign.

The Water Authority's ad campaigns that called on Israelis to "rescue the Kinneret" implicitly drew on the central place of the Lake in making possible the success of the

National Water Carrier and national development more generally. The ad campaign, thus, sheds light on the discursive framework shaping popular and professional interpretations of statistics such as those that seem to point to Kafr al Bahar residents' over-use of water resources. Such understandings also shapes common sense conceptions about water development and conservation. Thus, despite the seemingly apolitical efficiency oriented aims of current water reforms, the understandings of conservation, and waste that the Water Authority ads conveyed, informed and reflected popular and professional understandings of water management and restructuring in which the reverberations of earlier water development narratives were evident. This framework justified the imposition of painful fiscal restraints on Kafr al Bahar's Local Council and limited and obscured understandings of the distinctive way that key forces of spatial compression were coming together with water sector restructuring to shape water use, payment, and collection in Arab communities. We now turn to the fragmentary way such a conception of conservation and waste expressed itself in relation and within Kafr al Bahar in particular.

Discursive constructions specific to Kafr al Bahar

I first became aware of Kafr al Bahar's water troubles in a meeting with an activist by the name of Hagit who worked for a Jewish organization called Sikkuy (Eng: Chance), The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality. Hagit worked out of a shared loft space in a formerly industrial area on the outskirts of Binyamina, the nearest large Jewish city to the South of Kafr al Bahar. Her work consisted of researching and publicizing information about civil rights issues in the Hof HaCarmel Regional Council where I was living. Kafr al Bahar bordered the regional council area to the South. Recognizing that my aim was to involve myself as much as possible in the politics of water infrastructure in the area, she suggested that I begin by looking into what was going on in Kafr al Bahar. She explained that the town had been experiencing periodic water cutoffs as a result of its municipal debt to the National Water Company (Mekorot) which provided the town with water for domestic use. "The best thing you can do," Hagit told me, "is to teach them how to conserve water. The people there are descended from swamp-dwellers, they are very simple. That sort of education is essential for them to learn how to stop wasting water. " She put me in touch with Noor, a community organizer from Kafr al Bahar whom she liked and respected for her ability to interact with everyone – across cultures, and towns.

Over the course of my research I became close to Noor, participating in many of the women's group activities that Noor organized in the community. Because I had no car, and there was no bus service into the town, and I did not live in the town, I often ended up relying on Noor to pick me up by car on Highway 4 where the bus stop was located. Soon after our introduction Noor organized a meeting that she hoped would help me advance my research on water. Abed, the principal of Kafr al Bahar's technical highschool hosted the meeting in his office which also served as the staff meeting room. Tareq, the town historian and the local head of youth services was also there. During this first meeting we sat awkwardly around a long rectangular table. The physical distance between us intensified the discomfort in the room that seemed to arise from the assumption among those present at the meeting that my work regarding water had to do with minimizing waste, and encouraging water conservation. After much deliberation, in which I struggled to explain myself and Abed struggled to understand my research, Abed finally said "well, of course money to pay back the water debt is what we need the most, but if you cannot get us that, then I believe

that the best thing you can do is to teach a class to high school students about how not to waste water." It, thus, appeared on the surface that Abed had internalized the idea that the reasons for water problems and debt in the town had to do with water overuse and waste and that this could be remedied through education.

Abed's suggestion signaled that he was aware of the way the mainstream public viewed water debt issues in Arab communities. However, I did not have to dig far to understand that, from the vantage point of those sitting around the table, the understandings and practices associated with water debt among residents of Kafr al Bahar had little to do with ignorance, overuse, or waste. This became apparent soon after the meeting when I began trying to find accurate statistics about the town's water use, debt, and its socio-economic structure. The complex issues that I encountered in relation to interpretations of Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) data about the town, shaped as they were by the discursive understandings laid out above, as well as my difficulties locating municipal statistics about water, foreshadowed what would increasingly become clear throughout my fieldwork: That water tariff payment was inseparable from the ongoing process of spatial compression and the association of this process with the delineation of the national and ethnic boundaries and deepening segregation in Israel.

## 2. Situating missing local statistics in the context of spatial compression

I now turn to an account of the way that my difficulties locating municipal level statistics were connected to the constraints that shaped community members so-called free choice in the realm of water payment and collection, and the community's inability to comply with contemporary water reforms. As we shall see in the following section, what instantly became clear from the difficulties I encountered during my preliminary search for accurate municipal water data, was the inadequacy of deploying national level Central Bureau of Statistics data, clan-based politics, and/or other cultural deficiencies manifest in the realm of environmental awareness and economic competency, as discrete heavily determining variables, to explain low water tariff payment and collection rates. Such explanations did not account for the actual conditions of spatial compression that influenced the production and lack of production of statistics about water in the town. Even though Abed and others sometimes decried the lack of awareness among residents about water conservation, the willful absence of local level statistics, as we shall see, pointed to local officials' implicit recognition of the hypocrisy of the charges of lack of conservation ethics and water wastage among Kafr al Bahar residents.

The inadequacy of deploying a dichotomous understandings of waste and efficiency to interpret Kafr al Bahar's water crisis was nowhere more evident than in the vicious bureaucratic circle that confounded and fed into local officials municipal record keeping strategies and water tariff collection practies. The day Nadim had taken me on a tour of the crumbling infrastructure in the town and returned to his ad-hoc family compound, I had been trying for some time to get my hands on municipal records that would fill the gaping holes in central government statistics by providing municipal level data that systematically recorded how much water was allocated per person per household, and how much people paid for these allocations. When I had not found any, I had come to Nadim as a last resort.

It so happened that the puzzle behind the missing statistics did in fact become clear to me in the course of conversation with Nadim that day in context of the contradictory atmosphere created by Nadim's meticulous accounting of the details of the town's budgetary issues against the setting of his provisional office in his bedroom which, as mentioned earlier, he shared with his brother. He used the room to hold meetings and discussions related to his political and journalistic work that was part of what he saw as his efforts to advocate for his town. He pulled out two folding chairs from the corner, placed a small round table between them, and brought his younger sister into the room to bring us tea and to practice her English with me while he went to shower and to change his clothes that, after our long walk through the town, were damp with sweat.

When he returned he urged me to begin the conversation by asking him questions. He told me that he was a virtual walking database of Kafr al Bahar statistics as well as a student of public policy, both of which put him in a position to answer my questions effectively. At the same time, however, it was obvious from his misunderstanding of my compliment of his sister's English and my reference to how much water prices had risen that he was accustomed to fielding offensive questions and to defending himself and his community against the scorn of the public who viewed Kafr al Bahar as a provincial town of uneducated residents with profligate tendencies. Indeed, he mistook my praise of his sister's English as a criticism of *his* inability to speak English and my question about how much water prices had risen as a sign that he was unaware of the processing costs involved in modern water provisioning. With regard to his English, he explained that only Jews learn English in primary school and that Arabs living in Israel must learn Hebrew before they begin to learn English, not to mention the gaping disparities in funding between Arab and Jewish schools and teacher training programs. It seemed to me that the special emphasis he placed on his computer-like knowledge of the town's basic statistics as well as his ability to remember every face, no matter how much it had changed since he had seen it last, was his way of responding to the acute awareness that residents had of the preconceptions that most outsiders held of Kafr al Bahar. In contrast to his cousin, a soccer star, and the pride of the town, who remained in her sweaty sports clothing and periodically made appearances in his room, he sat fresh and upright in his clean, starched clothing. During our conversations, his measured demeanor and dress, mirrored the concise, and calculated observations he made about the community and from which he could draw general conclusions about the limits and possibilities of improving public welfare.

After his reaction to my praise of his sister's English and my off-the-cuff reference to the spike in water rates, I was especially wary about asking him the question that was formeost in my mind. I wanted to get a sense of his take on the reasons for low water tariff collection rates in the town since it seemed to be the taken for granted explanation that outsiders and policy professionals offered for Kafr al Bahar's water crisis every time I mentioned the water shutoffs. Moreover, in the many conversations I had with residents as well as with water professionals, low tax collection rates always appeared to be connected in some way to Kafr al Bahar's low socio-economic ranking in national statistical records. Indeed, when speaking about Kafr al Bahar's low tax collection rate, and its municipal debt crisis, policy professionals, residents, and activists of all kinds often used the community's ranking of 1 on Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics' (CBS) socioeconomic index as shorthand for explaining the problem (2008 CBS report30).[31] Clearly, the ranking of 1 denoted poverty. Indeed, everyone inside and outside the town seemed to agree, for good

reason, that this ranking had something to do with Kafr al Bahar's fiscal difficulties, and debt. Such explanations, however, were perpetually linked, not only to low tax collection rates, but to the so-called resurgence of collectivist/ familial politics that critics argued were the cause of financial mismanagement, low tax collection rates, debt crisis, and ultimately the town's crumbling infrastructure. Yet it was altogether unclear whether those citing this ranking saw it as a cause or a consequence of low-tax collection. There was much tension, even within individual residents about how to interpret these national statistics in relation to water debt. In any case, it gave little insight into the relations of water debt that shaped decisions about whether and how municipal taxes and water tariffs would be collected and the dilemmas residents faced when trying to pay their taxes, let alone decisions about keeping municipal records on water use and rates of payment and collection.

As we talked it became clear that part of the reason for the absence of systematic calculations about water and taxes was that they were fraught with conceptual and discursive challenges and riddled with practical and ethical obstacles. There was a deliberate absence of accurate municipal level data on household size and a lack of information about private property/building size/asset surveys. In theory, information on household size could be gathered from payment of municipal taxes (Hebrew: arnona ארנונה) which are entirely made up of both property taxes, and water tariff payments which are priced according to the amount of water used per person per household. In Israel the price is 2.3 USD for up to 3.5 cubic meters (~925 US fluid gallons) per person per household month and 3.7 USD for additional water use (Water Authority). In Kafr al Bahar, however, efforts to estimate how much people paid for water on average was no simple matter.

The difficulties of enforcing water and property tax collection and, hence compiling an accurate record of municipal water use and tariff payment was a source of endless torment, and sense of failure for those who collected them. For Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer, for example, who was in charge of enforcing tax collection, the question of whether to collect, and when to punish for failure to pay taxes was a complex balancing act among the conflictual requirements of the national government, residents' well-being, and local political relations in the town. So it was that public policy and political science professionals often decried the incapacity of Arab municipal authorities to collect taxes, and the tendency of households in such communities to underreport the number of people living together under one roof. The reasons for these complexities is an indication of the contradictory character of the problem. The lack of accurate data on water payment and allocation.

In place of accurate municipal data, Nadim offered his own eminently logical and scientific analysis of the situation with respect to water debt, and collection of water tariffs. In his estimation, the pricing reforms in 2009 that had included a 30% hike in the price of water, led to a situation in which 40% of households in the community could no longer afford to pay their water bills.

Those who could no longer afford to pay their bills were faced with an added difficulty. A new amendment to the 2001 water law now banned discounts on water tariffs, and required municipalities to separate property tax collection from water tariff collection when before they had been calculated together. In practice, municipal officials in places such as Kafr al Bahar in which the municipal government was still in charge of providing water to

households, continued to collect water and property taxes together. However, those in charge of collecting taxes found themselves having to give greater discounts on property taxes in order to compensate for the higher price of water. The practice of giving discounts, as we shall see in the section that traces the routes of movement involved in paying water tariffs, was remained a highly personalized, complex process that was shaped by the constricted space of the town.

Nadim concluded that the collective water debt of the group who could not afford to pay their taxes to the municipality was still less than that of the 30% of the households who did not pay because they were connected to the ruling nuclear family, the *jib*. The debt of this powerful group, Nadim contemptuously noted, constituted 50% of the residents' water debt to the municipality. Not paying water bills, Nadim explained, was common practice in political deal making, giving favors, and avoiding payment of water taxes. It was an example of what I heard residents of Kafr al Bahar and other Arab communities refer to as the phenomema of "a political mafia class skimming cream off the top for itself." This circle was characterized by those outside the ruling nucleus, as made up of people who exploit their familial ties to get council related positions. The promise of council related positions, it must be stressed, have come to consitute 1/3 of the employment in Kafr al Bahar (municipal report). The fraction of employed residents with jobs on the council has increased as economic restructuring since the 1980s has decreased the opportunities for work outside the community in industries such as agricultural labor, in-home care, and building and construction.

In sum, the practice of avoidance of bill payment was, for a variety of reasons, a large part of the reason for the absence of accurate municipal level data data, since tax documentation would have been the main source from which to gather such information. Yet the reasons for such avoidance was not obvious. As my discussion with Nadim unfolded, it became clear that there was more to it than the backwards influence of familial politics, lack of education, or the 30-40% rise in the price of water that had made non-payment, and irregular payment when possible, a necessity of survival. The tensions that pervaded efforts to distinguish between those who could and could not pay their water bills was shaped by ongoing spatial compression which, as we shall see, entails strict zoning and building regulations that squeeze the town upwards and block its expansion outwards.

It was likely, in Nadim's view, that residents had not been informed about the new water pricing structure. But regardless, it was common practice not to report new family members. Nuclear families in Kafr al Bahar were large, defined as having 7-9 members.[32] Yet because of limits on construction of new homes as well as regulations that limited the number of floors that buildings in a non-urban community could have, families would incorporate new members without notifying authorities. The average number of people living in homes, according to Nadim, was actually between 16-20 people. Unemployment, and the shortage of childcare and community centers, moreover, meant increased numbers of people were at home using water during the daytime. What ended up happening was that the poorest and largest households, containing the most people, were being charged at the higher block rate, the rate that, in theory, applied to "water-wasters," even though they were not going over the basic allotment of 3 cubic meters per person per month. Because there was no record to indicate that more people had joined the household, they were getting charged for their supposed over-consumption of water. Thus, poor residents of Kafr al

Bahar were subsidizing the presumed low-volume/ordinary users of water.

Even Nadim, who put every effort into assuming an objective, and logical analysis could not hide his emotion about the unjust way national policies limiting the town's expansion and leading to the underreporting the number of people living in households had fed into the debt crisis. As I listened to Nadim's statistical breakdown of community water debt, I noticed that when we approached the question of those who could not pay he gestured, with an ironical smile, to our surroundings. He explained that part of the difficulty with water payments, was that when children got married, or family members were added to the household, there was no room to expand outwards. Houses rose upwards and were crammed together, as they filled with people packed tightly, one on top of the other, creating what he referred to as "...a constricting feeling." New floors and rooms were constructed as children grew up, got married and had their own children. That is, the "collective punishment" of the community for its water debt, was inseparable, in the eyes of many, from the seige-like conditions under which the community lived.

The connection of property tax data to building restrictions

The problem of not reporting family and household size to the municipality stemmed from the fact that people tried to avoid paying the amount in property taxes that would have applied to houses that were constantly growing taller as well as to avoid revealing height violations of homes large enough to house the additional number of people. The only alternative to growing taller, however, was to expand outwards towards the neighboring Jewish communities who were vehemently opposed to giving up land.[33] In order to expand the town, Kafr al Bahar's engineer had to present a Master Plan to the District Building and Planning Committees who were comprised primarily of officials from the surrounding Jewish communites.[34] Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry, a central government agency, was responsible for approving or rejecting those plans.

Numerous critical geographers, architects, and civil rights workers inside Israel have documented the refusal of the Ministry to approve plans for expansion (see for example, "Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights," online).[35] These scholars and activists have also highlighted planning policies that limit the land available to Arab communities by designating the surrounding areas as nature reserves, archeological excavation sites, military zones, and Jewish settlements. Finally, they have pointed to the Ministry's practice of generating endless amounts of red tape in order to drag out final permission when expansion plans have been approved (Falah 2003 & 2005, Hanafi 2004, Khamaisi 2000a & b, Weizman 2007; Yiftachel 2004, 2006 & 2010).[36]

The result for Kafr al Bahar was that it was forced to grow upwards rather than outwards. Even the highway that was meant to improve the mobility of those who commute along Israel's northern coast, had the opposite effect for the residents of Kafr al Bahar who lacked a freeway exit. As mentioned in the introduction, from within Kafr al Bahar, the guardrails of the coastal highway sealed the town off on its eastern edge. Its southern border towered over the town as an earthen embankment that officials of the wealthy resort town of Beit Etzion built in 2002 to "protect" their community from "noise pollution" and threats to property which, according to them, originated from Kafr al Bahar. To the north, as mentioned earlier, the fish ponds of the wealthy kibbutz of Neve Yarok, in which Kafr al

Bahar's cemetery still sits, were slowly encroaching upon the town. To the west, the fisherman of Kafr al Bahar have designated the shoreline the "fisherman's village." Legally, however, it is a state nature reserve over which the fishermen do not have jurisdication. Thus, without sufficient land reserves, residents in Kafr al Bahar, as in other Arab locales within Israel's 1948 borders, tended to build illegally on land that was not necessarily zoned for residential use. This was especially common on the edges of town. The local engineer explained to me on numerous occasions that it was rare that local officials collected property taxes for illegal structures. This was due, in part, to the vulnerability of such structures to demolition, as well as to the fact that they lacked proper utility connections and, thus, adequate basic services (discussed further later on).

In Kafr al Bahar, the tall houses squeezed up against one another, the narrow winding paved and unpaved roads, the absence of significant industry and commerce, the people gathered together at intersections that lacked sidewalks and alternative public spaces were all indications of such limits. Far from being able to expand, as we shall see, it seemed to many Kafr al Bahar residents that national government institutions such as the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the Israeli Army colluded with local planning agencies and local officials from neighboring communities to take land out of their hands in order to preserve it for various national uses that often ended up benefiting the tourism industry of neighboring communities such as Beit Etzion with its treasure chest of archeological artifacts. Ibrahim, Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer repeatedly warned about the problems of overcrowding which we explore in further detail below: "We dwell in a sensitive beach area that is significant in terms of archeologiy and nature reserves," he told the the national press in 2015, "...and it seems that the state accounts for all of this more than the people..." He went on to point out that Kafr al Bahar's population has "grown from a village to a population the size of an urban locale, but this has not been accompanied by planning visions" or by political representation at the local level in the planning committees (Ha'aretz 2015).[37]

As the borders that surrounded the town closed in on it, the buildings and the cramped spaces in between them appeared as if imploding from the forces of collision produced by the way that the neighboring Jewish towns continually encroached upon Kafr al Bahar. I use the term "*sumud*" (Arabic: sumud الصمود) to refer to residents' efforts to safeguard the boundaries of the town and to resist cultural and physical erasure. The term refers to a nonviolent form of resistance entailed in the steadfast determination to stay in place. As indicated earlier, Arab citizens and activists frequently refer to such illegal constructions as this form of resistance, *sumud*, which translates, appropriately, as "steadfastness." In subsequent chapters, we explore the significance of *sumud* and the contentious process of redefining *sumud* that frames the tensions that have arisen in the town in relation to the water crisis.

The specter of housing demolition haunting Kafr al Bahar, the disproportionately tall homes, costly property taxes that go along with large homes, the "unrecognized" or illegal status of new structures and floors, the relations of the town to the neighboring communities, the familial relations within the community, and the overall limits on space, all played a part in people's decisions not to report the actual size of their household and number of people living in it, and local officials sense of justice in overlooking such non-

reporting. For residents, notifying the local officials when new members joined households would have officially revealed the physical enlargement of homes through the addition of new stories, floors, and rooms. Local officials, for their part, were well-aware of such non-reporting. Thus, data on household size that would, in theory, have been a defense against charges of profligacy and over-use of water were not readily at hand. The lack of accurate data made it easier for the architects of the new pricing reforms to make arguments in favor of fiscal discipline associated with water pricing and debt that relied upon the reductive simplicity of behavioral economics and contributed to justifications for the takeover of indebted local councils by unelected emergency management teams that in order to restructure the debt by imposing painful conditionalities upon the community.[38] What becomes clear is that the modes of governance, and data collection entailed in the new water reforms are inextricably intertwined with conditions shaped by histories and forms of building construction that we address throughout this chapter.

**3. <u>The new pricing reforms & water wasting</u>**

Having laid out the reasons for the lack of accurate statistical data on the town and its water use in relation to the forces of spatial compression, we are now in a position to grasp the the details of the new reforms in all their inadequacy. In 2009 the national Water Authority initiated a process of water pricing reform. The first step involved the introduction of a new two tiered water tariff rate. The new pricing structure replaced the old 3-tiered pricing system (the old structure still applies to agriculture) that had small incremental jumps between tariff blocks. The logic and justification for the 2-tiered structure was that the bigger jump between block rates encouraged conservation, and efficient distribution of scarce water resources. In theory, such a jump would send a stronger price signal to "water wasters" or over-users, than had the previous 3-tiered pricing system. The first block rate was labeled by water professionals as a "human right price," since it was supposed to be a relatively low price for a minimum of 2.5 to 3 cubic meters (kiloliters) per person per month, or 26 gallons per person per day. The second block was referred to as the "conservation price." In this model, high volume users who paid at the second block rate would subsidize ordinary household water use (D. Katz personal communication, 2016; Katz 2016; Kislev 2011).

It bears repeating that in Kafr al Bahar underreporting of household size often meant that people were being charged the higher block rate that applies to "conservation-price," a rate that was approximately 30% higher than the previous tariff rate. Unlike South Africa where local water politics have focused, in large part, on prepaid water meters, the tensions that emerged as a result of the new water reforms in Israel have focused both on water tariff payment and collection practices as well as the pipes themselves in relation to the legal status of the building units.[39] Water economists and proponents of private water companies, for their part, argue that, unlike municipal officials, water company officials are more likely to read and report water meter measurements accurately. According to a University of Haifa Water Resource Economist I came to know, this is because with the introduction of private water corporations, "....the government basically makes the water utility [private water company] pay for all water that is not allocated by quota, and so there is no incentive to lie about where the water ended up," (personal communication 2013). [40]

In Kafr al Bahar where there is no water corporation, municipal officials still read the consumption measurements on a bimonthly basis and send the household a bill.[41] Yet,

according the University of Haifa-based water economist, municipal meter readings are often inaccurate. He explained that "before the reform, the municipalities had all sorts of ways of cheating regarding their loss rate. For instance, they would register [their losses] as consumption by the municipality itself so as not to appear to have high leakage rates and get fined by the Water Commission, and all sorts of other tricks" (personal communication 2016). Water corporation officials, in his view, have no incentive to cheat in this way.

Even though local politics is not centered on water meters as it is in South Africa, there is an effort to take the responsibility for reading municipal meters out of the hands of municipal officials ostensibly in order to improve accuracy. In the process, a new market for remotely operated Automated Meter Reading (AMR) systems has developed. The State of Israel's 2011 Water Efficiency Report states that "A nation-wide upgrade to replace the existing manual metering systems with remotely operated Automated Meter Reading (AMR) systems in all sectors is currently underway.… AMR's dramatically improve detection rates of pipe leakages, thereby minimizing this source of water loss…. Data provided from the automated meters are analyzed by companies that win tender bids for these tasks. Manual reading is not required from these systems. Instead meter readings are sent automatically and continuously through communication cables, to a central database, where analyses are conducted automatically. If a problem (such as a leak or a malfunctioning meter) is detected, these companies are responsible for repairing the problem" (2011: 11). AMRs are in a position to partner with private water corporations in order to cut labor costs that municipalities may not be motivated to cut, since municipal jobs are an important source of employment for under-employed local residents.

In any case, no matter how accurate an AMR reading might be, they are not able to detect how many people are actually using water in the home. Municipal officials, by contrast, have intimate relationships with their "water customers" since they are part of the same community, and often the same extended family. This gives them greater insight into the actual number of people that are using water in homes and their personal circumstances, and this relationship allows them to have a more nuanced interpretation of the meaning of water meter readings that seem to reflect over-use. What I discovered, moreover, was that the issue of accurate meter readings and water leakage could not be separated from fiscal restraints that made upgrading pipes impossible, and upgrading pipes, as we shall see, was a precondition for building.

Not surprisingly, as tariff rates rose residents' debt to the local municipality skyrocketed. At the height of the debt, the municipality owed 8 million shekels to the National Water Company (Mekorot), while residents' debt to the municipality got up to 50 million shekels (2,068,494,480 USD). A good number of local leaders, as indicated in the introduction to this chapter, began to criticize residents for their supposed wasteful practices when it came to water. For example, Marwan Aboud, Kafr al Bahar's Mayor at the time, told me that the problem of low water payment rates had to do with his people's backwards priorities. From his large armchair in his spotless, airconditioned office, the only municipal office, incidentally, that remained comfortably cool during blackouts, he explained that residents prioritized their cell phone and car payments above their water payments because water payments had not yet been individualized as they would have been with a private water company. The municipality still made water payments to the National Water Company (Mekorot) on behalf of residents as a whole. Mayor Marwan argued that this was the reason

why the National Water Company imposed water cutoffs on the entire community rather than on individual households that had not paid their bills. Many residents referred to this practice of cutting off water to the entire community as "collective punishment" and, as we shall see later on, they connected it to the ongoing commodification of their livelihoods. The process of commodification that had begun with the community's dispossession from the swamps, had in the stories that residents told of the past, been reinforced during the period of military rule immediately after the establishment of the State of Israel. During that time, collective punishment was common. Local Israeli officials regularly imposed unexpected curfews that deviated from the routine curfews, as well as other measures to undermine and contain Arab communities. Such measures that restricted mobility, building, and reinforced borders greatly accelerated the process of confiscation of Arab land for those who remained in Israel after 1948.

As mentioned earlier, the fact that Kafr al Bahar's residents were being charged the "water-wasters" price, and that, in many cases, they were not paying their bills, which in turn led to a massive municipal water debt to the National Water Company (Mekorot), reinforced the stigmatization of the community as profligate and lacking high-minded civic principles. What is new about the logic of the pricing reforms in the way that it has bolstered the old conceptions about Kafr al Bahar, however, is that while it recalls deep-rooted notions about the wasteful practices of the community, it also involves a reworking of the conception of waste. The concept of waste in the realm of water is now helping to outline the boundaries of the individual water user who, thanks to behavioral economics, is getting redefined in the apolitical and ahistorical terms of human nature, rather than simply in terms of Zionist development, and nation-building. As the head of the regional water company in the council adjacent to Kafr al Bahar said, "if we were a European country, we wouldn't have to do this but you know – we're not, so pipes are under the ground, away from view, and local committees go into their water accounts and siphon off money to use for other things...." He went on to explain that private water companies individualize payment, and are, thus, able to avoid the problems associated with what he referred as a kind of "mentality" prevalent in Israel (for Jews and Arabs). This "mentality," he seemed to be saying, when operating individually and responding to price signals, would automatically fall into line in the service of balancing budgets and ensuring public welfare in a way that would be impossible if left a collective form of payment. According to this logic, low tariff payment rates and fines for over-use could correct or shape relatively fixed and essentialized human natures, and cultural deficits. The lack of reliable municipal data on Kafr al Bahar simply strengthened the human nature thesis that saw price signals as the chief mechanism for the Water Authority's demand management strategy aimed at stimulating proper water use. Yet, it did not reflect what is actually going on in the town.

Despite the disconnect between actual debt payment practices and understandings in Kafr al Bahar and the theories of human nature that underpin the new water pricing model, water economists and professionals throughout the world have celebrated the new pricing system as a breakthrough in behavioral economics. In Israel, water economists and professionals have declared its application to be yet another example of Israel's innovations in the realm of water efficiency and water saving technology. Countless newspaper articles and policy program papers have reported the success of the new system in fostering efficient and conservative allocation of scarce water resources.[42] In the words of Ariel Dinar, an Israeli water economist at UC Riverside who has advocated for such a tiered pricing system

in California, the goal of the new model is to use water pricing to educate water wasters so that they "...internalize the scarcity level of water and change the behavior.." (Dinar quoted in UC Riverside's "Science Daily," 2015).[43] None of these experts considered the differential effects of such a pricing strategy.

In addition to the new pricing structure, in 2010 the government introduced full cost-recovery rates that would cover the cost of water services and production in the water sector. Water professionals claimed that cost-recovery rates would reflect "the scarcity value of water" (Kislev 2011). The new rates included the cost of desalination which, according to water sector officials, had previously been underfunded. In addition, the government began to charge a Value Added Tax (VAT), adding an extra 15-18% to water rates (personal communication, 2016).[44] Although the lower block rate was supposed to remain relatively low since it was "a human right price," it ended up being higher than the highest third tier rate had been before the introduction of the new 2-tiered pricing structure.[45] Thus, even with no new additions in a household.

The final aspect of the new pricing system as it has been applied in Israel is that, as mentioned above, the Water Authority has done away with discounts on water bills. This is part of an effort to force municipalities to introduce private water companies that would take over responsibility for water provisioning, infrastructure maintenance, and billing. In abolishing discounts, the Water Authority sought to force municipalities to separate the calculation and collection of water bills from that of property taxes. Yet as we have seen, in places such as Kafr al Bahar that have yet to introduce private water companies, water and property taxes are still collected together.

**4. <u>Socio-spatial relations of debt payment</u>**

With a sense of the limits imposed by the town's outward expansion and the reformed pricing structure, I can now illustrate the way that these limits are spatialized and the way that they shape the process of bill payment and collection. What one finds in the end is that the routes of movement that residents take, the decisions and negotiations they make about whether to pay and collect water bills, transcend the realm of individualized decision making, and enter the realm of collective interpretative understanding. Noor revealed the socio-spatial relations of water debt to me as I accompanied her one summer day to pay her water bill. Noor, like Nadim, was in her mid-30s, and a self-proclaimed member of the younger generation.

Noor picked me up at the abandoned bus stop at the end of the only road (no. 6531) leading into Kafr al Bahar. She was en route to pay her water bill at the municipal offices. As we drove, the influence of the town's borders on our transportation route were clearly perceptible to me. They were, afterall, a large part of the reason people built upwards rather than outwards and refused to pay muncipal taxes. The drive was lengthier and slower than it was for the majority of nearby Jewish communities that had direct access to the speedier and newer coastal highway 2. The stops we made, and the scenery we passed to get to the offices all reflected the ways that people dealt with such difficulties through their relations to one another, and still managed to make payments when they could. On the way Noor picked up other residents, exhausted after the days work. We drove past the well-ordered suburban community of Ein Halav, the Jewish town that bordered the old highway #4, and that,

unlike Kafr al Bahar, was located close to a bus stop [include map]. We entered Kafr al Bahar through the narrow, one-lane tunnel. Once inside the town, the scene shifted dramatically from one of a wide, multi-lane road, bordered by open fields and rangeland for grazing animals, to a maze of narrow, sidewalk-less streets, lined by houses and shops. The traffic jams provided opportunities for Noor to greet friends and neighbors, as she heeded children who, lacking alternative public spaces, dodged cars while they played in the street.

Along the way we ran into the Mayor who was backing out of his driveway in a shiny black car, without regard for others waiting to get by. Noor made it known that she was going to pay her water bill and that I was a researcher interested in water infrastructure and debt. He gestured to the sky "inshallah" (Arabic: God-willing). Apart from her work in a small Jewish law-office outside the town, Noor organized among the women and youth of Kafr al Bahar. The women's empowerment work she organized included employment training, peer counseling, literacy classes, computer classes, and making connections to other towns and organizations, was part of Noor's effort to create a social security network for women such as her mother, but also to help younger women become literate and to acquire access to professional/vocational training so that they could take care of their children and have some measure of independence. Noor's experience organizing put her in regular contact with the Mayor. Although she was critical of what she saw as the Mayor's hypocrisy and opportunism when it came to supporting the community endevours in which she was involved, she and the Mayor had, in her words "learned to work together." This knowledge of organizing initiatives in the community, her connection to the Mayor, and her work outside the village, meant that it was she to whom her siblings and her mother turned to deal with the social service bureaucracy and to pay municipal taxes. Thus, despite the Mayor's self-important disregard for those waiting to get by, and the cacophonous honking and yelling that cut through the air, Noor made sure to take advantage of their chance meeting, which was made longer by the confines of the narrow road on which he had caused the traffic jam.

Noor's was also familiar with the difficulties that the new pricing reforms placed on Kafr al Bahar's families because of her own family situation. Unlike the Mayor, Noor was sympathetic to those who could not afford to pay the new water rates since she was one of them. Among her nine siblings, Noor was in the middle and, at the time, was the only unmarried daughter. When her mother had become ill and immobile, her father had left her mother for another woman. Thus, although Noor's young nieces, nephews, grand-nieces, and siblings regularly stayed at the house during the day, Noor was the only remaining wage-earner in the household.

Noor's work to organize the women in the town and to make connections to women doing similar work in neighboring Arab Israeli towns was not work that the Mayor cared much about. However, because his constituents were the supposed "younger generation," the ones that regarded themselves as "modern," and who had many years earlier supported the his electoral campaign to wrest control of the Council from the traditional leadership, he endorsed these organizing activities. We explore these generational dynamics further in subsequent chapters.

In general, when asked directly about water debt, the mayor rehearsed the national narrative about Kafr al Bahar's debt being a result of many free riders whose collective

behavior led to municipal debt that undermined the town's economic development and public welfare. But the mayor made an exception for Noor because of her role as a community organizer. As everyone around sat in their cars, or stood on the street waiting for them to finish talking, he promised to put in a word supporting her payment schedule request that she had first planted in his conciousness during a meeting about her community organizing work. As he picked up his phone to call in the request, he advised her to slip straight into the billing and payments office when she arrived at the municipal offices. The information exchanged during the brief meeting in the tight space of the main thoroughfare helped cement the previous arrangement she had made, with the mayor's backing, to pay her family's bill in installments. Noor and the mayor's mutual knowledge about one another, and the way that Noor's organizing work was influenced by her position in the household and in the community, disposed him to her. The closeness of people to one another made such meetings constant. It was, in other words, an example of the way that physical proximity, complex familial relations, the limited space in which to move around and the profusion of rules and procedures that had to be worked around, structured the process of debt payment and collection.

When we arrived at the municipal offices, Noor asked me to wait outside while she casually cut through the crowd of residents sitting on benches in the waiting room. The anxious expressions on the faces of those waiting, and the fact that they were not able to just slip into the office as Noor had done, indicated that they were not necessarily assured a payment schedule. When Noor returned, she steered me into the waiting area for Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer, Ibrahim. We soon realized, however, that Ibrahim would not be returning for quite a while. He had been pulled out of the office on an emergency. There had been a town-wide power outage.

The power outage forced into the open what I had sensed was the reason for the anxiety on the faces of those waiting in the billing and payments office. As air conditioning ceased, those who had been eagerly awaiting their turn to meet with billing and payment officials began to file out into the courtyard in order to escape the suffocating indoor heat. I waited outside underneath the office awnings with Mohammad, the municipal head of youth services and informal town historian, whom I had met during the first meeting with Abed, the high school principal. Tareq explained to me that "those are people who cannot afford to pay their full bills." They were part of the 40% who Nadim had once described as people who paid when they had the money – "not in an orderly way." Now they hoped to put the obstacle of having to postpone their anticipated meeting with billing and payments to their advantage by catching the attention of an official with whom they could informally work out an agreement as had Noor on her way to the offices. The the damaged power grid that had caused the outtage, the temporary condition of the offices, located as they were in trailers near to the sea, just as with the constricted space of the town, seemed to provide the physical frame that, despite and perhaps because of its defects in its temporary, and now disorderly condition, aroused increased hope among those waiting for a personal meeting.

As Muhammad explained it, since the town had not yet introduced a private water company, municipal officials were still able to deal directly with residents regarding their payments. The chaotic condition produced by the power outage, the waiting residents hoped, would provide an opportunity for even more subtle judgement and directness on the part of municipal officials. Such judgement, according to Mohammad, was based on

subjective and political criteria in which officials could decide whether or not to penalize residents for lack of or irregular payment on water tariffs. Most often residents were able to work out payment schedules with municipal officials.

Although the town was inhabited by approximately 14,000 residents, those in charge of collecting debts were intimately aware of the personal circumstances, and reasons why people did or did not pay. Any general claims about priorities and behaviors made by outside observers fell apart in the face of the subjective ways in which decisions about payment and collection were made in the context of increasing financial hardship, spatial, and legal confinement. Such everyday routes of movement and intimate social relations underlie a social infrastructure that can be seen as a sort of public good through which debts are managed. We explore this social infrastructure and the networks of communication underpinning it in further detail in chapter five.

**PART II: Water Tariff Collection Practices**

Now that we have a sense of what sorts of interactions, decisions and understandings are involved in the payment of water bills, we can turn to the conflictual decisions that Ibrahim, the municipal engineer, was faced with in his attempts to enforce collection of water tariffs. As indicated above, he had to work around new pressures to depersonalize water payments and rules aimed at cutting water off from the rest of the workings of municipal government. However, because Kafr al Bahar had not yet introduced a private water company, Ibrahim was still able to make decisions in a personalized way. Yet, this way of making decisions was now, more than ever, a tortuous process for Ibrahim. Not only was it necessary for him to engage in the delicate collective and political dynamics of his community that were shaped by the structure of the local government and by a collective commitment to ensuring social security under conditions of increasing hardship, but to manage these dynamics in the context of new cold, exacting procedures aimed at punishment.

The contradictions of the position in which he found himself came to a head in the aftermath of a risky speculative (though not profit-oriented) project he initiated in order to reshuffle the water debt and increase tariff collection rates. The project entailed building a new neighborhood before it had been approved by the district Building and Planning Committee. I provide an account of the project's dramatic unfolding later on. Its significance, in my view, is that it demonstrates the process through which the forces of spatial compression have come together with new water reforms to literally shape the physical layout of the town and, in the process, have generated tensions that water professionals attribute to dynamics that are entirely internal to the community.

**5. <u>Water tariff collection & municipal government: local structure and decision making</u>**

When Ibrahim returned from dealing with the power outage he greeted me kindly despite his agitated and distracted state of mind. His eyes scanned the room rapidly as if searching for something or someone. He was clearly still absorbed in the dilemmas that had arisen as a result of the emergency. He showed me into his small stuffy office. It was so packed with filing cabinets, engineering handbooks and piles of papers that there was almost no room to move. Sweaty and disheveled, he sank heavily into the chair behind his desk.

He told me that I could use any data I needed from his office. Anxious to get the meeting over with so that he could focus on the immediate work at hand, he then asked me to formulate a list of questions which he could return to me in a few days with answers. I tried to explain that I was interested in learning more about the process of water tariff collection and about the real reasons for the low tax collection rates that residents and water professionals alike linked to the rundown state of infrastructure in the town. He perked up a bit, eager, it seemed, to take the opportunity to cast a human interpretation upon the impersonal statistics that so many policy professionals and analysts chose to intepret in light of their condescending attitudes towards tariff collection practices in rural and semi-rural Arab locales and that implicitly justified inequality and harsh fiscal discipline in the realm of resource distribution.

He began walking me through the decision making criteria that guided his judgment regarding water tariff collection. He had definite convictions that guided his judgment regarding tax collection and debt payment. The ban on discounts, in particular, presented new challenges that were altering old methods of water tariff collection and payment, and through which water debts had been managed prior to the new pricing system. Although discounts were now illegal for water bills, he was able to compensate by increasing discounts on property taxes. In addition, he used some of the property tax money he collected to pay the National Water Company (Mekorot). The new stringent rules about payment in full on water bills, however, meant that Ibrahim had to find a way to collect enough money to pay to the National Water Company. The only way to do this was by stepping up enforcement of property tax collection. If he could not collect property taxes he could not pay the National Water Company (Mekorot), let alone join a private water company as required by law. Ibrahim concluded that such efforts, and the official and personal liabilities associated with them, had come to take up nearly 50% of his time. For this reason, Ibrahim explained, he could not give proper attention to his other responsibilities such as the electrical grid. Perhaps this was the reason, he seemed to be saying, for the power outage that had pulled him out of the office on the day of our meeting.

The new rules were one side of the problem that Ibrahim had to account for in his decisions. The other side of the problem that shaped his decision making process with regard to enforcing tax collection had to do with the historically produced structure of the local government in which he worked and the way it was influenced by economic restructuring that accelerated during the early 2000s. Ibrahim had been appointed as head municipal engineer by the local council in the late 1980s. This position was one of three key appointed positions on the local council. The other positions were City Clerk and Municipal Treasurer. In holding the position of Municipal Engineer, Ibrahim became responsible for planning, maintenance, and billing and payments for utilities (streets, water, electricity, pipes), public and residential buildings.

As a rule, the central government in Israel initiates policies, programs, and passes legislation, while local authorities are responsible for tax collection, payment, and delivery of basic services. These services include water, sewage disposal, electricity, roads, town residential and public planning, welfare and education services. Local authorities are also in charge of passing budgets to support service delivery and are responsible for organizing cultural, religious, and community events and functions. In Arab localities, as we have seen however, town planning is shaped by limited land reserves. For this reason residential

property taxes are limited, and business taxes are almost non-existent because of limited transportation infrastructure and restrictions on industrial development in Arab communities.

Ibrahim's responsibility for tax collection, developing infrastructure, and planning had, in the beginning of his career in the town, been a source of hope for improving living standards and opportunities for residents of Kafr al Bahar. At the time of Ibrahim's appointment, the council was headed by the same Marwan Aboud who headed the Council during the beginning of my research in Kafr al Bahar. As mentioned earlier, he was known for having come to power as a result of a "revolution" in Kafr al Bahar's local politics. Marwan Aboud's "revolutionary" legacy was that he had unseated the family of the Mukhtar (akin to Mayor but instead of a Mayor of a polity, of an extended family) who had negotiated land transfer and sedentarization with Zionist officials from the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency in the vicinity of the marshlands where Kafr al Bahar's residents had lived prior to 1924. We discuss this legacy in greater depth in chapter four. Simply put, the Mayor who Marwan Aboud had unseated and who was a descendent of those in the inner circle of the original Mukhtar, deployed an argument about access to infrastructure and social security more generally that attributed the community's "staying power" and continued existence to the personal character of a skilled and experienced leader. The political parties represented by the 11 members on the council at this time, were largely the result of political pressure and deal making between central government officials and the Mukhtar's family. The 1989 generation to which Marwan Aboud belonged, by contrast, argued for making use of the public sphere and the law in order to force the state to live up to its democratic promise. For this camp, the question of infrastructure was a question of civil rights.

As a result of the more progressive policies of Marwan Aboud who fought hard for adequate basic services, Ibrahim was able to bring paved roads and infrastructure to the town. Ibrahim confessed, however, that times had been tough since the very beginning of his appointment. The reason was that he was appointed during the first wave of economic restructuring that had occurred under the auspices of Israel's 1985 Economic Stabilization Plan which represented the first wave of reductions in central government subsidies to local government. Yet since 2004, he had experienced a significant increase in the difficulties he faced regarding water piping and tax collection.

These difficulties stemmed from the way that the national Economic Recovery Plan of 2002-4 had come into play with respect to water. In general, the plan included sharp cuts in central government transfers to local authorities. It also conditioned continued central government transfers on significantly raising the level of local tax collection, and on authorities covering at least 25% percent of their welfare budgets. Finally, it empowered the Ministry of the Interior to dismantle local authorities and install its own appointees in authorities that were in fiscal crisis and could not pass budgets.[46] The Ministry officials would then preside over commissions that were responsible for coming up with recovery plans.

Yaniv Reingewertz and Itai Beeri have chronicled such increasingly punitive and conservative policies that the Finance Ministry has imposed upon Israeli local governments (primarily Arab local governments). They tell us that:

> "In 2003, the government declared that local deficits would no longer be automatically covered. Over the next year, many local authorities faced financial crisis: 76% of local authorities operated under deficits, over 50% activated recovery plans, and 21% of local authorities held back wages of thousands of employees for months. (2018: 362)

Reingewertz and Beeri go on to explain that this interventionist approach to fiscally distressed local governments included sanctions and conditionalities for grants, and loans such as local cutbacks and mass layoffs as well as the appointment of external accountants that had the power to impose extra levies and fees and control new municipal contracts.

When the Central Government deemed this approach to be insufficient, it increasingly adopted what Reingewerz and Beeri refer to as "the neutralization approach" (2018: 363). This approach involved the Interior Ministry dismantling local councils and replacing them with emergency management teams such as the one that was appointed in Kafr al Bahar, or what in Israel is referred as "convened committees." Convened committees were appointed to "distressed municipalities" such as Kafr al Bahar that were in fiscal crisis, and had a massive water debt, to replace elected officials. The appointed officials were charged with taking over control of expenditures, managing municipal resources, and imposing strict debt restructuring plans that required raising tax collection rates. Although the Interior Ministry has had the authority to adopt this approach for some time, it became increasingly popular after 2003. Reingewerz and Beeri explain that

> "This ['the neutralization approach'] was the most severe top-down response toward poor performers…by severely constraining local autonomy and restructuring local democracy…By law, convened committees were put in place until the next election, and for not less than three years. In practice, most of the committees' terms lasted around five to six years….The moment the head of a convened committee was nominated, he/she held all the powers and authorities of a mayor." (2018: 363; emphasis added).

For Ibrahim 2001 was a starting point of the increased troubles that came to a head when an emergency management team was appointed to take over the Council in 2011. 2001 was the year that the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) passed the Water and Sewerage Corporation Law that, as we have seen, made access to funding, and public support for infrastructure much more difficult for poor communities. In 2004, shortly after the new water law's passage, an amendment to the law that was passed in conjunction with the 2002-2004 National Economic Recovery Plan. The amendment made it compulsory for local councils to introduce private water companies by 2010. The pressure that this placed on Kafr al Bahar's municipal infrastructure budget was, according to in Ibrahim, the greatest difficulty of his career.

The 2004 Amendment made private water companies responsible for buying water from the National Water Company (Mekorot). Prior to the 2001 law, the National Water Company had been responsible for pumping water to the gates of communities and the local authorities was in charge of distributing the water internally. The simplistic logic that water professionals regularly recited in favor of the 2001 water corporation law was summed up by Guy Zilberman head of water and sewerage in Hof HaCarmel Regional Council, the

municipal government area neighboring Kafr al Bahar. In his words, "...water delivery has been a cash cow for the local authorities...." Payment in the hands of local authorities, he argued has been "...put into immediate municipal needs, and network maintenance has been neglected."

It was an argument about bureaucratic failure and the excessive benefits that local government officials acrued from their special positions. Such logic, however, did not account for the interconnectedness of the state and the market through which the new water reforms worked. As we shall see, for example, it did not account for the way that the Ministry of Finance set prices in order to compel privatization in the realm of local water provisioning seeking, in the process, to mask the fact that these government determined prices aimed to reflect the cost-recovery price that would be required by private water companies. Activists and water professionals often insisted that the anger of the public about the 2009 price hike of 30% to 40% that tended to blame private water companies was misplaced since it was not the companies, but the government that determined water prices. The Interior Ministry further punished towns such as Kafr al Bahar for not having "attracted" a private water company by withholding funding for infrastructure upgrades. Indeed, private water companies that were moved by cost-recovery, rather than by public welfare, were uninterested in dealing with low water tariff payment rates and investing money in Kafr al Bahar's crumbling infrastructure. In this way, the process of water privatization, involved rules, regulations and pricing policies that were deterimined by public agencies, but had private sector forces embedded within them. Public and private forces worked in tandem with each other and, just as with the government planning policies and the water tariff payment practices in the town, they were intertwined. Yet, according to Zilberman and many other water engineers and managers with whom I discussed current water sector reforms, private water companies operated, as a "closed loop," cordoned off from the public sector in order to protect water provisioning from profligate local municipal officials (Kislev 2011).[47]

The pressures to commodify water that the the central government imposed on local governments, such as Kafr al Bahar, that had failed to comply with the water corporation law took three forms, some of which I have already suggested. The purpose of such measures were to force local councils to cede control over water provisioning to private water companies. They included 1. Price manipulation and the ban on discounts; 2. A new amendment that, as indicated above, granted the Ministry of the Interior the power to expropriate power from local councils that faced severe financial distress and could not pass budgets; 3. The conditioning of subsidies for new piping infrastructure upon the introduction of private water corporations (Kislev 2011). I turn now to the role that each of these reforms played in local water management, emphasizing some of the areas in which it influenced Kafr al Bahar's local political structure and Kafr al Bahar's Municipal Engineer's decision making.

1. The national government sought to enforce compliance through the manipulation of water tariff prices in advance of the 2010 deadline to introduce private water companies. At first, the Finance Ministry increased the price of water that municipal governments paid to the National Water Company to deliver water to municipal gates. At the same time, it lowered the price for household consumers (Kislev 2011). In other words, municipalities had to pay more to the National Water Company to receive water than they were bringing in

from municipal residents' water tariff payments. Yoav Kislev, Environmental Economist at Hebrew University, explains in his 2011 policy report on Israel's water economy that "for the municipalities the important factor is not the household price, but rather the difference between that price and the price they pay to Mekorót [the National Water Company]. The difference was NIS 3.40 per CM in 1991 and NIS 1.40 per CM in 2004. Thereafter, this difference rose: in 2008, it was NIS 2.00 per CM." These price fluctuations, he continues, "eliminated hundreds of millions of shekels a year from the water income of the municipalities" (2011: 66). The result was that local authorities plummeted into fiscal and infrastructural crisis. The goal of such policies, according to Kislev, was to make "…it difficult for the municipalities to maintain their water economies, thus pressuring them to agree to transfer their water departments to the new corporation once they are established" (2011: 66).

Infrastructure maintenance deteriorated and water losses increased as a result. The only solution, it appeared, was to introduce private water corporations. Then, in 2009, in anticipation of new cost recovery water rates that private water companies were planning, the Finance Ministry raised household water rates by 40% (local water authority) for every community, regardless of whether or not they had introduced a private water company. In doing so, the Ministry sought both to deflect popular anger at the new prices away from private water companies, as well as to make the financial distress of not introducing a private water company greater than the advantage of keeping water management in the realm of local government. The new prices were out of reach for poor households. These disciplinary measures have been catastrophic for poor communities.

2. In Kafr al Bahar, the water debt rose to such heights that in 2011, during the peak of the debt the Ministry of the Interior audited the council and fired all 11 members for non-payment of their personal water debts. The Ministry kept Mayor Marwan Aboud in his position as a figurehead, perhaps without realizing the depth of his unpopularity. The reason the Ministry did this, residents suspected, was to appease their anger about what appeared to many people to be the unjust takeover of the council, and the hijacking of democracy. In place of the fired council members the Ministry brought in people from "outside" – "2 Arabs and 2 Jews to restore the situation" (Mayor Marwan Aboud, personal communication, 2011). Thus it was that even without the introduction of private water company, Kafr al Bahar council members and many residents felt as if they were pushed into a position of having to concede democratic oversight of the water economy, and municipal budget more generally to officials who had no understanding, concern, or genuine reason to be accountable to local residents' needs. As one resident explained, "They only came for meetings, protocols and procedure – once a month or every two weeks, they pass bills, they sign them and that's it."

3. Although Kafr al Bahar's municipality was eventually able to rebuild its council, the fact that Kafr al Bahar still had not introduced a private water company meant that the town was ineligible to receive central government subsidies that were available to those communities that had introduced private water companies. Ibrahim was infuriated by the catch 22. He regularly met with officials of nearby Jewish towns that either already had introduced regional private water companies, or had been able to make the case to the Water Authority that their town should not be penalized by being deprived of government funding for not having introduced private water and sewerage corporations. In fact, the wealthy town of Beit

Avraham, which was a ten-minute drive to the southeast, had done exactly that. Beit Avraham's Council members had argued that because of the town's well-off socio-economic circumstances, and high tax collection rates, it did not need a private water and sewerage company to receive central government subsidies for infrastructure upgrades. The government had agreed on this basis to release funds to Beit Avraham for which towns that had introduced private water companies were only eligible. Ibrahim explained that he had, in his words "begged" to join nearby water companies. He had submitted official requests on several occasions to the water corporation of the nearby city of Hedera. He had attended joint meetings with officials in charge of service provisioning for the neighboring communities. Each time his request to join a regional water corporation was refused. The private corporations, he explained, feared the high cost of upgrades of Kafr al Bahar's decaying infrastructure and the low tax collection rates.

On the surface, access to central government funds now appeared to depend upon compliance with an individualistic market logic that only private water corporations and "responsible" towns such as Beit Avraham were capable of following. Yet, from the vantage point of Kafr al Bahar, what emerges is not the workings of a color-blind market logic. The the effect of disciplinary measures that made it impossible for Ibrahim to upgrade the town's infrastructure or to introduce a private water company, discipline that water professionals argued was necessary in order to correct residents individual deficiencies and conservation ignorance, revealed the ongoing exclusionary dimensions of water policies as well as of the underlyiing water ideology that professionals' representations of Kafr al Bahar's water debt as a consequence of over-use and mismanagement.

Ibrahim found himself in an increasingly difficult situation as he tried to balance the needs of his community against the fiscal austerity measures and pressures to commodify water provisioning. He saw no way to work completely within the bounds of the law. Thus, he built on his previous decision making guidelines, devising clear principles that could provide him with direction about whether or not to enforce collection, discounts, and payment schedules. The bottom line for him was a question of ethics. He was unwilling to enforce the new law that did not allow for discounts or for payment plans for people who simply could not afford to pay, especially those with the highest bills – the elderly. Indeed retired residents, who themselves had not paid for the first time connection fees, often allowed their children to connect to the municipal network built of metal pipes, by attaching PVC pipes to the their homes. Structures with PVC pipes were always considered illegal since approval for water infrastructure was required before building could proceed. Yet, without the ability to collect municipal taxes on illegal structures, Ibrahim felt pressure to demand the money from those who had legal metal connections, and legal homes, but who were being charged extra for the water pumped through the PVC pipes to their childrens' homes. "How can I enforce payment? I can't garnish wages – they're old and poor, and they have no wage…" So the household debt built up. Some people, Ibrahim told me, owed the debts of their deceased relatives. "Sometimes grandparents have bills of 300,000 shekels!" [~79,000 USD]. Compounding the problem, as mentioned above, was the fact that because water provisioning was still in the hands of the municipality, the Interior Ministry withheld the funds necessary to lay new metal pipes. These dilemmas simply strengthened Ibrahim's confidence in the moral and just basis of his collection practices, despite the fact that such criteria often meant that he had to work around state regulations.

Collecting taxes on the water that was pumped through the legal and illegal, metal and PVC, temporary and permanent piping network that had developed in a provisional way to fill in the gaps in the water provisioning demanded a sensitivity in judgment from Ibrahim. This sensitivity was always based on the information that he already had about the people he was dealing with. This information was usually not the result of formal records since he was unable to record the accurate size of people's homes, or the number of people using water in the household. Instead his decisions were based on previous information, chance meetings, gossip, and recommendations made by other municipal employees.

As we have seen, the channels of communication that were opened and shut by the stop and go routes through the town shaped the process of deal-making and created conditions for payment schedules to be worked out. In this way they formed a sort of collective resource or social infrastructure that facilitated residents' access to piped water in the face of the near absence of national-scale state support. We pick up this theme again briefly in chapter five. Here I have provided an indication of this provisional social infrastructure in order to give a sense of the regulatory and social environment in which Ibrahim operated. Doing so helps prepare the way to for the following account of the tensions that were unleashed in the context of a building project that Ibrahim initiated in order to try to open up space of the town and acquire central government funding for infrastructure upgrades.

**6. <u>Socio-spatial relations of debt collection</u>**

In Part II so far I have given an account of the social and structural conditions associated with relations between Kafr al Bahar's local government and various central government ministries that shape water tariff collection practices, focusing in particular on the dilemmas that Ibrahim, Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer dealt with daily. I now turn to an account of Ibrahim's efforts to get around some of the difficulties that the new water laws created in the realm of water tariff collection by spearheading a project to construct a new neighborhood. He tried to get beyond the limits on building in order to reshuffle the water debt among community members. He hoped that once he showed the Interior Ministry that he could increase tax collection rates, the Ministry would grant him the funds to upgrade and install new pipes. In the end, however, he was unable to follow through with his promises. The result was disastrous. On the one hand, Ibrahim underestimated the extent of anger among residents over inadequate services and insufficient land reserves. On the other hand, he overestimated the humanity and the willingness to exercise subjective judgment on the part of central government officials.

Ibrahim's construction of the new neighborhood represents a literal remolding of the physical space of the town which, in his view, became necessary largely because he was unable to get central government funding for water infrastructure upgrades in other ways. He believed his plan would provide the initial impetus for raising water tariff rates in the town, and hence for receiving funds for upgrades. Its failure illustrates the limits of the environment he was in, shaped fundamentally by the way that the forces of compressional stress came together with the water reforms. Yet it also indicates a refusal to yield to passivity even if the conditions were not in his favor. Moreover, it gives an indication of the personalized social infrastructure that I contend underpinned the way that residents managed water debt collectively under conditions of increasing insecurity.

The "new neighborhood:"

Although I had known about the "new neighborhood" for some time, I did not understand its significance or what relevance it had to my own research until Ibrahim explained it to me during our last meeting in 2015. Earlier in my research I had often driven through the neighborhood with residents, proud to point out the large buildings and wide streets that contrasted so noticeably with the crowded, confined space of the rest of the town. Noor, whose payment journey I described earlier, often drove me through the neighborhood just so we could find a quiet refuge outside of her home to talk, away from the eyes and ears of neighbors. There was a spacious calm that emanated from the enormous concrete homes, clean streets, and overall luxury of the neighborhood that appeared to me to be uninhabited. Indeed, there was one especially large home on a corner that Noor told me was owned by a doctor from Kafr al Bahar who lived most of the time in Italy.

It was not until one day in late spring, towards the end of my research, that the reason for the neighborhood's appearance and the connection of the neighborhood to the question of water reforms, water pipes, and spatial compression became clear to me. I had requested a last interview with Ibrahim simply to understand more clearly for myself some of the technical, mechanical aspects of Kafr al Bahar's water piping system. But this meeting was unlike the others. I knew that something was wrong when Ibrahim first asked me to meet him late in the day in a cafe in neighboring Beit Avraham rather than at our usual meeting place in his office. His voice was agitated and he made the arrangements hastily, evidently trying to avoid any extra explanation in public. When I arrived at the cafe he greeted me with a nervous smile. After several attempts to steer the conversation to a particular technical question I had about backflow preventers, I realized that I needed to take a different approach. Ibrahim's mind was absorbed with other matters. This was clear from the fact that every question I asked him led him to the same answer regarding the inadequacy of existing water infrastructure.

I gave up on my questions and simply asked how he was doing. That was all it took for him to lay out the key dilemma that he had apparently been going over in his mind for some time: In order to upgrade the water and sewage system he needed government funding. In order to get government funding he needed to join a water and sewage corporation. In order to join a water and sewage corporation he needed to increase the amount of tax collection in the town. We had talked about this many times before but it seemed to me that this time the injustice of the situation was more upsetting to him than usual. The neighboring water and sewage corporation from the town of Hedera had, at one time, been willing to accept Kafr al Bahar's as part of its corporation. However, it had agreed on the condition that the government would undersign for the town in case Kafr al Bahar defaulted on its water payments. The government had been willing to sign, but had withdrawn its agreement when the water rates had shot up as a result of the Finance Ministry price manipulation strategy mentioned earlier. Kafr al Bahar's water debt spiked to the point that, as mentioned earlier, the Interior Ministry intervened by dismantling its municipal council and setting up a debt restructuring plan.

All this was the context of Ibrahim's dillemma which he approached indirectly through side stories. He paused periodically to underscore the ridiculous web of mutually conflicting rules in which he was caught. He would have no need for a water corporation if

he could just enforce higher rates of tax collection. "I could tell the state, just as Beit Avraham did, that 'I am a good manager. Everything's in order' and I could get money to complete the infrastructure systems. I don't want to enforce higher collection rates to make things harder for our already distressed community. I just want to upgrade the infrastructure systems." Although he was well aware that he could never expect such an outcome, he could not help but imagine what plans he would be able to realize if he could get funding. After circling the topic of a particular planning vision that he had for some time, he finally zeroed in on what was foremost in his mind at the moment.

He proudly declared that he was going to meet the following day with a local water provider called Meheron. "I will spend all night preparing a budget, an estimated timeline for the project, and a report for our request to join their water company..." As he went on he became more animated. "Every month I have to deal with our minus. I have to pay the water company 200,000 shekel [51,814.82 USD], and I receive between 100 [25,907.81 USD] and 150 [38,861.11 USD] from the residents. I won't have to deal with that anymore if we can join a water corporation! Sure it will be more expensive for our residents, but it won't be my problem. I can focus on other things like roads, and lighting. I will be very happy when we establish a corporation because it will be less work for me."

As he continued he involuntarily shifted his focus away from what he hoped he could achieve on behalf of his people if he succeeded in joining a water corporation to what it would mean for his personal career. He unfolded the logic of his thoughts outloud, finally coming to the bitter conclusion that "...it's possible I will leave the municipality. And the new person that takes over my position will get the best of both worlds because he will not have to do the work to join a corporation, and when he comes in he'll have less work to do. Once it's all been settled and we are part of a water corporation someone else will come in and be able to spend his time on roads and electricity and make a name for himself." What emerged was that residents of the new neighborhood had gotten angry when the Interior Ministry forced Ibrahim to stop construction in the middle of the project and that he was concerned that this would mean that the local council would appoint someone else to take over his position.

I quickly picked up the thread, realizing now that the new neighborhood was the missing piece of the puzzle with respect to infrastructure upgrades. Indeed, Ibrahim's previous account had made it clear that joining a water company in order to get funding for infrastructure upgrades was virtually impossible. He was now trying once again to do just that. In light of the difficulty that he had described about his attempts to join a water company in the past, it now seemed stranger than ever that he would be staying up all night to prepare for a meeting about joining a water company that would most likely reject his request. As he spoke he repeatedly alluded to a previous strategy that had evidently failed and angered certain members of the community a great deal. I struggled to make sense of the meaning of what he was saying. It seemed after some time that the following day's meeting for which he would prepare that night, was perhaps a last ditch effort to remedy what he felt had been a terrible mistake.

"I was tired of just putting out fires, of installing only makeshift pipes, of managing conflicts between neighbors…" he told me. He noted, for example, that in the crowded quarters of the town already compressed to the limit, that people built on top of each other.

By way of illustration he told me about a man who had constructed his home in a place that blocked the entrance & exit of another person's home who happened to be blind and deaf. In response, Ibrahim had had to carve a pathway through the area on which the new house stood so that the blind and deaf man could exit and enter his home without danger and difficulty. The new path angered the other person, and this, among other things, was the kind of dispute that Ibrahim wanted to prevent by constructing a new neighborhood. "There's not even enough space to build a new Kindergarden!" exclaimed Ibrahim. "How can we increase matriculation rates when we can't get land on which to build schools? It's a mess." "I saw the danger of the crowded housing conditions and the pressure from which people needed to be released…. " he explained, "They needed to breathe…."

He went on to elaborate what he referred to as "his vision for the new neighborhood." His vision was founded upon precisely such a desire to release the community from their sense of siege by giving residents room to "breathe." The spacious calm that Noor and I felt during our drives through the half-built new neighborhood was what he had hoped for when he had signed off on the construction project. "I wanted to begin to build and I had an idea. We can start to build and then in 2 or 3 years maximum, I will start to get loans and funding and approval from the Ministry of housing. I'll have approved water and sewage lines and roads, not the temporary ones we have today. So what happened? The houses went up, and people moved in. I began to charge, even partial taxes based on the size of the homes, and for water and sewage…." He thought that if he collected enough taxes from the residents of the new neighborhood, that he would be able to show the Ministry he was a good manager, as had other wealthier Jewish communities, and then he would be able to get grants to complete the infrastructure and install permanent pipes. Perhaps he would even get exempted, as had Beit Avraham from the new water corporation requirement. He also was hopeful that the funds he did receive from the residents of the new neighborhood would cross-subsidize services for poorer residents. Kafr al Bahar's poverty, however, meant that he would not be able to proceed quickly. "I said to myself, we're poor, it'll take some time, but let us build…I believe that in another year infrastructure will arrive. I assured the committee [the District Building and Planning Committee] that the houses would be built according to my plans, in the right place, in compliance with codes and specifications, without fights between neighbors. My plan was to attach temporary pipes above ground at first, and then later catch up with permanent infrastructure. It will be better for the Committee too because they won't have to worry about building violations [as they do now in the confined area designated for residential building] and dangers that they pose (like fire hazards, etc.)." It was not long, however, before the Planning and Building Committee told him "…where there is no water or sewage lines, you cannot get approval to build." With a sense pride and indignation, Ibrahim told me how he had refused to accept the Committee's conditions. "…I was persistent and I said "no! Give us permission!" and he cited a particular government ordinance that, in his view, would have exempted Kafr al Bahar from the rule that required piping installation before construction. This strategy did not work and the Committee refused to release permission for the new neighborhood since it violated compliance codes by attaching temporary infrastructure above the ground. Ultimately, after much deliberation and persistence on Ibrahim's part, he told me, "…the state didn't give us the approval. So now there's a situation where there is a house, and there's no infrastructure." "Ooh-wah," he exclaimed shaking his wrist vigorously "did we get in trouble! It's illegal for the authority to allow building without infrastructure so today I learned a lesson. If there's no infrastructure in

place, then I'm not signing a request for permission." The other main lesson, which in his view, "was more interesting," was that "….this is an example of the kind of pressure that is on the manager. This is the tool that the Building Committee uses to block housing and building in Kafr al Bahar."

Construction halted. Despite the problems with the neighborhood, there were already people living in some of the houses. They refused to pay for water and sewerage, Ibrahim explained, because the fact was that the homes they lived in were illegal and the water pipes were haphazard, and there was no sewage system in place. This made the buildings vulnerable to demolition or eviction. The water pressure was low, and the sewage was a disaster. Indeed, the crisis intensified when, in the absence of sewage lines, the residents began to dig their own cesspits. Before long, the pits began to leak into the groundwater, the rivers, and pollute the surrounding environment. "Then their ears perked up," Ibrahim remarked bitterly. He was referring to Kafr al Bahar's Jewish neighbors, and to the Building and Planning Committee. Sewage began to run into the street and it started affecting the health of the people nearby. "And who feels the worst damage?" Ibrahim was almost yelling. "It was because of this situation," he said, suddenly shifting to an impassive demeanor and expression that seemed to reflect the impersonal but relentless bureaucratic rigmarole that hindered him at every turn, "that I finally received a state directive to complete most of a sewage line." As it turned out, the company, Meheron, that Ibrahim would be requesting to join the following day, won the bid to construct the network.

"The committee told me….I won't see any of the money….you just tell [the contractor] what to do and the contractor will do it. We will make sure the project gets constructed by a compliance engineer in compliance with the Building Committee's specifications." In other words, the Committee refused to give Ibrahim the authority to oversee the project himself. Nevertheless, Ibrahim insisted on playing a role and carrying it out on his terms as much as possible. "I said I'll meet you in the area and we'll do it with my plans, and it happened!" It seemed to me that the fact that he emphasized his efforts to fight for the residents of the town was his way of showing me that, contrary to what residents may think about the failure of his project, he was a champion of his people and their needs. Because he had to work within the system of regulations, discipline, and punishment embedded in the water infrastructure and planning codes, however, he was unable to directly implement and oversee planning and infrastructure development for the benefit of his people. Thus, he devised a method of infrastructure development that seized every opportunity he found to expand the living space in the town and to advance even minor maintenance projects. Even though he was not allowed to officially oversee the project, he emphasized the fact that he had managed to influence the way the project unfolded by persuading the compliance engineer that the Ministry had appointed to supervise the project to proceed on Ibrahim's terms. This involved reviving a forgotten 3-year old plan to renovate dilapidated pumping stations at a cost of 2 million shekels. The plan had gone nowhere three years ago, but now that the sewage catastrophe had occurred, he was able to squeeze a tiny opportunity out of it. Nevertheless, the catastrophe extended beyond simply the legal trouble into which it got Kafr al Bahar's municipality. It also included the anger that residents had about its unfinished character, and Ibrahim's efforts to collect taxes under these conditions.

I contend that the anger that the project elicited among residents towards Ibrahim reveals an underlying struggle over the meaning of responsibility in the context of state abandonment and withdrawal of support for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance. Certainly it is true that the segment of the community that would have lived in the new neighborhood was relatively powerful. As many residents had complained, it was this powerful group that constituted nearly one-third of those who refused to pay taxes and new expectations that they would pay may have upset them. However, this explanation it seems to me is insufficient. It was not only that this group felt that they should not have to pay their taxes because of their vested interests. There was a widespread sentiment in the town that those whose infrastructure was not permanent, or whose homes were not authorized by the state were not expected to pay taxes, or at least not regularly. This perspective, underpinned the more general sense that no one should pay for a debt and for inadequate infrastructure. After all, these were conditions for which the community was not responsible, and for which the government and the surrounding communities were shirking their responsibility for their role in creating the problem that had much to do with limiting the space that Kafr al Bahar had for building new residential homes. In other words, a simple intrinsic account of the tension is not enough. It does not account for the wider context in which the sensibilities guiding debt payment and the laying of water pipes have developed. Having traced actual practices of water tariff payment and collection and the tensions emerging in the process, the limits of interpretation of low tax collection rates in Arab towns as somehow purely intrinsic and related to cultures of waste, ignorance, and flawed human nature become glaringly apparent.

## **Conclusion**

As we have seen, the District Building and Planning Committee, the local institution that oversees planning for all local communities in the area, used the fact that Kafr al Bahar was unable to install permanent metal piping as an excuse to place further limits on Kafr al Bahar's building and expansion since infrastructure is a prerequisite for building. On the one hand, the tensions that the new neighborhood produced appear unresolvable. They reveal the inability of the new water policies to secure the sorts of compliance and that water professionals, let alone Ibrahim, intended them to produce. This is because of the specific way that the new water policies have combined with the forces of compressional stress in Kafr al Bahar and the sense of historical and geographical injustice that accompanies residents understandings of such stress which I turn to in the following chapters. As I have tried to suggest, these practices express a budding, yet fragmentary critique of the logic embedded in new water policies, bound as they are to the exclusions in the realm of infrastructure and basic services.

In the introduction, I discussed the limits of the categories and methods that critical social scientists use to analyze state policies and practices in the realm of infrastructure and planning. While such analyses calls into question Israel's discriminatory planning policies, it relies on many of the same categories of understanding that water professionals and policy makers use to argue for new water sector reforms. That is, it relies on the notion of pre-given categories that assume that seemingly apolitical market imperatives of private water companies, and new pricing reforms, are separate from national/ Zionist imperatives on the one hand and so-called traditional clan based politics in Arab locales on the other. Thus, critical social scientists have not been able to adequately call into question the arguments of

water professionals that interpret statistics about water tariff payment and collection in Arab communities as produced by internally generated politics associated with cultures of waste and mismanagement of national environmental resources. Nor have they been able to adequately respond to arguments put forth by behavioral economists that rely on individualized notions of human nature, and see responses to new water pricing models that deviate from the behaviors predicted by their models as a sign of flawed human nature that can be corrected through harsh discipline. In other words, they have not been able to pinpoint the deeply racialized way that current restructuring of the water sector expresses itself in places such as Kafr al Bahar.

I elaborated the actual conditions, practices and relations embedded in water tariff payment and collection in order to highlight the limits of such arguments, and to demonstrate the way that the forces of compressional stress have come together with new water reforms to shape the situations in which residents pay and collect water tariffs. The tensions that emerged in the process, as we have seen, challenge formulations that claim to explain seemingly self-evident politics. What we find is that social, economic, and state imperatives work in and through each other in ways that can only be perceived from the vantage point of the daily movement and dilemmas of ordinary people, and municipal officials in Kafr al Bahar.

This in-depth exploration of practices around water debt in Kafr al Bahar, reveal the intensifying exclusion and violent forms of segregation and confinement that have emerged through processes of water privatization. It also points to the way that communities such as Kafr al Bahar have organized themselves for a very long time in order to reshuffle their debt to protect the most vulnerable in their community. From this vantage point, it is not discipline that is needed, but for the national government to assume its responsibity for the historical and spatial conditions that have given rise to the water debt.

In the following chapter we turn to the way that struggles associated with access to adequate infrastructure in Kafr al Bahar are tied to a longer history of struggle over water resources and basic infrastructure. We explore this history in its connection to Kafr al Bahar's particular history of dispossession. The place of water in Kafr al Bahar's history of dispossession is central to divergent water narratives that have emerged among residents in the present conjuncture in the context of the town's crisis of indebtedness. Such narratives, as we shall see, challenge the dominant framework for understanding responsibility in the realm of water management and debt. They also seek to denaturalize the link that mainstream water histories of Kafr al Bahar make between Kafr al Bahar's water debt and water management practices and the community's heritage in the area of the swamps. I shall argue in the following chapters that the divergent critiques that such alternative water histories express entails a contentious process of redefining strategies and politics around water resources to fit contemporary conditions. In the process, political divisions among Kafr al Bahar residents have grown deeper and have branched out in several directions.

## Chapter 3: Water and the politics of *sumud*: Histories of the present conjuncture

One evening in the Winter of 2013, I attended a panel discussion at a Tel Aviv community-based organization called Zochrot, an organization dedicated to remembering al-Nakba (the Catastrophe of 1948) and its reverberations in the present. The presentation was entitled "Surviving against all odds: On Palestinian localities which survived the ethnic cleansing of 1948." Rather than focusing on Palestinians who had been massacred, expelled, or who had fled and then been prevented from returning to their homes after the war of 1947/8 that established the State of Israel, this presentation focused on Arab communities that had stayed in place during the war. The panel included one Palestinian historian, Adel Mana, and two residents of Kafr al Bahar: Nadim and Tareq who, as mentioned earlier, was the informal town historian. The small room was filled with about 15 people, mostly Jewish attendees from Tel Aviv. The tables in the entrance hall were covered in interview transcripts, each corresponding to a different "erased" town or village inside Israel's borders. The transcripts were records of army officers accounts of atrocities committed during al-Nakba that Zochrot staff had compiled. Kafr al Bahar, like other communities that had remained during the war were missing from the table. After a brief period of mingling we all gathered in a circle to listen to the accounts of "survival" told by Nadim, Mohamed, and Adel. Mohamed began by introducing himself and his town briefly. He did so by stating that:

> "We've been trying to decide when the nakba happened to us. We think it occurred in 1924 when Rothschild came and began draining the swamps….It's important to us to tell Kafr al Bahar's story because we've been neglected by Arab society in Israel. We were set apart socially, viewed as inferior, as "swamp dwellers."[48]

Mohamed's reference to al-Nakba, a moment that continues play a central part in the formation of Palestinian collective consciousness, and the way that he connected it to the "swamps," is somewhat paradoxical given the standard history of the town and the notion that the community had "survived" or at least not been ethnically cleansed through expulsion and violence, which were the defining features of al-Nakba, as had the majority of Arab communities inside what is now Israel. Tareq's spatial and temporal reframing of al-Nakba in relation to Kafr al Bahar's swamps and in relation to their draining, 23 years before the war of 1947/8, gives something of an indication of the significance and subversive role that local versions of Kafr al Bahar's water history play in the present moment and in relation to narratives of national progress in which Israeli engineer's innovative water technologies enabled redemption of the land, not least through the draining of swamps, and the development of modern forms of collective agriculture.[49]

The dominant history that frames contemporary representations and understandings of Kafr al Bahar, explained Nadim when it was his turn to speak, underwent a reworking and a revival in the 1980s. "[I]n the 1980s, the inhabitants of Kafr al Bahar began to be called 'Sudanese," Nadim told the us. Nadim, like other residents with whom I spoke about the question of Kafr al Bahar's origins, seemed to believe that this modification of the dominant narrative about Kafr al Bahar's origins was intended to underscore his community's status as non-Palestinian foreigners with little claim to the land.[50] During the panel discussion he

pointed out that "[w]hile it's true that some families in the village originally came from Sudan, there are also residents who are blond. It became a term of opprobrium referring to people with dark skin." We can only speculate that the revival and reworking of this standard history that emerged in the 1980s, precisely at the moment of what residents refer to as Kafr al Bahar's "political revolution," was in some way provoked by the emergence within Kafr al Bahar and among Arab Israelis more generally of a younger generation that refused to compromise as their elders had with the Zionist political establishment, and who connected their struggle for civil rights and resistance to erasure to demands for access to adequate basic services, particularly water and water infrastructure. We explore this period in more deeply in the following chapter.

In this chapter I interpret the relationship of three historical-geographical narratives about Kafr al Bahar's origins in relation to one another in order to highlight the logics that these historical-geographies have generated, and to anlayze the role they play in guiding contemporary engagement with the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar as well as in shaping strategic choices and rationalities regarding debt payment and collection described in the previous chapter. What becomes clear in this chapter is that these histories reflect the political divides within the community that came to the fore during the local elections and that they represent different of engaging with the contemporary water crisis.

The standard narrative was told to me on many occasions in many different forms – sometimes scholarly and sometimes popular - by people not from Kafr al Bahar. The two local and somewhat contradictory water histories, on the other hand, were told to me by residents of Kafr al Bahar. One of the local histories centers on the sea which was the key water resource for the extended family from Kafr al Bahar that made their living by fishing. The other local history focuses on the Takbir marshes which, as indicated above, was central to sustaining the family clan that raised water buffalo and harvested papyrus in the area.

In different ways, both of these local narratives challenge the standard history and the implications that it has for separating out Kafr al Bahar's forebearers from other Arabs inside Israel and from the nation-state more generally, for naturalizing their inferiority in a rigid hierarchy in which "swamp dwellers" are at the bottom, and for reproducing power relations that threaten the community's claim to the land and intensify the process of spatial compression described in the previous chapter.

I interpret the two local water histories as contending voices in a struggle to redefine the meaning of *sumud* in relation to contemporary water politics in the town and in relation to the standard narrative that represents the community as inferior "swamp dwellers." I argue that, through the interplay of the two local water histories, a new version of *sumud* is coming to the fore that harnesses the community's past relationship with water in order to engage with, live out, and make sense of the water crisis and to negotiate the contradictory way that ongoing exclusions in the name of national development interact with the non-national emphasis of the new water reforms on individual behavior and personal responsibility.

The cleavages that are apparent in the divergent local water histories first began to form during the community's dispossession and displacement from the Takbir wetlands in the 1920s. This cleavage is central to grasping the meaning behind the conflicting water

narratives that local residents recounted in light of the contemporary water crisis. The divide revolves around the degree to which the community was behind collaboration with the Zionists, versus the degree to which the community considered swamp drainage to be dispossession and a cause for struggle in the name of national liberation. At the time of the swamp drainage project there were disputes over land among the local Mukhtars who were the elders and the non-religious leaders of extended family clans (Arabic: *hamula*) that lived in the area. The Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PJCA), and representatives of the British Mandate negotiated with the Mukhtars over land transfer.[51] The grandparents and parents of the residents of present day Kafr al Bahar were part of a clan that colonial officials referred to as Arab al-Ghawarna. The term "Ghawarna" literally means "valley dweller." In practice the term lumped together a diverse array of people who colonial officials found living in wetland areas (Karmon 1953-4 1953-4, Shafir 1996, Tyler 1994). Thus, colonial officials also referred to the people who lived farther north in the Hula wetlands as Ghawarna. Those who lived in the vicinity of present day Kafr al Bahar led a semi-nomadic existence in the foothills of the Carmel Mountain range which is a coastal mountain range in northern Israel (show map).

In the oral histories that residents of Kafr al Bahar tell about this period, the role of Mukhtar Ashrafi Muhammed of the Arab al-Ghawarna figured prominantly because he offered the community's land to the Zionists, negotiated the communty's resettlement, and presented his people as employees to the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency's (PJCA) project to drain the Takbir wetlands. Indeed, historian Hillel Cohen tells us that one of the methods by which Zionist authorities managed to quell local resistance to the takeover of Palestinian land was by empowering a class of Mukhtars (2008 & 2010). This class became key mediators in the process of negotiations over land transfer with British Mandate Authorities, the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, and with the Jewish National Fund. Mukhtars often acted against the wishes of a good number of their clan. In Kafr al Bahar, as we shall see, those who were openly against the Mukhtar's deal with PJCA ended up fleeing the area during the War of 1947-1948 to areas outside Israel's 1948 borders. In return for the service of those who remained and agreed not to fight, Zionist officers promised not to expel the Mukhtar and his supporters during the ongoing resistance to Zionist land acquisition prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948 and during the War of 1947/8 that established the State of Israel. Such relations to Zionist authorities continued the familiar pattern established under the British Mandate of indirect rule in which the atomization of local non-urban communities based on kinship relations served as a way to undermine solidarity among rural and semi-rural populations. The descendents of this class and their allies were often the first to be appointed as town and village mayors by Jewish authorities once the state of Israel dismantled its military regime in 1966 (the year before Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights began) (Cohen 2010).

Today there is widespread agreement among community members in Kafr al Bahar that if the Mukhtar Dib Al'ali Shahidam had not negotiated land transfer in the way he had, the community would have been expelled or massacred like other Arab communities in the area.[52] That is, however counter-intuitive it seems, what the Mukhtar did may be interpreted in retrospect as a form of *sumud* since it allowed the community to remain in the area. At the same time the deal that the Mukhtar made, planted seeds of a new kind of division in the community that even at the time, was evident among those in the community who were

more reluctant than some in the group to go along with the Mukhtar's plan, but who nevertheless remained in the communiy in order to stay within Israel's 1948 borders.

Overtime, this division began to express itself as a dispute about whether or not the Mukhtar's strategies and leadership methods ought to continue to animate contemporary politics, and be carried into the future. This tension continues to underlie local politics in Kafr al Bahar as the memory of the Mukhtar, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, has come to serve as a symbol of the community's relationship to Zionist and Israeli authorities and to basic services, especially water resources.

Kafr al Bahar's 1999 community report characterizes the town's structure in terms of what it refers to as its 700 year old "bifamily tradition." The core inhabitants of the town are made up of two families – the Abouds and the Jamils. The Abouds are the family members that are descended from the clan that, prior to the 1924 Zionist swamp drainage project, made their living in the wetlands known as the Takbir Swamps. Tareq, explained to me that his family – the Abouds - makes up roughly 40% of the town's ~14,000 inhabitants. The other main family clan who makes up approximately 30% of the town's inhabitants consists of those who fished in the sea. In the words of Tareq "water was the source of income and determined the strength of the tribes in the area." It also determined the gendered division of labor in the community. The men of the Aboud family raised water buffalo in the wetlands, sold dairy products, and chopped wood for sale. The women used two different kinds plants that grew in the swamps – samar and papyrus – to weave mats and baskets that they sold and traded throughout the region. In this way water constituted a social good that sustained the entire community. This changed when PJCA drained the swamps and displaced the community westward to the 1.6 acre sand-stone ridge on the ruins of a Roman rock quarry.[53] The fishing segment of the community, unlike the Aboud family, was able to continue to pass down its tradition of fishing to its children after the community was displaced because, as Tareq remarks, "...[T]hey (the Zionists) could not drain the sea....."

As we shall see, this divide informs the tensions that have arisen between political camps that have each, in different ways, harnessed historical relationships of different segments of the community to water resources to influence contemporary local politics. The following historical accounts of the community's relationship to water, provides different lenses through which to understand the contemporary water crisis. Each account deliberately pulls out certain key moments, backgrounds others, and ignores some all together. The aspects of water history that each account foregrounds and presents as significant illuminates the subjective understandings through which residents and outsiders negotiate the contemporary water crisis, and engage with the dominant historical narrative about the town. The particular dimensions of the past that these three interpretations of Kafr al Bahar's water history emphasize, reflect the tensions within the community over how to enact and conceive of *sumud* in the present moment. Interpreting the tensions that emerged in Kafr al Bahar in the course of struggles around water provisioning and cutoffs, thus, entails interpreting water politics as part of an ongoing struggle to define what kind of practices ought to be included in *sumud*. Such tensions have divided the community from the very beginning in terms of how residents envisioned and lived out their relations with Imperial, Zionist, and later with Israeli authorities. This chapter is organized into three sections, each of which is a represents a different account of Kafr al Bahar's history.

**Structure of the chapter**

In the first section I provide an account of the standard narrative about the town's origins. In the second section I give an interpretation of one of the fisherman's retelling of the history of the town. For him the Sea is the focal resource around which he structures his narrative. In the final section I provide Tareq's account of the town's history and its relationship to the swamps that were once located in the area and provide an analysis of its relationship to both the standard narrative as well as to the narrative told by the fisherman.

Let me begin with the popular account of the community's origins and my understanding of the larger geopolitical and cultural influences shaping this account. Once the standard narrative is laid out, it will be clear how the two alternative local narratives are engaging with this standard narrative in relation to water politics.

**1. "The accepted Lore"**

The myth of Kafr al Bahar's foreign origins did not just appear in the 1980s out of the blue. It repeated and combined earlier conceptions about amil-al-Ghawarna (the ancestors of present day residents of Kafr al Bahar), Bedouins, and Arabs in Palestine more generally that emerged at specific conjunctural moments in which multiple forces came together to give rise to particular conceptions of Arabs in Palestine. Thus, for the sake of clarity and coherence I propose a brief account of the way that conventional notions about Bedouins in Palestine frame mainstream popular and scholarly conceptions of Jamil-al-Ghawarna's history. In my reading of existing historical accounts of Ottoman and Mandate Palestine, what stood out to me was a period between 1915 at the very end of the Ottoman Empire, through the Mandate period (1922-1948), and into the very beginning of the Israeli state in which conceptions about Bedouins and Arabs in Palestine emerged, recombined, and got redefined by Mandate and Zionist authorities in order to speak to the practical, military, and geopolitical needs of the moment. These were tumultuous years of warfare, rebellion, and state dissolution, reformation, and transition in which forms of governance of those who inhabited the area that, in the beginning of this period was known as greater Syria (present day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan), then Palestine, and then Israel, was transforming and being challenged.

My reading of several historical works which I reference below suggests that contemporary historical representations of Kafr al Bahar's origins, draw on familiar representations of dissident citizen-subjects (anti-state and national liberation rebels) as pre-modern, lacking a coherent identity and without historical roots in the land that developed during this 35 year period of transformation. The conceptions of those in the region who were unwilling to serve Imperial and state projects via conscription, taxes, and forced labor, became linked, in the beginning of this period, to citizen-subjects that were part of the Arab national movement under Ottoman rule, and, for reasons described below, resisted conscription during the lead up to World War I. During the Mandate period, these inherited conceptions, with slight modifications to fit with new kinds of national struggles, enabled Mandate and Zionist officials to justify dispossession of local inhabitants even though the Mandate had incorporated the Balfour Declaration's promise to protect the religious and civil rights of non-Jewish inhabitants of the region while also ensuring the establishment of a Jewish national home in the region.[54] Indeed, the myth of Arab al-Ghawarna's foreigness

and lack of coherent identity figured into the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency (PJCA) legal battles with residents over the wetlands that took place during the period of the British Mandate (1922-1948). The conceptions of the ancestors of present day Kafr al Bahar, and the reverberations of these historically and geographically specific conceptions in the standard narrative about Kafr al Bahar represents a crystallization of multiple conceptions about the people of Palestine that became hegemonic between 1915 and the 1950s. Thus, dominant narratives about the grandparents of Kafr al Bahar residents are part of a larger and longer process of discursive construction emanating from the ongoing yet shifting relationship of Imperial powers to the region.

In 1915 the Ottoman Empire was crumbling and World War I was wreaking havoc on the lives of all the inhabitants of the region. According to Historian Salim Tamari the term "Arab" among Turkish political and military elite as well as the Egyptian intelligentsia began, at this time, to signify a "savage and unreliable" group; namely "Bedouins and tribal formations" (2011: 14). Both the term "Arab" and the term "Bedouin" referred to those who were unwilling to fight in the Ottoman army at Gallipoli and in the Suez because they wanted to throw off the "the Ottoman yoke." In Tamari's words,

> "The failure of the Suez campaign [part of the leadup to Gallipoli], and the hardships inflicted by the war on the local population after 1915, including the impact of the coastal blockade against the Syrian provinces by the Allied forces, produced a backlash among Ottoman Arabs. This galvanized the forces that sought autonomy within the empire, and encouraged secessionist forces to flaunt the idea of independence – with considerable French and British support (2011).

Tamari remarks that the hardships that Arabic speaking Ottoman citizens in Palestine suffered included not only those that the Allies inflicted through their blockade of basic staple items, but also those that, in Tamari's words, have become know in the region as "The days of the Turks," a period that refers to:

> "…four miserable years of tyranny symbolized by the military dictatorship of Ahmad Cemal [or Jemal] Pasha in Syria, *seferberlik* (forced conscription and exile), and the collective hanging of Arab patriots in Beirut's Burj Square on August 15, 1916. (2011: 5)

Ahmad Cemal Pasha was the Ottoman leader of the Navy who led the failed military campaign in the Suez in which Ottoman citizens of Palestine were forced to serve as soldiers. In terrifying parallels to today's Syrian civil war (Palestine was part of Greater Syria), Charles Glass writes in the New York Review of Books that World War I, exactly a century earlier, entailed "...military conscription, forced labor battalions, machine-age weaponry, arbitrary punishment, pestilence, and famine…" Such conditions, he explains, "….undid in four years all that the Ottomans had achieved over the previous four centuries."[55] In addition, the Ottoman Minister of War Enver Pasha, together with Cemal Pasha, was responsible for brutal punishment of Arab nationalists. It was only in this context that the term "Arab" became associated with wild, unruly populations, hopelessly at war with one another, rather than a population who was willing and able to uphold noble Imperial goals and ideals. Tamari tells us that after the Suez campaign, Ottoman leaders sought reconcilliation with "Arabs" in order to re-establish a connection with the Arabic speaking

provinces and build solidarity in the context of the War. Speaking retrospectively, however, Tamari tells us it was "too little too late." (2011: 13)

After the War, when the League of Nations established the British mandate for Palestine, the lingering traces of these conceptions remained. Under the British Mandate, however, the notion of Arab and Bedouin were no longer linked to non-alliegance to the Empire. They were now getting reworked in relation to the land and resources and the implications of such resources for nation-building. Mandate officials efforts to define "Arab" and "Bedouin" and to live up to the Balfour Declaration's "dual obligation" to ensure a Jewish national home as well as to protect the rights of non-Jewish inhabitants, built on late Ottoman conceptions of "Arab" and "Bedouin." Such conceptions later informed historical narratives such as the standard one about Kafr al Bahar's origins and resource management practices.

In their 2003 article entitled "Colonialism, Colonization, and Land Law in Mandate Palestine: The Zor al-Zarqa and Barrat Qisarya Land Disputes in Historical Perspective" Geremy Forman and Alexandre Kedar describe the arduous legal process of defining indigenous rights to land in relation to the Takbir swamps as well as in relation to who and what constituted the public and the public good in the context of the Balfour Declaration's "dual obligation" (2003).[56] In the article, Forman and Kedar explain that during this period, mandate law-makers were responsible for adapting Ottoman land codes to the needs and requirements of the mandate. As for the forebearers of present day Kafr al Bahar who were called Jamil al Ghawarna, law-makers also had to address whether or not they constituted "a village" made up of a coherent group of people who's land rights ought to be guaranteed in accordance with the Balfour Declaration. Forman and Kedar describe in vivid detail the way that the Mandate Attorney General, in his unremitting effort to hasten the land concession to the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, argued that the Jamil al Ghawarna had Customary rights but no legally binding rights to the land since they were not a village. He determined this by the fact that they dwelt in tents. The attorney for the Jamil-al-Ghawarna, however, insisted that whether or not the community lived in tents was irrelevent. He argued that what was relevant, as far as Ottoman Land Codes were concerned, was whether the community was sedentarized. Forman and Kedar quote a 1922 letter that the attorney for the Jamil al Ghawarna wrote on behalf of the people of the Takbir swamps, in the context of land disputes with Mandate and Zionist officials. In it, the attorney explains their status during the Mandate period in the following way:

> "...though living in tents, the...tribes...are in point of fact perfectly settled citizens and by no means nomadic, because they do not have to move about with their cattle, and are never known to cross the boundaries of their limited areas, and if they shift their tents, at intervals, for small distances, it is only for hygiencial purpose [57]

This is how people from Kafr al Bahar today describe their ancestors immediately preceding their dispossession. They were, in the words of Forman and Alexandre Kedar, a previously nomadic group that was in the process of "sedentarizing."

The attorney for the Jamil al Ghawarna, thus, insisted that they were sedentary. Forman and Kedar point out, moreover, that at the very end of the long drawn out legal proceedings, the attorney for the Jamil al Ghawarna discovered that the land that they were

using was public land and that the local inhabitants were using it for purposes that Ottoman land codes deemed to be for the benefit of the public; namely, grazing flocks. However, the Attorney General persisted in arguing that public land could only be defined in relation to a village. From his perspective, tent encampments, even if they were permanent, did not constitute a village and, thus, they were not part of a public that would be benefiting from the use of the land as would inhabitants of an actual village.

Having rejected the notion that the local inhabitants were part of the public, and using the land for the public benefit, Forman and Kedar go on to explain that the Attorney General then tried to exercise of the right of eminent domain to expropriate "private" land for public use which was determined not by Ottoman definitions of the public interest but by Mandate definitions of the public welfare. The need to eradicate malaria became a reasonable pretext for expropration since it was seen as necessary for public health.[58] The added benefit was that the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency, rather than the British Mandate, would foot the bill for swamp drainage. Those among the British who disagreed with the Attorney General noted that, in fact, those who would benefit from swamp drainage only included a small portion of the public (the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and the Jewish agricultural collectivities that would settle in place of the existing inhabitants) and did not include those most immediately deriving benefit from the marshes. Those who did live by the swamps, moreover, had, by their own account, lived in the area for many generations and had not suffered from malaria, at least not to the same degree as British and Zionist colonists. In the end, however, the threat of force and of preemptive drainage "persuaded" the Arab al-Ghawarna to accept land transfer (Forman and Kedar 2003)..

What this prehistory of the mainstream narratives about Kafr al Bahar and about Arab Bedouin groups in the area suggests is that characterizations of Kafr al Bahar's forebearers as sickly swamp dwellers, and escaped slaves, origins which, as we shall see in my account of the mainstream narrative below, signifies that they had little attachment or ability to manage the land and water resources in the interest of the nation or the public, has been actively produced at specific moments in order to enable dispossession and in order to suppress resistance to Imperial and state making projects. Rather than understanding the link between the community and its water indebtedness as resulting from natural tendencies towards waste, clan politics, and premodern political culture that is unconcerned with the public good, we now can see the way that the conceptual logic that makes these links between the community, waste, and lack of public spirit, got modified, reworked and fixed through the process of producing first Mandate Palestine, and then Israel as we know it.

Having laid out the historical relations of power that enabled production of knowledge about Kafr al Bahar and its water history, and the connection of such knowledge to the community's dispossession, we are now in a position to identify the traces of this history in the standard narrative that informs contemporary offical and popular versions of Kafr al Bahar's water history and justifies harsh/ cruel fiscal restraints in the context of water debt.

The mainstream narrative

Hagit of the civil rights organization Sikkuy, who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, suggested that I educate the people of Kafr al Bahar about conserving water, was the first to introduce me to the mainstream historical narrative. She described Kafr al Bahar as a community descended from Sudan and Egypt who lived by the swamps. In fact, she emphasized that it was precisely because of this heritage that they had much to learn in the way of water conservation. My second encounter with this history was provided by the engineer who worked and lived in the neighboring kibbutz of Neve Yarok. He offered an abridged PowerPoint history of swamp drainage that Neve Yarok's community leaders created to present to tourists. According to the PowerPoint, the division of labor among groups working on the drainage project was self-evident: the Jewish "pioneers" (*halutzim*) prepared the land by burning shrubs and uprooting plants. Once the marshes were drained, it was "Hebrew labor" that cultivated the fields. The al-Ghawarna, the slides explained, were engaged in "al-Ghawarina work." Such work consisted of "removing the mud" in order to deepen canals and build the clay pipes. The kibbutz history presents this division of labor as natural, given the origins of the different groups. Describing the people of the area prior to Jewish settlement, the PowerPoint presentation brazenly asks: "are they princes or are they frogs?"

The most detailed account I received, however, was from the curator of the Carmel Museum. The museum, now houses artifacts that marine archeologists have uncovered on the sea floor in the area. Yet, the building itself had been built by Baron Edmond Rothschild as a glassworks factory when he was head of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency (PJCA). The building stood to the west of where the Takbir swamps had once been. In the staff office that also served as a stockroom for the museum in the gated kibbutz of Ein Kessem where, unlike in Kafr al Bahar, those who do not live on the Kibbutz have to pay to pass a manned security gate to visit the sea, the curator explained that Kafr al Bahar residents are decendants of slaves from Sudan that arrived in the area with the Egyptian occupation of Palestine in 1830s.[59] According to the curator, their origins are biologically confirmed by the prevalence of sickle cell anemia in the town's population which is why they were immune to malaria. Their immunity to malaria evidently is what prompted the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency to hire Arab al-Ghawarna instead of Jews to drain the swamps. Sufian notes, however, that British engineers who the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency hired as consultants in order to devise a drainage scheme for the Hula Wetlands, reported that "the majority, if not all of the inhabitants [al-Ghawarna] had suffered from recurrent bouts of malaria fever" (159). Tareq insists, on the contrary, that his ancestors had a natural remedy for malaria that involved covering the entire body of the sick person with mud and leaving the mud-covered person to bake in the sun. Thus, in his view, his ancestors were not afflicted to the same degree as Europeans by malaria.

In any event, as Historian Sandy Sufian remarks, because of "…the paucity of Arabic sources on…," let alone English sources, the history of malaria in Palestinian communities poses difficulties for research (2007: 18).[60] Indeed, Tareq explained that much of what Israelis know about pre-1924 people that inhabited the area of the swamps was, in fact, a replication of information about the people who lived in the Hula wetlands in the Galilee to the north-east. Colonial officials, as mentioned earlier, used the term "al-Ghawarna" to refer to inhabitants of all wetland areas. The term referred to a made-up group of valley people

that lived in wetland areas, who had escaped forced labor, and serfdom. It signified a group of people who had run away and found refuge in the swamps where tracking was difficult. Thus, colonists used the same term to refer to both those who inhabited the Takbir Marshes as well as to those in the vicinity of the Hula wetlands. In practice, the term "al-Ghawarna" served as an umbrella term for many different groups of people who came together in wetland areas during the Egyptian Occupation of Palestine in the 1830s.[61]

In a 2010 article entitled "A Classic Zionist Story" for the newspaper Ha'aretz, journalist and translator Meron Rapoport both confirmed the difficulty of finding documented evidence of Kafr al Bahar's history, at the same time as he reiterated what he referred to as the "accepted lore" about Arab al-Ghawarna's foreign origins. He wrote

> "Kafr al Bahar arose out of a swamp. The Takbir swamp....A field study conducted by the Israeli Interior Ministry in 1963...reports that the village elders said their ancestors had come to the swamp around the year 1500. The people who lived by these swamps had no written history, but the narrative they tell about themselves is substantially different from the accepted lore - for which verification is difficult to come by - that village residents are descendants of slaves who were brought from Egypt or Sudan, or fled from there, in the 19th century... People who fled from blood feuds, or were forced to leave their villages because of a shortage of land. Some came from the Jordan Rift Valley, some from the Hula Valley, some perhaps even from Iraq. The swamps were land that belonged to no one, and so anyone could settle there, find refuge there. Over the years, other groups of people who for various reasons hadn't found their place anywhere else joined 'the founding families' - Amash and Jurban. An alliance of outsiders that existed in the shelter of the swamps....."

Rappaport goes on to point out that "according to an article by Yehudit Ilan, a resident of Neve Yarok [the neighboring kibbutz to the north]... only 50-60 of the hundreds of workers who drained the swamp were Jews. The rest were the people who lived around the swamps....Their bodies were already immune to malaria, said the Jews. But one of the Arab workers who took part in the draining of the swamp said in a documentary that was filmed in the 1970s: 'People died and nobody knew why, because there was only one doctor, in Zamarin (Beit Avraham Yaakov )." Thus, as the reader might suspect the "accepted lore" is simply "lore." No clear-cut conclusion can be derived from the available evidence. But what *is clear* is the tendency of this history to naturalize representations of the Jamil-al-Ghawarna as having certain biological and cultural characteristics that derive from their supposed origins both in Africa and in the swamps. As we shall see, this theory of Kafr al Bahar's origins often get linked to wasteful water management.

What is surprising is that even today the scholarly literature makes authoritative claims reinforcing "the accepted lore," by drawing on evidence that Imperial, Zionist and state authorities produced at particular moments in history in order to further their nationalistic and imperialistic goals. The conceptions of al-Ghawarna that come from this literature, build and borrow from earlier conceptions that arose out of specific practices and conflicts at the time. In their 2011 article on Bedouin settlement during the late Ottoman and Mandate periods for the journal of New Middle Eastern Studies, for example, Hebrew University Geographers Ruth Kark and Seth Frantzman rely on Rapoport's reporting to

assert that "the Ghawarina (people of the lower area/valley‟) lived in non-permanent dwellings among the reeds. Some related that they came to Palestine as slaves from Egypt in the nineteenth century. The environment of the reeds they found in Palestine was similar to the one that had existed in the Nile valley, and they would have been accustomed or resistant to the malaria then prevalent in the swamp." Later in the same article, Frantzman and Kark cite Yehuda Karmon, whom they say is one of the "foremost" researchers who studied "the change wrought on their [al-Ghawarina] lifestyle." Convinced of Karmon's expertise on the subject of al-Ghawarna, Kark and Frantzman state that "Many of them [al-Ghawarina]….arrived in the 1830s when they came as immigrants, deserters or slaves connected to the decade-long Egyptian occupation of the country." However, we cannot overlook the question of who Yehuda Karmon was and what he represented. Karmon, originally named Leopold Kaufman, was born in Auschwitz. After World War II he immigrated to Israel with his family. As an adult he worked in the Department of Geography at Hebrew University. Much like the field of Archeology in Israel that Nadia Abu El-Haj describes in her book Facts on the Ground: Archeological Practice and Territorial Self Fashioning in Israeli Society (2001), the field of Geography was, especially in the 1950s when Karmon did much of his research on al-Ghawarna, tied to the project of nation-building and the construction of Jewish national identity. In the area of Geography this included conducting regional studies that documented and assessed the positive and negative changes that Zionist development as compared to other groups produced in the landscape. Thus, in his 1953 article about the inhabitants of the Hula wetlands written for the Israel Exploration Journal Karmon observes:

> The low conditions of life combined with disease to turn all the settlers in spite of their different origin into a common type: the Ghawarina – sick people, lacking in force and will. In the merciless struggle between man and nature in the Huleh Valley, nature remained the master. The Arab settlers did not possess the knowledge and the means to subdue nature and to impose their will upon it. This task remained for the Jewish settlers who came to the Huleh Valley in 1939 (24).

Although this passage refers to the inhabitants of the Hula wetlands, the term "al-Ghawarna" as described above, signified and conflated all those in the area who dwelt in wetland areas. According to Tareq and others, when Arab Palestinians from other parts of Palestine used the term, it was meant to be an insult and to signify their inferiority to other Arab groups. In relying upon Meron Rappoport's journalistic piece and the work of Yehuda Karmon, Kark and Frantzman's scholarly journal article reproduces the conventional wisdom of early Zionists about the community as foreigners, lacking a coherent identity and lacking a long-standing connection to the wetlands. Thus, despite the absence of written records about the people of Kafr al Bahar prior to swamp drainage, the meager scholarly literature about the inhabitants of the wetlands that does exist, provides a clue to the chauvinistic sources of present day mainstream conceptions about the al-Ghawarna.

For the most part, as Sandy Sufian points out, "Zionists did not believe the Arab population held a strong attachment to the land; they used the existence of swamps as proof of a supposed indifference and detachment" (2007: 161). Mandate authorities tended to agree with the Zionists. The swamp's existence from this perspective represented inefficient land-use and a kind of passive acquiescence to sickness and degraded conditions. This is the

"accepted lore" about the Arab-al-Ghwarna that frames the standard narrative of Kafr al Bahar's origins.

Now that we have a sense of the specific contexts out of which ideas about Arabs, Bedouins, and al-Ghawarna emerged and got redefined and how they have fed into contemporary conceptions about the residents of Kafr al Bahar and their relationship to water and to the nation, we can turn to the two contrasting local narratives about the community. These narratives, both of which are structured around the community's relationship to key water resources, represent a process of knowledge production that informs Kafr al Bahar residents contemporary understandings of the water crisis and guides their strategies with respect to water debt payment and collection.

Munir the fisherman's account emphasized dimensions of the town's history that revealed compromise, multiculturalism, and national service, while Tareq's account emphasized conflict, crisis, and transformation. Yet these two narratives intermingled, like the family members themselves. When read in relation to one another and in relation to the mainstream narrative about the community's water history, the two local narratives can be understood as reflecting the interconnected yet, specific experiences of dispossession from different kinds of water resources in the community – the sea and the wetlands. These narratives, in turn, inform present day debates within Kafr al Bahar over how best to secure access to adequate amounts of piped water for domestic consumption. That is, today's water politics is a struggle within *sumud* of self-definition (over how to define *sumud*). The significant place of water history in giving voice to subjective understandings of dispossession and of feeding into the political lines of division that have emerged from such understandings, allows us to begin to discern the divergent non-liberal conceptions of the public, collective goods, and human welfare and the way they interact with and challenge the logic imposed by new water reforms and associated fiscal restraints.

## 2. <u>Munir and the sea</u>

Munir, a vocal member of the fishing family from Kafr al Bahar was the first to lay out for me one of the two dominant local versions of the history that also challenged, in its own way, the mainstream version of Kafr al Bahar's history. His version was shaped by what he referred to as "his heritage in the Sea." In other words, what he said was informed by the fact that he still managed to eke out a living through fishing. Certainly it was not ideal and he was constantly searching for other sources of income. By the end of my fieldwork, for example, he was experimenting with transforming his ad-hoc front patio into a seaside fish restaurant. When I first met him, he used this front area that was shaded from the wind and sun by a large, flat bamboo awning, under which lay several beach mats and a small round table with chairs, as a place for local fisherman to congregate during the off-times in the daily fishing cycle. Located near a shed that housed fishing equipment, the fishermen used the resting area to drink tea, talk, repair equipment, and smoke. I found out later that this front patio as well as his cave like home built from irregular stones with only a partially built stone foundation for the floor, was in fact, illegal. It was zoned as national park land that people such as my pioneering neighbor, mentioned in the last chapter, was working hard to defend against military and real estate development. It often seemed to Munir, however, that struggles to keep the land and the sea (e.g. regulations regarding fishing and boating) in state-hands, whether for military use, or as a nature reserve, were simultaneously struggles against

his very existence and heritage. As we shall see, this tension pervaded the history that Munir told.

Munir was in his mid-40s and one of the 20 fishing families that continued to support their children with their fishing income. He claimed to be one of the hundreds of grandchildren of the Mukhtar who made the deal with the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PJCA) to drain the Takbir swamps. This was reason enough, he seemed to imply, to defend his grandfather's legacy and form of *sumud*. He invited me to sit down with him at the little round table under the awning to drink tea, as he chain smoked and spoke excitedly in Hebrew emphasizing important points in English. Like Tareq, Munir contended, against the popular history, that the community had resided in the area of the Takbir swamps for at least 500 years. He explained that because of the community's work on the swamp drainage scheme, Kafr al Bahar was eventually categorized in Zionist records as a laborers' town, a label usually reserved for Jewish settlements that were part of the Zionist "pioneering" enterprise. In fact, Sandy Sufian explained in her study of the place of malaria and swamp drainage in Israel's nation-building project, that swamp drainage was considered to be a particularly heroic expression of commitment of the "new Jew" to serving the nation.[62] It constituted dangerous work on "the front lines" of the battle to redeem the land (Sufian 2007). In the area of Kafr al Bahar, Jewish workers protested the employment of the people of Jamil-al-Ghawarna in the swamp drainage scheme, arguing that it was a Jewish duty, obligation, and right to engage in labor that would require them, as "Jewish pioneers" to "stand in the Takbir swamps neck high in water." This, they claimed, would cement "their right to live in this place" (quoted in Sufian 2007: 36). Instead, the al-Ghawarna stood neck deep in the water and this has served to bolster Kafr al Bahar's residents claim to the land, even if this claim is constantly tested.

The drainage scheme, thus, set the stage for the people of Kafr al Bahar to establish a relationship with Zionist officials and nearby Jewish communities. As time went on, Kafr al Bahar became a valuable source of labor for Jewish farms, most notably they took care of the fields when the farmers went to fight in the war that established the state Israel. The War itself in 1947/8, rather than the drainage scheme, which Munir only touched on briefly, was the key moment that framed Munir's narrative and formed the basis of his claim to the area, a claim that rested on Kafr al Bahar's history of service to the Jewish nation and Zionist movement.

Early that morning Munir had thrown his net into the sea, 1 km from the shore. He was planning to pull it in at 6 pm, sell his catch, and then take the dangerous journey farther out to sea at night in order to catch what he referred to as "a richer, tastier, and more expensive fish" called *farida*. Thus, he had time to spare, to talk, and to communicate his version of history which evidently was something he wanted visitors like me to hear. After some time of pleasant conversation and tea, Munir suddenly raised his index finger telling me "there are those who say bad things about us….This I know….A lot has transpired that cannot be repeated…." He was now ready, however tangentially he approached the subject, to discuss the deep and troubling tensions inside the community and between Kafr al Bahar and other Arab and Jewish communities in Israel.

He began by reference to the story of Hector of Troy, which at the time of our conversation had been showing on TV:

> "There were people here against the colonists. I saw the movie "Hector"...This is like what happened here. There were 2 brothers. The British and the Zionists were behind one of the brothers and that was the family who stayed. My grandfather said that in the future there will be rules and modern laws and we will live under them....So he stayed, and lived and protected his family. How did he do this? When the Zionists came to kick us out he said what can I do to stay here, to help. I have children. A person who does not have children or a family would not do this. Those who steal and rob go to jail and do not think of their families. My grandfather did. He had to do it. If he hadn't we wouldn't be here. He protected us. We were a big *hamula* (Arabic: clan)....If not for him there'd be no village here today. This is not a famous story because there is good and bad in it and the bad is hush hush. It is an embarrassing family scandal that a big war started because of a little family strife. But this is what happened with Hector as well.

As he spoke I tried to remember the details of the Trojan War and to pinpoint which strife he was referring in the story (between Meneleus and Agamemnon?, Hector and Paris?, Troy and Sparta?). I was not able to connect the dots exactly but I figured he was making his point through metaphor and that I ought just go along with it. He went on to describe what he referred to as unspeakable acts between brothers.

> "....[T]he brother that was my uncle from my grandfather's first wife was the soldier for the British. The other brothers, who were against him, killed him and cut him up and sent him back to us in a bag. My grandfather cried blood about this. This is also what happened in the movie. The brothers were going to fight just between each other rather than causing a whole war, but when someone intervened and killed one of the brothers it caused a whole war. If only 2 people fought it out in a gladiator stadium rather than armies, less would have died. This is why there's some stinky stories here.

It soon became clear that Munir's intention, beyond elaborating what he saw as some of the historic roots of Kafr al Bahar's intra-community tensions, was to highlight a form of protection and security that the Mukhtar provided, not only for his people, but for colonial officials. Munir wanted to underscore the military service that his grandfather's sons provided to the British and to the Zionists in 1948. The sons that remained with the grandfather ended up fighting alongside the British. "they were with them [the British] like soldiers. ... and I had an uncle in the navy and when the Jews came and Israel was established, the British wrote a certificate that stated 'these are collaborators' – don't hurt them...."

To prove the relationship and the validity of the certificate that authorized Kafr al Bahar's continued existence, Munir recounted a popular anecdote that I heard many times from residents. The story is about one of the Mukhtar's sons who fought with the British and whose hair turned white at the age of 18. As the story goes, during the war of 1948 the Jews committed a massaccre in the nearby Arab town of Tantura. One of the Mukhtar's sons was there fishing. The Jews captured him while he was fishing and took him to be executed. Zionist soldiers lined him up to shoot him along with the others.

"...They didn't know he was a son of the Mukhtar. They put a gun to his head and it didn't shoot, they put the gun to the sky and it shot, they put the gun to his head again and it didn't shoot. Meanwhile the Mukhtar was looking for his son. Where is he? Finally they [the Zionists] said, we're not going to mess with God. God wants this guy to live. All the hair of the Mukhtar's 18 year old son turned white after this. From then on the Zionists would always ask my grandfather when they caught somebody before they did anything to him. They'd say 'is this one of yours?' they respected him.

The protective figure of the Mukhtar through the authority he had established in his relationship to colonial authorities and that aided the community most clearly during times of crisis and war was, in Munir's account, key to the community's staying power and a model for future struggle. This was his version of *sumud* and it revolved around collective security, protection, collaboration and service to the colonists.

Just then, as Munir had come to the end of the first segment of his history, Noor arrived and went inside the house to talk to Munir's wife, Aisha, with whom I later took an Arabic literacy class. Noor helped Aisha receive their children who were beginning to stream in after school. Noor brought out more small glasses of tea and urged us to continue our conversation. The break shifted Munir's attention. He gazed out at the sea before us. He continued the discussion, this time focusing on the sea, an its role in the life of the town, and in his own life today. Unlike the swamp, the sea remained a part of life for him and this gave him reason to support strategic compromise with national authorities rather than to invoke al-Nakba (catastrophe)/ dispossession. In the past, according to Munir, the sea was alive with fish to the point that the waterways by the shore leading into the sea were white with the color of the fish. Yet today the fish have become scarce because, in Munir's words, "...technology of today has made the fish extinct." Indeed a power plant in Hedera to the south of Kafr al Bahar, and factories in nearby kibbutzim, such as the styrofoam factory in the coastal kibbutz of Ein Carmel to the north, have evidently contributed to the decline in fish in the area (The Middle East Eye). Munir explained that when he was a boy he used to go to the Crocodile River that borders Kafr al Bahar to the north and to sit there with his grandmother by a water wheel that still existed at the time. She would wash clothes and tell him stories about his family's past. She told him that when she was a girl "there were so many schools of fish that you'd sea sharks eating them...." He explained that while in his father's time the fishermen needed only an arrow to catch fish, they now needed to dig through rocks to find fish. "You used do be able to pick and choose from the abundance of fish. No longer."

Despite the new hardships that fishing families faced, Munir emphasized the ongoing power of the sea in his life. Like the so-called water-buffalo/swamp family, the fishing family had been displaced and now lived under cramped conditions of spatial compression. Yet, his ongoing relationship to the sea attested to the difference in his understanding of the community's past, and politics of *sumud*. In his words, "...the sea gives us energy, romantic energy – it's a free zone. Although we are a muslim village that does not serve in the army, we have a map that says that everyone who passes through here from wherever…can pass freely... It is for everyone, it is not owned by one person. We protect the seashore. We the fisherman from my grandfather [the Mukhtar], we take care of this place and make sure nothing happens. If we didn't do this, we couldn't be here. We watch over this place and

make sure no one breaks fishing laws and national laws....We don't want trouble, we want this area to remain safe and to keep it in our hands." Thus, in addition to the service to the nation/colonial authorities that the community had provided, under his grandfather's leadership, Munir also portrayed himself and the other fishermen as carrying on his grandfather's legacy of stewardship and protection of the area and in particular of the sea and the sea shore.

The history that he told, and the way he connected his sea based livelihood practices to this history, provided a rationale for his community's continued use of the area. He strove to show that his use of the area did not contradict the Jewish national character of the area as a state nature reserve. At the same time, however, his history expressed the sense of danger that the fishermen could not help but feel given the illegallity of their building structures as well the host of state restrictions that favored large commercial fishing boats, and that hurt the small fishing boats of Kafr al Bahar. He told me, for example, that unlike the large Israeli [Jewish] fishing boats, there are regulations limiting how far out to sea small fishing boats such as his can sail (7 km according to Munir). He complained that police regularly harrassed Kafr al Bahar fisherman while turning a blind eye to large fishing boat violations. Such violations, according to Munir, included the way that large fishing boats would often switch from large nets to small drift nets when they were out at sea, out of sight of the fishing authorities. In his words, "...the small [drift] nets capture everything, and scrape the sea ruining the ecology, so the police of the water ask them to use larger nets. They [the big fishing boats] say ok, but then they switch their nets out at sea. They don't follow the laws of fishing. The police do not stop and inspect them the way they do our boats." He went on to explain that just like in farming, the sea needs to be left alone during spawning season. The state recently passed legislation that prohibitted the fishermen from going out during spawning months. Munir told me this is how it's always been. Now, however, it is problematic for small fishing boats to lose the income they would have generated during those months because the large boats continue to fish un-hindered during spawning season, and leave the sea depleted of fish. "The big problem is that you are supposed to let the fish grow so they can reproduce....They [the big boats] go out during spawning season and catch all the fish with drift nets and throw the small fish back. Seagulls eat the small fish and none are left for us. I tell the policemen what I see. I report it. It's prohibited, but nothing changes. What I know about fishing is you need to leave the sea free for a while...This is why there's no business for us and why I am not encouraging my seven children to carry on in fishing." The online news organization *Middle East Eye* later reported that most fishermen in the area believed that "...The laws were designed to force Palestinian fishermen to abandon the profession." The report quoted Munir as saying "when they basically ban me from fishing, I can't accept that…..No matter if they hit me in the head or shoot me, I'm going to keep going into the sea to fish." The reality was that he had tried other professions, but without the skills and education necessary to succeed in the other professions, he always found himself having to fall back on fishing.

In expressing his frustration about unjust police harassment, and laws that made it difficult for him to support his family, he also recapitulated his right to the sea by connecting his contemporary practices to his grandfather's protective stewardship and ability to enforce law and order. His narrative, in other words, was directed, in part, at preventing a new round of dispossession and displacement from his sea-based livelihood. Despite the difficulties he faced, Munir had little choice but to steadfastly remain on the seashore. Indeed, he told the

*Middle East Eye*, "…Me, as a 44-year-old, I can't give it up. I'm going to be going out into the sea for the rest of my life…." He later pointed out, "…if I don't go into the sea to fish, I don't feed my children." Munir chose, however, to interpret his persistence and concern for the rules of the sea as part of a longer legacy of perseverance that came out of his grandfather's practice of *sumud*.

Munir illustrated this longer legacy through his account of his grandfather's role in imposing laws that, according to Munir, had reined in and modernized what had been an unruly area. His account conspicuously contradicted the dominant history that characterized the Al-Ghawarna as bound and determined by the unhealthy environment of the area before swamp drainage. Rather than foregrounding swamp drainage as the central activity out of which the values and practices associated with *sumud* arose, as Tareq did, and as we shall see in the next section, Munir focused on his grandfather's role in subduing the area. Such a leadership style, according to Munir, is one of the keys to what he saw as his grandfather's success in consolidating the people and their claim to the area. His grandfather, in other words, was engaged in a sort of state-building, "modernizing" project aimed at sedenterizing the community in place and working with rather than trying to escape from higher level bureaucratic authorities, rules, and regulations.

To make this point he turned his historical lens on an era 100 years before the war of 1948, skipping the period of swamp drainage entirely. He began in the mid 19th century during a time of so-called "lawlessness" and Bedouin "blood feuds," just as the Ottoman Empire was beginning to initiate its reform process. As Munir tells it, the area had been a den of iniquity. "Many people passed through.... It was a scary place, all of them came passing through to other places – Lebanon, Syria. Also there were all kinds of wild animals here. There was a story about a big dangerous animal with a lot of hair. This place was untamed. The war was not just with the people, it was also with the animals." Munir explained that his grandfather began the process of semi-sedentization and conquest of the area by building the first house. "He founded the place...and when people passed through with big herds my grandfather had the power to grant them land. He had that kind of authority to allow people who arrived from elsewhere to stay if he thought they would make good use of the land. And every so often the authorities would come by and do a census. They would ask about the new people and my grandfather, the Mukhtar, would say I allowed them to be here." Colonial officials from the Ottomans, to the British, to the Zionists conferred upon his grandfather the right to decide who could stay and could not precisely because of his authority and power to enforce modern laws and govern in an orderly fashion.

The period that Munir's grandfather lived and the way that, in Munir's account, he was able to subdue "nature" and the "people" in the Takbir swamps belongs to a period in the mid-1800s, at the end of Ottoman rule, during which Ottoman leaders, as mentioned above, were attempting to consolidate control over the outlying provinces and, in the process to embark upon a course of modernization. Munir's grandfather aided these Imperial ambitions by reining in the community, and ending an era of so-called Bedouin wars.[63] Not only did this history contradict the dominant Israeli narrative about the people of Kafr al Bahar, it also undermined the link between Arab Bedouins during the late Ottoman period and anti-Ottoman Arab patriotism/ nationalism. The other moment that frames Munir's history, as we have seen, was the War of 1947/48.

Munir ended his roundabout story with an indication of where he stood in relation to the Israeli state and where he likely stood among the political camps that divided sharply during the 2013 local elections over the question of water debt and cutoffs. "I am Israeli, I'm happy that I'm Israeli. I don't say I'm Palestinian, I'm Israeli," Munir insisted. "Kafr al Bahar is like the nation of Israel. All the different factions of Arabs also are in Kafr al Bahar. Christians and Druze came here and became Muslim, like the Jews who come to Israel from all over the world. Here they came as well, from all regions, and walks of life. We are a population that is very diverse and that's because of the love of the Mukhtar for every person. He was a good man who was able to transcend divisions." The notion of the Mukhtar as good, kind, and being able to transcend divisions, it seemed to me, was Munir's way of saying that he accepted the notion of Israel as a Jewish state. Specifically, the reference to diversity and immigration seemed to allude to the highly controversial law that allows every Jew from anywhere in the world to immigrate, become a citizen, and receive returning citizens' benefits from the government, at the same time as it denies Palestinians who's families were expelled relatively recently the same right. Kafr al Bahar's diversity, Munir seemed to say, mirrored Israel's diversity, a diversity that is derived from the "Right of Return Law" that has drawn so many Jews from all over the world to Israel, many of whom came during periods of political and economic crisis in their countries of origin (e.g. Russian Jews, Ethiopian Jews, South African Jews, as well as Jews from Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Tunisia, and Morocco who left as a result of tension that emerged as a result of Zionist conquest). Munir's remarks signified, in other words, that he did not want to fight for anything beyond the small area of land and authority carved out by his grandfather. At the same time his story conveyed a sense of insecurity in, as well as a defense of Kafr al Bahar's existence in its present location. The justification he elaborated emerged from the view that what Kafr al Bahar's grandparents had done with respect to law enforcement and protection in the area was akin to service to the nation and in return they received a portion of land in that nation, albeit a compressed, shrinking portion of land that demanded constant defensive justification to keep the borders from squeezing it out of existence.

Despite the defensive undertone that suffused Munir's narrative, there was some precedent for Munir holding onto his contemporary sea-based livelihood in the story of how his grandfather established safety, some measure of authority, and peaceful relations with Imperial authorities and with the colonists. For Munir, then, compromise, collective cohesion, alliegance, and service to the Jewish nation through the community's kinship with the Mukhtar was their safety net and basis for access to national resources, however inadequate they were. By insisting on his grandfather's role in turning the area into the modern law-abiding nation of Israel, and emphasizing the fisherman's role in enforcing the laws of the sea and sea shore, he was identifying with his grandfather's legacy and, doubtless hoped to emulate the success of his grandfather's strategy with respect to ensuring that his community remained in place.

This history and the defensive claim it made to remaining in the area, and to Kafr al Bahar's fishing rights and rights to the seashore, did not communicate a version of liberal abstract rights espoused by Israeli government officials. Nor was it aligned with an indiscriminate market logic embedded in new water laws that asserted the common welfare is achieved through managing one's private affairs properly. It was, in fact, a highly specific interpretation of the community's dispossession and the politics of *sumud* that informed this historical and geographical notion of rights to land and water, especially to the sea.

Towards the end of our conversation, Munir invoked a protectionism associated with values identified with dominant notions of masculinity and femininity. "A woman can pass freely here on this beach, and whether she wears a headscarf, or she walks naked, she will have no problems. No one is allowed to talk to her. Here we are good because of my grandfather. We protect the seashore." It seemed to me that he was evoking a kind of paternalism that parallelled his depiction of his grandfather's relationship to the area and his people, in which his grandfather's power derived from similar representations of masculinity and femininity. The logic of this reprentation entailed an association of masculinity with the forces of law and order and modernity more generally, and the forces of the sea and "nature" more generally, including the romantic energy it radiated, with a wild, unorganized place, in need of protection and subjugation. In the story of Munir's grandfather, however, the colonial officials respected him and gave him authority over the area, despite the fact that he was clearly incorporated into a patronage relationship in which he was less powerful than the colonists.

Munir's need to invoke such representations seemed to express a recognition of the limits that such gendered representations and relations placed on him. Even the minimal amount of power Munir's grandfather had, over the small area of land he was able to hold onto and over the part of the clan that had stayed inside Israel after 1948, appeared in the present moment to be out of Munir's reach. Indeed the laws that designated the fisherman's village as national park land meant that the masculine forces of law and order were, at the moment, focused on protecting the area from human activity, including activity of the fishermen. Moreover, Munir's ability to continue to live and work in the area depended on central government officials' willingness to overlook his illegal use of the area. This marginal position, dependent as it was on the whims of central government officials, did not produce conditions that facilitated orderly conduct in terms of building construction, for example. Instead it subjugated the fishermen further. Thus, the identity and place that Munir forged for himself and the other fishermen through the limits imposed by gendered categories, was key to both the cooptation of the fishermen in their efforts to represent themselves as the custodians and protectors of the area, as well as to the awareness of their domination and subjugation. He ended his narrative by pointing to the irony of the situation. "How is it you can stay here, they ask? You haven't contributed to our country and served in the army. Well, how did *you* come here – show me a map – you'll see you're coming out cheap." Throughout his entire story he had emphasized service to the nation and to Zionist and British authorities and reciprocal protections. Now, however, he revealed a note of contempt at the injustice of the circumstances in which he found himself. In some way, the way he ended his narrative seemed to indicate his desire to move beyond the set and limited categories that confined him within the logic of Zionist service and service to the Jewish nation.

Munir's history which communicated a certain claim to the area, contrasted with the claim expressed by Tareq in his narrative of dispossession from the swamps. We now turn to Mohammad's narrative. Despite their differences, the interconnections of the two histories are evident in the way that they each, narrate the politics of *sumud* in order to speak both to the dominant history of Kafr al Bahar, as well as to contemporary water politics. The way that they interacted in local politics, was part of an ongoing process of contestation that involved reformulating the meaning of *sumud* to fit with contemporary water conditions.

Each history focuses on different kinds of water resources and on different historical moments, but both narratives highlighted the active role of the community in producing the waterscape, and the notion of active production is what is so central to the politics of *sumud.*

## 3. Tareq and the swamps

Tareq Aboud, as mentioned in chapter two, worked for the local council as head of Youth Services, and also led historically oriented tours of the town. He recalled a water history and history of dispossession from swamps that highlighted a different politics of *sumud* than the one that Munir recounted. Tareq's version of water history and the politics of *sumud* associated with it, emphasized the burgeoning struggle for Palestinian Liberation at the time of swamp drainage and the larger significance of the legal battle that took place between Arab al-Ghawarna, Mandate authorities, and Jewish Colonization Agency officials. This history informed his intepretation of the current water crisis as well as his political position with regard to the 2013 local elections in which the water crisis played a prominent role.

Tareq's history questioned prevailing assumptions about the separation and hierarchical ordering of Arab communities in Israel and the way this had historically undermined the community's claim to remain in the area and to Palestinian identity. His accounted illustrated the ways in which distinctions among Arab groups in Israel were produced to great practical effect in terms of Zionist strategies that fragmented Arab communties in their effort to undermine the burgeoning Palestinian national liberation movement. At the same time, it elaborated how conceptions of waste and swamps became linked in ways that justified displacement, isolation, and fragmentation of residents of Kafr al Bahar. In doing so, it reveals that such linkages always had to be reproduced.

Tareq once mentioned that because there had been no highschool in the town when he was a teenager, he had to take several buses to go to high school in a different Arab town. When he would get off the bus the children from the town would taunt the students from Kafr al Bahar, pointing and yelling "Ghawarna" as they got off the bus. With pride, Tareq told me that as a young man he had re-valorized the term "Ghawarna" by infusing it with all the richness of Kafr al Bahar's water history and the sense of dignity this history imparted. At the same time as Tareq wanted to pay due respect to the particularities of Kafr al Bahar's past, he also wanted to use this history to struggle against divisions that isolated his community from their place and identity as part of a larger Palestinian Israeli community. Put differently, he wanted to seize upon the moment of swamp drainage, in particular, to kindle hope and a belief in the transformative possibility – mobilizing this history as an active force - among the people of Kafr al Bahar, particularly the youth of Kafr al Bahar.

Rather than the diminishing access to the sea, the upheavals of al-Nakba (the catastrophe of dispossession) in the form of swamp drainage, and the conflictual process that ensued in the negotiations over the wetlands, framed the concerns of Tareq's history. More generally, He did not frame his history through the themes of law and order and service to the Zionists and the Jewish nation as Munir had. Tareq's framing focused primarily on the 1920s when legal battles took place over the wetlands. Like Tareq's history, Munir's focused on pre-Israeli and early Israeli statehood. The key moments that concerned Munir, however, were different than those that concerned Tareq. Tareq did not focus on the end of Ottoman rule or on the War of 1948, perhaps because, unlike most accounts, which

mark 1948 as the year of al-Nakba, Tareq's al-Nakba, as mentioned earlier, happened prior to the War, in the 1920s with swamp drainage.

My conversations with Tareq most often took place in his office at the community center on the northern outskirts of the village where he worked to instill pride in the youth of Kafr al Bahar about their heritage in the wetlands. In contrast to the fishermen's relations to the sea, Tareq and his forebearers had been entirely dispossessed from the swamps. However, Tareq was in a more secure situation than Munir. He had regular employment in a government related social service department, even if it meant he was enclosed inside the four walls of his office most of the time, something that he often pointed to when lamenting the predicament of the community and the troubled transition they underwent from semi-sedentization to a wage-based urban livelihood. Tareq and his family also had a large home that, unlike Munir's, was built in an area legally zoned for residential construction. Thus, on the one hand his interpretation of the community's water history seemed more threatening to the existing order than Munir's history. At the same time, however, his actual existence in the present moment in terms of where he lived and how he made his living was less of an affront to the status quo than the situation in which Munir found himself. Perhaps it was the way that his relative security in the present combined with the history of extreme insecurity stemming from the complete dispossession of Tareq's grandparents from their livelihood, that enabled Tareq to formulate a greater challenge to prevailing assumptions about the people of Kafr al Bahar and the traditional politics of *sumud* among the elders in his community.

The importance for Tareq of elaborating a version of history that uncovered a suppressed past filled with tension and struggle came together for me the day he drew me into his office during his coffee break. I had been strolling in the courtyard of the local government offices hoping to catch Ibrahim. I had attended Tareq's tours in which he focused on what he believed Israeli Jewish tourists would find most compelling; namely, the Roman Byzantine tiles along the sea shore. He simply had to brush off the sand to reveal their faded designs. He mentioned the Arab al-Ghawarna during the tours but focused more on the remnants of the great Empires that left their trace on the landscape. Afterall, he charged money for the tours and Jewish Israeli tourists would likely not appreciate paying to be reminded of their historical role in racialized dispossession. His urge to redress the Eurocentric focus of the dominant history of his people by highlighting the conflictual role that his grandparents had played in producing the waterscape, however, was the driving force of his historical research.

That day in early Spring he was in a cheerful mood and familiar enough with me by that point to want to communicate what he had learned. After several months of getting to know Tareq, going on his tours, meeting him at his office, and encountering him at community events he told me that he wanted to show me some of the information he had collected about Kafr al Bahar's past. He revealed that he was working to piece together Kafr al Bahar's history because there was no thorough written record of Arab al-Ghawarna's history, and the fragments that were well known either contradicted what he had heard from his grandparents, or were narrow, and isolated pieces, cut off from the larger context. Such myths, he explained, seemed to reinforce popular notions that the community's right to the land with which the PJCA had compensated them, was not a settled matter since at the time of the concession agreement over the wetlands, foreigners in particular had no rights to land.

In his office he pointed out key sites on the map that showed the area that had once been the Takbir wetlands. Next to the map he displayed a photo of Dr. Martin Luther King, a reference to his alliegance with the younger generation and their struggle for civil rights. In his way, he was telling people that al-Ghawarna was not just the descendents of a marooned group of runaways, but was part of a larger struggle for community. He expressed himself eagerly, hopeful, it seemed, that his findings might some day reach the ears of those who would be willing to listen and believe his version Arab al-Ghawarna history. He started by reflecting upon his position in Israeli society, a position and identity that contrasted markedly with Munir's reflections about his identity and position as one of the few fishermen left in the town. Tareq told me: "I have to hold both sides of my identity as a Muslim Palestinian Arab and also as an Israeli." He continued, "what does this mean? I didn't do the army, but I'm also an Israeli citizen and also I have my own identity as a Palestinian. I have read books and I know what happened to Palestine." What he learned from these books, he told me, was that the popular narrative that associates the swamplands with wasteland and, by extension, discounts the productive capacity, humanity, and forms organization of those who lived in these area, did not justify the community's dispossession. In his words "al-Nakba was not nature, it wasn't a natural event." Put differently, it was not destined to occur as a natural course of development and progress. He said "I have read Ilan Pappe's book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. I have gone to Ramallah and searched for documents in libraries...You swim and you learn and you search for the truth and you pass it along." Indeed, asserting a Palestinian Israeli identity rather than an Arab Israeli identity when living inside Israel's 1948 borders is a dangerously political act. It is a declaration of solidarity and is often mis-interpreted by Israeli Jews as being implicitly anti-Israel.

Tareq invited me to come to his house that evening to discuss and look over some of the documents he had uncovered. He planned, as well, to introduce me to Water Economist David Katz, who had taken Arabic classes in the town and, in the process had become friends with Tareq. Tareq thought I would benefit from getting to know David Katz. He also thought that we would both be interested in learning some of the water-related history that we could not learn on the tours that he gave.

I arrived at Tareq's house in the evening after he had returned from work. His wife was just finishing up mopping the marble living room floor in preparation for our meeting. They had sent their three children next door to be with their grandparents so that we could focus seriously on our conversation. His wife was seven months pregnant with their fourth child. I had never met her before. Munir's wife, Aisha, by contrast was a familiar face who I often encountered at the local highschool and at community events. She said hello and brought us coffee, juice, and baklawa as we settled onto the large couches that surrounded a small glass table in their spacious, sparsley decorated living room. After a brief greeting, Tareq excitedly invited me to take a look at his study where he kept all the books and documents he had collected over the years. We entered his study that was indeed lined with bookshelves that were packed with history and geography books. An even larger map of the area than the one in his office covered the wall above his desk. There was one document, he told me, that was conspicuously missing. It was the deed to the land that had been promised to his people by PJCA. His father held that piece of paper.

In the safety of his study Tareq opened up about his research. He said, "I have decided to take a non-standard path to find sources. I dig like a chicken. I listen to the

stories of old people here and I check them against the internet and the materials I find." He explained that he struggled to blend oral history with the documented evidence he was able to track down. He confided that he did not share this information with just anyone, especially not people from within Kafr al Bahar. This, he told me, was because not everyone respected the written word as he did. After all, most people, including Munir, developed their historical perspectives through oral histories that their grandparents had passed down to them. Noticing the trace of doubt on my face, he explained that there were those in the town who could not even read Arabic, let alone read Hebrew or English. People did not respect education or academia, he asserted. He quickly qualified his statement, explaining that "people who do not have opportunities and education sometimes get jealous and believe that those of us who read and research feel superior to the rest. My father was an irrigation specialist and a builder, but he loved history. He instilled in me a love of education and history." For this reason, Tareq kept all the documents at home and analyzed them with only a small group of people. One of those people was Nadim who was would arrive later that evening.

The difficulties Tareq faced in blending written evidence with oral history, however, were deeper than the question of jealousy or lack of respect for the written word. His problems tracking down evidence in Arabic and the colonial categories that suffused the written evidence that did exist, meant that he had to filter through a muddle of confused assertions and arrange them in some coherent way to fit with the oral histories his grandparents told. Additionally, he had to confront, at least to some degree, the historical traditions of his forebearers. Some of these "histories" were, in fact, cautionary tales that spoke to the present moment of danger as much as they were reproductions of the past. There was, in other words, a lot more at stake in telling history than the questions of accuracy, and edification. As we shall see, the way that residents interpreted their history had much to do with their sense of (in)security, and their beliefs about survival strategies under emergency conditions.

Just then the doorbell rang. It was David Katz. He greeted Tareq and his wife warmly in Arabic. Tareq sat us all down once again on the living room couches eager to begin. He hastily broke into conversation by presenting us with an article that he had discovered in the course of his research. In fact, it became one of the few sources of documented information about the Jamil al Ghawarna that I was able to track down during the course of my research. This article, he told us, had provided him with a great deal of relief. That is because much of what it said fit with what he already knew. However, it was a scholarly article that had documented evidence, primarily gathered from the legal proceedings over the Kabara wetlands. Such evidence was hard to contradict. He explained that this article was important to him for two related reasons. Firstly, it revealed what he already knew in his heart, but could not prove: namely, that the Jamil-al-Ghawarna had not simply caved into the demands of the PJCA, but had fought tooth and nail to remain on the marshlands. He emphasized, for example, that the attorney, Wadi' al-Boustany, who represented the inhabitants of the area was a Palestinian activist that, together with the local inhabitants, saw the legal case as part of a larger Palestinian Liberation struggle.

In Tareq's account al-Boustany's work and his fight against the PJCA's efforts to takeover the Takbir Marshlands represented the seeds of another form of *sumud* that only began to develop more fully under the conditions produced after 1948. This fledgling form

of *sumud* made use of liberal law and sought to reveal the contradictions embedded in its universalistic presumptions, in order to fight against high-minded claims about land-use that undermined local inhabitants ability to continue to live on their land. He stressed further that the article revealed something else that he had not been able to express fully but now could demonstrate. That is, the legal case elaborated by the article's authors - Forman and Kedar (mentioned above) - illustrated, in Tareq's view, that Jamil-al-Ghawarna were not inherently an inward oriented group of outsiders, separate from the rest of the Palestinians. Certainly they were more geographically isolated than others perhaps, but this did not mean they were separate and unconnected to other groups. "In spite of everything," observed Tareq, "the article explains that there were three different groups that lived in the area. Jamil-al-Ghawarna was one of them. The three groups opposed the confiscation of their land by PJCA. They decided to unite together in order to file their protest to the British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel." The second main point about the article that Tareq wanted to underscore was the Mandate officials' duplicitous distortion of Ottoman land codes and of the categories of the public and public goods in ways that, as we have seen, undermined Jamil-al-Ghawarna's land rights.

Tareq began his elaboration of the significance of these two points by turning his attention to what he referred to as the moment of Kafr al Bahar'a al-Nakba, the moment of swamp drainage in 1924. By invoking al-Nakba, Tareq was consciously calling to mind a term that unites Jamil-al-Ghawarna to Palestinians. At the same time, he was reperiodizing al-Nakba to fit with the particular circumstances of his grandparents' experience of dispossession, connected as they were to the Takbir swamps. "If Rothschild hadn't coveted the water of the swamps that had been created by the dams built by the Romans 1,000 or so years earlier then Kafr al Bahar would have stayed in the place in which it was originally: 12000 dunams...." He insisted that it was not my and David Katz' interests that prompted him to begin this way, but his own conviction that water was key to understanding Kafr al Bahar's history. He paused for emphasis, "...the force of fire is like the force of water. Through water I can address every issue there is in Kafr al Bahar because water has built the story of the place."

He explained that Baron Rothschild first had his sights set on draining the Hula, but that in the Hula there had been a larger concentration of Arab groups. The British Mandate had a responsiblity to protect indigenous land rights and the people in the vicinity of the Hula were militantly opposed to expropriation. This made things difficult for Rothschild, so he turned his eye towards the less densley populated area of the Takbir wetlands.

> "Here we were less aware of the larger political situation. At that time, you see, Arab society began an anti-colonial struggle. Rothschild brought that struggle to us. At first Rothschild's company – the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency (PJCA) - tried to get the concession for our land from the Ottomans but he failed. But when the Mandate came to power right after World War I, he finally succeeded. But the Mandate was obliged to take account of our land rights so Rothschild could not begin development of the land until the Mandate had defined our rights. The only land that the British were allowed to use for Jewish settlement was land that was not inhabited, land that was public or state-owned and not already in use for public purposes."

Tareq went on to explain that Jamil-al-Ghawarna did not need time to figure out what was going on. They realized it was part of a larger struggle around dispossesion and immediately joined with the other two Arab groups living in the area to obtain the services of the attorney and Palestinan National activist Wadi' al-Boustany. Soon, however, the Mandate insisted on breaking the groups' claims into three separate cases, that sometimes pitted them against each other in efforts to determine land rights. In addition, the Mandate swiftly commissioned several studies to spell out land rights in order to clarify the legal steps that PJCA would need to take to initiate swamp drainage. The first few commissions recommended that the Jamil-al-Ghawarna settle informally with PJCA. Tareq emphasized that the residents' persistently refused to settle informally with the PJCA. He underscored their continual attempts to prove their rights under the law and to struggle against dispossession.

At first, Tareq explained, the groups in the area insisted that their land was not wasteland in the sense that the British understood the term. It was, in fact, "wasteland" that the community had revived. According to Ottoman land codes, such work gave them legally binding rights to the land, and opened up the possibility of gaining a title deed to the land. It was, in Tareq's account, far from the stagnant, unproductive. disease-ridden pool that Zionist officials later claimed it was. The question of waste and wasteland, as he went on with his narrative, played a key role in battles over national inclusion, belonging, and the question of the public.

The crux of the problem, Tareq explained, stemmed from the Balfour Declaration's "dual obligation," that, as mentioned above, required that it guarantee both a home for the Jewish people, as well as safeguard indigenous inhabitants land rights. To deal with this dilemma, Mandate authorities decided to settle Jewish communities on public/ wasteland that was not already employed for public use. Indeed, because of the Takbir status as "wasteland," the Mandate, saw the area as a perfect place to settle Jews. Moreover, like the Ottomans before them, the British wished to drain the swamps in order to eradicate malaria. However, the local inhabitants, who had only been informed about the concession after PJCA had already struck a deal with Mandate authorities, immediately began to protest. They enacted a fledgling form of *sumud*. That is, they simply continued to live on the land despite all attempts to invalidate their rights to the area. They carried on with grazing their flocks. They cultivated plots of land in order to establish their rights to it. Many even began to build stone homes so as to counter British officials' claims that tent encampments, even if they were permanent, did not constitute actual villages with rights to land.[64]

Such protest forced the Mandate to conduct further studies to determine the land rights of local inhabitants under Ottoman land law. The studies found that under Ottoman land classification schemes, local inhabitants had, indeed, brought wasteland (Mawat) under cultivation and thereby were entitled to the land.[65] In the words of Kedar and Forman,

> "*Mawat* [wasteland] had served as an important and legitimate source of auxiliary land for rural agricultural expansion…[A]ny person who "revived" *Mawat* by bringing it under cultivation (even if the act had been unauthorized) immediately acquired rights to the usufructuary title characteristic of most land in Palestine at the time" (2003: 514).

Thus, in an effort to avoid a long-drawn out struggle over small portions of the land, the Mandate commissions ordered PJCA to remove all cultivated land from the concession area.

While we were still on the couch, all of us engrossed in Tareq's account which was shaped his efforts to fit his own inherited memories with Forman and Kedar's scholarly account, Nadim arrived. Nadim had been delayed by residents who he had met on the street who wanted to share with him their concerns about the upcoming local elections in which he had decided to run not so much with the expectation of winning, he told me later, but in order to throw off the traditional balance of forces. He greeted us wearily, clearly wishing to sit down as quickly as possible so that he could relax onto the couch and listen rather than talk.

Tareq, for his part, was fully absorbed in his history and wanted to get back to the conversation. As soon as we had settled back down onto the couches, Tareq immediately resumed his methodical interpretation of the significance of the Forman and Kedar's article. He defended the position of the local inhabitants as if he were their attorney. He described the way that the dispute deepened when Mandate authorities anulled the land codes that had provided a legal basis for the inhabitants usufructuary rights to revive "wasteland." Rather than making good on their pronouncement that they would keep Ottoman land codes in place under British rule, Mandate authorities translated the legally binding rights to the land that the inhabitants would have had under Ottoman land codes, into Moral or Common rights in keeping with British Common Law. Such rights, were not legally binding.

No sooner had the Mandate decided on a legal strategy to transfer the majority of the land to the PJCA, then the attorney for the local inhabitants uncovered Ottoman land records that classified the area not as wasteland (Mawat) but as communal land (Matruka). This made a huge difference for the local inhabitants' case since communal land, under Ottoman land classification, was designated as land that did not belong to private people, but to whole communities that were using that land for the benefit of "the public" or of the community as a whole. Under British and Ottoman law, it was illegal to take over public lands for private use such as Rothschild had in mind. As mentioned earlier, public uses under Ottoman rules included grazing flocks. Grazing flocks, however, did not fit the Zionist vision of what was best for the public in a Jewish national home even though Jewish people were not yet a majority of the inhabitants. The Zionists, as we know, supported intensive agricultural settlement.

In the face of local inhabitants' continued protests, the Attorney General then devised a new plan. In Tareq's account, only someone as duplicitous as the Mandate's Attorney General Bentwich could come up with a sufficiently unscrupulous scheme capable of undermining the firm legal ground on which the inhabitants case stood. "...That crafty low-life Bentwich came up with the idea of removing the inhabitants in the interest of the public – to eradicate malaria! This hid the real aim of the concession which was to make way for Jewish agricultural settlement and for Rothschild's glass factory." As mentioned earlier, Bentwich refused to accept that a community that lived in tents constituted a village. Thus, it did not matter if the land was being used for the benefit of all who lived in the area since those who lived there were, from this standpoint, not part of the public. Forman and Kedar quote Bentwich as saying that "...[i]f their existed a village of the Ghawarneh....they would, I think, be clearly entitled to maintain those rights in the Zor [Takbir wetlands], on the ground

that the lands were constituted Matruka for the benefit of the inhabitants of the village...." Yet, according to him, they were not a village.

Forman and Kedar go on to point out that " …..The British and the PJCA were on the side of "law," whereas the indigenous population-turned-trespassers were branded as obstacles to the public interest." British and PJCA officials insisted, in other words, that it was not private Jewish settlement, but their interest in public health and hygiene that determined their interest in swamp drainage. In the process of translation, as we have seen, the question arose of who and what practices constituted the public and the public good, and, by extension, what sort of state and nation was to be built. Whether it would be one that was Jewish and relied primarily on intensive agriculture or one that included a variety of social formations, ethnic groups, and economic activities was precisely what was under dispute. Tareq explained that with all the contradictory obligations of the Mandate, and without a clear commitment to translating Ottoman land codes accurately, the Mandate authorities were able to create what Tareq referred to as "an infrastructure of legal trickery."

In the end, Jamil-al-Ghawarna were the first of the three groups of local inhabitants to take PJCA's offer of compensation in exchange for their land. The Mandate authorities, together with PJCA managed to intimidate them by threatening to begin drainage before a settlement had reached its conclusion.

Unlike Munir, Tareq's narrative appealed not to the charisma or diplomatic acumen of the Mukhtar, but to the rule of law. This, as we shall see, informed his alignment with the so-called younger generation that linked liberal notions of civil rights to struggles around basic infrastructure in the 1980s. However, he did not accept the the conception of the public or the vision of the public interest as it was presupposed by British Common Law. He had a historical and variegated view law. He saw it as holding the possiblity of justly mediating social relations in ways that, at least in theory, could have protected his grandparents grazing rights but failed to do so because of the way that any possibility of justice under the law was lost in translation. Despite this "infrastructure of legal trickery," Tareq the emphasis in his history was the way that the local inhabitants struggle was connected to the larger struggle against dispossession that in Munir's account was lost.

In all the conversation that night, Tareq did not once focus on Kafr al Bahar's reputation as collaborators, a reputation that seems to have formed as a result of their relationship to Zionist forces during the War of 1948. Instead he reiterated the initial point he had made in his office earlier that day and that he repeated several times throughout my field work – that swamp drainage was Kafr al Bahar's Nakba and that "al Nakba was not nature, it wasn't a natural event but an ethnic cleansing.... "

He ended with an abreviated chronology that, in his view, illustrated that the past and present poor conditions of the community were not produced by a natural tendency of the people to be inefficient, wasteful, and ignorant about water management. "Water. From this everything else came....all the work, livelihood...all this time thats' how we made a living and the moment in 1920s when we dry them...imagine yourself, with a family in the swamp and there's no water, no plants, nothing. The Zionists shifted our heritage so we lose our heritage...and this turns us into a population for wages.... So pay attention, because today we are talking about the need to expand the area of jurisdiction over the lands we have as a

result of this whole experience. This is why we face so many challenges. First we are dispossessed of our livelihood and then we have to move to a small area of land. We don't have an industrial or business zone, we have no land and no agriculture, there is no trade. So what do people live from? Only one thing: working for others as wage laborers, working for money. So because of the drying of the swamps in the 1920s we are now stuck. None of this was bound to happen!"

Nadim, who until then had remained silent, suddenly perked up at the thought of those who protested at the time refusing to leave and continuing to graze their herds despite having had their rights annulled:

> "…What else could they do? What other choice did they have? You take all these people from their lifestyles and this is a transition without an interim period. So all of the sudden you just move them here – they lose their livelihood, their sources of income, the swamps, the water…people with flocks, there is no place for them and their flocks….Nothing is left but to become workers for others…and they are compelled to build here, like the world is moving on, and they see houses from stone, and each one starts to survive, alone with all the hardships – we are talking about a lack of services completely, and they came here and started building houses from stone, and lived.

As Tareq brought his account of the significance of the article to a close the shouts and gunshots marking the beginning Kafr al Bahar's Friday night festivities, most often connected with weddings, resounded in the distance. Nadim who by now had regained some of his energy, noted bitterly that this noise was one of the justifications that the representatives of the wealthy resort town of Beit Etzion next door where Netanyahu had a villa, hurled at their neighbors in order to legimate the Beit Etzion Development Corporations construction of the barrier wall that separated the two communities.

Tareq looked up. After all was said and done, he began, "Jamil-al-Ghawarna took the offer of land from the PJCA," which Tareq referred to scornfully as "a pock-marked pit, a rock quarry...poor compensation..." He then reframed his narrative in Zionist and Mandate terms. "If PJCA drained the swamps for the public purposes they claimed they were doing it for – public health - then our role in draining the swamps means that it was us who made the land livable for the benefit of "the public." Such logic, insisted Tareq, meant that the people of Kafr al Bahar must be recognized as a legitimate part of that public, and are entitled to compensation for their role in the historical and geographical production of that public. Compensation in the form of continually shrinking land reserves and inadequate infrastructure, he argued, was not compensation at all but amounted to a penalty that seemed aimed at undermining their very existence. What such a history demands, he insisted, is equal access to services and equal treatment under the law.

The inhabitants struggle to be included in the definition of the public, their refusal to leave their land, their insistence on using the law, when possible, to demand their rights, and their connection to the larger struggle among Palestinians against dispossession, were the dimensions of Tareq's history that distinguished his position in relation to the fledgling form of *sumud* that developed more fully after the establishment of the Israeli State. I situate this form of *sumud* in relation to the post-1948 conditions out of which it emerged in the

following chapter. This form of *sumud* demanded inclusion in the notion of the public and refused to define the public good in terms of Jewish national and state interests. At the same time, Tareq's interpretation of the history in relation to the article seemed to indicate a notion of the "public" that was grounded in a distinct history of dispossession in relation to water resources. In other words, the notion of the public that emerges from this sense of *sumud*, transcends an a-historical/ liberal notion of the public, public works, the public good, and rights to public resources.

## Conclusion

Rather than focusing on land exclusively, in this chapter I have focused on the connections of *sumud* to struggles around livelihood that for Kafr al Bahar residents, have revolved around the community's various sorts of engagements with water. Indeed, memories and practices associated with the community's water history have shaped residents' understandings of the pressures they have faced during periods of transition in which old methods of accessing water resources transformed. At each turn, Kafr al Bahar residents reworked the meaning of *sumud* in ways that demanded a reconsideration of the past, and in particular, histories of racialized dispossession. In Kafr al Bahar, as I indicated earlier, this reconsideration is connected to the notion that the community, and in particular the Mukhtar, sacrificed the swamp through which the community made their livelihood by brokering "a deal" with The Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PJCA) to drain the swamp in exchange for allowig the community to remain in the area. In other words, it was this seeming acquiescence to dispossession from water and land that got defined at the moment of swamp drainage as *sumud*.

In Kafr al Bahar today, *sumud* practices and politics, and efforts to define *sumud* in a way that can intervene in the contemporary situation, entails a struggle over what constitutes an adequate historical understanding of the community's dispossession from water. The tensions between the narratives told to me by Munir and Tareq reflect a larger process through which the people of Kafr al Bahar are striving to make sense of and organize around the experiences and activities associated with water debt described in the previous chapter.

Despite the tensions between the two local narratives, I do not see them as polar opposites, or as entirely determined by the character of the water from which each family made their livelihood prior to swamp drainage and the establishment of the Israeli state. I have deployed a conjunctural interpretation of the local narratives in order to highlight the shifting politics of *sumud* that emerge in these accounts, each of which foregrounds different turning points in which Kafr al Bahar's relations to water were transformed along with *sumud* politics. The standard histories of the area, and of the al-Arab al-Ghawarna, attempt to fix their collective cultural identity in nature. This deterministic narrative masks the contradictory politics and practices of waterscape production evident in the two accounts of what *sumud* meant and what it entailed for the community at different moments. The seemingly immutable qualities that, according to the standard narrative, were apparent in the fact that the residents had allowed the land to remain a so-called wasteland, justified repeated rounds of dispossession and confinement. I have tried to bring out the way that the local versions of water history, however opposed they are to one another, are aligned in the fact that, in different ways, they both situate historically and geographically the racialized

categories that otherwise tend to represent Kafr al Bahar's politics and culture as an automatic outgrowth of swamps. Munir and Tareq were both, in different ways, responding to notions that Arab al-Ghawarneh were foreigners, sickly, weak, and lacking any coherent identity or long-standing connection to the wetlands from which they made their livelihood and the implications this had in the present moment. Indeed, they were, in their own ways, challenging the standard history's link between Kafr al Bahar residents' "foreign" background, and allegdly wasteful style of resource management and the role that this articulation played in justifying water cutoffs, harsh fiscal restraints, the emergency takeover of the Local Council, and the Interior Ministry and neighboring communities collusion in undermining the Kafr al Bahar officials efforts to stop the shrinking of the space of the town, and to expand the land area of the town.

Both narratives challenge such justifications in foregrounding particular turning points that convey the unwavering relations of the community to key water resources in the area both in collective memory and in practice. Viewing the interplay of these local narratives in relation to the notion of *sumud* which entails active resistance to efforts at removal, relocation, and dispossession, offers insight into the slippages and disjunctures that have been produced by the conceptual logics and practices of *sumud.* At every turning point, the politics of *sumud* that emerged in relation to water resources in the area, made it necessary to re-articulate the linkage between waste and Kafr al Bahar residents/culture in new ways. Such linkages, in other words, have been produced in particular times and places.

Togeher each history touches on several key turning points during the period between World War I and the aftermath of World War II ending with Israel's establishment in 1948. One key moment is the period at the end of Ottoman rule when the Ottoman Empire first attempted to conscript local residents and brutally punish Arab nationalists in the region, and then later sought to build popular support in outlying provinces, while simultaneously continuing its project of consolidating, and standardizing its rule in the face of European pressure. This is the period when the Mukhtar of Kafr al Bahar emerged as the leader. His memory, for the people of Kafr al Bahar, has come to symbolize law and order in the face of an unruly natural landscape, clan feuds, and intensified intervention on the part of Ottoman officials. Another key turning point during this period was the moment of swamp drainage mentioned above that was completed in 1924. Although Kafr al Bahar residents still had access to the sea from which some residents continued to make a living in fishing after swamp drainage, the relationship to the sea and fishing as a source of livelihood came under pressure, though less so than those who made their living from the swamps. The final turning point during this period was the war of 1947-48 and the establishment of the Israeli state. In Kafr al Bahar the war was not only a period of violent transformation, expulsion, and loss of land. It also marked the beginnning of strife within the community over how best to organize and provide security under new conditions. At each moment, the forebearers of the present day residents of Kafr al Bahar faced new pressures in the realm of water resources from which they derived their livelihood.

Muhammad and Munir's conflicting interpretations of Kafr al Bahar's past, each told by different voices through different understandings and practices identified with *sumud* in relation to water, are opposed and yet mutually reinforcing. They each constitute one pole in a reciprocal interplay among the various narratives about Kafr al Bahar's origins.

In my view the resurgence and reworking of these narratives in the context of water restructuring is indicative of a struggle over the definition and practices entailed in *sumud*. Once again, this struggle is occuring both literally and figuratively through the community's engagement with water, this time with politics and practices of *sumud* coalescing around water debt and water pipes. In chapter five I explore the implications that the contemporary struggle to redefine *sumud* has for contemporary water politics in Kafr al Bahar. Indeed, the sense of indignation among Kafr al Bahar residents at water cutoffs that extend across political and class divides and which residents refer to as "collective punishment" reflect the sense of outrage that, as we shall see, was already visible in the previous era's politics of *sumud*. This outrage stems first and foremost from the living memory of having first been dispossessed, then sedentarized, then compressed, and now denied basic water infrastructure to support a form of life in which the community has been unable to thrive. It, thus, becomes clear that residents' accusation of "collective punishment" for water cutoffs is more than an individualistic critique that accuses the National Water Company (Mekorot) of unfair collective punishment of the whole community for the offenses of a few individuals in the who do no pay their water bills. It also signals the memory of earlier eras of collective punishment in the realm of basic services that sought to undermine Arab Israeli citizens efforts to "remain in place" – to enact *sumud* - as a group.

Although Tareq and Munir focused on key turning points leading up to the establishment of the State of Israel, the versions of *sumud* they expressed, were retrospective discoveries. The interpretations of history and of *sumud* embedded in their narratives, began to develop more coherently in the period of military rule over Arab locales inside Israel (1948-1966), and the period immediately following military rule in the 1970s and 1980s. The perspectives that the histories that Munir and Tareq conveyed emerged during this period to become active forces in shaping politics inside Kafr al Bahar. The divergence of these two interpretations of water history and understandings of *sumud*, represented the seeds of division that increasingly came to split the community along political lines. They give voice to the tensions that are constantly at play in the efforts of community members to define their place in Israeli society, in relation to notions of the public and to the state, and in relation to the broader Palestinian struggle. These tensions came to a head in the form of what residents refer to as "the 1989 rebellion" and they reflect a split that had taken place within Arab Israeli society after 1948. As we shall see in the chapter five, this split reappeared, in new form, under new circumstances once again in relation to water crisis during the 2013 elections.

Before we return to the way this reciprocal interplay between divergent forms of *sumud* are playing out today in contemporary water politics in Kafr al Bahar, we trace out in the following chapter the way that Tareq's version of history and his interest in legal definitions and procedures, as well as his appeal to a more inclusive notion of the public, came out of generational rebellion within Arab Israeli society more generally. This rebellion and the politics and practices of *sumud* that emerged in the process, consolidated in the course of struggle in the 1980s around questions of basic water infrastructure. Such an historical and geographical understanding of the deeper meaning of struggles over material conditions of life that center on water resources and infrastructure, allows us to connect Kafr al Bahar's internal water politics that I address in chapter five, to the larger forces at play within Israel.

## <u>Chapter 4</u>: Situating *sumud* in relation to basic water infrastructure: A historical-geographical framework

Tareq's father, Ahmed, who lived a few houses down from his son conveyed through his actions and words that as early as the 1950s, he had begun to align himself with the version of *sumud* reflected in his son's story. On one of my visits to his house, for example, Ahmed declared self-confidently that he had been an expert irrigator but that such expertise did not come from his heritage, but from the skills that he had acquired from the Zionists, and the water conveyance schemes they had designed. He explained that he had helped irrigate Neve Yarok's fields which now lay in the area of what was once the Takbir marshlands. The irrigation infrastructure he used, relied in part upon the pipes that his people had built to drain the marshes. Dov Kublinov was the engineer that devised the scheme. Neve Yarok's abridged history described in the previous chapter, celebrates the role of Dov Kublinov's drainage system.

Despite the technical feat that the irrigation scheme represented for the new state, and the important place of the people in Kafr al Bahar in enabling such an accomplishment, Ahmed underscored the other side of the coin from the perspective of Kafr al Bahar residents. "What did this mean for us?" Ahmed asked. He handed me what he referred to as "the deed to the land" originally promised to his people during the British Mandate. He then directed me to the window on the north-west side of the house, and pulled aside the shades to reveal the view of Neve Yarok. From the window we gazed at Neve Yarok's fishponds that stretched in a patchwork of irregular geometric shapes along the western seashore.

Still gazing out of the window, he recounted how shortly after the kibbutz' establishment in 1949 Kafr al Bahar residents had been invited to a dinner in the kibbutz dining hall. At the dinner he had waited for the moment when the kibbutz leaders would say their welcoming remarks. When the time came, he seized the opportunity to show them the absurdity and injustice of their grandoise welcome. The kibbutz members, he explained, referred to him and his community as "our guests." To these welcoming remarks he politely responded, "It is not you who are welcoming us as your guests for dinner. It is we who welcome you as our guests" and he pulled out the same deed that he had shown me. The deed not only proved the relatively long-standing land rights of the community, but also that Neve Yarok's fishponds had encroached upon Kafr al Bahar's land. Ahmed noted indignantly that Kafr al Bahar residents now have to ask permission to visit their cemetery that sits on Neve Yarok's land.

Ahmed's indignation expressed the general sense that the community's role in water infrastructure development and its role in enabling Jewish settlement was not necessarily a sign of service to the nation as Munir had framed it. For Tareq and his father, Kafr al Bahar's history of dispossession and the role of their people in constructing water piping networks, entitled them to more than what they had now. The history Tareq told and the sense of injustice that he shared with his father warranted not only critique of the notion of Zionist progress associated with agricultultural development of kibbutzim (collective self-sufficiency on the basis of intensive farming), but raised the question of distributional justice in the present moment. He expressed what Tareq had said in different words: that given the history of dispossession that cut Arab communities off from access to wells, wetlands, and springs which was the basis of their livelihood, and that as Tareq had put it, turned his

grandparents into "a population for wages," and that made water available only throught that basic piping infrastructure, that such infrastructure ought to be an entitlement and a civil right. This conviction, as we shall see, became a coherent political stance in 1989. It went hand in hand with the growing sense that access to water and water infrastructure, as a public good, represented the equalizing possibilities of Israeli liberal democracy. It was an area in which Arab Israeli citizens could struggle for equality and distributional justice without being criminalized as they had during the 1970s when a more militant form of politics aimed against ongoing land confiscation was prevalent.

In the 1980s, however, the younger generation of Arab Israeli citizens began to transform the meaning of *sumud* to focus on rights to essential water infrastructure in the absence of land for grazing and agriculture and to use the ideas associated with this version of *sumud* to legitimize jerri-rigged inter-generational piping networks. Ahmed's story expressed the views of the so-called "younger generation" that rebelled against their elders during the 1989 local elections in what residents now refer to as "the 1989 political rebellion." Yet, as is clear from this brief account, the lines of division that separate the younger and elder generation correspond more to political and moral outlook rather than to age.

This chapter locates the roots of this rebellion in the larger political struggles within Arab Israeli society and seeks to demonstrate the relation of these dynamics to Israeli political economic development more generally, and thus to show the way that the 1989 rebellion emerged out of the tulmutous and contradictory political and economic dynamics of this period. The same political tensions that consolidated themselves during the 1989 rebellion reappeared during the 2013 elections which I address in the following chapter. During the 2013 elections the political camps, which had their roots in the 1989 rebellion, mobilized collective memories of the community's relationship to water and to the nation, memories which were reflected in Munir and Tareq's histories, in order to address the contemporary water debt and water shutoffs and to defeat their opponent. Only by understanding this longer lineage are we able to see the full significance of Munir and Tareq's history in relation to contemporary political tensions that erupted in the 2013 elections, and in relation to wider political and economic developments outside of Kafr al Bahar's borders. In other words, this chapter seeks to provide a framework that enables us to connect seemingly internal political dynamics in Kafr al Bahar that are often attributed entirely to culture backwardness to larger political and economic developments inside Israel. It reveals the way that Judaization has shifted not only in relation to the creative-destructive tendencies of Israeli capitalism. It has also shifted in relation to *sumud*. Both of these forces have a played a key role in the process of Israeli capitalist development.

**<u>Structure of the chapter</u>**

In order to highlight the interconnections of *sumud*, settler colonialism, and Israeli capitalist development and to illustrate the connections of the 1989 rebellion to these sets of relations, I provide a conjunctural framework that periodizes their interrelations in the larger political currents within Arab Israeli society. I trace key turning points leading up to the 1989 rebellion, paying particular attention to the way that political struggle within Arab Israeli society more generally transformed during this time in response to Israeli planning policies known as Judaization which I elaborate below. Such struggles went from being focused on

strategic compromise with Israeli authorities in order to gain access to basic infrastructure, to a more militant opposition to ongoing land confiscation, then to a kind of resistance that centered specifically on linking civil rights to basic infrastructure, especially water infrastructure. By the 1990s with the end of the Cold War, the dominant discourse about globalization diminishing the importance of national borders, and the advent of the Oslo Accords, the rigid planning rules that had constrained the economic development of Arab Israeli communities for so long appeared to ease up. The rhetoric of coexistence emerged and became a mode through which Arab Israeli communities could highlight some of the contradictions of commodified forms of coexistence that failed to address or even reflect upon material disparities and distributive injustices, including stark disparities in the realm of water resources that had been produced through processes of dispossession and containment of which coexisting Jewish Israelis were implicated. It was during this period that popular and scholarly discourse increasingly represented ethno-nationalism and the rigid delineation of borders that it entailed as a system that was separate and opposed to global capitalist development. Thus, there was a sense that opening up to the global economy would, to a large extent, lead to the end of national conflict and produce increasingly permeable national borders.

The 1989 rebellion belongs to this last period. In the context of "opening up" and coexistence, town leaders were able to initiate a host of infrastructural projects that improved the quality of life in the town, and that allowed residents to move about beyond its borders more easily. The rebellion of the younger generation fused the opportunities afforded by the rhetoric of receding borders with the form of *sumud* politics that was focused on water infrastructure that was prevalent within Arab Israeli society in the 1980s and had linked the sense of entitlement to water infrastructure to civil rights and resistance to erasure. Under these circumstances, in which the younger generation was enacting and envisioning a new method of relating to the nation and to the public in Israel, and threatening the power of the elder generation, the divisions that had pulled apart Arab Israeli society more generally during the previous decades began to manifest in Kafr al Bahar. As we shall see in chapter five, these divisions deepened and splintered during the 2013 elections specifically in relation to the contemporary water crisis.

The periodization I have laid out is not unique. However, by bringing the politics of *sumud* into dialogue Judaization, on the one hand, and bringing Judaization into conversation with the dynamics of Israeli global capitalism on the other hand, I am trying to draw attention to the way that these three processes: Israeli global capitalist development, the rigid delineation of Jewish territory through practices of Judaization, and resistance to such practices in the form of *sumud* are interrelated (internally related). The sorts of ethnic and racial differentiation produced by Judaization was central to Israeli economic development even during the so-called era "peace and privatization" in which neoliberal forms of capitalism were emerging in Israel and peace and more porous borders seemed to be on the horizon. Viewing the 1989 rebellion in this light, gives us a fuller sense of the place of Kafr al Bahar's water politics within this larger context. Far from an entirely internal battle of a younger generation against static cultural traditions, in this chapter we see the 1989 rebellion as a whole, as part of a dynamic and contradictory process in which *sumud* politics continually get redefined.

**1. 1948 – 1966: Military Rule - crisis driven *sumud* & the seeds of division**:

As suggested earlier, not just in Kafr al Bahar but throughout Israel, a generational rebellion of those who had come of age after Israel's establishment in 1948 began gaining momentum after the lifting of military rule over Arab locales in Israel in 1966. This generational rebellion, however, had not yet reached Kafr al Bahar which had established itself during the war as farm laborers for the nearby Jewish Kibbutz settlements and had helped build the irrigation system that supplied water to kibbutz fields. That is, the main water works in the area during the period of military rule served to build the kibbutzim (Jewish collective farms) in order to realize the Zionist imperatives of close Jewish settlement of the land. Kafr al Bahar, like many Arab towns and villages in Israel, did not have water piping infrastructure during this period. It was not until 1965, the year before military rule ended, that the State provided the town with its only infrastructure: one water pipe with a few connection points where residents could collect water. There was no other infrastructure – electricity, roads, health clinics, hiring halls, schools – until the 1980s.

At the same time, the state imposed a regime of military rule over all Arab Israeli communties who remained in Israel after 1948. The regime severely controlled the mobility, opportunities for employment, and furnished the legal means through which to complete the process of concentrating Arab Israeli citizens in as small an area as possible, and of expropriating Arab land (Hillel Cohen 2010, Hal Draper 1997). Munir and Tareq's narratives communicated *sumud* politics through histories of the community's relations to the sea and in relation to the Takbir marshlands. Towards the end of military rule, the material and metaphorical place of the sea and the wetlands in conveying a politics of *sumud* got reworked in relation to water infrastructure that now underpinned residents wage-based livelihoods. Indeed, the limits of having only one water pipe became increasingly apparent as the town grew by five to six hundred people as a result of the influx of uprooted and dislocated Arab families seeking refuge during the period of military rule. These "internal refugees" settled in towns such as Kafr al Bahar that had not been destroyed.

Elderly residents of Kafr al Bahar describe this period as a reign of terror: "We were being terrorized. Only a few of us could read and write and the military government would limit employment of Arabs so we were completely disconnected from the world. All we could do was drink [water] and survive." Nadim's father explained that
"they [military officials] didn't oversee us with tanks and soldiers. They would patrol and they had ten clauses that mostly pertained to movement – permits, curfews, no wandering. In terms of food, you got a ration according to the number of people in your family and a few more articles. So in Kafr al Bahar we were only connected to water. We were like prisoners of war. A lot of us went and got employment as agricultural laborers, and continued to live, but were in constant fear. We could not express ourselves.

The period of military rule was a moment that called for Arab groups that had remained inside Israel's 1948 borders to come up with new strategies in order to negotiate the disruption of everyday life. The current of thought and action about *sumud* that came out of the experience of the War of 1948, framed *sumud* as holding fast to the local, and a vision of community, customs, and habits belonging to a community of kin, rooted in a particular regional location. Such a vision was not solely local since it was also tied to the notion of

what it meant to be part of a larger Palestinian community that was developing at the time. However, unlike the current of thought about *sumud* that later developed, the meaning of being Arab and Palestinian focused on ensuring a livelihood and improvements in local conditions and defending the heritage that a community of kin shared. Such visions hardly focused on using such struggle to connect to a broader Palestinian community. This form of *sumud* relied on relatively locally bounded conceptions of culture, a sort of localism. It arose out of crisis, out of a state of emergency. Such moments of danger, as we shall see in the following chapter, continue to enable the reworking of interpretations of *sumud* that emerge in periods of political and structural crisis and violence in Israel.

In his book *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, Hillel Cohen defines *sumud* thus: "The ethic of holding fast to the land even at the price of a limited amount of collaboration with Israel" (2008: 10). Hillel Cohen explains that this form of resistance became popular in the Occupied Territories during the 1970s.[66] However, as we have seen with Munir's account of his grandfather, it was invoked and employed much earlier by rural and semi-rural Mukhtars in order to justify their seemingly traitorous alliances with Zionist and British forces by framing there actions as a form of "protection" of their families from the violence of war and protective masculinity and political shrewdness in safeguarding one's heritage from disreputible, unscrupulous forces that sought to undermine such a heritage. It came to signify the ability of leaders to ensure a place in which to live for their communities, to bring about sporadic improvements in basic services, as well as to tenaciously hold onto cultural values and heritage. In Cohen's words "*Summud* grew out of the conviction that one could be a nationalist Palestinian, without taking up the armed struggle against Israel, by holding on stubbornly to the land and to the Arab culture." In the early years of the Israeli State, *Sumud* was thus associated with Palestinians that had not fought against the Zionists and were considered by many who had been expelled to be traitors.[67]

In response to crisis-influenced forms of *sumud*, alternative conceptions of *sumud* began to develop as the children of Arab Israelis who came of age after Israel's establishment became adults. This alternative form of *sumud* also held fast to a sense of the local, but at the same time, it sought to reach out beyond the boundaries of the local to other rural and semi-rural Arab communities inside Israel in order to call the Israeli state to account for the marginalization of 1948 Arab Israeli citizens. This form of *sumud* found support in moments such as the legal battle over the Takbir Marshes that Tareq had recounted in such precise detail, when the local inhabitants sought to turn the law, policies and ruling leaders' rhetorical proclamations about the public good against themselves, by using them to stake claims for greater inclusion. Such forms of *sumud*, as mentioned earlier, arose around the question of basic services, especially water infrastructure access and development. *Sumud* came to be associated with a form of democratic practice that highlighted the limitations of Jewish liberal democracy for Arab citizens in structural and historical terms.

<u>How this transformation occurred</u>

During the period of military rule the question of collaboration and acquiescence versus struggle in the name of Palestinian liberation and self-determination began to take on new meaning in the context of the recently established Israeli state, and the separation of

Arabs inside Israel's 1948 borders from those who had been expelled. The new conditions of life in Israel – a Jewish national home that was embedded in a state structure - required that 1948 Arabs assess what kinds of practices and understandings would aid them in their negotiation of the realities of everyday life and in terms of fuller inclusion. The discursive framing of *sumud* that had previously revolved around the acquiescence versus national liberation struggle, got reworked through the discourse of national service versus entitlement. Arab citizens began transforming themselves and organizing in new ways.

The military regime officials, for their part, tried their best to ensure the continued power of the local Mukhtars who they had relied upon during the War to contain unrest among rural and semi-rural Arab populations. The military officers who had appointed the class of Mukhtars to preside over land-transfer and govern Arab communities that remained inside Israel's 1948 borders, preferred to relate to Arab communities through the channels of patronage they had built, rather than to allow civil ministries and bureaucracies to extend services directly to Arab locales (Degania, Arnon Yehuda 2014). Once the military regime was dismantled, many officers that had served in the military administration took up posts in the new civil administration and worked closely with local Arab leaders to construct local governments.

The way that such relations manifested in Kafr al Bahar was that in 1965, one year before the end of military rule, the Interior Ministry appointed a young ally of Kafr al Bahar's Mukhtar to head the town's first local council. As mentioned earlier, residents noted that Ministry officials chose this person because he was literate, and because he was allied with the Mukhtar who had a record of cooperating with Zionist officials. It was a common strategy of the new Israeli regime. As Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz (2005) explain

> Liason between the state and the Palestinian citizens of Israel....was established mainly through government appointed village mukhtars (headman). Many were chosen after convincing Labor Party technocrats that they were authentic community leaders who could secure votes for the party through their personal authority over fellow villagers and clan folk. Others were favored because of their willingness to act as proxies on behalf of absent Palestinian refugees in deals involving transfer of property to the state. The dubious legitimacy they supplied to the emerging land regime was rewarded with a variety of political and personal favors, including positions in civil service, infrastructural improvements in areas where their kin lived or had assets, rights in property, and sometimes even cash.

They go on to note that

> A close relationship existed between state agencies that dispensed routine services to Palestinians and the ruling Labor Party, which sought their votes in elections. This soon created a deep dependency of whole Palestinian communities on the party. It strengthened the leverage of the party's prominent Palestinian members in their own communities.....Parties not included in the Labor-centered coalitions that held power from 1948 to 1977 were unable to offer their Palestinian supporters help in terms of government services or budgets, and had an obvious disadvantage when it came to recruiting members and voters. (2005: 67)

The leader of Kafr al Bahar's council that Ministry officials appointed in 1965 held his position for the ensuing 24 years until the 1989 political rebellion. In Kafr al Bahar, just as in other Arab communities, Ministry officials made sure that the new head would run as a Labor Party candidate in local elections and that he would "persuade" his people to vote for the Labor party during national elections. The Labor Party was Israel's ruling party throughout much of this time. It is important to note that, for the most part, Arab Israelis, including those in Kafr al Bahar, considered the Labor Party to be a Zionist political party. This is because of its affiliation with the Hebrew only labor policy of early Zionists, its support for a labor market segmented by national affiliation (e.g. Jewish/Arab), the privileged protections and welfare subsidies that its associates in the national trade union organization (Histradut) provided for the Ashkenazi (European) working class, and, later for its failure to oppose Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories after 1967 (Kimmerling 1988; Ha'aretz 2001), not to mention the fact that all political parties, excluding those that are considered to be independent Arab political parties, maintain membership in the World Zionist Organization (Algazi 2012). It was no coincidence that, precisely at this moment, the Israeli state introduced the one water mane that would connect the community to the recently constructed national water grid.

The role of the local Arab leadership in bringing basic services to their communities through patronage relations was two-fold. On one hand, it was part of the overarching effort to legitimate both Arab Israeli leaders that headed the newly formed local councils, and who the state Ministers relied upon to enforce control over the Arab population. On the other hand, the introduction of infrastructure projects helped legitimate the Israeli state in the eyes of Arab communities inside Israel's 1948 borders by attending to social welfare and social needs. Indeed, the introduction of basic services at the end of military rule and the establishment of official local Arab governments (in name only) was a new strategy that came out of the realization on the part of Zionist officials that Arab citizens were there to stay.

During this period, the accomplishment of "staying" was identified with *sumud*. As one Zionist ideologue said at the time, the very presence of 1948 Arabs inside Israel's borders, had forced the Israeli Jewish leadership to recognize the pressing need to strengthen "...the Arab sector's bond and loyalty to the State of Israel" (quoted in Arnon Y. Degania 2014). Thus, the relationship between Israeli Jewish authorities and local Arab leaders initially added strength to the Mukhtar's legacy as "protector" of his people by playing on the notion of *sumud* that associated staying power with the diplomatic shrewdness of the Mukhtar in his dealings with outside officials, especially the Zionists.

At the same time, the extreme repression of the Arab Israeli community and the uncertainty produced by Israeli officials' active recruitment of spies and creation of a dense network of informers among and within the Arab Israeli community, eventually undermined the belief that local mukhtars and their allies were engaged in any genuine form of *sumud*. Accounts by ordinary Arab Israeli citizens of that time describe the feeling of "ears in the walls" and "eyes in the bedsheets" (Bisharat 2013). For example, Abu-Baker described the crippling fear that kept her husband, Muhammad, from joining a political party that was not part of the Labor-centered coalition at the time. "Muhammad joined the Communist Party briefly, but soon got cold feet and quit, convinced that 'walls have ears' and that no person was safe from careless gossip and malicious informers" (Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz 2005:

67). Ha'aretz contributor Odeh Bisharat writes,"...the military administration settled in our homes, nestled between the sheets of our beds, between father and son, man and wife, until everything seemed suspect" (2013: online).[68] Those who expressed opposition to the military administration, moreover, were subject to violent retribution. In 1956 in the village of Kafr Qasim, where residents were exceptionally vocal about their opposition to Military Administration, a commander decided, without announcement, to enforce an early curfew. He ordered military authorities to shoot unsuspecting peasants coming home from work after the unanounced curfew. The justification for the curfew, according to the commander was the imminent Israeli invastion of the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza – the Suez War.[69] Such practices and conditions destroyed faith among many Arab Israeli citizens that Mukhtar-esque versions of *sumud* were anything more than a testament to the success of Jewish military leaders in preying upon their leaders moral and human weaknesses. This shattered the sense that old forms of *sumud* could guide and protect Arab communities in the aftermath of 1948.

The experience of military rule, thus, unleashed tensions between groups within the Arab community. It set off conflict between those who saw *Sumud* as a tool for collectively providing social security, and access to resources, most notably water pipes under emergency conditions, and those who saw it as a tool of non-violent resistance and popular democracy. Needless to say, redefinition of *sumud* that was taking shape under military rule was a threat to the power of local Mukhtars.

Bisharat describes the contradictory forces out of which his generation (born in Israel the mid to late 1940s) transformed themselves and began to renovate *sumud* in the aftermath of al-Nakba (the Catastrophe of dispossession/1948 establishment of the state) and military rule. This transformation entailed a sense of *sumud* that was similar to the one expressed by Tareq's account of negotiations over the wetlands. Bisharat writes,

> ...[E]xactly at this difficult moment, the military administration pressed upon the wound with full force to persuade those who had remained – a branch of an uprooted tree – that they were a nation of informers with a traitorous leadership. My father-in-law, Nimr Rihani, who participated in nationalist groups, told me that in those days a Shin Bet security service agent who was known in the area came to visit him – on a holiday of all days. The Shin Bet [Israel Security Agency] man took advantage of the tradition of Arab hospitality that did not allow guests to be thrown out, even if they were enemies. The visit's purpose was to transmit the message to other residents that even the patriotic [Arab/Palestinian nationalist] Abu Hisham, as my father-in-law was known, was "one of ours." Several years later, Abu Hisham was sent to prison for two years because he did not reveal information he had about a "hostile" organization that had not carried out any actions, and he was fired from what was then considered a quite prestigious job as school principal....

The efforts of the military administration to assign the label of "informer" and "collaborator" to Arabs that remained in Israel after 1948 served both to drive a wedge beween what became known as "1948 Arabs" and Palestinians living in exile, as well as to send a message to Israeli citizens - Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christians alike - that the Arabs that remained inside Israel were not there because of their refusal to leave – because of an active *sumud* politics - but because the Zionists had allowed 1948 Arabs to remain in

exchange for their support for the Zionist cause. It conveyed a sense that any improvements in the quality of life of Arab Israelis was simply the result of acquiescence and service to the Jewish nation.[70]

Yet the unexpected consequence of the military administration's contradictory strategy, which sought to control Arab citizens through coopted leaders who held power through their ability to provide basic services for their people,[71] and at the same time, undermine any real power such leadership might have over its constituents, was to open up a space for a new kind of *sumud* to emerge.

Odeh Bishara provides insight into this contradictory dynamic that entailed introduction of limited infrastructure and the establishment of nominal local councils in Arab communities, at the same time as Israeli Ministry officials ordered demolition of homes and piping infrastructure it deemed illegal. Just like today, Arab communities responded by constructing and reconstructing such structures over and over again every time they were destroyed. Bisharat explains:

> The other side of the coin is the staying power of those that remained. The key word was *sumud* (steadfastness) and it was expressed in the building of homes, most of them without permits. The entire village would join in the construction work. It was also expressed in the exhausting daily struggle to obtain an exit permit to work in Jewish cities, the struggle to pave a road, to connect a village to the water and electricity grids and to build a school.

....Ben-Gurion [Israel's first Prime Ministery] was counting on an Arab refusal that would constitute, at a critical moment, the ultimate excuse for expelling the Arabs. Following 1948, and for the first time, the leadership of a large Palestinian group was changing the rules of the game, receiving Israeli citizenship and waging a civil struggle to achieve its goals. And thus the buds of political realism began to blossom, and the battle was decided in favor of staying. Even the 1956 massacre at Kafr Qasem, when 48 Arab civilians were killed by Israeli Border Police, did not change matters. Moreover, the struggle was colored by optimism and was open to the other, so that even a Jewish democrat wouldn’t feel alienated from it.

*Sumud*, in other words, came to be associated with a form of non-violent protest aimed at making demands upon the state to live up to its promises to provide basic services to all its citizens. This proved to be a lasting strategy. Dependency upon Israeli officials' patronage required Arab Israeli communities to frame their staying power, especially with regard to securing access to services, in terms of service to the Jewish nation. The emergent alternative form of *sumud* reframed basic service provisioning in terms of entitlement and used construction of pipes and access to infrastructure as a channel through which to make claims and voice democratic critique. Certainly this posed some difficulties for broader solidarity with Palestinians across the green line since civil rights to infrastructure was not a plausible venue through which to make claims. Yet, as we shall see, it did build solidarity among disparate groups within Israel's borders, and the practice of building and rebuilding demolished and destroyed homes and infrastructure united them with Palestinians across the Green Line who, as time went on, employed the same practices that came to be associated with a new form of *sumud*.

Through *sumud*, and the principle of non-violence associated with it, Arab citizens that remained within Israel's borders after 1948 eventually delegitimized the logic of the military regime. New discourses and practices associated with *sumud* that, at the time, were transforming it into a form of grassroots resistance that would crystallize later on, played a central role in undermining military rule. This fledgling form of *sumud* made clear that "transfer" of Arab Israelis that had remained in Israel after 1948 was untenable. Moreover, it was morally illegitimate in the eyes of the world.

Grassroots resistance during the military regime, it turned out, did not take shape in the manner anticipated by Zionist authorities. Arab communities did not rise up violently in solidarity with surrounding Arab countries in the name of national liberation, thereby giving the State an excuse to expel and or massacre them. They criticized martial law from within the framework offered by Israeli democracy. As martial law that governed Arab locales inside Israel's 1948 borders gave way to civil law the promise of meaningful citizenship, self-government, and protections of civil rights and liberties paved the way for the civil rights struggle around water that emerged more fully in the 1980s.

**2. <u>1966-1977: The Frontier: Judaization, *Sumud* and the politicization of a new generation</u>**

One year before the 1967 war in which Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula,[72] the Israeli government lifted its policy of military rule over Arab Israeli locales inside Israel's 1948 borders. The Jewish settlement movement in the territories soon began to evolve. Inside Israel's 1948 borders, officials replaced martial law with new methods of dealing with Arab Israeli citizens. The new methods focused on concentration and control of Arab Israeli citizens through the organization of space (see, for example, Falah 2003; Gregory 2004; Khamaisi 1995; Misselwitz and Rieniets 2006; Weizman 2007; Yiftachel 2004, 2006 & 2010). These new methods involved confiscation, fragmentation, and confinement of Arab land, in order to encourage emigration of Arab citizens, and undermine Arab political organizing inside Israel's 1948 borders. The new methods that became known as Judaization were foreshadowed in a series of policy recommendations by Israel Koenig, the Interior Ministry commissioner for Israel's northern district (aka the Galilee which has an Arab majority). Koenig laid out his plan for the Galilee in a memo that was leaked to the National Press in 1976. The memo became known as the Koenig report (Piterberg 2008). The Journalist Jonathon Cook refers to Koenig as "the civilian reincarnation of the military governor" (Kanaaneh 2008: xviii).

The memo put forward a series of suggestions for undermining Arab Israeli political organizing and securing the "Jewish character" of the Galilee. Yisrael Koenig framed his policy recommendation explicitly in relation to the transformation of political thinking among Arab Israeli citizens that was influenced the liberal ideas espoused by the leaders of the new government. Arab Israeli citizens were taking hold of such ideas in order to oppose military rule and to demand liberal rights. On the frontlines of this transformative process was the so-called younger generation who were engaged in a rebellion against the "traditional" leadership of their elders:

The military government, under whose aegis this population was placed, established the rule of "notables" and thus entered into the framework of Arab society which was built on family clans. The abolition of the military government caused the undermining of the authority of the "notables" and those whom they represented. The undermining of the individual's dependence on the establishment - the military government - enabled the younger generation to feel the power that had come into its hands in a democratic society, and this also because of the passage of Arab society from an agricultural society to an industrial one with all the social implications of this.

Among the many suggestions that Koenig proposed to undermine the economic and political power of Arab Israelis in the Galilee, was his recommendation to "Introduce law suits and put into effect a number of court sentences, particularly in the sphere of income tax and illegal building, which will deter the population from any thought about an escape from the hands of the law" (Text of the Koenig's April 1976 internal government memo that was leaked in the newspaper al-Hamishmar which published it in September of 1976).[73]

In response to the leaked report, and ongoing confiscation of land primarily in frontier areas such as the Galilee, Arab citizens held a one-day strike on the 30th of March 1976 (Kanaaneh 2008, Piterberg 2008, Stein 2008). Hatim Kanaaneh, founder of the Galilee Society, an Arab public health NGO, describes the Israeli government's response in his published diaries.

> The state could not countenance defiance from its Arab 'citizens'; so to break their will it responded with massive violence against villages....It imposed a curfew and deployed its tanks, turning our peaceful streets and fields, for the first time in living memory, into a war zone. Six unarmerd demonstrators were killed in the ensuing clashes....In nearby Sakhnin (an Arab city in the Galilee), a few dozen Golani crack troopers linked arms in a circle and danced th Hora [Jewish national folk dance] to their own chants of...'The people of Israel live' [*am yisrael chai*] on the very spot where they had shot dead two young villagers" (12).

The Land Day strike and Israeli authorities' violent response to it, marked the moment when the form of *sumud* that was prefigured in practices of illegal construction of homes and water pipes under the military regime that Odeh Bishara described, gained widespread traction among ordinary Arab Israeli citizens, and got linked to a discourse of entitlement and claims to full incorporation into a notion of the public. Abu Baker and Rabinowitz remark that Land Day "…had unprecedented significance and important political and historical repercussions." They tell us that the annual gatherings to commemorate Land Day became important elements of a new politicized identity" that soon manifested in the conventional public sphere in the realm of Arab local government. Mayors who were members of Zionist political parties no longer were able to gain support, and new Arab-Israeli-centered political parties emerged and became popular. One of the key reasons for this shift, according to Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz, was "the growing awareness within the Palestinian community of the municipal arena as an alternative space for political assertion" (2005 :83).

Judaization replaces martial law

Although officials publicly acknowledged the injustice and feigned surprise and

outrage at Koenig's recommendations, they had, in fact, already been working quietly for several years on devising a new set of institutions aimed at strengthening the Jewish presence in the landscape, and control over land, mobility, and allocation of basic resources. Jihad abu Raya, an activist and lawyer based in northern Israeli, suspects that the leak was deliberately intended to "…incite intimidation and hostility towards Palestinians" (2017). In his view, it enabled and gave impetus to "The Galilee Development Plan" which was implemented soon after the leaked memo was published. The Plan entailed the construction of "[d]ozens of 'Jewish only' settlements" to which "…hundreds of thousands of Jews were transferred to live…" (2017).[74] In my view it was not simply Koenig's leaked memo and the Israeli response to the protest among Arab citizens that brought the issue of ongoing dispossession of Arab Israelis into the public sphere. Popular anger within Arab Israeli society arose as well because of the way that Koenig's leaked report brazenly confirmed what Arab Israeli citizens already knew and were experiencing: It confirmed the actual and continual confiscation of their land that was already well underway.

Legal Historian Alexandre Kedar explains that the desire of Israeli authorities to shift to new methods of control over Arab Israeli citizens had, in fact, been apparent as early as 1959 when it was clear that military rule would soon come to an end. He tells us, for example, that Yosef Weitz who was a member of the Galilee Committee, a precursor to the District Planning Committees of the 1960s, explicitly stated in 1959 that "…until now the goal of the work [of the Lands Department] was to establish ownership of the State on its land. The goal now is the judaization of the Galilee." A new set of laws, institutions, and regulations, thus, became embedded in a system that planners refer to as Israel's Land Regime (Yiftachel 2006).

The new land regime focused on the demarcation of space, and got underway with the surveying of Israel's frontiers. By 1960 a government body called the Israel Land Administration (ILA) had formed in order to manage the 93% of the land that, as a result of the large number of surveys produced by the new land regime, had been designated by law as state/public lands. Indeed, because of the new laws, Israel Land Administration officials could now claim the land they were managing and administering had been legally expropriated. The fact that representatives of the Jewish National Fund, which is registered as a private company and holds land exclusively for Jews, had nearly equal representation within the Executive Council of the Israel Lands Administration, meant that Administration authorities most often understood Judaization as synonymous with the public good (Yiftachel 2006).

The Administration had a 3-tiered planning structure. At the highest level was the National Board for Planning and Construction that furnished national plans for development of the country, and approved and rejected lower-level district plans. District Building and Planning Committees formed the second rung of the hierarchy. Local committees associated with municipal authorities of various kinds were at the bottom (HRW 2016).[75] Needless to say, the structure of the Administration created a tightly nit vision of what kinds of development would be in the public interest. It sought to use such regulations in order to Judaize the frontiers, secure Israeli boundaries and territory, "absorb" new Jewish immigrants, and address the issue of Arab-Israeli social unrest and political activity by fragmenting and disrupting the areas in which Arab Israelis could live, congregate, and move about. After its formation, the Administration swiftly produced its first Master Plan for the

country. The plan designated 124 existing Arab communities legal, and criminalized the rest (Beidas 2001, Yiftachel 2006). The criminalized Arab communities were erased from official maps. Today, Arab Israeli citizens living in such villages refer to their homes as "unrecognized" or "unrecognized villages." As we shall see, such conditions, which entail erasure and lack of official recognition, first emerged and were thrown into sharp relief on the frontier. However, these kinds of conditions in which there are large areas of construction and infrastructure connections that the Interior Ministry deems illegal exist in all Arab Israeli communities whether or not they are "unrecognized." Thus, the conditions that were born out of the Arab Israeli experience in the Galilee in the 1970s persist today across Israel.

Indeed, the Israel Lands Administration soon devised a system of municipal demarcation in order to facilitate the erasure and expropriation of Arab villages, towns, and land that eventually became a national formula for delineating space and maintaining Israeli sovereignty and territorial control. It divided local governments into regional, local, and city councils. Regional councils belonged primarily to Jewish citizens. They represented a unit of local government that presided over a number of low-density communities of various kinds (villages, kibbutzim, moshavim, mitzpim, development towns). Regional councils had jurisdiction not only over the villages in which people lived, but also over the land between the villages. According to Yiftachel, regional council land constitutes about 80 percent of Israel's land area (2003: 110). Thus, the Israel Lands Administration could argue that even though the population densities of such communities were low, regional councils required a larger land area for cultivation and/or industry, which, after all, was a central tenet of Israeli nation-building and notions about self-sufficiency and security. At the same time, the Administration designated much of the grazing and agricultural land of Arab Israeli communities as non-agricultural and non-industrial. Such land reverted into state hands and, as indicated above, the Jewish National Fund wielded considerable influence over decisions about how to develop such "public" land.

The result was that regional Council areas extended across vast expanses of land and largely excluded, surrounded, and fragmented Arab communities. Arab councils, on the other hand, were, for the most part, confined to units of local government known as local councils. Local councils were defined by their jurisdiction over populations of 12,000 or more residents who lived in non-agricultural communities that, as a consequence, were more densely populated. Indeed, local councils had jurisdiction only over the residential areas in which residents lived. Local Council governance, in other words, did not extend to the areas between and surrounding their town in the way that regional council's governance did.

By the mid-1960s, district plans for the Galilee called for establishing Jewish villages, towns, and industrial parks in areas where Arab villages, farms, and pasturelands were located. These were, after all, places that the Israel Lands Administration had designated as state and agricultural land after its initial spate of surveys were produced in order to reflect and confirm these demarcations. The passage of the Building and Planning Law in 1965 meanwhile legalized the possibility of razing small Arab villages that were now located on state land and deemed illegal (unrecognized) by the State. Along with the first country-wide Master Plan, this 1965 Law erased many of the small Arab villages in the Galilee from official maps, and provided a legal basis for demolishing homes and villages that existed on land that the Israel Lands Administration deemed public or agricultural (Bimkom 2017,

HRW 2016). Despite the passage of the 1965 Law, however, many Arab villages remained on state land in areas that had not yet been built up, or designated for other national/public uses. Thus, the system of land management established in the 1960s, as we shall see, did not come into full force until the 1980s in the context of economic restructuring. When it did, as we shall see, Arab Israeli citizens began consolidating their struggle against erasure and in favor of fuller inclusion around access to water resources and water infrastructure.

The relationship between Judaization and Israeli capitalist development

During this period, the frontier simultaneously functioned as a tool for nation building, and as a way to facilitate early industrial development through land distribution to Jewish local authorities and industrialists. In doing so, it moderated class conflict by sheltering early industrial development and Jewish workers from the costs and consequences associated with global capitalist development.[76] That is, far from representing a nationally-oriented barrier to cosmopolitan Israeli capitalist development, frontier development and expansion has been crucially important to creating the conditions that enabled Israel to transition from a traditionally understood state-directed form of capitalism to neoliberal forms of capitalism as described by Adam Hanieh (2003). As we shall see, the frontier's place in Israeli racial capitalism and class formation in Israel has shifted as the country has opened up to global capital. Yet the role of the frontier as moderator of class conflict, and driver of industrial & technological development has endured in new forms even as the welfare state has increasingly been dismantled.

Through frontier industrialization and development towns, the Israel Lands Administration, with the aid of the 1965 Building and Construction law, thus, facilitated a new vision of national land development that was less focused on "transfer" of Arab Israeli communities that had remained after 1948 than it had been under martial law. When it became clear that full transfer was untenable, the Israel Lands Administration began to focus more on the cantonization of Arab Israeli space. As we shall see, such cantonization laid basis for the kind of politics that developed within Arab Israeli society that focused on basic infrastructure, especially water infrastructure as necessary for material survival in the absence of contiguous land-reserves through which Arab Israeli residents had previously made their living, but that also saw the struggle for basic water infrastructure as essential for equalizing disparities, and connected such struggle for basic infrastructure to demands for civil rights.

District governments and development departments, meanwhile, began offering incentives in order to attract Jewish settlers to the frontier. According to planning officials, such incentives were necessary to even out the distribution of the Jewish population, which was initially clustered in the interior and central areas of the country. Incentives focused on settling Middle Eastern Jewish immigrants in public housing projects known as "development towns" on the frontier. Government support for Jewish residents of the Galilee included housing subsidies, tax breaks, low interest loans and rent subsidies. The major industrial employment on the frontier was in labor intensive, low-wage jobs primarily in the textile and food processing industries. Development towns, thus, encouraged "occupational specialization" that served frontier industrialization.

Israeli Jewish industry on the frontier benefited not only from low-wage, government subsidized labor of the new immigrants. It also benefited from the direct

subsidies that, as Yiftachel remarks, included "….substantial government investment and a range of incentives and concessions such as tax exemptions and low interest loans to investors in the region [the Galilee]…" He notes that the Israeli Ministry of Industry "provided all necessary infrastructure and in many cases also constructed industrial buildings to be leased by private industrialists" (1991: 167).

In Adam Hanieh's terms what is key about this moment is the role that the State (or the particular institutions of the state mentioned above) played in class formation. This is because the role of the state in underwriting early Israeli capitalist/industrial development and class formation, set the stage for the way in which Israel subsequently opened up to the global economy, and for the role of the frontier in moderating class conflict among Jewish groups. Hanieh lays it out in the following terms:

> With the expulsion of most of the indigenous Palestinian population in 1948, resulting in the absence of the readily exploitable working class traditionally found in colonial situations, the state embarked on a massive immigration program aimed at bringing Jews from the Middle East and North Africa (Mizrahi Jews) to settle in the new state. The imported Mizrahi Jews were able to constitute a working class on which the economic foundations of the country could be built. The Mizrahim thus laid the basis for the first wave of industrialization that began in the late 1950s and was centered the so-called Development Towns.

This early history is instructive with regard to the role played by the state…in class development. At the level of the working class, the state led the process of immigration and settlement of Mizrahi Jews in specific industries and localities. At the level of the capitalist class, the Labor Zionist movement, through its unchallenged control of the state apparatus, adopted a strategy of state-led industrialization funded through external capital flows. This period – which lasted until 1973 – was characterized by high levels of growth financed by capital transfers from German reparations and international Jewry. In this initial period of state and class formation, the state directed virtually all capital transfers to favored business groups involved in the 'national project.' In return, these groups…undertook industrialization projects and investment in areas designated as crucial for the development of the state [e.g. on the frontier]." (2003:6-7)

Although the overall policy framework known as Judaization that governed planning and development of Israeli land encompassed all of Israel, I focus here primarily on its development in relation to the frontier, because it was on the frontier that new national-scale methods of control and domination over Arab populations manifested first and most visibly. The frontier was where planning policies associated with compressional stress its related influence on undermining Arab Israeli citizens ability to connect legally to water pipes developed in direct connection with successive waves of capitalist development in Israel. It was here as well where Arab Israeli opposition to such policies reworked *sumud* in relation to water pipes, and later took hold in new configurations places such as Kafr al Bahar as we shall see in the discussion below of the 1989 rebellion. Thus, understanding the place of the frontier in Israeli development sheds light on the political shifts that took place within Arab Israeli society in the 1980s that I discuss below, and which manifested in Kafr al Bahar through the politics of basic infrastructure and welfare.[77]

## 3. The emergence of Palestinian-Israeli civil society: 1977-1989

As fear and anxiety among the Israeli leadership grew in the aftermath of Land Day about the new forms of politics and political leadership among Arab Israeli citizens and their demand for civil rights, Israeli government officials began to enforce the 1965 Building and Construction Law with greater determination and vigor. They did this by actively following Koenig's recommendations to step up law enforcement in the realm of illegal construction. In this context, the Likud party, a center right political party that is committed to settlement construction in the territories and Jewish immigration to Israel, began gaining in popularity and the traditional Labor party lost its hegemonic position in Jewish Israeli society. The key difference between the Likud and Labor parties at the time, was that while the Labor Party and the Likud Party both supported settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza, the Labor Party was in favor of territorial compromise (Beinin and Hajjar 2014).[78] Likud, by contrast, refused all proposals for territorial withdrawal. Not surprisingly this hard and fast position on the question of territory trickled into land policy within Israel's 1948 borders.

The new rigid territorial policies, as we shall see, mirrored the increasingly harsh policies regulating Arab NGOs that began to emerge during this period. Thus, at the same time as new Judaization policies were beginning to intensify enforcement of the 1965 Planning and Building Law in keeping with Koenig's recommendations, and criminalizing a host of existing Arab villages, and their use of surrounding land for grazing, and farming, Israeli lawmakers revived an ordinance from the period of the British Mandate: The Ordinance for the Prevention of Terrorism (Kanaaneh 2008). The amendment to the Ordinance designated Arab Israeli leaders who were central to political activity in Arab communities as terrorists.[79] In response, Hatim Kanaaneh, who was a leader in his village of Arrabeh at the time and was working with a Health Monitoring Committee decided, like many other leaders, to refocus "on the most pressing issues…including water supply to the unrecognized villages" (2008: 198). Although seemingly mundane and narrow, the focus on "pressing issues" indicated a concerted effort that was beginning to develop in order to get around the restrictive amendment. Thus, "pressing issues" such as water supply came to take on an extraordinary amount of symbolic significance in addition to its pragmatic material significance. In the context of Israeli liberal democracy, as we shall see, questions of erasure got linked to demands for inclusion that spoke to the notion of the nation, the public, and a sense of common humanity. Access to water in particular took on increased significance as a symbol of life, and health. Struggle around water simultaneously embodied a struggle against erasure and material deprivation. In short, it camouflaged a host of deeper questions about ongoing erasure of Arab Israeli citizens. In the process, the meaning of water and other basic services got reformulated within the framework of liberal social democracy, and formed the basis for alliances among previously isolated struggles among Arab communities for access to basic services.

### A new form of Judaization: the preconditions for the development of Arab Israeli civil society

For Arab citizens in frontier areas, as mentioned above, these were the years when the exclusions and violence embedded Israeli Land Policy came into full force. Arab communities that had subsisted on land that the Israel Lands Administration had designated

as State land in the 1960s but had previously ignored, now officially became trespassers in the areas where they were living, where they grazed their flocks, and in the areas where they cultivated their fields. As "trespassers" residents faced home demolition orders. Israeli authorities began to destroy even the temporary shelters and infrastructure such as makeshift kindergartens and other provisional structures assembled with sheets of corrugated metal.

Geographer Ghazi Falah refers to this period as the second wave of Judaization. According to Falah, the key policies and practices associated with this second wave of Judaization were crystallized in two key developments in the realm of planning. The first was the convening of the Markovitz Commission in order to identify "illegal" Arab villages that would be targeted for demolition and removal. Falah tells us that the Markovitz Commission was "a top level inter-ministerial commission on 'illegal construction in the Arab sector'" (1991:79). It identified 113 for immediate destruction, and many more for destruction within a timeframe of five years (Falah 1991). The second development was the formation in 1982 of the Misgav Regional Council in the heart of the Galilee. Falah remarks that "[t]he Misgav Regional Council was established ostensibly to provide services and to create a regional network for…Jewish settlements…" He goes on to point out, however, that "[i]n fact…the move….placed their lands under the formal jurisdiction of the [Misgav] Council," in order to control "…all natural resources and all development pertaining to agriculture and grazing in the area under its jurisdiction" (1991: 80). Together, the Markovitz Commission and the Misgav Regional Council undermined the subsistence practices and very existence of the majority of Arab villages in the Galilee by limiting and denying them access to land through which they had previously subsisted.

Precisely at this moment the economic downturn that spurred Israel's 1985 Economic Stabilization Plan set in motion a period of long-term unemployment among workers that by the 1990s, Rosenhek reports, "…reached unprecedented levels."[80] One effect of the downturn in the Galilee was that enterprises in the area's industrial parks began to show even more preference for hiring Jewish workers that lived nearby or in the same council areas. On the surface hiring policies that prioritize workers living nearby to industrial plants makes sense. However, in the Galilee, it is important to remember, that "the same area" was not synonymous with "the same council area." Indeed the land areas of regional councils, as indicated earlier, often fragmented and cantonized Arab living space and access to employment.[81] Thus, Arab communities living nearby to industrial plants, but outside of the official council area from which they had been excluded meant their chances of being hired during the downturn were much lower. Despite their proximity to Arab communities, moreover, the fact that industrial zones were located outside Arab council areas meant that industry's corporate taxes went to support infrastructure development within the regional council's of which they were a part (Yiftachel 1991). In retrospect, I believe, we might see this as the preconditions for the present fiscal crisis facing so many Arab local governments, especially in the realm of water infrastructure and access. In any case, these were the conditions to which Arab Israeli communities were responding when, during this period as we shall see, they gradually began to focus their attention and political activity on access to basic water infrastructure.

By this time, Judaization was no longer about the development of frontier areas through the establishment of development towns for working class Jewish citizens that had emigrated from Arabic speaking countries in the 1950s in 1960s, or about the offer of huge

subsidies to industrialists to set up industrial parks and zones in frontier areas. As economic crisis deepened, Judaization policies began to focus more on drawing European middle class Jews to the frontiers, and on transforming existing industrial zones in order to introduce a range of export-oriented industries that combined high and low tech manufacturing processes (e.g. plastics, fiber-optics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals) (OECD 2017). Direct government support for industrial development included the construction of a connective infrastructure on the frontier in order to facilitate high tech industrial development and access to employment for new middle class residents of the frontier. At the same time this connective infrastructure further fragmented and disconnected Arab communities in the area. Falah explains, for example, that Jewish settlement blocs "…had communication linkages among themselves as well as to urban Jewish settlements inside and outside the Galilee." The purpose of such communication linkages was, in Falah's words, to create "…a continuous territorial belt while forming a physical barrier separating the major Palestinian concentrations in the region" (1991: 76).

These new methods of Judaization entailed a particular form of state intervention aimed at facilitating Israel's process of opening up to global economy, and of easing the influence of the uncertainties of global capitalism and associated downturns on historically well-protected middle/ working class European Jewish citizens (Ashkenazi). This shift, in other words, did not simply represent a reduction in the role of the state in economic and social spheres. It involved new forms of state intervention and a re-articulation of class, religion, ethnicity and nationalism in the broader Israeli society.

Ariel Sharon, who was Minister of Defense at the time, developed a system of *mitzpim* or hilltop lookouts in the Galilee that operated to reinforce the work of the Markovitz Commission and the Misgav Regional Council in fragmenting Arab territory in the Galilee. Eyal Weitzman explains that the *Mitzpim* program took its inspiration from defensive military and security strategy. The architectural design of *Mitzpim* sought to enlist the "civilian population to act as agents alongside the agencies of state power," by designing them as circular rings around hilltops with homes strategically placed in order to orient "…the view of the inhabitants towards the surrounding landscape." The intended effect of such design was to turn the inhabitants into guardians, a kind of civilian security force in charge of monitoring activities of the surrounding Arab Israeli communities (2007: 132). Antony Loewenstein and Ahmed Moor explain the role of the *Mitzpim* in perpetuating everyday violence that aided the project of Judaization. They speak, for example, of the way that vigilant Mitzpe residents in the area of Misgav regional council took it upon themselves, particularly during periods of local dispute, to warn government officials about residents of the nearby Arab city of Sakhnin who were building outside the legal residential zones of the town. They would also take every opportunity possible to notify authorities if it seemed to them that residents of neighboring Arab communities were not cultivating their land. Indeed, uncultivated land meant it was available for legal expropriation by the Israeli state (Loewenstein and Moor, 2012). Such methods of Judaization that focused on enlisting ordinary Jewish citizens, and criminalizing Arab towns, neighborhoods, and whole sections of Arab communities, particularly on their outskirts by focusing on illegal building and infrastructure, soon spread to other parts of Israel, including Kafr al Bahar.

The *mitzpim* program sought to attract middle class Jewish families with a range of incentives that were different than those that had underpinned the Development Towns of

the 1950s and 1960s. Carmon and Yiftachel tell us that the State planning institutions offered "…state land at very low costs, physical infrastructure at negligible costs, generous housing assistance, and high quality municipal and educational services" (1996: 7). Middle class families, according to Carmon and Yiftachel, were also drawn to *mitzpim* because they offered the chance to escape the increasingly dense central cities and towns in Israel, and promised semi-rural home and garden plots not available elsewhere. Each *mitzpe* had an entrance committee made up of rotating combinations of residents that were responsible for reviewing applications to live in the community. The committee admitted new residents according to a social and cultural profile that fit with the committee's conception of what the town ought be. In Carmon and Yiftachel's words, "the Israeli planning authorities vested…the settlers [with] the power to screen potential new residents according to their 'suitability to the new life-style in a small Galilee settlement….Consequently, most of the new settlements have developed into enclaves of young highly educated middle-class residents of quite homogeneous social and ideological backgrounds" (1997).

One *mitzpe* resident who told me that she had moved to her *mitzpe* home from Tel Aviv in the 1980s in order to give her children the freedom to run around that she had as a child growing up in Tel Aviv when it was sparsely populated, told me that she had paid virtually nothing for her large hilltop home and the land on which it sits. She explained to me the relationship between the regional council in which her mitzpe was located and the local councils of neighboring Arab towns in the context of frontier judaization in the following way: "mitzpe...is a military term….the thing is that we're (Jewish mitzpe) on top of you (Arab communities) and if you look at a map we're like fingers that serve as buffers between the Arab communities so that they cannot expand." [82] *Mitzpim,* thus, activated the system of municipal demarcation developed in the 1960s as well as the latent authority within the 1965 Building and Construction Law, and used military strategy as a blueprint and basis through which to force out of existence de-facto Arab villages located within regional council areas that had existed despite their illegality during the first four decades of Israeli state rule.

For ordinary Jewish citizens, the subsidized cost of living for those who were willing to move to seemingly remote areas eased the burden of cuts in central government subsidies for food and transportation at the time, that would have had a greater effect on them if they had remained in central hubs of Israel. Such benefits, thus, softened the blow of economic restructuring for middle class Jewish citizens who suffered from public sector layoffs and erosion of wages. Moreover, just as with the previous era of industrialization, government subsidies for *mitzpe* settlement benefited industrialists looking to hire skilled workers at lower wages than elsewhere in the country.

Needless to say, at this time, the deliberate disconnection of Arab villages from water piping networks started to become increasingly apparent as new hilltop settlements received piped water immediately, sometimes even before the Israeli state had granted them official permission to build and settle on the land. As one resident of an unrecognized Arab village where I had initially planned to do my research exclaimed about the neighboring *mitzpe*, "what am I supposed to tell my son when he sees that the Jews next door have lights and electricity and even water for their cows, and we, humans, do not have either?" Such obvious disparity, combined with the criminalization of Arab Israeli opposition to land confiscation and NGO work, as well as the increasingly rigid building restrictions set the

stage for what Hatim Kanaaneh, a prominent Galilee doctor who is deeply engaged in NGO politics in the Galilee, refers to as emergence of Palestinian civil society (2008)

New forms of *Sumud*

As policies of Judaization in the 1980s thrust Arab Israeli citizens into positions in which their livelihoods were increasingly commodified and political activity around dispossession was criminalized, water as a basis for urban livelihoods, as opposed to agricultural or pastoral forms of life on historic lands, became the focus of struggle. A new form of *sumud* came into to focus primarily in relation to basic services, particularly water infrastructure and, in the process, got linked to the question of recognition and erasure. The movement to recognize unrecognized villages that I describe briefly below, was the first movement to connect questions of material survival that had to do with access to adequate water and water infrastructure to what appeared to activists struggling for recognition to be a willful effort on the part of planning authorities to erase any trace of villages that they deemed illegal. As Muhammad, the Chairman of the formerly unrecognized village of Ayn Hawd al-Jadida explained in a 2001 interview published in The Journal of Palestine Studies,

> …We formed a committee in ‘Ayn Hawd al-Jadida to press for government services. Before then, for a long time we had believed that it was a question of reaching the proper authorities in the proper manner and with the right attitude, but after we acquired the skills to write proper letters to the right offices, we gradually realized that we weren't getting services because we weren't part of the Jewish people, the people of this state. Not providing you with electricity or water or roads also ensures that nobody can see you—it's a way of erasing you. (2001: 46)

The scene from the documentary entitled "Not on Any Map"[83] in which a village elder questions a planning volunteer about his village's lack of water infrastructure reiterates the larger significance of basic services, particularly water access, in relation to the question of erasure, exclusion, and inclusion with stunning clarity. "When exactly do we drink water properly?" the village elder asks the volunteer architect who is helping the community make a Master Plan for the village, as part of their effort to achieve official recognition. His children explain that what he means is "when will they [planners] make a plan for water?" The question is rhetorical. He declares that he gave 20 years of his life working as a laborer (as a wage-worker aka one who has been dispossessed of land) for the state of Israel and still "never drank the water" (flowing through pipes). As he speaks he becomes more animated, raising his voice, and wagging his index finger at the architect. Struggling with his toothless enunciation, he asks indignantly, "when will I drink water?" The architect replies, "If they say this village exists then they will have to bring water…I can't say when that will happen. I don't know." "I know when there will be water here," the village elder rejoins, "when my coffin arrives." The prescience of his words are soon revealed when the film cuts to a scene several months later, with his brother reciting his eulogy. His brother holds a pitcher of water over his grave. Through his tears, his brother begins:

> We are going to pour water on my brother's grave…May he rest in peace, he, who worked for this cause [of bringing water to our village] for many years and didn't succeed in drinking the water that reached our village [finally after much struggle]. A man who struggled all his life for this moment – to be able to see water with his own

eyes, and he did not see it, and he did not drink it. It's not easy. It's not normal. It's something not regular in life....A man who gave himself, worked for the settlement so that they would see what it is [to have water], a lifetime of struggle to drink water. To be recognized, they refused to recognize us.

He then looks down at the spot where his brother is buried and begins to pour the water. He speaks directly to his deceased brother saying, "here you have water to soak your life. This is your blessing and we did what you requested."

In fact, the village had been engaged for many years in a battle for recognition. When the community finally received water infrastructure, the narrators explain, there was a celebration. Residents pronounced the day the water arrived as "our birthday." "Today we are born," the brother of the village elder tells the documentary crew. It was, in other words, the day that the village went from being invisible to being visible within Israel.

The protracted struggles of unrecognized villages eventually made clear to those involved in the struggle that no matter how much one complies with the building rules and procedures, and no matter how much effort municipal engineers in Arab towns make to navigate through the bureaucratic logic imposed by Israel's land regime, the struggle will not amount to anything if it does not link the issue to the question of erasure.

Over time, the connections that the movement for unrecognized villages made between material survival and access to services, erasure, and recognition, catalyzed and fed into the development of a host of new independent Palestinian political parties, as well as neighborhood committees, and a burgeoning Arab Israeli NGO movement. These developments, in Hatim Kanaaneh's view, signaled the emergence of Palestinian civil society and in my view, indicated a redefinition of *sumud*. Indeed, the struggle for recognition captured the existential crisis that all Arab Israeli citizens faced, whether or not they resided in an unrecognized village. The fight to install and receive infrastructure to support urban based livelihood on a fraction of the area of land that had once belonged to the community, whether or not it was officially recognized, became a way for communities to assert themselves as part of a public that resided in Israel, as well as a way to insist on their collective humanity, on their very existence. The understanding of the connection between basic services and erasure came out of everyday practices and struggles, and challenged the technicized veneer of planning policies and procedures that masked ongoing exclusions and underpinned the increasing marginalization of Arab Israeli citizens. The question of recognition, in other words, was not only about "pressing issues," or about frontier development. It was about erasure and it was a structural question that was central to the workings of Israeli development.[84] Because of the limited land in which Arab communities were allowed to live, every community experienced lack of State recognition to some degree. It contributed significantly to turning the question of basic services into an issue that could connect Arab communities across disparate sites.

An important step in the struggle to push the government to assume its responsibility to address "pressing needs," was the practice of developing alternative Master Plans for unrecognized villages. The production of such maps soon became popular among Arab Israeli NGOs focused on issues beyond the sphere of unrecognized villages including those that were seeking to expand the land reserves of recognized towns that were,

nevertheless, suffering from spatial compression and where there were doubtless illegal structures and infrastructure connections that made them vulnerable to demolition. This willingness to engage in technical procedures and focus solely on "pressing needs" seemed to strike a balance between Zionist intervention/cooptation and outright protest against ongoing dispossession. Such maps were the first step in gaining approval for basic infrastructure installation and welfare grants. They represented one of the few legal mechanisms that Arab communities had to enlarge their land reserves, and hence to expand the area in which they could legally build and connect to permanent infrastructure (Bimkom 2017).[85] Local and volunteer engineers and architects affiliated with the Arab NGO network publicized these maps and plans. They highlighted the hypocrisy of the fact that in a modern industrialized country there were people living without basic infrastructure.[86] At the very least, delineating Arab communities on maps brought attention to the issue of lack of recognition and facilitated efforts of NGOs to arrange for doctors to visit villages that were ineligible for state services, funding, and welfare benefits because they were constructed on public lands.

The struggle around basic services that formed the heart of the movement to recognize unrecognized villages, inspired newly formed local neighborhood committees, and independent Arab political parties which, in turn, influenced the growing Arab NGO movement. These movements strove for a certain degree of autonomy from increasingly stringent state policies that were laser focused on restricting building and access to basic services. The increasing obstacles associated with the new wave of Judaization and with Likud, for example, eventually led Hatim Kanaaneh to leave his government post and start the Galilee Society. He explains that "[g]radually but definitely" he came "…to the inescapable conclusion that the only option left to me, if I want to practice the professional public health theory that all those world-class professors taught us at Harvard, is to go it alone and commit to the Galilee Society" (2008: 127). Indeed, it was beginning to appear as if Arab NGOs were a more viable way to influence change and raise awareness than protest against unjust government policies and practices of land confiscation that were oriented towards the national government. The politics that emerged, privileged municipal and district level engagement and sought to avoid national level politics that appeared to restrict and undermine such grassroots organizing. In this way, water emerged as a material and symbolic resource that connected the past to present struggles in ways that on the surface appeared mundane, but that provided a platform for demanding fuller inclusion in the notion of the Israeli public, that resonated deeply with histories of dispossession, and that Arab citizens lived out as a form of erasure and racism.

By the end of the 1980s with the seeming success of the Arab NGO movement, Ministry and government officials began to try to coopt leaders of the NGO network just as they had with the Mukhtars of the previous generation. Kanaaneh recalls, for example, his exasperation at the repeated attempts by Labor Party officials to persuade him to help set up a national-level NGO that would incorporate all the leaders of bi-partisan Arab NGOs throughout Israel. The overall message that such repeated attempts conveyed, in Kanaaneh's view, was that "we would like you, the activists on behalf of the Arab minority, to work for us through a system that we set up and control. You will be handsomely rewarded…." Such a strategy, he notes, "…is the traditional approach of the Labor Party." (2008: 196) Indeed, by the late 1980s, government officials and Parliament members had begun to make a concerted effort to undermine the autonomy of Arab NGOs and their ability to define, even

minimally, their most "pressing issues."

Yet, the organizational foundation – the organized experiences and activity – provided a bulwark, at least during the late-1980s and early 1990s, against such infiltration by the Israeli state. Moreover, the belief and strategy of making demands for distributive justice in the realm of basic resources and connecting them to erasure as well as the need for a more inclusive notion of the public and public goods still appeared viable since arguments about how privatization of basic services would serve the interests of the common welfare had not yet gained widespread traction. In short, NGOs connected struggles for inclusion, and struggles against erasure to issues related to the material conditions of life that in many places revolved around legalizing communities' ability to connect to and to receive government support for water infrastructure. Such work was able to thrive, in part, because of the ongoing organizing that focused on municipal rather than national level politics. It entailed grassroots organizing aimed at carving out an independent space for Arab political activity that was free of Zionist intervention, at the same time as it strategically avoided direct confrontation by focusing "humanitarian" issues and "pressing needs."[87] The Arab NGO's that emerged to deal with "pressing issues" became one of the key venues through which this new form of *sumud* articulated with the larger existential dilemma facing Arab communities, questions which revolved around erasure.

The seemingly a-political NGOization of Arab Israeli problems inside Israel may seem, at first glance, to render such problems technical and to detach them from their structural and historical foundations. However, the processes out of which they were born, and the restrictions and pressures through which they developed ended up paving the way for a gradual recognition among ordinary Arab Israeli citizens of the interconnectedness of questions of basic welfare, especially basic water infrastructure, with larger issues related to exclusion and erasure. Such struggle was about carving out space to live under new conditions, not about recovering all the land that had been lost.

**4. Peace & Privatization and Kafr al Bahar's 1989 political rebellion**

> [C]olonization and annexation yield enormous profits...It has sometimes been suggested that the dynamics of capitalist modernization would compel Israel to abandon its attachment to old style colonization…But capitalism can be both colonial and digital, occupying both global markets and frontier settlements" ("Offshore Zionism" by Gadi Algazi, 2006: 37).

By the late 1980s and the early 1990s, what had had seemed in the late 1970s and early 1980s to be Israeli planning agencies' ever tightening strangle hold on Arab organizing and living space now appeared to be loosening in terms of the possibilities for fuller inclusion and access to water resources in Arab locales. This can be attributed to the new turn that Judaization took in response to Israel's opening up to the global economy. A new commodified form of Judaization emerged that celebrated cultural coexistence but did little to address the material disparities between Jewish and Arab locales, and continued to enforce discriminatory planning rules. Yet, as Rebeccah Stein makes clear in her book Itineraries of Conflict (2008), Arab Israelis were able to play on the contradiction between the discourse of coexistence and the reality of ongoing segregation by bringing attention to unsuspecting Jewish tourists that were venturing beyond their traditional spatial and social

boundaries during a time when borders seemed to be receding. It was the period of the Oslo Peace Accords when public rhetoric claimed that national borders would diminish in importance as free trade and liberalization raised all boats. As Stein (2008) shows, the rhetoric of "coexistence" that emerged during this time in the context of the Oslo Accords, obscured the forces of spatial segregation and racialized dispossession that persisted and that often reinforced processes of spatial compression in places such as Kafr al Bahar.

Out of this brief period Kafr al Bahar's 1989 rebellion emerged, well after the rebellion of the younger generation had occurred in Arab Israeli society more generally. The rebellion gave rise to a new division in the town. This is when the seeds of division that had already begun after Kafr al Bahar's displacement from the wetlands to the area where it now sits deepened and erupted for the first time in local political elections. It was during this period that the different ways of narrating Kafr al Bahar's past took on increasing importance in the context of the imminent defeat of the former leader who was affiliated with the Mukhtar's legacy and methods of securing access to water resources. The version of water history narrated by Tareq was associated with the rebellious younger generation. It represented a vision of the future and of political practice that reflected the larger changes within Arab Israeli society that had taken shape during the previous eras in which a younger generation had challenged the exclusion and marginalization of their communities using the tools provided by the ideals of Israeli liberal democracy, and in which Arab Israeli organizing had become increasingly autonomous from Zionist party politics, and map making and basic services had taken on new symbolic meaning in the context of state repression.

By the end of the 1980s, however, Israeli social science scholars were invoking the notion of the "Peace Dividend" as a way to resolve both the economic and political crisis associated with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The phrase referred to the sense among the Israeli business community that conflict generated by policies of Judaization, segregation, and Occupation manifest most clearly in the 1st Intifada (1987-1993), was an economic cost rather than a benefit to their economic interests. As political economist Michael Shalev explains,

> In the wake of the economic burdens of the 1987 Palestinian Intifada, as well as lost opportunities in expanding world markets due to the Arab boycott of Israeli products, leading businessmen began to actively support the peace process that was formalized in the Oslo Accords of 1993. In a startling interpretation of these trends, Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled (2000b) argued that redefining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an economic problem had finally rendered it susceptible to a negotiated solution (2008: 1).

In Joel Beinin's terms:

> "The Palestinian intifada…demonstrated that Israel could not continue the low-cost occupation policies it had pursued since 1967. Israel's business elite was unwilling to pay the costs of further occupation. It sought instead to participate in Shimon Peres's vision of a "New Middle East" based on opening Arab markets to Israeli goods and services. This required a settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians." (1999)[88]

As neoliberalization appeared to be on the horizon, scholarly literature that critically

explored Judaization and the methods of spatial and municipal demarcation it entailed, began to characterize it as a territorial-bound protective form of interventionism on behalf of Jewish citizens. They saw Judaization as a set of nationally-oriented political policies which undermined and countered the free development and integration of Israeli into the global economy (see, for example, Ben-Basat 2002, Kelman 1998, Uri Ram 2007, Rosenhek 2003, Yiftachel 2006). Such literature endorsed the notion that global economic integration and development would somewhat mechanically lead to peace and render borders/ territory obsolete.

In contrast to those who argue that it represented an external counter-tendency to the form of economic development that took hold in the 1980s, I argue, along with Gadi Algazi, Andy Clarno, Adam Hanieh, Nitzan & Shimshon Bichler, that this new phase of economic development contained within it forms of spatial control and cantonization that were already in place. I now turn to an exploration of the way that economic restructuring, new forms of *sumud*, which in Kafr al Bahar consolidated around water and water infrastructure, and the techniques of ongoing spatial compression formed in relation to one another during this period.

## The Peace Dividend

By the late 1980s, and early 1990s, Arab Israeli citizens found themselves negotiating their place in Israeli society anew. Stein demonstrates, for example, the way that underlying efforts of ordinary Jewish citizens and Ministry officials to engage in a form of regulated coexistence, was part of an effort to produce the scale of "the Arab village" and contain it within the nation-state, as if it had always existed in that form and, thus, as if the existing fragmented, de-urbanized Arab landscape was one in which Arab Israeli citizens "were naturally at home" (2008). From Ministry officials' perspectives, moreover, she argues that it was also, in part, an attempt to forestall Arab Israeli citizens' reconnection with intra- and trans-national Arab regional networks that Oslo promised to revive. Such fixing of the scale and space of Arab communities, she points out, reinforced naturalized notions of the communities by regulating even the interior and intimate spaces of the home. It included, for example "regulation of….[the] cultural contents and literal fabric (goat hide as opposed plastic)" of Bedouin tents (2008: 92).

Yet from the very beginning, it was clear to many Arab Israeli citizens who had been engaged in the wave of grassroots organizing and NGO activity that had taken hold in the late 1970s and 1980s, that such initiatives did little to address ongoing material deprivations in Arab communities, particularly in the realm of state supplied basic services such as water provisioning, trash collection, and health care. The discourses of the "Peace Dividend" and of "Coexistence," thus, obscured ongoing racism embedded in the fragmented landscape. The effect, at least in Kafr al Bahar to which we now turn, was to inflame ongoing tensions between factions that allied with Zionist political parties in the interest of holding onto their land and communal identity and those that sought to use the discourse of coexistence as an opportunity to push for further inclusion and distributive justice, particularly with respect to water provisioning.

Kafr al Bahar's 1989 Rebellion

In Kafr al Bahar this moment was when the new form of *sumud* that had been developing in relation to basic services for some time, gained traction. It was when the political split that had already occurred in the broader Arab Israeli society materialized. In the process, the question of how the community's historical dispossession from water resources spoke to ongoing struggles to access water infrastructure generated a process of reformulation of the meaning of *sumud*. The alternative interpretations of the town's history, and hence of *sumud*, including that of Tareq's father, Ahmed Tareq, now fully resonated throughout the community and fomented new forms of political practice such as the production of alternative master plans aimed at expanding the space of the town and enabling legal infrastructure connections and upgrades.

The relationship of Kafr al Bahar's 1989 revolution to the form of *sumud* that had, for some time, been consolidating around basic services within Arab society, particularly water infrastructure, first became clear to me through an account that Ibrahim, Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer, told me about his efforts in the 1980s to bring basic infrastructure into the town. I had come to his office to accompany him in his work routine. A planning blueprint for the town that he told me would likely prove to be futile in terms of its ability to improve conditions in the town, was spread across his desk. He stood up, scrutinized the plans. He flattened it out with his hands, drew his head back, drew his head closer, squinted his eyes, as if trying to solve a puzzle. After a few minutes with seemingly little results he inhaled deeply, then exhaled, and then sat down again staring off at the corner. As often happened when such difficulties emerged, we broke into conversation. He began speaking about the past. It helped justify the present predicament, and it also provided a brief escape.

He told me that in 1985, he returned to Kafr al Bahar, his hometown. He returned because during Israel's recession of the 1980s, he had been laid off from his surveying position for the City in Haifa. Despite the recession, he had more hope than when he had left the town in his 20s, that he would be able to make a difference through infrastructure development. "Look at me now…opportunities…" he laughed as he gestured around at his tiny office trailer. "I had the sense that I could be a hero and introduce roads and electricity that had not been here before," he continued. As he began to explain the reasons for his sense that there were new openings, he hinted at his political position, something he revealed only rarely since his job required that he navigate complex familial and political relations in the town.

Like other residents with whom I had spoken about the 1989 revolution and who supported legacy, he referred to the family/ political circle in power before 1989 as not "visionary." He described their leader as a "a modern-day Mukhtar." This expression, as I knew from other conversations with members of the women's literacy group with whom I spent much of my time, denoted the period in which *sumud* was associated with "mere survival" and when a sense of fear pervaded the practices that were seen as necessary for staying in place under Zionist leadership. Thus, the phrase "modern-day Mukhtar" signaled the disillusionment of those using the phrase with coopted leaders of the past and the way that their style of leadership reinforced social hierarchies that served both the Arab elite, and the Zionists. All the coopted group strove for, Ibrahim told me, was to provide "…simple

basic needs – permits to build, water connections, connections to electricity, things like that."

Indeed, the women of the women's literacy group who felt that they owed the existence of their group to the 1989 rebellion had once recounted the way that the concept of *sumud* or strategies for "staying in place" morphed during this time and managed to gain traction among a majority of residents. It involved a struggle over defining *sumud* through an appeal to fear versus an appeal to democratic entitlement. "[I]f you stand up to them [the old-guard] you will be punished: "…you will not receive water, or electricity, you will be over, you're through…" This, in the explanation, of one woman, elicited dread of falling back into the conditions experienced before piping had been introduced at the end of military rule. In other words, access to basic services in a precarious situation was a carrot and stick strategy that the leadership, prior to the rebellion, relied upon to maintain power.

What emerged from the accounts of those who supported the 1989 revolution was that the leaders of the town had administered water and other services through a system ofpersonal agreements that council members reached with their constituents. This was a form of governance that developed informally as a result of having been dispossessed from customary rights to water and from water as a social basis for production and reproduction. It was also a system in which residents were subject to arbitrary forms of punishment both from their own leaders, as well as from Jewish authorities. Such methods recalled the punitive measures associated with military rule and, as we shall see in the following chapter, resonated with contemporary punitive measures associated with the process of privatization of water provisioning. However, in the mid-1980s, when Ibrahim returned to the town, this form of leadership was under stress as it had been within Arab Israeli society more generally for quite some time.

By the time Ibrahim took his position as Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer, residents had lost faith in their Council's role as protector of the community and in its ability to secure adequate infrastructure for the town. After all, it had been twenty years since the end of military rule, and the town still lacked paved roads, electricity, health clinics, and a hiring hall for the powerful trade union organization, Histadrut, which was the largest employer, and pathway to employment in Israel until the 1980s. Until then, "we had suffered in silence," afraid to stand up, asserted Latifeh, a mother of two who had insisted on remaining part of the group despite her husbands disapproval. "What changed things?" I asked Her. Latifeh explained that having the support of the religious establishment in the town gave residents the courage to criticize the old methods of rule. "It was not all at once….The new camp was not haughty and self-confident like the old leaders….They wanted to work with the old Council. They did not want to disrupt things and make family strife between relatives. They sought to negotiate with the existing Council. But the Council's intransigence left them no choice but to revolt." Indeed, one of the women in the literacy group had once told me that "[t]hey [the religious group] came to the….Mayor and said 'listen, all the people around you are your friends and they are tired and old….We ask that you let two young ones enter the council. You will still have five seats left." Rather than consider their suggestions, however, the incumbent council members dismissed the concerns of the religious bloc as the concerns of "children" and admonished them for having the nerve tell the established political bloc what to do. The implied insult in labeling the religious bloc "children" was that they were ignorant of what was needed to deal with Zionist

bureaucracy with which the council had so much experience. The alienation of the religious block who, as we might expect, ranged in age and in experience, proved to be unwise. It sparked a rebellion. "…[T]hey [the religious group] left angry and said we will make a revolution….if you don't want us as friends, you will receive us as enemies."

The religious leaders who were well-connected to the ordinary everyday happenings and needs of the people of the town promptly began searching for someone who would be able to run against the established candidate. However, everyone they tried to recruit was afraid of reprisal. Finally, they found someone who hesitantly, under pressure from the community, agreed to run. This person was Marwan Aboud who was the Mayor when I arrived and remained in that position until his defeat during the 2013 elections. According to Ibrahim the religious group began their efforts to persuade him to run by inviting him to a meeting designed to introduce him to the idea. However, like everyone else they had tried to persuade, he was afraid. His father served as Director of Education on the existing Council. So he said to the group "what are you guys crazy? I'm going to revolt against my dad?" For him to run, in other words, amounted to a revolt against an entire system of authority on which everyone depended. In Ibrahim's telling of the story, Marwan left the meeting trembling, overtaken by fear. The only way to get out of the situation respectably, but to still run, was for the group as a whole to "twist his arm."

However, because of the fear within the community, the religious group with the support of a good number of the "younger generation," conducted what residents referred to as an "underground" campaign that won support without advertising, without posters, and even without announcing the candidacy. The whole campaign, one woman recalled, occurred through word-of-mouth networks and meetings. After an initial win by a small margin, people began to believe there was a chance for Marwan to win the Mayoral race. Thus, when a second election was held because the incumbent leadership had contested his the first election results in court, the incumbent mayor lost by a huge margin. From the perspective of those who supported the rebellion, this moment forced onto the table new ways of thinking and practicing their relations with each other, with Zionist authorities, and with water piping infrastructure. The rebellion drew on the NGO and political organizing activities in the larger Arab Israeli society by expressing aspirations for improved services in terms of a discourse of entitlement and citizenship rather than in terms of communalism and patronage.

Thus, it happened that in the 1989 local elections in the town, the Mukhtar's family, that had held all the council positions for the entire 20 years since the first council was appointed, experienced its first defeat. The incumbent Mayor lost out to Marwan Aboud, a candidate from the so-called "younger generation." The Mukhtar's family members had, up until then, run as members of the Labor-Zionist Party. The younger candidate was affiliated with with Meretz, which is a Jewish social democratic political party.

This was the period when Mohammad, began to pursue his interest in finding out about the community's history. He knew the stories that his parents and grandparents had told him about how the community came to the area where they are now located. However, he wanted to verify some these stories. In his effort to do so, he made use of new "peaceful and neighborly" relations with the territories to search for historical documents and books in libraries and universities in Ramallah and to speak to scholars there. This was when he was

exposed to the writings of the "new historians" whose historical discoveries were a source of much controversy at the time.[89] He began to see the history of his community as a way to shed light on contemporary questions about the community's right to the land on which they lived, to manage their water resources, and to frame analyses of the community's ability to govern itself and its resources in a way that did not define their rights in terms of service to the Jewish nation or to Zionist authorities. This period is when he realized the role that history could play in making visible the contemporary and historical role of the community in the region in order to reinforce their entitlement to water resources and their right to exist.

The association that Tareq's history had made between al-Nakba and the dislocation of the community and its dispossession from the wetlands simultaneously connected the aspirations for entitlement and citizenship that were symbolized by access to state provided running water, to the struggle against erasure. Although the history of the town, like the town itself, had not been destroyed, the effect of the standard narrative about the town was to erase Kafr al Bahar's long-standing connection to the area, its imprint on the waterscape, and the responsibility such a heritage placed on the central government to provide basic services given the way that Kafr al Bahar's historic lands were, despite the efforts to prove the foreignness of Kafr al Bahar's forbearers, essentially confiscated by the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency in the face of protests from indigenous inhabitants. Just as Arab tourist attractions in the Galilee became a destination for Jewish citizens seeking a non-threatening, apolitical way to transcend the borders that had been so divisive during the previous era, Kafr al Bahar became a tourist destination. Tareq initiated this process with his historical tours of the area in which he subtly hinted at the community's dispossession from the swamps and the havoc it had wreaked on the community's economic well-being.

He also brought his historical lens to bear on his work with Noor and others who were particularly engaged in developing youth-centered community organizations. He adopted the phrase "proud Ghawarna" as a rejection of the pejorative use of the term to refer to inferior swamp dwellers, separate from the rest of Palestinian society. The community organizations that he and other supporters of the new leadership participated in, moreover, soon reached out to connect with similar groups in nearby Arab towns such as Furedis. The new kinds of interconnections and community work going on in Kafr al Bahar, thus, reflected both what was going on the larger Arab Israeli society, as well as the community's particular history of dispossession from the wetlands. Developing water infrastructure and provisioning of basic services through what appeared, at the time, to be more democratic channels that framed access to water resources in terms of entitlement convinced residents of the possibility entailed in the alternative understandings of *sumud* that Tareq's historical narrative conveyed. Moreover, it was part of the larger effort to resist transfer and erasure.

From the perspective of water infrastructure, Ibrahim's sense of hopefulness and his successes in "modernizing" the community through infrastructure during this period seemed to emerge from the larger political climate and was enabled, in part, by new narratives that challenged formulas of erasure and trivialization of Kafr al Bahar's past as well as by the wave of alternative map making that had arisen with the struggle for recognition among unrecognized villages. Ibrahim, too, produced a new Master Plan for the town. Mohammad's history, in its own way, justified the sorts of Master Plans and infrastructure development

schemes that Ibrahim and others put forward at this time. Both the maps and the alternative historical narrative sought to make visible the community's existence and intention to remain in place and to reject attempts at erasing and/or shrinking their spatial and historical existence. As mentioned earlier, the new Council, with Ibrahim as head municipal engineer, was able to bring electricity, paved roads, a small health clinic, as well as to bring water lines directly into homes, and to introduce a shuttle in order to take Kafr al Bahar teenagers to high school outside the town. Prior to this period, parents often did not allow their daughters to attend highs school outside of the town. The Council with the new Mayor at its head, thus, appeared to be able to bring the town some of the opportunities that Israeli modernization promised and that had, up until then, been inaccessible to most of the residents.

Infrastructure politics, thus, transcended the struggle for liberal rights embedded in notions of "coexistence" and peace through friendly economic relations. Access to water infrastructure involved the view that, given al-Nakba (the Catastrophe/ dispossession) and the recent period of military rule, that had forced communities such as Kafr al Bahar into constricted areas and dispossessed them of their livelihoods, the state owed it to Arab Israeli communities to provide them with basic services, especially water infrastructure. Thus, basic infrastructure politics during this period and its ability to be interpreted in terms of *sumud* had to do with the fact that it tapped into feelings that struggles around infrastructure and civil rights were simultaneously struggles to halt ongoing dispossession and erasure. They were understood as the continuation of struggles to remain in place. Steadfastly remaining in place now became a question of access to water as urban livelihood. At the same time, it reflected the strategic focus of new forms of *sumud* in its focus on mundane, and seemingly apolitical matters of human welfare, that did not speak directly to land confiscation, dispossession, violence, apartheid, or occupation as it had in the 1970s.

By 1999 it was clear that the Oslo Accords were falling apart and that the Israeli business community saw little advantage to continuing negotiations. Settlement construction continued apace even during the Accords. Judaization in the Galilee and the ongoing constriction and limits on access to infrastructure in Arab communities persisted. As Joel Beinin points out, by 1999, there was scarcely a contingous territorial basis on which a theoretical Palestinian state could exercise its sovereign powers. Beinin explains that the lead negotiators had hoped that rather than establishing "a relationship of coexistence with the Palestinians on the basis of equality of status," they could resolve the conflict through "…enhanced capital investment, access to regional markets and expanded opportunities for profit." He goes on to point out, however, that

> …continuing Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, land confiscations and the construction of bypass roads have undermined the economic promise of a "New Middle East." The boundaries of potential Palestinian Bantustans are now clearly visible.

By the outbreak of the second Intifada (2000-2005) coexistence and "Peace and Privatization" and the limited openings they provided for change closed with a resounding finality. The peace movement had unraveled along with the Oslo Accords.

## Conclusion

The argument of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, I have argued that *sumud* has continuously undergone redefinition in relation to the pressures placed on Arab Israeli citizens by Judaization methods and that because *sumud* entails resistance to dispossession, it always involves mobilizing the past and reworking it to speak to and resist Judaization in the present and to envision the future. In Kafr al Bahar, such history is powerfully shaped by the community's historical relationship to water resources in the area. As we shall see in the following chapter, moreover, the various political camps in the town mobilized the town's water history in conflictual ways in order to make sense of and devise strategies to deal with the contemporary water crisis.

Secondly, I have tried to show that Judaization emerged as a way to contain class conflict associated with the contradictions of Israeli capitalist development and periodic crises linked to Israeli integration into the global economy. Methods of Judaization developed on the frontier, and their expression throughout Israel has, to some degree, allowed Israel to internalize the benefits associated with capitalist development and externalize its costs onto Arab Israeli citizens.

As we have seen, during the period of military rule, *sumud* strategies emerged as a way to survive and exist, under existential threat. It was framed by emergency conditions imposed by military rule and by the War of 1948. This is when the sort of history and meaning of Kafr al Bahar's experience of racialized dispossession that Munir conveyed emerged. In addition to cantonization and confiscation of Arab land, Judaization policies attempted to attend, minimally, to questions of basic welfare as it became increasingly clear that mass transfer of Arab Israelis that remained inside Israel was impossible. This is when new Arab local councils were established and limited infrastructure was introduced into Arab communities.

In the period following military rule, however, and in the context of the development of Judaization as a concerted strategy of land confiscation, a new generation that had grown up inside Israel began to openly challenge the version of *sumud* that belonged to their elders. Out of this struggle came a more overt form of *sumud* that explicitly raised the question of dispossession from land and entailed demonstration in the streets. This form of *sumud* culminated in the Land Day demonstration that took place in 1976.

By the 1980s, renewed Judaization efforts developed that were designed, in part, to offset the depredations wreaked on middle class European Jewish citizens by the recession of the 1980s and Israel's process of opening up to the global economy. In the process, land laws that had been formulated in the 1960s came into full-force. These laws criminalized a host of existing Arab communities, Arab associations, and protest in the so-called "Arab sector." In response to the criminalization of such activity, *sumud* strategies came to focus upon the question of basic services, particularly access to water infrastructure. It gave rise to a generation of grassroots activism, Arab NGO activity, and the development of independent Arab Israeli political parties such as al Balad and the Islamic Movement. The difficulties that critical planners and Arab Israeli municipal engineers faced in their attempts to get their voices heard, despite their efforts to comply with the letter of the law, came to be understood as a form of erasure. Out of these struggles a new form of *sumud* developed that

focused specifically on "pressing needs," particularly water infrastructure and tied these struggles to the question of erasure, recognition, and to attempts to redefine what it meant to be part of an Israeli public.

These ongoing shifts in Arab Israeli political strategy and thought came belatedly to Kafr al Bahar during a period of "opening up," represented by the notion of "Peace and Privatization" and culminating in the Oslo Accords. It seemed for a brief moment that there was reason to hope that the rigid delineation of territorial and national boundaries that Judaization entailed and reinforced would eventually relax. In Kafr al Bahar, the younger generation adopted a form of *sumud* that spoke the language of civil rights and entitlement associated with Israeli liberal democracy. At the same time, it drew on the community's specific history of dispossession in relation to water resources in order to denaturalize dominant notions about the community's foreign and "inferior swamp origins," and about its legacy of cooperation with the Zionists. Instead, it redefined this history to illuminate Kafr al Bahar's forbearers' active role in producing the waterscape and the rights to public services, basic resources such as water infrastructure, and inclusion in the notion of the public that this history imparted.

I have situated the conflictual dynamic that shapes both *sumud*, and Judaization in relation to periods of economic and geopolitical transformation as a way to frame the history of the present water crisis that I began this dissertation with and to which I return in the following chapter. In the chapter that follows, I connect it to chapter two through understanding of the historical-geographical context provided by chapters 3 and 4. Thus, I discuss how the political divides that became visible during the 1989 rebellion reappeared in new form in the context of the water crisis and the way that this history fed into the 2013 defeat of Mayor Marwan and the legacy he represented. In my view, at the heart of these tensions is a process of reformulation of the notion of *sumud* in relation to the new conditions created by the privatization of water provisioning and the ongoing process of neoliberal capitalist development in Israel. As we shall see in the following chapter, with the erosion of the public sector, the political lines of division that formed in 1989 have developed offshoots and complexities. Indeed, using water and the notion of public and public goods as a venue for democratic critique and as a platform to demand distributional justice has become more difficult as the discourse of individual responsiblity has increasingly been deployed to impose fiscal restraints on indebted communities such as Kafr al Bahar. In the process, residents' faith in the strategy of *sumud* that appeals to a public minded ethic as a basis for struggling for distributional justice in the realm of water and water infrastructure, and democratic critique that the 1989 generation espoused, has been undermined. This has led to a split within the 1989 generation and has catalyzed a new struggle over how to interpret the communities historical relationship to water, and thus how to define *sumud* in the present moment of water debt crisis.

## Chapter 5: The water crisis and its place in the 2013 local elections

When I arrived in Kafr al Bahar in Spring 2012, water shutoffs were no longer happening every day. By that time they were happening periodically for 6 to 12 hours at a time. On such occasions, some residents told me, they resorted to bathing their children in the sea. As mentioned earlier, there was no running water in the high school where the majority of community events took place. During cutoffs, teachers would open windows to air out the stench. During the weekly english lessons I sat in on at the high school, the dry sandy afternoon winds blew garbage from the trash bins across the floor while birds flew in circles, bumping their heads on the ceiling, trying to escape, and leaving blood marks on the ceiling the process. Students did what they could to organize and sweep the floor before they sat down. Shaking their heads disapprovingly they would blame everyone from the Mayor, to the water company, to themselves for the mess. It appeared to them to be a step backwards in terms of the improvements that the community had been able to achieve during the 1980s and 1990s. I learned from Ibrahim's secretary that there had been a spike in visits to the clinic for gastro-intestinal ailments that people suspected was due to the cutoffs. They feared that the clinic, which was already limited in its capacity to treat serious infections, would no longer be able to treat the sick, which were mostly children, because there was no water to clean the clinic itself. Indeed, everyone I encountered during periodic cutoffs were searching for ways to grasp the crisis and were engaged in a process of repositioning themselves in relation to the reconfiguration of political forces and alignments that was happening in the town as a result of the water crisis, and the fiscal crisis more generally.

This chapter brings the background we now have about the interrelations between the restructuring of the water sector, building compression/Judaization, and histories of resistance to dispossession the complex social and political dynamics through which local leaders and ordinary residents of Kafr al Bahar have struggled to respond and to grapple with the water crisis produced by the convergence of state-planning restrictions with new forms of fiscal discipline embedded in water sector restructuring. Doing so provides insight into new forms of organization and understanding in relation to water resources. Such understandings partially challenge the terms of the contemporary debate over efficient water management in Israel and the profligate "nature" of Arab political culture when it comes to resource management.

Rather than seeing the 2013 elections in Kafr al Bahar as retrograde, or as a sort of confirmation of the static and hermetically sealed Arab political culture, I want to interpret the tensions that emerged in Kafr al Bahar during the elections as part of the contradictory way that residents engaged with the institutions and practices associated with neoliberal water provisioning. The significance of histories of dispossession that I laid out in chapter three, in giving shape and force to the local tensions become apparent in the process of my interpretation of the elections. The tensions that emerged are central to the way that Arab Israeli citizens are negotiating their identities, redefining *sumud*, and mobilizing social memories in the context of wider economic and political changes in Israel at the national scale.

In Kafr al Bahar the elections resulted in the return to power of the conservative mayor who was associated with the less liberal, more traditional elder generation that had been appointed by Zionist authorities to lead the Council in the 1960s. At first glance, the

conservative election results appeared to fit perfectly with the analysis of the mainstream press and of policy professionals and scholars. A closer look, however, reveals that Kafr al Bahar's election results were actually provoked by ostensibly apolitical, and technically innovative water reforms. This chapter is meant to demonstrate these connections. Through close attention to local political dynamics, as well as to everyday practices and understandings, this chapter draws out the connections between Kafr al Bahar's local politics and what else is going on in Israel today.

**<u>Structure of the chapter</u>**:

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 begins with a section that lays out the water crisis and its role in intensifying already existing political tensions within the community that first burst onto the political scene during the 1989 rebellion. This overview is followed by a section that situates local support for the more traditional candidate within the context of the growing popularity of the Islamic Movement that has renovated a kind of independent Arab political organizing in response to austerity measures.

Part 2 focuses on the place of ordinary residents in shaping the trajectory of local politics, despite the strong influence of family affiliation. That is, it attempts to reveal some of the new forms of understanding among ordinary residents of Kafr al Bahar. Such shifts in ordinary residents understanding of their water related activities in the context of water crisis, just as with the shifting rhetoric of the political candidates, are central to a process in which *sumud* is getting redefined in relation to contemporary conditions in the town that have been produced by the confluence of water sector restructuring with technologies of nationalism and settler colonialism manifest in regulations that restrict planning, building, and mobility for Arab Israeli citizens. Yet, such restrictive regulations are simultaneoulsy responses to economic shifts. As we have seen, for example, many of Israel's Judaization policies that were originally devised and put to the test on the frontier and that later shaped such policies elsewhere in Israel, not only served to construct national borders and assert sovereignty, they also functioned as moderators of class conflict as Israel opened up to the global economy.

At the same time, I try to demonstrate the way that new understandings are also influenced by the larger political shifts within Arab Israeli society particularly with respect to the rise of the Islamic Movement and its emphasis on organizing autonomously across difference in order to create a social service network for Israeli Arab citizens in the context of state abandonment. As we shall see, these fledgling understandings have, to some degree, been able to provide a moral framework that has brought together community members in a sense of justice about their existing piping arrangements under new conditions.

The first section of part 2 focuses on the forms of organization around water pipes and water debt that are now giving rise to alternative understandings of responsibility and water indebtedness. In this section I describe the actions of one extended family in terms of their strategies to support one another through makeshift piping connections not sanctioned by the State, and to sustain access to the water grid in the context of rising water prices and water debt. Mayor Marwan was vocal in his criticism of such arrangements and, over time, his characterization of the community's misplaced priorities in relation to water payments, created an increasing distance between him and the people of the town. Recognizing the way

that this disjuncture influenced the outcome of local elections gives weight to the role that critical understandings of ordinary residents play in the political life of the town and in relation to the larger political and economic issues with which the Council was grappling.

I follow this discussion up in the second section of part 2 with and illustration of the way that these fledgling understandings of existing water piping and debt sharing arrangements are connected to historical understandings of the community's relationship and dispossession from water resources. I do this by reference to an account that several residents gave of the historcial and contemporary significance of the renovation of the town well in the face of water cutoffs. In other words, the historical accounts that Munir and Tareq narrated were signficant not only because local leaders were able to mobilize such historical-geographies in order to galvanize their people or because such histories provided redress for the way that the community's active historical role in shaping the waterscape had been erased by official narratives, and hence had undermined both the community's contemporary claims to the area as well as its demands to expand its land reserves. The local historical accounts were also important because of the ways they provided a kind of collective legitimation for residents practical water-related activities. The emergence of these historical justifications in the context of the contemporary water crisis, illustrated the way that residents have, within the limits of spatial compression and local government restructuring, intervened as an active, if contradictory and fragmented force in the elections and in formulating moral and practical responses to the water crisis.

As a whole, this chapter is intended to rethink standard explanations for the victory of the more traditional candidate during the 2013 elections. It deepens our understanding of why and how politics in Kafr al Bahar took the turn they did in 2013 and, in the process, it refuses to accept the framing that sees the structure of Arab local government, and the seemingly unilateral influence of Arab leaders over their clan, as an anathema to "western-style" individualistic democratic politics and deliberation (see, for example, Halabi, Y. 2014). It seeks to demonstrate that Rami's victory was not simply the result of pre-modern clan-based authoritarian forms of governance. It was also shaped by the popular understandings among ordinary residents that were developing in order to grapple with the water crisis. These new understanding, at the very least, questioned the prevailing assumptions about the causes of water debt crisis in Arab communities that Mayor Marwan seemed to hold. Such understandings, moreover, were informed by earlier understandings of *sumud* that had evolved in relation to water infrastructure understood as a basis for holding onto one's land, and resisting erasure. Yet, these fledgling understandings were now getting reworked in order to grapple with the contemporary conditions.

**PART 1: The role of the water crisis in shaping local politics**

**1. <u>The Water Crisis, the rise and fall of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign, & Mayor Marwan's fall from grace</u>**

In September of 2011 the National Water Company began imposing periodic water cutoffs in Kafr al Bahar as punishment for its water debt. These cutoffs lasted several weeks at a time. The water debt had risen to 5 million [17,516,202.49 USD], and then to 8 million shekels [28,025,923.98 USD] and residents' debt to the municipality reached 50 million shekels [175,162,024.87 USD]. Water cutoffs were occurring regularly for 10 to 11 hours a

day, despite government regulations stipulating that water could only be cutoff for a maximum of 6 hours a day. Thus, in October 2011, a political offshoot of the 1989 generation known as the Popular Committee, which I describe below, organized the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign in order to protest the cutoffs, and to call the Mayor to account for what it saw as his collaboration with the National Water Company in coordinating the cutoffs. Within the community, the Campaign organized a series of demonstrations that began at the town mosque that was located near the middle of the town, and wound east down Kafr al Bahar's main road that stretched east towards the hills and the coastal highway and west towards the sea, ending up at Mayor Marwan's house. During one demonstration against the cutoffs people likened Mayor Marwan and his relationship to the Israeli state to the relationship between the Egyptian secret police and President Mubarak, who, at the time had recently been ousted. Nadim told reporters "the residents are fighting for their survival. We've become accustomed to life without water....We want to place it on the public agenda" (Nadim quoted in Hovel 2011). In addition, the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign launched a media battle in order to shed a public light on what Campaign members referred to as the violation of Kafr al Bahar residents' human and civil rights. In doing so, the Campaign chose to use the phrase "collective punishment" to refer to the cutoffs. Other groups within the town soon began using the the phrase as well. It alluded to Israeli practices under military rule that limited employment, mobility, and threatened violence for even the slightest violation of military curfews. It also alluded to contemporary demolition, partition/segregation, and settlement practices inside Israel's 1948 borders as well as in the West Bank and Gaza. In other words, the Campaign sought to connect its demands for running water, government grants for water infrastructure upgrades, and a water debt relief, to demands for inclusion founded on notions of civil rights to which 1948 Arab Israeli citizens are entitled. At the same time, it sought to frame the cutoffs in terms of the historical and contemporary injustices of Israeli policies and strategies towards Palestinians as a group.

As a result of the Campaign, the Ministry of the Interior agreed to do a re-accounting of the debt. Auditors found that Mekorot had been charging the council 50% more than what it owed. The debt was cut in half. In addition, after several days of debate in the Parliament (Knesset), the Ministry recommended that the National Water Company give Kafr al Bahar's council three months to comply with a recovery/efficiency plan that included raising taxes and stepping up tax collection. In return, the Ministry would cover some of the council's debts. I later found out from Nadim, however, that this plan deteriorated soon after it was devised because "the Municipality thought they had 3 or 4 months to organize in order to comply with the payment plan. It turned out that they were expected to comply immediately." Mayor Marwan's son, who residents distrusted because of who his father was, gave a surprisingly direct and simple explanation for the municipality's "failure to live up to the plan." He said: "People have no money. We're the poorest community in Israel....We tried joining a local water authority but none would accept us. I told Mekorot [the National Water Company] I'll pay them on the first of the month, but they wouldn't wait.....I'll pay Mekorot soon, but that's instead of paying workers' salaries" (Arad 2011).

When it became clear that the council was not going to be able to meet the conditions laid out by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry fired the eleven council members, and retained the Mayor as a figurehead who, in reality, had no power. In place of th fired Council members, the Ministry appointed an emergency management team to take

over the responsibilities of the elected officials including the Mayor. This notorious event marked my introduction to the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar. In fact, there was no way that the town could have complied with the demands of the Ministry of the Interior. Under conditions in which many of the employed and working-age members of the community lived - on the outskirts of town, outside the residentially zoned areas, living in homes with temporary and makeshift piping connections - raising tax collection rates was impossible.

The recovery plan seemed to residents to be the only success the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign had achieved. With the emergency takeover of the Council, the Campaign quickly unravelled. The takeover seemed to indicate the futility of the Campaign's strategy of using water as a venue through which to organize popular democratic protest and to demand access to public goods to which individual citizens held civil rights. After all, the primary motivator for gaining wider support, the Campaign insisted, would be a public commitment to collective welfare, the public good, and liberal democracy, a commitment that transcended individual self-interest. This is why it fought so hard to bring the attention of the cutoffs to the public eye. In other words, the Campaign sought to appropriate the values of liberal democracy and use them in a way that would hold the Interior Ministry and the National Water Company (Mekorot) accountable for their violation of the State's own values and mandates. Yet, the technocratic and naturalized way that the water reforms further bureacratized, de-historicized, and individualized water provisioning, made it more difficult to use civil rights to public goods as a venue for democratic critique and organizing for racial and redistributive justice.

Although the Campaign was successful with regard to its critique of the Mayor's inaction vis-a-vis the water cutoffs, they were unsuccessful in their attempts to revive the liberal notions of water as a civil right essential for the public good. Although all could agree that the community needed to fight to get what they were entitled to; namely, ongoing access to running water, piped through nationally provided, upgraded infrastructure understood as a sort of compensation that the government owed the community given the community's history of dispossession, its displacement to the coast, and the support it had provided for the Zionist Project that had transformed the waterscape of the area into one in which Kafr al Bahar's residents had become entirely dependent upon wages to survive. There was less agreement, however, about whether struggle on behalf of the public good, within the liberal framework of the state, was useful given the fact that in the new era of water restructuring all notions of liberty and rights were associated with private individuals' economic liberties.

The Campaign's approach, however, drew on liberal elements that had emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. The Campaign attempted to turn the professed liberal values and concepts of Israeli leaders (e.g. equality, national identity, progress, etc.) in on themselves, to contest them, and to transform them. Part of this effort entailed calling upon the larger Israeli public to demonstrate solidarity with the people of Kafr al Bahar. The Campaign wanted to spark outrage among the public at the lack of commitment by the National Water Company (Mekorot) and the Interior Ministry to safeguarding access to water understood as an integral civil right, a right that ought to be guaranteed to all citizens in any liberal democracy that also considered itself to be an economically developed OECD country. The Campaign's logic relied on a belief in a public, and a notion of public goods that would push policy beyond consideration of individual benefit or cost of accessing and using water to a consideration of social goals agreed upon by society as a whole.

However, once the recovery plan failed, and the Ministry instituted an emergency takeover of the Council, the Campaign's concerted defense of the notion that water must remain a public good appeared ineffective. The new water discourse demanded a new response to cuttoffs on the part of the residents of Kafr al Bahar, one that, as we shall see, entailed building more autonomous channels for protecting water as a social and collective good, if not a public one. This political climate, in which local government and Arab culture were getting blamed for problems that stemmed from unemployment, discriminatory planning, and disinvestment, after all, made it easier to deflect responsibility from the question of public investment and public goods and to justify intervention in the name of "encouraging" prudent individual behavior.

As we shall see, Rami the rival of the incumbant Mayor, was able to respond to these economic shifts and exploit this contradiction between the Campaign's approach and the reality the community faced vis-a-vis water.

Most residents of Kafr al Bahar had no sympathy for the fired council members. They suspected that the council members, and their allies did not even pay their own household water bills, even though they were members of the political/ civil servant class that, unlike most of Kafr al Bahar's, had relatively secure jobs. Despite their distrust of the Council, their frustration and distrust of the Ministry appointed officials who took their place and that only came to the town a few times a month for meetings, ran even deeper.

I only learned of this campaign after it had petered out. It was Nadim's mother and brother who introduced me to the relationship of the Campaign to the political lines of division in the town. "My son knows all kinds of people..." his mother told me one evening after the Ramadan meal. "He never forgets a face," she continued, "he darts about here and there, but he always comes back to help our village. But now he has opponents who claim that the reason the Campaign ended was because of his flitting about, getting distracted from the issues in our town." Nadim's elder brother who had come over to enjoy good-natured conversation after the meal in the makeshift courtyard that, as mentioned earlier, attracted many visitors, perked up his ears. He was a builder and described himself as "humble" in comparison to his brother Nadim who he referred to as visionary. He was clearly proud of his brother's work. He, thus, jumped in to clarify his mother's remarks. He explained that his brother had spearheaded a Campaign that intended to bring the consciousness of the issue of water cutoffs to the larger Israeli public, and to spark deliberation about the issue on a national scale. He was proud to point out that Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign had galvanized debate on the Parliament (Knesset) floor. Nadim's sophistication, according to his family, allowed him to interact with a wide variety of people, and his training in public policy gave him a framework as well as methods to gain support in the larger society, both Jewish and Arab, for the struggles with which Kafr al Bahar residents were engaged. Despite his sophistication, however, it appeared that the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign, had ended in disappointment and this disappointment, I discovered, had something to do with the rise to power of Marwan Aboud's rival, Rami and the splintering divisions that characterized the elections.

I soon realized that the only way to grasp the 2013 elections was through an understanding of where the Campaign fit into the political differences and the tension to

which Nadim's mother had alluded. I began to try to decipher the political position of the Campaigners in relation to the legacy of the 1989 generation on the one hand, and the legacy of the traditional ruling bloc that were descended from the Mukhtar's familial sphere of influence on the other. As it turned out, the 2013 elections were not the first time since the 1989 rebellion that the traditional political camp had tried to regain its dominant position on the local Council. Beginning in 2003, this traditional political bloc had selected a new candidate to run against the incumbent Mayor Marwan. The new candidate's name was Rami Aboud. He was the grandson of the first head of Kafr al Bahar's council who, by the time of his loss to Marwan Aboud in 1989, had become deeply unpopular among residents. Rami, however, had transformed, adapted, and extended the conservative stance associated with his grandfather to fit with changing conditions. Like the organizers of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign, Rami was was vehemently critical of Mayor Marwan's seeming embrace of neoliberal water policies that he argued had led to the water cutoffs. However, he also exploited the seeming failure of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign's appeal to a what he represented as a futile faith in the liberal notion of public goods, and of the public in order to undermine the work that the Popular Committee was doing. After all, the significant support that the Popular Committee was able to garner as it mobilized against water cutoffs represented a new political force in the community. The Popular Committee's work threatened to destabilize the familiar balance of power between the Marwan Aboud of the 1989 generation, and Rami Aboud of the traditionalists.

The Popular Committee

The Popular Committee, explained Nadim's brother on the same Ramadan evening that I first learned about the Campaign, was a movement that sought to keep alive the true legacy of the 1989 generation which in the account by Nadim's brother had increasingly lost touch with the people who had once enthusiastically rallied behind it. Despite the infrastructural projects that Mayor Marwan had initiated during his first terms as head of the Council which spanned three consecutive terms (1989-2001), it seemed to many that by the early 2000s he had become increasingly like those he had set out to defeat in 1989 - censuring innovation, and diminished by petty interests. "He started to treat people like he's above them, and disrespect them. He was looking out only for his own pleasure. He would travel a lot. Leaving our town in crisis…" Nadim's brother told me. In the eyes of many residents, Mayor Marwan had settled into an old-fashioned governing style that involved running the council along purely self-serving lines, placing friends and family in council positions, often ones who had been part of the pre-1989 Council with whom residents were so unhappy. Thus, by the 2003 elections, Rami, the grandson of the Mayor that had been appointed by the Interior Ministry in 1965, and who was associated with the Mukhtar's legacy was able, in the words, of Nadim's father, "…to return the throne to the old family." Yet, as indicated above and as we shall see in greater detail below, Rami was a different kind of leader than his grandfather. For one thing, he was a respected Imam in the town. "You have to understand," Nadim's brother said, "many of us here are devout, and he is a Sheikh in a mosque, he was also a teacher in a school. His name was Rami like his grandfather but he wasn't the same. Because of his position in the community he had a connection to the people. He arrived at all the funerals, all the weddings. He would officiate marriage agreements. From the power of his position, he was the people's man. Everybody knew him. He had the liking and the support of the people. He served from 2003 to 2008."
The members of the women's group, who had been part of organizing the Campaign and

whom I soon discovered were members of the Popular Committee, however, referred to both of the candidates as "the two sharks." Suheir, a vocal artist from Kafr al Bahar, who I had met through the women's groups that I attended in the town, worked in the ice cream shop at the mall, a five-minute drive to the north along the coast from Kafr al Bahar. There, away from the eyes and ears of the townspeople, she spoke freely and passionately about the local election candidates and political dynamics. "For 5 years the people suffered from his [Mayor Marwan's] selfishiness," she exclaimed as she scooped ice cream ice cream for customers. It was Fall 2013. She spoke about her support for Nadim who, for the first time, was running as a candidate in the local elections. He was running as the Popular Committee's candidate. She explained that the Popular Committee had formed in 2007 as a local independent party affiliated with the national al Balad party.[90] Indeed, it is common for Arab Israeli local government candidates to run under what are known as "independent lists," or local parties affiliated with national parties. The reason is because often such lists represented local coalitions that were able to tailor their platforms to local rather national-scale concerns. Moreover, Arab national parties were largely excluded from national scale governing coalitions within the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset).

The Popular Committee was affiliated with al-Balad (the National Democratic Assembly) which calls for Israel to become "a state for all its citizens" – Arabs and Jews - rather than a Jewish State with a mandate to serve both Jewish citizens and the world Jewry alone. The exiled national al-Balad leader, Azmi Bishara is a Christian Arab from Nazareth who characterizes his politics as humanistic, democratic, liberal, and neo-nasserite.[91] This affiliation indicated that Kafr al Bahar's Popular Committee, belonged to the liberal democratic politics of the 1989 generation even though it was critical of the leadership represented by Marwan Aboud. As an underdog, however, its leaders contrasted their own aspirations and politics with Mayor Marwan's, insisting that the Popular Committee represented the true values of the 1989 generation. Recall that al-Balad belonged to the era of "flowering" of Arab civil society, of the generational rebellion that called for Arab citizens to transcend local divides and organize as a national minority within the confines of the Israeli state, all of which were part of the process of redefining *sumud* to respond to new pressures and to fit with new circumstances. Such political aspirations that emerged with the coming of age of a new generation, came out of the experience of Land Day and its aftermath, rather than in relation to the War of 1948 alone.

Suheir was part of this splinter group that had organized the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign. The Popular Committee consolidated much of its platform through the process of organizing around the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign which sought to unite residents around the issue of water cutoffs, and to frame such cutoffs as violations of civil and human rights, and as instances of collective punishment akin to the sorts of punishment imposed by Israeli officials during the period of military rule. The Committee's immediate goal for the 2013 elections was to break the rule of "the two sharks." Beyond that it sought to bring Mayor Marwan's leadership strategies and the projects he supported closer to what Committee members saw as the progressive, democratic legacy of the 1989 generation.

The immediate elections, however, are what consumed Suheir's thoughts on this particular day. To make her point about the inadequacy of both leaders, she went into great detail about Kafr al Bahar's recent election history. She told me that her and other members of the Popular Committee were fed up with the existing candidates. "We decided we don't

want to look for a savior. The main goal is to break the rule of the two sharks." Suheir could foresee Mayor Marwan's defeat that, in her words, was related to the fact that "… he is not respectful. He doesn't treat people nicely. When people go to his office he swings his back to them and gets distracted on the computer. The people are protesting and want a change." In other words, he was no longer in touch with his popular base and the issues they faced. I pressed further trying to figure out what the changes were that the people wanted and how it was connected to the issue of anger against the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign that Nadim's mother had described. "You're entire experience in Kafr al Bahar, with the women's group; it's all connected to our work – the work of the Popular Committee, and our struggle to change and push Mayor Marwan in the right direction. He started many projects in the 1990s. For example, he brought a shuttle to our town in order to transport high school students to school since there was no high school here. He helped bring paved roads to the town. This was what we wanted him to continue doing. But it didn't last." She was referring to the gains made by the 1989 generation described in the previous chapter. She suggested that I meet her after work at a nearby café where she could spend some time laying out for me the continuity of the work of the Popular Committee with the 1989 generation's work, as well as to explain how the Committee was now, by her account, moving beyond the 1989 generation. She preferred to meet me outside the town, near her work away from the scrutiny of town residents.

As soon as we sat down at the café she began to explain the activities of the Popular Committee in a way that seemed to me to be a defense of the Committee's criticism of Mayor Marwan, the candidate who they had once supported. Suheir grew more and more animated as we spoke.

> After we brought him back to power in 2008, we had a lot of hopes for him. We thought that after seven years (2001-2008) of being out of office, he would be better. We believed he had done a soul search and came back to himself. But it wasn't so. After six months he started to taint people. And he wanted to take control of everything by himself to fix up his financial situation. Everybody knew about it… He always had a coalition crisis…
>
> During his last term even members of his own camp protested against him. They didn't allow him to pass the budget. But this time Mayor Marwan had stronger connections to central government ministers. So the Ministry of the Interior had two hearings over why the council couldn't pass a budget, and they audited our accounts. Probably they consulted with him and as a result the Minister of the Interior fired the council members but they left him as head. He was no longer technically the head but he was still the head in our eyes. But technically the Ministry appointed him to a different position as head of a committee that would restructure our debt. But for residents, in their minds, he was still head of the Council. The Ministry said they did not fire him completely because from their perspective they probably thought '….the stubbornness of the Arab culture, and the resistance to these kind of committees,' and the fact that usually the head of this kind of an appointed committee is a head from outside the village and they believed that would cause a lot of anger. So they said to themselves that in order to minimize the anger and absorb it, we won't fire him. So he started being head of the appointed committee. But to us it seemed that

> he was simply cooperating with authorities to put us on debt restructuring plans that would raise our taxes and punish us more for our water debt.
>
> We, the Popular Committee members, constantly criticized him. But we still cooperated and we worked with him to advance projects in the town. But we began being more and more vocal about our discontent. With the Popular Committee we began pushing him to support our efforts to develop the community in a positive way….We had goals. We wanted to improve, first we wanted to protest – to take the village out of this situation, to fight and to struggle and if there's violence, to empower women, to start women's groups, to establish a leadership program for youth and a lot of things. And a lot of us would vote for Balad,….So our activism was focused on our community, but it was also connected to society more generally. But our demands didn't fit with Mayor Marwan. He didn't like that there was opposition outside of the picture – it didn't fit for either one of the politicians – so he and Rami (the rival candidate) would disturb our process. But we were strong…we said let's do it like this: let's convince young people that they'll run with the us and then at least we'll have some representation on the Council– one or two seats perhaps. Because we said we can't break the 2 sharks, let's start slowly from inside, we'll beat one of them – whoever will be defeated, we will be the opposition against the one that stayed.

The date of the election was close at hand, however, and despite Suheir's hopeful attitude, the urgency in her words stemmed from the fact that the Popular Committee's strategy seemed to be backfiring. The whole community was whirling from the threats and confusion that the party candidates were stirring up during the no-holds-barred campaign that I discuss in subsequent sections and that revolved around the key issue of water security.

What Suheir feared the most, she told me, was that the women's literacy group that the Popular Committee had worked so hard to build, would be dismantled if Mayor Marwan's rival won the elections. Throwing her hands in the air and frowning, Suheir declared that she would move to Milan if Nadim did not win the elections. She would, in other words, abandon the town for which so many of the women who had participated in Popular Committee activities (including the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign, and the women's groups) had declared their love and committment, despite the town's troubled history and the hardships they endured by making the decision to remain in the town and to participate in community activities. In fact, the women who participated in the community programs that had developed with the support of the Popular Committee, of which many of them were a part, often faced severe ostracism and suffering because of their insistence on participating in these activities. For example, Latifeh, another woman I got to know through the literacy classes, had lost her son and husband because of her resolve to be part the group. Her husband had left Latifeh with their 13-year old daughter and taken their 14-year old son to live elsewhere in the town. Despite her suffering, she insisted that her decision to join the women's group was worth-it. This enduring commitment, that was feuled the desires of the women who participated in the programs to improve conditions in the town as a whole for everyone regardless of political divides, gave Suheir's threat of abandonment a resounding significance. Suheir quickly added, as if to excuse and explain her threat of abandonment, "...we are not dark, dim-witted, backwards people from Sudan….we are from here….We need political institutions that disseminate truth and advance education, that

unite us in the name of overcoming superstition and violence." With this assertion, she seemed to me to be criticizing both candidates: Mayor Marwan for not living up to the progressive ideals of the 1989 generation, and Rami for standing in the way of what she saw as the progressive potential at the heart of the 1989 generation's program. At the same time, she appeared to be judging local political dynamics, at least at that moment of exasperation, by the same standard of good and bad as those who represented such dynamics as opposed to modernity. The candidates, from this perspective, were blameworthy because of the way their actions fed into national narratives about Kafr al Bahar's foreigness and retrogressive culture. As elections came closer, however, Rami began to adopt, within limits, some of the more "cosmopolitan" and liberal attitudes of his predeccesor. We discuss the significance of this transformation in subsequent sections in its relation to the growing popularity of the Islamic Movement and the way it fused liberal ideals with the imperative for an Islamic revival, and self-determination. As we shall see, the conditions Mayor Marwan faced that made it nearly impossible to adequately respond to widespread criticism by his constituents, together with the way that Rami had updated his platform undermined the Popular Committee's chances at destabilizing the balance of power.

Mayor Marwan & his legacy (the 1989 generation)

In 1989, Mayor Marwan had come to power on a liberal platform that in his own eyes at least, was captured by a humanist stance. He summed up his version of the 1989 legacy by contrasting himself with his rival Rami. In Gideon Levy's article for Ha'aretz covering the 2008 local elections, for example, Mayor Marwan explains that Rami "...is a religious man, an anti-humanist, who hates Jews. What has he done? Destroyed, destroyed, destroyed. I am distinguished from him in that I am a member of a Zionist party. I'm not a Zionist, but I'm a member of a party that respects my nationality." Marwan was a member of the Meretz Party, a liberal social-democratic party. That is, Marwan presented himself as originator of progressive reforms that, as described in the previous chapter, centered around modernization and infrastructure projects. He spoke the language of civil rights and demanded inclusion in Israel's liberal democracy in keeping with the civil rights discourse that had emerged in the 1980s within Arab Israeli civil society around the issue of access to basic services. He deployed the version of *sumud* that had developed two decades earlier as a unifying strategy among 1948 Arabs in the wake of military rule as described above. It represented an appropriation of the values of liberal egalitarianism in order to demand rights and entitlements even if it accepted the idea of a Jewish liberal democracy, and nation-state. It, nevertheless sought to influence the state by reference to Kafr al Bahar's local historical and geographical experience/ memory as described in the previous chapter.

The Mayor was certainly controversial from a personal standpoint. His political heroes included an eclectic mix: Charles de Gualle, Rudy Giulianni, Bashar al Assad, Tony Blair, and Bill Clinton. Yet, it is easy to criticize him in retrospect but it is also important to point out that one person cannot control the destiny of an entire town and to highlight the conditions and pressures that shaped some of his more contemptible, and seemingly callous actions and statement that increasingly detached him from the social aspirations of Kafr al Bahar residents and ultimately led to his defeat.

By the the early 2000s Marwan found himself facing mounting pressure as local government restructuring significantly cut central government subsidies to local

municipalities. In the face of such pressure, Marwan's relationship to his constituents became increasingly riddled with tension. Thus, in 2003, after nearly a decade and a half of consecutive wins, he lost to the new candidate – Rami. As the 2013 elections approached, Marwan found himself caught in a web of fiscal restraints, rising water tariff rates, further collapse of the property tax base, and the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign on the one hand and Rami's updated Islamist platform on the other.

Since the early 2000s the Central government had been devolving fiscal responsibility for basic services to local governments. From 2002 to 2004, for example, the Interior and Finance Ministries made sharp cuts in equalization participation grants to local authorities (Berner, Efrati, Gronau, & Rasin 2004; Carmeli 2008; Navon 2006; The Sikkuy Report 2003-2004; Shtrasler, 2004). Equalization grants are central government grants that help balance local authorities' budgets. Participation grants are grants provided by central government ministries to help cover mandated public services (e.g. welfare, education, firefighting). Among the cutbacks in Participation Grants was the new requirement that local authorities had to pay at least 25% of the welfare budget out of their own funds in order to receive welfare grants. The ability to match welfare grants at this rate was of course, dependent upon high rates of tariff collection.

At the same time as the cutbacks were taking place, water tariff rates were sharply increasing, and new legislation imposed by the Interior and Finance Ministries made local authorities increasingly responsible for coming up with their own sources of income. Administrative rules for managing service provisioning, meanwhile, was becoming ever more intricate and depersonalized. By the mid-2000s many municipalities were finding it necessary to reduce services and could not meet payments, especially of salaries of Council employees which in Kafr al Bahar provides incomes for 1/3 of the working population (Navon 2006).

Just at this moment in 2004, perhaps in reaction to the widespread fiscal distress that local authorities were experiencing, the Interior Ministry began to adopt the widespraed use of "convened committees" described earlier and that are sometimes referred to as emergency management teams. Such committees are charged with taking over control of expenditures, resources, and fiscal management in "distressed" mostly Arab municipalities. The recovery plans imposed by such committees are often conditional upon raising the rate of tax collection even more, which, as we saw in previous chapters, is a delicate issue in Arab communities given the history of dispossession, displacement, building restrictions, and the way this was intertwined with inadequate piping infrastructure. In fact, of the 31 committees that the Interior Ministry has appointed since 2004 to "support non-performing municipalities," 23 were in Arab communities (Beeri & Yaniv 2018).

As we saw, when the Ministry appointed an outside committee in Kafr al Bahar, officials believed that keeping Mayor Marwan as a figurehead would appease popular anger. However, it turned out to be his downfall. Mayor Marwan's work with the Interior Ministry forced him to hire a debt collection company. A 2011 Ha'aretz article entitled "Israeli Arab Village Left Without Water as Company Demands Payment" reported that the debt collection company that "his" auditing committee hired "foreclosed the debtors' bank accounts" and obtained "court-issued orders forbidding those who fail[ed] to pay their water bills from leaving the country." The Committee was empowered as well to "...seize their [debtors] cars and take other measures against them." This, evidently, was all initiated by the

Committee on which Mayor Marwan sat as head and which, as Suheir explained, the residents associated with his collusion with such "outside officials."

Although I arrived some months, after the peak of the water crisis, Mayor Marwan repeated to me the same lines he had told Ha'aretz reporters. "People are simply not paying up....The water bill isn't their top priority. They pay their electricity and cellphone bills, but not water." He went on to reiterate the exact line he had told Ha'aretz reporters during the height of the crisis: "My complaint isn't against Mekorot [the National Water Company]- it is like a milk supplier to a store. If the store owner fails to pay, they stop delivering the goods. People don't pay unless they are punished." Such a line seemed to be aimed at policy professionals' who incessantly repeated the same foruma - that individualizing payment would raise water tariff collection rates because no one could take advantage of water being provided as a collective good. However, as we saw in previous chapters, the issue of non-payment of taxes in Kafr al Bahar was not reducible to the "free rider problem" alone. It was, however, a way to exempt policy makers and the National Water Company (Mekorot) from responsibility for the cutoffs. Yet, this was a public face that the Mayor put on for reporters and for me. His position and his view was considerably more complex than the lines he publicly espoused.

Mayor Marwan revealed the contradictions of his position rarely, but there were indeed, several key moments, especially towards the end of his term in which I was able to glimpse his internal struggles. In these instances, he disclosed the frustration he felt at having to strike a balance between the imperatives of his constituents to continue to develop and improve service delivery, and to release his people from the suffocating stranglehold of Planning Authorities on the one hand, and the new more stringent central government requirements for approving local budgets and giving grants on the other. For example, in the wake of the Janitorial strike mentioned above, that had occurred before I arrived in the town, in which all of Kafr al Bahar's schools had been closed, he expressed, perhaps unintentionally, the multiple forces that were acting upon him and shaping his actions. First he complained about the difficulty of getting grants from the Interior Ministry. In an article reporting on the strike for Ha'aretz, Marwan portrayed the Ministry as parsimonious, and underscored the problem of tying grants to increased tax collection rates in a town where people could not afford the increased price of water or increased property taxes. The impersonal, close-fisted policies of the Interior Ministry, he complained, have "turned me into a begger and head debt collector and the residents are turning against me." Second he alluded to his vexation at the difficulty of getting the government co-sign for Kafr al Bahar's Council so that it could join a neighboring water company which, as mentioned in chapter two, would have allowed the town to receive grants that were now denied to it because of its failure to comply with the private water company law (Hovel 2011). Indeed, when water rates spiked, the central government had renegged on its promise to co-sign for the municipality so that Kafr al Bahar could join the regional water company in the nearby City of Hedera. Moreover, since 2005 credit lines that had once been available to local authorities were drying up as municipalities plunged deeper into economic crisis (Carmeli 2008). In the end, Mayor Marwan could not pay Council employees and service providers, many of whom were also the very people in his camp that eventually turned against him. It was for precisely, for example, that there had been a janitorial strike in 2011 that had forced the schools to close, and left children without care, roaming th streets, and that came, unfortunately for

Mayor Marwan, on the heals of a periodic water cutoff. He explained that this situation led him to consider quitting.

The budgetary cutbacks imposed by the Interior Ministry and their repercussions, however, were only part of the problem. The other part of the problem had to do with long-standing discrimination in the realm of Central Government fiscal and administrative resource allocation.[92] Kafr al Bahar's isolated, yet central, seaside geographical location, in a relatively wealthy part of Israel intensified such discrimination by making the town ineligible to receive National Priority Area (NPA) funds reserved for poor communities. National Priority Areas receive enormous amounts of state resources because they were poor towns, mostly on the frontier or in areas planners sometimes refer to as the "periphery" that, more often than not, were intended to "absorb" new Jewish immigrants.[93] [94]

Mayor Marwan, it seemed, became the symbol and bearer of neoliberal fiscal discipline at the same time as tariff rates rose and unequal allocation of central government resources continued apace. "I've tried everything" he said to me one day towards the end of his term when I came with Noor to his office to discuss plans for the women's group. He was unlike himself. He did not speak in his habitual jeering tone. He gazed at me with peculiar significance.

> Look at our town….People say we are not from here so we never owned the land, they say we are lucky to be here and they don't understand why we cannot turn our town into a rental resort for tourists, or even a water park. It's not our fault. It's not the fault of the municipality....We need plans. But all our plans are stuck in the agencies. The problem of this country is that all the land, the beaches, all of it is owned by the state. How can we fund tourism on such limited land, and with limited residential property revenue? It is the municipal responsibility to upkeep this area, but we don't even have control over most of the area. It is the right of the Interior Ministry to approve plans and award us grants, the Tourist Agency, the Agriculture Ministry, the manager of the Israel Lands Administration, the Environmental Agency, and the Archeological Agency – they all could support our plans to develop this area, but our plans are stuck in those agencies because they all want to keep it the way it is. The problem is that the offices always throw the ball to one another. The intention is not to fix any mistake or approve plans, it is to deny us the chance to develop our town. If Ein Halav [the neighboring Jewish town] would not have complained about our Master Plan for our town's development and expansion, claiming that it would bring down their property values, perhaps one of the agencies would've approved our plans, but so long as a Jewish town doesn't like our plans, that's that. Despite this, I am the one who gets blamed by the residents for all of it.

Indeed, the Ministry of Antiquities that oversees archeological excavation, had approved the neighboring town of Caesarea's efforts to exhume Roman era ruins in order to boost its tourist industry while refusing Kafr al Bahar's requests dig up ruins on public lands in order to develop its own tourist industry. As I knew from Ibrahim, the municipal civil engineer, the key justification that such agencies used to thwart Kafr al Bahar's tourist and industrial development initiatives, was the town's inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure. Without infrastructure, as mentioned earlier, all construction was illegal. This was the absurdity that swirled around Kafr al Bahar's institutional nightmare.

**2. The rise of Rami, the people's candidate**

The Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign seemed to channel residents frustration about the water cutoffs towards Mayor Marwan and his collusion with the National Water Company (Mekorot). However, I later discovered that although Mayor Marwan had indeed made many mistakes, support among residents for Rami also had to do with the way that Rami had managed to re-shape his family's legacy in order to bring it closer to the values of the 1989 generation.

Rami, "the other shark," was not the same tired old candidate of his grandfather's generation. He had renovated his grandfather's model of governance and version of *sumud* that had centered on the desire to preserve Kafr al Bahar's local heritage, and to hold onto the area of land on which the town now sat. He did this by integrating the values that his grandfather stood for with the values produced by the generational rebellion of the 1980s on the one hand. On the other hand, his association with Islamic Movement, as we shall see, reflected the contemporary spirit of autonomy, independence, and solidarity among Arab Israelis inside Israel that was emerging out of neoliberal reforms such as those in the water sector. This stood in contrast to al-Balad that Nazareth based journalist Jonathan Cook explained was, the party of "...elites, intellectuals, middle classes." In fact, the Rami was, in some ways, able to merge the two aspirations of the two parties and, in doing so, mirrored similar processes throughout the Galilee where the Islamic Movement had chosen to sit out local elections and throw its support behind Balad. This, in Cook's view, would be a powerful new alliance that would likely produce a tectonic shift in Arab local politics.

During Rami's grandfather's time the sense of cultural preservation had been associated with a more dependent and particularized form of *sumud* than that of the 1989 generation. This form of *sumud* involved safeguarding the survival and the distinctness of individual Arab communities. Certainly Rami's supporters emphasized the particularity of their attachment to the area, and to their heritage in the Sea and in the Wetlands. However, Rami, himself, rejected the patronage relations and dependence on Zionist authorities and the Zionist political parties of his grandfather's generation.

Rami, as mentioned earlier, was a well-respected religious leader in the town. Like al-Balad, the Islamic Movement with which he was affiliated, had emerged as an independent Arab political party in the late 1970s during the period of opening up of Arab civil society and the flourishing of independent Arab political parties described in the previous chapter. He was, in other words, conspicuously not affiliated with a Zionist political party or with a group that depended upon Israeli authorities for patronage as his grandfather had been. He even taunted Mayor Marwan for his membership in the social-democratic Meretz party that was also a Jewish political party. Moreover, the values that the Islamic Movement espoused were far from parochial. As we shall see, it sought to unite Arabs in Israel across difference, even welcoming Arab Christians. In fact, according to University of Haifa based sociologist Nohad Ali, the decision of the Northern Islamic Movement to drop out of Party politics all together, even at the municipal level, stemmed from the desire to avoid getting wrapped up in what the leader of the Northern faction of the Islamic Movement referred to as sectarian politics that would undermine its efforts to gain widespread support among Arab Israelis throughout Israel. Instead the movement sought to build popular organizations and

institutions, independent of the state. In the words of the leader of the Northern faction: "We have only lost by participating in municipal elections." Instead, what the leaders of the Movement have said, according to Nohad Ali, is that they are interested in building a society "able to stand on its own two feet" (Ali 2015).[95]

Nevertheless, local candidates continue to affiliate and identify themselves with the Islamic Movement during local elections, even when running under independent lists. Thus, in order to understand Rami's appeal in relation to water provisioning, and his rejection of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign's efforts to call the central government to account for its failure to guarantee access to water as a civil and human right, we have to look at what the Islamic Movement stood for.

The Islamic Movement

Paradoxically, I first began to perceive and understand the surge in popular support for the Islamic Movement within Arab Israeli society while visiting the well-known Arab Christian City of Nazareth, the capital of the Galilees.[96] I had gone to visit Journalist and Nazareth resident Jonathan Cook in order for him to introduce me to the unrecognized villages in the vicinity that were prohibitted from laying permanent water piping infrastructure. He began, however, by explaining that although there are many pockets of small unrecognized villages in the Galilee, most of today's struggle over recognition and basic services is happening int the Negev. However, he underscored the fact that in Nazareth part of the reason for there being less unrecognized villages in the Galilee than there had been in the past, is that many of the residents from the surrounding villages had, over the years, moved into Nazareth, expanding the population considerably and turning its Christian majority into a minority. including those near Nazareth, the majority of the larger unrecognized villages today are in the Negev. These demographic shifts reflected Judaization policies in the Galilee, but they also brought with them some surprising alliances including the growing cross-sectarian support for the Islamic Movement despite Israeli authorities attempts to foment discord in Nazareth between Muslims and Christians.[97] In fact, during the 2013 elections Nazareth's Christian Mayor and member of the Israeli Communist Party who had served as head of Nazareth's Council for 36 years, was defeated by an opponent who ran as an independent, supported by local members of Balad as well as those affiliated with the Islamic Movement.

As we sat in the back corner of one of Nazareth's famous confectionary cafes, Jonathan Cook explained that the appeal of the Islamic Movement was not secterian, indeed, in his view, there was a growing sense that "...with the Islamic Movement that the people's power comes from the people….No longer are people content in getting the scraps from the table of the Jewish population…" It almost seemed contrived but the owner vehemently agreed adding that if the Northern Islamic Movement is willing to ally with al-Balad it would become even stronger in "a mass mobilization way, with the masses on its side." One of the draws of the Movement, Cook explained, was that it provided social services and welfare programs to address issues of immediate survival among Arab communities in a way that the Israeli State did not and even undermined. It was precisely al-Balad's alliance with the Islamic Movement that led to the defeat of Nazareth's long-time Mayor in 2013.

Shaykh Ra'id Salah, the leader of the Northern Islamic Movement, for his part, expressed such aspirations in a 2007 interview in the Journal of Palestine Studies:

> You may ask who are the beneficiaries of the services offered under the various programs. Some may think that services will be provided on a sectarian or partisan basis, but this assuredly will not be the case. Palestinian society encompasses a spectrum of religious and political beliefs, and if we want to live as part of our society, we cannot view it from a narrow perspective. Therefore, in providing services, we take into account that we are addressing the entire spectrum of our society. Earlier I mentioned our project of surveying al-waqf properties [land reserved for religious rituals and for the needy. This refers particularly to such property that was confiscated before and after 1948] and sacred sites that had been neglected and scattered; we surveyed not only mosques and Muslim cemeteries but also churches and Christian cemeteries in our efforts to preserve a heritage that had almost disappeared—not as a result of natural causes but from deliberate Israeli campaigns. One would need an entire interview to describe their methods to eliminate this religious, cultural, and historical legacy. I should also mention that we are about to inaugurate the first hospital in the town of Tamra, which will be open to all segments of Palestinian society, as will all our future private hospitals and schools. We also help university students, regardless of their religious or political affiliation, by offering scholarships, within our available resources, through our educational foundation, Iqra'.

Later in the interview, Salah goes on to emphasize the balance that the Movement strives for among the goals of carving out a space of autonomy for 1948 Arabs, filling in gaps where the Israeli state has failed to meet the immediate needs of Arab Israelis, for uniting and allying with Palestinians outside of Israel's 1948 borders and supporting a two-state solution, as well as working in cooperation, rather than against the framework of so-called "Western civilization" and "publics." For example, he strives to dispel the belief that he is an an Islamic extremist who does not accept Israel's existence and who is committed to religious ideals at the expense of supporting Palestinian secular national aspirations. With respect to the conditions faced by Arabs inside Israel's borders he asserts that he supports an Arab civic identity but that, "…we do not need to pledge allegiance to the State of Israel every Monday and Thursday, nor should we kiss the blue ID cards it gave us." He goes on to insist that "Our citizenship is a given, and we are law-abiding citizens," (quoted in Ali 2015).[98]
On the one hand he remarks,

> We said that we realize the reality we live in, but it is our right to preserve our identity, social values, the existence of our civil institutions, and the attempt to approach independent thinking and decision-making, and shoulder the burden of the Palestinian society within the 1948 borders. It is also our right to attempt to find solutions for our problems instead of just complaining about them. These are the general characteristics of the Islamic Movement.

On the other hand he emphasizes that:

> Our Islamic, Arab, and Palestinian values impel us to communicate on the basis of civilized dialogue carrying a message of love for human existence and a call for

> cooperation aimed at promoting lives of health and happiness for ordinary people and defending their collective and individual rights, as well as their just demands to protect their livelihood, religion, and heritage…We have no problems with the Western public, and we reject the notion of an inevitable clash of civilizations with the western world. Our values are clear: 'O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another.' This is the past, present, and future difference that leads to the existence of different peoples and concepts, but the Holy Qur'an emphasizes that despite these differences the foundation of this relationship is to "know one another," knowledge here being that which involves goodness and casts out evil. It is very clear that if there is environmental pollution in Um al-Fahm [the Arab town where Salah is from], it may also threaten London and Washington and so on. At present there are momentous issues that threaten the entire world, but they could also bring us together." (quoted in interview with Jamil Dakwar, 2006)

By affiliating himself with this movement Rami seemed to be transcending the particularistic, familial feuds, notions of bounded conceptions of cultural preservation, and, most of all, patronage relations that had gotten his grandfather ousted. His affiliation with the Islamic Movement resonated with a larger sense of cultural pride that allied Arab Israelis across difference. Yet, in Kafr al Bahar, as we might expect, the way that the influence of the Movement manifested, diverged considerably from the ideals expressed by its leaders. We shall get a sense of its locally inflected character shortly when we discuss the campaign tactics of the three candidates leading up to the 2013 elections and the role that the water crisis played in shaping the way that the candidates elaborated their political positions and sense of duty/ responsiblity towards their constituents. As we can already detect, however, the considerable appeal of Rami, stemmed not simply from clan-based loyalties, intimidation and retrograde political culture. It arose out of the coincidence of multiple forces and circumstances that included the rising sense of a need for autonomy that the Islamic Movement reflected. The other side of the coin was Mayor Marwan's enfeebled position with respect to his ability to uphold the program of the 1989 generation, as well as the community's sense of the impossibility of achieving welfare through demand for entitlements in the realm of the public and public goods such as water in the context of the water sector restructuring. These were the conditions that contributed to the way that the 2013 elections played out.

Thus, even though cutoffs ceased by early 2012, contentious debate over how best to secure access to basic services tore the community apart during the 2013 elections. All sides used basic services, and especially water to galvanize support. Nadim, who was running for the first time, sued several members of the local council who were allied with Rami Aboud for their failure to pay their own household water bills. As a local offshoot of the Islamic Movement, Rami Aboud's party presented itself as religiously virtuous, and righteous. Nadim's decision to sue local council members was an attempt to scandalize the entrenched political leaders by exposing them as unfit even to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. He explained to me that in order to make the pilgrimage to Mecca one must be cleansed of all debts, particularly a water debt, which literally is the medium through which cleansing occurs. If all had gone according to Nadim's plan, there would have been at least a small chance that such a tactic might have, at least in part, weakened the substantial authority on which Rami's platform relied. Nadim's plans and words, however, did not move people to

the degree he had hoped. His plans could not be carried out because they did not foresee Rami's actions which were shaped by newly emerging circumstances and popular sentiment that arose out of the new conditions associated with the convergence of new impersonal and stringent water laws with ongoing discrimination in the realm of planning, which this dissertation addresses.

Rami, for his part, repeated some of the familiar rhetoric he regularly used to discredit Marwan by associating him with Zionist projects such as the separation barrier between Beit Etzion and Kafr al Bahar that had been an issue during the previous election. At that time he had referred to Marwan as a Zionist and pointed to the separation barrier as evidence of Marwan's ineptitude in dealing with Israeli authorities. In Rami's opinion, all Marwan's work to accomodate Zionist political parties had ended in the separation barrier and all it showed was that Marwan had, Rami's words, come out "a sucker" (quoted in Levy 2008). This situation appeared to be repeating itself during the 2013 elections. This time, however, rather than a wall, the point of contention centered on water cutoffs, water debt, and the failed debt restructuring plan. Indeed, such an outcome was not only far from the 1989 generation's definition of *sumud*, understood as a struggle to demand access to basic services and to connect this struggle to entitlements as a sort of reparations for dispossession as well as a refusal to be erased. It was also counter to the elder generation's version of *sumud* in which staying in place had to do with diplomatic shrewdness of a traditional leader in negotiating favorable deals with Zionist officials. In other words, it was clear to most residents that Marwan was hopelessly compromised.

What emerged in the course of the election campaigns was that in the immediate run-up to the elections, Rami's camp succeeded not solely on the basis of the public rhetoric of the leaders of the Islamic Movement. The ability of Rami's camp to gain traction within the community, was also connected to the way that his campaign tactics drew on contemporary understandings of self-organized piping arrangements and water debt reshuffling in the community and fused it with his grandfather's model of *sumud* that had come out of crisis conditions such as the ones that Kafr al Bahar now faced in the realm of water. That is, although Rami's camp had indeed tried to represent itself as upholding the high-minded values of the Islamic Movement, including a notion about the duty of Arab Israeli society as a whole to step in to provide guarantees of material welfare where government guarantees were absent, he also mobilized memories of collective punishment in the realm of infrastructure that was prevalent under military rule.

Rami's affiliation with the Islamic Movement was already well-established, as was his role as a people's religious leader. This allowed him to place more emphasis on inflaming Kafr al Bahar's local collective political memory. He reverted to his grandfather's tactics, evoking fear associated with memories struggle to survive and to retain Kafr al Bahar's local culture in the face of increasingly militarized and securitized forms of segregation and separation. Just like his grandfather three decades earlier, he began making announcements during the campaign that "if you don't bring me back….you will not receive water, or electricity. It will mean you're done for, you're through." Rami Aboud disseminated his threatening message by sending text messages to residents' cell phones, "blowing them up" with notes about how if he was not elected, their water would, once again, be cut. As one might expect, given the context of cutoffs and the historical memories of military rule, the threat struck a raw nerve in the community.

Such tactics indirectly mobilized the alternative history and lived experience of the people of Kafr al Bahar that Munir the fisherman had elaborated. This historical memory placed special emphasis on the way that the Mukhtar had protected the community from the ravages of the war of 1948 by remaining peaceful, negotiating the displacement of his community, and offering the forebearers of present day residents as employees of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency. In the context of the cutoffs that had only recently ended, the municipal engineer's failed neighborhood building project, the demise of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign and the restructuring plan that resulted from it, the notion that the State could revive arbitrary punishment at any time through interruptions in basic services, housing demolitions, or by taking control of the municipal budget and debt collection via appointing committees from outside the town, cast a shadow over the elections.

Rami’s messages reverberated powerfully throughout the community, especially among the elderly residents who, as we have seen, often relied entirely on their children for their survival. For example, in my conversations with the Abdel, the eldest town resident, which always took place in his small, dark house in the center of town, that had been built shortly after the community was moved to the shoreline, there was a sense that, despite its problems, the protective leadership of the Mukhtar's family was still better than the alternative in an otherwise hostile and violent environment. Rami, in Abdel's view, was the only one capable of protecting the community from the possibility of violent and arbitrary punishment. Indeed, Abdel often punctuated our conversations with the confession that, confined as he was within his home, conscious of his growing physical frailty and need for rest, and with no wages, he felt especially vulnerable when cutoffs occurred. The text messages that Rami sent out purposely sought to conjure traumatic memories that drew parallels between present day cutoffs and past periods of violent transition. What came across in my discussion with Abdel was the deep resonance of the past in the present, and the way that Rami Aboud was able to use the meanings this past held for residents in relation to basic services and survival, to help him win the elections. At least for the time being, Rami's messages served to discredit both the liberal discourse of the Popular Committee that was, nevertheless shaped by the community’s specific historical and geographical attachments, as well as Marwan Aboud's discourse about individualized payment, that appeared to recapitulate an ahistorical technocratic neoliberal framework with respect to water.

At the same time, support for Rami also came from his refusal to speak against informal piping connections in the way that Mayor Marwan had done, or to represent debt as a sign of religious immorality as Nadim had done. Instead he drew on the ideals of the Islamic Movement to refer to the existing piping arrangements as morally justified and he connected the debt issues directly to the need to expand Kafr al Bahar's living area. Of course, all candidates agreed that expanding the land area of the town was key to the contemporary debt issues that the community was facing. However, during their campaigns they did not draw out these connections explicitly. Unlike Marwan, Rami condemned the national parks and the surrounding Jewish towns for opposing the community's right to remain in place and for thwarting its "legitimate and fair demands" to expand its borders. Marwan, on the other hand, refused to refer to the separation barrier between Kafr al Bahar and Beit Etzion as "the racist barrier" even though the majority of residents insisted on calling it a "racist barrier." Rami, on the other hand, validated residents' feelings by telling

reporters that dealing with administrative authorities in order to try to expand the space of the town was like "screaming inside a river – nobody hears you."

In the end, when it was clear that Rami would win the elections, Marwan and Rami banded together to use water security as a way to thwart the chances of Nadim's Popular Committee to make any headway during the elections. They continued to rely on cell phone tactics to do this. For example, one night during an Arabic women's literacy class that I attended, the students began incessantly checking their phones. The class was soon in an uproar. Marwan had announced via cellphone a few days before that he was dropping out of the elections. However, the message the women had just received had announced that "due to pressure I have decided to re-enter the elections and run." He did this several more times before the end of the Campaign. "It's driving us all crazy!" one of the women exclaimed. "He tells us 'because of what I've done, I have served the people, given myself, brought water pipes, installed sewer lines, paved roads.... come be with me, return to my circle…." This is his way, the woman asserted, of "awakening the emotions of his camp, and those in his family circle." It was also a way of ensuring that Nadim's Popular Committee appeal to public goods and civil rights as a basis for demanding water would appear idealistic and removed from actual conditions in which none of those basic services were actually guaranteed as rights, but were dependent upon the will and whims of elected leaders and the Zionist bureaucracy. On the eve of the elections, Marwan dropped out once again, but re-entered the race on the day of the elections.

Aside from trying to undermine the Popular Committee, and those outside the sphere of influence of the two major leaders in the town, Nadim believed that Marwan's strategy was to send the mesage that "if you don't want me I will make a mess."
Thus, beyond inciting fear associated with periods of crisis, such cell-phone tactics sought to frustrate the efforts of the Popular Committee to concentrate their criticism on Rami alone. As the election drew closer, the tension in the town was palpable. Some residents even suggested that I stay away for few days to avoid getting caught in the crossfire.

On the day of the elections, even those in Marwan's family circle turned against him. They threw their weight behind Rami. It was altogether unclear whether this was the preconceived plan devised by the two candidates and their close advisors from the very beginning, or whether it represented a true defeat for Marwan. Rami reportedly stood outside poll locations reminding people, that, unlike Marwan's corrupted leadership, he had made real improvements. He emphasized, for example, that during his previous time in office he had successfully installed a new sewage system and a channel for rainwater. In other words, he reminded the people of his initiation of jobs and projects – of infrastructure. Moreover, he did this while standing in the street and connecting to ordinary people. He was playing his part as "the people's man," as Marwan's counterpoint. In the end it appeared that the real loser in the elections was the Popular Committee and its efforts at using public deliberation in relation to national government policies as a way to achieve redistributive justice in the realm of water resources.

I met Suheir a few days after the election. I asked her how she felt. She shook her head dejectedly. "Just as I expected…The literacy classes and the women's group are done for." "What do you mean?" I asked. I was in shock. So much of my experience in the town had been shaped by the work of the Popular Committee that I found it hard to re-orient

myself to where I belonged in Kafr al Bahar's community life now that the main community programs that I had participated had been dismantled. "What about the women's group?" I asked. Suheir replied that Rami's camp was developing an "alternative women's group." This group, she told me, did not teach Arabic literacy classes. "So what is it that they do?" I asked. "They teach Zumba." Suheir shook her head disapprovingly. The problem, from her perspective, was that the Zumba classes were intended to replace the education and literacy classes. In Suheir's view, the new Mayor was bent on undermining the women and children's chances at furthering their education and improving their ability to negotiate independently within Israeli society. The new Council, she seemed to imply, had dismantled the women's group in order to ensure that such groups could not intervene in Rami's plans. He wanted all deals and access to modern infrastructure and basic services would be channelled through him and his allies.

The next day I went to visit Noor. She told me that it was Kafr al Bahar's annual women's day celebration in which there would be a Mother's Day Parade through the town that would end up at the town mosque. However, Noor and her comrades who had participated in the literacy group, peer support, and leadership groups had been dis-invited. Rami was staging a parade of virtuous women to the mosque to replace the rabble rousing activities of the women's group that had, according to his camp, gotten out of control under Marwan. Soon after Rami's victory Noor, who had been the most outspoken about her "love" for her town, got married and moved to her husband's town to the southeast. However, Latifeh, the women who had lost her son by participating in the group, insisted that even now, with the dismantling of the group she did not despair or regret her decision. She did, however, fear for the way the ruling party would reorganize and seek to control family behavior, and reinforce ideas about the place of women in society.

At first glance these developments in the aftermath of Rami's victory, do not appear to have to do with water politics or any issue beyond women, men and the family. It seems to me, however, that the Rami's efforts to "put women in their place" had little to do with the women's activities themselves and that his political camp derived little material benefit from the reorganization of women related programs and activities in the town. What these developments reveal, is the relevance of gendered understandings to political dynamics in the town, even to water politics. In order to make this point, I draw on Joan Scott's elaboration of the contributions that a gendered analysis can make to grasping political dynamics (1986 & 1988). Indeed Marwan's strategy vis-a-vis the Israeli national authorities appeared more and more feeble and ineffective, and as the Ministry increasingly began to intervene in council activities in order to impose water debt restructuring conditions, the sense that Marwan's power reflected an active, masculine force of change, capable of fighting for autonomy and development for Kafr al Bahar became susceptible to the implicit critique levied against him by Rami's camp. Rami's camp constructed their policy towards the women's group through gendered understandings. It incorporated ideas about protective paternalism inherited from his grandfather, at the same time as it demonstrated a sense of masculinity associated with independence and a less deferential relationship to state authorities. The new policies towards the women's group, in other words, legitimized the authority of Rami's camp by depicting his governing style, and policies as masculine. The dismantling of the women's group was, thus, an assertion of control and strength.

The relevance of this assertion of control and use of policy towards women as a way to consolidate his power, is in the way it implicitly validated a notion of self-reliance, and autonomy in the realm of water management. Indeed, unlike Marwan, Rami's camp did not blame residents or adhere the self-serving ideals of water experts that blamed the town for the water debt. At the same time, the way he employed gendered representations also allowed him to present himself as a masculine force of protection and independence, and to contrast such protectionism with both Marwan's management of the water crisis, as well as to criticize and contrast it with the failure of the state to provide welfare to vulnurable women, children, and the elderly. Yet by advancing such gendered understanding in order to reinforce power relationships in the town, Rami's camp undermined the possibility of building alliances with the Popular Committee and of working to build a more progressive politics that perhaps would have been possible given current sentiments in the town and in Arab Israeli society more generally.

I conclude this section by suggesting that the capacity of the more conservative candidate and his political allies to win the elections despite opposition from the Popular Committee had to do with the pressures on his rival, the limits of liberal discourse in the context of state abandonment and local government restructuring, as well by his camp's tactics that purposely evoked fear associated with the past, and drew on gendered categories in order to challenge the self-serving representations of Arab society by water professionals. All of these attributes of the more conservative leader's campaign, however, were bound together by the fact that, although he may have depicted his position as embodying values opposed to Western liberalism, he actually updated his grandfather's traditionalism by drawing on the moral and material resources from the Islamic Movement and fusing them with some of the ideals associated with Western liberalism. Doing so allowed him to transform the unpopular, and outdated leadership methods of his grandfather, to fit contemporary conditions and critical attitudes of the Kafr al Bahar community.

His victory did not indicate a return to the past so much as the contradictions of modern development. His platform represented an integration of several currents of thought about governance and leadership. These elements included a particular notion about the values associated with Islam, sentiments and values flowing from Kafr al Bahar's particular history of dispossession, and elements of Western liberalism such as the need to transcend divides and guarantee rights. The process through which the Rami constructed his position in relation to the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar sheds light on the way that he integrated these different streams of thought. In doing so, he reflected the actions and attitudes of ordinary residents, at least for a brief moment.

Certainly familial loyalties played a role in undermining the Popular Committee's chances at intervening in "the rule of the two sharks." Yet, Rami's victory also transcended familial loyalties. His position reflected both the tide of popular passions in the town, and the frustration that resulted from the capitulation of Mayor Marwan to Israeli neoliberal capitalism most glaringly in the way that he worked with Ministry officials to impose water cutoffs and to restructure Kafr al Bahar's water debt. We will delve into the way that such popular feeling influenced the election in the following sections.

## PART 2: The role of ordinary residents in shaping local politics

### 1. Makeshift piping arrangements in relation to collective strategies of debt management/distribution

As we saw in chapter 2, the more impersonal, beauracratized, and costly it has become to maintain access to water for Kafr al Bahar residents, the more the community has come to rely upon the highly personalized, inter-generational, collective strategies that have long sustained the community's access to the water grid and that have operated outside of the realm of state bureaucracy. In the contemporary moment, what we find is that such strategies have been reinforced by the congruence between deepening exclusions and discrimination against Arab citizens in Israel's planning sector and values of autonomy and self-deterimination embodied in the Islamic Movement that, of course, are inseparable from deepening exclusions. This, I believe, is part of the reason for Rami Aboud's return to favor during the 2013 elections. The return to seemingly backwards, "clan-based" politics and forms of collective autonomy around debt management in fact has been provoked by the increasingly precarious circumstances in which community finds themselves. Segregation, less mobility, and few economic opportunities have, once again, forced residents to rely now, more than ever, on familial bonds in order to survive and, in the process, new ways of understanding existing highly personal water networks, have emerged. Rami's Campaign spoke to these new understandings. In other words, Rami Amash's success was not simply the result of the direct pressure he exerted on his community in keeping with the cultural dispositions to which the community, as a whole, was supposedly prone. In fact, it seems to me that before the rumblings of the shifts that were to come manifested in local public politics, the water practices of ordinary residents had given rise to a diffuse and common sense philosophy that sought to grapple with water cutoffs and debt on both a meaningful and material level. Despite the undefined and vague quality of this burgeoning common sense, it was palpable in the everyday practices and understandings that were perceptible in the way that the community talked about and organized itself in the face of water cutoffs. Thus, Rami could not have achieved the success he did, I believe, if his campaign had not, in some way, been carried and shaped by this popular tide.

In the realm of water and water tariff payments in Kafr al Bahar, there remains, out of necessity, a more personalized collective system of in-kind credit. Pipes have become a key terrain through which the people of Kafr al Bahar manage their debt. Those who live and/or build in areas zoned for residential building have a sense of duty to their family members who cannot do so. It is often a generational question since elderly people may have lived in the central areas of the town or village for a long time. Grandparents let their children and grandchildren who have gotten squeezed out, connect to their legally connected, permanent piping systems. As we have seen, water tariff collection and payment becomes complicated as the question of legality, and employment figure into decisions about tariff collection and payment. In general, however, those who have access to legal pipes are instrumental in sharing their debt and piping connections with those who do not. Such collective management and connections to water pipes are a way of ensuring minimum levels of well-being for extended families and the community as a whole.

I came to understand such arrangements first-hand through Abdel and his children. Abdel was the oldest member of the town, born in 1922. Abdel had lived in the same stone

house since he was a boy. His home was constructed in 1924, when Abdel was two-years old. His house was centrally located in an extraordinarily densely packed area of the town. Abdel had a legal connection to the water grid. His home, after all, was part of the compensation that the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency had offered in exchange for the community's relocation to the coastal sandstone ridge where Kafr al Bahar now sits. When I arrived at his house, Abdel's children escorted me from the car to his living room. His house was clustered together with several of his children's homes. His children, however, had built their homes more recently. Although I could not see them, I was aware that his children's homes received their water supply through narrow plastic tubes that they attached to their father's water line. Ibrahim, the town engineer had, on many occasions, complained to me as well as to the national press that since 2008 he had been unable to receive funding or approval from the central government to lay new water pipes. Many of the newer homes, such as those of Abdel's children had avoided the first time connection fees and had circumvented the injunction against laying new pipes by connecting through their parents and grandparents homes. I was also aware, however, that it would be difficult to discuss such connections openly since they had been directly implicated in the town's debt crisis and cutoffs, and this was a source of both shame and punishment for residents.

Abdel sat, just as he did during all of my visits, wrapped in his blanket on his single bed in his dark living room. The question of piping was especially delicate for Abdel since he wanted to keep what little he had – the legal, well maintained home he lived in – as inheritance for his kids. He did not want to discuss anything that might be construed as political. He preferred to dwell on a vague and ideal past, and to discuss what he referred to as his "humble" (simple) heritage. He told me that even though there were no pipes when he was a boy, and only one pipe when he was a middle-aged adult, "things were happier before pipes." He explained that the people would gather in social groups along the water collection routes and around water sources. Grandchildren would sit with their grandmothers by the water wheel that was located on Crocodile River as they washed clothes. The grandmothers would pass on their heritage through stories about their past. Women would fill buckets from the artesian wells along the seashore and would walk home together, carrying buckets of water on their heads. Abdel missed the camaraderie that formed through these kinds of connections. As he spoke, his children listened intently, nodding their heads in agreement. "Now everyone just stays in their separate houses" Abdel said regretfully just as more family members entered to the room to listen.

Abdel's grandson who was also named Abdel, was sitting next to me. He leaned over to explain the seeming paradox of the constant stream of relatives coming through his grandfather's door, and the elder Abdel's internal sense that he was isolated and alone. "You see" said the younger Abdel, "my grandfather worked in agriculture, it was physical work." He had worked as a farm laborer in the Jewish fields adjacent to Kafr al Bahar. "That's why after his 'retirement,' it was hard for him to get used to the bedroom…to life without work, I mean." Yet, it seemed to me that the elder Abdel's regret arose not only from his retirement. Although the residents had been displaced and their flocks diminished by the time of Abdel's childhood, he still harbored memories of the way that the community had once been organized so as to provide water collectively even if by the 1960s, the water they collected came from spigots provided by the National water pipe that belonged to the Jewish nation. Although now all the homes were supposed to have running water, there was a sense of a loss of control over water in the way he explained his experience. It seemed to me, in

other words, that in his explanation, there was a longing for a time when community members had legitimate command over the resources – land, water – on which they depended.

As we continued the conversation, and his children joined in, it became clear that the family's method for ensuring access to the water grid was still a collective effort. The difference was that this effort was no longer legitimate in the eyes of the State. Moreover, the sense of enclosure and isolation associated with constrictive building regulations, in some ways, merged with Abdel's contemporary home experience. His stone house, which initially had felt more like prison than a safe haven to those who were dislocated by the British Mandate's land concession, had become increasingly oppressive for him as his aging body became less mobile. What came through in his words and the way he held himself tightly wrapped in blankets, it seemed to me, was a feeling of being trapped inside the four walls of his house. All of this intensified the sense of separation and siege that he revealed in the memories he shared. It seemed to me, that now in his old age, he was confronted more and more with a sense of loss of control not only over his own body/ mobility, but also a loss of the authority of the town to collectively manage their water to support their livelihood. In the elder Abdel's account, water pipes further deepened his isolation by taking away the opportunities for outdoor encounters along water collection routes. But the pipes themselves did not necessarily produce the sense of isolation. The sense of isolation he conveyed, it seemed to me, was produced by the fact that accessing pipes in the way that the family did, was considered illegal on the one hand, and deepened their water debt on the other, even if it also redistributed and pushed the debt into the future.

The relation of water pipes to building restrictions and the way this fed into the family's water debt, and their precarious living situation, in other words, came together in a way that reinforced Abdel's sense of isolation and, in effect, provoked a sense of dispossession/ loss of control that conjured memories of the town's original dislocation, and the difficult transition to urban and wage-based livelihoods that so many town residents pointed to as the reason for the community's present poverty.

Despite Abdel's apprehension about discussing contemporary conditions, his children's warmth and desire to know everything there was to know about their father and grandfather seemed to encourage him to open up. He finally revealed with a slightly embarrassed smile, "Look, I have no wages, no pension...I rely on my children for support." What emerged was that although Abdel no longer went outside or engaged in much physical activity, his children came to him and took care of him. It was a given that he would allow them to connect illegally to his household water pipes. It was not even a question of direct in-kind exchange. It was a question of duty and this arrangement was the collective means by which they met their essential human needs and ensured, to the best of their ability, basic welfare. In return the wage earners in the family paid off the water for everyone, including Abdel, when they could.

The municipal engineer who, as we have seen, played a reluctant but central role in such connection arrangements, had once described the situation as the young taking advantage of the elderly through pirated water pipes that connect to the homes of the elderly. As mentioned earlier, the engineer had complained that he could not in good conscience garnish the wages of the elderly since they no wages. Yet, my time with Abdel's

family revealed, that far from social relations based on narrowly defined exploitation/liablility of the old by the young, their relations were based on collective, personal strategies that redistributed the debt within the family and in time in the face of financial hardship and precarious conditions.

Although a number of Abdel's children worked, they could not afford the first time connection fees for pipes nor could they obtain permits to build nearby. Abed, one of Abdel's middle sons explained that first time connection fees cost 35 shekels per square meter. Thus, for even a small house of 100 square meters, an area that was significantly smaller than the family compounds that people tended to build in order to squeeze growing families into limited living spaces, one would have to pay 3500 NIS (900.54 USD). Because of the prohibitive cost of such infrastructure and the difficulty of obtaining permits to build without proper infrastructure, Abdel's children connected narrow plastic tubes that were 2" rather than 4 or 6" in diameter to their father's pipes. As a consequence, Abdel was severely in debt. His water meter registered extreme over-use. "...If we request it," his son explained, "our municipal engineer is obliged to send maintenance people to connect us to pipes whether or not they are legal. He cannot charge us for water. He can only charge my father, but he often decides not to charge him. We have to do it this way. There's no other choice. We help my father by paying a little bit of the debt here and there when we can."

He went on to briefly explain the pipes, and the way that the community managed to install them: "Our pipes are above the ground, meaning they are temporary and illegal, but the municipal engineer must connect us – we cannot live without water. He charges a fee for the connection, but not at the official rate required for the size of the house. Sure, there are houses that install their own connections but it is much better if the engineer does it." As a result, the elder Abdel's water debt was continually rising. However, as his children were well aware, when their father dies, they would inherit his legal pipes, along with his debts. There was no way out of the situation besides refusing the house and leaving the town. They would not think of abandoning the town or their father's memory. It was, in part, an obligation that they were willing to accept as part of their duty to their father, his memory, and the legacy of the town. Without the ability to pay off debts completeley, the question of water tariff payment became a question of how to organize piping arrangements in a way that would ensure all family members had access to water while also redistributing water tariff payment within the family, among generations, and over time so that they would be able to pay in instalments and hold off payment as long as possible. Ya'akuh's unwillingness to force Abdel to pay and to accept that he paid when he could, meant that as long as Abdel was alive, family members were protected from having to pay fines or have their wages garnished for lack of paying in a timely manner. In other words, Abdel's lack of wages, and the respect he elicited as the eldest member of the town allowed the family to push the debt into the future. Such arrangements also reflected a process in which the meaning of responsibility (personal, fiscal, social, and generational) was getting transformed in ways that, as we shall see in greater depth the following section, were feeding into local politics, and informing contemporary processes of restructuring of the Israeli water sector. There was nothing individual or personal about this sense of responsibility. It was entirely familial, collective, and social, something that behavioral economists had missed when determining what constituted rational and prudent behavior. Water management and the economic concerns associated with it, in other words, were deeply embedded in the social fabric and history of the community.

The illegitimacy of this arrangement in the eyes of the State meant the specter of punishment, in the form of water cutoffs or housing demolition, hung over the town. The other problem with such connections, besides their illegality, and the potential excuse they gave to the Interior Ministry to demolish such homes, was that because the tubes were narrower, the water pressure in them was extremely low. The most immediate danger resulting from low pressure, as the municipal engineer once explained, was that it was not powerful enough to put out fires. Despite these dangers, Abdel's children felt that it was up to the them – the family and the community - to help each other out in the absence of state guarantees/entitlements. Part of this mutual support included Abdel's permission to use his water line, and in return his children took care of their father's needs, as best they could. The municipal engineer made possible these sorts of relations in his refusal to calculate debits and credits in the way that the new water policy demanded; namely, to collect water tariffs from all who were, to the best of the engineer's knowledge connected to the water grid whether legally or illegally. After all, there were water meters that registered water use at the entrance of each house as well as at the entrance of the community. The municipal engineer, however, refused to collect for the total amount of water use in the town.

The immediate goal of these strategies was to maintain access to the water grid. However, in my view there was, embedded within these practices, an almost imperceptible form of communication that is generalized, if somewhat fragmented and indistinct. It indicates, as I have argued, a common sense sanctioning of collective, personalized arrangements, despite the way that they contradict the impersonal, individualized rules and regulations of the new water reforms.

In the following section I seek to highlight the fledgling justification for such arrangements. I do so by highlighting the way that the town water well took on new meaning as a source historical authority and confirmation of the community's ability to autonomously manage water resources in the contemporary context of "collective punishment" imposed by the National Water Company (Mekorot). In the process, it affirmed that contemporary piping arrangements in the town were not merely a sign of lack of personal responsibility or inability to respond to price signals that would encourage efficiency and environmental protection in the realm of water provisioning. When pipes stopped providing water, the well became an alternative, yet insufficient source of water. What emerged during my visits to the well was the way that those restoring the well understood their activity through the lens of the community's historical experience of dispossession and the ongoing character of such dispossession in the form of water cutoffs. Such an historical perspective imbued the well with a new significance that revealed a common sense justification for the kinds of collective, personalized strategies already in place for accessing water and implicitly challenged the irresponsibility of the public sector in a liberal democracy for not assuming taking its place as provider of basic services as a necessary precondition for social equality.

<u>The water well and Common sense</u>

I glimpsed the new forms of historical justification for contemporary piping arrangements when I accompanied the younger Abdel to the town well after the meeting with his grandfather. The younger Abdel was eager to show us the newly restored well that was located on the sea shore on the western edge of the town in the "the fishermen's village." As we walked westward toward the sea he explained that because water in Israel is

public property, a community's right to land does not translate into rights to water on the land and vice versa. As mentioned above, the well that was in "the fisherman's village," was, in fact, on land that did not belong to the town, it belonged to the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. In the past, even after the establishment of the state, and before pipes were connected to homes, the water from the well was, in Abdel's words, "the life of the village." Indeed, the National Water Company (Mekorot) provides 70% of water in Israel, and 30% is provided by communities with a historical right to pump (The National Water Authority). The National Water Authority had granted Kafr al Bahar a permit for pumping rights just as it had for all other communities that were deemed to have historical rights to pump. The town well was, thus, part of Kafr al Bahar's historical right even though the rights to the land were in question.

As we walked west from his grandfather's house to the seaside where the well was located, Abdel told me about the well's relationship to the community. Certainly piped water was a basic service to which residents felt they were entitled. However, the water resources that flowed through water pipes were bound to statecraft. They were tied to state-sponsored regimes of punishment, control, and discipline that, in effect, deepened and reinforced the community's sense of separation from the nation, understood as the Jewish nation. Water pipes, thus, constituted a key arena in which Arab Israeli citizens experienced a sense of exclusion from "the public." The well, by contrast, revealed the possibility of the community to manage water collectively and relatively independently of the State. It did not symbolize exclusion from "the Public," from decision-making processes, or from influence over legislation regarding water resource distribution. It served as proof of an alternative, yet efficient form of water management. In the eyes of the community members who spoke to me about the well, the high quality restoration, maintenance, and well-organized and resourceful use of the water of the well to supplement water during times of crisis, contradicted the widespread view that the water crisis in Kafr al Bahar was the result of an intrinsic deficiency within Arab political culture.

Abdel's face beamed as he described the restoration process on our walk to the well. The sense of pride that came through in Abdel's introduction to the well, it seemed to me, expressed precisely the significant place it held in relation to the contemporary water crisis, as well as with respect to the community's historical and geographical relationship to the area. Like the piping arrangements among generations and family members in Kafr al Bahar, social linkages that sustained the well, filled gaps where state support was absent. However, unlike the community's relationship to water pipes, its relationship to the water well could not be construed as an indication of the wastefulness, neglect, or apathy in the realm of water resource management.

As we continued our walk towards the well, Abdel concentrated intently on his discussion of the well, despite the sandy wind that was blowing in our faces. He told me that he felt it was unfortunate that many of the youth of his generation did not find the well all that interesting. "...But for my father and my grandfather," he explained, by contrast, " it is a friend from childhood. They would go out every day to the well to get water for drinking and other things…." He believed it was a mistake for Kafr al Bahar's youth not to appreciate the well. After all, he insisted, the well "…is also important for everyone! It reminds us of the period of lack, and the history of difficulty with access to water." The full meaning of this statement only became clear to me later, after we arrived at the well.

When we arrived Abdel directed us to a small wooden warehouse where the fishermen kept their supplies. The tall and imposing caretaker greeted us at the warehouse entrance on the west side of the shed. The caretaker led us through the dark, windowless room crowded with fishing nets, a worktable, and tools. Using a hankerchief to wipe the sweat from his bald head with one hand, he pulled the backdoor open with the other hand and ushered us into an L shaped yard that lined the south and east sides of the shed. He pointed out the small but thriving garden that he was cultivating in the yard using the water of the well. Then with a glowing smile he brought us to the steps of the stone well, which was covered with a protective tarp. He drew the well bucket up to the surface and instructed Abdel to bring cups from inside. He filled two large cups of water for us. "This water" he declared in his bass voice, "is the cleanest and purest water in the country." He insisted that we all take a large gulp in order to experience first-hand its high quality. To my horror, he even demanded that my 3-month old take a sip, maintaining that it had supported the entire community for generations. Then, with a solemn look on his face he noted that "[t]his well is all we have of our past, and it is how we survived during the early years of this town's existence." I then understood the meaning of the younger Abdel's remark that for the elder generation "the well was a friend from childhood and a reminder of the history of difficulty and lack."

Indeed, for those who had grown up before piped water connections but after the community had lost its rights to its historic lands, it became their source of survival, their "life," as Abdel had emphasized. The caretaker went on to underscore that, although the well does not produce nearly enough water to support the town's domestic water needs, it has, nevertheless served in recent years to supplement its water supply during periods of cutoff. At least, people who were in dire need such as those who could not afford to buy water from tankers or bottled water, could fill buckets at the well during emergencies. Abdel explained that because of this crisis, and because of the well restoration project that, incidentally began in 2001, the same year as the water corporation law passed, the well had emerged more often in everyday conversation than it had in the past. In the process the question of fair distribution of water had come into residents' consciousness more acutely. The sentiments of Abdel and the caretaker, who confessed that they had not joined the protests against water cutoffs, were nonetheless part of a larger popular current shaped by ordinary residents from across the political spectrum.

Later that evening we ate dinner at Munir the fisherman's newly established fish restaurant next door to the shed where the well was located. I wanted to know the age of the well. Neither Munir nor Abdel knew the exact age. They had searched for documentary evidence but, in the end, they were only able to come up with the orally transmitted stories from their grandparents. As mentioned in the chapter three, Tareq and other community figures had searched in vein for documentation that would prove the coherence of the al-Ghawarina as a social group that had been transferred from the foothills of the Carmel Mountain Range to the Mediterranean coast. The well was not documentation, but it was a concrete reminder that remained embedded in the landscape that proved the community's well-based rights. As we have seen, recognition of Kafr al Bahar's grandparents' place in waterscape production has become central to contemporary efforts to legitimize the right of the community to remain where they are, even in the face of accusations from their neighbors and from water professionals of inefficient management of water resources, and a squandering of the valuable real-estate on which the town is located. The well's very

existence served as proof of the active labor of the community, past and present, to produce the local waterscape in the absence of written documentation.

After my day at the well, I searched for secondary information about it in order to further understand its significance. Although, as indicated above, there is little written information about the al-Ghawarina, I remembered the legal historical account of the concession of Kafr al Bahar's land to the Palestine Jewish Colonization Agency that Tareq had shown me. The article by Forman and Kedar notes that the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 had turned well-based rights into a mark of legal right to the land (Forman and Kedar 2003). The existence of the well, in other words, did indeed serve as concrete legal evidence that Kafr al Bahar's forebearers had worked to bring the area under cultivation. This would have given them usufructory rights to the land under Ottoman law. Such rights under Ottoman landcodes which the British authorities claimed to be upholding, would have served as a basis through which to gain legal title to the land later on (Forman and Kedar 2003).

What emerged in the course of my visit to the well was that the water from the well provided both material and symbolic resources for contesting the dominant cultural understandings that had diminished and erased remnants of the community's active place in watescape production. This active place included a history of careful management of water. The well expressed the community's collective sense of belonging and a sign that they had been a coherent social group capable of prudent resource management. Indeed, residents contrasted the well-kept state of the well, which they could do themselves, with the leaky and divested state of the pipes. From the perspective of the well, in other words, the crumbling condition of the community's water infrastructure was not so much a sign of the community's deficiencies, but a sign of the Israeli state's deficiencies with regard to assuming responsibility for its historical production of such conditions.  The well's existence, and the sentiments it elicited among resident, moreover, attested to the continued importance of water history in the daily lives of residents. Such water history, as we have seen, continues to figure into contemporary water politics, particularly with respect to questions of responsibility and debt.

Such understandings perhaps reveal why support for the work of the Water for Kafr al Bahar Campaign under the banner of the Popular Committee with its demands for responsible government intervention in the name of the public, eventually began to dwindle in the face of new forms of intervention in the name of instilling personal responsibility among individual water consumers. Residents were exasperated with the perpetual and seemingly losing battle to force local planning agencies to assume responsibility for providing basic services on planning agency's own terms, and with their own procedures. Moreover, the other side of the coin was that this popular sensibility of the necessity of independent self-management at this moment of water restructuring, appeared to resonate more with the Islamic Movement's underlying principles, even if the way that these principles manifested in Kafr al Bahar differed in practice from the Islamic Movements rhetoric and its overarching ideology.

The illegal piping connections, understood in relation to the community's activities and understandings of the well makes visible the historically inflected moral framework underpinning the community's relations to water resources. This fledgling common sense

became the support on which Rami built his campaign. Though Rami's political camp sailed along with the current feeling about self-management associated with the Islamic Movement, it did not carry through, on a fundamental level, the alternative organizational possibilities contained within it because of the way both camps relied on provoking fear associated with water cutoffs that recalled the earlier era of *sumud* under emergency conditions. Another reason for the limits associated with Rami's campaign, as I suggested earlier was that in its efforts to subvert neoliberal representations of the wastefulness of the town in the realm of resource management, it relied upon the limits imposed by gendered structures and representations of masculinity and femininity.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have provided an alternative analysis to the conventional interpretation of the reasons for the victory of the conservative mayor during Kafr al Bahar's 2013 elections. I have developed this alternative interpretation by recounting what I see to be the key shapers (moments, practices, meanings) of the process through which the mayoral candidates, their constituents and the haphazard water provisioning systems in Kafr al Bahar were produced in relation to one another, and in relation to the wider-scale process of water sector restructuring.

In my view, the capacity of Marwan and then of Rami to do what they did as leaders, and for new ideas to arise that redefined *sumud* in relation to water politics, were not only the result of personal will or a relatively inert political culture, but were provoked and shaped by the significant pressures imposed by local government, particularly with respect to water sector restructuring that began in 2004. Such restructuring cut government subsidies to local government, and put responsibility for covering the increasing costs of basic services on municipalities. At the same time, Mayor Marwan's rise and fall was not separate from the actions and attitudes of his people, which were shifting in the context of new forms of fiscal responsibility placed on local governments and were, for their part, also shaped by collective memories of dispossession, and new values about the need for autonomous organizing for self-sufficiency across difference. That is, the limits and possibilities of the Marwan and Rami's leadership, intermingled with the direct actions, practices, and fledgling consciousness of ordinary residents that emerged most clearly in relation to restructuring in the realm of water policy.

The political dynamics and new understandings about existing water piping and debt sharing arrangements that I analyzed in this chapter are connected to one another and to wider scale political and economic shifts in Israel in three dialectical and mutually constitutive ways: The first is the way that the kind of internal political tensions we see in Kafr al Bahar are produced through their interconnections with national scale economic and water sector restructuring as it combines with limits on building and construction that often appear to be driven by nationalist imperatives alone. They are, in other words, part of a larger context in which *sumud* in its relation to "nature" politics figures in centrally and is key to understanding the way that neoliberal forms of capitalism are being produced in Israel today.

The second aspect is the role of ordinary Kafr al Bahar residents in shaping political dynamics in Kafr al Bahar. Their place in shaping politics is evident in the way that they have engaged with water provisioning and water tariff payments and, in the process, have partially penetrated the mainstream cultural meanings associated with these practices. Here I am drawing on the notion of "partial penetration" of structures that Paul Willis (1977) elaborates in his work entitled Learning to Labor. In it he explores the way that the critical insights that working class teenage "lads" in Britain have about their class position, and collective identity, are simultaneously limited by notions of masculinity and femininity through which they engage with class dynamics and understand manual and mental labor in gendered terms. The notion of "partial penetration," however, implies an approach to understanding class identity that sees ordinary people and their everyday practices as actively engaged in reproducing, and challenging existing structures, even if in partial ways that are limited by ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, and national-affiliation that limit the potential of such insights to catalyze a more progressive politics.

In Kafr al Bahar, the partial penetration of categories used to describe residents current practices with respect to water is perceptible in a reformulation of the naturalized notions of responsibility, debt, and efficiency, even if sometimes these understandings are limited by notions of masculinity and feminity and by notions of the nation. What is clear, however, is the way that these understandings are tied to the deeply held beliefs about the nation, dispossession, and public goods. Ordinary residents in Kafr al Bahar, in other words, are not mere byproducts of traditional authoritarian leaders and clan loyalties.

The third dimension of the situation that I shall sketch out in a provisional way in the conclusion, is that these reformulated notions and their limits have to be understood as part of a process in which Kafr al Bahar's social and political structures and the physical and technical infrastructure that underpins water provisioning are conditioning one another, and getting remade through each other. The complex web of interests, affiliations, that shape local political dynamics and their ties to sites and pressures beyond Kafr al Bahar's borders, are embedded in the physical shape of the town as exemplified in the partially finished new neighborhood just as this material shape and its consequences are central to local tensions, physical hardship caused by inadequate water infrastructure, and to the personal and political decisions this situation causes people to make. These are the preconditions that make up the material from which Kafr al Bahar residents can fashion their future and from which we can try to grasp the possibilities for where it is most likely is heading. Doing so entails rethinking the significance of local politics, and political divides in Kafr al Bahar and in Arab Israeli communities more generally in light of the deeper historical geography of *sumud* that I have elaborated in this dissertation.

**Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Contemporary restructuring in the realm of water, I have argued, does not represent a clean break from past water development that was pervaded by nationalist-Zionist politics. However, what is different about the contemporary moment is that, in the context of water privatization, the official Israeli narrative about national water development has shifted from its focus on a Jewish national collectivity, to Jewish national individuals that serve the nation and realize their progressive potential through responsible personal behaviors that result in efficient allocation of scarce water resources (see, for example, Siegel, S., 2015).[99] This technocratic and naturalized definition of the individual makes it seem as if new water policies are more egalitarian, at least in terms of race, and ethnicity than they were before because private water corporations are presumed to be apolitical, and are responsible for delivering water to all individuals who pay for it, regardless of their "national affiliation." This makes it easier to interpret water crisis and meter readings in Arab Israeli communities such as Kafr al Bahar as signs of waste and profligacy, inherent in Arab politics and resource management practices. Such interpretations, however, also entail conceptually deploying taken for granted assumptions that oppose and separate out the dynamic, technicicized/ "natural," and modern forces of the market, to the premodern and inert forces of Arab political culture. Such a perspective, has made it more difficult for residents of Kafr al Bahar to use civil rights to public goods as a venue for democratic critique, for organizing for racial and distributive justice, and for resisting erasure and dispossession. I try re-orient our attention to the pivotal role that racism, segregation, and ongoing dispossession play in shaping the process of water provisioning and to the way that this is informing struggles and new kinds of understandings among residents of Kafr al Bahar around questions of inclusion/exclusion, the public, the nation, responsibility, and democratic critique more generally.

Rethinking the relationship between Arab local politics and water sector restructuring through a settler colonial lens that places everyday practices associated with nature and land at its center, points to the active and mutually constitutive relationship between ordinary residents engaged in *sumud* politcs and water and its technologies. In the process it highlights the way that, together, through this distinctive relationship they are shaping the way that neoliberal forms of capitalism are being produced in Israel today. As we have seen physical and political conditions and their limits in the town are everywhere intertwined. Buidings are squeezed upwards, traffic jams force official meetings, intergenerational home construction is aimed at reshuffling the water debt in time and space and all these dynamics played into the results of the 2013 elections as well as into the larger process of reformulating *sumud* to fit with contemporary conditions.

In the remainder of this chapter, I retrace the backwards and forwards steps I took to rethink Kafr al Bahar's local elections in order to attempt to begin to think through what this "present as history" might mean for the possibilities for Kafr al Bahar's future.

**Retracing my steps**

The seeminlgy disparate organizing principles and styles that characterize the chapters of this dissertation are linked by my deployment of Lefebvre's regressive-progressive method that I use in order to develop an historical-geographical framework for thinking about and engaging with issues related natural resources, and "nature" in Israel. This approach to struggles over material and discursive conceptions of "nature," led me to open this dissertation with an account of the present water crisis in Kafr al Bahar.

I was able to begin rethinking contemporary analysis of the water crisis in chapter two by paying close attention to the way that new de-personalized, bureaucratic rules that have been applied to water provisioning and payment procedures expressed themselves in the actual practices of water tariff payment and collection in the town. Such water tariff payment and collection practices were shaped by the physical space of the town - by processes of spatial compression. I highlighted the confluence of new water rules with spatial compression as central to the way that residents live out and engage with the contemporary water crisis. Everyday practices of debt payment and collection that were shaped both by the routes of movement through the physical space of the town, as well as the institutions and materiality water provisioning and infrastructure illuminated the ways that water has become a key locus through which nationalism, settler colonialism, and neoliberal forms of capitalism are being produced in relation to one another in Israel today.

In response, residents of Kafr al Bahar are engaged in an effort make sense of these dynamics through their specific water histories, and the relations of these water histories to *sumud* practices and politics within Arab Israeli society more generally. Thus, in chapter three I explored the interplay of two local water narratives about Kafr al Bahar's origins both of which contrast with the standard narrative about Kafr al Bahar. One was focused on the swamps, and the other was focused on the sea. These narratives underpin political divides over how to engage with the contemporary water crisis, and reflect the role of Kafr al Bahar's historical engagements with water that I interpret through an understanding of *sumud* politics and practices. I argued that in order to understand the meaning for residents of the convergence of forces described in chapter two, and how they played into dynamics that political scientists characterized as indicating the regressive tendencies of Arab political culture, we must attend to the historical understandings that people have that are so centrally anchored in present water politics. In my view the interplay of the two alternative local water histories represents a critical rethinking of Kafr al Bahar's past as part of a process of redefining *sumud* to fit with contemporary circumstances.

Understanding how these divergent water histories were reflected in the tensions that tore apart the community during the 2013 elections necessitated that in chapter four I dig deeper in order to connect these local histories to the longer and wider historical geography of *sumud* politics in Arab Israeli society more generally. In doing so, I developed a conjunctural framework that began in 1948 when the Israeli state was established. With this conjunctural framework, I situated Kafr al Bahar's *sumud* politics in a series of turning points in which the politics and practices of *sumud* were redefined in response to pressures. This framework sought to clarify and highlight the active role of *sumud* in the production of Israeli capitalist development, and Judaization policies of segregation and national boundary delineation. These processes are often understood as self-enclosed, distinct systems that

encounter one another, but are not understood as forming through their dialectical relations that evolve in new ways in particular sites. Including *sumud* as a key element in this dynamic highlights the active role of Arab Israeli citizens in shaping the trajectory of Israeli political economic development and how it has evolved in relation to struggles over nature.

Having excavated the roots of contemporary water politics in Kafr al Bahar, I was able to turn once again to the present moment in chapter five in order to re-read the significance of the 2013 local elections in terms of the connections they had to the way that contemporary forms of neoliberal capitalism are evolving in Israel today, to the way that the past is anchored in the seemingly uncontradictory forward march of market-based development, and how concepts and relations to "nature" are central to grasping these connections.

In laying out the connections between Kafr al Bahar's internal politics, wider scale developments in the water sector, and ongoing processes of spatial compression, I have argued that the tensions that arose and that eventually led to the victory of the more religious, conservative mayor, was understandable in relation to the community's effort to organize itself in a way that would provide social welfare, security, and meet basic needs in profoundly insecure circumstances. In other words, far from an encounter of a backwards culture with a modern system of resource management, the difficulties, tensions, and local political reconfigurations in Kafr al Bahar have been produced through the way that the eminently modern logic of water commodification is working out in practice in the town. To put it differently, internal politics that appear, at first glance, to be unconnected to supposed apolitical water reforms now are visible and understandable in terms of their connection to one another.

## **The present as history and its implications for Kafr al Bahar's future**

This critical rethinking of Kafr al Bahar's history, together with close attention to everyday practices and understandings associated with water, moreover, suggests openings for identifying embryonic forms of political practice and organizing evident in everyday life. As we have seen, during the last few decades of the 20th century, struggles to access basic services among Arab Israelis in Israel were wrapped up with the struggles of a generation of Arab youth against the elder generation of leaders and Mukhtars. The new generation sought to define themselves as part of a public Israeli citizenry as opposed to a narrow identification with ethnic and family origin. Struggles over infrastructure fueled a sense of solidarity, and common cause among religiously and ethnically diverse, fragmented, and previously isolated Arab communities throughout Israel.

In the present conjuncture, however, the lived experience associated with commodification of water reflects the seeming failure of this project, at least in terms of its influence on national politics. The experience of cutoffs and fiscal discipline in the realm of water resonates with a sense of deepening isolation and vulnerability among Arab citizens associated with unemployment, spatial compression, and deterioration of social safety nets. What emerges from this tumultuous process is the metamorphasis of the the concept of responsibility and of the sense of collective duty in relation to the physical metamorphasis of the town and its waterscape. The tension that the cramped conditions and the new rules for water provisioning produced reveal a process of contestation over the meaning of

responsibility at the heart of the moral framework that guides the community's relationship to water and to Israeli water reforms more generally. The issue of responsibility, raises questions about the similarly contested practical and discursive significance for Arab Israeli citizens of the notions of the public, the nation, and its implications for dealing with debt, and resource distribution.

Such rethinking of the meaning of responsibility has engendered new forms of solidarity as expressed in the cross-sectarian organizing efforts of the Islamic Movement in Israel. Despite the fact that these challenges are often confined within the limits of ideas about the nation or about gender, highlighting the active role of residents molding, to the best of their ability and within the limits of their confined environment, their relations to water in a way that will provide security and guarantees in the realm of access to water suggests possibilities for more progressive politics that draw on the values of tolerance, collective responsibility, and autonomy reflected in the Islamic Movement's public rhetoric and its support network.

Although the results of the election seem to confirm political theorists theories of incomplete modernization, this dissertation reveals that the residents of Kafr al Bahar were not merely passive recipients of self-enclosed cultural logics and that political possibilities and outcomes are not necessarily predetermined. The very shape of the town, as well as residents everyday practices of water debt payment and collection and sense of responsibility to one another, can be understood differently when seen in light of their longer history of *sumud* water politics. Through the lens of "nature" we can interpret emerging politics as bound up with a wider challenge to standard narratives of erasure as well as to state and neighboring Jewish community's efforts undermine Kafr al Bahar's ability expand the space of the town.

Indeed, it seems to me that notions about collective responsibility that came to the fore during my fieldwork [100]reflects undefined, yet important political undercurrent that manifests an implicit unwillingness to accept the dominant terms of the debate and standard meanings of "responsibility," "debt," & "efficiency" that are framed in individualistic, economistic, and nationalistic terms. It represents a refusal on the part of Kafr al Bahar residents to be defined as wasteful and inefficient water managers. These historically and geographically inflected understandings of responsibility affirm arrangements in the town that have existed for a very long time in order to ensure access to water and are manifest in the conflictual process of redefining the politics and practices of *sumud* to fit with present conditions.

## References

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/world/middleeast/water-revolution-in-israel-overcomes-any-threat-of-drought.html

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/israel-proves-the-desalination-era-is-here/

https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-israel-beat-the-drought/

[2] For further reading on the history and politics of *sumud* see Cohen, H. 2008; Falah, G. 2012; Halper, J. 2006; Marie, M., Hannigan, B. & Jones, A. 2018; Najjar, R. 2014; Rijke, A. & Teeffelen, T. 2014, Wick, L. 2008.
[3] Indeed, Tamari tells us that "...sumud has had a murky genealogy in the idiom of the Palestinian national movment." He explains that "[t]he term *da'm sumud ahluna fi al-dakhil* ("in support of the steadfastness of our people inside") became the official Arab "guilt money" for abandoning the confrontation with Israel. Behind this notion lies the assumption, as Edward Said has noted, that by merely staying on their land, Palestinians were asserting their nationhood-the natural expected behavior from them being flight and exile. Conceptually, steadfastness was best expressed in a series of studies on the manner by which Palestinians adopted survival strategies to accommodate their traditional social and economic institutions to Israeli control. Sharif Kana'na of Birzeit University, for example, discusses how the extended patriarchal family in the Galilee (and by extension in the West Bank) adapted itself to the underclass conditions to which Arab villagers have been subjected. The traditional family, by asserting its conservatism, became a conserving agent and a protector against attempts at manipulation and dismemberment." Tamari describes a process of "degeneration of the ideology of sumud" that gave rise to a "populist reaction." This populist reaction was less vanguardist than the traditional ideology of sumud, and it was anchored in the daily experience of ordinary Palestinians which is why it remained somewhat fragmented. However, this factionalism that allowed for belonging among many different sectors of Palestinian society enabled mobilization that was impossible before. Indeed, he points to this political current as that propelled and sustained the first Intifada, and gave it its grassroots character.

[4] In his 2017 Colloquium talk for the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies, Political Scientist Rami Zeedan laid out this mode of understanding Israeli political society with what he saw as the spectrum of thinking about Israeli statehood. It ranged from thinkers he characterized as "radical" such as geographer Oren Yiftachel who describes Israel as an "ethnocracy" or "ethnocratic regime" to those he described as more moderate such as Yoav Peled and Sammi Smooha who refer to Israel as an "ethnic democracy" in contrast to a liberal democracy.

[5] Ghanem, Asa'ad & Mustafa, Mohanad. 2009. Arab Local Government in Israel: Partial Modernization as an Explanatory Variable for Shortages in Management. *Local Government Studies*. 35(4): 457-473

[6] See, for example, Ghanem, Asa'ad & Mustafa, Mohanad. 2009. Arab Local Government in Israel: Partial Modernisation as an Explanatory Variable for Shortages in Management. *Local Government Studies*. 35(4): 457-473 & Zeedan, Rami. 2017. "Arabs in the Three Branches of Political Power of the Israeli Political System – Politics, Identity, and Leadership." Talk (October 26) presented in the Israel Studies Colloquium, Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies at UC Berkeley

[7] The report's editors conclude from the many commentaries in the report such as Ghanem's that "family and sectarian circles of belonging continue to play a dominant role in municipal Arab politics, while the power of political parties has diminished." They point out that "[i]n the attempt to explain this point, many commentators have directed their criticism at Arab body politic's internal ailments: Not only have Arabs failed to discard familial voting patterns, it seems to have become even more deeply entangled in them."  A 2009 article entitled "Arab Local Government in Israel: Partial Modernisation as an Explanatory Variable for Shortages in Management" by Ghanem and Mustafa, goes so far as to claim that problems of management of Arab local government in Israel "can be explained by a single factor: partial modernisation, which is itself a

reflection of incomplete change-processes in the direction of modernisation, alongside the survival of traditional social structures and modes of conduct."

[8] http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_36882-1522-2-30.pdf?140217093516

[9] http://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Features/No-jihads-here

[10] http://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Features/No-jihads-here

[11] https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium.MAGAZINE-this-could-be-israel-s-beach-paradise-but-instead-it-s-a-disgrace-1.5389380

[12] See, for example, Eran Feitelson & Itay Fischhendler (2009)

[13] Seth Siegel's 2017 bestseller, *Let There be Water* (New York: St. Martin's Press), is an example of a popular account of Israeli water development, that frames contemporary water sector restructuring as irrevocably cutoff from the national security and nation-building imperatives of past. Like the more academic work of Israeli water scholars such as Itay Fischhendler and Eran Feitelson, Seth Siegel refers to contemporary Israeli water policies as being characterized by the ascendancy of a multi-scalar economic and environmental governance paradigm that has replaced the national scale paradigm of the past (i.e. Feitelson, Eran and Itay Fischhendler. 2009).

[15] Rinat, Zafrir. 2011. Breaking the Thirst: The Arab Neighborhoods of Lod Were Connected to Water for the First Time Ever. *Ha'aretz*. November 11, 2011. [Online: https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/1.1563639; Hebrew]

[16] Seminal work on the cultural politics of nature & difference includes Braun, B. 2002, Gregory, D. 2001, Hart, G. 2004, Kosek, J. 2005, Moore 2007, Moore et al. 2003.
[17] For a discussion of the role of Gershon Shafir's seminal work Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (1989) in contemporary settler colonial studies of Israel-Palestine see Gabriel Piterberg's article entitled "Israeli Sociology's Young Hegelian: Gershon Shafir and the Settler Colonial Framework" in the Journal of Palestine Studies. XLIV (3):17.

[18] https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-the-underground-ghetto-of-gaza-1.5257897

[19] http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/32857/Acts-and-Omissions-Framing-Settler-Colonialism-in-Palestine-Studies

[20] In his 2017 Colloquium talk for the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies, Political Scientist Rami Zeedan laid out this mode of understanding Israeli political society with what he saw as the spectrum of thinking about Israeli statehood. It ranged from thinkers he characterized as "radical" such as geographer Oren Yiftachel who describes Israel as an "ethnocracy" or "ethnocratic regime" to those he described as more moderate such as Yoav Peled and Sammi Smooha who refer to Israel as an "ethnic democracy" in contrast to a liberal democracy (see, for example, Peled, Y. 2014; Smooha, S. 1997; Yiftachel, O. 2006). Despite the range of thinking about Israeli statehood/democracy that Zeedan laid out, the common thread among the framings of Israeli politics that he put forward, both at the national scale and at the local scale, is that they seek to come up with generalizable theories of democracy/statehood in which Israel is one variation. Rather than shedding light on the way that these political regimes form and are evolving through everyday practices and are related to other dimensions of life, we get snapshots of Israel's gargantuan bureaucratic structure, the strategic and exclusionary plans of various planning agencies, and the futility and injustice of Palestinians living inside Israel as well in the West Bank and Gaza's unending struggles to engage with with callous government officials and procedures. Such snapshots leave out all sorts of connections that are necessary for grasping how Israeli nationalism or its ethnic regime is unfolding and changing through its relations to other elements of social life, as well limit insight into possibilities for social change. In this dissertation, I hope to convey some sense of the mutual constitution of such an exclusionary regime by looking at it in relation to water sector restructuring, as well as in relation to *sumud*.

[21] Clarno, Andy. 2009. *The Empire's New Walls: Sovereignty, neo-liberalism, and the production of space in post-apartheid South Africa and post-Oslo Palestine/Israel.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Dissertation.

[22] Salamanca, Omar Jabary. 2014. "Hooked on electricity: the charged political economy of electrification in the Palestinian West Bank". Working paper (February) presented in the symposium "Political Economy and Economy of the Political" at Brown University.

[23] For examples of literature on the interrelations of global economic development with nationalism and/or processes of settler colonialism and dispossession see: Algazi, Gadi. 2006. Offshore Zionism. *New Left Review*. 40: 27-37; Clarno, Andy. 2017. *Neoliberal Apartheid: Palestine/Israel and South Africa After 1994. post-apartheid South Africa and Post-Oslo Palestine/Israel.* Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press; Asa Maron & Michael Shalev. 2017. *Neoliberalism as a State Project: Changing the Political Economy of Israel.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; Omar Jabary Salamanca. 2014. "Hooked on electricity: the charged political economy of electrification in the Palestinian West Bank". Working paper presented in the symposium "Political Economy and Economy of the Political" at Brown University.

For examples of literature on environmental politics and nation building see: Alatout, Samer. 2007. State-ing Natural Resources through Law: The Codification and Articulation of Water Scarcity and Citizenship in Israel. *The Arab World Geographer*. 10 (1): 16-37; Braverman, Irus. 2009. *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine*. New York: Cambridge UP; Sufian, Sandra M. 2007. *Healing the land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine*, *1920-1947*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

[24] For a recent example of this sort of everyday injustice perpetrated by Israel's gigantic bureaucratic structure see Jonathan Cook's February 6, 2018 CounterPunch article entitled "A 14-Year-Old Girl Forced Alone and at Night Into the Gaza Cage: Another Routine Mishap for Israel's Occupation" (https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/02/06/a-14-year-old-girl-forced-alone-and-at-night-into-the-gaza-cage-another-routine-mishap-for-israels-occupation/)

[25] For a fuller discussion of the spatial dimensions of the philosophy of internal relations as elaborated by Ollman (2003), see Gillian Hart 2016.

[26] Not surprisingly, highly touted new technologies such as "fit free devices on shower heads and taps" that Water Authority officials offered to households had not made it into Kafr al Bahar's homes.

[27] http://147.237.72.10/water/watec/002_Water_Conservation-Small.wmv

[28] https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/world/middleeast/water-revolution-in-israel-overcomes-any-threat-of-drought.html; https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/israel-proves-the-desalination-era-is-here/; https://www.timesofisrael.com/morocco-film-searches-out-jews-who-left-for-israel/

[29] In his work on water in Israel, Alatout has shown how the divide between politics and scientific knowledge production through which water has been rendered technical and scarce obscures the way that such knowledge has been produced in the context of highly politicized debates over Israel's capacity to absorb Jewish immigrants, a central component of the making of the Israeli nation-state and in producing Jewish Israeli citizen subjects. Moreover, he shows that the techniques and methods developed in the course of developing scientific ideas about water in Israel, have shaped governmental techniques and relations of power in Israel in other realms of life as well. Unlike most other work on water in Israel that remains almost exclusively technical and economistic, Alatout's work draws on science and technology studies literature in order to demonstrate political consequences of scientific production about water and its infrastructure (Alatout 2009).

[30] http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/hodaot2013n/24_13_087e.pdf

[31] The Central Bureau of Statistics uses a combination of information about population (e.g. number of dependents, avg. number of children per household, median age), education (% matriculation, % of students between the ages of 20-29), (un)employment, benefits (e.g. pension, welfare), and standard of living (e.g.

financial income, motorization level, housing characteristics) to rank communities by socioeconomic cluster ranging from 1 to 10. The information is founded on reports furnished by the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Religious Services.

[32] Most residents of Kafr al Bahar are eligible to receive the poverty tax discount which calculates discounts based on average family size for a given group versus household income. The Central Bureau of Statistics Statisical Abstract, categorizes families by type of family, type of household and size of family and population group (http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/shnatone_new.htm).

[33] See, for example, the 2011 Ha'aretz report chronicling the angry response of Kafr al Bahar's neighboring communities to Ibrahim's proposals to expand the town (https://www.haaretz.com/1.5159544)

[34] In a 2015 Ha'aretz report by Amnon Dirktor quotes Kafr al Bahar's municipal engineer explanation of the issue: "we are a changing community. We have grown from a village to a population the size of an urban locale, but this has not been accompanied by planning visions.........and we have no representatives in planning meetings....." (Reported by Amnon Dirktor in Ha'aretz, 30 May 2015, under the heading: Kafr al Bahar's New Master Plan: The State of Israel Deprives Arabs of Their Land – *Hebrew*: https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/architecture/.premium-MAGAZINE-1.2644972).

[35]http://bimkom.org/eng/arab-communities-in-the-north-and-center/

[36] Yiftachel lists the following revealing statistics:

- Arabs [Arab Israelis] make up 16 percent of the state's population but own only 3.5 of the land area.
- The jurisdication of Arab local authorities extends over 2.5 percent of the state's land area.
- Over half the land owned by Arabs in 1948 has been expropriated by the state
- Arabs are effectively blocked from acquiring or leasing land in some 80 percent of state land area.
- The Arab population has grown six-fold since 1948, yet the land under its control has halved.
- Since its establishment, the state has built more than seven hundred Jewish localities.
- During the same period, no Arab localities have been built (apart from twenty-one towns and villages to concentrate the Bedouins).
- Dozens of long-established Bedouin Arab villages, mainly in the south, are unrecognized, and the state plans to evacuate them (2006: 143).

[37] https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/architecture/.premium-MAGAZINE-1.2644972

[38] In their 2018 article entitled "How effective is central enforcement? Evidence from convened committees in failing local authorities," Yaniv Reingewertz and Itai Beeri chronicle the increasingly punitive and conservative policies that the Finance Ministry has imposed upon Israeli local governments (primarily Arab local governments):

"In 2003, the government declared that local deficits would no longer be automatically covered. Over the next year, many local authorities faced financial crisis: 76% of local authorities operated under deficits, over 50% activated recovery plans, and 21% of local authorities held back wages of thousands of employees for months." (2018: 362)

Reingewertz and Beeri go on to explain that this interventionist approach to fiscally distressed local governments included sanctions and conditionalities for grants, and loans such as local cutbacks and mass layoffs as well as the appointment of external accountants that had the power to impose extra levies and fees and control new municipal contracts.

When the Central Government deemed this approach to be insufficient, it increasingly adopted what Reingewerz and Beeri refer to as "the neutralization approach" (2018: 363). This approach involved the Interior Ministry dismantling local councils and replacing them with emergency management teams, or what in Israel is referred as "Convened Committees."

Although the Interior Ministry has had the authority to adopt this approach for some time, it became increasingly popular after 2003. Reingewerz and Beeri explain that "[t]his ['the neutralization approach'] was the most severe top-down response toward poor performers…by severely constraining local autonomy and restructuring local democracy…By law, convened committees were put in place until the next election, and for not less than three years. In practice, most of the committees' terms lasted around five to six years....The moment the head of a convened committee was nominated, *he/she held all the powers and authorities of a mayor*." (2018: 363; emphasis added).

[39] For examples of analysis of prepaid water meter politics see Gillian Hart 2013; Alex Loftus 2005 & 2006; Antina Von Schnitzler 2008 & 2013.

[40] Water Economist personal communication, 2013; D. Zilberman, head of the Hof HaTichon Water Dept., personal communication 2011.

[41] There is a meter located at the entrance to the town as well as smaller ¾" meters located at the entrance to each house.

[42] Some prominent examples of such work include the 2015 book entitled Water Pricing Experiences and Innovations edited by Ariel Dinar, Victor Pochat, & Jose Albiac-Murillo; Seth Seigel's 2015 best-seller entitled Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water Starved World; The 2011 Policy Program Paper by Israeli water economist Yoav Kislev entitled The Water Economy of Israel ; the 2015 New York Times article by the New York Times Jerusalem Correspondent Isabel Kershner entitled "Aided by the sea, Israel Overcomes and Old Foe: Drought" https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/world/middleeast/water-revolution-in-israel-overcomes-any-threat-of-drought.html

[43] https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/06/150602132228.htm

[44] Incidentally, approximately one-quarter of Israel's fresh water supply, and 70% of its water for domestic consumption comes from desalination. All the plants except one plant in the south, are run by private contractors.

[45] **3-tier rates**: 1. 4.11 NIS or 1.06 USD, 2. 5.659 NIS or 1.46 USD, 3. 7.795 NIS or 2.02 USD;
**2-tier rates**: 1. 8.11 NIS or 2.10 USD, 2. 11.95 NIS or 3.09 USD

[46] For further discussion of the sorts of measures and cutbacks imposed on local government during this period see Yaniv Reingewertz and Itai Beeri's 2018 article entitled "How effective is central enforcement? Evidence from convened committees in failing local authorities."

[47] In theory, "a closed-loop" meant that money from water tariffs paid for the internal costs of running the company, providing water, maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, as well as returns on equity (pools, pumps, labor, interest, profit)

[48] For an english transcript of the talk go to: http://zochrot.org/en/activity/54730

[49] See Samer Alatout 2007, Alon Tal 2002, & Seth Siegel 2015 for three different angles on the central role of water engineers in enabling the fulfillment of the national-imperative for close Jewish agricultural settlement of the land.

[50] It is interesting that in Israel today there are massive protests against the detention and deportation of Sudanese and Eritrean refugees that Netanyahu's government claims are not welcome in Israel because they are not Jewish and are threatening the economic well-being of Jewish citizens.

[51] Paraphrase (Forman & Kedar 2003): "The Jewish Colonization Association ("JCA") was established in 1891 to aid Jews emigrating from Eastern Europe to other parts of the world. In 1900, the JCA assumed administrative responsibility for the Jewish colonies established in Palestine by the Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who retained decisive influence in direction and funding of the Association's Palestine section.

Operations of the JCA in Palestine focused on the establishment of Jewish villages of family farmsteads, and this is also true of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association--or the "PJCA"--into which JCA operations in Palestine were reorganized in the mid-1920s. (For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to this organization as the PJCA throughout the entirety of this article.) By 1945, the Rothschild family and the PJCA had together acquired approximately 450,000 dunams of land for Jewish colonization, two-thirds of which had already been transferred to individual Jewish settlers themselves. Politically, the PJCA was officially "non-Zionist," and it made great efforts to retain its independence and freedom to maneuver. However, it consistently maintained close relations with Zionist officials and cooperated with their institutions, despite rising tensions between the two groups in the mid-to-late 1930s surrounding a number of issues (particularly land management and settlement). Most importantly, PJCA leadership saw itself as working alongside the Zionist movement during the Mandate period and toward the same overall goals.

[52] Rebecca L. Stein's book *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism* recounts a similar local narrative told in the town of Abu Gosh to justify wartime collaboration. Hillel Cohen suggests that this may be a common method of those who remained within Israel's 1948 borders of complicating the typical understanding of quiescence and resistance as mutually exclusive. I don't really know if this is important to note. The other parallel between Abu Gosh and Kafr al Bahar is that since much of the surrounding Arab communities were expelled and massacred during the war, both Abu Gosh and Kafr al Bahar were left isolated from other Arab communities, and surrounded by Jewish settlements. In Stein's words "…this postwar geography catalyzed political disaffiliation from other Palestinians and active affiliation with the Israeli state…. " (102). This stands in contrast to the Arab communities in the Galilee that are not isolated from each other, a geography that seems to have influenced the region's history of resistance.

[53] Initially al-Ghawarina that lived in the area entered into negotiations with al-Takbir that also lived in the area – together they lived in about 45,000 dunams of land. But in the process of negotiations the Mandate and PJCA managed to divide them and negotiate separate agreements with each of them. The area that al-Arab al-Ghawarneh was given in exchange for their land in the marshlands was much reduced, and has continually been reduced in violation of the original agreement (add exact area in acres and dunams). Tareq's father showed me his deed and explained this all to me. He said he had been invited to a meal at the dining hall of the neighboring Kibbutz when it was first established. He brought his deed and told them that they were his guests not the other way around.

Haaretz article entitled "A Classic Zionist Story": "In return for clearing the swampland, PICA purchased a rocky, pitted hill that was once the site of a Roman quarry used to build the famous aqueduct that brought water to Caesarea, and gave it to the swamp dwellers, registering it in their name in the Tabu land registry. In exchange for the thousands of dunams of the swamp and its close environs, they got 1,200 dunams of rocky hilltop land."

[54] For further discussion of some of the implications of the Balfour Declaration's "dual obligation," according to historians, see Ben Gilding's 2012 article entitled "Dual Obligation and Dual Treachery? The British, Zionists, and Arabs in Mandate Palestine, 1917-1939.

[55] http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/10/22/syrian-deadlands/

[56] I return to this article again in the chapter when I give an account of Tareq's telling of Kafr al Bahar's water history.

[57] Although nomadic life would not have lessened the community's attachment to or active role in the production of the area, it is important to note that the attorney described the people as they wished to be characterized at the time. During the Mandate period and continuing on through to the Israeli state period, the category of "bedouin" served as a contrast to the category of "Palestinian" who colonial authorities saw as having an interest in national liberation. Bedouins, according to this perspective, identified in terms of kinship relations, were less attached to the land, and, thus were less likely to join the national struggle. Thus, today, unlike Palestinians (or Muslim Arabs or 1948 Arabs or whatever the term people prefer), Bedouins and Druze are not prohibited from serving in the Israeli army. Today, however, Bedouin Arabs in the Negev Desert

increasingly identify as Palestinian in the context of accelerated confiscation of their land and criminalization of those who live in unrecognized villages.

[58] For further discussion of the relationship between malaria eradication and nation-building, see Sandy Sufian's 2007 book entitled Healing the Land and Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine, 1920 to 1947.

[59] I could not find much official documentation of this version of Kafr al Bahar's history but that is likely why Tareq felt the need to write his own history. What I did find was mostly related to the people who lived to the north in the Galilee in the Huleh basin, another wetland area that Baron Edmond Rothschild set his sights on draining. I did find one scholarly article that used archives to document a history that fits with this official narrative entitle "The Arab Settlement of Late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine: New Village Formation and Settlement Fixation 1871-1948," by Seth Frantzman. But it also notes that many of "the swamp dwelling Arabs" in Palestine had probably been there even before the Ottoman period; other documentation of this popular narrative: Meron Rapaport, ‗A Classic Zionist Story', Haaretz, 11, June, 2010, p. 10; Bedouin Settlement in Late Ottoman and British Mandatory Palestine: Influence on the Cultural and Environmental Landscape, 1870-1948 by S. Frantzman & R. Kark: "The environment of the reeds they found in Palestine was similar to the one that had existed in the Nile valley, and they would have been accustomed or resistant to the malaria then prevalent in the swamp."

According to the article, the Syrian Ottoman company for Agriculture granted a concession of 25,512 dunams to the Jewish Colonization Agency (ICA – pre-PICA) near present day Beit Etzion and Kafr al Bahar. 6,000 constituted the wetlands. The Mandate authorized the concession to the but stipulated that 2,500 dunams must be set aside for local Arab populations. Kafr al Bahar was given 1,200 land (rocky, pitted quarry land). This fits with other scholarly accounts of the process of land transfer. When Neve Yarok was established it took some of this land, most significantly for the people of Kafr al Bahar it took over the land where their cemetery lay. Much later the state took 3,000 of that land during the building of the coastal highway which cuts the town off on its eastern edge.

[60] Important exceptions are the work of Gorney 2007; Alexandre Forman and Kedar 2003; Khawaldi and Rabinowitz 2002. However, out of these authors, only Forman and Kedar focus specifically on the Arab-al-Ghawarina that lived in the area of the Takbir wetlands. The other authors focus on the Huleh.

[61] More can be discerned from these writings about the kinds of cultivation and crafts in the area, than can be discerned about the cultural meaning and significance of the swamps to the people of the region. Not surprisingly, these writings tell much more about the attitudes of the colonial explorers towards the socio-ecological conditions of the region and the meanings that this region held for them than about the various inhabitants of the region and their own understandings. Sandra M. Sufian's work on the intersection of technology, disease, nation-building as they came together in the Huleh drainage project (2007) is the most reliable source that I have come across. Yet she writes very little about the complex practices, both material and meaningful, through which the socio-ecology of the Huleh Basin was produced prior to Zionist settlement.

[62] The notion of "The new Jew" was a way of contrasting Jews in Israel to those in the diaspora that had lived a cloistered, mal-nourished, non-agrarian existence on the margins of society. The new Jew, by contrast, was healthy, strong, and self-sufficient. Redeeming the land of Israel was seen as central to the process of transforming from an oppressed people into a nation of sovereign subjects.

[63] Historians such Frantzman and Kark 2011, Karmon 1953-4, and Tyler 1994 represent the period between the rise of Mamluk rule in the 13th century after they suppressed the Mongol invasion and the mid 1800s as a several centuries in which Bedouins, who were said to have arrived in the 7th century with the Arab Empire, took hold of the region like a wild invasive species, undermining the possibility for any "higher levels" of sedentary agriculture to take root (Frantzman & Kark 2011, Karmon 1953-4, Tyler 1994).

[64] Late in the negotiations after Jamil-al-Ghawarna had settled with PJCA, one of the groups that had yet to reach an agreement, actually began to uproot PJCA pine trees that the Agency had planted as part of a state-sponsored forestation program. Such programs, As Irus Braverman has shown in her book *Planted Flags: Trees,*

*Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine*, constitute a key arena in which nation-state building has occurred, and in which struggles over identity and space are fought out. Planting pine trees in this context, was both a material and meaningful way of rooting the Jewish nation in the land, and delineating Jewish territory. Eyal Weizman explains, for example, that the Jewish National Fund (JNF) practice of planting pine forests on what it saw as "state land" was part of an effort " to prevent Palestinian planting, and to maintain land reserves for new settlements or the future expansion of existing ones. Pine trees were chosen both because of their fast growth and because of the acidic deposit of pine needles they leave on the ground, which eradicates most smaller plants and undergrowth between the trees. 'Pine deserts' were meant to make the land unusable for Palestinian sheperds by depriving their flocks of pasture." (2007: 120). In addition, pine trees such as cedar symbolized European civilzation, and for many of the European Jewish groups that had just arrived in Palestine, pine forests reminded them of all that was good and abundant about Europe. They were now seeking to reproduce such a civilization, but without the fear of pogroms and Fascist forms of anti-semitism that pervaded their lives in Europe. Braverman tells us that the planting of olive tree, on the other hand, became a symbol of *sumud* among Palestinians, a marker of steadfast refusal to be uprooted (Braverman 2009).

[65] Forman and Kedar define Mawat land as " The expression dead land (mevat) means vacant (khali) land, such as the mountains, rocky places, stony fields, pernallik and grazing ground which is not in the possession of anyone by title-deed nor assigned ab antiquo to the use of inhabitants of a town or village, and lies at such a distance from towns and villages from which a human voice cannot be heard at the nearest inhabited place.

[66] In Historian Salim Tamari account *sumud* "...began as a form of passive resistance to Israeli rule in the early seventies and ended as a form of passive nonresistance (some would say as aggressive nonresistance) following the decision by the Arab states in Baghdad (1978) to aid the "steadfastness" of the West Bank and Gaza to the tune of $150 million annually." According to Tamari, *sumud* in the West Bank "….evolved [in part] as a form of asserting the traditional virtues of rural society (attachment to the land, the fecundity of Palestinian women, and self-sufficiency). In effect there was something very retrogressive in this attitude. Attachment to the land took the form of an idealistic glorification of peasant society that never existed in reality. Fecundity was expressed as a parallel reaction to the Jewish nationalist obsession with Arab demographic growth ("the procreation road to liberation"). And the search for self-sufficiency became a search for autarky-a perspective that was blind to the present economic realities of Israeli domination and market forces. Even today in the economic literature of the intifada we see the strong impact of this autarkic perspective in the discussion on the revival of the domestic economy."

[67] Indeed, Tamari tells us that "...sumud has had a murky genealogy in the idiom of the Palestinian national movment." He explains that "[t]he term *da'm sumud ahluna fi al-dakhil* ("in support of the steadfastness of our people inside") became the official Arab "guilt money" for abandoning the confrontation with Israel. Behind this notion lies the assumption, as Edward Said has noted, that by merely staying on their land, Palestinians were asserting their nationhood-the natural expected behavior from them being flight and exile. Conceptually, steadfastness was best expressed in a series of studies on the manner by which Palestinians adopted survival strategies to accommodate their traditional social and economic institutions to Israeli control. Sharif Kana'na of Birzeit University, for example, discusses how the extended patriarchal family in the Galilee (and by extension in the West Bank) adapted itself to the underclass conditions to which Arab villagers have been subjected. The traditional family, by asserting its conservatism, became a conserving agent and a protector against attempts at manipulation and dismemberment." Tamari describes a process of "degeneration of the ideology of sumud" that gave rise to a "populist reaction." This populist reaction was less vanguardist than the traditional ideology of sumud, and it was anchored in the daily experience of ordinary Palestinians which is why it remained somewhat fragmented. However, this factionalism that allowed for belonging among many different sectors of Palestinian society enabled mobilization that was impossible before. Indeed, he points to this political current as that propelled and sustained the first Intifada, and gave it its grassroots character.

[68] https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/1.5280516

[69] The Kafr Qasim Massacre was only 1 of a number of massacres of Palestinians that occurred at the hands of Israeli military forces in 1956. Indeed, Tamer Sorek explains from 1949 to 1956, and especially in 1956 with the Suez War, that Israeli Defense Forces, police, and civilians killed "between 2,700 and 5,000 Palestinians…along Israel's newly created borders—most of them unarmed refugees who tried either to return home or to harvest their crops." The reason that the Kafr Qasim Massacre receives so much attention in Arab Israeli narratives even though it was not the worst of its kind, according to Sorek, is that Arab leaders in Israel saw this event as an opportunity "to turn the nominal citizenship of the Palestinians in Israel into a tangible set of civil rights. It was exactly because the massacre in Kafr Qasim undermined this outlook by targeting Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, that it became necessary to make it a symbol of civil struggle." The paradoxical implications, as Sorek indicates, is that it drove a wedge between Palestinians inside Israel's 1948 borders and those outside (2005 remarks by Tamir Sorek entitled "Remembering Kafr Qasim: How the 1956 massacre has shaped the Palestinian struggle for civil rights" in the *Stanford University Press Blog* on the 59th anniversary of the Massacre)

[70] For a review of political debates over whether sumud is an active or passive form of resistance see Rijke K., Teffelen, T. 2014. For a gentle critique of *sumud* as a concerted political strategy see Halper, J. 2006.

[71] Such as the one water pipe that the National Water Company (Mekorot) had installed in 1965 Kafr al Bahar.

[72] As a result of the 1979 Peace Treaty with Egypt, Israel bgan the process of withdrawing from the Sinai. By 1982 Israel's withdrawal was complete.

[73] Al ha-mishmar archives:
http://jpress.org.il/Olive/APA/NLI_heb/?action=tab&tab=browse&pub=AHR#panel=browse

[74] 2017, January 26. Abu Raya, Jihad. "The 40-year-old Israeli document that forms the backbone of an apartheid state." *The Middle East Eye (Op-Ed)*. Online: http://www.middleeasteye.net/essays/40-year-old-israeli-document-forms-backbone-apartheid-state-1736661388

[75] https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/israel/palestine#5a548c

[76] Rosenhek refers, for example, to the massive wave of Eastern European immigrants that came to Israel in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Rosenhek remarks that between 1989 and 1996 "[t]he budget for programs of immigrant integration rose on an average of 18.7 percent annually, and the budget for housing, most of which was directed to the new immigrants, increased at an annual average rate of 33.9 percent [Weinblatt et al. 2000: 138)]."

He goes on to argue that such budget allocations, which involved settling new immigrants "…in the peripheral areas of the country as an instrument to achieve geopolitical aims," indicates that "…as in the past, during the 1990s, the Israeli welfare state was still conceived of as a major instrument for the incorporation of new Jewish immigrants; a task that represents one of the most central components in the process of Zionist nation-building" (Rosenhek 2002: 25).

[77] A related element of frontier development that has endured is the influential role it has played in enabling an alliance between State and Zionist institutions, and private corporations that historian Gadi Algazi refers to as the "deep state" (Algazi borrows the phrase "deep-state" from the Turkish context in which it refers to an influential coalition among military generals, the judiciary and organized crime that shapes policy irrespective of particular elected leaders). This alliance is most apparent in the changing forms Judaization on the frontier. In the Israeli context, Algazi uses the phrase "deep state" to refer to an alliance among core state and Zionist institutions including the Ministry of the Interior, the Israel Lands Administration, the Military, and Zionist organizations, particularly the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, and the World Zionist Organization. He explains that "politicians come and go in Israel" but that these core institutions "…are long-lasting powerful players, pursuing long-term goals based on a shared outlook, itself often based on common socialization patterns and multiple social ties within Israel's elite" (2013: 60).

This alliance established itself in the early years of state-led capitalist development, and has remained crucial to shaping the character of Israeli capitalism. It has also remained central to the forms of political organizing that have developed among Arab Israelis in response to Judaization.

[78] http://www.merip.org/sites/default/files/Primer_on_Palestine-Israel(MERIP_February2014)final.pdf

[79] According to the Mossawa Center, a Haifa-based advocacy group for Arab citizens of Israel, the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance was meant to apply only during armed conflict. Moreover, evidence of terrorism often derived from secret intelligence that limits the accused party's ability to defend against terrorist allegations. Finally, the ordinance itself states that "[i]f the Government, by notice in the Official Gazette, declares that a particular body of persons is a terrorist organization, the notice shall serve, in any legal proceeding, as proof that that body of persons is a terrorist organization, unless the contrary is proved." In addition, alongside the authority given to the Minister of Security to declare that particular associations are "terrorist organization" and "unlawful association," the law authorizes the Police Commissioner to close the offices of such organizations and associations. The properties of such organizations are subject to sequestration." (Mossawa Center Human Rights Report May 2016). The undemocratic character of this Ordinance that gave Arab citizens no recourse to the law, in other words, called for new forms of strategic organizing on behalf of Arab citizens of Israel. Incidentally, this Ordinance is what the Israeli State used to strip MP (MK) Azmi Bishara, the head of al-Balad, of his parliamentary immunity in order to put him on trial for treason in 2001. He subsequently was went into political exile (Cook, 2001).

[80] The economic crisis was caused by stagflation that resulted from spiraling inflation and balance of payment deficit. Such stagflation, according to Nitzan and Bichler, had to do with the fact that the core firms in Israel at the time were engaged in a pattern of "military/financial" accumulation – a militarized economy that benefited large conglomerates but not the economy as a whole (1996).

[81] Oren Yiftachel's 1988 study of the uneven distribution of economic benefits of Galilee industrialization provides an example of the workings of Judaization in as it intertwined with the process of economic restructuring. He describes a municipal by-law that required that residents of the Jewish town of Ma'alot fill all vacancies in the Ma'a lot industrial zone factories with Ma'a lot residence who were Jewish and the pressure that local businesses were under from Ma'a lot leaders to hire Ma'a lot residents before hiring others who lived in the area (1991: 169). In the postscript, moreover, Yiftachel adds that "peripheral" areas such as the Galilee suffered the most in terms of unemployment during the downturn that lasted into the 1990s. For the Arab citizens of the Galilee, he remarks, "…job losses have been significant" as factories closed down. The influx of highly trained immigrants from the former Soviet Union that the state settled in peripheral areas such as the Galilee only compounded the hardships associated with economic restructuring as industrial parks transitioned into high-tech jobs for which many working class Middle Eastern Jews and Arab Israelis citizens lacked training.

[82] The result, as mentioned earlier is that Arab Israeli citizens who make up approximately 20% of the entire Israeli population owns 3.5% of the land, and Arab Israeli local municipalities where the majority of Israeli Arab citizens live, take up only 2.5% of the land area (Yiftachel, Abu-Baker & Rabinowitz).

[83] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIrxVN_oVlw

[84] Today Interior Ministry has initiated a concerted effort to revoke the citizenship of Bedouins living in unrecognized villages in the Negev. For the last two decades but particularly since 2010 Bedouins who go to government offices to renew passports or to engage in other routine procedures suddenly find that their citizenship has been revoked. They are told that they can reapply for citizenship as foreigners and that they can go through a naturalization process. However, even when they do this, they are often denied citizenship. The Ministry attributes this problem to "administrative errors" in the period of Military Rule over Arab locales. It claims that the grandparents of those whose citizenship has been revoked did not register themselves properly when they were told to do so under the Military Regime. Evidently, it was often impossible for Bedouin residents to move about because many of their communities were located in remote areas without

transportation routes. The military curfew did not allow them to get to government offices in time. Those targeted with this new measure are those living in the Negev where residents of unrecognized villages have repeatedly rebuilt their homes after the Ministry demolished them. Researcher Touma-Suleiman explains that "..when they strip them of their citizenship, they are ultimately stripping them of their only remaining weapon [their rights as citizens - used to fight against forced evictions]." Touma-Suleiman goes on to point out that “"They [Bedouins] already reside in unrecognised villages – when you deny them living rights, you deny them the right to exist in that area." (Najjar in al-Jazeera, 31 August 2017). As we can see, the predicament of unrecognized places in bold relief the relationship basic service, dispossession, and erasure.

[85] Master Plans are planning blueprints that local municipal officials must produce in order to expand the area in which they can build and develop. Regional Building and Housing Committees are responsible for approving such plans. Although rarely approved. Areas that are not included in Master Plans are not eligible to receive basic service provisioning or state funding. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, it is impossible to separate the question of land distribution from building and infrastructure. Constricting the area in which residents are allowed to build, moreover, serves to undermine the tax base since in many instances, local authorities cannot ethically demand taxes from people living in homes that have inadequate infrastructure and are vulnerable to demolition. Such a situation contributes further to the deterioration of infrastructure, and feeds into illegal home construction, and illegal piping connections.

[86] Abu-Hilja was the founder of one of these NGOs – the Association of Forty – an organization established in order to assist unrecognized villages in their struggle to achieve recognition. He himself was trained as an engineer. The Association worked with a host of architects, planners, and engineers who were critical of Israeli planning policies.

Abu Hilja was from the village of En Hud. He first discovered that his village was “unrecognized” in the 1980s when he heard on the news that that Israeli authorities were planning to demolish it. When the villagers first heard this news, Muhammad told me “we thought we were the only ones.” He later learned when he looked into the matter, that there were many communities inside Israel that faced similar threats of razing and home demolition. Trained as a civil engineer, he searched for building codes, rules, and regulations. This is how he discovered that the 1965 Building and Planning law had erased his village and many others that, unlike his, were located in the Galilee and Negev. In response to his discovery that his village was one of the villages slated for demolition, he initiated an organizing campaign that focused on adhering precisely to the state’s codes for building and infrastructure in order to demonstrate their willingness and ability to cooperate with state laws. The organizing campaign developed into the Association of Forty. In addition to their focus on recognition and the infrastructural foundations that recognition enabled, the Association focused on other issues of survival and daily welfare. For example, the Association built a Kindergarten that was hidden from the watchful eye of helicopters checking for illegal construction by surrounding the structure with corrugated metal so as to make it appear temporary. Indeed, a permanent structure, even if it was a Kindergarten was considered illegal by Israeli authorities

Yet, even after the village gained partial recognition in 1994 they struggled with lack of adequate land reserves and infrastructure. The entire process led Muhammad to the conclusion that, it was not a question of rules and procedures that was limiting his ability to get services for his community and other communities. In his words, “we gradually realized that we weren’t getting services because we weren’t part of the Jewish people, the people of this state. Not providing you with electricity or water or roads also ensures that nobody can see you—it’s a way of erasing you.”

At the same time, however, the movement itself did succeed in making visible the question of recognition and basic services. Indeed, by 1993 Arab Israelis from all across the Galilee gathered in Jerusalem for the biggest protest of Arab Israeli citizens since the establishment of the Israeli state 45 years earlier (Conford & Rubin). The protest was aimed at bringing the issue of “unrecognized villages” into the public debate about land use, allocation, and access to basic services. The size of the protest, however, indicated something broader that extended beyond the question of unrecognized villages alone. It touched on the question of recognition as it affected all Arab communities in Israel.

[87] Historian Salim Tamari describes a similar emergence of popular political activity in the West Bank and Gaza during this period in which ordinary Palestinians sought independence from the traditional elite and political party bureaucrats. The difference between the forms of mobilization inside Israel and in the occupied territories, of course, is shaped by the promise of citizenship for Arabs inside Israel's 1948 borders, and occupation without citizenship in the territories. In Tamari's words: "Populism became the ideology of a new radical and grassroots alternative to the elitist outlook of the traditional leadership of the nationalist movement both inside and outside the territories. ("Elitism" is used here in a dual sense: first, in its espousal of a vanguardist organizational structure for its struggle; and second, in the sense that patronage and the adoption of notable personalities as leaders of the national movement became a modus operandi for the movement as a whole.) The appearance of the mass organizations (mu'assasat jamahinyya) sponsored in the early 1980s by the leftist groups within the PLO and their embrace of a populist ideology was seen as the necessary antidote to the limitation inherent in the nationalist movement."

[88] Joel Beinin adds to this explanation of the conditions that encouraged the Oslo process the geopolitical climate at the time: "The collapse of the Soviet Union and the unchallenged hegemony of the United States in the Middle East after the 1991 Gulf War set the stage for the Madrid and Oslo negotiations. The Bush administration tried to consolidate its Gulf War achievements by removing a major potential source of regional instability--the Arab-Israeli conflict. Conditions were ripe for this effort because the PLO was politically weakened and diplomatically isolated as a result of opposing the US-led war against Iraq, although the PLO did not support Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, Israel, the PLO and the US all feared the growing strength of the radical Islamist organizations, HAMAS and Islamic Jihad" (1999) http://www.merip.org/mero/mero032699

[89] The new historians discoveries were enabled by the expiration of the "Thirty Year Rule." This allowed them to access archival documents that had recently been open to public view (for examples of this work see, Benvenisti 1987, Kimmerling 1983, Lockman 1996, Morris 1987, Pappe 1992, Shafir 1996, etc.).

[90] This party did not gain national attention until the 1990s when it came under the leadership of Azmi Bishara who adopted the slogan "Israel a state for all its citizens."

[91] Electronic Intifada: Interview With Azmi Bishara, 2006 - https://electronicintifada.net/content/interview-azmi-bishara/9643

[92] In 2003, Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, reported that, "local councils and municipalities of Jewish towns received 59% more per citizen than their Arab counterparts" in balancing grants are just one area in which such discrimination occurs. The most obvious area is in the realm of land-use and planning which, as we have seen, is directly connected to water provisioning and debt (https://www.adalah.org/en/content/index/2052?Content_sort).

[93] Despite the fact that the majority of poor towns in peripheral regions are Arab, the majority of NPA funds go to Jewish communities Indeed, Adalah found that out of the 557 towns and villages that benefit from being classified as National Priority Areas, only four of them are Arab, and they are small villages at that.

[94] Added to this are the limits on industrial development in Arab communities that undermine the possibility of generating industrial and commercial tax revenue, and the limits placed on personal loans and grants to citizens who do not serve in the military (e.g. mortgages, higher education).

[95] https://972mag.com/doing-gods-work-a-look-at-the-islamic-movement-in-israel/104201/

[96] In 1996 the Islamic Movement split into Northern and Southern factions over the issue of whether or not to run in national elections.

[97] In fact, the Israeli authorities recognized the threat of the Islamic Movement and had been attempting for some time to reinforce divisions between Muslim and Christian Arabs in Nazareth. Cook pointed out, for example, a wall in the central plaza area next to the holy Basilica of the Annunciation where rotating banners

singing the praises of Islam and denouncing all other religions periodically incited skirmishes between Christians and Muslims. It was a vestige of a land dispute that had taken place there in 1999 and 2000. Israeli authorities had supported the appropriation of the area next to the Basilica that would eventually become the plaza where we stood. The expectation among Muslim residents who were involved with the dispute was that, rather than becoming a public plaza, it would be used for Muslim rituals and charity purposes. When violence broke out as a result, Israeli police refused to intervene (the Washington Post 1999).

[98] https://972mag.com/doing-gods-work-a-look-at-the-islamic-movement-in-israel/104201/

[99] This viewpoint also came through very clearly in a 2013 conference I attended entitled, "Water and Sewage Corporations: Reform or Structural Change."

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