



A Drop in the Ocean

Water deprivation as a Force of Mobilization and Dissent in the West Bank

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The photo on the cover page is one of Solomon's Pools in al-Khader, a village near Bethlehem. The Solomon pools comprises three pools and are fed by four different springs. The water was used by the Palestinian living in the area in and around Bethlehem, for recreational purposes, but also to collect water in times of droughts. Jan Selby (2003) recounts that in 1998, refugees from Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem would go to these pools to collect buckets water, and would wash clothes and play downstream (Selby 2003: 176). In pale comparison, nowadays the first pool is completely empty, while the downstream ones only have a small amount of polluted water. When the drought of 2008 was combined with a cut in water supply and a broken well, the people of Dheisheh, together with other areas in Bethlehem, did not have the opportunity to get water from this ancient source, while they did not receive water through the network for over forty days.

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1. Introduction

Water is as vital to the survival of a person as to the survival of a state, with a state's economy relying on production, for which much water is needed. Consequently, this basic human need has evolved into a highly politicized subject in water scarce areas. Water sources have become an issue of contention, not only between states, but also within state boundaries. Although many books and articles have been written about water wars, crises and disputes over scarce water sources in the Middle East, most focus on inter-state contention (Lowi 1993, Allan 2001, Soffer 1999, Scheumann and Stifler 1998, Amery and Wolf 2000). Even those authors who concentrated their efforts on the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict remained primarily on a level of national policies, technical analyses, power relations, hydropolitics, national security or internal political issues (Zeitoun 2008, Messerschmid 2005, Soffer 1999, Trottier 2000).

Socio-political dynamics within Palestinian society¹ are hardly covered in this vast body of literature, with the exception of the work of Jan Selby (2003), who also described socio-political features and internal disputes between the Palestinian people and their local water authority, and between the local water authority and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), primarily focussing on the areas of Bethlehem and Hebron (Selby 2003). However, although Selby mentions the voices raised on the streets of Bethlehem, water protests were not part of his research (Selby 2003: 165). Nevertheless, the water scarcity has been the subject of some protests in the West Bank, directed towards their Palestinian leadership and institutions. Therefore the water crisis is, to a certain extent, a force of mobilization and dissent in the West Bank².

¹ Palestinian society is taken to mean Palestinian inhabitants of the geopolitical Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza

² Although the Palestinian Territories consist of Gaza and the West Bank, this study focusses on protest in the West Bank only, as political and social situations are substantially different in the two areas. To research this topic in Gaza would require a different study and limited access to this area inhibits the researcher.

Palestinians face a severe water shortage in many areas of the Palestinian Territories, with per capita water withdrawals being calculated as low as 123 liters per capita per day in 2007, in the West Bank, contrary to 544 lpcd for Israelis (World Bank 2009: 13). It has been estimated that Palestinians in the West Bank consume, for domestic use, an average of 50 lpcd (World Bank 2009: 17). Other estimates take into account the disparity between different areas with substantial differences in domestic consumption between urban areas, refugee camps and rural areas, in order of highest to lowest consumption (PHG 2006). This great disparity of water consumption within the Palestinian Territories could further create sources of grievance, as some areas consume less than 20 lpcd (World Bank 2009: 17). The minimum required amount of water for domestic use and a decent quality of life in a developing country is calculated to be 100 lpcd (Falkenmark 1989 in Falkenmark 1997: 930, WHO). Therefore, the Palestinian Territories in general, and some areas in particular, face a severe water crisis.

Reasons for this lack of water in the West Bank, and the extensive difference between water consumption between Israel and the Palestinian Territories, are manifold and numerous books, articles and reports have attempted to analyze its causes (Selby 2003, Zeitoun 2008, Messerschmid 2005, Shuval 2005, World Bank 2009). Many indicate a factor of deprivation in their analyses: water is, to a certain extent, withheld from the Palestinians, either by Israeli procedures, control or priorities, or Palestinian mismanagement.

This study analyzes the question: how does water deprivation instigate forces of mobilization and dissent in the West Bank and to what extent could these events give rise to more collective action or political violence? To answer this question four issues need to be analyzed. First, in which ways are Palestinians in the West Bank deprived of water, and how do they perceive this deprivation? Second, how did the water deprivation instigate forces of mobilization in the West Bank? And what were the incentives and mechanisms for the Palestinian protests? Third,

how does the water deprivation create forces of dissent? Last, why has a social movement not emerged and what is the likelihood that Palestinians would resort to political violence?

The causal relation between water deprivation and mobilization is not assumed, as other incentives are discussed, which, taken together, has instigated forces of mobilization. Relative deprivation will be used primarily to explain the motivation expressed by the protesters. Further, the lack of a basic need is assumed to have some influence on political opinion, and internal social relations. Therefore, this assumption has been explored in the case studies.

2. Methodology

As literature on water protests in the West Bank is sparse, this research relied primarily on interviews with members of the communities in which the protest took place, both protesters and those who did not partake in the actions. Further, interviews were conducted with key figures in the water sector in the West Bank, both governmental officials and academics. In total, twenty-eight interviews were conducted, of which eighteen with Palestinians living in Aida, Dheisheh and Azza camp, Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud. To ensure the comparability of the answers, the interviews with local Palestinians were largely standardized with forty-four questions in eight different categories: extent of water deprivation, origins of protest, protest norms, norms of violence, political dissent, internal relations and future predictions. This division of interview questions structured the interviews from relatively easy discussable questions, to more sensitive issues. Also, questions were based on indicators from analytic frameworks used, to be able to analyze the results. With exception of two interviews with Palestinians in izbt Jaloud, who were interviewed using survey-type of questions, to make communication easier.

Many of the interviews were conducted in cooperation with a Palestinian translator. The translator differed in each community, and sometimes also within a community itself. This enabled

access to locals whom would normally not be accessible. The interviewees were not specifically chosen, but were the result of a so-called 'snowball effect', initiated by the first translator. Nevertheless, a variety of people from different backgrounds and of different ages, both male and female, were interviewed. Disadvantages of this effect might be that some of the interviewees could have been like-minded people. Further, the translators were not professionals and might not have translated with the utmost accuracy. Also, as most interviewees knew their translator, personal relations could come into play. However, knowing the translator also could also have given them the confidence to confide in the interviewer when discussing politically sensitive issues. Sometimes there were multiple people present and this might have affected their intentions or confidence to answer some questions, either positively or negatively. Another advantage of the use of translators are that the interviewees were free to speak in their own language.

This research uses different case studies of communities where there has been a protest last year. Although the protests in Aida camp and Al-Jiftlik were extensively covered in the media, the other protests in Dheisheh camp, Azza camp and izbt Jaluod were found after talking to Palestinians involved in these areas. The year of 2008 was taken as a reference point for interviewees as their recollection of these events is crucial to the research, and in that year it was the first time for the water protests in Aida camp, Azza camp and Al-Jiftlik.

Literature research is primarily based on books, articles and reports covering the water situation in the Palestinian Territories. Further, online newspaper articles from local Palestine news agencies were used to locate the protests and any specific problems in the water situation last year. Theoretical literature on the causes of the water crisis was compared to the interviews to analyze differences in perception and reality. Further, frameworks guide the research and are the basis for some predictions for the future.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Deprivation and Processes of Micro-mobilization

Ted Gurr (1970) believes that collective violent actions are the result of an intolerable gap between *value*³ *expectations* and *value capabilities*, produced by aggregate hardship in a collective entity (Gurr 1970: 24). Therefore the theory is based on personal feelings of people who feel they are deprived of something that they believe they are entitled to, but also enduring a certain extent of hardship, while there is an opportunity for them to change their condition, as they compare themselves to a similar group that is more advantaged. Value expectations are the average value positions to which a person feels entitled to, while value capabilities involve the average value positions a person believes would he would be able to of obtain or preserve (Gurr 1970: 27).

Gurr (1970) identified three types of relative deprivation: *decremental deprivation*, *aspirational deprivation* and *progressive deprivation*. Decremental deprivation occurs when expectations remain static, while achievements are perceived to become less. Contrary, aspirational deprivation takes place when expectations rise and achievements remain the same. Last, progressive deprivations prevails when expectations rise, expecting continual progression, and achievements follow, but either do not live up to them, or start to fall (Gurr 1970: 46-56). Although absolute deprivation is present in the severe lack of water in the Palestinian Territories, relative deprivation can be discovered internally, as some areas are more deprived than others. In protests around water in the West Bank, a combination of progressive deprivation and decremental deprivation could be observed. Locally, expectations of the Palestinians for their Water Authority rise, while the achievements of the latter cannot keep up, and in some cases actually decrease. At the same time,

³ Ted Gurr (1970) uses values as something that is strived for and identified three categories: *welfare values*, *power values* and *interpersonal values* (Gurr 1970: 25). Gurr (1970) explains *welfare values* to involve those which contribute to your physical well-being as well as self-realization. *Power values* relate to the extent to which a person can have influence on the actions of another person, which in politics apply to the participation in the political structure and desires for self-determination and security, such as freedom from oppressive policies. *Interpersonal values* revolve around interactions with other people, from which psychological satisfaction is sought, such as in status, communality and ideational coherence (Gurr 1970: 25-26).

national expectations remain the same, as Israel still controls the resources, while achievements are failing, as their water situation deteriorates. The theory of relative deprivation will serve as framework to explain the motivation behind the protests. However, incentives need to be in place for people to turn their motivation into protests. These incentives are discussed by using Karl-Dieter Opp's and Wolfgang Roehl's (1990) theory of processes of micro-mobilization.

Opp and Roehl (1990) understand repression to sometimes promote mobilization after it has launched micro-mobilization processes (Opp, Roehl 1990). These micro-mobilization processes could be seen as processes initiated by relative deprivation, as a form of (perceived) repression, thus the incentives used by Opp and Roehl combined with deprivation and included in the analysis of the water protests in the West Bank for a better understanding of the instigation of mobilization.

Opp and Roehl differentiate three different types of incentives that repression is able to have an impact on: *social incentives*, *moral incentives* and *public good incentives* (Opp, Roehl 1990: 524). Social incentives are embedded in social relations as it entails the expectations of the person's environment and informal positive and negative rewards or sanctions that might result from joining the protest following repression. Further, moral incentives are identified as the *protest norms* and *norms of violence*. The former relates to the extent a person feels the moral need to participate in a protest, the latter to the extent to which a person thinks that violence is justified to this means. Last, the public goods incentives entail feelings of system alienation and the influence a person thinks to have by means of political action (Opp, Roehl 1990: 524). The public good in the latter explanation thus entails the new changes that will be made to the current political situation. Opp and Roehl (1990) further believe that the micro-mobilization processes are more likely to occur when a person is directly subjected to the repression, the repression is considered illegitimate by themselves and their environment and they are part of protest-encouraging groups (Opp and Roehl 1990: 526). In the case-studies, these incentives are believed to have turned motivations into actions.

3.2. Confrontational Protests and Contentious Politics

Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow have analyzed performances of collective action, such as demonstrations and protests, and their theories attempt to explain the mechanisms and processes of such public displays of contention. The framework of 'Contentious Politics' (Tilly, Tarrow 2007) is utilized for analyzing mobilization around water issues in the West Bank. Contentious politics entail the making of claims that pertain to the interest of another actor, leading to collective action wherein the government has either an active or passive role (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 4). Water protests in the West Bank are contentious political actions, as the Palestinian actors make claims that bear on the interest of a government by means contentious performances. The intricacy of the claim making relations in the West Bank becomes clear as claims are made pertaining to the interests of either, or both, the Israeli and the Palestinian government.

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) define different mechanisms of contentious politics, with *brokerage*, *diffusion* and *coordinated action* being the most significant. Brokerage is a mechanism in which new connections are made, while diffusion leads to the spread of the contention in form or issue. Either both of these mechanisms, or each one individually, can result in coordinated action, in which at least two actors participate in making claims on the same object (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 31). These mechanisms are important to comprehend the nature of the water protests in the West Bank, especially in the case of the relation between the protests of the refugee camps in Bethlehem.

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) give significance to the regime in which the contentious event, or episode, takes place. They use the concept of *political opportunity structure* to explain the connection between regimes, institutions and repertoires. It deals with those factors that promote or obstruct collective action and possible alterations to them (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 49). Being aware of these factors will facilitate the analysis of water protests in the West Bank, as regime change, after the Oslo II Interim Agreements and the establishment of the Palestinian Water Authority, facilitated these protests.

Although mobilization has taken place in the form of these water protests, it has not transformed into a full-scale social movement. This needs to be explained, as Clemens Messerschmid recounts ‘given the depth of the water crisis, it is just absolutely striking, the silence surrounding water’⁴. Therefore, the mechanisms of mobilization and demobilization need to be analyzed further. An important process is the upward scale shift, which involves diffusion, higher coordination, brokerage, emulation and can create more social cohesion between, sometimes previously unconnected, groups (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 94-95).

This study uses the theory of relative deprivation as a framework to explain the motivations behind the protests, as they reflect the reasons given by the protesters. However, other incentives need to be in place for people to turn their motivation into protests. These incentives are derived from those in micro-mobilization processes, to create an aggregate of those mechanisms that drove the protesters. Last, overall processes and mechanisms are derived from the theory of contentious politics, as to to analyze the basis and potential for a social movement and possibility of political violence. Therefore, these theories are used in order of magnitude: from psychological motivations, compared to the context, to associated social incentives and local mechanisms, to larger processes.

4. Water deprivation in the West Bank

Before analyzing the effect of water deprivation in the West Bank on the Palestinians, it is important to understand the context of water allocation and the difficulties encountered. Palestinians were granted restricted control of a number of water sources after signing the 1995 Oslo II Interim Agreement. However, this control is very limited and it has been argued by Jan Selby (2003) that the Oslo II Agreement was made “to dress up domination as ‘co-operation’” with regard to Israeli-

⁴ Author’s interview with Clemens Messerschmid, hydrogeologist, on 25 May 2009

Palestinian relations (Selby 2003: 96). The asymmetry in allocation of these transboundary water sources, primarily focussing on groundwater resources, gives insight into the extent of deprivation.

4.1. Sources of deprivation in the West Bank

Three important freshwater resources lie beneath the ground of the West Bank, namely the Western, North-Eastern and Eastern Mountain aquifer. The Western and North-Eastern aquifer are shared with Israel. Most of the recharge in these aquifers are derived from rain and snow on the Palestinian side, from where it flows down into Israel (World Bank 2009: 9). The most important transboundary surface water resource the Jordan River system, which consists of various rivers, lakes and wadis. However, the Palestinians are not allowed access to the Jordan river water sources and are only granted limited access to the aquifers, as stipulated by the 1995 Oslo II Agreement (Zeitoun 2008: 48).

The Oslo II Agreement was signed in 1995 between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and would transfer power and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the, soon to be erected, Palestinian Authority (PA). The Oslo II agreement, as set out in Articles XI, XII, XIII, divided the Palestinian Territories in different areas of control. Area A would be under full control of the PA, Area B would be under Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control with the PA being responsible for the public order for Palestinian inhabitants, and Area C would be under under full Israeli control, except over Palestinian inhabitants. The Agreement followed the Declaration of Principle on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed in Oslo, in 1993, and it aspired to put the previous agreement into effect, as stated in the Preamble. Also, the Interim Agreement was only intended to be for a transitional period, not exceeding five years from signing the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area on May 4, 1994. However, it has far exceeded this time-frame.

The Oslo II Agreement included annex III, article 40, twenty-five paragraphs on water and sewage. The first paragraph was the recognition of Palestinian water rights that would be negotiated upon in future permanent status negotiations. Also, while paragraph 3.a. states to maintain the quantities of water that were used, the Palestinians would receive additional quantities of water from the Eastern Aquifer. These future needs were estimated, in paragraph 6, at 70-80 mcm/year, while immediate needs for domestic use were calculated to be 28.6 mcm/year, in paragraph 7, to be made available during the interim period. To implement new projects, the Israeli-Palestinian cooperative Joint Water Committee (JWC) was established. This Committee would be responsible for all water and sewage related issues in the West Bank and its responsibilities and obligations were described in Schedule 8.

It would appear that the Oslo II Agreement granted the Palestinians more power and responsibility over the groundwater resources and future creation of new projects. However, it de-facto limited Palestinian involvement while carrying the burden of accountability for the water problems. Every water project in the West Bank has to obtain approval from the JWC. However, this is a lengthy bureaucratic process and many projects are delayed or rejected, obstructing infrastructure development (World Bank 2009: 48). Further, Israel prohibits the drilling of wells without these permits with an army order (B'Tselem 2008).

Moreover, the disparity between Israeli and Palestinian consumption rates is great. According to the CIA World Factbook (2009), Israeli population is less than double of the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip combined. Nevertheless, Israelis consume five to six times more than Palestinians with total Palestinian consumption being less than half of Israeli domestic consumption (Zeitoun 2008: 135). Furthermore most Palestinians rely on tanker water to supplement their limited water quantities. However, this water, mostly supplied by Israeli water company Mekorot, is very expensive. In 2007, it was estimated that the price ranged between 15-30 NIS/m³. Consequently, households spend an average of 7.4 per cent of their income on water (PHG

2006). Furthermore, as water tankers are part of a private sector, there are no guarantees for the water quality. On occasion, some Palestinians have been able to take water from illegal connections, or unlicensed wells, which are primarily located in the North of the West Bank, where groundwater can be reached with relatively shallow wells. However, around ten per cent of the Palestinian population in the West Bank are not connected to a water network (World Bank 2009).

The limitations arising from the Joint Water Committee made it difficult to maintain and develop the water infrastructure in the West Bank. Furthermore, the PWA lacks the legitimacy and capacity to solve the water issues, as the water sector is de-facto fragmented, dispersing power over various local organizations and Israeli authorities, while the PWA assumes responsibility for the future Palestinian state (Trottier 2000). Also, as the PWA is focussing its efforts on direct competition with the Israelis on the control over water resources, emphasizing the asymmetrical allocation at every opportunity, Trottier (2000) argued that this approach is undermining the system as it would justify stealing water, as that would be in the spirit of the national struggle (Trottier 2000: 46). Another source of grievance with relation to the PWA is that the people are not seen as actual parties in political decisions or even information about these decisions. The Palestinians are not part of any debates on water issues. Messerschmid sees the PWA as patronizing the Palestinian in many respects, being ‘the benevolent father who does it for the kids’⁵. Herewith relations are polarized between the Palestinians and the PWA.

Further polarity lies in the water abstraction produced after the Oslo II Agreement. Palestinian wells drilled after Oslo II produced, on average, 12.5 mcm/year by 2006, and per capita consumption had in effect decreased (Zeitoun et al. 2009: 155). Contrary, Israeli abstraction from the Western aquifer, exceeds the pre-set limits of the Oslo II Agreement by 72 mcm/year on average (Zeitoun et al. 2009: 154). Also, Israel draws about 44 mcm/year from the Jordan Valley and allocates only twenty per cent of the Mountain Aquifer to the Palestinians, while preventing the

⁵ Author’s interview with Clemens Messerschmid, hydrogeologist, on 25 May 2009

PWA to develop additional water sources (B'Tselem 2008). Therefore there are physical sources of water deprivation in the West Bank, as there is a great disparity of water consumption between areas within the Palestinian Territories, water is allocated unequally between Israel and the Palestinians, and because of the limitations of the PWA to develop water sources and attain a legitimate status.

4.2. Deprivation as Motivation

As seen above, there are physical sources of water deprivation in the West Bank. In this section, the case-studies will be analyzed, uncovering the motivations of the protests. The theory of relative deprivation will not be taken to mean a direct link between deprivation and collective action, but will only be utilized to uncover the motives of the protesters. Besides the feeling of deprivation, other incentives need to be in place for people to be moved into protest. However, it seems that most protesters express feelings of anger and hardship to be the cause of the protest. Therefore, these motives are analyzed in the context of relative deprivation.

4.2.1. Refugees in Bethlehem

Last year, the water shortage was particularly dire in summer resulting from a severe drought (B'Tselem 2008). In Bethlehem, this problem was aggravated by cuts in water supply from both Mekorot as well as the West Bank Water Department (WBWD), because of disruptions in the pumping stations; while the needed amount to supply Bethlehem with a sufficient amount of water is around 27.000 m³ per day, before August in 2008 they received around 13.000 m³ and after August they were left with a mere 8.000-10.000 m³ a day⁶. However, there seems to be a difference in water consumption in different areas of Bethlehem, primarily due to the low-pressure water

⁶ Author's interview with Dr. Simon al-Araj, director of the Water, Sanitation and Sewage Authority (WSSA) in Bethlehem, on 20 May 2009.

supply, which affects the higher areas the most. Although it is said that inhabitants of Bethlehem went without water for periods of ten to twenty days in the summer of 2008⁷, it seems that refugees in the camps sometimes had no running water for up to forty days⁸.

On Tuesday, September 9, 2008, inhabitants of the Aida refugee camp took to the streets to protest the water shortage, being accompanied by several residents of Azza refugee camp. Violence broke out between the protesters and the Palestinian police and one resident was seriously injured. Although this protest attracted the most media attention, primarily because of the violence and the presence of the Palestinian Prime Minister in the adjacent Intercontinental Hotel, it was not the only protest in Bethlehem last year. The other refugee camps of Dheisheh and Azza also had (confrontational) protests, where streets were blocked and tires burnt. The refugee camps are typically the areas most affected by the shortage in general, and droughts in particular. As Dr. Simon al-Araj explains, the small area does not lend itself to many rooftop tanks and low-pressure water has to travel upwards to reach most inhabitants. Also, the small diameter of the pipes is not suited for supplying the current amount of households. Since the pipes were laid, over twenty years ago, the population has grown significantly. Furthermore, decaying infrastructure is exemplified by the contamination of water, when sewage was leaking into a water pipe in an area of the Dheisheh refugee camp in May 2009⁹.

The protest in Aida refugee camp started a period of time after a substantial amount of water was cut by Mekorot and the West Bank Water Department. According to both protesters as non-protesters, the severe water shortage was the main reason for the protest, as they did not receive water for about forty days¹⁰. Furthermore, in 2008, the shortage of water began as early as April, while usually the summer shortage starts from around June¹¹. Also Dheisheh had around three

⁷ Author's interview with Dr. Simon al-Araj, director of the Water, Sanitation and Sewage Authority (WSSA) in Bethlehem, on 20 May 2009.

⁸ Author's interviews with several residents from Aida, Azza and Dheisheh refugee camps, in April and May 2009.

⁹ Author's interview with Dr. Simon al-Araj, director of the Water, Sanitation and Sewage Authority (WSSA) in Bethlehem, on 20 May 2009.

¹⁰ Author's interviews with several residents from Aida refugee camp, in April 2009.

¹¹ Author's interview with a student from Aida Camp, who joined the protest, on 28 April 2009

protests in the summer of 2008 caused by the lack of water¹². A baker from Dheisheh camp related that they did not even have water for praying¹³. Furthermore, in April of 2008, Azza camp protested the lack of water, after they did not receive water for over a month, when usually water is available every twenty days¹⁴.

The water crisis produces innate feelings of exasperation and disgrace. One of the protesters in Aida refugee camp described a feeling of humiliation and frustration resulting from the water crisis: ‘We feel we are not human beings, as human beings have the right to drink water and we do not have water to drink in summer’. He further explained that the water shortage inhibits them from leading a normal life, as the first thing they think about in the morning is how to get water¹⁵. Another student in Aida also made it clear how water is important for them as Muslims. For them, water is not only needed to pray, but taking a shower is also necessary if a woman has her period and if a married couple have had sexual relations. Therefore they have priorities for the use of water, and praying is the most important one¹⁶.

Women also expressed feelings of anger and humiliation. A mother of eight children felt angry because she had responsibilities like cooking and providing water to her children and through her anger even hit her son to force him to bring water¹⁷. Also, a kindergarten teacher from Azza camp felt depressed about the situation, as she could not teach the children to wash their hands or brush their teeth, as there is not enough water¹⁸. Furthermore, when the water comes, it only comes for a short period of time and this creates some anxiety during those water scarce months. The water tanks storing water are located on the roofs of the houses and most people have their own

¹² Author’s interview with a housewife from Dheisheh camp, who joined the protests, on 5 May 2009

¹³ Author’s interview with a baker from Dheisheh camp, who joined the protests, on 5 May 2009

¹⁴ Author’s interview with a kindergarten teacher in Azza camp, who participated in the protest in Azza, on 12 May 2009

¹⁵ Author’s interview with a student from Aida Camp, who joined the protest, on 28 April 2009

¹⁶ Author’s interview with a student from Aida Camp, who did not join the protest, on 28 April 2009

¹⁷ Author’s interview with a housewife from Aida Camp, who did not protest, on 29 April 2009

¹⁸ Author’s interview with a kindergarten teacher in Azza camp, who participated in the protest in Azza, on 12 May 2009.

motors to pump the water up to the tanks. However, they always need to be aware that the water can come at any moment, as they cannot afford to miss it.

The cause of the water crisis is generally believed to be the unfair allocation of water by Israel, who is perceived to control the sources and is reluctant to supply the Palestinians with a sufficient amount of water. However, people are also critical of the internal issues facing Palestinian institutions and water networks, such as mismanagement, misdistribution and the aging water infrastructure. A volunteer from Azza described how he sees other places having more water, even though they are merely a street away from the camp¹⁹. Also, some refugees in Dheisheh believed that Aida camp generally has more water than them, as there is an important hotel near the camp, and most refugees of the three camps believed the city areas of Bethlehem have more water²⁰. A trader in Aida camp believed Dheisheh and Azza have less of a problem, as Dheisheh is supposed to have a spare wheel and Azza takes water from the same water line as the University²¹. These differences are believed to be caused, not only by the network itself, but also by the distribution policies within the Water Authority of Bethlehem. Furthermore, in summer, they see on television, how Israeli settlers in the West Bank water their lawns and swim in their pools²², which is attributed to the inequality in the allocation of water between Israelis and Palestinians. Some trace this inequality back to the Oslo II Agreements, because although the population has grown, the water supply has remained the same, creating this crisis²³.

Besides Israel, both the Water Authority and the PA are held responsible for the crisis to a great extent. Furthermore, most do not seem to discern between the different institutions of the PWA, the WSSA, the WBWD, and the PA on this issue²⁴. A trader from Aida camp believed the lack of water in Bethlehem was due to a failing authority, as he knew of other places in the West

¹⁹ Author's interview with a volunteer from Azza camp, who joined the protest in Azza and Aida, on 12 May 2009

²⁰ Author's interview with several refugees from Dheisheh, Aida and Azza camp, 28 April 2009 - 12 May 2009

²¹ Author's interview with trader from Aida camp, who participated in the protest, on 29 April 2009

²² Author's interview with kindergarten teacher in Azza camp, who joined the protest, on 12 May 2009

²³ Author's interview with student from Aida camp, who participated in the protest, 28 April 2009

²⁴ Author's interview with various inhabitants of Aida, Al-Azza, Dheisheh camps 28 April 2009 - 12 May 2009

Bank where they do not have a problem with water, such as Ramallah and Nablus, and other cities like Hebron believed to face less of a problem than Bethlehem²⁵. Geographical factors are not taken into account in such reasoning, as it is easier to drill a shallow well in, for example, the North of the West Bank. Also, Hebron in general faces even severe water shortages as many communities there are not even connected to a network. However, it is clear that Palestinians do see, or believe, that some areas consume more water and comparisons and accusations are quickly made.

In the refugee camps in Bethlehem they feel deprived of water and they express this deprivation to be the cause of the protests. They believe that there is great disparity between the allocation and consumption of water and water is, to a certain extent, withheld from them, as Palestinians in relation to Israelis, and as a 'group' within an area to the rest of the area, be it within the area of Bethlehem or Bethlehem compared to other cities in the West Bank. Nevertheless, other incentives need to be in place to protest the severe lack of water, as many areas in the West Bank suffer the same hardship. These incentives will be explained by the theory of Opp and Roehl (1990) in the following chapter. However, first the refugee camps in Bethlehem are compared to Al-Jiftlik and Izbt Jaluod, as the physical causes for the water shortage in the latter places are different.

4.2.2. Al-Jiftlik and Izbt Jaluod

Al-Jiftlik is a town in the upper Jordan Valley and therefore is designated Area C. This has grave implication for the Palestinian inhabitants, as Israel has full control of the area, as stipulated in the Oslo Agreements. There is a severe lack of water, electricity and other basic services. Water in this region suffers from salinity and therefore cannot be used for drinking. Stringent restrictions prevent the building of any permanent infrastructure, therefore Al-Jiftlik's inhabitants live in houses of nylon and zinc. The Israeli occupation is more visible in this area because of the many restrictions. Al-Jiftlik's protest was organized by a group of women, who went to the governor's

²⁵ Author's interview with trader from Aida camp, who participated in the protest, 29 April 2009

office in Jericho on June 11, 2008, to protest the lack of water, electricity and basic services. However, when there was no change, they went with two busses of 150 women, and five men, to the PLC and PWA in Ramallah on July 13, 2008, and finally talked to Dr. Shaddad Attili about their water situation. The protest in Ramallah got much media attention, also as some politicians joined the peaceful march to show solidarity, like Dr. Mustafa Barghouti who acted as a spokesperson for the demonstration.

Although the Israeli occupation is described as the main cause of their problems, they also blame the Palestinian government for their hardships. A farmer in Al-Jiftlik explained how the government can help them with some things, however they do not. He does recognize the restrictions that the government faces, but believes the government could do more to alleviate some of the hardships by providing basic services²⁶. One of the female organizers described that although the PA can have little intervention in the area, they expect more of them: ‘Why we blame them? Because during our meeting with Oxfam, and the letters we sent to the PWA, we realized after a period of time, they did nothing with the Israeli. They did not present the Al-Jiftlik-file with the Joint Water Committee’²⁷. Moreover, in Al-Jiftlik they also feel the distress from the lack of water. One of the female organizers, and head of the women's association in Al-Jiftlik, explained how women feel the shortage more than men. She described how men leave the house during most of the day, while women have to deal with the children, and cook the food. They feel helpless in summer, when it is 50 degrees Celsius and their children want to drink: ‘we are suffering the pain of our children’.²⁸

Dr. Shaddad Attili, head of the PWA, knows the case of Al-Jiftlik very well. They need a water network and a reservoir, but the PWA is restricted by the Joint Water Committee. In this case, they even had to go further after the approval of the JWC to the thirteen departments of the Civil

²⁶ Author’s interview with farmer in Al-Jiftlik, who did not participate in the protest, on 19 May 2009

²⁷ Author’s interview with head of women’s association in Al-Jiftlik, who co-organized the protest, on 19 May 2009

²⁸ Author’s interview with head of women’s association in Al-Jiftlik, who co-organized the protest, on 19 May 2009

Administration. The project in Al-Jiftlik was blocked by the Archeological Department and they forced the Palestinians to pay for the archeologists to come to the area. After a year and paying more than 80.000 NIS, they are implementing the project. Now, they also need the reservoir, and the whole process starts over again²⁹. Although the people in Al-Jiftlik feel deprived by the PWA, in this case, the PWA has de-facto no control over the projects. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Al-Jiftlik feel deprived of water by both the PWA as Israel.

Farmers in Izbt Jaluod also protested the water shortage last year. In the Qalqilya district most of the water problems are caused by the building of the Wall, which cuts off wells from Palestinian farmers' lands. The protest occurred in August 2008, when Prime Minister Salam Fayyad came to the area. The cause of the protest was the limited water supply, resulting from a malfunctioning groundwater well³⁰. They went to the Ministry of Agriculture many times to complain, but the reply was that they are bound to the Oslo II Agreement and could not give a permit³¹. It is important to note that the protest was organized because the farmers were in need of agricultural water for their lands, while the protests in Bethlehem concerned primarily domestic water and the protest in Al-Jiftlik concerned both, but with an emphasis on domestic water.

In Izbt Jaluod, the Palestinian institutions were also blamed for the shortage of water and as they are primarily farmers, they direct their anger towards the Ministry of Agriculture. Also the Oslo II Agreement is seen as the root of the problem by the head of the local village council. He found the Palestinian negotiator during Oslo II 'hideous', as water is too important to give to the Israeli. He finally asserted: 'Policy killed us'³². Furthermore, a farmer who joined the protest, felt that the water shortage hinders him in living the life that he want, which makes him angry³³. As a farmer, his life depends on a sufficient supply of water.

²⁹ Author's interview with Dr. Shaddad Attili, head of the PWA, on 25 May 2009

³⁰ Author's interview with the head of the village council of izbt Jaluad, who organized the protest, on 10 May 2009

³¹ Author's interview with the head of the village council of izbt Jaluad, who organized the protest, on 10 May 2009

³² Author's interview with the head of the village council of izbt Jaluad, who organized the protest, on 10 May 2009

³³ Author's interview with a farmer from izbt Jaluad, who participated in the protest, on 9 May 2009

4.2.3. Motivations

Although it is difficult to explore the motivations of those who protested the lack of water, it is clear that they themselves express the lack to be the main reason. Furthermore, they indicate that this is a feeling of deprivation as they believe they are entitled to a larger supply of water to their area, as to increase their consumption, while comparing their situation to that of Israelis and other Palestinians. Furthermore, they see opportunity to change their situation in the form of the Palestinian Water Authority. However, this organization cannot meet the demand of the people, as they are suffering from both Israeli restrictions as well as mismanagement.

Since Oslo II, the expectations of the Palestinians have risen, as they believed their situation would be improved by the agreements made and the subsequent establishment of the PWA. However, since 1995, the situation has become worse as more restrictions are imposed, the infrastructure is decaying, water is over-extracted leading to brackish water sources, and the water supplied to Palestinian areas is not enough for the growing population. Moreover, the disillusionment is even greater as their own government cannot help them. This progressive deprivation can be seen as a motivation to protest against Palestinian institutions. The level of value expectations, especially those related to welfare and power values, grew without being accompanied by the value capabilities.

However, other incentives need to be in place, as other areas in the West Bank, who also suffer from the water crisis, do not initiate protests. These other incentives and factors explaining the protests in the refugee camps in Bethlehem, Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaluod are analyzed in the following chapter. They are also important to understand the probability of future actions, or social movements around water issues.

6. Mobilization and dissent

This chapter analyzes the different incentives, presented by Opp and Roehl (1990), that have played a role in the water protests last year. The different case-studies will also be compared as differences arise between them. Furthermore, the theory of contentious politics will explain the general mechanisms of these protests. The assumption remains that deprivation is the underlying motivation for the protesters, however the incentives discussed in this chapter are crucial to the actual instigation of the protests, as deprivation alone does not lead people into protest.

5.1. Contextual Incentives

Opp and Roehl (1990) created a context in which the micro-mobilization processes were more likely to occur. It is more probable if a person is directly subjected to the repression, the repression is believed to be illegitimate by themselves and their environment and if they are part of protest-encouraging groups (Opp and Roehl 1990). Although their theory was intended to discover when repression of protests would rather encourage protests instead of being successful at deterring them, the incentives Opp and Roehl (1990) designed could be construed to be incited by a context of deprivation. The reaction could be similar as deprivation is comparable to perceived general repression by Israel in the unequal allocation of water and by the PA in its misdistribution of it within the West Bank. The latter is especially the case in Bethlehem, as some refugees feel they are deliberately deprived of water by the local water authority as a result of non-payment³⁴. In the case of Al-Jiftlik it becomes apparent with relation to Israeli restrictive policies that they believe are intended to drive them out of the area³⁵.

In the previous chapter it became clear that the Palestinians in the case-studies are directly subjected to the deprivational repression and that they and their environment believe it to be

³⁴ Author's interview with various refugees from Aida, Azza and Dheisheh camp, 28 April 2009 - 12 May 2009

³⁵ Author's interview with head of women's association in Al-Jiftlik, who co-organized the protest, on 19 May 2009

illegitimate. They face a severe lack of water, especially in summer, which is essentially attributed to the repressive measures by Israel as the one who controls the water resources and its allocation. They believe they are deliberately deprived of this resource and therefore they find the measures illegitimate. Furthermore, some referred to the illegitimacy of the Oslo II Agreement, which, for them, created the current water situation.

It can furthermore be argued that Palestinians in general are part of a national protest-encouraging group, as non-violent protests have been common across villages in the West Bank. However, the government might not always be so supportive, as the protest in Aida was violently suppressed by Palestinian Authority police. Nevertheless, the protest-encouraging environment in the case-studies can be found on a much more local level.

Firstly, the refugee camps in Bethlehem have been the stage for many protests over the years, especially in the Aida and Dheisheh camps. For example, there have been many protests against the Wall being built in Aida camp, which has resulted in many young Palestinians in Aida being taken prisoner. But also the War in Gaza, in 2008 and 2009, has been the subject of protests in the camp³⁶. A trader in Aida camp responded that friends and family reacted normal to him joining the protest as all of them were also participating³⁷. Also Dheisheh camp is known for its protests, such as the children's protest in 2006 against the Israeli attacks on Gaza. Moreover, Dheisheh camp previously had protests on the water situation, for example in 1999, when there was a severe drought causing a great water shortage. Also, in Dheisheh, it is usual for women to participate as well³⁸. These protests are often organized, primarily by youth, but include participants of various ages, both men as women.

Secondly, the people of Al-Jiftlik were also encouraged by a previous successful protest they had over a local health clinic. In 2008, there was a governmental health clinic that was connected to

³⁶ Author's interview with a math teacher in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 29 April 2009

³⁷ Author's interview with trader from Aida camp, who participated in the protest, on 29 April 2009

³⁸ Author's interview with housewife in Dheisheh camp, who participated in the protest, on 5 May 2009

electricity. However, the people living around the clinic were not connected and therefore they connected a line to their houses. To stop them from tapping into this electricity line, the Palestinian Authority closed the clinic for three months. This clinic was essential for them, as otherwise they had to travel long distances and through Israeli checkpoints to reach a health facility. Therefore some people in Al-Jiftlik organized a protest, together with the head of the Palestinian Negotiation Committee. They went to the governor of Jericho and prevented him from moving his car by blocking the road. Later, the Minister of Health reopened the clinic³⁹.

Lastly, although izbt Jaloud is not known to have had many protests, the farmers and local council do keep pressure on the authorities. The head of the local council believes this pressure is the only way of changing something. For example, he invites media to talk to them about the problems they are facing. Furthermore, there are meetings with other villages, some of whom have committees that make protests, in Qalqilya to talk to each other about these issues and to act together against restrictive policies⁴⁰.

Overall, in all areas studied, both protesters and non-protesters believed that their family and friends would support them when they would join a protest⁴¹. Although it is difficult to assert that the protesters in Bethlehem, Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud were in protest-encouraging groups, it can be observed that they operated in a protest-encouraging environment, one being stronger than the other. Besides this general context that makes micro-mobilization processes more plausible, the incentives for mobilization are analyzed and applied to the case-studies, to be able to understand their main mechanisms.

³⁹ Author's interview with female organizer of the protest, 19 May 2009

⁴⁰ Author's interview with the head of the local council in izbt Jaloud, 10 May 2009

⁴¹ Author's interview with various Palestinians living in Aida, Dheisheh and Azza camp, Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud, on 28 April 2009 to 19 May 2009

5.2. Incentives for Mobilization

5.2.1. *Social incentives and Moral incentives*

According to Opp and Roehl (1990), social incentives involve the expectations of the social environment and informal positive rewards and negative sanctions that might follow participation in the protests (Opp and Roehl 1990). As stated above, every person interviewed in Aida, Dheisheh, Azza, Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud responded that their family would support them in protesting. Therefore, there seem to be strong positive rewards, as the protesters are supported by their family and friends, which might positively influence their position.

However, in Aida it also became clear that not participating might bring about negative sanctions and that the participation in the protest could bring relative positive rewards. A math teacher, who did not participate in the protest because he thought it was unorganized, chaotic and people were not well behaved, felt social pressure after this event. He heard neighbors telling him ‘yes, you are lucky, you have the water so you don’t need to protest. If you were suffering like us, you would have gone to the streets and protested’. Therefore, if there were to be another protest, he would join it⁴². If he would join the protest, he would be socially rewarded, but only because of opposite reasoning, as if he did not participate, negative social sanctions would follow.

Also in Dheisheh camp, not participating in the protest might bring about negative social sanctions. A baker expressed his feeling about those who did not participate in the protest: ‘I get angry from them, but what can I do? I think they should participate, all of them should participate’. The reason for his anger is that he aims to have water for his family⁴³. A taxi-driver in Dheisheh believed that participation in the protest depends on the degree of suffering: ‘If they suffer too much they would share’. Again, a negative social sanction might result from not participating in the protest, even though that person might suffer the same lack of water, as they would be seen to be

⁴² Author’s interview with a math teacher in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 29 April 2009

⁴³ Author’s interview with a baker in Dheisheh camp, who participated in the protest, on 5 May 2009

better off. This became a reason for the math teacher in Aida, following the social pressure, to participate in the next protest.

Moral incentives to protest are derived from the moral need to participate in a protest, the protest norms, and to what extent violence is justified, norms of violence (Opp and Roehl 1990). As seen above, some have already expressed some sense of morality related to the participation as they believe the people should participate. Although it is not clear that this stems truly from morality, or if it is related to other social norms. However, there seem to be certain norms related to the participation in such protests as discussed above. Nevertheless, the norms of violence have not been addressed and they might indicate the likelihood of participation in confrontational or violent protests. Violence is taken to mean the infliction of damage on persons or objects, and therefore confrontational protests, when streets are blocked and movement is restricted, can turn into violent protests, when protesters start throwing stones to inflict damage. However, it has to be noted that throwing stones is only a low degree of violence. Two issues are relevant here: the justification of violence by protesters and the likelihood of the use of violence in future actions.

The protest in Aida turned violent when protesters threw stones and the police began shooting. Although most accounts in Aida recount the events with the shooting from the police initiating the violence from protesters, a math teacher, who did not participate but witnessed the events, believed the violence from protesters began before the police actions⁴⁴. As the protest itself was unorganized and resulted from social pressure, after a speaker at the mosque called on the people to protest, the use of violence was spontaneous. It could therefore be that there are norms of violence are present within the camp. Nevertheless, the violence used by the protesters is justified by them only as a reaction to violence by the police⁴⁵. In Azza camp, a protester related that the use of violence can be justified in the case of water, as it is vital for them⁴⁶. Another protester from

⁴⁴ Author's interview with math teacher in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 29 April 2009

⁴⁵ Author's interview with a student in Aida camp, who participated in the protest, on 28 May 2009, a trader, who participated in the protest, on 29 May 2009

⁴⁶ Author's interview with kindergarten teacher in Azza, who participated in the protest, on 12 May 2009

Azza believed the use of violence is useful and the easy way to support their requests⁴⁷. Only in Dheisheh, all respondents declared that violence by protesters in water protests cannot be justified⁴⁸. Again, it seems that the organization of protests is the most important factor here, as both Aida and Azza were not truly organized, with Aida resulting from pressure, while the protests in Dheisheh are more regular and organized by inhabitants of the camp.

Most people in the case-studies believed that the water crisis could become a reason for Palestinians to take violent actions in the future⁴⁹. However, a housewife in Aida camp explained that the problem with violence by protesters on the water issue is that the PA does not have the key to solve the issue, so the only thing they could do is let their voice be heard. If there were to be a protest against Israel on this issue, violence would, according to her, be justified⁵⁰. This testimony might indicate that there are different norms of violence in this issue: norms related to the Palestinian institutions and norms related to Israel. Furthermore, the belief that in the future violent actions might be taken, might not necessarily indicate a general norm of violence, but the necessity of the resource and the grievance associated with the lack of it.

5.2.2. Public goods incentives and Political Opportunity Structures

Public goods incentives are explained by Opp and Roehl (1990) as feelings of system alienation and the perceived influence using political action (Opp, Roehl 1990). The public good is considered to be the changes in the situation after successful protests. Although the public goods incentives concentrate more on feelings and perceptions of those who protest, Tilly and Tarrow provide an actual framework of the political opportunity structure, which deals with factors that promote or inhibit collective action and the changes in those factors (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 49).

⁴⁷ Author's interview with student from Azza, who participated in the protest, on 12 May 2009

⁴⁸ Author's interview with various refugees of Dheisheh camp, on 5 May 2009

⁴⁹ Author's interview with various Palestinians in Aida, Dheisheh, Azza, Al-Jiftlik and Jaloud, 28 April 2009 - 19 May 2009

⁵⁰ Author's interview with housewife in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 29 April 2009

Namely, “the multiplicity of independent centers of power, its openness to new actors, the instability of current political alignments, the availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers, the extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making”, and changes in the previous features (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 57). Within this framework, people decide to mobilize and choose the actions to take. Public goods incentives and political opportunity structure taken together might provide more insight into both the political motivation and dissent as the context of the political structure of the protests.

The perceived influence of using political action is directly related to the political context. The context that enabled protests on water issues changed when the regime changed. After the Oslo Agreements, the Palestinian Authority was established and Palestinian water management and supply institutions were founded. Therewith the responsibility to provide the Palestinians with a sufficient supply of water shifted. Furthermore, the Palestinian Water Authority could now be held accountable for any problems in the West Bank and Gaza. However, as discussed above, the PWA faces many restrictions and control of the water resources remains with Israel. This also made claim making relations more complex as in different cases, Palestinians would have to make claims on either, or both, the Palestinian or Israeli government. Nevertheless, Palestinians could appeal to their own national institutions. This might have changed their perception of the opportunities to change and therefore enabled collective action. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the water crisis itself has worsened, as the supply rate has not been enough to accommodate the growing population, and therefore the protests themselves cannot solely be attributed to a change the political context. Also, looking at political opportunity structures, opportunities to protests are mixed.

Although it could be argued that within the Palestinian regime there are various independent centers of power, including the two leading parties, and perhaps even Israel, the openness to new actors is severely restricted, even though formally permitted. However, an opportunity could lie

with the instability of current alignments, as that would create a chance for claimants to enter the political realm. Nevertheless, the availability of influential allies or supporters is limited, although small political parties might support protesters, such as the Mubadara has done in the case of Al-Jiftlik, and who supports non-violent resistance. Still, changes in these factors have taken place, compared to the regime of direct Israeli occupation. Therefore, they might have instigated some mobilization opportunities.

The public goods incentives of feelings of system alienation and perceived influence of protests are interesting factors in the water protests. Although feelings of system alienation are widespread in the case-studies, the perceived influence of protests varies, from place to place and from person to person. Only the refugees in Dheisheh seemed to have generally a more positive view on the influence of protests. The extent of this influence differs from awareness raising to solving some of the local issues, however, nationally, the situation cannot be changed, as Israel is believed to control it⁵¹. Dheisheh camp organized multiple water protests, therefore the perceived influence might have been an incentive for them. This further indicates that, as argued above, the change in regime could have had an influence on the protests, as they perceive the opportunity for change lies in the PA, or PWA. Therefore, the protests are directed toward Palestinian institutions, and not towards Israel.

Feelings of system alienation have been an ambivalent factor in all case-studies. There is a general discontent with the government and overall it is believed that nor the government, nor any political party, can solve the water crisis, as they are tied to Israeli policies. Nevertheless, at the same time some believe that the PWA can do more to change the situation in some areas⁵². Still, this belief is only the result of dissatisfaction with the water institutions, as they are seen by some as corrupt and mismanaged and therefore some improvement would be possible. Furthermore, most

⁵¹ Author's interview with various refugees from Dheisheh camp, on 5 May 2009

⁵² Author's interview with various Palestinians in Aida, Dheisheh, Azza, Al-Jiftlik and Jaloud, 28 April 2009 - 19 May 2009

still vote for their political party, although social norms might play a large part in this. One Fatah affiliated student in Aida believed that Hamas would be best able to deal with the water crisis because they are block-minded⁵³. But overall, political attitudes are not influenced by water issues.

Most conveyed that no party can help to solve the crisis, as everything is in the hand of the Israelis. Moreover, water issues are not part of their political agendas, and therefore people generally do not relate the water crisis with national political parties. Therefore, it cannot convincingly be argued that the Palestinians in the case-studies alienated from the system completely, however, they are critical towards it and generally do not have much faith in both local as national institutions.

Current opportunity structure and the extent of influence of protests on Palestinian institutions also differs vastly in every case. In Aida, because of the violence by the police and protesters, the PA responded and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad promised funds to repair the wells while the governor, the Prime Minister and Dr. Shaddad Attili, who is the head of the PWA, talked to the WSSA to review the distribution plans. A housewife in Aida stated that two hours later, they received water⁵⁴. It seemed as if their protest had an effect. However, a student in Aida camp remarked that it was not successful as nothing has changed and they face the same problems⁵⁵. The protest appears to have created merely a temporary solution, probably by redirecting the water to the camp by the WSSA. Also Dheisheh residents generally believe the protests are successful as they receive water afterwards. Therefore, they generally have more protests, as they know that the Water Authority will meet their demands. However, even though they have more protests, there is still no change in the water situation itself. The only thing they can achieve is the redirecting of water to the camp, not a sustainable solution. Azza's protest was not really successful in this sense, as although they had the chance to speak to the governor about their issues, water came to the camp

⁵³ Author's interview with a student from Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 28 April 2009

⁵⁴ Author's interview with a housewife in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 29 May 2009

⁵⁵ Author's interview with a student in Aida camp, who did not participate in the protest, on 28 May 2009

only three days later. Although equal distribution of the water in Bethlehem would be a goal, an one-time redirection of the water is not a solution.

Furthermore, the protests in the refugee camps in Bethlehem did not appear to have had much influence on the WSSA or the PWA, and therefore no structural changes were made. The WSSA has some restrictions following the physical water infrastructure, however it admits to having priorities and will redirect the water when necessary to hospitals etc. Also, when an Israeli officer calls because they are without water in the area of Rachel's tomb, water is redirected to that area. Dr. Simon al-Araj admits this prioritization of Israeli areas: 'the Israeli called and forced me to direct the water, because they feed me the water. I now call my office and give water to that area'⁵⁶. Furthermore, when important officials come to Bethlehem, there is sufficient water supply in Bethlehem, supplied from both Mekorot, after negotiations, and the West Bank Water Department. When people go to the WSSA's office to protest, Dr. Simon al-Araj stated he would explain to them that they have the right to do so, but he is not a magician. He assured that everybody is treated equally, but they face restrictions from the network⁵⁷. However, the protests in themselves do not really change anything, primarily because the WSSA puts the blame for the water crisis on the Israeli side, even though water should be evenly supplied throughout Bethlehem. Also, the protests are not taken seriously enough. Dr. Al-Araj conveyed his opinion on the protests in Dheisheh camp: 'sometimes kids and politicians will let kids go to the streets, it's politics. Some people will direct those people to try to make a point'. He believes the reason why there are many protests in Dheisheh is that there the refugees there are very political⁵⁸.

The water protests in general do not influence the PWA to a large extent, however the protest of Al-Jiftlik did make an impact, as both Eng. Jarrar and Dr. Attili recounted this event. Eng. Ayman Jarrar of the PWA believed that protests would be of great support to the PWA and the PA in

⁵⁶ Author's interview with Dr. Simon al-Araj, head of the WSSA, on 20 May 2009

⁵⁷ Author's interview with Dr. Simon al-Araj, head of the WSSA, on 20 May 2009

⁵⁸ Author's interview with Dr. Al-Araj, head of the WSSA, on 20 May 2009

general: 'let their voice be heard'⁵⁹. He also recounted the words of Dr. Attili at a water sector working group, where all donors meet, in 2008, where he said that he was not afraid of demonstrations, to let them demonstrate, and let them raise their voice that we do not have water'⁶⁰. This would eventually enhance the position of the negotiator in negotiations with Israel.

Dr. Attili believes that protests give them the determination to improve the situation, however the PWA is restricted by Israel. He tells people he is the minister of virtual water, as he has a network and needs to put the water in, but it is with the Israelis⁶¹. The demonstrations are welcomed by him, not to send a message to the Israelis, as he believes they know the situation in the West Bank, but to the international community, that they might come and exercise pressure on the Israeli in order to approve projects that allows the PWA to drill wells⁶². However, it seems that again responsibility to act upon protests is redirected away from the actual object of the protests, which are the Palestinian water institutions, and the actual influence to change water policies, therefore, is not very strong.

On the level of negotiations with Israelis, water protests in the Palestinian Territories could have an effect, according to professor Eran Feitelson. As protests concentrate on human needs more than national rights, because the protesters mostly just want water on a short-term basis, prof. Feitelson believes Israel would grant the Palestinians more emergency supply. He thinks that the Palestinian national rights discourse and the talk about compensation for past wrongs 'will not get any cubic of meter of water to any person who needs it'⁶³. What happens internally in Palestinian politics, determines what agenda is set for negotiations. So when Palestinians protest for more water now, and the negotiator brings this to the table, prof. Feitelson believes it can have an effect⁶⁴. However, during a meeting of the WBWD with Mekorot, they decided not to give any additional

⁵⁹ Author's interview with Eng. Ayman Jarrar, PWA, on 11 May 2009

⁶⁰ Author's interview with Eng. Ayman Jarrar, PWA, on 11 May 2009

⁶¹ Author's interview with Dr. Shaddad Attili, head of PWA, on 25 May 2009

⁶² Author's interview with Dr. Shaddad Attili, head of PWA, on 25 May 2009

⁶³ Author's interview with prof. Eran Feitelson, Hebrew University Jerusalem, on 6 May 2009

⁶⁴ Author's interview with prof. Eran Feitelson, Hebrew University Jerusalem, on 6 May 2009

water for the summer of 2009, while it was known that a drought would create a severe lack of water⁶⁵. In 2008, water supply to the West Bank was in fact decreased, creating the water crisis. Therefore, up to now, even emergency supplies are not necessarily granted. Although the opportunity to in fact change policies, or even supplementary supplies, by means of protests is not strong, the protesters in the case-studies did seem to believe their protests were successful, following the immediate water supply to their area.

6. The failure of a Social Movement

Looking at the incentives to protest water issues in the West Bank, it would seem that they are strong enough to initiate more collective action. However, large-scale water protests in the West Bank have not occurred. In this chapter, the mechanisms and processes that would lead to large-scale collective actions are applied to the case-studies and it becomes clear that an upward scale-shift fails and protests are demobilized.

6.1. Brokerage and diffusion

Although the incentives are the motivations of the protesters to take the initial action, mechanisms leading to new coordinated action, are identified as those by Tilly and Tarrow (2007), namely brokerage and diffusion. The former relates to a mechanism in which new connections are made, while the latter refers to the spread of contention in either form or issue. Each of the mechanisms individually, or together, can result in coordinated action (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 31). The water protests in the West Bank are part of contentious politics, as the protesters make claims that bear on the interest on the government. The claim making relations, however, are intricate as claims are made pertaining to the interests of either, or both, the Israeli and the Palestinian government.

⁶⁵ Author's interview with Khalif Alhabisch, director of the WBWD, on 14 May 2009

Diffusion of the contention occurs when other people learn about the contentious episodes, however, even when other areas learnt about protests elsewhere, they did not necessarily understand the importance of the relation to them. In our case-studies, most protesters conveyed that they did not know about other water protests, especially in Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud⁶⁶. Even in the refugee camps in Bethlehem, some responded that they did not know of any other water protests in the West Bank⁶⁷. However, it has to be noted that this might also be said because some respondents might want to make their protest unique. Still, water protests are not widely known or acknowledged as little media attention is paid to them. This makes diffusion difficult. Nevertheless, in the Aida protest it became clear that the protest was the result of diffusion and brokerage.

Although the refugees in Aida mostly explain the origin of the protest as a natural occurrence as a result of people gathering at the water tank when the water was lacking, it actually started as a result of encouragement by the speaker in the mosque⁶⁸. This was the result of diffusion of the protests in Dheisheh as, according to a math teacher in Aida camp, the speaker conveyed the following through the loudspeakers: ‘you are not organized, you are weak, you are cowards, you are not like people in Dheisheh. They went the street and after half an hour the water was in their tanks. You people here in Aida are cowards and not strong enough’⁶⁹. Although this is more based on social pressure, diffusion plays a part as they have heard about the protests and Dheisheh. Also, when the protest started, refugees from Azza camp saw the protesters and asked what they were doing. When the protesters replied that they were protesting the water situation, refugees from Azza joined⁷⁰. This local form of diffusion created an event of collective action. It also brokered new connections between the refugees in Aida and Azza and involved emulation of the protest in Dheisheh. However, brokerage and diffusion in the Aida protest was merely an event and seems to have not created substantial new connections between the refugees on shared interests. Meetings

⁶⁶ Author’s interview with various inhabitants of Al-Jiftlik and izbt Jaloud, on 9, 10, 19 May 2009

⁶⁷ Author’s interview with various refugees from Aida, Azza and Dheisheh camp, 28 April 2009 - 12 May 2009

⁶⁸ Author’s interview with various refugees from Aida camp, 28-29 May 2009

⁶⁹ Author’s interview with a math teacher in Aida, who did not participate in the protests, on 29 May 2009

⁷⁰ Author’s interview with various refugees from Azza camp, 12 May 2009

between the camps do not take place and no actions are coordinated. An upward scale shift, leading to new coordination at a different level, therefore has not taken place.

6.2. Social appropriation, Boundary activation, certification and identity shift

Other mechanisms leading to new coordination are also not well represented in the case-studies and might explain the inability to create a social movement. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) identified four other mechanisms, besides brokerage and diffusion, of contentious politics, namely *social appropriation*, *boundary activation*, *certification* and *identity shift* (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 34). The latter does not have any basis in the case-studies. The identify shift involves the creation of new identities within challenging groups that brings them together through the coordinated action (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 34). The protests have not reached this level, wherein this mechanisms could evolve.

Social appropriation involves non-political groups to change into political actors by using organizational and institutional bases to initiate movement campaigns (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 34). The start of this process has been made in the case of Al-Jiftlik. There, a group of women who already had regular meetings, formed their women's association after the protest in Ramallah⁷¹. They became a group of political actors, however they have not launched any campaign with relation to water. Nevertheless, this basis is formed and, if necessary, they will draw upon it to make further actions in the future, as plans for another protest were already being discussed⁷².

Boundary activation is the creation of a new boundary, or an existing one taking shape, between the claimants and their targets (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 34). This mechanism appears to be present in the protests in Bethlehem. The refugees in the camps define themselves even more as refugees with relation to water, as most believe that it should be provided for by UNRWA.

⁷¹ Author's interview with female organizer of the protest, on 19 May 2009

⁷² Author's interview with female organizer of the protest, on 19 May 2009

Therefore, most do not pay water bills, which crystallizes their boundary even more, as the authorities also look upon them as being non-paying refugees, or even trouble-making refugees. Therefore, criticism by them on measures taken in the supply of water or prioritization of water distribution, will be attributed solely to the fact that they are defined as ‘refugees’. Nevertheless, they do not form a boundary across all the refugee camps in Bethlehem, but remain in their own area. This creates even more boundaries between them. Therefore, as the refugee camps do not work together, boundary activation works against their goals.

Certification relates to an external authority’s readiness to support the claims of the claimants (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 34). In the case-studies, this mechanism only applies to international NGOs, like Oxfam in Al-Jiftlik. However, within the Palestinian society, certification occurs from some political parties, such as the Mubadara, and local NGOs. Nevertheless, as media coverage on these events is meager, no large mechanisms can evolve.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has attempted to analyze the motivations and incentives of the water protests in the West Bank, and, combined with larger mechanisms, explained the failure of a social movement. Also, the likeliness of violent political actions has been examined. This chapter will synthesize and discuss the findings, and conclude the research by answering the question of how water deprivation instigated forces of mobilization and dissent in the West Bank and to what extent these events could give rise to more collective action or political violence.

The first question to be answered comprised the ways in which Palestinians in the West Bank are deprived of water, and their perception of this deprivation. Sources of physical deprivation are traced back to the Oslo II Agreement, which resulted in the establishment of the PA, and subsequently the PWA, and the JWC. It did not give the Palestinians the power to manage the water

resources, but limited Palestinian involvement, even though they were now to be held accountable. The disparity in consumption between Israel and the Palestinians is great, with Palestinians consuming an average of 50 lcpd, for domestic use. Moreover, even within the Palestinian Territories there is a grave disparity in consumption, as some areas consume less than 20 lcpd, for domestic use, and ten per cent of the Palestinians are without a water network. Because of the limitations of the PWA, it lacks legitimacy and capacity to develop the water sector.

This physical deprivation is translated into a psychological deprivation, which uncovers the motives for the protests. The protesters feel angry and they express the deprivation to be the cause. After forty days without water, the protest expressed their feelings of anger and humiliation. They believe the cause is the unfair allocation by Israel, internal mismanagement by Palestinian water institutions, unequal distribution and the decaying infrastructure. Deprivation is also seen in the perceived amounts of water other camps consume: some refugees in Aida believe Dheisheh and Azza have less of a problem, and some refugees in Dheisheh believe Aida does not suffer as much as they do. They also see disparity between their consumption and that of settlements, which further aggravates their feelings of anger. Furthermore, Al-Jiftlik also blames the Palestinian water institutions for their hardships, even though they see the Israeli occupation as the main cause. Izbt Jaloud protesters blame Palestinian institutions as well. Although motivations are usually difficult to explore, it is clear that the protesters express deprivation to be their main drive: they feel entitled to a larger supply, after comparison with Israeli settlements and other Palestinian towns. The establishment of the PWA provided an opportunity for them, but they could not meet the demands. Progressive deprivation can be seen as primarily welfare and power values grew, but the value's capabilities could not keep up. Herewith answering the third question as it created forces of dissent between the Palestinians in the case-studies and their leadership.

The second question relates to how the water deprivation instigated forces of mobilization in the West Bank and what the incentives and mechanisms were for these protests. The context in all

case-studies is assumed to have played an important part. All areas of protest were directly subjected to the deprivation, which was seen as illegitimate by both the protesters as their environment, and they were situated in protest-encouraging environments. Furthermore, the social incentive of the expectations of the social environment was important as although positive rewards were obtained by joining the protests, because it was supported by many, negative sanctions followed non-participation, which makes the incentive to protest perhaps even stronger.

The norms of violence varied among the case-studies, but has shown an interesting dynamic. In the Aida protest, both the protest as the violence was spontaneous. Some of the interviewees could justify violence used by protesters in water protests. Contrary, in Dheisheh, the protests are organized and all interviewees renounced the use of violence by protesters in water protests. The organization of a protest precludes skirmishes breaking out and reduces the likelihood of violence significantly. In general, most believed that Palestinians could, in the future, take violent actions concerning water issues. However, this does not necessarily relate to norms of violence, as this response can also be attributed to the expression of the severity of the problem. Furthermore, there seem to be different norms of violence: norms related to the Palestinian institutions and norms related to Israel.

Another incentive for the protests can be found in the political opportunity structure, although in reality it has a negative effect on the protests, people's perceptions of the opportunities might be a stronger indicator. After the protest in Aida, PM Salam Fayyad made a public ordeal and vowed to make changes. Nevertheless, no structural changes were made to provide for more water in the camp. Generally, in Dheisheh, where protests are more regular, it is believed that the protests are successful, as some water is redirected to the area for a little while. The perceived influence has probably made for more water protests in this area. However, the protests seem to have little effect on the WSSA or the PWA. The WSSA does not take the protests seriously and some priorities exist in their distribution policy. Still, although Al-Jiftlik has made an impression on the PWA and it's

case is used to send a message to the international community, the responsibility to act upon their requests is redirected away from the institution.

The last question concerned the failure of a social movement and the likeliness that Palestinians would resort to political violence. Important mechanism of a social movement are brokerage and diffusion, which can be found in Aida as the mosque pressured protest after diffusion from Dheisheh, which led to brokerage with Azza. However, in general people do not know about protests on water issues, partly because of the lack of media attention. Therefore, these mechanisms cannot initiate coordination between the actors, and an upward scale shift is inhibited. Other mechanisms can only be seen in mild forms, such as social appropriation in Al-Jiftlik after the establishment of the women's association, and the boundary activation in the refugee camps, which negatively affects coordinated action as the boundaries stay within the areas of the camps and do not comprise all of them. Taking the failure of a social movement, or even coordination of actions, together with the weak norms of violence, it does not seem likely that water deprivation can create acts of political violence on a large scale.

In conclusion, water deprivation is seen to be the prime motivator for the water protests. Other incentives such as the context of protest-encouraging relations, social expectations and perceived influence of the protests have proven to be strong indicators. The failure of a social movement can be attributed to the inability to form new connections and spread the contention, perhaps even caused by the strong boundary activation, which has inhibited rather than promoted the creation of a social movement. Violent political actions are not found likely due to the weak norms of violence. However, if spontaneous protests would occur more often, it can lead to more scattered acts of political violence. Nevertheless, if a social movement cannot be formed to address the water crisis in a more influential and substantial way, these protests could remain just a drop in the ocean.

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Appendix I

List of Conducted Interviews

Case-Studies

Two refugees in Aida camp, Bethlehem, 28 April 2009

Three refugees in Aida camp, Bethlehem, 29 April 2009

Five refugees in Dheisheh camp, Bethlehem, 05 May 2009

Three refugees in Azza Camp, Bethlehem, 12 May 2009

Two residents and the head of the village council in izbt Jaloud, 10 May 2009

Two residents of al Al-Jiftlik 19 May 2009

Formal Interviews

Eng. Ayman Jarrar, PWA, 11 May 2009

Dawood, Stop the Wall Campaign, 18 May 2009

Clemens Messerschmid, hydrogeologist, 25 May 2009

Issa el Shatleh, Palestinian Farmer's Union, 17 May 2009

Prof. Eran Feitelson, Hebrew University, 06 May 2009

Khalil Alhabish, director of the WBWD, 14 May 2009

Toine van Teeffelen, development director AEI, 14 May 2009

Dr. Simon al-Araj, director of WSSA, 20 May 2009

Shaddad Attili, head of PWA, 25 May 2009

Michael Talhami, policy advisor, Negotiations Affairs Department, 25 May 2009

Appendix II

Standardized Interview questions, Case-Studies

Interview People of the community

Name (optional)

Age

Gender

Education

Political preference

Community

Average monthly/yearly income

Occupation

Marital status

Family size and members

Topic-guide and questions

Extent of Water deprivation

1. On average, do you think you receive enough water, how is the quality, is it reliable? Explain.
2. Is there enough water in summer for drinking and agricultural needs?
3. If no, how do you get water in summer?
4. Overall, what do you feel you need most? (food, money, water etc.)
5. What do you think should be dealt with first? The overall water shortage or not having access to certain water sources?

Protests (norms and incentives)

6. Did you participate in the protest last year? Why yes/no?

If no, when would you consider joining a protest concerning water issues?

If no, what do you think would be a better way of achieving the goal?

If no, what do you think about those who did participate?

If no, did you ever participate in another kind of protest? If yes, why that protest, but not this one?

7. Were there any protests before in your community? If yes, approximately how many? If no, why not, do you think?

If yes, how many were on water issues?

8. What happened last year that was the cause of the protest?

9. What was the goal of the protest last year?

10. Who organized the protest?

11. Could you give me a description of the day in question?

12. Was there violence used by protesters or police?

If yes, (and participated) does that make you more determined to achieve the goal or does it deter you?

13. In a protest concerning water issues, do you think the use of violence by protesters is justified? And in other protests? In which cases would violence be justified?

14. Do you think that the water shortage can be a reason to become violent? Explain.

15. Did the protest achieve its goal? Explain.

16. Do you think protests in general are legitimate political actions?

17. Do you think the water policy can be changed by protests?

18. How would/do people in your close environment react if/when you join a protest?

19. Do you know anyone in your close environment that participated in a protest in general? And a protest on water issues?

20. If participated in the protest last year: did you feel more connected to a group?

If not participated, did you feel you were an outsider?

21. What were some of the chants and phrases used during the protest?

22. Do you think it is more likely that an international third party would intervene after a protest?

23. What do you know about and think of the other protests last year on water issues?

Political cleavage

24. What do you think about your political leadership on a national and local level?

25. Who do you think is most responsible for the crisis?

26. If a water source is damaged, what or who do you think is generally the cause of it?

27. Which political party do you think would be best able to deal with the water crisis?

28. Does the water crisis influence your opinion on political parties/organizations?

Group cohesion/polarization

29. How is your relationship with neighboring communities?
30. Do you work together on water issues with groups/individuals/parties who you would normally not work with? Explain.
31. Do you work together with other communities also suffering from the water crisis? Explain.
32. Do you feel more connected to other communities also suffering from the water crisis? Explain.
33. How do you feel about communities having more water supply?
34. How do you feel about donors not funding certain water projects in communities because of political reasons?
35. Do you feel more sympathy towards those communities?
36. Do you discuss water issues often with family or friends? If yes, how much? Explain.
37. What do you think about illegal water-tapping? What would be the motives and do you feel sympathy?
38. Do you know people who tap illegally? If yes, are they in your close environment?
39. Do you think you should pay for water in general?

Future

40. Do you think there will be more action around water issues from the Palestinians?
41. Do find it likely that these actions will include violence? If yes, what kind?
42. How do you think that Palestinians can act together to change water policies?
43. Do you think water issues can either politically divide Palestinians or strengthen them as a group?
44. Do you think that water rights can be realized under occupation?