

Waste and the Phantom State:
The Emergence of the Environment in Post-Oslo Palestine

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ABSTRACT

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In 1995, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established as an interim Palestinian government on shreds of land within the West Bank and Gaza. One of the new authority's lesser-known administrative mandates is protection of the environment from pollution. Though the PA was to have a semblance of "self-rule," the Oslo Accords that established the PA also stipulated that the latter seek Israeli approval when building most large-scale infrastructures—including those designed to manage waste. Meanwhile, emergent ideas about the environment defined it as a limitless expanse. The environment projected out from PA enclaves on thirty percent of the land in all directions—including into the air above and into the subterrain below. The Accords projected environmental responsibility into Israel proper as well as into areas it "shares" with Palestinians in the occupied territories. As a consequence, Palestinian waste infrastructures are objects of concern not only to the Palestinian communities they are designed to serve but also to the Israeli state, to Israeli settlements, to regional neighbors and to foreign donors in far-flung offices who are concerned with "environmental security." This dissertation investigates a series of multimillion dollar PA projects aimed at protecting what came to be called the "shared" environment through management of Palestinian wastes. In doing so it analyzes the tension between the insistence, on the one hand, that the PA govern "its" population within strictly defined borders as part of a hierarchical system of nested sovereignties in which Israel's is the

superior form, and the imperative, on the other hand, that this territorially-defined, officially *interim* government perform care for the territory's longterm ecological future.

It tends to be taken for granted that Oslo produced a period of separation by enclosing the West Bank and Gaza and cleaving them off from Israel proper. Millions of West Bank Palestinians are no longer permitted to work in, travel through or even visit Jerusalem or Israel. Israel has prohibited Israeli citizens' entry into PA areas of the West Bank. This allows PA areas to appear relatively autonomous—insofar as they are viewed as *separate* from Israel. But in a number of significant ways, Israel continues to control and to direct the daily experiences and future possibilities of West Bank Palestinians. Separation and control are thus equally accurate characterizations of Palestinians' experiences post-Oslo. This dissertation contends that their particular combination in the post-Oslo period has allowed people living in the West Bank to experience PA governance as what, borrowing a term I heard there, I call a phantom state (*shibih dowlah*). Palestinians see the limits of PA autonomy vis-a-vis Israel and the PA's many donors. The PA is specter-like: an appearance without stable material follow-through. People nevertheless treat the PA as a matter-of-fact, tangible part of their lives: as an address for appeal, requests and complaints, as a distinct entity upon which responsibility, blame and, very occasionally, even praise is bestowed.

Studies of garbage at the turn of the twenty-first century show that modern waste has the capacity to destabilize and to undermine political systems because of the risks it is perceived to pose and because of the difficulty of keeping it stable and contained. Unlike water, oil and electricity, waste is an infrastructural substrate whose flows should move out from inhabited areas rather than into them. As mobile, abject matter that perpetually threatens the environment,

it requires constant monitoring. It is managed at regional scales. In the Palestinian context, waste therefore reveals some of the spatial-geographical complexities that render the treatment of separation and control as an either/or dynamic impossible to sustain. It also reveals the ways in which believing both separation and control to be true for the people experiencing them in combination means living, working and planning within a logic of constant contradiction. Waste is not the only infrastructural substrate that reveals the Mobius strip of separation and connectedness of the post-Oslo period. But waste and its infrastructures are uniquely useful for showing the impossibility and the partialness of a politics of separation more broadly in an emergent era of environmental securitization. This dissertation thus analyzes an incommensurable tension in what Achille Mbembe has called a “late-modern colonial occupation” that operates in the style of older forms of indirect colonial rule. That tension renders governance of people and territory both difficult and incoherent. It produces environmental hazards while seeking to eliminate them. And it performs major political displacements among colonized and colonizers alike.

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Introduction

I am the de facto Palestinian water regulator.

- Uri Shani, head of the Israeli Water Authority (IWA) in 2008

You have an Authority sitting there, a phantom state (*shibih dowla*). [He repeats *shibih dowla* several times.]...A phantom state has a responsibility to its citizens. If it fails to do something, it's not my problem as a citizen....As long as there's an Authority, it's the Authority who is responsible for protecting me. Not me. Militarily, politically, materially, health-wise, education-wise...I am not the one responsible. You are...The simple reaction that comes from inside people—it's not like it used to be.

- Nasser, participant in the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-93),

November 2009, Nablus

Matter with No Place to Go

In 1995, a novel set of institutions called the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established as an interim Palestinian government on shreds of land within the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), or the West Bank and Gaza. It was created with the signing of the Oslo Agreements by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the state of Israel. In the West Bank, where the research for this project took place, the PA was granted partial autonomy on roughly thirty percent of the territory. Israel retained control of the other seventy percent. One of the new authority's lesser-known—but key—administrative mandates is protection of the environment from pollution.

Emergent ideas about the environment defined it as a limitless expanse. It was sublime in the Kantian sense in that its limitlessness challenged previous imaginings of the landscape.¹ The environment projected out from PA enclaves in all directions—including into the air above and into the subterrain below. Premised on the argument that the environment, wherever it is, is a shared human asset and an object of global and of expert concern, the Accords stipulated that the interim, not-yet-sovereign PA seek Israeli approval when building sanitary infrastructures for the Palestinian population. Waste was thus enfolded within Oslo's "politics of verticality"² while also posing as a mobile threat that violated the newly agreed-up political boundaries in which the PA was to govern. Because the Accords projected environmental responsibility into Israel proper as well as into areas it "shares" with Palestinians, Palestinian waste infrastructures became objects

¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 91.

² Weizman, *Hollow Land*. See also Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 28.

of concern not only to the Palestinian communities they are designed to serve—where raw sewage runs through neighborhoods and orchards—but also to the Israeli state, to Israeli settlements, to Palestinian NGOs, to neighboring governments and to foreign donors in far-flung offices concerned with “environmental security.”

This project investigates a series of multimillion dollar PA projects aimed at protecting a nebulously defined, yet definitively vulnerable, environment through management of Palestinian wastes. In doing so it analyzes the tension between the insistence, on the one hand, that the PA govern “its” population within strictly defined boundaries as part of a hierarchical system of nested sovereignties in which Israel’s is the superior form, and the insistence, on the other hand, that this territorially-defined, *temporary* government perform care for an environment that violates all political borders and concern for which extends into the deep, potentially post-national future.

It tends to be taken for granted that Oslo produced a period of separation by enclosing the West Bank and Gaza and cleaving them off from Israel proper. Millions of West Bank Palestinians are no longer permitted to work in, travel through or even visit Jerusalem or Israel. Israel has prohibited Israeli citizens’ entry into PA areas of the West Bank. The most vivid material manifestation of the politics of separation is Israel’s nine-meter-high concrete Wall. This allows PA areas to appear relatively autonomous—insofar as they are viewed as *geographically separate* from Israel. But in a number of significant ways, Israel continues to control and to direct the daily experiences and future possibilities of West Bank Palestinians under PA rule. PA policies are usually as

dependent on Israel as they are on donors seeking compatibility with Israeli demands in the name of peace.

However, since there *has* developed a form of spatial separation since Oslo, separation and control are equally accurate characterizations of Palestinians' experiences post-Oslo. This dissertation contends that their particular combination in the post-Oslo period has allowed people living in the West Bank to experience PA governance as what, borrowing a term I heard there, I call a phantom state (*shibih dowla*). On the one hand, Palestinians recognize the limits of PA autonomy vis-a-vis Israel and the PA's many donors. The PA is specter-like: an appearance without material follow-through. On the other hand, West Bank residents nevertheless treat the PA as a matter-of-fact, tangible part of their lives: as an address for appeal, requests and complaints, as a distinct entity upon which responsibility, blame and, very occasionally, even praise is bestowed.

Studies of garbage at the turn of the twenty-first century show that modern waste has the capacity to destabilize and to undermine political systems because of the risks it is perceived to pose and because of the difficulty of keeping it stable and contained.³ Unlike water, oil and electricity, waste is an infrastructural substrate whose flows should move out from inhabited areas rather than into them. As mobile, abject matter that perpetually threatens the environment, it requires constant monitoring. It is managed at regional scales. In the Palestinian context, waste therefore reveals some of the spatial-geographical complexities that render the treatment of separation and control as an either/or dynamic impossible to sustain. It also reveals the ways in which believing both

³ Moore has recently argued that, "as garbage and other risks go rogue, they present the capacity to undermine existing political and management institutions and their related sociospatial orders." Moore, "Garbage Matters," 789.

separation and control to be true, as people experiencing them inevitably do, means inhabiting a logic of perpetual contradiction. Waste is not the only infrastructural substrate that reveals the Mobius strip of separation and connectedness of the post-Oslo period.⁴ But waste and its infrastructures are uniquely useful for showing the impossibility and the partialness of a politics of separation more broadly in an emergent era of environmental securitization. This dissertation analyzes an incommensurable tension in what Achille Mbembe has called a “late-modern colonial occupation”⁵ that operates in the style of older forms of indirect colonial rule. That tension renders governance of people and territory both difficult and incoherent. It produces environmental hazards while seeking to eliminate them. And it performs major political displacements among colonized and colonizers.

Assignment of PA accountability for protection of the environment hinges on what the Accords imagined as pollution. Oslo’s authors envisioned environmental dangers from industrial emissions, coal production and municipal solid waste and sewage. Their vision was made possible by a massive epistemic shift with regard to municipal wastes. Over the past century the latter had been tethered to questions of hygiene and public health.⁶ The (partial) substitution of hygienic by environmental thinking had major consequences. It entailed tectonic shifts in what government, as Israeli sovereign or as PA/phantom state, believes itself to be governing. Environmental thinking is also a form of thinking that posits particular futures. With the shift from

⁴ Larkin also uses the word “substrate” to refer to the objects of infrastructural operations. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 4.

⁵ Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 28.

⁶ Public health remained an important aspect of waste management but was sidelined by the environment’s emergence.

hygiene to environmentalism new questions came to be asked about the future. Such questions posit can future potential outcomes or risks as mutually exclusive and therefore critical. For example, a place is either livable or unlivable. They can also posit outcomes that, if negative, will be totalizing and permanent. Gaza, for instance, may become irreversibly unlivable. Positive outcomes in this rendition of risk are always precarious. In some sense, then, *waste* management became *risk* management.

Crucially, this was not merely a discursive displacement. The particular variant of environmental thinking that has been ushered into PA governance is responding to real material changes within the OPT. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, shifts in the material processes of capitalist production and consumption in Palestine conspired to produce new waste excesses. These included rapid urbanization, the proliferation of synthetics like chemical fertilizers, nylon and hard plastics, spikes in consumption and changed farming practices. Household discards had long been reused in daily domestic and agricultural life. As such, remains such as food waste, for example, had been “out of place”⁷ only before being re-placed, in transition from one place (e.g. the home) to the next (e.g. the olive grove). Around the mid-twentieth century, materials had begun to appear, and to proliferate, that could neither be reused nor absorbed into the earth as before. Nitrates from synthetic fertilizers and large, concentrated quantities of human excrement increasingly percolated into the Palestine’s major water sources. The fumes from growing piles of unassimilable garbage wafted across the occupied landscape.

⁷ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

Waste's new excesses were constitutive of new scales of concern whose name became known as the environment.⁸

The emergence and entrenchment of environmentalist thinking as the master narrative for the management of waste catalyzed reconsideration of the principle of the physical separation between humans and wastes that had, during waste's run as a problem of public health, served as the solution to waste accumulations of many kinds.⁹ Waste was transformed, I argue, from matter out of place (which implies there is some good place for it) into *matter with no place to go*. It became what Moore, drawing on Žižek (2006), has called a "parallax object: 'that which objects, that which disturbs the smooth running of things'."¹⁰ This reconfiguration of the meaning of waste for human and non-human life, as well as for the earth's natural resources, produced the conditions for the politics of wastes, their management and their infrastructures in post-Oslo Palestine. Waste in this project is thus both an ontologically manifest threat and is shaped by cultural and social experiences of risk.¹¹

Socially contingent notions of risk have historically been easily manipulated to further repress, isolate and dispossess the already disenfranchised. As I describe below, as an example of this possibility, environmental protection can work much like justifications of civilizational superiority in older examples of indirect rule. It can be deployed to legitimize continued foreign control of colonized and occupied populations, often

⁸ Bickerstaff and Agyeman, "Assembling Justice Spaces." See also Gille, "Actor Networks, Modes of Production, and Waste Regimes."

⁹ On the relationship between master narratives and infrastructure, see Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure."

¹⁰ Moore, "Garbage Matters," 781.

¹¹ Parkhill et al. "From the Familiar to the Extraordinary."

through control over their infrastructures. But the OPT's material—that is, ontologically irrefutable—transformations challenge facile dismissals of Israeli and foreign discourses around protecting Palestine's environment, for example, as solely tools for further control of occupied Palestinians. Palestine's transformative experiences of twentieth century capitalism and occupation present similarly urgent calls for concern among those living in, and those researching, twenty-first century Palestine. The need for new solutions to waste's excesses cannot therefore be dismissed as a mere "smokescreen" for politics, even while the Israeli occupation of the OPT is constitutive of that need's articulation.¹² Simply put, the problems of waste are historically unprecedented and materially specific. This project can thus be read as a tale of the Anthropocene in an arid climate. It is a tale about the politics of aridity's securitization in the Middle East in particular. By examining the relationship between garbage and governance in the late Anthropocene, it highlights the later (mid-twentieth century and on) consumption and waste production aspects of this human-made era. In this sense it combines analysis of the familiar problems of climate change adaptation (in this case to raised temperatures, less rainfall—less water) with analysis of a realm of governance (waste) that is usually reserved for students of consumption, of "culture" or of political order. This can be read as a study of what Brenda Chalfin calls the "scata-logics" of political authority in the context of indirect colonial rule that is uniquely and intensely conscious of its climatic conditions—and effects.¹³ A key distinguishing feature of its being late-modern is the fact that political

¹² Please see Stamatopoulou-Robbins, "Occupational Hazards," for a case study in how environmental impact assessment processes used for determining the specifications of a sanitary landfill near Ramallah were profoundly shaped by the politics of occupation (2014).

¹³ Chalfin, "Public Things, Excremental Politics," 93.

authority here is shaped by an era of environmental transformations that include the *global* crisis of climate change.

Epistemic Instabilities

On 27 March 2007, a sewage tank collapsed in Gaza, submerging the Palestinian village of Umm al-Naser in many tons of raw sewage and killing five. When the PA Interior Minister arrived a few hours later, he was chased out by the gunfire of angry villagers. Two and a half years later I sat in the West Bank city of Ramallah in the Quaker-run Ramallah Friends Meeting House. The evening's screening of "Gaza is Floating" showed footage of the disaster. People waded chest-deep in sewage. A boy sat on a door in a lake of sewage, paddling through it with a wooden plank. Our mixed expat and Palestinian audience of about thirty was told that Tony Blair had personally intervened to secure two truckloads of materials for the tank's rehabilitation. We were also told that months ago one of the temporary basins Blair had procured had again collapsed.

Representatives from the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Advocacy Task Force (eWASH)¹⁴ and the PA's water ministry answered questions after the screening. "The PA can do this. It can fix Gaza's water problem," one woman in the audience said, standing to address the PA representative. "So why don't they??!" It was well-known—and the film had just shown—that Gaza's waste infrastructures were inadequate due mainly to

¹⁴ According to its website, "the Emergency Water and Sanitation-Hygiene Group (EWASH) is a coordination body founded in 2002 after the emergency situation following the Israeli incursion to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which aims to coordinate the work in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector to avoid duplication and help ensure optimum results. There are various stakeholders operational in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector in the occupied Palestinian territories. These include the national and international NGOs, UN agencies, academic and research institutions, Palestinian Authority counterparts like Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) and West Bank Water Department (WBWD) in the West bank or the Coastal Municipal Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza, etc." See: <http://www.ewash.org/en/?view=79YOcy0nNs3D76djujAn3TTG> Last accessed 20 July 2015.

Israel's blockade on the materials necessary to fix them. Hence the need for Blair to intervene. But the woman's sentiment echoed that expressed by people in Umm al-Naser who had taken up arms against the minister. "It's not every time that the occupation is the source of the problem," she continued.

For her, as for many Palestinians with whom I spoke, sewage floating through a Gaza village was an index of the PA's failure to govern, its failure to protect its constituents, its lack of political will and therefore also its illegitimacy. The presence of wastes "out of place" occasioned the articulation of political accountability. Viewing Gaza's sewage problems from the vantage point of the West Bank, a three-hour drive through Israel and several heavily armed checkpoints away, the discussion also revealed waste as an object for which the PA was held responsible at a national-geographic scale defined in the post-Oslo agreements. Within this new spatial imaginary, images of public wastes offered people the opportunity to parse out, geographically, where the Israeli occupation's responsibility ends and where the PA's begins. They provoked people to mark the boundary between "internal" Palestinian governance and "external" Israeli occupation. The relationship between this boundary, waste, environmentalism and the Oslo Accords form the central objects of concern in this dissertation.

A German hydrogeologist and long-time resident of Ramallah stood up next. He was a tall, barrel-chested man who wept, rumor had it, whenever it rained in Ramallah. Like most of the cities, towns and villages in the West Bank, Ramallah is located at a much higher elevation than is Israel to its west. Rainwater not collected flows down the mountainside, across the Green Line (see Figure 1) and into Israel. Even if it flows into

the aquifer, it becomes largely inaccessible to Palestinians. Israel's occupying authorities forbid Palestinians from drilling wells deep enough to access it, while Israel extracts about 90 percent of the West Bank's aquifer waters annually. "The Gazans should throw all their sewage into the sea," the expert boomed from the back of the room. One of the presenters had just explained that the current off Gaza's coast runs north toward Israel. In Ashkelon, an Israeli coastal city just north of Gaza, there is a large desalination plant. Its seawater intake is only 12 kilometers from Gaza's waters. In despair, the hydrogeologist called for the weaponization of Gaza's sewage. Doing so might get Israel's attention. Gaza's sewage might threaten a critical Israeli infrastructure.

The hydrogeologist's sarcastic proposal contrasted with the woman's comment, which blamed the PA. It sat uncomfortably, too, with the main point of the event. Its organizers sought to highlight Gaza's sanitation crisis as a problem of human rights—as a problem that no one, including Israelis, deserved to have. Though not stated explicitly, the message was double: that Israel was violating Palestinians' human right to be free from their own wastes. But also that *anyone* governing the territory was open to scrutiny by international agencies monitoring the right to sanitation. Shitting is a universal phenomenon, after all. For the conglomerate of international agencies, local NGOs and PA ministries that made up eWASH, freedom from shit was a right protected by international law. As such it extended beyond the question of national governance to the protection of humanity in the abstract.

The semi-serious suggestion that Gazans weaponize their sewage also sat uncomfortably with the message of one of the presenters, a Palestinian-American lawyer

working for the Palestinian water ministry (PWA). Sanitation was key to the future establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, he argued. A modern state needs clean water and a clean environment. The security of the state depends on it.¹⁵ In a conversation I was to have with him about a year later, he added another connection between the freedom from wastes and statehood: “We are preparing for the day,” he told me. He meant the day when the PA would gain full, sovereign, internationally recognized statehood. Preparation meant building the state’s infrastructures, including infrastructures for the management of its wastes.

For him, infrastructures thus represented “cultural ambitions, political machineries,”¹⁶ and the appearance of statehood as indexed by “the state’s power to cleanse.”¹⁷ In his words and his demeanor every time I encountered him, the PWA lawyer made clear that preparation for “the day” also included performances of care for the environment.¹⁸ Such performances were occasioned at a number of scales: through the design and operation of waste infrastructures, through appearances to the public like the Ramallah event and in meetings with Israelis and donors, for example. Designing, building, operating and talking about infrastructures had the potential, he was saying, to prove that Palestinians were capable of serving as modern, responsible, environmental stewards. Rather than offering the chance to modernize occupied subjects, however, as

¹⁵ On the “promotion of sanitation and hygiene” as “key to reckoning the relationship between state authorities and residents” in the Ghanaian context, see Chalfin, “Public Things, Excremental Politics,” 97-8.

¹⁶ Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 2.

¹⁷ Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, 52. See also Laporte, *The History of Shit*.

¹⁸ Thanks to Audra Simpson for help with this formulation.

was often the case in older colonial contexts (e.g. British Africa),¹⁹ building the right infrastructures could present the PA as already modern—whether or not its population had “caught up” with it. For the lawyer and his colleagues, infrastructures were as much symbols of the state readiness of a select group of bureaucrats, engineers and experts as they were solutions to the fact that only 5 percent of Gaza’s water is potable due to the over-pumping of its aquifer and to constant sewage seepage.²⁰

More recently, “preparation for the day” has also come to mean preparing the would-be state for the long-term effects of climate change. Recent UN and World Bank reports on climate change in the Arab world have shown that “the day” in this sense has already arrived.²¹ Increasing annual temperatures and decreasing annual rainfall in Israel and the OPT present the risk of desertification in addition to the risk of the depletion of already-scarce natural water sources. In 2012 it was reported that the past 20 years have shown an increase in average annual temperatures in the Arab world. The next two to three decades are expected to see a decrease in annual rainfall of nearly 25 percent. Average temperatures are expected to continue to rise by 4-5 degrees celsius.²² In the face of this developments, reuse of wastewater and protection of groundwaters from solid wastes are reframed as “adaptation” measures. In 2010 the PA published a climate change

¹⁹ See for example Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 7.

²⁰ Scholars often analyze infrastructure in order to understand states in the making or newly independent states. Infrastructure tends to help shed light on claims to modernity and their material underpinnings/substrates. Limbert, for example, shows how the post-coup Omani state used the language of development to claim that the nation was founded on the building of modern infrastructure. Limbert, “The Senses of Water in an Omani Town.”

²¹ The World Bank published a report in 2012 that describes the consequences of global warming in the Arab world. In the same year, it published another report that showed that “population growth with limited resources and environmental capacity is most acute in places like Gaza and the West Bank.” World Bank, “Adaptation to a Changing Climate.” See also Qumsiyeh, “Environmental Nakba,” 58.

²² Qumsiyeh, “Environmental Nakba.”

adaptation strategy with the help of the UN Development Programme. In 2012 the environment ministry published a National Strategy for combatting desertification in the OPT. Both strategies cite the increased use of brackish and treated wastewater and sealed-off solid waste infrastructures as key, “no-regrets” target practices for adaptation.²³

But the PA had begun planning a series of “adaptation” schemes in the mid-1990s, years before the language of climate change adaptation had taken hold. The PA’s early initiation of major solid waste and wastewater infrastructural overhauls was informed most by the absence of such infrastructures and therefore by the need to build them for the protection of the environment from further damage. Air, land and especially water sources had been left polluted after two decades of occupation. Mandated to govern civil aspects of Palestinian life (e.g. health, education, tax collection) on non-contiguous islands of land, the PA now had a chance to mitigate, if not reverse Palestine’s environmental status. The islands of land in the West Bank under PA jurisdiction include most major built-up Palestinian areas,²⁴ called Areas A and B, and little else (see Figure 1). In 1995, the Accords had placed a population of approximately 2.7 million Palestinians under the new authority’s jurisdiction. In 1995 municipal engineers began applying to the Israeli authorities to design twenty-two wastewater treatment plants that would allow for the reuse of municipal sewage (e.g. in irrigation of select crops) as well as hundreds of meters of underground sewage networks connecting buildings to the new

²³ PA-UNDP, “Climate Change Adaptation Strategy,” xii.

²⁴ The two exceptions to this are the cities of Jerusalem and Hebron.

plants. It also planned four large-scale, governorate-level sanitary landfills for municipal solid waste.

Building these particular kinds of large-scale, sanitary infrastructures was also conveniently in line with what the PA's "sponsors" had in mind for Palestine. These measures came highly recommended from donors like the World Bank, the German development bank (GTZ/KfW) and from the Japanese development agency (JICA). For many of the projects' ostensible supporters, sanitary landfills and wastewater treatment plants represented mechanisms for securing Palestinian quietude after the turmoil of the first Intifada, or Palestinian uprising, between 1987 and 1993. Thus one World Bank report upon which much of the PA's waste-related policy was based called its volume on sanitary conditions "*Infrastructure: An Investment in Peace*."²⁵

As far as Israel—as another reluctant, and partial "sponsor" of the PA—was concerned, the infrastructures for which the PA submitted applications were more controversial. Many self-proclaimed environmentalists in NGOs in the Israel (and on the settlements) of the late 1990s and 2000s were in the process of lobbying the Israeli government to ban sanitary landfills, for example, in favor of more extensive recycling. For them the PA's plans therefore represented what was to be avoided. Yet many of the PA's proposed projects were actually reincarnations of the same infrastructures Israel itself had planned to build in the West Bank before relinquishing partial control of Palestinian residential areas to the PA. These plans represented the opinions of segments of the Israeli military bureaucracy and of select Israeli ministries. While expressing the

²⁵ Italics mine.

PA bureaucracy's post-Oslo environmental, political and economic ambitions, the PA's proposed projects therefore encoded social, political and economic parameters preferred by Israeli occupation officials, ministry bureaucrats and environmental experts between the late 1960s and the late-1980s and condoned for "the territories" in the 1990s and 2000s.

While the above demonstrates the epistemic instability of waste and its infrastructures in politically complex contexts, it does not exhaust their epistemic and semiotic variations as I encountered them during fieldwork. There I observed waste infrastructures like sewage tanks operating on several additional levels. They had technical and training functions, they embodied successful bureaucratic organization, they confirmed that Palestinians understood the imperatives of environmental protection. But, due to their association with Israeli-approved and with "international" (e.g. World Bank) standards, they also displayed the global relevance, and usually the superiority, of non-Palestinian standards. By contrast, they therefore displayed the gap between developed governing bodies and their inferior Palestinian counterparts.²⁶ Together, these permutations of meaning to which crises around waste gave rise reveals how wastes and their infrastructures can be "critical" or "vital" infrastructures in the Middle East, in the twenty-first century and in any "developing" context more broadly.

In the context of Palestine, it also reveals the significance of observing infrastructural developments as they are unfolding. The term critical infrastructure usually evokes critical infrastructure protection (CIP), as in the United States and Europe.

²⁶ Here the similarity to colonial Nigeria as described by Larkin is remarkable. See Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 19.

CIP frames already-built infrastructures as objects of protection from “incidents” in war or natural disaster. The criticality of waste infrastructures in the above contexts, by contrast, resides in the intensity with which they condense futurities into the construction of yet-to-be-built or yet-to-be-rehabilitated infrastructures. It resides in infrastructures’ relationship to futurities that include those of the occupied population, the would-be Palestinian state, the exiled Palestinian nation, the Israeli state, humanity, the region, and the environment as a biosphere vulnerable to problems of resource scarcity.²⁷

This dissertation tracks the experiences of Palestinian engineers, experts, bureaucrats and nongovernmental employees whose job it is to imagine, negotiate and build for some of these futurities (and *not* to build for others) through the management of waste and its critical infrastructures. It assumes that work on waste as risk highlights “the relationship between objects, technology, expert knowledge and local understandings.”²⁸ This is therefore a study of how the emergence of a connection between environmental risk and waste has shaped the professional discourses of this subset of people living in occupied Palestine. It looks at how it has shaped their dynamics with the populations they govern. In doing so it contributes to existing literatures that show that schemes for environmental protection and climate change adaptation do not follow singular, predictable or linear paths in as they generate “friction” from one locality to the next.²⁹ The effects of their deployment are often incoherent and contradictory. While it highlights environmentalism’s continuities within other genealogies of dispossession, this

²⁷ Masco, “Bad Weather.”

²⁸ Moore, “Garbage Matters,” 789.

²⁹ Tsing, *Friction*. See also Rudiak-Gould, “Climate Change and Accusation.”

project also addresses forms of environmental thinking that are based in material transformations. As new, unassimilable materials proliferate, pile up and contaminate, and as the quantities of existent materials exceed the human capacity to manage them, these transformations become impossible to ignore. Their intransigence insists on intervention, whether governmental or private. What variants of environmentalist thinking are mobilized in the generation of solutions to waste problems, in what form and to what effect are key questions that frame this investigation. As it investigates experiences of people tasked with managing “self-rule” under an occupation with uniquely complex spatial characteristics, this project is in conversation with scholarship on indirect colonial rule. It simultaneously speaks to scholarship on settler colonialism, a form of rule often thought of as too different from indirect colonial rule to warrant joint analysis. In particular, it speaks to the study of indigenous reservation homelands, for example in North America. The section below describes the material, spatial, legal and political conditions in which Palestinians have been trying to manage their wastes since Oslo. Comparing those conditions to those on native reservations helps frame some of the effects of them doing so, a discussion of which follows.

Oslo, Waste Flows and the Emergence of the Environment

I met Suleiman Abu Ghosh in January 2010. He was a wastewater engineer in his early fifties. He was working in the West Bank’s Nablus municipality water and sanitation department, where he was responsible for upgrading the city’s wastewater infrastructures for a population of about 126,000. His main work over the previous twelve years had been planning two sewage treatment plants for the city. With the

promising deluge of international funds the Accords had brought, he had been told the project would take months, maximum three or four years, from start to finish. But like another two dozen plants, his were still papers on a desk and a map across his wall.

After Oslo, Israel maintained “security” control in PA territories (Areas A and B). That means the Israeli military can enter PA areas at any time to detain, beat or kill and to demolish, set up checkpoints or besiege. Israel also maintained civil as well as military control throughout the other seventy percent of the West Bank. Built-up Palestinian areas are usually tight clusters of buildings with private agricultural plots forming rings around the outskirts of communities. The seventy percent of the territory that Israel continues to control includes most of these outer rings and most fertile Palestinian agricultural lands. Israel retains control over all major roads and passage points between the West Bank, Israel and Jordan, and over the movement of people, goods and aid.

In Area C, the name Oslo gave to that seventy percent (see Figure 1), a branch of the Israeli military called the Civil Administration (CA) continues to manage all civil and military affairs. It has done so since Israel’s occupation began in 1967.³⁰ Under the CA’s watch the number of government-sanctioned Israeli settlements in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) has reached approximately 150, among which 18 were built after the Accords. Around 100 so-called outposts have also been erected by settlers, most also after the signing of the Accords.³¹ The number of settlers in the West Bank

³⁰ The name of the administration was changed from “Military” to “Civil” Administration in 1981.

³¹ United Nations Secretary General, “Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/0E780293F13D3AB785257C16004C5E78> Last accessed 19 July 2015.

(including those in East Jerusalem) has more than doubled since 1993,³² reaching 547,000 by 2013.³³ Israel has deemed other parts of Area C Israeli-controlled closed military zones, nature reserves, military bases, agricultural areas and industrial zones. Approximately 200,000 Palestinians also live in Area C. This population is largely “ungoverned” beyond the municipal level, as it is outside PA jurisdiction and receives few to no services from the CA.

In creating the conditions of possibility for establishing a Palestinian police force, a Palestinian national legal system and Palestinian ministries for education, finance, agriculture, transportation, social welfare, local government, environment, water and the like, the Accords created something akin to what in British colonial Africa was called a “Native Administration.” Palestinians’ everyday lives in Areas A and B are managed by Palestinian-run municipalities under new PA laws, regulations and directives. PA police serve drivers with traffic and littering tickets within Areas A and B, replacing the Israeli officers who had done so between 1967 and 1995. The ministry of education oversees the writing of Palestinian public school textbooks, and the PA has the capacity to change the local time in Areas A and B during the holy month of Ramadan.

While the PA in that sense has some form of control over most of the Palestinian population, it controls only a fraction of the territory itself. The PA and the population it governs are banned from drilling wells, building and systematic cultivation on lands

³² The West Bank had 262,500 settlers in 1993. 110,900 in the West Bank, 146,800 in East Jerusalem: ‘By Hook and By Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank.’ B’Tselem. July 2010, p10. A further 4,800 settlers lived in Gaza: ‘Israeli Settler Population, 1972-2006.’ Foundation for Middle East Peace. Accessed 2 September 2013 <http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-infoand-tables/stats-data/israeli-settler-population-1972-2006>

³³ The Israeli NGO B’Tselem compiled these numbers from two sources: Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. See <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics> Last accessed 19 July 2015.

outside Areas A and B. The PA police cannot enforce Palestinian law outside of Areas A and B, for example for traffic violations, murder or toxic dumping. They cannot move cross Area C without prior Israeli permission and Israeli accompaniment. The enclaves, or bantustans, in which the PA has civil jurisdiction can thus be likened to the reservations of native peoples in North America, a comparison that has recently become popular.

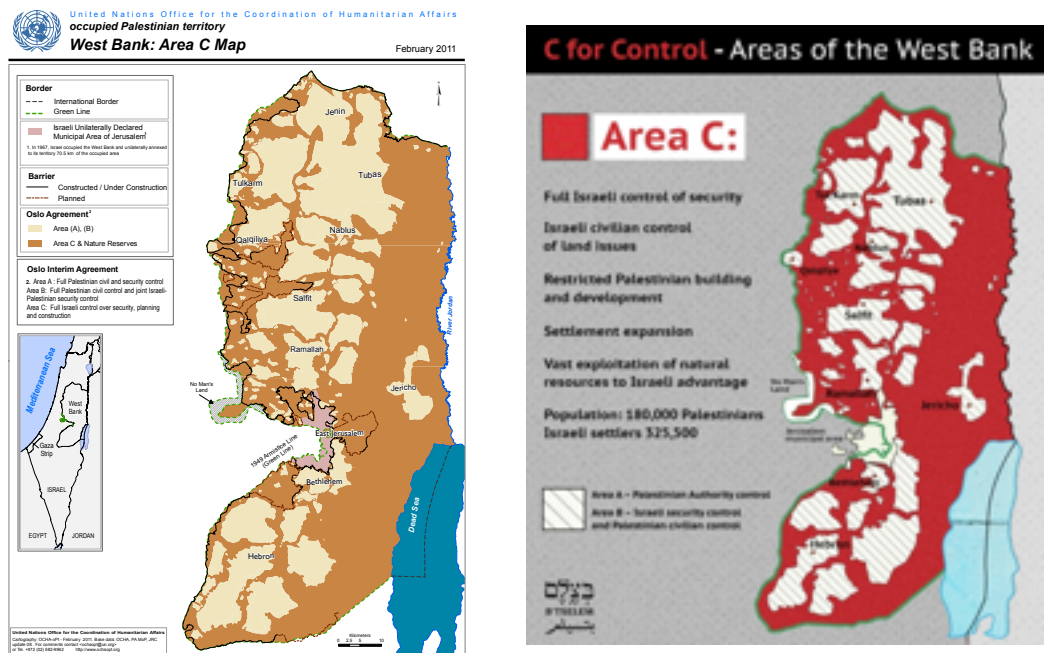


Figure 1. These maps of West Bank Areas A, B and C as defined by the Oslo Accords highlight the size of Area C and the non-contiguous nature of PA areas by omitting the diverse sub-classifications within Area C (e.g. Israeli settlements, closed military zones, firing zones, nature reserves, Israeli state parks, roads, checkpoints and Israel’s Wall), all of which are under total Israeli control. Israeli NGO Bimkom calls it “the prohibited zone.”³⁴ Source of left map: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2011). Source of right map: B’Tselem.

³⁴ Bimkom, *The Prohibited Zone*.

On reservations, indigenous communities enjoy partial legal autonomy, for example in determining personal status (e.g. membership in the community), economic activities (e.g. gambling), education, distribution of property and adjudication of criminal cases (e.g. domestic violence).³⁵ Studies of native administrations in the context of indirect colonial rule and of indigenous reservations share a focus on the question of how rights are articulated, how citizenship and subjecthood are distributed and what forms of governance are constrained or permitted there, depending on the configuration of sovereignty on the territory. Such studies tend to think sovereignty insofar as it concerns the status of the populations that live there (can they have separate passports?) and that of individuals who enter the territory (can they be tried in local courts?). They think, in other words, about the government of the subjects of law (and rights) and thus about the government of *human* subjects.

To the extent that Oslo established the PA as a native administration to exercise self-rule over a population on discrete chunks of territory, the West Bank could be studied as a kind of hybrid of indirect colonial rule and rule by reservation. But, in stipulating that the PA also protect the environment, Oslo produced an additional set of arrangements in which humans—as subjects or populations—were far less important. Assigning accountability for protecting the environment was to depend on how the latter was defined, on the territory’s topography and on the material properties of its water sources in particular. The definition Oslo gave to the environment was formed on an epistemic and political fault line. Not only was Oslo an opportunity to invent a state-like

³⁵ See for example Blackburn, “Differentiating Indigenous Citizenship.”

government from scratch; that invention also happened to occur as environmentalist movements, environmental expertise and green technologies were being birthed into the halls of mainstream government offices and international development agencies worldwide. This made it possible for Oslo’s advocates to earnestly call the West Bank “a shared environment,” including the land across the entire West Bank, the underground as well as the West Bank’s air space, irrespective of Oslo’s jurisdictional carvings.

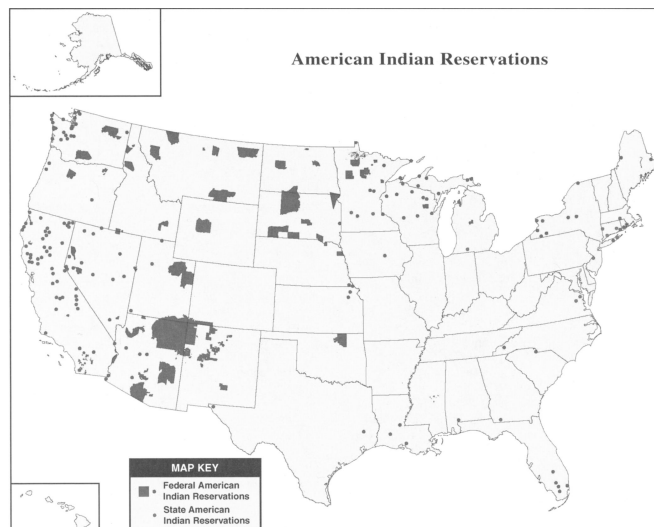


Figure 1. American Indian Reservations. Source: Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce 2000.

Figure 2. Map of American Indian Reservations. Juxtaposed with the above maps of the West Bank, this map shows the similarity in how reservations and PA enclaves are both enclosed, semi-autonomous areas that are spatially non-contiguous with one another, and surrounded by settlements. Source: Thomas Biolsi.³⁶

The mountainous topography of the West Bank by comparison with low-lying central Israel presented the PA with an additional challenge. Nablus, for example, is located in the northern West Bank (see Figure 1). It is nestled between two mountains at

³⁶ Biolsi, “Imagined Geographies,” 242.

an elevation of around 1,800 feet above sea level. Tel Aviv, which lies about 17.4 miles southwest of Nablus, stands at about 16 feet above sea level. Among the first things Abu Ghosh explained to me was that, because Nablus’ north-south West Bank mountain ridge slopes downward toward central Israel, near Tel Aviv, gravity pulls wastewater westward down the slope and into Israel. The PA must also thus prevent pollutants from its areas, including those that end up in Israeli-controlled areas of the West Bank, from reaching Israeli territory *outside* the West Bank.

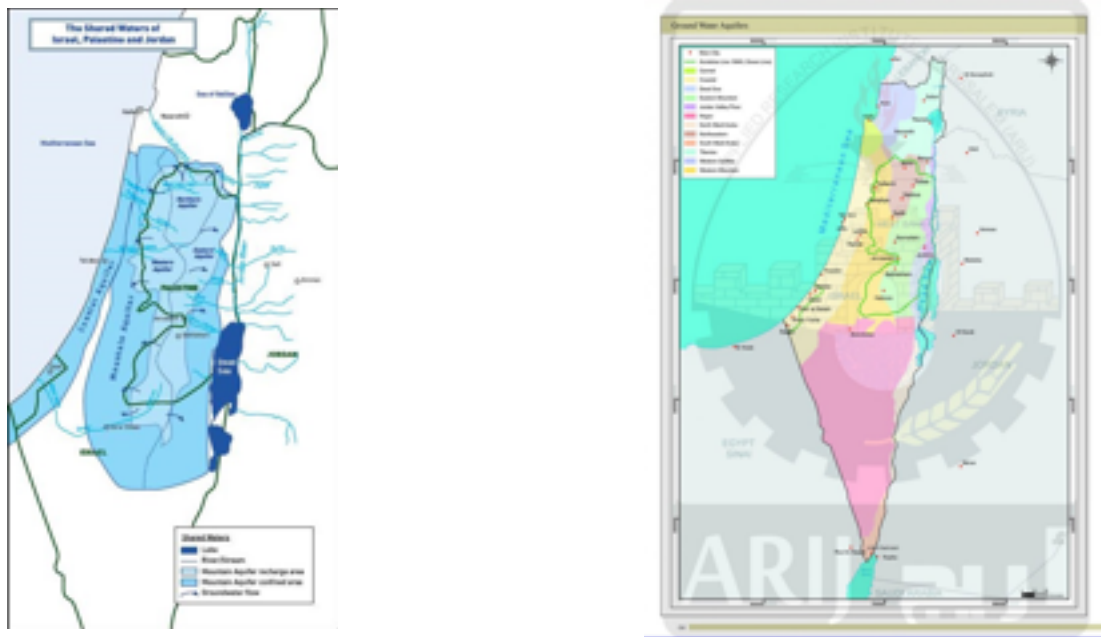


Figure 3. Left: Map of the waters shared by Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan. By including Jordan, this map gives a slightly wider view and thus highlights the expansiveness of the meaning of “the environment” and therefore of “environmental protection.” Source: Mediterranean Affairs.³⁷ Right: Map of the ground aquifers in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. This map shows that the Western Mountain Aquifer (in yellow), the Eastern Mountain Aquifer (in light green), the Northeastern (in brown) Aquifer, the Jordan Valley Floor Aquifer (in violet), the Tiberias Aquifer (in light blue) and the Dead Sea (in blue) all straddle the Armistice (“Green”) Line between the West Bank and Israel. Source: Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ).

³⁷ Please see *Mediterranean Affairs*: <http://www.mediterraneanaffairs.com/en/events/water-israeli-palestinian-conflict.html> Last Accessed 19 July 2015.

In being assigned responsibility for land, air and water far beyond its jurisdiction, the PA was being granted an impossible twist on the “off-reservation rights” that have been recently ceded to select indigenous communities in the United States. These are rights claimed by indigenous advocates who, for example, campaign for their communities to fish and hunt outside reservations. Such campaigns for using and protecting “shared” natural resources can result in what Biolsi calls “comanagement” between indigenous communities, “the federal, state, municipal, and county governments in ceded areas over the health and future of both the particular food sources ...and the environment more generally.”³⁸

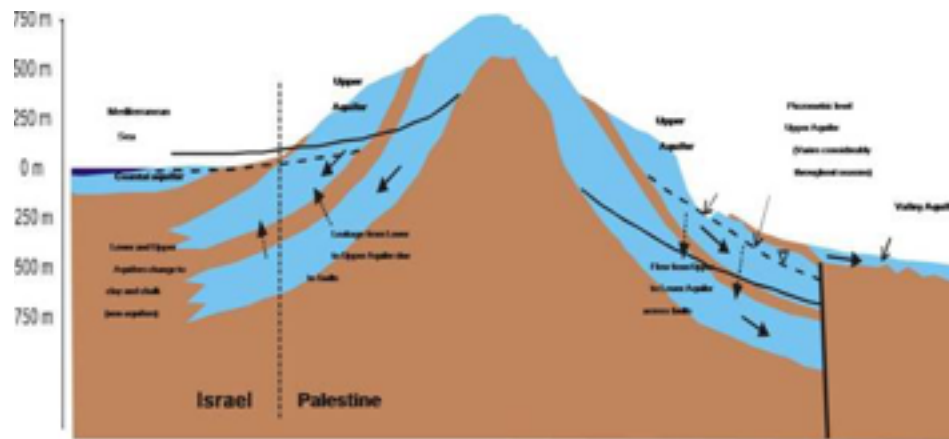


Figure 4. This simplified map shows how the mountainous feature of the West Bank tends to cause water (and wastewater) to flow downhill either toward Israel or toward the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea. The perforated vertical line represents the Green Line. Source: unknown, online.

³⁸ Biolsi, “Imagined Geographies,” 246.

Indigenous claims here are to shared or coequal, rather than nested or hierarchical, sovereignty through “government-to-government relations.”³⁹ To the extent that Oslo extended the parameters of (or allowed for) PA governmental concern to areas outside the areas in which it governs populations, “comanagement” of those areas with Israel was in some sense being suggested. And the Palestinian negotiators who signed Oslo’s environment and water articles presumably preferred comanagement to sole Israeli involvement in managing key aspects of the territory. What the PA received in practice, however, was responsibility over the environment beyond its enclaves *without the authority to act*. This arrangement has resulted in displays of apparent Palestinian backwardness around environmental issues, as evidenced in lacking infrastructures. And it has resulted in the continued actual pollution of Palestinian environments, as I describe above.

A Study of Smokescreens

This project can also be framed as a study of smokescreens. Environmental protection, and now climate change, have both served as excuses for sinister political and economic interests. In Palestine, scholars indict their manipulation in the further entrenchment of Israeli control in the OPT. The argument is that Israel’s is a false, or insincere, environmentalism. In Palestine, it serve to “greenwash” Israel’s policies of dispossession. The PA, for its part, is also deemed false, an empty vessel for Israeli or donor aims in the region. Many of my interlocutors within and outside Palestine argue that it *appears* to govern, or it *appears* to be autonomous, while neither is actually true. It

³⁹ Interestingly, this policy first appeared in the United States in the 1990s, at the same time when the Accords were forming the parameters of environmental stewardship in Palestine.

is this appearance, they insist, that allows settler colonialism to march on unabated. This appearance is a smokescreen that blinds some occupied residents and, most importantly, that blinds the international community, from the occupation's true image.

There are good reasons for both sets of critiques, as I will show. And though the two apparent smokescreens—environmentalism and PA governance—have independent origins, in the context of waste management they become entwined. Both environmentalism and climate change adaptation discourses have served to naturalize, to render technical and therefore to depoliticize inequalities with deeply political roots. Environmental protection and nature conservation have long justified dispossession and destruction, especially among indigenous peoples. Since 1967, environmental legislation has been mobilized as a form of what Eyal Weizmann calls lawfare in the OPT.⁴⁰ Environmental norms and regulations greenwash confiscation of Palestinian lands. First designated nature reserves, many Palestinian lands have then become Israeli settlements. Afforestation has been used to cover up the ruins of ethnically cleansed villages.⁴¹ It is always at least partly in the name of environmental protection that Israeli bureaucrats have denied or delayed all but four of the twenty-two wastewater treatment plants the PA has applied to build while sewage continues to flow into the West Bank's groundwaters.

From this long duree perspective, nature preservation arguments are the latest in a series of smokescreens used to legitimize colonization of Palestinian lands and destruction of lives and livelihoods. Since the early twentieth century, Palestinians have

⁴⁰ Weizman, *Hollow Land*.

⁴¹ See for example Benjamin et al., *Greenwashing Apartheid*.

heard that they were not civilized or modern enough to be autonomous, that they did not know how to “make the desert bloom,” that the security of Jews against Arab violence had to be ensured, that their history was not as deep as that of the Jewish people.⁴² They have been told that they did not have recognizable title to their land, that they have built homes “illegally,” that is without Israeli permits. They have been told that for public health reasons they should accept mass sterilization campaigns. Israel has even used the language of human rights and of international humanitarian law to justify bombing civilians.⁴³ Within this long and painful genealogy, environmental arguments for the necessity of Israeli control over civilian infrastructures—for instance the fact that all PA projects must be approved by Israel—appear as another iteration of an old phenomenon. From the perspective of dispossession, little is therefore new about the emergence and circulation of environmental arguments in Israel and in the OPT.

Similar critiques of manipulability are now being launched about climate change in Palestine. In a chapter published in Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict (2012), our German hydrogeologist laments that climate change “adaptation is not considered as a socio-economic and political task, but as a purely technical endeavor.” He calls this the “climate changeization” of Israel’s “very old political discourse on ‘water security.’”⁴⁴ He warns that it offers “a highly attractive canvas, a projection screen for almost everybody and any agenda.” He warns the PA against falling “for the pragmatic technical solutions promoted by Israel and the donors.”

⁴² See for example Abu El-Haj, Facts on the Ground.

⁴³ See for example Weizman, Least of All Possible Evils.

⁴⁴ Messerschmid, “Nothing New in the Middle East,” 423.

Messerschmidt also critiques the PA's "action plans" for being "tailored to and made compatible with the given status quo of the conflict."⁴⁵ It is true that, among PA experts, bureaucrats and engineers in charge of designing and building environmentally sound waste management infrastructures, priority was usually given to what foreign donors and Israeli government officials have pre-approved for construction. This is in part because the international—that which emanates from the global North—is the technical. And PA waste managers saw themselves as speaking the language of the technical arguing, as the Palestinian-American lawyer did, that they were developing the technical capabilities necessary to govern a sovereign state. They saw the technical as the tool of the present while they waited for a political solution. They insisted that theirs is not in itself political work, in other words. Many of the "technical" solutions they chose for mitigating Palestinian wastes' polluting effects were, as Messerschmidt argues, compatible with the occupation's status quo. Compatibility meant agreeing to site landfills and wastewater treatment plants in Israeli-approved locations. Such measures involved expropriating privately owned Palestinian lands; Israel never offers settlement, Israeli state or private lands. Compatibility meant acceptance of donors' conditions, for example required financial arrangements, technologies, materials, legal regimes, in lieu of seeking offers more compatible with local Palestinian environmentalists' standards and with Palestine's topography. It meant not planning infrastructures with the return of Palestinian refugees in mind.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 455.

In their compatibility with the occupation authorities' own policies, PA practices in the field of waste management are not too dissimilar from PA police facilitation of Israeli arrests and assassinations of Palestinians. They differ little from the PA's cooperation with the CA to process permit requests for Palestinians wishing to enter Jerusalem—where many of the homes they were forced to leave are now occupied by Jewish Israelis. They differ little from the PA's insistence that Palestinian municipalities automate municipal electricity payments through prepaid meters so as to pay the Israeli Electric Company, instead of trying to build Palestinian generators. These well-documented PA practices of choosing to comply with Israel's occupation policies rather than to defy them are why it has become increasingly commonplace for scholars and activists to argue that the PA is a subcontractor—a prosthetic, now *constitutive part*—of Israel's occupation. And these arguments are compelling. Especially if we look at the growing number of Palestinians kidnapped from refugee camps and sent to Israeli prisons, the growing Israeli settlements and the growing number of Palestinian homes demolished. The occupation marches on.

Yet it is also undeniable that Palestinians in the West Bank—including many of the PA employees, NGO workers, dentists, municipal engineers, farmers, dancers, activists, students, agroeconomists and other residents of all kinds with whom I spent time for over two years—treat both the PA *and* environmental protection as much more than mere smokescreens. By arguing that the occupation was not to blame, for instance, the woman at the Friends Meeting House distinguished between the occupation and the PA, on the one hand, and expressed genuine concern for Gaza's environment, on the

other. In critiquing the PA, like many others I encountered during fieldwork, she reified an image it projects of itself: that of a bonafide, already autonomous government with at least some of the trappings of a “real” state.

This was an image I saw refracted through the ways in which PA bureaucrats and municipal employees who managed waste treated their own work as well. Doing “technical” work was for many doing national work. Building the critical infrastructures of statehood and protecting its environment were framed as work for the nation—and therefore work *against* the further entrenchment of occupation. In the face of a settler colonial project that is rapidly moving to displace the local population, it is not hard to imagine how establishing large-scale infrastructures that make life slightly more livable, that connect fragmented territories and that project PA work into a deep future could allow them to see themselves as anti-colonial actors.

This, too, was not the effect of mere fantasy. While many of the PA’s planned infrastructures have been delayed, destroyed or cancelled, *some have been built and now operate*. I spent much of my fieldwork researching the 2007 construction of a regional sanitary landfill in the northern West Bank governorate of Jenin, for example. In 2014 when I returned, another, World Bank-funded site in Hebron in the south had just opened. In speaking with the landfills’ designers and managers, in reading through their archives and in speaking with municipal representatives and city employees from the surrounding towns that used them, I observed the multiple ways in which the ongoing PA environmental reforms have had a number of—often unintended—effects, including on the bureaucrats and experts themselves. Environmentalist anxieties about waste,

exacerbated by climate change anxieties about suddenly more imminent water scarcity, help shape the parameters of what is thinkable for PA bureaucrats who require the approval and support of states and agencies outside their jurisdictional boundaries in order to sustain rule within them. More broadly, they have helped shape the boundaries, forms, modes, approaches and priorities of people's relationship to critical infrastructures, to one another and to politics, in the West Bank.

In this dissertation, I treat municipal sanitation monitors, PA bureaucrats and city engineers as a distinct group of people, partly because they were some of the only people I met who were interested in speaking about waste. Despite being "governors" in the sense of governing public wastes, they are also *in* and *of* the population they govern. Just as the Palestinian institutions in which they work are, in a sense, "nested" within the Israeli state and donor structures that, in some cases, gave birth to them. Many are elites. Especially PA employees and consultants with international aid agencies. But their lives are also woven into the larger fabric of an occupied society. They are fathers, sisters, cousins and sons. Their children are in Israeli prisons, where many have been themselves. Their homes are ransacked in the dark of night. In governing, they alter their fellow residents' lives. Sometimes for better, others for worse.

As they go about trying to govern, Palestine's waste managers are constantly asking "*How should we do this?*"⁴⁶ They are constantly negotiating the limits of their institutions' inevitably intimate relationship to the occupier. Meanwhile, they boycott Israeli goods at the local supermarket after work. They are faced with perpetual

⁴⁶ Simpson explains that this is also a crucial question to those living in Mohawk territory across the two sides of the border between the U.S. and Canada. Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*.

“catch-22’s,” a category that became fundamental to my fieldnotes. I call a catch-22 a dilemmatic situation in which two equally strong ethical principles are forced into opposition with one another. On several occasions, for instance, Israel has made granting the PA permits to build waste infrastructures conditional on the PA accepting to connect Palestinian and Israeli settlement infrastructures together. The PA categorically refuses. “This is a red line for us,” the Palestinian-American lawyer repeats to me. He explains: If infrastructural work is to be national work, it cannot legitimize settlements through material connectedness.

The municipality of Salfit had applied for a wastewater treatment plant for its population of approximately 9,000. Israel made permission conditional on connection to the nearby settlement of Ariel, one of the five largest West Bank settlements with a population of over 16,000.⁴⁷ Ariel is built on private Palestinian lands held by residents of Salfit as well as those of surrounding villages. The PA refused. It rejected “having the Salfit WWTP service any Israeli settlements.”⁴⁸ It also rejected Israel’s implicit demand, as PA bureaucrats saw it, that the PA recognize the legitimacy of its settlements. This refusal can be seen as a response to political recognition as a technique of settler governance.⁴⁹

But it is a refusal with immediate environmental and economic consequences in addition to possible long-term health, social and political ones. The Salfit plant has yet to be built and Ariel’s wastewater infrastructures have yet to be upgraded. B’Tselem,

⁴⁷ Zirulnick, “Five Largest Israeli Settlements: Who Lives there, and Why.”

⁴⁸ Palestinian Water Authority, Status of Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects in the West Bank, 21.

⁴⁹ See for example Simpson, Mohawk Interruptus, 20.

The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, writes, “the prolonged neglect of treatment of Ariel's wastewater, due to the malfunctioning of the treatment facility inside the settlement, has led several times to pollution of Salfit's central water-pumping facility. The flow of Ariel's waste has already damaged the flora and fauna in Wadi al-Matawi, between Salfit and Ariel.”⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Salfit's agricultural lands are flooded with the town's own raw sewage as well, land in the area is devalued, springs become unusable, forcing residents to purchase water, usually from Israel. And, when wastewater ends up in Israeli territory, Israel fines the PA for polluting the Israeli environment. A refusal with such high stakes provokes heated debates behind the PA's closed doors. In a conversation we had, one water pricing expert rolled his eyes, disagreeing with the logic of refusal to connect to settlement infrastructures. “If we end up in an agreement with the Israelis to remove the settlements, do you think the sticking point will be that we had connected our wastewater treatment plants and sewage networks?!”

Shibih Dowla

Another way to take the characteristic example of Salfit and its sewage is to say that the PA's establishment has many ways of being consequential—beyond its facilitation of the occupation's ongoing processes. This returns us to the question of smokescreens and subcontracts. The PA's management of people, materials and enclaves produces surprising, incoherent and often troubling *new* effects on the territory and among the people it governs. This dissertation explores how, for many among the PA's governed,

⁵⁰ B'Tselem, “Ariel Settlement Fact Sheet,” 30 August 2010; updated 17 July 2012. http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20100830_facts_on_the_settlement_of_ariel Last accessed 23 July 2015.

“self-rule” was both state-like and a smokescreen. It is in this context that we can understand the comments of Nasser, a butcher I met in Nablus, and with whom I open this chapter. Nasser introduced me to the idea of what he called *shibih dowla* to describe what the PA had become for him. *Dowla* means state in the modern, international relations sense of the term. *Shibih* is more complicated.

The Arabic word *shibih* can mean ghost, shadow, phantom, apparition, shape, specter, spectrum, shade, spook, wraith, spirit, evil spirit, sprite, gremlin, idol and bogey. It suggests something that is both present and not. It is something in which only some believe. It is both material and immaterial. It can be good, neutral or wicked. It can be beautiful or foul. It can be ghostlike. Or it can be the *image* of something ghostlike. A wraith, for instance, can be an image seen shortly before or after death. Wraiths are often pale, thin and insubstantial. Yet they are traces. They are indices of something real, whether the real is impending death or a person who once lived. A wraith can be a dead person who appears in life, after death. It can be an immaterial or spectral appearance of a living being, frequently regarded as portending that person’s death. A wraith is also a water spirit.

Like other people living in settler colonies, Palestinians live with precarious assumptions about the permanence of borders as well as the status of their own rights.⁵¹ People live, work, plan, hire, get married, produce and manage waste in the West Bank as if the PA simultaneously were a state, as if it were long gone *and* as if it never was.⁵²

⁵¹ Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 22.

⁵² For a discussion of the multiple, contradictory ways in which the occupation is similarly portrayed by Israelis, see Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*.

Israelis I encountered, Palestinian waste managers, West Bankers who disliked the PA, and resident expats differed from one another—and from one day or moment to the next—on the question of where, and with whom, sovereignty resided on the Territory. The main question centered around the extent to which Israel’s sovereignty is absolute. Whether, as Rashid Khalidi once put it, a one-state solution is already in place.⁵³ Speaking of the PA as a *shibih*—phantom or a ghost—state on the one hand confirms Khalidi’s implication that the so-called “two-state solution,” in which the PA would have played a central role as a state neighboring Israel, has long been dead. The PA in this sense would be the two-state solution’s ghost reappeared, haunting a population “directly” occupied by Israel and kept alive by foreign donors.⁵⁴ Speaking of the PA as a *shibih*—in the sense of wraith—state does something slightly different. If a wraith can be a representation of death before it happens, *shibih* affirms the idea that the PA, and its statehood project, is headed for doom, even if it’s not there already.

Speaking of the PA as a *shibih*—shadow—state can, furthermore, recall a complex relationship between materiality and the immaterial. Material has the effect of an appearance, for example the production of lower temperatures in the form of shade. And the immaterial is untouchable and unreliable, such that you look away and look back and it disappears. Shadow state is also the name given to movements that provide services and infrastructures but that lack international recognition as states, for example

⁵³ Shalev, “Leading Palestinian Intellectual: ‘We Already Have a One-State Solution,’” *Haaretz*, 5 December 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/leading-palestinian-intellectual-we-already-have-a-one-state-solution-1.399629> Last accessed 24 July 2015.

⁵⁴ The Oslo Agreement has actually expired. Designed as an Interim Agreement for five years, it expired in 2000. The fact that the last fifteen years continue to be analyzed as partial effects of Oslo—and that the PA continues to exist—is itself reason to consider terms like “phantom” or “ghostlike” for the latter.

in the cases of Hizbullah, ISIL and the Zapatista movement. For some of the people with whom I spoke, including PA and municipal employees, the PA and its projects are “haunted by what might have been”⁵⁵ had the conditions for building a state been fairer. For others, the PA is a ghost of a project whose deadline has long passed—a project that never came to fruition.

As North American indigenous reservations are “of” the settler states within whose boundaries they find themselves, occupied Palestinians are “of” the Israeli state. Israel is “their” state, even if it is a state in which they are an unwanted minority. Even if, in the case of West Bank Palestinians, they are subjects rather than citizens of it. Abu Ghosh’s plant designs are subject to Israeli state approval. The Israeli military (through the Civil Administration) processes Palestinian requests and Israeli ministries are involved in issuing decisions. His plans are evaluated by the same Israeli ministries (e.g. the environment ministry) that evaluate projects for Tel Aviv and Nazareth. Abu Ghosh used the encompassing term “we” to describe himself and his colleagues, some of whom worked in the PA, as the collectivity tasked with asking the (Israeli) state for permits and with visiting Israel’s Beit Il military base to discuss blueprints, for instance. The PA was an assumed background part of his story rather than a central actor. The latter position was reserved for Israel, which issued or denied permits from on high. Palestinians are thus “of” the Israeli state in the terms Audra Simpson uses to describe the Mohawk living

⁵⁵ Chalfin, “Public Things, Excremental Politics,” 99.

between the United States and Canada: “one must come up against its image, its history, and its laws as one moves through and upon it.”⁵⁶

Yet Abu Ghosh described Israeli rules and decisions as both state-like and occupation-like, or exceptional. Israel was ideal-typical sense of being predictable and procedural *and* arbitrary and mysteriously punitive. The fact that his experience was echoed by that of hundreds of other West Bank Palestinians suggests an adjustment is in order to those analyses that treat the OPT as spaces of the Agambenian state of exception. On the one hand, those who liken occupied Palestinians to Agamben’s *homo sacer* are right to view them as a population whose relationship to the Israeli “polis” is characterized by an arrangement of inclusive exclusion. On the other hand, however, the places where most Palestinians live and work in the West Bank *are* to some extent governed by Israel through its control over the PA. They are governed to a standard that is higher than that of “bare life” usually associated with Israel’s siege on Gaza. The difference is a matter of degree. The West Bank in general, and its PA areas in particular, might therefore better be understood as what Chalfin calls a “*partial* exception: a space *built* and circumscribed but barely sustained by the sovereign state.”⁵⁷ There the long, slow prevention of the establishment of Palestinian infrastructures amounts to a “calculated underprovisioning” of the PA by Israel without amounting to all out abandonment or war.⁵⁸ Perhaps the idea that the PA is a *shibih dowla* can be read, then, as an appropriate mirroring of the partialness of the exception, just as it mirrors the

⁵⁶ Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 115-6.

⁵⁷ Chalfin, “Public Things, Excremental Politics,” 99. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

partialness both of indirect rule and of autonomy under which West Bank Palestinian society has been governed for the past twenty years.

Chapters

Chapter 1. This dissertation has six chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the first two decades of Israeli occupation in the West Bank, roughly 1967-1993. Israel's early governance of Palestinian waste laid the foundations for the eventual reorganization of the relationship between municipal administrative boundaries and large-scale dumping. Israeli policies favored central government intervention into the work of municipal employees and Israeli police and military intervention into the practices of Palestinian residents as pedestrians, shopkeepers and drivers. Investigating changes in the character and scales of central government concern about water contamination is significant for understanding the focus on Palestine's underground aquifers that was to become characteristic of water and waste management in the 1990s. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, new materials became available for the first time for popular consumption. These circulated, commingled with preexisting objects and practices and accumulated, producing new forms of material excess. The chapter draws on the recollections of West Bank residents and a former CA sanitation officer, as well as on the military orders it was his job to implement, to describe municipal waste management practices of that period. After 1967, the occupation authorities' practices in the West Bank increasingly targeted the minutiae of Palestinian municipal refuse management, marking an important shift from practices that had preceded them. The authorities continued to treat waste as a problem of public health. But waste's management was as focused on keeping public

order in the Territories—an order that was bound to how materials were placed in public spaces.

Interestingly, residents with whom I spoke did not consider this ordering political at the time.⁵⁹ They recalled feeling that Israeli involvement in the management of their wastes was “helpful” and “normal,” if “without the agreement of the people.” For occupied residents, some Israeli involvements in waste management were what I call an “unqualified good.”⁶⁰ (So apparent was their quiescence to Israel as well that the Israeli authorities set out to integrate occupied Palestinians’ waste into a national Israeli waste management system. This required compliance from all segments of the population and municipal government.) To understand waste’s uniqueness in this regard I compare early waste management with later moments (in the late 1980s and early 1990s), when Israeli involvement in was characterized as suspect—as political—because it was considered a tactic of political repression. I also compare residents’ experiences of solid waste management under Israeli rule with the dynamics of Israeli-controlled education. By contrast with education, waste management was still emergent as a field of governance in the 1960s and 1970s. “Solid waste” in particular was just becoming objectified as a new kind of burden within municipal work. I argue that because of the field’s then emergent specificities—including the new version of abjectness with which it was characterized—the occupation’s involvement in solid waste management was, at least for a time,

⁵⁹ Here I mean that they did not call it political (*siyaseh*). But I also mean that it did not “open a space of disagreement” between two sides for them, as Andrew Barry puts it in “The Anti-Political Economy.” They did not necessarily consider Israel to have managed Palestinians’ waste for motives other than those of managing the waste.

⁶⁰ This is a term I borrow from Joe Jackson in “Smoke, Lies, and the Nanny State,” cited in Metzl, “Introduction,” 6.

instrumentalized by local Palestinian sanitation workers and residents. This may suggest that processes of objectification can be a temporary neutralizer of politics, at the same time as it occasions new terrains for political engagement. If disciplinary power, or a politics of life, was to some extent at work in this period, as some contend,⁶¹ this chapter's findings may also suggest that processes during which fields of knowledge or of work are objectified can provide temporary respite from the grip of disciplinary power per Foucault. It may also suggest that, precisely because of its potential for abjectness, presents unique possibilities in complex political contexts.

Chapter 2. The idea that the environment should be protected from human actions was already salient among Israeli and Palestinian researchers in the 1970s. But it was not until the 1990s that *waste* was consolidated for the governors of the West Bank into an object of environmental concern and systematic governmental practice.⁶² The spatial-jurisdictional contradictions around environmentalist management of waste as I describe them above shaped the parameters for effective speech in the work of Palestinian regulators and managers. This chapter shows how some of the incoherencies of Oslo's approach to environmental pollution were mirrored in incoherencies in the daily speech of Palestine's experts. These incoherencies were effective in that they helped carry

⁶¹ Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*.

⁶² By the mid-twentieth century the environment had already begun to emerge as a fragile biosphere (Masco 2010) composed of regional ecosystems connected by natural features, for example underground aquifers, animal migration patterns, air flows, rivers and mountains. Its emergence around the 1960s and 1970s has been attributed to shifts at the international level, for example in the increased dependence on oil fuel (Mitchell 2011) and in the nuclear arms race (Masco 2010). If cholera epidemics were catalysts for organizing governments across the globe into action in support of "public health" in the mid-nineteenth century, nuclear proliferation and the world oil trade were some of the main catalysts for international organizing in support of "the environment" in the mid-twentieth century. What cholera was to the fields of public health and sanitation, in other words, synthetics, nuclear weapons and fossil fuels were to environmentalism.

forward processes to construct infrastructures and to keep them running. They did so by serving as evidence that experts were “environmentally-minded.” They evidenced Palestinians as reliable partners in the protection of an environment “shared” by Israelis and Palestinians. But Palestinians did not only deploy contradictory speech cynically toward utilitarian ends. This was not mere strategic compliance with dominant forms of speech promulgated by foreigners with the ability to withhold or to allow the construction of Palestinian infrastructures. These forms of incoherent speech and thought also appeared in experts’ more intimate work settings. Nor, however, was bureaucrats’ reiteration of them a symptom of them having become unknowing, disciplined subjects of new colonial logics put into effect post-Oslo.⁶³ The language associated with the concept of a shared environment was fraught for the people who used it. With visible frustration, they repeatedly claimed that it contradicted other forms of thought and practice to which they were (much more) strongly committed. Yet they felt compelled to repeat it. Incoherent forms of speech I describe below were thus features of a kind of Orwellian doublethink that has, I suggest, become necessary for participation in the building the would-be Palestinian state as a state that also protects a “shared environment.”⁶⁴

Chapter 3. In Chapter 1 I note that, during the first Intifada, the management of garbage within Palestinian municipalities became politicized. Residents developed a stake in managing their own wastes without Israeli interference. In Chapter 3 I show that, after Oslo, PA waste reformers continued to seek to manage waste independently of

⁶³ See Weizman, “Seeing Through Walls.”

⁶⁴ See footnote on doublethink in Chapter 2. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, 32.

Israel. But the way they worked and spoke about their work revealed that the significance of doing so had changed. Managing waste was still a national duty and—within new geographical limits—a nation-wide task. But it was also considered technical and therefore divorced from the political.⁶⁵ Paradoxically, however, there was little the PA could do to build a landfill or a wastewater treatment plant, for instance, that did not involve Israel. In most cases this was due to restrictions imposed by Oslo. But, in other cases I discovered through fieldwork, PA experts also sometimes *chose* to involve Israel in their work. The “authorship”⁶⁶ of PA infrastructures designed to be “by the nation, for the nation,”⁶⁷ was therefore neither singular nor simple. I examine the case of the PA’s Ramallah regional landfill plan, which, I learned, had been a Civil Administration plan before the PA’s establishment in 1995. The PA had borrowed many of the measurements for that landfill—and for the Jenin and Hebron landfills it had also designed—from the Israeli measurements that had been approved in the 1980s. By borrowing measurements and expropriation capacities from the Israeli administration, and by rendering them “technical objects,”⁶⁸ Palestinian bureaucrats were drawing “on the coercive and material power of the state.”⁶⁹ But the state was not their own.

The dilemma this chapter explores is therefore how PA experts were able to view their work as technical *and* as national (and therefore not as political) while they

⁶⁵ I use the word here as I used it in note 83 in this chapter on Andrew Barry’s definition of the political.

⁶⁶ Mukerjee, *Impossible Engineering*, 223.

⁶⁷ This is a play on the American clothing line called “For Us By Us” (FUBU).

⁶⁸ Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*.

⁶⁹ Matthews, *Instituting Nature*, 5.

themselves knew that much of what they did was based on calculations borrowed from the occupier from whom they sought independence. My answer points to the field of what I call the “technical-national,” which emerged as an albeit unnamed local framework for understanding PA waste management reforms toward the building of a state. In one sense, the technical-national can be viewed as a framework capacious enough to offer a resolution to one of the many incoherencies of statecraft attempted under military occupation. The technical-national also emerged as a result of the spatial confusions produced when Oslo’s separation of the West Bank from Israel also resutured the two territories through concerns about their “shared environment’s” wellbeing. The chapter also begins to describe some of the effects of the technical-national as a conceptual framework on the relationship between governors and governed. PA reformers’ own expertise recommended alternative calculations and infrastructures to the ones they had borrowed from Israel. One effect of the technical-national was that experts repeatedly disavowed the forms of expertise familiar to them when facing critical publics. The technical-national also sometimes became an evaluative framework for residents, including those critical of PA reforms. But the fact that PA experts’ attachment to the technical-national meant that disavowals of this kind undermined experts’ legitimacy, often when they needed it most.

Chapter 4. With a focus on the construction of two PA-run landfills (one in Jenin and the other in Hebron), Chapter 4 examines the PA’s approach to the question of social transformation—and the persuasion of noncompliant publics—as they appeared in its West Bank sanitation reforms. PA state-building through the building of institutions and

infrastructures for waste combined two imperatives of nationalism as they have appeared historically: one that seeks to preserve the nation's culture or heritage; and the other that seeks to modernize the nation by pulling it away from culture that impedes modernization. But PA nationalist statecraft also differed from both imperatives. The period I examine (between 2007 and 2014) was thus characterized by a profound ambivalence toward the questions of social transformation and of popular persuasion. In powerful senses, PA and municipal waste reformers resembled other nationalist reformers. There was much talk in ministry and municipal offices, in meetings and in waste-related policy briefs, about the questions of residents' culture (*thaqafah*) and mentality (*'aqliyyah*). Reformers attempted to alter inhabitants' practices vis-à-vis discards.⁷⁰ They attempted to reorient residents' senses of sight and olfaction toward new modes of disgust. Reformers also encouraged a technoaesthetics of awe toward new infrastructures and techniques for managing waste.⁷¹ These doubled as attempts to reorganize residents' approaches to themselves as governors of the nation and can be viewed as attempts to "modernize" the population out of old habits and into new ones. However, reformers' discussion of culture revolved most around how to improve waste management *without addressing the problem of culture* directly. They concentrated resources on the development of large-scale infrastructures, equipment and institutional rearrangements. Reforms were designed to leave the culture and mentality of the people

⁷⁰ See Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere" and Chakrabarty, "Of Garbage, Modernity and the Citizen's Gaze."

⁷¹ Here I borrow Masco's use of the term, by which he means "the evaluative aesthetic categories embedded in the expert practices of," in this case, post-Oslo waste reformers. Masco, "Nuclear Technoaesthetics," 350.

as they were—if not to preserve them as heritage, at least to avoid conflict with them. The technoaesthetics of PA statebuilding thus favored “stuff” over citizens, the material over the spiritual (see also Chapter 3). Through inclusive exclusion, a theory of culture was therefore key to technical-national praxis for managing waste.⁷² This allowed reformers to reiterate the distinction between expert and lay, awareness and ignorance. Residents’ reliance on experts was thereby reproduced.

Chapter 4 also examines the impacts of infrastructures built on the West Bank as a space open to PA governance. Operational since 2007, the Jenin landfill, for example, produced the villages as “its” infrastructural peripheries because they were now required to use it. As far as reformers were concerned, this was the production of new “national” infrastructural spaces because of the novelty of their scale. It contributed to a spectral sense that Authority-authorized expertise was exercised within and across contiguous swaths of territory whose boundaries were at the outer edges of the West Bank. Reforms worked equally, though less visibly, at the “intimate” level of the home. The new, technical-national character of the Authority’s borrowed measurements described in Chapter 3 was thus also apparent in how measurements shaped the built environment within which everyday governance took place. Regional landfills gave bureaucrats tools—and provided them with a sense of jurisdictional *reach*—heretofore unavailable to Palestinians like the municipal sanitation workers described in Chapter 1. These tools were attractive in part because they contributed to bureaucrats’ own senses of building a state for the nation as a whole. The nation’s state, it was implied, could only be built by

⁷² Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

members of the nation itself. Paradoxically, then, bureaucrats' use of Israeli measurements also afforded *them* experiences as if they governed a population and territory autonomously.

Chapter 5. Chapter 5 addresses the conundrum I faced when I found that residents and their representatives in municipal and village government appealed to the PA for help solving their waste problems in localities distant from the PA's spaces of governance—where infrastructural “centers” had not yet managed to create “peripheries.” They appealed to the PA despite the fact that they had little evidence that the PA could or would provide the help that was required. This was a default appeal to the PA as a standalone set of institutions responsible for large-scale waste problems, including problems in Area C (where the PA had no control). I read the appeals by the village of Shuqba resident to the PA across large swaths of Area C as diagnostic of a kind of reluctant compliance with PA rule. As Chapter 3 shows, compliance did not come about because of the legitimacy of the PA in most residents' eyes. Nor was it diagnostic of the PA's actual authority to rule or of awe at the state's spectacular infrastructural achievements, both of which it repeatedly failed to do. Instead I describe the sensibility that made this possible as a kind of matter-of-factness. Chapter 5 thus discusses the concept of the phantom state, by which I mean something similar to what Timothy Mitchell argues about the “state effect.” Residents' albeit unsatisfactory experiences of PA involvements in waste management took "on the

appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form."⁷³ This was in part an effect of the PA's performance of statehood.

Chapter 5 investigates the case of Shuqba and three of the major waste-related problems that have plagued the village for well over a decade: Israeli industrial dumping, the burning of X-ray images for silver extraction from Ramallah-area hospitals, and the spillage of raw sewage into Shuqba village lands. The chapter proposes that the Authority's waste governance had three effects with regard to the phantom state effect. One, it helped catalyze the emergence of residents' orientation toward Palestinian central government ("the government") in addressing waste in public, whether the origin of that waste was Palestinian or Israeli. Two, it contributed to residents' differentiation between two types of government: the one was the visible, practical work carried out by municipalities and village councils. The other was the regulatory work carried out, or expected to be carried out, *by the Authority*. The expectation was that it would do so through science-based expertise such that the Authority was positioned as absent though often incompetent regulator. Three, it contributed to the production of uncertainty among "non-expert" residents, thereby reinscribing the distinction between experts and laypersons on the terrain of dilemmas about how to deal with waste excesses.

Much has been written about the dramatic institutional changes that accompanied the establishment of national state systems in the Middle East. These changes often

⁷³ Timothy Mitchell argues that "the phenomenon we name 'the state' arises from techniques that enable mundane material practices to take on the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form." Mitchell, "Society, Economy, and the State Effect," 170. In an earlier version of this dissertation I argued that the PA appeared to be a kind of "semi-state effect," following Mitchell. The partialness and the effect of some kind of statehood still correspond to my argument, but the closer translation of *shibih dowla* allows the phantom, shadow-like elements of the phenomenon to be better articulated.

resulted in the introduction of new mediators—in the form of social positions, infrastructures or technologies. Mediators' effects were felt at the scale of national government, but also at the most minuscule of levels such as the classroom.⁷⁴ In post-Oslo Palestine, the shifts with regard to mediation in sanitation were multiple. One was that the Authority replaced or reduced the roles of long-standing local mediators, for example the municipality and the mukhtar,⁷⁵ replacing them as mediator between residents and the Israeli authorities. Authority experts fashioned themselves as what Bruno Latour has called an "obligatory point of passage" in the solving of municipal waste problems.⁷⁶ But the Authority was not actually able to control the passages through which information, claims and demands passed; those passages were frequently blocked or bypassed by municipalities, the Israeli authorities, by NGOs or donors.⁷⁷ Mediation was thus a fragmented and incomplete achievement. It was nevertheless accepted into daily municipal practice.

⁷⁴ In Yemen, for example, transformations in the education system meant that "a teacher-to-class relationship mediated by the blackboard would replace the numerous Sinna-to-pupil dyads mediated by *luhas*." The blackboard replaced the *luha* as mediator between instructor and pupil. Messick, Calligraphic State, 105.

⁷⁵ The *makhtara* (the position of mukhtar) was invented by the Ottoman central government. The Ottoman law of 1871, article 59, stipulated that mukhtars be elected to local communities. The *makhtara* survived British and Jordanian rule. After 1967 the occupation authorities used it as a vehicle for enforcing "indirect rule" in the Territories. In that sense its position previewed, and paralleled, that of the Authority post-Oslo. Officially, the PA dissolved the *makhtara* in 2000.

⁷⁶ Sociologist Gil Eyal argues that "the expertise of research officers" in early Zionist state-building did something similar. They became points "through which must pass all the different flows of information arriving from agents and informers, aerial photos, monitors of the Arab press, electronic eavesdropping, military attaches, and foreign agencies." Eyal, Disenchantment, 186.

⁷⁷ Tulkarem municipal council signed an agreement with the Israeli regional council of Emek Hefer, for example. And municipal governments continued to do much of the actual work of collecting fees and disposing of waste.

Does the fact that PA mediation became within the “horizon for the taken for granted”⁷⁸ suggest that this was an instance of authority without legitimacy? What was the relationship between legitimacy and mediation here? Positioning oneself as a mediator, on the one hand, and claims to legitimacy, on the other, share interesting analytical ground. Both an entity claiming mediator status and one claiming legitimacy make themselves appear as obligatory points of passage between two other entities. Both mediators and those claiming legitimacy work on behalf of something or someone not present.⁷⁹ The mediator and the claimant to legitimacy therefore both oscillate between immediacy and the elsewhere/elsewhen, if not the transcendental. In both cases the subject making the claim derives authority, furthermore, “from beyond the here and now.”⁸⁰ By positioning themselves as mediators, Authority bureaucrats appealed to an external power (Israel), all the while also appealing to the higher principle of liberation and long-term protection of the nation's environment. By appearing—and by serving—as mediators, PA reformers were therefore enacting one component of legitimacy without necessarily having their *moral* authority to do so recognized by the population whose compliance they did not demand but acquired.

Fernando Coronil argues that the Venezuelan state's authority was established when it became a mediator between the nation and foreign oil companies.⁸¹ It acquired a

⁷⁸ Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology,” 100.

⁷⁹ “For most authors,” writes Lisa Wedeen, “‘successful’ spectacles are those in which legitimacy is gained either by appeal to an external, consensually acknowledged authority or by making the represented figure popular.” Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 7.

⁸⁰ See also Keane, *Christian Moderns*, 216-7.

⁸¹ Coronil, *The Magical State*.

mediating position because companies were interested in the oil under Venezuelan soil but were required to go through state institutions in order to access it. Like oil in Venezuela, garbage and sewage for residents and local governments in Palestine produced what Coronil calls "fantasies of collective integration into centralized political institutions."⁸² In Palestine, as in Venezuela, these "fantasies" were not based on the population's persuasion, exactly. But the mechanisms through which the fantasy was engendered in Palestine differed from those in Venezuela. Oil was Venezuela's most important source of wealth. That was not the case with garbage or with sewage in the West Bank, though those were commodified as well.⁸³ The benefit of mediation for Authority experts came in another currency. That was a moral currency. It was gained through attempts at, and recognition of, protection of the environment. That currency could be paid out by the Authority's international "addressees," as I discuss in Chapter 2. It could be paid out for example through dribs and drabs of recognition of their capacity for statehood (or for statehood itself) at the UN General Assembly. But from among occupied residents it was paid out in a currency that was neither moral nor monetary. It was paid in the currency of compliance that, I argue, signaled the kind of inverse state recognition that I call matter-of-factness.

Chapter 6. In Chapter 6 I turn to the landscape—and specifically to the streets—the Authority sought to reform. I do this in part in order to understand the extent to which residents' discarding practices in public constituted engagements with PA governance. I

⁸² Ibid., 4.

⁸³ Much of the material I collected on the monetary values of wastes (e.g. in used goods markets) has been published elsewhere (in Jerusalem Quarterly) and is outside the scope of this dissertation.

draw on residents' ways of speaking about whose responsibility it was, post-Oslo, to perform the upkeep of public spaces. I also highlight how, despite the matter-of-factness I describe in Chapter 5, residents' ideas about PA responsibility did not emanate from either a simple or a total abdication of individual accountability. Rather, the public micropractices I observed, along with numerous commentaries, suggested instead that at stake in the way people handled wastes in public were fraught local theories about occupied Palestinians' "culture," about the PA's effects *on that culture*, as well as emergent forms of social solidarity whose sources of cohesion—even when fleeting—often seemed to have little to do with governance at all. In presenting a number of "street scenes" from Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin, Chapter 6 depicts amorphous, yet somehow still cohesive, contributions to the making of the West Bank city as I observed it in the early twenty-first century. Neither a general trend, nor a discernible cultural direction, nor a particular political consciousness were manifest in the presence of public discards in the West Bank. Idiosyncratic individuals precipitated networks of "provisional and singular tactics"; their "millions of small individual efforts" operating without "master schemes or abstractions."⁸⁴ This suggests, among other things, that while the technical-national farming of PA statecraft was important to the way waste management was formulated at regional scales, it was far from hegemonic when it came to the life of the streets. In many

⁸⁴ In "Metropolitan Africans: Reading Incapacity, the Incapacity of Reading," Timothy Maliqalim Simone presents a series of short stories which, he says, are "contributions to the making of the city" of Khartoum. He does not "offer these stories as indications of some general trend or discernible cultural direction," he says. "Nor are they exemplars of an emerging political consciousness, although each in some ways can be read as a political practice." Instead, he argues that "Africans precipitate in a network of these provisional and singular tactics, but largely without the benefit of an overarching sociopolitical methodology...it is in the matrix of the myriad of such stories that larger Africanity is being forged...Millions of small individual efforts operating without master schemes or abstractions." Simone, "Metropolitan Africans," 171.

cases it was preceded by that life, in fact, which contributed to expert ideas about the “cultural” practices they would shruggingly leave be.

The chapter opens with two Ramallah scenes in which I observed discards being abandoned in public. Both scenes involve strangers. I first explore culturalist understanding of possession-leaving (what reformers called “littering”) that were applied to fleeting moments like these. Such understandings were common among reformers, but also sometimes circulated among the governed—especially among elites. Whereas Chapter 5 examined the relationship between PA governance and a distant, rural locality, Chapter 6 moves into the epicenter of PA governance, or Area A, which makes up roughly 18 percent of the West Bank.⁸⁵ If there are any spaces in which the fullest experience of PA governance can be observed, it is therefore on the streets of these cities. I then propose alternative understandings of the two Ramallah scenes and of other similar moments. These understandings are based on consideration of the micropractices involved in moments of discarding. I investigate how residents read public spaces in which they abandoned objects. Given reformers’ definition of culture as a residue of past habits (Chapter 4), I ask, do these alternative understandings contest the idea that culture was at work? Or do they support it, merely offering a different angle on the same problem? My first answer is that in such moments we see improvisational encounters in

⁸⁵ With the exception of Hebron, the urban center every major Palestinian city in the West Bank is classified as Area A. The city of Hebron was divided into two parts in 1997: H1 and H2. H1, in which about 140,000 Palestinians live, is under PA civilian control. H2, in which approximately 30,000 Palestinians and 500 Israeli settlers live, is under full Israeli civilian and military control. See Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) website: http://www.tiph.org/en/About_Hebron/Hebron_today/ Accessed 1 January 2015.

which strangers in public consulted one another about how best to address the presence of matter that had nowhere to go.

Second, I argue that to the extent that there was something like a culture at work in the scenes I describe, then, its logics were the following: Abandoning objects in public entailed a commitment to paying attention to, to following or to tweaking, the interpretations that strangers in one's midst applied, would have or applied, or would later apply, to placing discards in public spaces. Deciding to discard an object was thus an individual and a selective—and therefore simultaneously a collective—process. This suggests that neither arguments that read litter-strewn streets as “moral surfaces,”⁸⁶ nor arguments that pin discarding on the individual's need to affirm identity,⁸⁷ can fully capture the nature of the beast some came to call “littering.” Abandoning objects in public also implicitly entailed adherence to the principle of the “lesser evil.”⁸⁸ Since determining the least negative form of abandonment was organized around interpreting what others would do or would have done, calculating the least offensive way to discard objects was tethered to the social within a “closed system” that was spatially bounded (i.e. highly dependent on location) yet temporally flexible. It was fleeting and improvisational. And it was prestrained yet interpretive. Unlike the work of reformers, in other words, it was not based on an abstract ethical principle, for example that one should not litter, that waste pollutes the environment, that littering indexes relative

⁸⁶ In this case I use the term moral surfaces to suggest that reading such a surface tells the reader something about the morality of the purported collective that uses that surface.

⁸⁷ Smith, “I Discard, Therefore I Am,” 139-140.

⁸⁸ Here I draw on architect Eyal Weizman's concept of “the lesser of all evils” to describe the legitimation of violence in the “humanitarian present.” Weizman, The Lesser of All Evils.

civilizational worth, etc. It did not operate according to an ideal image of what society—or the state—should do or look like. It was instead based on a reading of what was locally and socially acceptable as the least offensive way to manage offensive materialities. It was therefore an act *known* to be limited by the constraints of the conditions in which it was performed. Yet it was also known to involve choice. In this sense, the ethical positioning of residents “managing” their own wastes in public was analogous to that of PA reformers managing waste at the level of the nation (Chapter 3).

At the same time, it is not only parallels that can be drawn between governors and governed in the moments I describe. Chapter 6 also offers a depiction of the street scenes, and public commentaries, out of which Palestine's local waste managers *selected* their approaches to garbage governance as policy and politics (Chapters 3 and 4). In claiming to bypass culture and in building infrastructures aimed at doing so, the Authority also disavowed its authority to demand the conformity of the populace to its reforms. In this sense, Authority reformers claimed to be offering up *their own conformity* to the population's limitations, thereby appearing to reverse the relation of who was obeying whom. From the counter-commentaries residents offered about the presence of public dirt, we see how culture—which had become incorporated, through exclusion, into reformers' technical praxis—was understood very differently by many non-reformers. PA waste managers viewed culture as unchanging and therefore as an impediment to statecraft. Many residents, by contrast, described culture as something that had already been transformed, as an *effect*, in fact, of the phantom state's existence. Residents thus

saw practices involving discards out-of-doors as practices "in conversation" with governance—whether as complaint, anticipation, appeal, flouting or substitution.

Counter-interpretations of public discards are worth recounting for two reasons. First, because they highlight the powerful glossing effect that elite, PA, foreign and sometimes municipal narratives had—in diagnosing public garbage as “culture,” for example—on what was the material accumulation of sporadic, unpredictable moments of object abandonment. The role of central and municipal governments in people’s lives was thus both *anticipated* and (thereby) *recognized* through the leave-taking of possessions. Contrary to those who argued that litter was a sign of the population’s “alienation from the environment” or of its lack of “environmental awareness” (*wa’i*), many residents assumed that municipal services and PA regulation might eventually make themselves felt, if poorly and belatedly. To some, “litter” was thus a practice of *entitlement* based on a reconfigured sense of ownership over public space post-Oslo.

This marks a shift from the approach to discards and to cleaning public spaces described as most common during the first Intifada (Chapter 1). Residents’ commentaries and discarding practices also serve as diagnostic of the immaterial, partial nature of the phantom state. Interpreting and acting with regard to discards indicated recognition of fleeting *fragments* of publics, of social, temporary and intimate forms of propriety and of political justice among Palestinians—for example as articulated by those who participated in the first Intifada against “returnee” Palestinians who arrived from abroad to take the helm of Palestinian self-rule. This highlights the value of considering how pre-Oslo solidarities within the Palestinian public(s) have been reorganized to accommodate

both expectations of government *and* expectations of new forms of social organization (if not publics). Residents' entitlement to government care for public space also complicates the tendency in Palestine studies to focus on just two features of the PA's past two decades of rule: One, the PA's facilitation of Israeli and donor aims in the Territories through provision of the basic needs of the occupied population such that Israel is relieved of its duties as an occupier under international humanitarian law. And two, that the PA has served as the proxy repressive arm of a U.S.-Israeli alliance as it comes to resemble other Arab authoritarian regimes. The latter argument allows for the possibility that West Bank Palestinians have been affected in unforeseen ways by the PA's tenure. But the question of what other effects might have resulted from the PA's presence—other than repression or continued occupation—have not thus far been adequately raised.

Note on Methods and Terms

In total I conducted 26 months of ethnographic and archival research. I recorded the sanitation practices that constituted the (un)sanitary foundations of two municipalities: Jenin, in the northern West Bank and Ramallah, in the West Bank's center. I conducted research in the municipalities of Nablus and al-Bireh (Ramallah's twin city), as well as in two villages: Faqu'a (Jenin district) and Shuqba (Ramallah district). I also conducted interviews in Jerusalem and in Israel (Tel Aviv, Haifa and Emek Hefer). Most weeks, I spent half of each week in Ramallah and the other half in Jenin. I rented apartments in the Ramallah Tahta and al-Tireh neighborhoods. In Jenin and in Faqu'a I alternated as a guest in five different families. For about six months I worked in Jenin refugee camp at the Freedom Theater, where I taught English. For five weeks I rented a

room in a boarding school for the blind in al-Marah al-Sa'ad neighborhood in Jenin's southeastern hills. Although these feature slightly less in the chapters that follow, as a long-term resident and frequent houseguest I was able to document household practices around the production and movement of refuse, including how waste was classified, when and how it was reused, and where it was disposed of. I also observed waste collectors' work practices. I conducted archival research in the municipal archives of al-Bireh and Nablus with a focus on their solid waste management files. I also collected hundreds of documents, some published and others internal to municipalities, to the occupying authorities and to PA ministries. These covered past, planned as well as ongoing projects related to waste.

Because the institutions that constitute the Israeli occupation are multiple (i.e. they extend beyond the Civil Administration), I usually refer to them as "the occupation authorities," or as "the authorities," instead of as "Israel." For brevity, I sometimes refer to the Civil Administration as "the CA" or "the administration." I refer to West Bank Palestinians as "residents." I do this despite the fact that many of my interlocutors described them(selves) as "citizens" (*muwatinin*). My choice of wording here is based on the fact that most of these approximately 2.5 million Palestinians are not legally citizens of Israel. Nor is the Palestinian Authority a recognized state that can grant them citizenship. "Residents" is therefore a fitting empirical descriptor of their legal and political status as members of a militarily occupied population; not a reflection of their right to reside on the Territory. I should also note that by West Bank Palestinians (or residents) I mean Palestinians holding West Bank identification papers (which technically

renders them under Authority jurisdiction). But I also mean Palestinians with Israeli citizenship residing in the West Bank (whose numbers are unknown), Palestinians who are without identification papers of any kind (whose numbers were around 50,000 in 2010) as well as Palestinians with Gaza IDs or those with international passports (the latter requiring Israeli visas to reside there). No matter their legal status, this diverse set of people inevitably produces discards and wastewater of equally diverse kinds. Some of them also participate in waste's collection, disposal, regulation and management. This dissertation is one way to tell the story of how that works in an era of environmental insecurity—and why it matters.

CHAPTER 1

The New Normal:

Garbage beyond a Politics of Life?

Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. In the West Bank, it became responsible for 586,000 Palestinians living on 5,600 square meters of land.¹ Supervision of municipal functions was transferred from Amman to Tel Aviv, which oversaw a military administration in the West Bank. The administration was now responsible for sanitation as well.² Through "three Israeli orders," Reem Musleh, a Palestinian solid waste expert I met during fieldwork, writes, Israel "changed the responsible actors for solid waste management from the Jordanian administration to themselves."³ Palestinian municipal employees now worked according to regulations and norms shaped by the occupation authorities and the experts they enlisted to guide them.⁴

During the occupation's first two decades, the theory that municipal waste posed a danger to public health continued to organize how it was managed. The Israeli government hired Micha Blum in 1969 as the military administration's first long-term

¹ Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 42. Sneh writes that the Palestinian population in the West Bank in 1967 was much lower—350,000—and grew by the mid-1980s to 850,000. Sneh, "There is Another Way," 126.

² On Israeli restrictions to the functions of municipalities see Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 98.

³ These were orders 191 (1967), 194 (1967) and 236 (1968). Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making."

⁴ The World Health Organization was among the international organizations that participated in the evaluation of the administration's activities in the Territories. WHO professionals conducted annual visits to the territories during the years 1975-1986. Barnea and Kahneman, "Data for Policy," 61.

Health Officer. He was “responsible for sanitation services in the West Bank: sewage, wastewater, municipal waste,” he told me in 2010. Public health organized the institutional lines of authority for policy design and regulation enforcement. Medical and public health experts became "obligatory point[s] of passage"⁵ through which decisions about waste management passed. Blum had a degree in Public Health from the Jerusalem School of Medicine and one in Epidemiology from the University of Hawaii.⁶ Though they had not received formal training in public health, sanitation or medicine, municipal workers were called health monitors. Local Palestinian public health advocates and international aid organizations involved in "developing" the Territories also framed garbage as a public health issue.⁷

Blum described his office as having "inherited the existing services" from the Jordanians:

There were district offices all around the West Bank. In the main cities, these were responsible for all the areas around them: Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, and Bethlehem. The area was covered by Palestinian employees. Under SMOs: Senior Medical Officers,⁸ who were also

⁵ Latour, *Science in Action*, 150 and 245.

⁶ Blum also had a BA in international relations.

⁷ For example, between 1990 and 1992 Palestinian physician Mustafa Barghouthi and biologist, biochemist and public health expert Ibrahim Daibes conducted a study titled Infrastructure and Health Services in the West Bank: Guidelines for Health Care Planning as part of The Health Development Information Project, in Cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) (1996). The provision of "garbage disposal services," which they classified under "sanitary" facilities, was one of their central foci.

⁸ This was the arrangement invented under the British mandate, where "each district was supervised by a senior medical officer, usually British, and a junior officer frequently of Palestinian Arab origin. The senior medical officers were in charge of administration and supervision of health duties while the Palestinian medical officers would actually execute those duties." Sufian, "Arab Health Care," 15.

Palestinian. These SMOs were under Israeli SMOs. Those numbered about ten. I had a lot, about fifty Palestinians, under my responsibility.⁹

With the Jordanian Health Ministry¹⁰ out of the picture, each West Bank municipality and village dumpsite continued to be monitored by municipal health department employees now supervised by Israeli medical officers.¹¹ After 1981 the military administration was renamed a civil administration, though according to Blum the shift made little difference to his daily work. Until the 1990s he received orders from the Israeli Interior Ministry and from the Ministry of Health.¹² The latter received guidance from medical researchers based at Israeli universities.¹³

At the same time, military orders and their enforcement techniques seemed to have little to do with the health of human bodies, though military orders did sometimes

⁹ See also Gordon, Israel's Occupation, Chapter 2. Israel's hope, writes Gordon, was "to weaken the sense that the 1967 War constituted a dramatic break." Gordon, Israel's Occupation, 57. On the structure (and restructuring) of the military and civil administration's health care system, see also Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 44.

¹⁰ The Israeli Chief Medical Officer replaced the Jordanian minister of health. Sever and Peterberg, "Israel's Development," 54, note 7.

¹¹ Blum's direct access to and authority over how municipalities managed waste was gained in part by the fact that, by the early 1980s, four of the largest Palestinian municipalities were under Israeli-appointed officials. Between 1976 and 2004/5 Israel forbade municipal Palestinian elections, which also meant that even those mayors who had been elected in 1976 began by 1980 (when the next elections should have taken place) to be reappointed by Israel. By the early 1990s most of the mayors had been appointed by Israel to replace elected mayors. Coon, Town Planning, 90. See also Gordon, Israel's Occupation, Chapter 2 and Tamari, "In League with Zion," 45.

¹² I should note that some have argued that the Israeli Ministry of Health "did not have any authority in the territories and could not offer any budgeting support," which meant that the ministry "relied upon the judgment of the chief medical officers (CMOs) to set policy and priorities in day-to-tray management and development, but maintained a supervisory role over public health issues of potential issue to the Israeli population." Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 43.

¹³ Interviews with Israeli environmental lawyer Richard Laster in Jerusalem, 14 July 2011; with Micha Blum in Jerusalem, 13 July 2011; with former General Director of the Israeli environment ministry and Oslo negotiator Shmuel Brenner in Tel Aviv, 26 April 2011; and with environment scholar and expert Hillel Shuval in Jerusalem, 22 September 2010. See also Barnea and Kahneman, "Data for Policy," 59.

speak the language of health.¹⁴ Both the occupation authorities and the municipal governments they controlled placed a growing emphasis on the role of urban order in waste's management instead. Though the new Israeli administration saw itself as implementing an updated version of the Jordanian system, it was soon intervening much more intimately and pervasively in the management of Palestinian refuse than had Jordanian governors before it. Israeli officers intervened in municipal workers' daily routines, in how and when pedestrians took leave of their possessions and the administration both defined and regulated littering.

Consider the language of "Military Order for the Conservation of Cleanliness (Judea and Samaria)."¹⁵ Order 1160 (1986) defined "to throw" (dumping, emptying, abandoning or leaving), "drinking container" (a container for one-time use, made of metal, glass, plastic, paper and any other material used to drink with the exception of milk and its products, whether empty or full), "waste" (including food scraps, peels, bottles, boxes, cans, cartons and packages of all kinds, broken or ruined objects (*khardawat*), pieces of timber, cigarette butts, trash of packages of any kind (*qamameh min ay no' kan*), and anything that could cause the lack of cleanliness or of order, with the exception of construction waste or vehicle parts). Article 2 forbade the throwing of waste into public spaces or the moving of wastes from public spaces into private spaces, and forbade the dirtying of public spaces. "Public places" were defined as "every place that is used by the public (*al-jumhour*) or that is passed through (e.g. by traffic) or that the

¹⁴ Pharmacies and restaurants, for example, "were closed on the pretext of public welfare or sanitation." Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 53.

¹⁵ These are my translations from the Arabic version of the order.

public passes through, or uses." Article 3 stipulated that, when in vehicles, children under the age of twelve should be monitored so that they do not throw waste out of the vehicle. Article 9 required that all beverage containers have a marking on them saying that they cannot be dumped (i.e. thrown anywhere). Article 10 stipulated that the head of the civil administration, working with the local authorities (the municipalities) and with the consent of the police chief, assign someone to be the "custodian of cleanliness." Article 16 stipulated that the owners of yards--and those who represent them--must keep their yards clean. Nothing in the order's language indicated an overt concern either with health (qua disease prevention, contamination) or with protection of the land or water. Order was paramount.

During these first two decades, the authorities seemed confident that their ordering of residents' daily waste-related practices was proceeding with fairly well secured compliance. Within fifteen years of occupying the territory, the Israeli government had drawn up master plans for the complete overhaul of the West Bank's disposal system, effectively integrating the West Bank into Israel's own national plans to create regional sanitary waste disposal facilities. This decision can be understood in the context of what, below, I call the apparent quiescence that characterized much about the occupation's first two decades. The plan was ambitious. Not only would it be costly—each landfill would cost a minimum of around \$10 million¹⁶ in addition to the undisclosed thousands for the cost of studies and designs. It would also be time-

¹⁶ This is a large figure in comparison with the development budget the civil administration had allocated for government health services, which in 1993, for example, was \$3.3 million. Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 45.

consuming and required control over large tracts of land and the roads that connected them. The engineers proposed to construct eight regional, sanitary landfills, one for each "service area" comprising several cities, dozens of villages and Israeli settlements. Existing municipal and village dumpsites would be closed and "rehabilitated" and all local governments would be required to send their waste to the new landfills for a fee.¹⁷

Even more than in the case of other types of infrastructure (e.g. electric grids, wastewater treatment plants, roads, water distribution networks and telecommunications lines), both constructing large scale dumpsites and maintaining them as the sole system for solid waste disposal would require the stable, compliant participation of numerous arms of the Israeli administration, Israeli settlements, Palestinian municipalities and village councils, from the populations they served as well as cooperation *between* Palestinian communities and Jewish settlements. Most large-scale landfills employ a weighbridge where truckloads of garbage are weighed. That weight translates into the fee charged to municipalities. Plans to include such technologies would give municipalities financial incentives to avoid dumping in new landfills and to continue dumping in "irregular" sites instead. Doing so could raise weighbridge prices for other communities using the landfill. The fact that the Israeli government and occupation authorities deemed regionalizing solid waste disposal feasible thus indexed confidence in their capacity to

¹⁷ A sense of the radical shift from local to regional landfilling can be gained by comparing the number of landfills proposed (eight) for the entire West Bank and the number of villages (some with populations of over ten thousand, like Qabatya in the Jenin district that made up any one part of the proposed eight areas, each of which already had its own dumpsite. Jenin governorate alone had around seventy separate Palestinian towns and villages, for example, excluding Israeli settlements in the area. In 1987, Qabatiya is thought to have had a population 10,800. http://www.palestineremembered.com/GeoPoints/Qabatiya_1468/index.html

govern the territory at the most capillary of levels. It rested on nearly two decades of relative quiescence in matters of municipal refuse management.

For many older residents with whom I spoke, Israeli involvement in how solid waste in Jenin was managed had indeed, for a time, been a relatively uncontroversial aspect of occupation. It was an aspect they "got by," in Lori Allen's terms.¹⁸ That the military set waste management fees, forbade littering and defined waste and that under Israeli control municipalities purchased equipment from and were trained in their use in Israel were part of the natural warp and woof of life (and the life of garbage) under occupation.

The quiescence of the first two decades has been the subject of a number of scholarly works since the 1970s. Scholars take diverse views on two questions: one, the extent to which Israel deployed what Farsoun calls "coercive military power." And two, the extent to which residents' assent to certain governing practices was a signal of Israeli hegemony,¹⁹ of Palestinians' fear of the occupation's military power or a signal of Palestinian steadfastness (*sumud*)—a defining characteristic of Palestinian nationalism during the second half of the twentieth century. Answers depend in part how violence is defined. For some the distinction between physical destruction and the potential or threat of military violence is inessential; the occupation operated according to repressive power

¹⁸ Allen, "Getting by the Occupation."

¹⁹ Following Antonio Gramsci, I use this term here to mean power exercised--and consent secured--not through direct control or force, nor even necessarily through the central apparatuses of the state. Rather power entrenched in the institutions of "civil society." Gramsci, *Selections*, 137, 155, 169. In this instance I use the term as shorthand to refer to Foucault's concept of disciplinary power as well.

in Louis Althusser's sense.²⁰ Some point to the occupation authorities' early ability to govern daily life with relatively few Palestinian casualties. They argue that little disobedience was a response to the generalized presence of Israeli violence.²¹ Gradational experiences of violence served to "destroy political space," others argue. Azoulay and Ophir propose that "insinuated" and "withheld" violence prevailed "until the outbreak of the first Intifada" such that until then "Israel ruled the Occupied Territories with a semblance of order."²² At the same time, the need for what they call "flagrant" withheld violence resulted from the fact that "Israel act[ed] there without the ability to make significant use of ideology, law, or disciplinary mechanisms that reduce its need for violence."²³ Still others argue that, absent support for Israel's regime, Palestinians' cooperation with Israeli governance was a critical if quiet response—usually glossed as "resistance"—to Israel's sovereign military power.²⁴

²⁰ Althusser, "Ideology."

²¹ Both Farsoun and Tamari, for instance, suggest that coercive military power was the most important factor in Palestinians' relative quiescence during this period, which assumes that Israel lacked both hegemony and legitimacy among occupied Palestinians. Tamari, "In League with Zion," 41. Farsoun, Palestine and the Palestinians.

²² Azoulay and Ophir, "The Order of Violence," 101, 107-8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁴ Scholars have generally read cooperation in two ways: either as a form of "coping" or as steadfastness. While the former assumes a universal human need to survive in the face of real or potential destruction, the latter presupposes residents' successful inculcation with the nationalist value of remaining on the land for the sake of the national movement's triumph in the long-term. Some commentators have read "coping" as the tactic through which *sumud* was achieved. Two such commentators are Barghouthi and Daibes. They argue that the first "stage" of resistance to occupation, which lasted until roughly 1987, was the "stage of steadfastness when a large number of new projects were created within the confines of Israeli regulations with the support of the PLO and Arab countries. The approach was to adapt to the Israeli restrictions and help people remain in their homeland." Barghouthi and Daibes, Infrastructure and Health Services, 287. They contrast this stage with the first Intifada (1987-1993), when resistance was instead characterized by "self-reliance, self-organization and outright defiance of Israeli regulations and military orders." *Ibid.*, 288.

With the hindsight knowledge that during both Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2006) Israel repeatedly employed military incursions, sieges, assassinations, bombings, house demolitions, imprisonment and torture, recent commentators have characterized the occupation's operative mode of power during its first two decades as a "politics of life."²⁵ This is a term Neve Gordon has popularized in the study of Palestine's occupation in order to emphasize the preponderance of a Foucauldian disciplinary power during this period. In his discussion of Israel's use of "collaborators", Gordon affirms that fear of violence was important to Palestinians' experiences,²⁶ but he distinguishes between "destructive coercive measures" and what he calls "noncoercive measures." He argues, contra Azoulay and Ophir, that the latter *did* operate through the logic of discipline. They emanated from "civil institutions" and were largely "invisible."

The difference between the Gordon's argument and those of Farsoun and Tamari centers around their views of Palestinian consciousness. To argue that all Palestinian responses to Israeli control over daily governance were (quiet) coping-as-steadfastness is to suggest that Palestinians perceived Israeli-controlled governance as singularly oriented toward repressing or controlling the population. To argue, as Gordon does, that Palestinians became disciplined subjects of occupation is to suggest that the power that organized the "civil" aspects of their lives allowed Palestinians' thoughts and behaviors to be imperceptibly shaped by the institutions that occupied them.

²⁵ Gordon, Israel's Occupation, 55 and 65. Looking back from the late 2000s, this has been contrasted with the idea that the Territories are ruled as an Agambenian state of exception, for example. Lentin, Thinking Palestine. For more on the politics of life see also: Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life;" Rose, The Politics of Life Itself; Sahlins, "The Stranger-King."

²⁶ Gordon, Israel's Occupation, 43.

While in waste management “cooperation” between the occupied and their occupiers appears at first glance to support either or both the above claims (*sumud* or discipline), additional factors must be considered in understanding Palestinians’ compliance with Israel’s control over municipal refuse. Factors I discuss below include the historical objectification of garbage and the inversed relationship between visibility and power. This analysis underscores the value of attending to the specificities of distinct *fields* of governance when attempting to characterize the nature of rule over long periods of time. It therefore provides a counterweight to arguments that favor particular practices as representative “regime features”²⁷ (e.g. control over water distribution, erection of checkpoints) over others or arguments that, by relying on the idea of representative regime features, periodize occupation’s rule along a linear historical spectrum.

This chapter reveals an alternative dynamic not captured by the above explanations. Residents and municipal sanitation workers in Jenin and in Ramallah characterized Israel's involvement in municipal waste management until the late 1980s as simultaneously "normal," "helpful" and "without people's agreement." Importantly, residents also contrasted Israeli involvement in municipal solid waste management with "political" attention to discards and urban cleanliness. “Normalcy” was thus contingent. It relied as much on specific ways of managing waste as it did on the fact that those practices were refuse-oriented. What it relied on less was *who* practiced the practices. That forms of Israeli involvement deemed non-political were nevertheless "without the agreement of the people" suggests a preserved critical interiority that supports Farsoun

²⁷ Azoulay, “Demolished House,” 215.

and Tamari's insistence on the absence of Israeli legitimacy. But the fact that Israeli involvement in street cleaning and garbage disposal could have been seen as helpful complicates that claim. Under what conditions could an occupier be illegitimate *and* helpful? Are the only conditions under which that could be the case the conditions of disciplinary or biopolitical power? Must the perception of "helpfulness," in other words, signal the perceiver's false consciousness? My aim is to shift away both from the question of legitimacy and from the question of subject (trans)formation. Residents' belief in the instrumental usefulness of Israeli involvement in solid waste management neither meant docility nor the successful legitimization of the Israeli occupation as a whole. I propose that we consider ephemeral, and even sometimes cynical, "communities of practice"²⁸ that can coalesce, for example around the management of discards.

Help from the Army,²⁹ Help with Our Work

Soon after Blum was hired, another young man, named Abdelfattah Abu 'Abeid, was hired by Jenin municipality as one of the city's three health monitors, a position he was to hold between 1972 and 2007. With the arrival of Arab (and Jewish) Israeli shoppers in Jenin and the increased availability of cash to West Bank Palestinians, he told me, Jenin's commercial area grew in the 1970s and 1980s. Soon Abdelfattah and around thirty other workers were cleaning and monitoring Jenin's streets daily.

²⁸ See for example Wenger, Communities of Practice and Hughes et al., Communities of Practice: Critical Perspectives.

²⁹ The extent to which Israel intervened upon Palestinian municipal waste management parallels its interventions in the field of health more broadly at the time. See Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 44-45.

Abdelfattah explained that as they did so, it was common for them to seek the help of uniformed Israeli police officers stationed in a house near Jenin's main roundabout. Officers were both "Arabs and Jews," he remembered. One was a Palestinian (citizen of Israel) from Nazareth.³⁰ Officers walked with municipal workers on Abu Bakr, Nazareth and Haifa streets in Jenin's central market, demanding identification cards and handing out tickets for littering. "First I'd go to the market. If it was within my power (*itha tili' bi'idi*) I would clean," said Abdelfattah. "If I couldn't, I would go [to the Israeli headquarters] to get help." He recalled:

Let's say I caught someone and charged him with a violation. I would say 'Why did you throw the garbage here?' Or 'Why are you standing here?' Let's say he threw the remains of his cart on the ground...I say 'Give me your name.' He would refuse to give me his name or ID. I would get the Israeli policeman and he would come and say to him, 'You have a violation.' He would write him up and give him a ticket and that would be that...But if we on our own were to give a ticket, we would have problems.

Until the late 1980s, they called upon officers for help two or three times a week. He described this dynamic as "help from the army." "They helped us with our work," he said. "For example in keeping order among the street vendors. The arrangement of the carts. They would also follow up on violations. So if anyone threw their waste on the streets, they would issue orders!"

³⁰ I asked whether the fact that some officers were from Nazareth made it easier to refuse their orders. "Aozubillah!" (absolutely not!) Nabil chimed in: "Because even if the police is Arab, he's like the Israeli state!"

In the early 1980s it was also common for the administration to send municipal health monitors for trainings³¹ in Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Haifa and Afula across the Green Line. "The mayor sent us saying you have a course in such-and-such," said Abdelfattah.³² "Everyone who was responsible for health or for waste had to go...So we would look at the waste management—how they do it there. They gave us courses." He attended one course in Nazareth, one in Tel Aviv and an exhibition in Afula. Health monitors from several other West Bank municipalities, including Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron also attended. Israeli instructors led workshops on Israeli methods of collecting waste (e.g. in dumpsters), how to operate collection vehicles and machines, and on waste separation. They exhibited the latest Israeli technologies for dumping waste en masse.

Normal

Many who commented on the military's practices of political repression during the first two decades of occupation excluded waste management from their narratives about repression. Abdelfattah, for instance, had personally experienced the military's harassment. When he was twenty-two years old, he recounted, "I was caught with some armed guys. Though I wasn't armed myself." He was imprisoned for four years. He critiqued the army for causing the "suffering of residents" in Jenin. "Believe me," he said, "there was no worse suffering than that." By contrast, he described Israeli involvement in his municipal work as having been "totally normal." "I lived this," he said as we sat in

³¹ These trainings can be seen as part of a larger, more systematic approach by the occupation authorities during this period. On training programs instituted to develop the "local capacity" of Palestinian professionals, see Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 51 and Barnea and Kahneman, "Data for Policy," 59. See also Penchas, "Training of High Quality Health Professionals."

³² Note that for Abdelfattah the command seemed to come from the mayor, though the trainings were organized and run through the Israeli occupation authorities--presumably through Blum's office.

Jenin's municipal accounting office. "I worked in this system. Worked with them." The policemen who helped him keep public order "were accepted as another kind of [local] police," he explained. They were "not a big deal. They were the general security for the waste."

Older Jenin residents with whom I spoke expressed similar views of Israel's early involvement in municipal street cleaning, though there were no illusions that residents had universally *complied* with Israeli-enforced regulations. When I spoke with Mukhlis Mahjoob, Jenin's local historian, he also described the experience of municipal life under Israeli control as "normal," adding that it had nevertheless been "without agreement from the people."³³ Rather than noting the municipality's imbrication with the Israeli occupation authorities (e.g. Israeli police in Jenin's market), he and others praised municipal workers for their "caring" custodianship over the city's public spaces. Several emphasized how much cleaner Jenin had been before Oslo. One optician in his seventies remarked that at that time "there was cleanliness" in part because municipal employees were known for "caring" about the city. Before Oslo, he said, "if you threw water in the street your neighbor would write up a complaint to the municipal health department saying you dumped water in the street...Now the municipal employees wouldn't care about the city. They wouldn't stop the guy who throws his cup in the street." That Israeli officers were behind many of the regulations municipal workers enforced and behind the equipment they used to do so, did not throw into question the sincerity of municipal

³³ This challenges Maoz's argument that "in practice the Military Government refrained from interfering in the municipal regime...and let the course of local rule have free rein...Only under unusual circumstances did the Israeli authorities interfere." Ma'oz, The Palestinian Leadership, 67.

workers' "care" for order in the city. The sincerity of municipal service cleaning Jenin's streets was dissociated from the military material constraints and regulations that helped give it shape. In some cases, furthermore, the occupation authorities' involvement was seen as an aid in the municipality's attempts to improve its own services. Trainings in Israel for Abdelfattah indexed Israel's technical superiority, for example. But they also opened up the possibility that Jenin could *advance itself* by becoming more orderly. The path could be paved through education and imitation. "From all this we came up with what? The idea of having dumpsters!" he exclaimed. "So we started to develop here. Initially our capacities were very weak here as a municipality—don't forget that."

If, for the occupation authorities, solid waste was (a) matter of urban order, that did not necessarily mean that all residents experienced its daily management by people who included Israelis as a *political* practice in Andrew Barry's terms. It did not open up a "space of disagreement"³⁴ between two groups viewed as distinct from one another. In fact, my conversations with Abdelfattah and with others who remembered that period revealed that the distinction between occupiers and occupied was itself sometimes difficult to discern in waste management.³⁵ Among other things, the distinction between occupier and occupied did not always map neatly onto the distinction between civil administration and municipality, or between Israeli and Palestinian.

³⁴ Barry, "The Anti-Political Economy."

³⁵ It was common for my Palestinian interviewees to blur the line between municipal and Israeli initiatives when talking about the period before Oslo. This is further evidence that between 1967 and the late 1990s, the line between internal Palestinian governance and external Israeli occupation, or "political" intervention, was not always clear. See note 32.

Consider the case of the proposed regional landfill for the Ramallah "service area" in the central West Bank. In the mid-1980s the occupation authorities chose a site on lands owned by residents of Deir Dibwan village, fifteen minutes east of Ramallah.³⁶ Deir Dibwan residents rejected the proposal.³⁷ They hired two experts to assist them. One was Hillel Shuval, a Jewish Israeli, who was asked to write an expert opinion outlining the risks of the project. Shuval had a degree in water resources and environmental engineering from Cornell University and another in Environmental Health and Engineering from the University of Michigan. He had worked for years as Israel's Chief Environmental Health Engineer and had been appointed Professor of Environmental Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The other was Muhammad Said Hmeidi, who "served as an advisor to the community." At the time Hmeidi was establishing the community health unit at Birzeit University. Deir Dibwan had heard about his community health survey in Ramallah, Birzeit and on the Jordan Valley³⁸ and had asked him "to try to mitigate...and to reduce the impacts as much as possible on the community," he told me.

³⁶ On July 28, 1998, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a report titled "Environmental Infrastructure: Regional Environmental Cooperation." This report claims that "seven high priority sites were selected" in the early 1990s following the plan's elaboration, at which point the CA "commenced a detailed plan of the seven proposed solid waste disposal sites." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Environmental Infrastructure."

³⁷ Hmeidi remembered being asked to comment on the site in 1986. Other interviewees placed the story closer to 1990.

³⁸ He was later to become a Director-General of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of the Environment, the Authority's chief environmental negotiator during the Oslo Accords, one of drafters of the Palestinian Authority's *National Strategy for Solid Waste Management 2010-2014* and the general manager of Tadweer, a Palestinian recycling company.

According both to Shuval and Hmeidi, "politics" was relevant neither to the administration's proposal to construct the landfill nor to Deir Dibwan's response to it. They both maintained that Deir Dibwan's reasons for objecting were purely "NIMBY³⁹" (not in my backyard)—an acronym Hmeidi used repeatedly. "Those sites were...sort of non-political...The issue was not [politics] at the time,"⁴⁰ Hmeidi remembered in Nablus in 2010.⁴¹ Deir Dibwan was not opposed to the landfill because Israelis had proposed it and Israelis would (also) use it, he explained, but because they had proposed expropriation of Deir Dibwan's lands *for a landfill*. "It was only later that politics came into the picture," Hmeidi added. "Because at the time, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was no prospect for peace." The "rejection was not based on political reasons—that 'we don't want to make a sanitary landfill for Israelis.'"

Discards Go Political

This "normal" situation lasted roughly until the first Intifada's eruption (1987). Beginning in the mid-1980s, the unqualified good⁴² of urban cleanliness was replaced by a sense among residents that, while some forms of Israeli involvement in managing municipal waste continued to be useful if "without the agreement of the people," other

³⁹ For more on NIMBY, see Reno, "Beyond Risk Emplacement," 520.

⁴⁰ Here Hmeidi was implicitly contrasting Deir Dibwan's objections to the landfill plan in the 1990s with those of Rammun in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Deir Dibwan managed to prevent the construction of the landfill on its lands and eventually the plan (by this point an Authority plan) was moved to Rammun. When Hmeidi and I met Rammun was opposing the new plan, partly because residents were concerned that settlements would be able to use the landfill on their lands.

⁴¹ The landfill was designed "to serve all communities," he said. "If you look at the document...you'll find the proposed quantities of solid waste of both Palestinians and Israelis in one table."

⁴² This is a term I borrow from Joe Jackson in "Smoke, Lies, and the Nanny State," cited in Metzl, "Introduction," 6.

forms had emerged that *were* now political. Abdelfattah and others contrasted “normal” and “helpful” forms of intervention in public order with other, political forms. Two characteristics made the latter political: One was their excess. And the other was their lack of a reasonable logic of accountability between those responsible for having “dirtied” and those responsible for “cleaning.”

One common form of military harassment involved the cleaning of public spaces. Soldiers knocked on doors, pulled people out of their homes and obliged them to wash slogans off of walls⁴³ and clear the streets of garbage-barricades. Abdelfattah recounted



Figure 5. Example of barricades set up to prevent the army from passing.
Photo near a West Bank settlement from a news site online, 2013.

⁴³ Julie Peteet has documented how "taking over privately owned walls for inscription [of graffiti] was also an act of internal politicization and mobilization, since owners of walls of print would be confronted by soldiers demanding erasure and payment of fines of roughly 700 Israeli shekels (about \$350)." Peteet, "The Writing on the Walls," 143. It was under Military Order 1260 of November 1988 that stipulated that "property owners are held responsible for graffiti on their walls and are obliged to remove it (al-Haq 1989: 257-258)." Peteet, "The Writing on the Walls," 157, note 15.

that "the army would force the families to come out and clean. Even the stones that had been placed as roadblocks, they would force the families to come out and move them! And they were forced to come out of their houses and to sweep the whole area!" Nabil, a municipal accountant, added: "You can't imagine how many stones I removed!" "Me too, so many stones!" Abdelfattah exclaimed. Those who refused got "nice and cooked." "You'd get three or four soldiers beating on one person at the same time." "They would make the whole neighborhood come out," echoed Nabil. "Especially the men and boys. First thing they would say is 'Clean the streets! Remove all the stones from the streets!'" "And *they* [the army] were the cause of the disorder and uncleanliness in the first place!"

For residents, the difference between this type of “cleaning” and the involvement of police officers in anti-littering campaigns on Jenin’s streets resided in an analysis of the intentionality behind military practice. There was an obvious difference between cleaning for the sake of cleanliness (or order) and cleaning as collective harassment: "Israel didn't ask people to clean because it wants *cleanliness*," said one young community organizer in Jenin:

In the afternoon, they would ask for all the young men to be out in the street to clean...Or they would bring an individual and make them clean from the top of the street to the bottom. Or they would make them read the graffiti and then paint over it...This was psychologically difficult. One day they asked two men, Abu Allam, Hazem al-Souqi, our neighbors. In Jabal Abu Dheir. They forced them to clean the street that was far from the neighborhood. There were tires there. When you light a tire on fire it leaves a black mark. This was about 10pm at night. At that time you can't see what you're doing!...There was also a man named Munjid 'Arqawi...They told him to take the broom and the dustpan and to clean the *entire* street.

This description of the occupation authorities' intentions being off kilter implied the possibility that they *could* have been reasonable. In Abdelfattah's account, they became unreasonable was evidenced by the fact that municipal sanitation workers were among the first to be harassed, either through coerced, excessive cleaning or through obstruction of their duties: "They'd take us...from our houses," Abdelfattah remembered, "and force us to clean first, before anyone from the families." On other occasions, the army prevented municipal workers from working at all, imposing curfews that halted municipal services for days or weeks at a time. "When there was a curfew we needed a permit to go around," said Abdelfattah. "And the army wouldn't give permits." Soldiers commonly threatened or shot at municipal garbage collectors as they cleaned. "When you have a curfew for four to five days, how can you go out to do anything? If we went out to clean, there were bullets flying at us at our collection trucks. We had workers injured more than once." As a result, by 1992 "and in most municipalities the departments of the mayor and the engineer [were] the only ones still working,"⁴⁴ wrote Anthony Coon, a town planning expert working in Palestine at the time. Barghouthi and Daibes found that by the early 1990s under one third of residents was receiving garbage disposal services, and in the north [where Jenin is located] only about 24 percent.⁴⁵

Outcleaning the Occupation

As practices of political repression, these Israeli involvements in the movement of municipal discards were read as practices inciting acts of nationalist resistance. By the

⁴⁴ Coon, *Town Planning*, 90-91.

⁴⁵ Barghouthi and Daibes, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, xiii.

second half of the 1980s campaigns had emerged calling for a boycott of municipalities.⁴⁶ Highlighting the connection between the Israeli military officers in command of municipalities and the fact that Palestinians' taxes were funding occupation's government, the boycott movement aimed in part to draw new institutional lines between where occupation ended and autonomy began. These early forms of line-drawing prefigure what were to become more sharply defined boundaries between internal (national), Palestinian waste governance and external (political), Israeli intervention in the post-Oslo period--especially after 2007, when the second Intifada was by many to be considered over. The first Intifada's boycotts were thus accompanied by broad-based efforts to replace municipalities with local voluntary committees.⁴⁷ "With the beginning of the Intifada--that's when everything stopped," said Abelfattah. "All of it. All this cooperation (*ta'awun*)" with the Israelis. Committees⁴⁸ formed for almost every service previously available through public and private institutions, including education, healthcare, food distribution, construction and street cleaning.⁴⁹ Birzeit University students were among the first to establish committees, around 1983.⁵⁰ Students traveled across Palestine,

⁴⁶ "No taxation without representation" was a common graffito in Palestinian towns and villages. Peteet, "The Writing on the Walls," 142.

⁴⁷ See Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 51.

⁴⁸ Abdelfattah distinguished neighborhood committees' work from that of political parties. "The neighborhood committees are the ones who cleaned," he said. "And they had no relationship to the political parties. [Cleanup] was about help, cooperation among neighbors."

⁴⁹ Interviews with Abdeljawad Salih, former mayor of Al-Bireh, at his home in Al-Bireh, 14 February 2011, with Mustafa Sheta, Jenin city, 20 July 2011. While this was new to the "new normal" that had characterized the fifteen years since 1967, the shift paralleled shifts that had occurred toward the end of the Mandate period as well in the Jordanian period. See Sufian, "Arab Health Care," 19. Under Jordanian rule a "rise of volunteerism" among Palestinian physicians and medical specialists also supplemented the work of the Jordanian government in the West Bank. Khatib, "Eyewitness Account."

⁵⁰ Bornstein, "In-Betweenness." Bornstein also cites Hasso (2005), Sahliyah (1988) and Taraki (1990).

including into Israel and to Gaza, to provide services to other Palestinian communities. Jenin's students soon followed suit. In 1989 Jenin's popular committees announced it was forbidden to pay municipal electricity, water and waste management fees.⁵¹

The boycotts of the 1980s were remarkably successful. Jenin's municipal accounting department estimated that ninety percent, or "a large percentage," of residents heeded the call not to pay their fees.⁵² Whereas Israel had been in charge of 75 percent of West Bank rural clinics in 1967, by 1992 its share had dropped to just 28 percent, the rest being covered by "indigenous Palestinian health organizations."⁵³ "In most communities which had access to garbage collection and disposal services," wrote Barghouthi and Daibes, "the services were carried out by individuals or by youth groups in the communities," while "UNWRA provided free garbage collection and disposal services to all refugee camps in the West Bank."⁵⁴

Juxtaposing the two periods—the first two decades characterized by less controversial Israeli involvements in municipal refuse and the Intifada characterized by political repression through discards—reveals the semiotic instability of the management of refuse under military rule. Here the shift in publicly agreed-upon meanings attached to that management seemed to coincide with the more general shift (apparent in multiple

⁵¹ Interviews with Nabil Jamal, Jenin municipality accounting office (2 October 2010, 10 March 2011, 20 March 2011, 4 July 2011, 19 July 2011, and Mustafa Sheta (3 April 2011, 20 June 2011) in Jenin city.

⁵² Jamal made the point that the numbers have been clouded by the fact that many may have paid without admitting it.

⁵³ Barghouthi and Daibes, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, 291. See also Khatib, "Eyewitness Account," 37, note 37.

⁵⁴ Barghouthi and Daibes, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, 39.

governing fields) from quiescence to nationalist mobilization against occupation. However, a second juxtaposition reveals that features specific to waste management contributed to early tendencies toward compliance *in that field in particular*. That is the juxtaposition between waste management and the field of education.

Gordon proposes a binary between coercive, visible measures/sovereign power and noncoercive, invisible measures/disciplinary power.⁵⁵ This allows him to argue that while the first year of occupation and the late 1980s were characterized by the Israeli deployment of coercive, sovereign power, the intervening years were characterized by more insidious, noncoercive forms of disciplinary and biopolitical power. He presents the field of education as a representative example. In 1967, the occupation authorities took control of the Palestinian educational system.⁵⁶ The first year of occupation and the mid-1980s both saw "vigorous opposition" from students, families, teachers and their communities, Gordon writes. Israel responded with sovereign power: teachers were fired and schools and universities were shut down. From the late 1960s until the early 1980s, by contrast, "Israel began emphasizing the two other modes of power": disciplinary and bio-power. These were less coercive and allowed residents to believe themselves to be

⁵⁵ Gordon's typology of violence--coercive versus noncoercive--corresponds roughly to Azoulay and Ophir's typology of "withheld and eruptive" violence. Azoulay and Ophir, "The Order of Violence," 105. I say roughly because for Azoulay and Ophir "withheld violence is the presence of a violent force whose outbreak is imminent, but is not manifest." (102) Withheld violence resembles noncoercive measures in Gordon's terms in that it enables people to "'act upon the actions of others' without exerting physical force" (102). Both are "potential force" in that they act "through the discourse that represents [them] and through the imagination that stimulates [their] action without necessarily being linked to the actual designated force."

⁵⁶ Daibes and Barghouthi trouble Gordon's statement, arguing "The only two fields [of governance] which escaped the full control of the Israeli authorities were the fields of health and education, where a movement defying Israeli regulations and dominance began to take root and reached its peak during the Intifada." Barghouthi and Daibes, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, 288.

freer as a result. When they were not protesting actively—which permitted civil institutions to function with Palestinian “cooperation”—that signaled power’s decreased visibility and thus its noncoercive nature. This marked a success for the Israeli authorities, Gordon argues, since it showed that they had rendered occupation normal for the occupied population.⁵⁷

Visibility

According to Foucault, one condition for the operation of disciplinary power is that power should be visible yet unverifiable.⁵⁸ My research suggested that although municipalities were regulated by Israel beginning in 1967, municipal workers indeed experienced them as semi-autonomous. This suggested a degree of visibility without verifiability. When Blum retired in 2000, he had technically been Abdelfattah's boss for twenty-eight years, for example.⁵⁹ But Abdelfattah did not remember Blum by name. Jenin's mayors and several (Israeli and Palestinian) higher-level medical officers had mediated between them. "We had no relationship to the central authorities," Abdelfattah told me. "We only had a relationship with the municipality. And the central [civil] administration had a relationship with the mayor, with the secretary, and with the General

⁵⁷ Two Israeli officials who served in the administration in the West Bank and Gaza during its first two decades echoed Gordon's assertion. See Sever and Peterburg, “Israel’s Development,” 43.

⁵⁸ Power must be visible such that the inmate "knows himself to be observed." It must be unverifiable in that he "must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so." Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

⁵⁹ Israel dissolved Jenin's municipal council in 1980, replacing it with an Israeli-Jewish military commander and a new committee of Palestinians. Though this changed the organizational structure within which Blum was Abdelfattah's superior, the fact remained that Abdelfattah was under Blum's (indirect) direction throughout Blum's tenure in the administration. Interview with Mukhlis Mahjoob in Jenin city, 13 February 2011.

Director." Thousands of Palestinians held positions structurally similar to Abdelfattah's.⁶⁰ Municipal employees thus both mediated between occupiers and occupied *and* between other Palestinian employees and Israeli officers. These layers of mediation, along with Abdelfattah's own sense of distance from his long-time boss, would seem to suggest the success of one of the goals imputed to the occupation's early architects: occupation's invisibility to the occupied population.⁶¹

However, it was clear from speaking with Jenin residents and municipal employees that, at least in the realm of refuse management, "the Israeli government employee or clerk" was actually quite visible. For civil institutions such as schools and municipal health departments to function (i.e. with Palestinian compliance), the Israeli authorities continued to be physically visible to the Palestinians they governed. Israeli administrators still monitored classrooms and textbooks to ensure the use of appropriate historical narratives, for example, even during the occupation's "quieter" years. Israeli police officers walked the streets with municipal health monitors to punish loiterers and litterers in a similar fashion. From the point of view of visibility, Abdelfattah's experience of having freely sought the help of Israeli police officers *could* suggest the operation of disciplinary power. So successfully had disciplinary power become diffused, it might be argued, that despite seeing the officers with his own eyes, Abdelfattah did not (or could

⁶⁰ The rapid accumulation of waste across the West Bank had necessitated the proliferation of positions to manage it: the number of senior medical officers, health monitors, garbage collectors, street sweepers, fee collectors and other municipal employees grew steadily between 1967 and the early 1990s. See also Selby, "Dressing up Domination," 128-9.

⁶¹ In 1970 General Shlomo Gazit, the IDF and Defense Ministry's coordinator of activities in the territories, for example, explained that the "idea...was to create a situation whereby the inhabitants could carry on with their lives 'without the help of an *Israeli* government employee or clerk.'" Cited in Gordon, Israel's Occupation, 55. Moshe Dayan, Israeli general and Minister of Defense, similarly claimed that the goal was to make the "occupation invisible." *Ibid.*, 49.

not) verify that the officer was part of the structural conditions through which he served as "the principle of his own subjection."⁶²

Verifiability

But it is in the relationship between visibility and verifiability that the governance of garbage seems to be less characterized by the disciplinary logic that permeated the educational system. Israeli intrusions into the latter may, as Gordon argues, have operated through an unverifiable power: teachers did not always know when or how they were being observed by Israeli authorities. This was especially true once it became obvious that Israel was using Palestinians to "inform" on one another.⁶³ For Abdelfattah, by contrast, Israel's sovereign power during the "quiet" years *was* verifiable. As was his *own* authority to govern as a result. Power was thus verifiable, split, tiered and relational. In recounting his story, Abdelfattah recognized the enforcement authority of the officers in Jenin's market as well as the expert authority of the trainers in Tel Aviv. At the same time, Israeli agents' authority functioned strategically to boost his *own* authority, enabling him to participate in city governance. Officers could enforce anti-littering regulations more effectively than he could. They provided and passed on authoritative sources of knowledge about solving the problem of growing quantities of solid waste—a problem in which Abdelfattah and his colleagues were professionally and pragmatically interested.

⁶² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 203.

⁶³ This is commonly referred to as "collaboration."

Local elites have long been shaped, made or strengthened in times of governmental transition⁶⁴ in general and through colonialism's specific need for cultural brokers who, while perhaps not "native surrogates,"⁶⁵ are fluent in both "cultures."⁶⁶ But in this context Abdelfattah and others who collected municipal refuse were far from elite. And no one with whom I spoke framed their work as a matter of brokerage, or translation, across two groups. Rather, the fact that Israeli authority agents' power was verifiable *and* that they were physically visible was, paradoxically, key to Abdelfattah's experience of *autonomy* in his work. Challenging Foucault's concept of disciplinary power as that which is visible yet unverifiable, the more Abdelfattah knew and *saw* of occupation's agents, the more power's location (in himself and in the municipality) seemed to be verifiable to him and therefore available for instrumentalization.

Removing refuse from public spaces was a goal shared by those whose profession made them responsible for it and by residents who benefited from its removal, moreover. This was a moment in which the ethno-national category to which one belonged seemed to matter less, at least in retrospect, than did the work of keeping Jenin clean. Keeping discards in order was simply work *that had to get done*. The fact that it was "dirty work" may have helped, though that fact was not discursively salient among those with whom I spoke. The notion of work that has to get done helps to highlight the significance of studying the everyday practices of governing and of "getting by" under conditions of

⁶⁴ Mao (1926) identified a comprador class of merchants in China that he argued were the agents of foreign imperialism. Nkruma (1965) made a similar argument about the role of the indigenous elite serving neo-imperialism in Africa after decolonization. See Bornstein (2009) for more global comparisons.

⁶⁵ Tamari, "In League with Zion," 41.

⁶⁶ See for example Hagedorn (1988); Szasz (2001); Wyatt (1978/9).

occupation," as Allen puts it, and perhaps of "getting by" more generally—for example, in late twentieth century post-agricultural contexts. Allen argues that "getting by" the violence that marred life during the second Intifada permitted residents to deflect violent measures "through adaptation." But for Abdelfattah, ordering refuse on Jenin's streets was not something to which he seemed to have to "adapt"—since he believed in its value—though it may have been what Allen calls "a form of agency with no determinate political effect."⁶⁷

Objectification

Here I wish to highlight the significance of professional commitment in general and the particularly unqualified nature of the "good" of urban cleanup in particular. At least for a time, Abdelfattah seemed to see an alignment between his own daily work aims and the aims of the Israelis who were involved in them. Below I outline the relationship between the historical "stage" at which waste management found itself during occupation's first two decades and the emergence of this alignment.

For a number of reasons, some of which I outline here, the first two decades of occupation coincided with the objectification of garbage as "solid waste" (*nifayat salba*). Garbage was transformed from a private resource into a new kind of burden. Its burdensome nature rendered its expedited collection and disposal crucial. The objectification of refuse (*zbaleh*) as solid waste helped create a common "regime of

⁶⁷ Allen, "Getting by the Occupation," 456 and 460.

truth”⁶⁸ that was the sole purview neither of the occupiers nor of the occupied. It is in this sense that, above, I argue that Abdelfattah and his coworkers were not “cultural brokers”: the “culture” of cleaning to which they adhered did not emanate from one group, producing the necessity for it to be “translated” by brokers to the group that lacked it. Thinking about objectification thus also decenters the binary that privileges either hegemony or resistance.

The 1960s witnessed the resignification of *zbaleh*, which I begin here by defining as refuse or remains. From a set of materials that tended to recirculate, *zbaleh* was transformed into material increasingly conceived of as something to be removed, buried and forgotten. This was in part a result of the global proliferation of synthetics and disposable containers. But it was not reducible to them. It was the intersection of synthetics' proliferation with other historical transformations already underway that made objectification possible.⁶⁹ These changes preceded the proliferation of disposable consumer goods, which intensified in the West Bank in the 1980s and 1990s. In Jenin, in addition to the closing down of most public bathhouses in the mid-twentieth century, changing farming practices both relied upon, and sent, new materials into circulation. Drip irrigation replaced rainfed agricultural in many parts of the West Bank. Rainfed agriculture had required few to no chemical fertilizers. Drip irrigation under plastic

⁶⁸ Gordon ultimately states that the occupation failed "to normalize the situation." It failed "to implement an alternative regime of truth in order to prevent the revitalization of a Palestinian national identity." Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 61 & 62.

⁶⁹ In 1996, the Bethlehem-based Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) documented that in the Jenin district there had been "considerable change in the composition, output and bulk density of urban solid waste." For details see ARIJ, "Environmental Profile," 92-3.

coverings encouraged their use. The expansion of drip irrigation, first in Israel⁷⁰ and then in the West Bank, thus came to favor chemical fertilizers over the organic waste that older generations had carried on their heads to their lands or to their house's "piece of garden." Chemical fertilizers were more profitable and less time-consuming alternatives to composting from organic waste. Drip irrigation also necessitated the use of plastic agricultural sheets⁷¹ to cover large areas of land. Once discarded, these plastic sheets "contaminated" otherwise reusable organic agricultural wastes, producing greater quantities of *unusable* refuse for the farmers who had once found use for them. Chemical fertilizers and plastic irrigation sheets were thus also two new material *outputs* that resulted from agriculture. Plastic agricultural sheets⁷² and nylon bags (which followed in the late 1970s)⁷³ were initially discarded together. The presence of plastic sheets and bags in agricultural refuse discouraged farmers from fertilizing their fields with agricultural and household wastes: they discovered that animals, such as cows, that consumed those plastics, fell sick or died from doing so.

Im Taoufiq, who came to Jenin in 1951, remembered that milk and yogurt had been sold "in glass" before that. Amina, born in 1936, was from Qabatya south of Jenin. She had moved to Jenin in 1971. She remembered there being no plastic there when she

⁷⁰ See Khalidi, "The Arab Economy in Israel," 73.

⁷¹ ARIJ, "Environmental Profile."

⁷² One older Jenin resident who had been a school principal for many years told me that his school had "had small gardens," or greenhouses. They "would be covered with nylon; its name was *dafiy'a* in Arabic. The Jews called it *hamamud*."

⁷³ One Jenin municipality worker recalled that plastic bags had begun replacing paper bags in Jenin around 1978-79. Mukhlis Mahjoob also remembered that plastics came to Jenin in the 1970s.

initially arrived. But by comparison with Qabatya's *zbaleh* – which she described as "clean"– Jenin's *zbaleh* had been dirty from the start. In Qabatya they could use *zbaleh* “for the lands around them. But in Jenin they couldn't use it. It was dirty, useless.” In Qabatya they would gather household “remains from food scraps” in a metal container in a corner, she said. Then “someone would come by and buy the remains. Only twice a year! They would give maybe two or three dinars.”

The fact that household and agricultural refuse ceased to be useful as a private resource is especially remarkable given the fact that, in much of the West Bank, between 50 and 60 percent of the waste being produced was (and continues to be) "organic," composed especially of food waste. Abdelfattah recalled that the burden grew especially in the 1980s. "In the 1970s we'd sell the garbage" to the farmers, he said. But "when nylon and plastic increased, we stopped all that. Because the farmers didn't want the waste anymore. What would they want from it?" "Plastic and glass" were the new materials that tipped waste into abjectness: "It became a burden on the municipality," he said. "Wherever there was a valley, they would dump there!" Synthetics (and to a lesser extent glass) were thus material outputs that rendered *zbaleh*-as-fertilizer useless, transforming it into *zbaleh*-as-trash. *Zbaleh* became what Gay Hawkins calls "worthless rubbish simply meeting its fate."⁷⁴

Waste's accumulation was also a product of urbanization, which compounded the effects of natural population growth and of the refugee influxes after the Nakba (1948)

⁷⁴ Hawkins, The Ethics of Waste, 80.

and the Naksa (the occupation of 1967).⁷⁵ Chemical fertilizers had been available to Palestinian farmers since the 1950s. The occupation limited farmers' access to them to those on the Israeli market.⁷⁶ Without competition these were expensive. For many, agriculture became less profitable than work inside Israel (which is also how cash flows, and therefore Jenin's shopping district, grew during this period). Agricultural land in places like Jenin—one of the most fertile plains in all of Palestine—was thus used for building businesses and extensions of households as families grew. The "piece of garden," as one municipal employee put it, that had once allowed households to reuse food remains, quickly shrank. The problem was greater in urban centers than it was in villages.⁷⁷

Waste thus accumulated at new rates and in greater quantities. Household and agricultural refuse became newly conspicuous.⁷⁸ Its now transitional state rendered its "thingness visible."⁷⁹ Rotting in a bucket by the front door, piling on a street corner, remains now really *remained* remains. Across the West Bank objects that had previously

⁷⁵ All cities in the West Bank have been experiencing significant population growth since 1967. The population of Al-Bireh, one of the fastest growing cities in the West Bank, grew from about 18,000 in the late 1960s to about 40,000 in 2005. Jenin city grew from a population of 14,402 in 1961 (www.Palestineremembered.com accessed 28 May 2014) to 48,448 (including Jenin camp) in 2008 (PCBS 2007). More recently, the Jenin governorate grew from a population of 195,299 in 1997 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Dissemination and Analysis of Census Findings: Governorates Executive Report Series (01), Jenin Governorate," prepared by Omayna Al-Ahmad, January 2002) to 251,807 in 2007.

⁷⁶ Interview with agroeconomist Feras Batran, ARIJ-Jenin in Jenin city, 4 and 10 February 2010.

⁷⁷ See Sever and Peterburg, "Israel's Development," 48.

⁷⁸ Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, 80.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

found a place in new uses after being discarded became matter unequivocally "out of place."⁸⁰

Attention to these material changes is important among other things because it sheds light on some of the conditions within which service provision under occupation changed over time. While aspects of service provision have been historicized in some work on Palestine, their material conditions of possibility have tended to be elided (with the exclusion of three "natural" conditions: water scarcity, land scarcity and birth rates). For municipalities, the accumulation of waste meant that the need for workers, new equipment and vehicles also increased, as did the proliferation of possibilities for waste's misplacement. Public order in relation to refuse was now at stake more than ever before. And it was expensive. Municipalities across the West Bank experienced increases in cost, in the need for a larger labor force and, most importantly, accumulations of raw waste. They tried to defray mounting costs by charging residents (more) for waste collection. Families that for decades had benefited from the waste they produced were charged for it.

The now perpetual presence of street sweepers, dumpsites, bins and dumpsters in urban centers encapsulated what a radical break had occurred between what refuse had been until the mid-twentieth century and what it had now become. The focus of street sweeping before the 1960s had been on the absence of filth in public spaces. The focus of "waste management," by contrast, was on the management of the *presence* of a substance – solid waste – instead. Street cleaning had been an activity with an identifiable end: a clean street. Solid waste management, by contrast, was inherently ongoing, precisely

⁸⁰ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

because the object it aimed to manage was understood as a fixed entity whose nuisances could be ameliorated but never fully eradicated. The introduction of dumpsters had at first represented the prioritization of street cleaning in the service of public order and public health. The establishment of a solid waste management *system* with a constant need for upgraded and specialized trainings, experts, equipment, technologies and fee collection mechanisms, came to represent acceptance, one might say, of the permanent place of garbage in the governance of everyday life.⁸¹

Solid Waste as an Object of Knowledge

With trainings in Tel Aviv and equipment brought from places like Nazareth, a hierarchy of expertise in managing waste was carefully maintained. Increasingly, though, solid waste became an object of specialized knowledge for municipal workers as well. Workers were sources of authorized knowledge through their daily, and often grinding, routines.⁸² And they were sometimes acknowledged as such. The engineers at Jenin's sanitary landfill, which opened in 2007, the year Abdelfattah retired, called upon him to compile the baseline data they required for the research phase of the landfill's construction. One of Jenin's accountants described Abdelfattah to me as the "most experienced (*aktar khabran*)" worker in the city's field of health and waste. Though he did not make it explicit, he was differentiating between an expert (*mukhtas* or *khabir*) and someone with experience (*khibra*). Abdelfattah overheard Nabil making his comment. "I

⁸¹ Among the indications for this is the fact that governing authorities made few efforts during this period to reduce the amount of waste being produced.

⁸² The distinction between expert and non-expert (especially in environmental pollution) was to become crucial to the dynamics of governance in the post-Oslo period. It was from that vantage point that some of my interlocutors described how municipal workers accumulated knowledge about waste *before* Oslo.

mean, I worked in it for a time" (*ya'ni, fatra*), he added modestly. But both men were also making another point. That despite workers' lack of diplomas or degrees, solid waste had become a discrete field of work—a field in which there *were* specialized forms of knowledge to which they were among the few to have access.⁸³ That Abdelfattah was experienced in waste management was undeniable. And as far as Nabil (whom the municipality had hired in 1998) was concerned, Abdelfattah was the most authoritative source on pre-Oslo governing conditions around garbage in Jenin.⁸⁴

The occupation authorities also exhibited an implicit appreciation for municipal workers' knowledge. During the 1960s and early 1970s each municipal worker constructed his own equipment for cleaning the city's streets. "The workers themselves would go get them (*natish*)⁸⁵ to make a broom," recalled one worker. "They would go to the mountain, bring a *natish*. The municipality would buy a stick (*'asay*) and give it to the worker who would go get the *natish*. He would tie it around the stick." Nabil smiled: The

⁸³ I met Abdelfattah in 2011, four years after his retirement. Yet he remembered many minute details about his work. These included the number of collection vehicles the municipality had when he had arrived, how many days it took a household in the 1970s to fill a cloth sack (*khaysh*) full of refuse for collection by his workers, when plastic and nylon first entered Jenin's waste stream and how many small waste containers Jenin had in 1995 versus 1997. He knew how many tons of solid waste Jenin produced a day in the early 2010s, he knew the history of garbage before his arrival, the size of the dumpsters bought in 1979, and he made statements about the social correlates of increased amounts of waste: "When there is population growth, there is a growth in the garbage" and "when stores open in commercial areas, there is also an increase." He also confided, with some pride, that he was in the midst of writing a book about his experiences as a sanitation worker.

⁸⁴ For the post-Oslo period, by contrast, NGOs like ARIJ, international aid organizations like the World Bank, and the Palestinian Authority claimed authoritative knowledge about the field.

⁸⁵ The Arabic word *natish* refers both to a type of shrub (English: *Crotalaria*) and to the piece of sweeping equipment that can be made with it. In Palestine it is also sometimes referred to as *qash*, which can either mean hay or straw or whisk or broom.

street was "cleaner than it is today, by the way. The *qash* especially, cleans better than the brooms today."⁸⁶

That garbage became both a burden and a specialized object of knowledge suggests that solid waste was a product of objectification.⁸⁷ Here I draw on three aspects of Bernard Cohn's understanding of objectification in colonial India: One, the fact that objectification involves simplifications that allow people to "stand back" and "see [the object] as an entity."⁸⁸ Two, the fact that objectification makes that which is objectified "available"⁸⁹ in new ways to new actors. And three, the fact that objectification involves the rendering "static" and "timeless"⁹⁰ of that which is objectified.⁹¹

Waste's abandonment came to be (over)determined by its fixed "thingness." *Zbaleh* thus also became a thing in Callon and Muniesa's terms: it was "stabilized, delimited and definable." Among other things, this meant that it had "objective properties

⁸⁶ Workers' knowledge about broom-making drew from knowledge acquired in the cleaning of homes and *bab al-bayt*. See Chapter 1.

⁸⁷ In the sense that solid waste now seemed to make certain undisputable demands on residents, municipal workers and governors, it acquired a kind of agency--if not "vibrancy" in Jane Bennett's terms--in that its presence compelled people to do things in ways they had not done them before. Solid waste's objectification therefore resembles objectification in infertility clinics as documented by Charis Cussins. Cussins argues that "non-reductive manifestations of objectification make possible a notion of agency not opposed by, but pursued in objectification." Cussins, "Ontological Choreography," 575. See also objectification in the work of Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 8-9.

⁸⁸ Cohn, "The Census," 229.

⁸⁹ India's objectification through colonial forms of knowledge "involved the coding of India in ways that rendered it increasingly available for colonization." Dirks, "Forward," xv.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Webb Keane's suggestion that objectification is a public process (because it is semiotic), and one that involves changes in both the epistemic and the pragmatic status of an object, are also relevant here. See Keane, "Self-Interpretation," 239.

that allow[ed] the application and transfer of property rights."⁹² Building on Jordanian regulations, the occupying authorities rendered public refuse municipal property.⁹³ The Jordanian and Israeli definitions of littering codified to waste's legal isolation. That codification found material form in Jenin in the 1970s, as in other municipalities (e.g. al-Bireh), through the distribution of dumpsters. These made the production of litter—the placement of solid waste outside homes or dumpsters—a spatially practicable and legally legible act. Municipal ownership over waste was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it meant that residents could be charged for waste collection and fined for littering. On the other hand, *zbaleh* was a burden for municipalities as much as it now was for households and pedestrians.

Cohn describes the British census as a technology that facilitated the objectification of Indian culture: “Through the asking of questions and compiling of information in categories,” objectification “provided an arena for Indians to ask questions about themselves, and Indians utilized the fact that the British census commissioners tried to order tables on caste in terms of social precedence.”⁹⁴ In Palestine, similarly, among objectification’s effects was that discarded materials now possessed ethnonational identifiers. Solid waste was increasingly calculated as a substance that could be compared

⁹² Callon and Muniesa, "Peripheral Vision," 1233.

⁹³ Although Jordanian Municipal Law Number 9 (1955) "did not specify the owner rights of [solid] waste, writes Musleh, "most municipal bylaws and regulations, established on the basis of this law, defined that the municipality owns the waste collected." Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 108. It was "forbidden for anyone to collect the waste other than municipal collectors or their contracted workers." In 1961, for example, the "Ramallah municipality (Regulation Number 28, 1961) defined that all wastes from barns and commercial establishments were owned by the local council." Waste continued to be the property of municipal governments under Israeli rule. In 1973, for instance, Tulkarem "identified waste collected from any barn, commercial establishment, building, or workshop as owned by the municipality." Ibid.

⁹⁴ Cohn, "The Census," 230.

statistically (e.g. in kilos produced per capita) across population groups that the occupation authorities marked as "Arab" and "Jewish," or as "Palestinian" and Israeli." Waste was also identified regionally (e.g. Jenin's waste could be compared to Ramallah's). New markers were given through a process of abstraction. When materials became solid waste they were lifted from the context(s) of production, exchange and circulation in which they had heretofore been embedded. Their afterlives became singular in that their final destination was the dump.

Zbaleh's potential for (re)use was thus also newly limited. An abject substance, its reuse was a delicate matter. This is where public order became important. Incorrect reuse could result in negative consequences. It could be read as an unsanitary practice based on the misrecognition of waste's identity (as a danger to human health). It could also be read as a political practice based on the recognition and exploitation of its harmful or obstructive properties. The latter occurred in the 1980s, for example, when residents set fire to old tires and rolled them at military jeeps and when Israeli curfews forced residents to live among their own wastes for days or weeks at a time. But incorrect use could also be read as mere error—the flipside of correctly managing waste's placement.

For early waste managers in the West Bank, waste was also now part of "waste streams."⁹⁵ Waste flowed from inside (residential areas, homes, businesses) out. Waste movements had patterns that could be measured, predicted, and managed at a regional scale. The assumption of waste's ontological directedness is noteworthy because, among other things, it elided the fact that much of what constituted solid waste *materially* (e.g.

⁹⁵ See for example ARIJ, "Environmental Profile," 92.

plastics, chemical fertilizers) had originated geographically outside the borders of the West Bank, and in that sense flowed inward. Solid waste was understood as something produced locally. In collecting fees per household or business and in distributing dumpsters throughout cities, managers now focused on two things: First, identifying its "source" (the *local* individual, household or business). It could be separated "at the source" or "collected from the source." Second, they focused on removing it from the source to an appropriate "outside." Solid waste was thus fixed as an object (or objectified) through its association with particular forms of identifiable, permissible and required movement.

All the same, objectification was a process rather than an achievement.⁹⁶ It occurred gradually, unevenly and incompletely. It had begun in the mid-1950s but was not stabilized until the late 1980s. Unevenness was also geographical and institutional. It occurred in some municipalities more quickly and more pervasively than it did in others.⁹⁷ Objectification was also uneven because the legal definition of solid waste was

⁹⁶ Cohn, "The Census," 230. Hawkins, The Ethics of Waste, 29.

⁹⁷ This was partly because central governments treated different municipalities differently. It was also because they never fully managed to standardize municipal regulations regarding waste. Between the Ottoman and Jordanian periods, for instance, a number of laws stipulated that local governments were responsible for improvements in sanitation, in citizens' health, safety and welfare. Among other things, it was uneven because, as Maoz writes, the "Military Government would not go out of its way to assist those nationalist municipalities which were reluctant to cooperate with it in municipal affairs." Ma'oz, Palestinian Leadership, 82. Because assistance to municipalities from Israel, as well as the extent to which Israel allowed municipalities to receive funds from Arab countries and from Palestinian remittances, were both variable across time and space, the objectification of solid waste through practices of "solid waste management" was also uneven. See also Tamari, "In League with Zion," 47. The Jordanian Village Administration Law Number 5 (1954) was one such law. Another was Jordanian Municipal Law Number 29 (1955). Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 107-8. Under Jordanian rule municipal sanitation fees had been determined independently by each local government. *Ibid.*, 108. However, at least in Jenin, household and agricultural refuse had continued to be sold--by the farmers and residents who had produced it--until well into the 1970s.

itself unstable. The concept of "municipal waste" had already existed in the mid-1960s insofar as it was a category of governance over which responsibility had been transferred from Jordan to Israel in 1967.⁹⁸ But objectification did not yet initially correspond to academic disciplines as it would in later decades. Few university degrees existed in waste management until the late 1990s and neither the Israeli government nor municipalities yet had "solid waste management" departments.⁹⁹ These only emerged in the 1990s and 2000s. And many West Bank municipalities still housed their solid waste management functions within municipal health and engineering departments when I conducted fieldwork between 2009 and 2012.

The juxtaposition of "civil institutions"—municipal health departments, on the one hand, and the occupied educational system, on the other—may thus reveal the relative uniqueness of waste management as a field of occupation's governance. The difference between the two underscores the value of investigating the specificities of different fields of practice that at first glance may seem to have made up Israel's "civil institutions" if not the entirety of the occupation as a "system." It reinforces the need to know the details of practices, temporalities, standardizations and priorities of different aspects of colonial governance. It also suggests an empirical challenge to arguments that a singular logic characterized land and population management as a whole, coherent expression (e.g. of a singular Zionist enterprise) during each distinct period of occupation

⁹⁸ Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making."

⁹⁹ It was in this context that Mahjoob explained to me that before Oslo "the municipality's activities were very diverse. It had broad powers." Interview in Jenin city, 24 August 2010.

—as well as to the argument that periods of occupation can be represented by a single area of governance.

My project thus departs from Gordon's in a significant sense. Whereas Gordon's focus is on the ways in which governance indexed the occupation's logics as a whole, mine tracks the emergence and the record of one particular field. On the one hand, my insistence on the specificities of a particular field may be useful only to understanding waste management insofar as that field was emergent *as a field* in a way that other fields (e.g. water distribution, education, disease prevention, transport) were not. On the other hand, my approach suggests that ascribing totalizing modes of power to governance under occupation does not fully capture the experiences of occupied residents. Nor does it capture the experience of the hundreds and thousands among them who daily functioned as the occupation's municipal *mediators*.

It is worth noting too that some research does exist on discrete aspects of life and on discrete governing "sectors" in the West Bank and Gaza over the past four decades. NGOs, international aid organizations, Palestinian and Israeli universities and analysts have produced numerous reports on the health, education and water sectors in particular.¹⁰⁰ Within academic circles, interestingly, this work has tended to be the turf either of historians of the Ottoman and Mandate periods¹⁰¹ or of scholars calling for direct policy changes to those sectors. But these accounts of the occupation's effects on and of Palestinians' experiences and work in—these "sectors" of everyday governance

¹⁰⁰ Some examples include Selby "Dressing up Domination" and "Cooperation," Barnea and Husseini, Separate and Cooperate, Daibes and Barghouthi, Infrastructure and Health Services.

¹⁰¹ For example Schneider, "Religious Education," and Sufian, Healing the Land.

have taken for granted that the sectors were static. With fields of practice assumed to be always-already objectified, changes in governance have been assumed to be the effect of changes in the symbolic meanings of those fields to governors or governed, on the one hand, or the effect of their political manipulations by those driving policy, on the other.

The history of solid waste management shows that changing priorities in that field¹⁰² shaped the relations of local governance in the West Bank. This includes its emergence as a field in the first place. A field's characteristics—especially for a field related to infrastructure—depend both on material changes and on changes in circulations of knowledge and expertise as well, of course, as they do on whether a governing regime is a military occupation or a representative government. Fields also change at different rates in different places and the everyday practices through which infrastructural and social services are sustained vary by field. They also depend in part on whether the sector centers on the *distribution* of resources or the *removal* of their excesses. Water distribution and electricity generation differ dramatically from solid waste removal, for example. First, solid waste differs in its relative novelty.¹⁰³ Second, controlled largely by Israel *within* Israel, electricity and water differ from garbage in that they both usually flow inward, from Israeli sites or Israeli-controlled sites into Palestinian cities and villages.¹⁰⁴ These material and geographic differences among fields of governance mean

¹⁰² This includes changes at an international level through circulating fields of expertise. Circulations of this kind become more important in the following chapter about post-Oslo waste and environmental expertise.

¹⁰³ Though also recent, electricity was installed about a century ago. Plumbing, on the other hand, has a history that dates back to ancient times.

¹⁰⁴ Palestinians buy about 52% of their water from Mekorot, the Israeli national water company.

that a shift at the top levels of management cannot have had the same effect on each infrastructure and the social relationships it requires or assembles. This is the case, for example, in transitions from the Jordanian administration to Israel or from Israel to the Palestinian Authority. This is in part because different fields of governance mobilize different “actors” and they do so in different ways. Waste management in the West Bank, for example, has historically been less susceptible to privatization or to charity work than have water distribution, education, healthcare and electricity. It is one of the most consistently municipal services in Palestine. This makes waste management a productive lens through which to examine transformations that have occurred in the relationship between municipal governments and central authorities. These institutions in turn become productive sites for thinking about changes in the reproduction of bureaucratic authority. As more frequently privatized infrastructures, by contrast, water and electricity help tell stories of commercialization, infrastructural violence, agricultural decline and energy dependence.

During the two decades before Oslo, solid waste management became a field of governance because solid waste became objectified, and vice versa. Handling, discarding or moving solid waste could be political. Or it could be an unqualified necessity and, when done correctly, an unqualified *good*. Between the late 1960s and the late-1980s, then, managing waste was neither inherently national(ist) (even for those like Abdelfattah who perceived themselves as nationalists) nor was it always a tool for colonial domination. By contrast with this early period, the national autonomy of municipal waste management was to become extremely significant for Palestine's waste managers in the

post-Oslo period. For many in the PA bureaucracy, solid waste management became both national work toward building an independent state *and* technical work, requiring new forms of expertise. The way that distinction appeared after Oslo is the subject of the following chapters.

Chapter 2

What did the Environment Do?: Borders, Bureaucrats and Waste Post-Oslo

...the weightlessness of a language that is severed from culture...offers one the opportunity for a certain excursion if not into a new identity, at least away from an old one.

- James Siegel¹

...a Neighbor is the one who by definition smells.

- Slavoj Zizek²

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: One, to further elaborate on the institutional, legal and jurisdictional effects of the Oslo Accords (c. 1995) on the management of Palestinian wastes in the West Bank. The seeds of addressing waste at environmental scales had been sewn before Oslo, for example in Israeli plans for large-scale sanitary landfills and in Palestinians' public health activism. But the signing of the Accords helped institutionalize the assumed causal relationship between waste and pollution of the environment. It also established conditions that made the Palestinian Authority accountable to Israel and to foreign aid agencies for pollution prevention. Oslo's arrangements thus consolidated the environment's existence as an object of research and governance in the Territories. The environment became a hegemonic

¹ Siegel, Fetish, Recognition, Revolution, 15.

² Zizek, "Tolerance as an Ideological Category," 23.

"given" with which any Palestinian waste manager now had to contend. Not only was the environment "out there" and everywhere. It also emerged as a new unqualified good whose protection was an index of civilization. As such, it "created an ideological legitimization for...designs and socio-material and political engineering,"³ Palestinian and foreign.

My second goal is to introduce the Palestinian experts whom the "transfer of authority" authorized to work on the front lines of management. In doing so I pay particular attention to how the spatial contradictions rendered through the Accords and their aftermath shaped the parameters for effective speech in the work of regulators and managers. I show how some of the incoherencies of Oslo's spatial-jurisdictional arrangements vis-à-vis environmental pollution were mirrored in incoherencies reiterated in the daily speech of experts. These incoherencies were effective in that they helped carry forward processes (requiring Israeli or international permission) to construct infrastructures and to keep them running. They did so by serving—or at least being admitted—as evidence that experts were environmentally-minded and that they were thus reliable local partners in the protection of an environment "shared" by Israelis, Palestinians and ostensibly the region. But contradictory speech was not only deployed cynically toward utilitarian ends. This was not mere strategic compliance with dominant forms of speech promulgated by foreigners with the ability to withhold or to allow the construction of sanitary infrastructures for Palestinians; these incoherent forms of speech and thought seemed impossible to argue against. Nor, however, was bureaucrats'

³ Carroll, *Science, Culture*, 143.

reiteration of them a symptom of them having become unknowing, disciplined subjects of new colonial logics put into effect post-Oslo.⁴ The language associated with the concept of a “shared environment” was fraught for the people who used it. With visible frustration, they repeatedly claimed that it contradicted other forms of thought and practice to which they were (much more) strongly committed. Yet they felt compelled to use it anyway. This suggests that the incoherent forms of speech I describe below were features of a kind of Orwellian doublethink that has, I suggest, become necessary for participation in the building the would-be Palestinian state.⁵

Municipal refuse underwent a first-order transformation—objectification as solid waste—during the transition from Jordanian to Israeli rule (Chapter 1). Solid waste and, now, sewage underwent a second order transformation during and after the transition ushered in by the Accords. That second-order transformation was made possible by the environment's emergence. Waste was reconstituted as an environmental pollutant. Environmental protection eclipsed the unqualified good of municipal waste's ordering for order's sake (Chapter 1). Although the environment was not yet a universally salient "imaginary" in Palestine, references to it after the early 1990s came to have a moral weight that made it very difficult to ignore if one were in the business of managing waste. For the waste managers with whom I worked—especially those in the PA but including

⁴ See Weizman, “Seeing Through Walls.”

⁵ George Orwell describes doublethink as “[t]he power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them...To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies – all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth.” Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, 32.

all sorts of self-proclaimed environmentalists—municipal refuse became something like the environment's antithesis. This made it possible to make statements like the following one made by the Israel Parks and Nature Authority. In July 2013 it issued a report in which it claimed that "[a]lmost 90 percent of sewage from Palestinian towns in the West Bank flows *into the environment* [emphasis mine] untreated."⁶

But what constituted "the environment" into which sewage could be said to flow? The emergence of the environment can first be understood as a transformation in spatial and temporal scales newly characterized by an absence of limits. The environment extended in all directions: eastward and westward toward Jordan or the Mediterranean, northward toward Lebanon and southward toward Africa. It extended downward into the depths of aquifers and up into the atmosphere. The environment could also move such that that extension outward, upward or downward could be reversed. Governing and research practices and institutions were increasingly organized around the assumption that insects, waters, gases, seeds and other natural features could also flow inward and move outward across political borders. The limitlessness of the environment made waste a fugitive substance. If the environment was limitless and should be protected wherever it could be found (which was everywhere), and if human-made waste only interfered with it as pollution, there was, quite literally, nowhere for waste to go.

The gradual transformation of waste into an environmental pollutant was catalyzed by, and came to necessitate, new solutions to the new uncertainties associated with public waste. It (re)produced the need for expertise in new spatial and temporal

⁶ Rinat, "Most Palestinian Sewage."

scales for which the human senses and the existing medical sciences no longer provided adequate knowledge. As in contestations over the Michigan landfill recently studied by Joshua Reno, in the West Bank "the ability to distinguish between likely and unlikely threats acquired the status of a [newly] valued technique. Depending on how they assess[ed] and respond[ed] to the likelihood of danger, subjects [were] counted expert or lay, wise or mystified, 'sanitary' or 'unsanitary.'"⁷

Thinking vertically down and horizontally out about the surface pollution of groundwaters can be said to have transformed nineteenth-century contamination into twentieth-century pollution. Using one's untrained senses of sight, taste and smell came to seem short-sighted, or limited, by comparison with the broader scalar standards of the environment. The former rested on calculations that now seemed provincial. Uses of the human sensorium prioritized temporalities limited to detectable signs (e.g. as cholera) of the short-term future. Pollution of groundwater resources, by contrast, had by the 1990s become a matter of risk projected into decades in the future. The horizontal scale at which the movement of pollutants was monitored, moreover, had come to span not only all of Israel and the territories it occupied but also the Mediterranean as a whole—far beyond what the human eye could see. What is more, aquifers could not be seen by a person inhabiting the surface of the land. Nor could the nitrates that moved through rock and gravel on their way to storage there. Nor, for that matter, could the effects of current practices on the land's surface be known *as those practices were occurring*. Fifteen to thirty years (themselves mere estimates) now mediated between the *origins* of pollution

⁷ Reno, "Beyond Risk," 516.

and pollution itself. Environmental assessments based on the human sensorium dropped to the bottom of the evidentiary hierarchy.

As I discuss in the following chapters, these conditions produced new uncertainties around the accumulation of wastes both solid and liquid. While the spread of diseases like cholera had been experienced as unpredictable eruptions of social chaos for over a century, administrators' new orientation toward the long-distance and long-term pollution of waterways meant that "daily life [was] characterized by overwhelming uncertainty and unknowability" whose forms departed radically from those that had long been familiar to sanitarians in the area.⁸ Waste's risks took new shape. They required new approaches to the management of people and things.

The environment was therefore also a package of new practices and concepts mobilized by and necessitating new forms of expertise. Initially the concern of a small number of Israeli planners and Palestinian community organizers in the West Bank, after Oslo the environment became key to most PA institutional structures, laws and plans regarding garbage and sewage.⁹ It also became central to the Authority's relationships with Israeli institutions and with international aid agencies. The environment was thus translated into particular technologies and practices for managing waste such as sanitary landfills, treatment plants and mechanized recycling.

⁸ Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 14.

⁹ In the 1980s Israeli administrators had raised concerns about the long-term risks to the Mountain Aquifer below it—risks associated with waste disposal on the earth's surface. This marked a shift from the logics directing Israeli practices of aquifer exploitation (though those practices continued) to an interest in the aquifer's long-term protection from pollution (i.e. no longer only quantitative analysis of water scarcity).

The emergence of the environment in Palestine first helped make centralized control over municipal waste and sewage a priority for the Israeli occupation authorities. Environmental standards required placement of material buffers between human-produced waste and the ground, whether in the form of reinforced sewage pipes, treatment ponds or landfill lining. Until the early Israeli occupation period, dumping of solid wastes had involved the horizontal movement of municipal waste from residential centers to multiple administrative peripheries and the use of the land's surface for the waste's disposal, burning or reuse. Waste piles had either been covered with dirt or burned. When Israel began to plan large scale regional landfills in the early 1980s, by contrast, the emphasis turned to digging a few, deep holes. On the one hand, land filling can be understood as the making of new surfaces underground. On the other hand, landfilling proposed the extension of a surface into a lower (shallow) plane that had not been used before for the disposal of such large quantities of waste.

This fed the notion within an emergent class of environmentally-minded experts that the people in charge of the new technology's regulation should be experts in knowledge forms about the land, its surface *and* its relationship to the underground, as well as in the (changing) chemical compounds that constituted human wastes. Environmentalist waste management also relied on sociological thinking. Statistically verifiable patterns in consumption, socialization and household spending and what would eventually be called "environmental awareness" were useful to track as one measured the sizes and shapes of landfill schemes meant to last into the far future. These forms of

knowledge had been only marginally relevant to the physicians and other medical experts whose responsibility it had been to manage waste's deleterious effects on public health.

One effect of the emergence of environmental protection as the key "metrological regime"¹⁰ within which the risks of waste pollution came to be calculated and managed was the establishment of new standards for the practices of measurement with which infrastructures to protect the environment from municipal waste were to be built. Palestinian bureaucrats, engineers and other experts who managed Palestinian garbage worked daily under the assumption that the future of a sovereign state, and the nation's environmental survival, were both at stake in their ability to design and build infrastructures. The stakes were similarly high when they attempted to make those infrastructures "ecologically sustainable" – infrastructures recognizable as such both by served communities and by closely watching Israeli and international observers. Experts saw their application of internationally recognized, "technical" standards in measuring, designing and building waste management systems as a matter of national, and sometimes even anti-colonial, significance.

For the construction of the first Palestinian-run sanitary landfill in the West Bank, called Zahrat al-Finjan, international standards dictated the calculation of population growth over three to five decades into the future. Ethnographies of nuclear fallout and waste have shown that state planners are required to do unprecedented imaginative labor in building waste disposal facilities that assume the institutional and territorial shape of

¹⁰ Barry, "The Anti-Political Economy."

their political communities into the unimaginably far future, for example 200,000 years.¹¹ In the West Bank, that managing Palestinian waste necessitated the measurement of territory, population and political institutions up to thirty or fifty years into the future was, in some sense, just as imaginatively laborious. Especially for local experts working in a territory whose jurisdictions and demographics were in constant flux, deferred pending the ever-ephemeral "political solution."

Nevertheless, given the imperative to build the future state's infrastructures today, their designs for the landfill's garbage collection radius and population served divided objects into measurable unknowns and unmeasurable unknowns. The "fallout" from this division was the parallel, implicit distinction between "natural" population growth, for example, which was legible within a purportedly universal metrological regime of environmental protection and considered measurable, and "political" population growth, which could not be reliably calculated into the building of a national system of waste management and was fundamentally context specific. Paradoxically, practices of "natural" population forecasting that allowed Palestinian waste managers – as well as many of the people they sought to serve – to perceive their work as national work for what would one day be an independent, environmentally sustainable state, were the same measurement practices that could potentially narrow, and finally reconfigure, the material limits of the (future) state in unexpected ways. This chapter introduces the experts for whom these were daily dilemmas. Oslo's expert waste managers emerged as a loose-knit, geographically scattered yet identifiable group in tandem with the emergence of waste as

¹¹ Masco, [The Nuclear Borderlands](#) 38, 305. See also Petryna, [Life Exposed](#).

an environmental pollutant. Waste's reproduction as such allowed for the privileging of new forms of expertise and therefore for the bolstering of their (albeit limited) bureaucratic authority¹² in Palestine.

"Our Wastewater"

"Where is our wastewater?"¹³ Majdi asked. "In October...it should start flowing through the pipes," said Tarek. It was midday on June 6th, 2011. I had accompanied two experts from the Palestinian Water Authority (the PA water ministry) on a trip to the boundary area between the northern West Bank and central Israel. They conducted "site visits" three or four times weekly, though most kept them within the West Bank. Tarek, Majdi and I stood on the western side of the Green Line near Baqa al-Gharbieh. We could see minarets in the West Bank town of Baqa al-Sharqieh some dozen meters east and across the Wall.

Before 1948 the two Baqas had been a single Palestinian town. In 2011, Baqa al-Gharbieh had an appointed, Jewish-Israeli mayor and a population of about 40,000 Palestinian Arab residents. Baqa al-Sharqieh had 4,000 residents and was under the administration of the West Bank governorate of Tulkarem. Sixty-three years after Baqa's partition, the Japanese government had partnered with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the PA and the Israeli Baqa al-Gharibeh municipality to fund the construction of a wastewater network extending from the ground underneath the West

¹² Feldman, *Governing Gaza*.

¹³ Since neither man was from Baqa al-Sharqieh, Majdi was not asking about the literal waste that came from either of their bodies. This was the waste of the nation. And in particular, it was the waste of the nation as defined according to the 1967 borders. In other words, he was referring to the waste of the present nation that belonged to the aspired-to future nation-*state*.

Bank part of Baqa to its Israeli-administered counterpart across the Green Line. UNDP staff distributed a Project Fact Sheet to trip participants. The project's aim, it stated, was "to promote peace building through cross boundary cooperation in wastewater management in order to enhance the communities' wellbeing and security and to protect [sic] shared environment and natural resources."

Clutching the sheet in the car on the way north, Majdi had made a lengthy and impassioned speech critiquing the project to Tarek, Samer (the taxi driver) and myself. The problem for him was double. First, where they really needed wastewater treatment, West Bank Palestinians were not getting it. The Authority had been applying to construct plants in the West Bank since 1996. But Israel had denied them permits and, losing hope, some donors had reassigned funding. Roughly 90 percent of Palestinian sewage flowed into the ground untreated. Much of it flowed across the Green Line, into the Dead Sea and into the aquifer below. Majdi's second problem was the boundary suggested by the term "cross boundary." "How can we do cross boundary cooperation," he huffed, "if we don't have actual boundaries?"¹⁴ We pulled into a densely populated area. Majdi read out Hebrew from the building signs, showing off what he had learned in prison. "We're arriving in Baqa al-Gharbieh. In Israel," he said. Tarek corrected him in a loud whisper: "In the part that is occupied from the *Palestinian nation*." Turning to me, Majdi responded with a mysterious phrase he had used several times already that day: "You see how history is stronger than geography?!"

¹⁴ Here Majdi was referring to the fact that Israel has never officially declared its borders.

The meeting in Baqa's municipal meeting hall featured Jewish and Arab Israeli municipal employees from Baqa al-Gharbieh, Authority experts (Majdi and Tarek), Japanese donor representatives and Dutch and Palestinian UNDP staff. Majdi and Tarek exchanged greetings in Arabic with Baqa's Palestinian employees. The Japanese consul, who was fluent in classical Arabic, joined in. The meeting itself was conducted in heavily accented English. Baqa al-Gharbieh's mayor welcomed the group. He opened in story format. He described the two "sides" that were involved in this wastewater project. The Israeli "side" was narrow, he said, flanked by the Mediterranean Sea on one side and what he called the "Palestinian side" on the other. He called Baqa a "border town." The words "side" and "borders" suggested two geographical units that mirrored one another across a thin line. This point elided that the Authority had nominal jurisdiction over just thirty percent of the West Bank (called Areas A and B), while Israel had sovereign control over the whole territory—as well as its underground. It elided that five hundred thousand Israeli settlers also produced sewage in the West Bank, much of which flowed westward into Israel and eastward into the Dead Sea. It elided that it was because of the Authority's crippled authority in the West Bank that Majdi and Tarek were *in Israel* trying to manage *West Bank waste*, while Palestinian wastewater projects in Tulkarem, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron and Salfit had been stalled or canceled.

But the mayor was actually proposing two, contrasting, spatial schemas: One conceived of a solid border between two distinct, coherent national wholes. That was what made Baqa al-Gharbieh a "border town." The other ignored the border—"looking" at the problem of waste from below the earth's surface instead. "We know that our sewage

problems are not only *our* problems," he said. "Because we are sitting on a very big aquifer here. And if it is spoiled by the Israeli side, or by the Palestinian side, it doesn't matter! Because it will be spoiled! Because in the underground aquifer—they don't know borders!...We are ready to connect the project...to the other side, the Palestinian side." No sooner had he made the move to "see" sewage from the point of view of the underground aquifer that straddled the border, than he had returned to the two, mirrored sides.

The Japanese consul's welcome followed: "I...see this as a sort of political, symbolic project to show that we can cooperate in order to have unity among two nations," he said. But the mayor was evidently flustered. "As you understand, this is a very complicated region here," he replied. "*Very* complicated. Where everything comes to politics! Instead, we should look at the physical problems. The physical problems are *physical problems—not politics!*" Majdi had been holding his tongue. He smiled, waiting for the mayor to finish. "Thank you very much for inviting us here," he began. "We are working together with our neighbors on the other side—the Israeli side..." He extended his chest in the mayor's direction and his head toward the Japanese consul.

We really understand your concern about the wastewater...coming from our side....We understand that some lessons can be learned from nature itself. We know that water and wastewater do not recognize any borders! And we hope that one day we can take lessons from nature...We should say: 'Let us put our past away, very far away.' And we should focus strongly on the future—

Immanent to this brief exchange in Baqa were a number of questions, some of which I address in this chapter: What did the spatial and institutional boundaries of Palestinian governance become after Oslo? How did the emergence of the environment

affect their boundaries? Toward what publics were Authority bureaucrats' energies oriented as a result? How did the newly forged connection between waste and the environment come to shape the parameters of what was thinkable, practicable and imperative for Palestinian waste managers? What did the shape the environment gave those parameters look like in governors' everyday attempts to manage Palestinian waste? In the introduction to Against Health, a volume on how health became "the new morality" in America, Jonathan Metzl argues that "appealing to health allows for a set of moral assumptions that are allowed to fly stealthily under the radar."¹⁵ He and Anna Kirkland call for scholars to "pay attention to the *uses* of health in their daily lives. Where does the term appear?" they ask. "To what means and to what ends?"¹⁶ In encountering the environment's emergence in the West Bank during fieldwork, and in asking the above questions, I asked myself and my interlocutors a similar set of questions. What did the environment do?¹⁷ When did its attendant terms—e.g. pollution, protection, awareness—appear, and to what effect?

For the new Palestinian government, the environmentalization of waste began with the inscription of waste as environmental pollution into the Interim Agreement signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993 and 1995. The "Oslo II" accords, signed on 28 September 1995 in Taba, Egypt, paved the way for the

¹⁵ Metzl, "Introduction," 2.

¹⁶ Their premise is that "even the most cursory examination of health in daily conversation, email solicitation, or media representation demonstrates how the term is used to make moral judgments, convey prejudice, sell products, or even to exclude whole groups of persons from health care." Ibid.

¹⁷ I also want to thank Lila Abu-Lughod for encouraging me to ask this question when we met in Bethlehem while I was in the field.

establishment of an interim Palestinian government in the West Bank and Gaza. Annex III, "Protocol Concerning Civil Affairs," laid out the guidelines for which aspects of governance would be transferred to the new authority and under what conditions.¹⁸ I spoke with members of the Palestinian team that worked on the parts of Annex III that dealt with waste and the environment. Nablus-based engineer Muhammad Said Hmeidi was one such expert. He described the understanding of waste's deleterious relationship to the environment as a lowest common denominator, a rare common ground between the Israeli and Palestinian technical teams. His description underscored how taken for granted it was that there was a relationship between municipal waste in particular and the imperative of environmental protection:¹⁹ "to us the environment *was* wastewater and solid waste at that time."

Annex III made clear that, within the framework of the Accords, waste's epistemological home was now the environment. At least at the level of the law, an overnight shift had occurred from health hazard to pollution. The word "environment" appeared 33 times in Annex III, and the word "waste" appeared thirteen times. All but one

¹⁸ The articles that continue to be cited among waste managers and experts within the Authority, among NGOs, lawyers and consultants are derived from Annex III

¹⁹ In 1995 ARIJ also began drafting an environment law in conjunction with the Environmental Law Institute of Washington, D.C., "with the prospective creation of PEPA [a Palestinian Environmental Protection Authority] in mind." Amra, "The Development of Palestinian Environmental Law." Included among the comprehensive law's realms of concern were "impact assessments, licensing of regulated facilities, water-quality protection, air-quality protection, prevention and abatement of noise pollution, management of hazardous substances...management of solid waste, and management of domestic and municipal sewage." A Palestinian legal advisor to the Ministry of Planning argued that the draft law was "based upon the environmental laws of the United States." The law was eventually discarded because, according to Amra, "it became apparent that the law was much too developed for the realities of Palestine, in particular the absence of effective governmental enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, the discussion of environmental regulations raised concerns about possible impediments to economic development, highlighting the Palestinian commitment to accelerated development, with a minimum of obstacles," Amra 1998, "The Development of Palestinian Environmental Law." And interview with Dr. Isaac Jad in Bethlehem, 16 May 2011.

reference to waste appeared in Article 12 on "The Environment." Article 12's stated goal was "to protect the environment and to utilize natural resources on a sustainable basis." It is worth noting that, nevertheless, waste remained thinkable outside the frame of the environment as well: The environment article isolated out "licensing for...*environmental aspects* of...sewage, solid waste," for example, implicitly accounted for non-environmental aspects of solid waste and sewage in addition to their environmental aspects. But there was little on waste in the Civil Affairs Annex that did not address environmental concerns. Waste's environmental features were now dominant. The term "public health" appeared just once in the Annex and the words "sanitary" and "sanitation" did not appear at all. No references to diseases were connected to waste.²⁰ Article 40 on "Water and Sewage" transferred "powers and responsibilities in the sphere of water and sewage in the West Bank solely to the Palestinians," though it left the question of who owned water- and sewage- related infrastructure for a later date. References to sewage (there were 49, and two to "wastewater") appeared throughout Annex III and were especially frequent in Article 40. Oslo II reaffirmed the relationship between how, when and where sewage flowed and the preservation of "water quality," whose status became one of the central indicators of environmental pollution.

The Authority was established as a cluster of ministries. Solid waste and sewage were shared concerns for several of them, including the Ministry of Local Government,

²⁰ At the negotiations level between the PLO and Israel, solid waste continued to fall under what came to be called the Environment File. Sewage fell under the Water File. The Negotiations Support Unit (NSU) for the Authority, a committee of experts that guides it during ongoing negotiations, is organized along similar lines. The NSU has developed positions on solid waste that have also made it a cross-file set of issues with the Water File. Interviews with David Philips in Ramallah, 23 October and 2 November 2009.

the Water Authority, the Environmental Quality Authority²¹ and the Ministry of Health. A number of new Palestinian laws dealt with waste. These regulated "local authorities in both urban and rural settings, eliminating different legal frameworks between cities and villages."²² The daily management of waste, however, remained in municipal hands—at least during the early years of Authority rule.²³ Local governments were held responsible for "maintenance [and] cleaning...of streets."²⁴ The PA's Local Government law (1997) article on "Cleanliness" stipulated that the council "collect...transport, and dispose of and regulate activities related to garbage from streets, houses and public areas."²⁵ The article on "wastewater" stipulated that the council "establish wastewater services and public toilets and work on the administration and monitoring thereof."²⁶

At first, whether health or the environment were to determine chain of command for waste's proper management was still legally and institutionally opaque. Health was still an organizing principle for ministry-level as well as municipal institutions. In the Public Health Law of 2004, for example, Article 2 determined that "the Ministry of

²¹ Where "authority" rather than "ministry" is used it signals that the agency is one step lower than a ministry. Beginning in 1995, the EQA was first the Environmental Planning Directorate (EPD) within the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. In 1998 it became the Palestinian Environmental Authority (PENA), and later a ministry (the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, or (MEnA). It was eventually "demoted" again to an authority. Interviews with Zaghoul Samhan of the Environmental Quality Authority, 14 April and 20 May 2010 and with independent consultant Khalil Nijim, 12 and 19 April, 2010.

²² Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 8.

²³ Under the Local Authorities Law of 1997, local councils were tasked with issuing "rules or enforcement regulations necessary to regulate the work of the local authority and insure [sic] fulfillment of its interests and needs."

²⁴ Article 15.

²⁵ Article 15, section 8.

²⁶ Article 15, section 4.

Health must perform...(12) licensing [for] institutions that are specialized in garbage collection, treatment and disposal...(16) health supervision over all sewage systems and waste water plants."²⁷ Article 42(1C) stipulated that "the Ministry shall coordinate with the relevant bodies to determine...collection, recycling or reuse of wastewater and rain water." In Article 43 the law stated that it was "forbidden for any individual to use wastewater for fertilization or irrigation of agricultural land, only in accordance with the bases and standards specified by the competent authority."²⁸ Into the 2000s, many Palestinian municipalities still lacked "environment" or "solid waste" departments. While I was in Jenin, garbage collection trucks were organized through the engineering department, anti-littering campaigns were run through the health department and waste management fees were handled through the accounting and electricity offices. Sewage was managed through a separate water and sanitation department.²⁹

As the years passed, however, the Ministry of Local Government and the environment and water authorities increasingly took the lead in designing, implementing and regulating large-scale planning and regulation for waste. Together, these ministries and the laws to which their mandates were oriented gave the environment precedence in identifying problems and solutions in relation to waste. Reem Musleh, one of Palestine's foremost waste experts, thus argues that the Palestinian Environmental Law Number 7

²⁷ Palestinian Legislative Council, Public Health Law, 4.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "The municipality used to have broader powers," Mr. Mahjoob told me in Jenin. "There weren't departments or administrations for the environment, for example. They didn't exist. Those who would take care of that would be just the municipality. The responsible person would be someone who 'filled the chair' (*bi'abi alkursi*) a man who knew how to fulfill his duties (*qayim biwajbo*)." Interview in Jenin on 13 February 2011.

(2000) was "the first law that tackles solid waste directly." By this she means that "this new revolutionary law shows that the government recognizes that the deterioration of the environment has been partially caused by the lack of solid waste management." The law distinguished between solid and hazardous waste and defined collection, transportation, recycling, treatment, and disposal activities for waste management. Whereas "in the past the Ministry of Health (MOH) was responsible for assigning disposal facilities," she continues, under the environment law "solid waste disposal facilities are to be licensed by the MEnA," the Ministry of Environmental Affairs.³⁰ The law posited "that dumpsites are not only a health hazard; they are an environmental hazard as well" and it gave "power to the MEnA, in cooperation with other specialized agencies, to determine standards for solid waste disposal sites." The environment ministry thus became "responsible for designing a master plan for solid waste disposal sites in the West Bank." The law also designated "a special fine for those who litter" and charged municipalities "with responsibility to provide bins for solid waste storage."³¹

Among Palestinians as well as international agencies, the promise of the talks catalyzed extensive knowledge production on the relationship between waste and the environment. Research activities intensified between 1991 and 1993. During the talks, a local Palestinian NGO called the Applied Research institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ)³² began

³⁰ This would later become the Environmental Quality Authority.

³¹ Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 10.

³² ARIJ worked with researchers in Palestinian universities, with the Palestine Hydrology Group (PHG) and with the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees in an "environmental technical committee" that operated through the Orient House between 1991 and 1995. Interviews with Dr. Jad Isaac of ARIJ in Bethlehem, 16 May 2011 and with Ibrahim Dajani of the World Bank in Beit Hanina, 21 July 2010.

documenting the "environmental status" of the Territories, for example. The director, Dr. Jad Isaac, recounted:

We wanted the status of the Palestinian environment to be documented before [transfer]...So that at least the Israeli actions against the environment would be documented by an international body. So in these multilateral talks I asked that there be an environmental profile done for all the Palestinian territories. The Dutch offered to do it...I published the eleven districts, Nablus, etc., including Jerusalem, and I followed this with an environment profile for all the West Bank.

Each Environmental Profile included chapters on Topography and Climate, Socio-Economic Characteristics, Geology, Land Use and Soils, Water Resources, Agriculture, Industry and Historical and Archaeological Sites. In a separate part of each report was a section called "Environmental Concerns." This included subsections on wastewater, solid waste and air and noise pollution. Palestinian specialists with degrees in relatively new knowledge forms such as remote sensing, environmental engineering, environmental policy and geographic information systems (GIS), in addition to the more traditional earth sciences (such as biology, chemistry, hydrogeology, soil and irrigation) worked on the project. The report evaluated "[s]olid waste collection services" and "sewage disposal facilities," arguing that "solid waste is threatening the nature, water resources and public health." It stated that greater attention had been brought to the question of solid waste "on a national and regional scale" for the "protection of public health and avoidance of waste to keep the environment as clean as possible," for the "reduction of gas emissions resulting from burning of wastes to reduce air pollution," for the "protection of groundwater," and for the "necessity to plan for future trends and waste arising from the

general increase in volume production of waste in urban areas and the changing composition over time."³³ Comparing Palestine with a broader international arena in which "solid waste" and "the environment" interacted to multiple effects, ARIJ also wrote that "solid waste management" was "one of the most important environmental issues in developing countries in terms of environmental significance, finances and public awareness."³⁴ Previewing Annex III's link between wastewater and sewage, one of the dangers ARIJ outlined was the possible effect of solid waste on water supply.³⁵

The environment became an increasingly important object of research in Palestinian universities across the territories, frequently with an interest in water protection. At the Islamic University of Gaza the Civil Engineering Department was established in 1992-1993. It offered integrated courses and conducted research on "problems of construction, infrastructures, environment, water and structures"³⁶ and by 2001 its courses included environmental engineering.³⁷ Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron established a Renewable Energy and Environment Research Unit in 1999 "as a core research basis in energy and environmental protection." The Arab American

³³ ARIJ, "Environmental Profile for the West Bank Volume 7: Jenin District," 92.

³⁴ Ibid., 93.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Islamic University of Gaza, Civil Engineering website: http://eng.iugaza.edu.ps/en/Department.aspx?Dep_ID=1&&Page_ID=56 (accessed 19 March 2013).

³⁷ Under Environmental Engineering were the following subjects: "Water quantity, definitions, characteristics and perspectives, water *purification* process in natural systems, engineered systems for water *purification*, water scarcity and *quality* deterioration in Gaza. *Wastewater* introduction, primary and secondary treatment, *wastewater* disposal and reuse and *wastewater* management in Gaza. *Solid waste*: introduction, solid waste management in Gaza." and "Sanitary Engineering." Under Sanitary Engineering were the following subjects: "Demographic Analysis, Sewage Qualities, Storm water qualities, Sewer hydraulics, Sewage systems, Storm water drainage systems, non-uniform flow profiles, Pumps and pumping stations, *sewage* treatment, *sewage* treatment plant design [my emphasis]."

University of Jenin, established in 2000, has offered a BSc. degree in Environmental and Community Health since its inception.³⁸ The Unit, which was established by the Chemistry Department, has kept "an ongoing database on the water quality of the West Bank and Gaza."³⁹ An-Najah's Water and Environmental Studies Center in Nablus was upgraded to an Institute (WESI) in 2001. Birzeit's Institute of Environmental and Water Studies (IEWS) was established in September of 2007, replacing the Water Studies Institute which was established in 2001.⁴⁰

A number of international aid agencies and consultants also produced reports in the early 1990s to assess the Territories' infrastructural and environmental status during the period of transition. Among them was the World Bank's 1993 publication entitled Developing the Occupied Territories: An Investment in Peace. Its fifth volume, "Infrastructure," evaluated solid waste, environment and natural resources, water supply and sanitation.⁴¹ Another was a report produced by Adrian Coad, UK-trained public health engineer specializing in water supply and solid waste management.⁴² The report, entitled "An Evaluation of the Current Status of Solid Waste

³⁸ Topics covered in this department, which is housed in the Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences, include "water, *sanitation*, *solid waste*, noise, food, vector and rodent control, occupational health, housing, urban health as well as global environmental issues [my emphasis]." As described on Jenin's university website: <http://www.aauj.edu/facultyDept/6.html/28/0/> (accessed 19 March 2013).

³⁹ As described on the Bethlehem University website: <http://www.bethlehem.edu/institutes/WSERU> (accessed 19 March 2013).

⁴⁰ The goal was "to offer and contribute to the capacity building of the Palestinian water and environmental sectors by providing knowledge, advisory services, graduate education (Master level), research and continuous education through short-term training in water and environment related issues." As described on the IEWS website: http://www.birzeit.edu/institutes/water_std/ (accessed 19 March 2013).

⁴¹ My thanks to Ibrahim Dajani at the World Bank for helping me locate this document.

⁴² Coad had previously worked on similar projects across Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Management in Palestine" (1997), was commissioned by the Authority's Environmental Planning Directorate in the Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation.⁴³ Along with ARIJ's environmental profiles, these two reports have provided much of the background data upon which the Authority's waste reforms have been built.

International aid agencies have funded most of the Authority's waste management reforms. Though the reasons behind why they have done so lie outside the scope of this dissertation, it is noteworthy that these agencies also presupposed the environmentally polluting nature of municipal waste. They frequently make funding conditional on the construction of particular infrastructures. They make it contingent on the establishment of specific cost recovery systems, for instance those designed to encourage "citizen accountability" and "environmental awareness," and on specific collection and disposal systems as a result. In the mid-1990s Germany planned to build an industrial zone at the northernmost tip of the Jenin governorate,⁴⁴ for example. Construction of a nearby landfill and wastewater treatment plant were conditions for the project's implementation.⁴⁵ This dovetailed with the Authority's plans to construct regional sanitary landfills, one of which was then slated for Jenin. Though the industrial zone had yet to be built as of 2014, Zahrat al-Finjan landfill was constructed and began operation in 2007 as the West Bank's first Authority-run sanitary landfill. When the World Bank offered Jenin the loan for Zahrat al-Finjan's construction, furthermore, it did

⁴³ Many thanks to Reem Khalil of the Ramallah JSC for Solid Waste Management for helping me locate the report.

⁴⁴ It was slated for construction in al-Jalamah village.

⁴⁵ Interviews with researcher Dawood Hamoudie at Stop the Wall in Ramallah, 22 August 2010, 8 March 2011.

so on the condition that an "environmentally sound solid waste management system for Jenin district" be put in place. To ensure its directions were followed, one of its four "project development objectives" (PDO) "indicators" was "passage of the Environmental Law."⁴⁶ That World Bank box was successfully ticked in the form of Palestinian Environment law of 2000, mentioned above, seven years before the opening of the landfill itself.

These examples of international "hands" in the regulatory frameworks and daily work of Palestinian waste managers after Oslo are just the tip of a tall international iceberg. In addition to the Authority's accountability to multiple Israeli actors, in other words, the Oslo process also established complex relations of accountability and influence between the Authority and "the international community" when the former planned for, managed and disposed of Palestinian wastes.

Separation / (Re)Integration

Oslo II is perhaps best known for having divided the West Bank into three areas, called Areas A, B and C. Area A is purportedly under both PA civilian and policing authority and comprises 17.7 percent of the West Bank. Area B, in which the Authority has civilian control and the Israeli military has policing control, comprises around 22 percent of the West Bank. The rest of the West Bank, termed Area C, today comprises 61 percent.⁴⁷ Area C includes most Palestinian farmland and lies above most of the West Bank's underground water sources. Most settlements are built in Area C, as are Israeli

⁴⁶ World Bank, "Implementation Completion," 1.

⁴⁷ Until 2000 the size of the areas changed several times but after 2000 the sizes have remained stable. Hass, "UN Report."

military bases, closed military areas and firing ranges, nature preserves and nature parks. 18 percent of the West Bank is also "defined as a closed military area designated for military training."⁴⁸

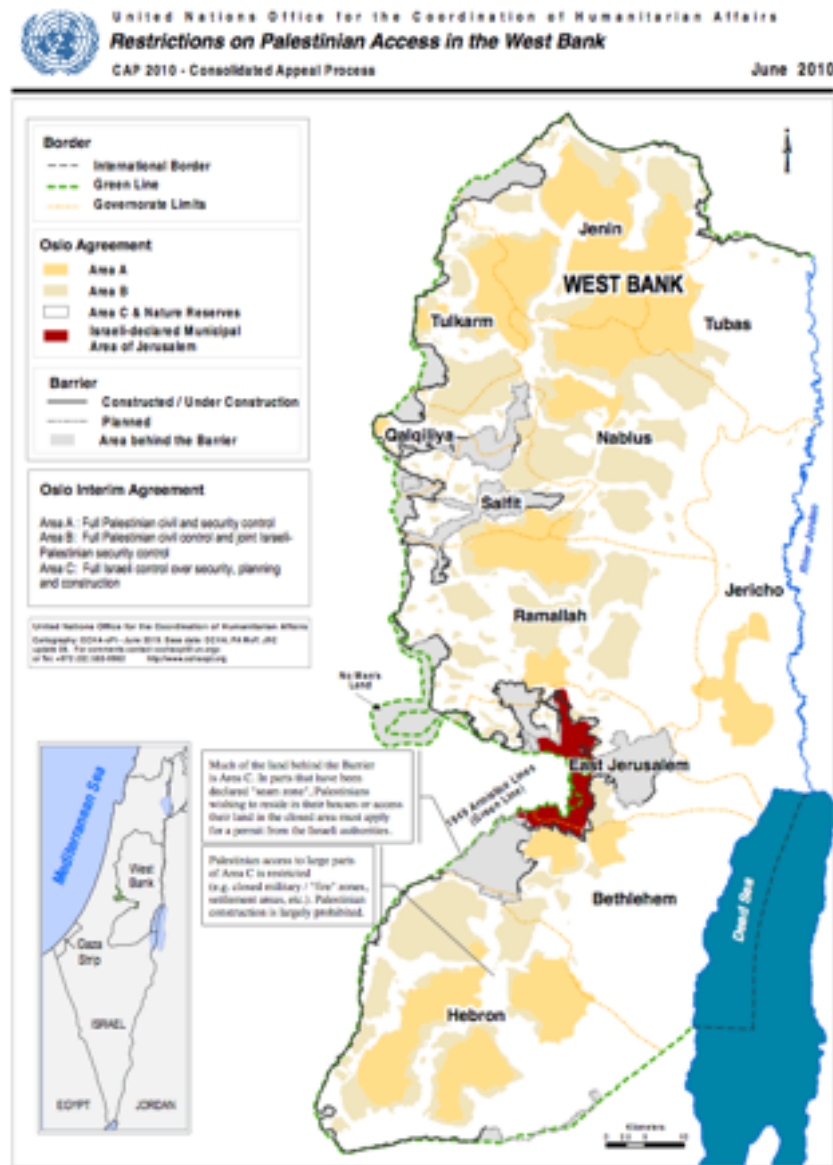


Figure 6. More detailed map showing the basic outlines of the classification of West Bank areas as A, B or C (2010). Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁴⁸ 38 communities, with about 6,200 residents live within Israeli "firing zones." Hass, "UN Report."

When the Accords were signed, roughly 1.6 million Palestinians lived in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and another 1 million lived in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority thus became responsible for governing around 2.5 million Palestinians living on a number of scattered, non-contiguous pieces of land. In recent years the result of these divisions in the West Bank has been termed "bantustanization." The fragmentation of the West Bank into "bantustans," or enclaves, in which the Authority had only partial authority has received the lion's share of attention among Palestine scholars interested in Oslo's spatial reorganizations. Eyal Weizman writes, for instance, that "[n]ew and intricate frontiers were invented, like the temporary borders later drawn up in the Oslo Interim Accord, under which the Palestinian Authority was given control over isolated territorial 'islands', but Israel retained control over the airspace above them and the sub-terrain beneath."⁴⁹ Critics who use the term "bantustanization" spotlight the fact that areas under (still limited) Authority control total less than a quarter of the territory and lack contiguity because settlements, closed military zones, nature reserves and other parts of Area C (e.g. all main roads between cities and villages) divide them from one another.⁵⁰

Critics who call the post-Oslo governing regime a form of apartheid cite the fact that the creation of Areas A, B and C was accompanied by the rapid enclosure of the West Bank and its separation from Israel. Separation began with an increasingly stringent permit system in the 1990s, which now prohibits most West Bank Palestinians from

⁴⁹ Weizman, "Introduction to the Politics of Verticality."

⁵⁰ See also Omar Tesdell's ongoing work on nature reserves.

entering Israel or Jerusalem. It has been entrenched through checkpoints, roadblocks, the establishment of separate roads for Israeli citizens and West Bank ID-holders and the construction of the Separation (or Apartheid) Wall.⁵¹ But the experience of separation has been largely one-sided. The word “separation” is therefore inadequate for describing the “net” spatial setup of the West Bank post-Oslo. The new regime prevents Palestinians from traveling outside the West Bank, into Israel (or Jordan) and into settlements. At the same time, it enables the growth of Jewish-only Israeli settlements—including universities, shopping malls and tourist sites—within the West Bank. Israelis thus move more freely and frequently than ever before among Jewish enclaves within the West Bank and between the West Bank and Israel. West Bank Palestinians, by contrast, have been rendered increasingly immobile within their resident enclaves.

The effects of fragmentation and segregation on the governance of waste have been multiple. One of them is that Palestinian-owned and Palestinian-cultivated lands in the West Bank have come to be used as dumping grounds for industries and businesses within Israel and by Israeli West Bank settlements. Images of the Israeli settlements—usually situated atop the West Bank hills and mountains—whose sewage often spills down into the valleys below, circulate widely, as do images of Israeli industrial dumping

⁵¹ On how the apartheid road system works, see "Typologies of Segregation," in [Visualizingpalestine.org](http://visualizingpalestine.org) <http://visualizingpalestine.org/infographic/seggregated-roads-west-bank>; Cook, "USAID Funding," B'Tselem, "The Forbidden Road Regime," Shabi, "Israel's Apartheid Road," Frykberg, "US Funds Apartheid," McGreal, "Israel Accused."

on private Palestinian lands.⁵² They circulate in the local Palestinian media and have been well-documented by Israeli non-governmental organizations like B'Tselem, Bimkom and by international organizations such as Amnesty and Friends of the Earth Middle East. A sense of what these practices of dumping look like, and how they are experienced by the Palestinians whose lands are dumped upon, can be gained from a day trip to Shuqba.



Figure 7. Discards beside Shuqba's roads and in Shuqba's valleys. Photos by the author, July 2012.



⁵² Deutsch writes that Ariel settlement, for example, “does not inform the Salfit Council (in Palestine) of wastewater overflows from the settlement's treatment plant heading in the direction of Salfit. Ariel's wastewater has already damaged seasonal crops and livestock that used to live in the area where Salfit's residents used to hike before it became polluted. Water contamination has brought about the extinction of the deer, rabbits and foxes once common in the area.” Deutsch, “JNF Greenwash,” 32. Nihadeh Sawalha said of her experience of settlement wastewater in her own village: “Our life has become terrible. We're bothered day and night. The odor is horrible. We can't open the windows because of the smell and the mosquitoes. It's worse in the summer, when it gets hot. We've tried everything but we haven't been able to get rid of the mosquitoes,” quoted in *Ibid.*

Shuqba is a village of about five thousand residents located forty minutes' drive northwest of Ramallah. To Ramallah residents, Shuqba is known as the place where Israeli cars go to die—and be reborn. A car that goes into Shuqba in the morning, it is said, is a scattered heap of unrecognizable pieces by the afternoon. As you drive through Shuqba, car parts – and metal parts of beds, office chairs, refrigerators, piled and placed in visibly demarcated categories – are the major attractions by the side of the road. To others, Shuqba is known as the place where archaeologist Dorothy Garrod found several prehistoric human and Neanderthal skeletons in a cave in 1928. She also found remains from Neanderthal flint-tool making activities: Neanderthal trash. That remains in the cave, where archaeological survey was resumed in 2013 for the first time since the 1920s. In the summer of 2012, I visited the cave before work got started.⁵³

I was invited partly for the prehistoric trash and partly to see the massive waste sites that have proliferated since the West Bank's “separation” from Israel around 2000. In recent years, Israeli trucks have taken to dumping industrial and construction waste in Shuqba's Wadi al-Natuf,⁵⁴ where the cave is located. Sami, the secretary of Shuqba's village council, took me and a few Birzeit University students and faculty through the wadi (valley). Sami was forthright about the fact that it is Palestinian landowners from Shuqba who, in exchange for about 200 shekels per truckload (about \$50), allow drivers to dump waste there. We took a winding route out of the wadi so I could walk through the mounds of broken plastic pipes, rubber hoses, shattered floor tiles, yellow paint buckets,

⁵³ I am indebted to Brian Boyd for introducing me to Shuqba, to the cave, and to its residents.

⁵⁴ Garrod coined the term "Natufian" culture for her late Epipaleolithic finds from this valley.

empty gallons of chemicals, wooden planks filled with crooked nails, desktop computer monitors, broken drawers, mattress innards – all in large quantities, indicating their origins in factories – and hundreds of plastic bags, caked in dust and billowing in the hot summer wind. A gutted, shrub-covered Israeli ambulance crowned the pile.

Dumping occurs in parts of the village designated Area C.⁵⁵ The roads that connect Shuqba to its administrative center in Ramallah are also in Area C. This means that Israel controls the passage of the PA police between the two. Thus when Shuqba's village council asked the Palestinian police to come from Ramallah to arrest the Shuqba landowners who were profiting from the dumping, the police car was unable to arrive in time to arrest the suspects; the PA police needed Israeli permission to traverse the connecting roads. "They might receive a permit for the next day, the next week or the next month," Mr. al-Masri, the head of Shuqba's council, told me. "And they are only allowed to come between certain times. For example from 6am until 10am on the given day. If they get a permit. So of course the person doing the dumping has had the chance to flee by the time [the police] get there, and they can't make any arrests."

When we reached the road from our trip into Shuqba's valley of trash, three students were waiting in the car with a bottle of processed Israeli grapefruit juice. We each got a disposable plastic cup. The cups were the kind that is so soft you have to hold it very gently to make sure you don't spill its contents. Sami took shotgun. As we drove back toward the village center, he rolled down his window. He let his empty juice cup

⁵⁵ As of 2013 there were 297,000 Palestinians living in Area C in 532 residential areas under total Israeli control. 67,016 of those Palestinians live in communities that fall entirely within Area C. The other 291 communities are partially in Area C and partially in Areas A and/or B. Hass, "UN Report."

flew out. The side of the road consumed it. I laughed and told him that now he owed me another interview, this time about littering in Shuqba. "You know," he said, "I didn't want to throw it away like that, *wallah* (I swear)." "So your hand did it against your will?" I smiled. He replied, "Well actually I thought about it *a lot* before I threw it. I was like 'should I throw it or shouldn't I?' But finally I did."

Though Sami's comment rightly mocked my interest in what was clearly a tiny issue (his tiny cup) in the face of much bigger problems like industrial (perhaps toxic), dumping, for the engineers, bureaucrats and experts who worked in the Authority ministries to whom the council wrote letters asking for help, taking care of the West Bank's waste had developed a weight of existential proportions.⁵⁶ First there was the issue of survival. Recent studies on nitrate concentrations in the West Bank aquifer to test the seepage of sewage had indicated that, without drastic and immediate solutions to the West Bank's waste problems, this arid landscape could soon become even more difficult to inhabit. Second, managers worried about the financial aspect of management – since, for example, only around 30 percent of residents were paying waste service fees while governorates like Ramallah were spending up to \$2.3 million per year to keep things running.

Furthermore, at least since the early 1990s, donors like the World Bank and Palestinian officials had together decided that good infrastructure would make good citizens; that it could produce non-violent subjects compliant with the Oslo-imposed

⁵⁶ Israeli environmental historian Tal writes of Oslo that "Palestinian leaders were left with their daunting list of ecological problems and insufficient international aid to address them." Tal, [Pollution in a Promised Land](#), 359.

regime. It was in this spirit that the World Bank's 1993 report, on which much of the Authority's planning for waste reforms was based, was entitled Developing the Occupied Territories: *An Investment in Peace* (my emphasis). This sociological presupposition had led to major investments in sanitary landfills, sewage networks and treatment plants, roads and telecommunications facilities, especially in what were deemed "poverty pockets" (e.g. Jenin and Hebron), places that also happened to be associated with armed groups that were neither under total Israeli nor Palestinian Authority control.

But waste was also a (dirty) matter of recognition. Despite its fragmented, crippled ability to govern, the Authority was accountable to Israel, to foreign donors and to local Palestinians when demonstrating its environmental "friendliness" vis-à-vis waste. It is perhaps the level of Israeli and international recognition that best resembles my fleeting moment with Sami in Shuqba. Palestinian waste managers were painfully aware that Israeli and international eyes were upon them, waiting to see whether the infrastructures they were trying to build were "environmentally sustainable," "ecologically friendly" – waiting to see if they measured up. All blueprints of waste infrastructures they designed, for example, were evaluated in "Environmental Impact Assessment" reports, usually written in full or in large part by foreign consultants. Assessments were evaluated by Israeli military officers and Israeli ministry bureaucrats as well, I discovered, as by Israeli settler, environmental experts and non-governmental organizations based across the Green Line. Palestinian waste managers were expected to show, in the words of one Israeli settler environmentalist, that the proposed infrastructure will "not [be] affecting water, settlements, or the Israeli side." It was usual to hear

Palestinian waste managers comment – some amusedly, others lamentingly – that "we are all in the same boat," or "we drink from the same bowl." The sense that what we do "in here" has repercussions "out there" for the environment was always palpable—as was the sense that if our measurements toward environmental sustainability measure up, we will be that much closer to being recognized as a state.

"Our Shared Environment"

While justified, the scholarly tendency to focus on fragmentation and separation has thus inadvertently elided another spatial dynamic that was put in place by the Accords. This dynamic was partly at odds both with fragmentation and segregation. Importantly, it was also key to the system of environmental scrutiny I describe above. That was the production of what, locally, some came to call the "shared environment"⁵⁷ in the West Bank.⁵⁸ In the past several years the expression has been used to describe the geographical space in which the Authority has allowed pollution to occur. In 2009, for example, Israeli Army Radio issued a special report on West Bank sewage. It reported that Israeli "Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau has threatened to restrict the supply of water to the Palestinian Authority if no sewage purification plants are installed there. He said, 'They get clean water from us, and in return they give us sewage. This destroys nature, and I would say that this is the way that wicked people behave.'" The Jerusalem Post also reported on Landau's statements: "Landau says he is 'infuriated' over pollution

⁵⁷ Twite and Isaac, Our Shared Environment.

⁵⁸ The term seems to have been coined by Dr. Jad Isaac (the director of ARIJ), and by Robin Twite, a British educator and administrator who was in the midst of establishing a Department of Environment at the Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) in 1994. The two coedited a volume entitled Our Shared Environment: Israelis and Palestinians Thinking Together about the Environment of the Region in Which they Live (1994).

of the 'shared environment.' 'It is infuriating that we give the Palestinians fresh water and yet they do not adequately treat their sewage and instead pollute our shared environment.'"

Like the notion that waste is an environmental pollutant, the spatial implications of a "shared environment" can be traced back to Oslo's environment article 12—which served as the blueprint for how Palestinian waste would be regulated over the following nineteen years. Article 12 not only made the Authority responsible for Palestinian wastes and codified waste as an environmental pollutant; it also ensured that the actions the Authority took (or didn't take) to protect the "West Bank environment" from Palestinian wastes would be oriented to meet particular standards for doing so. According to the article, the standards with which both the Authority and Israel were required to comply were, quite vaguely, "internationally recognized standards concerning...acceptable levels of treatment of solid and liquid wastes."⁵⁹ Similarly and without reference to the *authors* of propriety, the article presented its purpose as the promotion of "the *proper* treatment of domestic and industrial wastewater, as well as solid and hazardous wastes." Yet neither "appropriate measures" nor "proper" were defined in the agreement.

Instead they were substituted for the enforcement mechanisms put in place to maintain "compliance." Those mechanisms set two processes in motion: One, that whenever the Authority attempted to construct, rehabilitate or alter any medium- to large-scale infrastructural project relating to waste (and therefore to the environment), that

⁵⁹ It continues: "both sides shall respectively adopt, apply and ensure compliance with internationally recognized standards concerning...and agreed ways and means for disposal of such wastes...storage of hazardous substances and wastes."

project had to pass through a complex vetting system over which the Israeli military and central government had primary control, as I describe above. And two, that the Israeli military and central government—and, as I discovered, increasingly other Israeli actors as well—had the power to determine what constituted negligence when it came to Palestinian approaches to waste. Article 40’s egalitarian-sounding statement that "each side shall take the necessary and appropriate measures to prevent the uncontrolled discharge of wastewater and/or effluents to water sources, water systems and water bodies" thus elided the fact that the sovereign ability to evaluate “appropriate measures” resided with Israel. What constituted the "*uncontrolled* discharge of wastewater and/or effluents" was left to Israel's discretion. Similarly, any waste *infrastructures* relating to water (or wastewater) required additional Israeli vetting. All major sewage-related infrastructural projects in the Territories require approval *both* by the administration and by the Joint Water Committee (JWC), moreover. The JWC is made up of an equal number of Israeli and of Palestinian representatives and works by consensus. In practice, however, the Israelis exercise veto power on the committee.⁶⁰ Notably, Israeli projects in the West Bank, in Gaza and in Israel are spared evaluation by the committee.

Upon its establishment and promised funding by a number of international agencies, the Authority began to submit proposals for the construction and rehabilitation

⁶⁰ See Selby, “Dressing up Domination” and “Cooperation, Domination,” Trottier, “A Wall, Water and Power,” Tagar et al., “Sleeping Timebomb,” B’Tselem, “Foul Play,” Amnesty International, “Troubled Waters,” World Bank, “Assessment of Restrictions,” UNEP, “Desk Study on the Environment.” Although the 1995 Accord “transferred responsibility for the water sector to the Palestinian Authority,” writes Weizman, “in practice, the scope of Israeli control of this sector did not change. A Joint Water Committee (JWC) was set up to oversee and approve every new water and sewage project in the West Bank. The Committee was comprised, in equal number, of representatives of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority. All its decisions are made by consensus. No mechanism is established to settle disputes where a consensus cannot be attained.” As a result, “Israel can veto any request by the Palestinian representatives to drill a new well, or to obtain the additions stipulated in the water agreement.” Weizman, “From Water to Shit.”

of wastewater treatment plants across the West Bank and Gaza. Among them were proposals for two new sewage treatment plants in Jenin. In 1996 the population of Jenin district was estimated at around 184,735.⁶¹ About 40 percent, over 70,000 people, lived in urban and semi-urban areas.⁶² This meant the people in those areas lived in close quarters. The 8,000 Jenin refugee camp residents experienced the most extreme compression. It also meant that there was much less land available for dumping garbage at a distance from homes there, and much less permeable soil available for the safe "land treatment" of sewage without a sewage treatment plant. Land treatment pumps untreated wastewater into carefully selected land plots and the percolation of the wastewater through the land's layers treats it naturally, by separating solids from liquids. According to a survey carried out by ARIJ in 1996, 87 percent of the total population of the Jenin district were not connected to a sewage network.⁶³ However, about 61 percent of the total population had access to piped water and 51.9 percent had their own wells. They were therefore *producing* wastewater like everyone else. Only 33 percent of the communities in the Jenin district was disposing of their solid waste in local and public dumps, furthermore, while 67 percent were dumping their solid waste "randomly" or burning it in the spaces between houses.⁶⁴ As a result, in Jenin as across the West Bank, the sewage from homes and industries flowed freely into valleys. Due to the topography of the

⁶¹ This represented 11% of the total population of the West Bank. ARIJ, "Environmental Profile," 24.

⁶² The number of people living in rural areas was around 113,992. This represented 61.7% of the total population of the Jenin district. About 11,620 people lived in Jenin camp while 50,937 and 8,186 persons lived in urban and semi-urban areas. Ibid.

⁶³ ARIJ, "Environmental Profile," 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

region, some of it flowed across the Green Line, into Israel. Smoke from burning garbage wafted toward nearby Israeli settlements and across the Green Line. Accusations and threats against the Authority—like those of infrastructure minister Landau above—proliferated from Israeli officials, settlers and journalists.

Meters from the Green Line, on the Israeli side of the Wall in the town of Gilboa, meanwhile, Israel built a wastewater treatment plant to "catch" the effluent flowing in from Jenin. There, Jenin's wastewater has been treated in a plant operated by Israeli technicians since around 2000.⁶⁵ Treated wastewater is sold or gifted to Israeli farmers in the area. Israel constructed another four plants to treat sewage flowing out of the West Bank at four other "border" locations.⁶⁶ All five were built bordering the Israeli side of the Green Line or the Wall (whichever is further west): The Yad Hanna plant in Emek Hefer (Israel) borders the Palestinian city of Tulkarem. The Drom Hasharon plant borders Qalqilya. The Shoket plant borders Hebron. And the Hagihon plant borders Bir Nabala, Al-Ram, and Al-'Azzariyah. By 2010 over a third of the annual collected urban wastewater from Palestinian communities was being treated in these five Israeli plants.⁶⁷

In all five cases Israel has deducted funds for the construction and operation of the plants from the Palestinian Ministry of Finance through a tax collection system known as

⁶⁵ The presence of a treatment plant on the Israeli side of the Green Line may, it can be surmised, have made the construction of plants on the Palestinian side redundant – at least as far as an Israeli interest in clean water for irrigation was concerned. However, for anyone concerned about the contamination of groundwater inside the West Bank, which eventually flows into an aquifer that is “shared” underground by Israel and the West Bank, plants to treat the effluent on the West Bank side were equally imperative.

⁶⁶ Palestinian Water Authority, “Status of Wastewater Treatment Projects.” See also Levental, “Independent Wastewater Management.”

⁶⁷ Palestinian Water Authority, “Status of Wastewater Treatment Projects,” 4.

the VAT (value added tax). This is money normally collected and held by Israel on the PA's behalf. An internal Palestinian Water Authority (2010) document stated that between 1996 and 2010, over 170 million NIS (\$49.57 million) were "deducted by Israel from Palestinian tax revenues for the construction of wastewater treatment plants and [operation and management] costs for infrastructure located inside Israel to treat wastewater originating from the West Bank." Between 2002 and at least 2010, deductions occurred "without any prior authorization from the PNA."⁶⁸

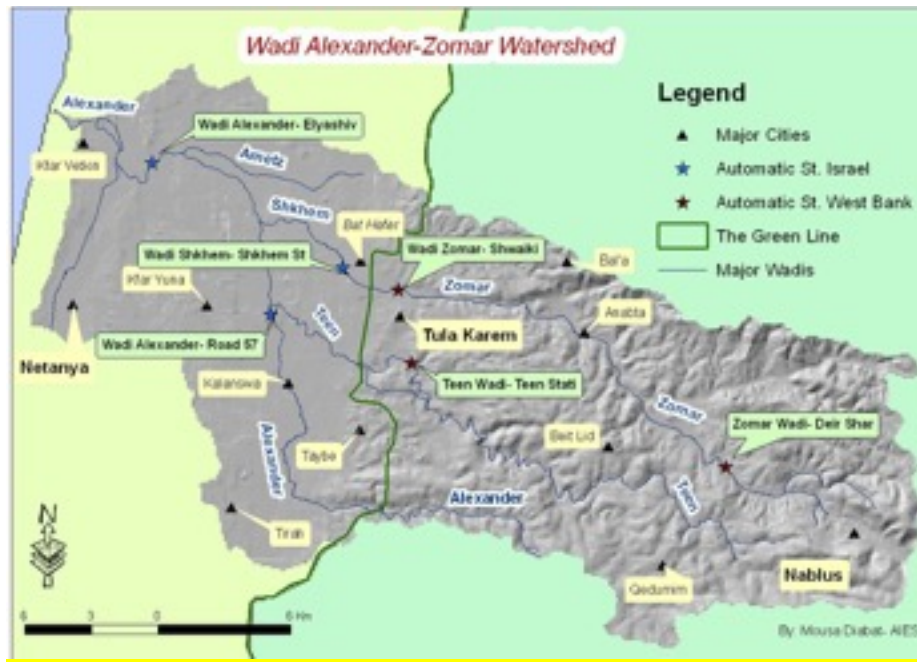


Figure 8. Map of the watershed connecting Tulkarem (West Bank, in green) and the Emek Hefer area (Israel, in yellow). This is one of five such areas where Israel built and now operates wastewater treatment plants on the western side of the Green Line in order to collect and reuse sewage from Palestinian communities on the West Bank side. Sewage flows from the West Bank into Israel by the force of gravity. It would not do so, however, were Israel to permit construction of sewage networks and treatment plants on the West Bank side of the Wall and Green Line.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Palestinian Water Authority, "Status of Wastewater Treatment Projects," 5.

⁶⁹ This image is from a slide by Iyad Aburdeineh (from Friends of the Earth Middle East). Aburdeineh gave a talk on a panel I organized, called "The Social Circulation of Sewage," at the al-Quds/Bard Battir International Summer Program, held at Muwatin in Ramallah, 9 August 2010.

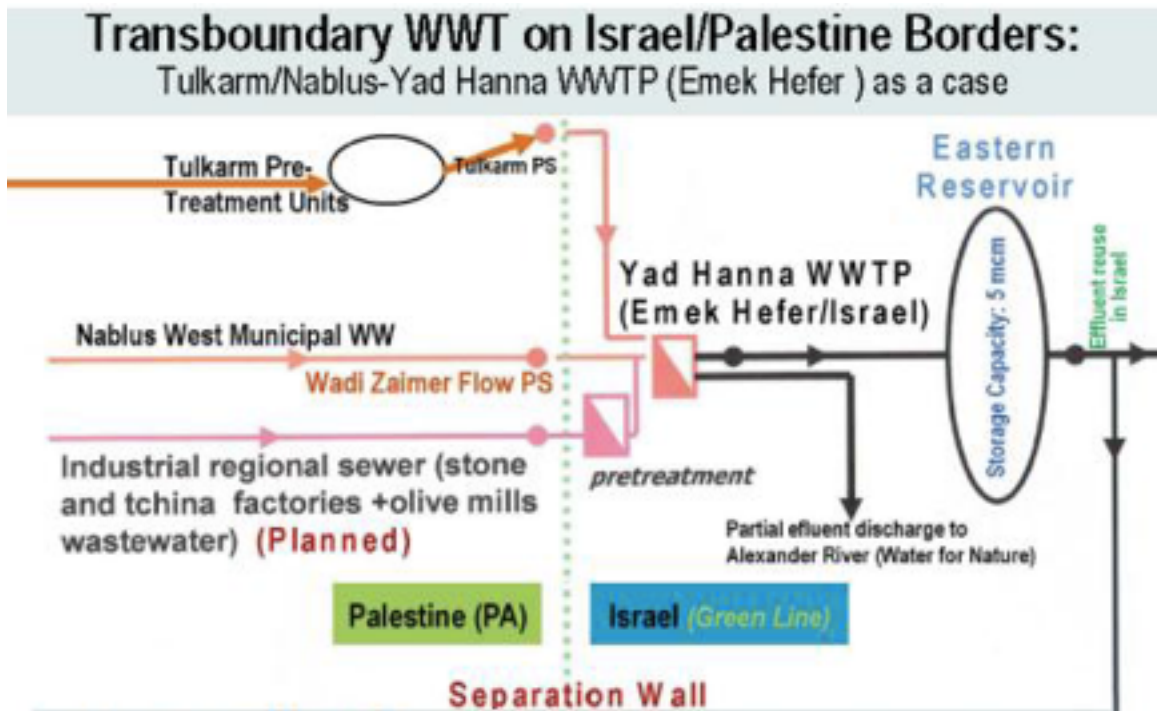


Figure 9. The flows of “transboundary” sewage treatment from Tulkarem in the West Bank into Israel at the Yad Hanna treatment facility in Emek Hefer.⁷⁰

According to those with whom I spent time in the Authority, Israel has cited "the polluter pays principle" to justify its having charged the Authority for the running of the plants. In Israel this principle came into use in environment-related litigation in the 1990s, though "the majority [of cases] were directed at small polluters and litterbugs, whereas larger factories managed to keep regulators at bay."⁷¹ It is remarkable that the polluter pays principle was cited *at all* vis-à-vis the PA given the fact that Israel could have deducted the money from the Authority—as it does in other cases

⁷⁰ This diagram was originally produced by Rashed Al-Sa'ed (2010) and was cited in “Interdependent Wastewater Management Between Israel and Palestine: The Case of the Tulkarem-Emek Hefer Region,” thesis submitted by Simcha Leventi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University, May 2011, p. 27.

⁷¹ Tal, *Pollution in a Promised Land*, 413.

—without justification. Most importantly for this chapter, though, for the Palestinian managers with whom I worked, Israel’s mobilization of the polluter pays principle did a certain kind of *work*. References to environmental pollution had a non-negotiable, almost magical quality to them. Their power resided in their ability to reduce the frame of discussion to a very specific version of environmental pollution—and to keep it there. The repeated invocation of the polluter pays principle serves as a diagnostic for the hegemonic reach of environmentalist discourses of accountability around waste post-Oslo.

PA employees could be frequently heard proclaiming, "We *want* to pay" for sewage pollution, "*of course* we want to pay," arguing only that "we want the system to be *fair*." In the words of Shaddad Attili, the Palestinian water minister, when I met him, "Palestinian sewage mixes with settlement sewage.⁷² So we don't know whose is whose when it flows into Israel." Attili had written letters to the Israeli government insisting that the Authority be reimbursed for the *percentage* of sewage that the Palestinians had paid for that had originated in settlements—a percentage that could only be calculated according to what Authority advisors could find out about settlement water *consumption*. "They never respond!" he said, waving a piece of paper in the air. "They send us a monthly bill. This is the invoice system." As with other ministry and municipal bureaucrats with whom I had spoken, it seemed impossible for Dr. Attili *not* to participate in the logic that the polluter should pay, even if this “polluter” was being overcharged.

⁷² Interview with Dr. Attili in his Ramallah office at the Palestinian Water Authority, 31 August 2010.

Dr. Attili's lament that he had not received answers to his letters also underscored a second, related point: While Authority bureaucrats were among the few West Bank Palestinians to continue to have sustained interactions with Israelis who were not soldiers at checkpoints (Dr. Attili offered to put me in touch with Baruch Nagar and Avi Shaliv, his "contacts" in the Israeli water authority), they were nevertheless often in the dark about how, when and why Israeli decisions about Palestinian waste were made. Because my own Israeli contacts were few and I was based in the West Bank, I too experienced difficulties obtaining information about the Israeli plant in Gilboa and the other four plants from all of my Palestinian interlocutors in the relevant authorities. I read this as a parallel to the difficulties they had experienced in obtaining information about (let alone visiting) the plants. Even the bureaucrats whose job it was to communicate directly with Israeli institutions about the "polluter pays" deductions knew little about the details of the arrangement. And that arrangement had been made without Palestinian approval.⁷³ We can read the urgency of Majdi, Tarek and their colleagues to solve the West Bank's sewage crisis partly in this context replete with spatial confusions, unauthorized deductions and the sense that more waste was threatening the environment with each day that passed. Oslo II had reestablished Israel's control over how Palestinians managed their own wastes such that control and responsibility were not under the same roof. But they were also sutured in new ways.

⁷³ One former Authority medical waste expert explained that the Palestinian-funded, Israeli plants "were initiated by the Israelis and without the consent or approval of the Authority. The wastewater treatment plant in Emek Hefer was built without any approval from the Palestinians. Meanwhile Palestinians were applying for wastewater treatment plant approval from the Israelis, but were refused. Suddenly, the Israelis got money from KFW [a German aid agency] and built their own plant." Interview with Taghreed Najjar, UNDP Offices in Ramallah, 17 May 2011.

Colonial Incoherencies: Government as Territory

Oslo's spatial contradictions were constituted by political separation with geographical-environmental overlap, or integration. They were key in shaping how the region's waste managers and others documenting and attempting to regulate its environmental conditions spoke about (and experienced) their work. Some only seemed to see separation: Geographical separation was so tangible a change from the pre-Oslo period as to allow for the conflation of the PA with the geographical territory of the West Bank as a whole. This was visible, for example, in the slippage between use of the term "PA" to describe *institutions* that had partial authority to govern and use of the same term to describe a territorially-bounded geographical entity. This was especially common among the Israeli environmentalists I encountered, including among people familiar with the territorial breakdown of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C and with the fact that the Authority is a set of institutions—ministries, police stations, budgets and mandates—and does not describe a fixed *location*. Slippage took the Green Line as a border between two sovereign states. I frequently heard and read that sewage was flowing "from the Palestinian Authority into Israel," for instance. Israeli newspapers described "the state of the *environment in the Palestinian Authority*." One wrote that: "according to statistics from the Ministry of Infrastructure, the amount of sewage that is treated *in the Palestinian Authority* is five percent, as compared with approximately 70 percent in Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria." Another commented, "an ecological time bomb is ticking beyond the border. The bomb is located *inside the Palestinian Authority*."⁷⁴ He

⁷⁴ Leshem, "The Ecological Disaster."

told of how "in the mid '90s...shrewd entrepreneurs turned *the PA into the unofficial garbage dump* of the State of Israel." To highlight the absurdity of this expression, it would be like saying sewage was flowing "from the U.S. State Department into Mexico." The same slippage became such a problem among American journalists as well that in June 2013 the Library of Congress published the following instructions in its Subject Headings Manual:

Palestinian National Authority...it represents a governmental entity, *not a geographic area* [emphasis mine]. Do not treat this heading as a geographic heading. Do not assign it as a geographic subdivision after topical headings or subdivisions...Since the territories controlled by the Palestinian National Authority do not currently have international recognition as a "country," nor an internationally recognized name, use the headings West Bank and/or Gaza Strip, as appropriate, to refer to these geographic areas. If a work is limited in scope to those parts of the West Bank or Gaza Strip under Palestinian control, this may be brought out by assigning Palestinian National Authority as an additional heading, in accordance with the guidelines above.⁷⁵

An Israeli settler I interviewed described the Authority as a "country." We were driving through al-'Azzariyeh, a Palestinian city south of Ramallah. As in Shuqba, both sides of the road were lined with used objects—(settler) garbage for sale. Dust swirled off stone-cutting work along sloping sidewalks. Chemical mists sprayed out of car repair shops. Through the thick grey particle-filled air the charred iron dumpsters, plastic bags billowing off metal poles and piles of rotten fruit rinds in this city I had passed dozens of times before were amplified by their (new, for me) contrast with the sanitized settlement of Maale Adumim from which we had just come. Avi noticed me staring. "You see all the

⁷⁵ "Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Palestine," H-980, Subject Headings Manual, June 2013, p. 3; <http://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeSHM/H0980.pdf>

garbage?" he asked. "You see the enormous difference between Israel and the Palestinian Authority? It's a third world country!" The fact that a highly educated Israeli (he held a PhD in Geography) living and working inside the West Bank could maintain that the Authority was a geographical *place* underscores the extent to which this perception had become entrenched in the imagination of Israelis of all political persuasions and involvements—including those involved in undermining the autonomy of the very Authority institutions whose autonomy they proclaimed.

Because my fieldwork was primarily among Palestinians, I was even more interested to find that they, too, participated in the circulation of this language—though in a slightly different form. By way of concluding I return now to the sewage story with which I began this chapter. I briefly examine what it meant for Palestine's waste managers to visit "their wastewater" in their "neighbors'" backyard. In his essay on the split sovereign manifest in the architecture of the King Hussein bridge, Eyal Weizman suggests that Authority employees have become "disciplined" subjects (per Foucault) of Israeli occupation. He argues, implicitly, that the occupation has ceased to discipline the rest of the occupied population directly.⁷⁶ Like Gordon's argument about the pre-Oslo period (Chapter 1), Weizman's thereby suggests that the *interiorities* of people like Tarek and Majdi are transformed by their daily interactions with Israelis. However, I think the meeting offers a window onto another approach worth considering.

Lisa Wedeen's work on Syria can be productive here. In Hafez al-Asad's Syria, she argues, Syrians dissimulated love for Asad. They spoke and behaved as if

⁷⁶ Weizman, "Seeing Through Walls."

unconditionally devoted to him.⁷⁷ This sustained compliance with Asad's authority. Meanwhile, individuals' critical interiority was preserved. The problem of course is that it is hard to know what is housed within that critical interiority if all one has is observable speech and comportment. Who is to say that Majdi and Tarek's statements in the car were more sincere than were their silence (in Tarek's case) and speech (in Majdi's case) at the meeting itself? Why pin claims about critical interiority on certain moments of speech but not on others? Why assume criticality to be housed in an "interiority" in the first place?⁷⁸

What I found most interesting about the meeting in Baqa were two things: That, as in the case for Syrians under Asad's regime, Majdi seemed to have felt called upon to prove the sincerity of his commitment to the project *in the terms laid out by Baqa's mayor*. And that the meeting seemed to demand a performance of *two logically opposing interiorities*: one that did "see" borders and one that did not. Read through Wedeen's frame, Majdi publicly dissimulated belief in the value of cross-boundary cooperation, belief in the existence of two distinct national-territorial sides and by association, belief in Authority sovereignty in the West Bank. This patently contradicted claims Tarek and Majdi had made privately to me and to each other in the car.

But Majdi's speech also contained contradictions internal to it. On the one hand, he attested to his willingness to "take lessons from nature," as he put it. This entailed

⁷⁷ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*. Mathews goes further to say that there are dissimulations specific to participation in modern bureaucracies: He writes, "Forestry officials in Mexico must act as if they believed the content of the documents that are their daily companions, but they are haunted by the sense that these documents are lies that may conceal a hidden pitfall that will cost them their jobs." Matthews, *Instituting Nature*. 17 "[K]nowledge," he writes is "practice and performance" (14).

⁷⁸ Matthews also argues against the idea that "official discourses are uniformly internalized by government officials." Ibid. 15. "Overemphasizing the power of official discourse pays too little attention to the daily practice of politics within and outside state institutions, to the informal networks of patronage by which officials, politicians, and ordinary people seek to appropriate or modify the power of the state." Ibid.

speaking as if he had gone through the mental exercise of suspending his "recognition" of the Green Line as an international border between two states. It entailed thinking "like the environment": like the aquifer that straddled it from below and like the sewage that flowed across it. On the other hand, he also professed a willingness to work with what he called "our neighbors on the other side," thereby recognizing the border quite clearly. Both statements (the willingness to learn from nature and to work across borders) were, furthermore, obvious repetitions of what the mayor had said—which was also incoherent.

Webb Keane argues that "sincere speech is that which is compelled by nothing that might lie 'outside' the speaker."⁷⁹ While Keane's argument is intuitively compelling, the Baqa story also suggests that alternative versions of sincerity were engendered in the context of the spatio-political confusion to which Oslo's waste-environment nexus had lent itself. At the meeting, sincere speech seemed to rely on being able to house opposing logics within a single, publicly performed interiority. Neither one of these interiorities could, on its own, constitute (or be thought to produce?) the kind of sincere speech that seemed likely to satisfy the mayor—or, more importantly, to encapsulate the West Bank's post-Oslo spatial contradiction. If one only "saw" the Green Line as a border, one might by the same logic insist on the Palestinian national interest within one's own (West Bank) borders. One might therefore be indifferent about the sewage flowing across them. From some versions of a Zionist perspective, *not* "seeing" the Green Line as a border could lead to misplaced claims (especially by West Bank Palestinians) on rights to territory

⁷⁹ Keane, Christian Moderns, 214.

within Israel. The meeting-as-examination of sincerity⁸⁰ thus made a strange kind of room for logical fragmentation within a single speaker.

But also, contra Keane, the meeting/examination seemed to make room for—even to demand—two influences that lay *outside* the speaker. One of Majdi's statements affirmed his ability to think like nonhuman materials such as soil, aquifers and sewage. These nonhuman materials lay outside him not only because they were distinct from his body. But also because they were useful objects of imitation, sources of "learning," since they did not think "like humans." They did not think, in other words, according to the interests of a particular human (national or political) group. This same statement affirmed a second external influence: Baqa's mayor. Majdi's professions about wanting to "learn from nature" and to work with his "neighbors" "on the other side" were manifest duplications of what the mayor had just stated. Avowing that his thought had been influenced by something that Keane would call "'outside' the speaker," then, seemed to work as a form of temporary proof that Majdi—as a representative of the Authority—could be a sincere partner for this project.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Much about the Baqa meeting indeed lends itself to a parallel with the three primary techniques of control characteristic of discipline as defined by Foucault: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 170. Revisiting the words of welcome exchanged by the three men, we can say that a process normalization, for example, seemed to encourage speaking of the project favorably. But it also favored speaking of the project as an abstract good divorced from "national" or "political" interests and valued instead for its usefulness in fixing "physical problems." The mayor's curt response to the Japanese consul, who accidentally framed it in political terms, is a case in point. Majdi's repetition of the mayor's language, in contradiction with statements Majdi had made before the meeting, seems to be a further indication that, like any examination, the meeting was not just an expression of a particular norm. Rather it was an event in which forms of speech and comportment were *normalized*.

⁸¹ In a Scheps seminar on part of this paper, Audra Simpson framed this as what she called a performance of sympathy and care about the environment, to the Authority's neighbors and occupiers—as well as to the international donor community. These were indices of civilizational value and worth. I thank you for that insight.

Seeing/Ignoring Borders: A New Lingua Franca?

It is important to note that these discursive incoherencies did not only emerge in the presence of Israelis, though they certainly seemed to facilitate smoother interactions with them.⁸² Earlier that day, Majdi, Tarek and I had also visited the town of Barta'a, which was, like Baqa, split in two in 1948. Another "cross boundary" sewage project was in its planning stage there. Barta'a al-Sharqieh's Palestinian mayor (with whom Tarek had spent two years in an Israeli prison in the early 1990s) had hosted us and the UNDP and Japanese representatives alone. No Israelis were present. By contrast with the English-dominated Baqa meeting, the Barta'a meeting had been conducted mainly in Arabic with sporadic English translations for some of the UNDP staff.

It had begun with the mayor, Ghassan Mahmoud, offering his condolences to the Japanese consul for the earthquake that had just devastated Japan. Majdi, less comfortable in English than Tarek, was vocal this time. Toward the end of the meeting Majdi took the floor to make a statement, almost out of the blue, about Palestinians and Israelis as "neighbors" across "two sides" of a line. He addressed his statement to the donor representatives: "We are trying to improve the relationship between the two parties," he said. "We're in conflict with our neighbors here and we think this sewage project can help." His assertion both echoed and followed a similar comment by Barta'a's mayor: "This is a peace project...a project of trust and peace between the two peoples...We as Palestinians believe in peace. We are partners."

⁸² On mediation, networks, and municipal government in Israel and in early Zionist statebuilding, see Eyal, *The Disenchantment*, 38-9.

This meeting was slightly less formal in tone. Perhaps as a result it was quickly apparent that, unlike Majdi and Tarek, most of the donor representatives present knew little about the projects themselves. They knew little about where sewage flowed, where it would flow once the project was built, how it would be treated, and about the area's political geography. It was clear for many donor staff that this was their first time visiting the areas in which the projects their agencies were funding would be built. They had embarked on the day of site visits with little information on where the physical lines to be "crossed" by the sewage were on a map. One UNDP representative described only having been "briefed this morning." Both the Japanese consul and the UNDP representatives repeatedly expressed confusion about their geographical location while in Barta'a. "But now we are not on the West Bank side, are we?" one woman asked. This prompted the mayor's assistants to produce a number of fold-out maps. The group poured over them on the table for several minutes before returning to the cars.

On the one hand, this suggested that all the day's meetings were characterized by a degree of what could be deemed a kind of superficiality. There was a sense in which participants appeared simply to be mirroring each other's formalities. It seemed as though no single speaker was the true generator of the doubled, contradictory forms of language being used. Each meeting created a kind of hall of mirrors effect in which the words "peace," "borders," "neighbors," and, occasionally, "sewage" and "aquifer" bounced from one wall chaotically to the next. There was something about their statements that lacked traction. So superficial did they seem, in fact, that I neglected to write most of them down during the trip. Only because my voice recorder remained on was I able to return to them.

On the other hand, such visits were taking place up to three, four and five times a week for hundreds of Authority and municipal bureaucrats, Palestinian NGO and aid agency employees, like Majdi and Tarek. And, occasionally, infrastructures were being built *through* the repeated holding of such meetings. This suggests that the apparent superficiality actually did a lot of work to smooth out potentially contentious interactions among the bureaucrats, engineers and experts involved. That work resonates with work performed by the "I" in Indonesia's lingua franca, Melayu, as described by James Siegel. Siegel writes that Melayu's "I" belongs to no one who uses it. This is because "one learned the lingua franca by imitating what the other said while the other was doing the same...The lingua franca took shape in the middle, between the speakers. Eventually, they could comprehend each other."⁸³ Like Melayu, the superficiality of waste management's lingua franca appeared to be necessary to the "successful" management of Palestinian waste.

As a result, that incoherent, often discursive work also became central to my research. It is work underappreciated in the study of Palestine as a whole and in the study of the infrastructures that serve Palestinians specifically. Given the participants of a meeting like this one, how can Palestine scholars—or any scholar interested in infrastructure, for that matter--differentiate between local, colonial and "international" effects wrought by infrastructures post-Oslo? In the chapters that follow, I explore additional everyday practices that enabled Majdi and his colleagues in ministries and

⁸³ Siegel, Fetish, Recognition, Revolution, 15 & 16.

municipalities to distinguish themselves as both sincerely "friendly" toward the environment, as learned in the ever more specialized modes of managing waste and as authoritative enough to take on its management. From whom did they need to distinguish themselves, why, and were their techniques for doing so effective?



Figure 10. On the side of the road in Shuqba, car parts, used industrial cans, steel rods. Photo by the author, 2012.

Chapter 3

Measured Futures, Borrowed Pasts: Trash and Technical-National Statecraft

"Some things just aren't about occupation"

The sonic boom of a low-flying fighter jet blasted through the accounting office in which Abdelfattah and I were speaking. The windows remained intact, but shook, as the jet swooped down over Jenin a few more times. The sound flooded the office. Nothing else was audible for several seconds. Abdelfattah's lips kept moving silently. I made him repeat it several times until I could hear again. There was something in the way he continued to speak through the blast of the swooping jets that was almost too neatly analogous to his story about what changes Oslo had brought. It seemed to have nothing to do with occupation, just as his story had not needed to pause for the fighter jet's swoops. This corresponded to what I had heard repeatedly throughout two years' fieldwork: "Some things just aren't about occupation. How we manage our own garbage is one of them." This was often contrasted with other matters of governance such as electricity and water provision, both of which are controlled in large part by Israelis.¹ Life in the West Bank was being discursively divided into things considered "about"

¹ Interviews with managers at the Jenin branch of the Northern Electricity Distribution Company, Jenin Municipality, Fall and Summer 2010. The electricity grid in the West Bank is connected to Israel's. Most Palestinian communities in the West Bank purchase power from the Israeli Electric Corporation (while a very few have their own small scale generators). This is the case especially for the northern and southern parts of the West Bank. The Ramallah area is served more by the Jerusalem District Electricity Company. For a history of electricity in the Jerusalem area in particular, see Dumper, "Jerusalem's Infrastructure." According to more conservative estimates, West Bank Palestinians are forced to buy up to 52 percent of their water from the national Israeli water company, Mekorot. The water they buy from Mekorot is extracted from the Mountain Aquifer that lies beneath the West Bank from which, according to a recent Amnesty International report, "Palestinians should be able to extract for themselves if Israel were to allow them a more equitable share of the aquifer." Amnesty, "Troubled Waters," 13.

occupation and things not; things internal to Palestinian governance and things external to it.

An "internal" audit for the Authority's water sector published in 2008, for example, argued that obstacles "may be categorized as chiefly external or internal." The occupation was "external." "[E]xternal obstacles" were "grouped in two categories ('political' and 'occupation-related')." The same document included "internal political divisions and differential focus," weak institutional capacity, poor internal governance, insufficient coordination with donors and illegal connections (e.g. to water pipelines), the ministry's "relationship with society," poor communications and mismanagement among the "internal obstacles" facing the sector. In conversations with waste and wastewater experts, it was common to hear that "there are the exogenous, or external constraints, and the endogenous or internal constraints on the development of the...sector."² Muhammad Said Hmeidi made a similar argument to me, asking sarcastically: "Is politics now interfering in the mandate of the Ministry of Planning, of the Environmental Quality Authority, or of the Ministry of Local Government?" "So it's just an institutional problem?" I asked. "It is!" he said, suggesting the institutional and the internal were one.

As external, politics and (or as) occupation were said to "interfere" with internal Palestinian governance.³ In these contexts the local often stood in for the internal. This

² Interview with legal advisor to the Palestinian Water Authority, Fuad Bateh in Ramallah, 16 Sept 2010.

³ In this sense the meaning of politics differed markedly from that which had developed in Egypt after the 1860s, where "[p]olitics was a field of practice, formed out of the supervision of people's health, the policing of urban neighborhoods, the reorganisation of streets, and, above all, the schooling of the people," Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 103.

suggested the geographical valence of internality. By extension, it also suggested that politics could be found at the outer boundaries of the internal. Sometimes, then, politics *was* the occupation. That included the question of how the occupation might end—through the formation of a Palestinian state, through annexation of the West Bank by Israel? The internal domain of governance was, according to this definition of politics, not political in itself. I asked Muhammad Said Hmeidi how he was planning his recycling business in Nablus "without looking into politics," as he had put it. His answer: "I don't worry much about a state or no state. Because I need a state when I deal with borders. And in the recycling business the resource is *local* and the market is *local*. I don't need to export my recyclables, my products," he said. But not all things Israeli were political—or linked to the occupation. It was conceivable for there to be avenues into the internal Palestinian governance of Palestinian wastes for Israeli involvement. "Second," Hmeidi continued, "I don't need to think of regional solutions because all my solutions can be local...Even if I thought of Israelis as partners, politics can be avoided. You talk business. So politics may not interfere badly in our work."

Some have characterized Palestine's post-Oslo condition as a de facto "one state solution," citing full Israeli control from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan.⁴ Other observers of the period after the second Intifada especially remark on the absence of a sense of being under occupation in some Palestinian cities. New York Times articles

⁴ Rashid Khalidi, for instance, was quoted saying that "a one-state solution already exists" because "there is only one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, in which there are two or three levels of citizenship or non-citizenship within the borders of that one state that exerts total control." Shalev, "Leading Palestinian Intellectual." Jeff Halper, of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, also recently made the same argument.

relate, and progressive activists lament, that one forgets about the occupation in the wifi-equipped cafes of the "Ramallah bubble."⁵ So too do West Bank Palestinians living in these cities as well as Palestinian citizens of Israel who shop, visit and reside in the West Bank.⁶ A Druze friend who had moved from Haifa to Ramallah, for example, often remarked at the strangeness of feeling "more free in Ramallah" than he had for decades inside Israel.

My sense is that this apparent elision of the occupation shares a logic with the impulse to refer to the occupation in the past tense.⁷ It also corresponds to a geographic imaginary that conceives of the occupation as located at the outer borders of Palestinian governance and, often, in forms that bear Israeli military markings. As we stood in al-Manara square in central Ramallah on the commemoration of Nakba Day (May 15, 2011), an NGO employee explained, "the Authority police have surrounded al-Manara square because they don't want youth to go to Qalandia checkpoint and *confront the occupation*." At least at the level of speech in this moment, for her the occupation was at the checkpoint where the soldiers, jeeps and watchtowers were. Where we stood was somehow different. Similarly, Hmeidi had explained: "where does [politics] come as a

⁵ [The New York Times](#) article "Next Stop: Ramallah Attracts a Cosmopolitan Crowd," complete with a colorful slideshow of images of the city's newest, hippest night spots is a perfect example of this trend. Luongo, "Next Stop."

⁶ Even in Jenin, which has seen many of the most brutal effects of occupation most recently it is common to hear the occupation spoken about in the past tense.

⁷ As I describe in Chapter 5, sentences would begin "In the time of the Israelis (*zaman alyahud*)" or "under the occupation (*taht alihital*), we used to do x y or z," to describe the differences between the present and that time, for example. To me, the spontaneity this kind of talk, the unremarked-upon and unremarkable way in which it comes forth, was a strong indication of the changing parameters not only of what could be said, but of what could be thought. I encountered such offhanded comments several times a day between 2009 and 2012 but had rarely heard in 2004 and 2007.

sort of problem? If I need to discuss with Israelis I need to go there [to Israel]! And then comes the issue of permits."

In 1991, Partha Chatterjee presented what he called a "fundamental feature of anticolonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa." According to this feature:

...anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power...by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the "outside", of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity.⁸

During the two decades after Chatterjee's essay was first published a peculiar thing happened in Palestine. The version of anticolonial (or anti-occupation) nationalism promoted by the Authority "divided the world of institutions and practices into two domains," as Chatterjee might have predicted. But rather than placing the material domain "of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology" on the "outside" (the realm of the colonial state) as did Chatterjee's anticolonialists, this one placed it on the national "inside." The technical domain of science and technology was rendered internal and national. The internal, material domain continued to be compared and coordinated with that of the colonial society (Israel), and the latter was also usually deemed superior. But the possibility for these two material domains (Palestinian, anti-

⁸ Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation*, 26-7.

colonial and Israeli, colonial) to comingle did not disturb Palestinian bureaucrats' ability to characterize the technical as *internal* and *national*.⁹

If distinctions between internal, technical and national garbage governance on the one hand, and external politics and occupation, on the other, had become commonsense for Palestine's waste managers over about two decades, they had been unthinkable in the decades before that (see Chapter 1). This chapter juxtaposes and attempts to square two seemingly contradictory analyses. One shows how the "authorship"¹⁰ of many of the Authority's "technical" infrastructural projects was neither ethnationally, nor legally, nor institutionally singular. On the one hand, this makes it difficult to attribute a singular nationalist, colonial, neoliberal or other "logic" to these projects—at least not without an analysis of their *effects* once built. A second narrative shows that, on the other hand, for many of the Authority's technocrats, it was clear that the reforms of which such projects were a part were as national (Palestinian-authored) as they were technical (universally vetted). This chapter is thus an attempt to understand how these two contradictory phenomena have been sustained, and to what effect.

During the first two decades of occupation Israeli regulations and disposal plans for managing waste had been nearly identical across the two sides of the Green Line.¹¹ In the mid-1980s the occupation authorities had commissioned Tahal, Israel's national water

⁹ In this sense the technical-national resembled the claim of Indian nationalists described in an account Chatterjee offers of the treatment of Ayurvedic medicine in the early twentieth century. Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation*, 149.

¹⁰ Mukerjee, *Impossible Engineering*, 223.

¹¹ The "Green Line" marks the armistice lines established after the 1967 occupation of the West Bank.

authority, to produce a Master-plan for the Disposal of Solid Waste in the Judea and Samaria Region.¹² Israel managed to build two of seven planned West Bank landfills, one in Abu Dis and another in Jericho, before the establishment of a Palestinian government.¹³ Like those planned for another five landfills, both were designed for disposal of trash from Israeli West Bank settlements as well as Palestinian communities. Planning at this (what Israeli planners saw as the "national") scale involved the calculation of a number of measurements. These served to facilitate the legibility—and compliance—of the people, lands and wastes in the Territories for the benefit of the Israeli state.¹⁴ In this sense early Israeli measurements were also anathema to one appeal for justice for Palestinians dominant at the time: that appeal called for an end to occupation, *separation* from Israel and the establishment of sovereign Palestinian rule in the West Bank and Gaza.¹⁵

It seemed paradoxical, then, that those measurements that did not end up forming landfills before Oslo ended up surviving Israel's hand-off to the Authority, becoming the basis for national, Palestinian-run landfilling schemes in the 2000s and 2010s.

¹² My thanks to Dina Zbidat for helping to translate from the Hebrew.

¹³ The administration produced detailed plans for seven West Bank sites. The Ramallah, Hebron, Qalqilya and Jenin sites were deemed "ready for construction, after having passed all requisite stages of planning and statutory approvals." By 1995, the Nablus site was "in the final stages of statutory approval, with detailed planning not yet completed."

¹⁴ Scott, Seeing Like a State, 1998.

¹⁵ At an international level, this appeal was registered in Yasser Arafat's 1988 speech declaring the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (December 13, 1988). It also manifested in local calls for autonomous governance during the first Intifada (see Chapter 2).

Measurements calculated to extend Israeli sovereignty into the West Bank thus became technical objects for building hi-tech infrastructures toward *Palestinian* sovereignty there



Figure 11. Tahal Plan (1987)

instead. As they were described by dozens of Palestinian engineers, bureaucrats, and environmental experts working in governance, landfills were designed both as "preparation for the day"¹⁶ when Palestinian statehood would be internationally recognized and as service-enhancing, environment-protecting technical devices. As such, the "addressees"¹⁷ of the Authority's infrastructures were "international" as well as local (see Chapter 2). On the one hand, because of their association with Israeli expertise, the measurements enabled Authority bureaucrats to see themselves as "working at the cutting edge of their industry...and thus as pushing their society into the future."¹⁸ Using measurements (calculated and) approved by Israel—as a representative of successful statehood—offered a vetted avenue for performing technological soundness. On the other hand, the infrastructure to which the measurements gave shape presupposed a theory of the relationship between garbage and the environment whose legitimacy had, over the course of two decades since their initial calculation, been compromised in the eyes of many of those Authority bureaucrats most sought to impress. By the late 2000s, landfills were becoming obsolete in much of the "developed" world. One effect of measurements' translation into the Authority's technical-national terms was therefore that the same experts whom the measurements helped put the facts of nation-statehood on (or in) the ground compromised their ability to draw on their own *up-to-date* expertise (in "developed" countries) in order to defend landfills before critical local publics. The

¹⁶ Interview in Ramallah, September 16, 2010.

¹⁷ Here I make a distinction between the "addressees" and "beneficiaries" of infrastructure.

¹⁸ Larkin, "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," 330. See also De Boeck, "Inhabiting Ocular Ground."

recoding of "Israeli" measurements as "Palestinian" technical-national ones thus also helped renew, or at least highlight, measurements' attachment to their origins. The measurements were rendered unstable by the Palestinian technocrats who coordinated their transformation into infrastructures. Despite this instability, measurements were in this sense never entirely unmoored from their origins and thus never entirely amenable to human meaning-making in the present.

In proposing these arguments this chapter engages a growing body of scholarship on infrastructure and science and technology¹⁹ that challenges the assumption that infrastructures are material manifestations, symbols or embodiments of coherent ideologies or of the political imaginaries of planners and politicians.²⁰ There is also a growing interest in how the people whom infrastructures are designed to serve, coerce or constrain reconfigure the meanings that planners and policy-makers originally assigned them.²¹ Others, highlighting the unruly, obstinate,²² "recalcitrant" or "vibrant"²³ traits of the nonhuman ask how materials in infrastructural assemblages alter their intended

¹⁹ See for example Bear, Lines of the Nation, Callon and Law, "Engineering and Sociology," Coelho, "Tapping In," Elyachar, "Phatic Labor," Ferguson, "The Anti-Politics Machine," Fisch, "Tokyo's Commuter Train Suicides," Gandy, "Landscapes of Disaster," Graham et al., "Water Wars in Mumbai," Harvey, "The Topological Quality," De Laet and Moll, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump," Masquelier, "Road Mythographies," Mukerji, Technology and Territoriality.

²⁰ See for example Graham, Disrupted Cities, Otter, The Victorian Eye, Collier, Post-Soviet Social, Science, Culture, and Modern State Formation, Foucault, Discipline and Punish, Salamanca, "Unplug and Play," Sneath, "Reading the Signs."

²¹ See for example Larkin, Signal and Noise, Harvey, "The Topological Quality," Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey, Bishara, Back Stories, Khan, "Flaws in the Flow."

²² Matthews, Instituting Nature, 26. Matthews calls nature's an "unruly obstinacy" (26).

²³ Bennett, Vibrant Matter.

effects.²⁴ Drawing on these openings unsettles the assumption that a known quantity called politics determines the character and effects of infrastructure.²⁵

This assumption is especially calcified with regard to infrastructures and technologies in Israel/Palestine.²⁶ I therefore ask: how did the people in charge of the construction of large-scale infrastructures make sense of their planning and management practices, and to what effect? I offer what Larkin calls an "account of translation"²⁷ in making measurements and their histories the centerpiece of this chapter's story. I attend to how measurements traveled in (bureaucratic) time and (national) space; to how they become "copies" designed to enable participation in "a contemporaneous modernity by repeating infrastructural projects from elsewhere" or elsewhere.²⁸ Finally, I consider some effects of the translation of occupation's measurements into material designs for liberation. I begin by examining one such set of designs, which was arranged into the form of the Palestinian Authority's National Strategy for Solid Waste Management 2010-2014.

²⁴ See for example Anand, "PRESSURE," Mitchell, Rule of Experts, Mitchell, "Are Environmental Imaginaries Imaginary?", Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, Callon, Laws of the Markets, Von Schnitzler, "Citizenship Prepaid," Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey, Kosek, "Ecologies of Empire," Mrázek, Engineers of Happyland, Giedion, Building in France, Matthews, Instituting Nature, Mumford, Technics and Civilization.

²⁵ My work echoes Larkin's recent argument that "discussing infrastructure is a categorical act." Larkin, "Politics and Poetics," 330.

²⁶ See for example Denes, "From Tanks to Wheelchairs," Graham, Disrupted Cities, Gordon, Israel's Occupation, Weizman, Hollow Land, Samour and Khalidi, "Neoliberalism as Liberation," Korn, "The Ghettoization of Palestinians."

²⁷ Larkin, "Politics and Poetics," 330. See also Callon, Laws of the Markets, Latour, We Have Never Been Modern.

²⁸ Larkin, "Politics and Poetics," 333. See also Dalakoglou, "The Road."

Understatedly National

The Ministerial Cabinet has endorsed the strategy by Decree No. 13/49/05 on May 2010. This approval has strengthened our hope for a better future...[It] falls within the Palestinian national effort to end the occupation and establish the Palestinian State...a key developmental and political²⁹ dimension within our national march to ending the occupation and earning our independent Palestinian State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Despite the grandiose tone of this quote from the National Strategy,³⁰ the Strategy's launch did not attempt spectacle³¹ status as have so many imperial, colonial and nationalist infrastructural state-building efforts elsewhere.³² It was an invitation-only event. It took place in a modest conference room in Ramallah's Best Eastern hotel. Attendees – about seventy-five Palestinian ministry employees, peppered with the occasional blond head of a foreign consultant – each received a grainy (recycled) brown folder. It was in English and Arabic. A sticker of the Authority's eagle emblem and the Palestinian and German flags (the latter partly concealing the former) adorned the front. Both covers of the glossy English-Arabic reversible booklet boasted photographs of landfill construction work: workers laying large, black, high-density Polyethylene sheets

²⁹ Note the use of the word “political” here. As common as it was for the occupation to appear to have the monopoly on “politics,” there *were* also contexts in which Palestinian bureaucrats described their technical work as political. I read these as statements proposing the anti-occupation character of the infrastructural projects. Politics is thus still oriented toward the occupation, though it originates in this case from within a PA project.

³⁰ Ministry of Local Government, National Strategy, v.

³¹ See for example Sara Prichard, Confluence.

³² See for example Barker, “Engineers and Political Dreams,” Coronil, The Magical State, Ferguson, Expectations of Modernity, Geertz, Negara, Khan, “Flaws in the Flow,” Larkin, Signal and Noise, Mitchell, Rule of Experts. See also Wedeen, Ambiguities of Domination, 13-14.

at Zahrat al-Finjan, the West Bank's first Authority-run sanitary landfill. The booklet also featured images of dumpsters belching smoke; the "random dumping" it was the strategy's intention to eradicate.

In one noisy fell swoop we abandoned folders on chairs, standing for the national anthem. Speeches from several men, including Dr. Ghonim, head of the Strategy's National Team, the Minister of Local Government and a female German Development Bank representative were followed by a forty-five-minute ode to garbage management by then Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad. Dr. Ghonim called for a celebration of the strategy as "a national product. Not only does it make...us feel that we own what we do," he said. This was the outcome of a "very analytical study" that had brought to light Palestine's need for technical, institutional and financial reforms. Reflecting on their experiences as professionals, most bureaucrats with whom I drove on landfill visits, attended workshops, meetings with green NGOs and municipalities seemed convinced that at least some aspect of their work was "national" (*watani*). It was thus not surprising that the national character of landfills described in the Strategy was, like their technical character, treated as an indisputable fact. In daily conversation bureaucrats and engineers framed Zahrat al-Finjan in Jenin, the first PA-run sanitary landfill in the West Bank, as the successful result of reforms toward independent statehood. With its lining, leachate pools, centralized collection system and the establishment of an expert council to administer it, Jenin's landfill was the pinnacle of Authority technical and national achievement.

Other, yet-to-be-built landfills were described in similar fashion. In 2013, the Hebron governorate followed in Jenin's state-building footsteps by acquiring a regional sanitary landfill for the southern West Bank. PA plans for Hebron's landfill had been underway since the early 2000s but had experienced delays both due to Israeli red tape and to local objections to the project. When I arrived in 2009, the land issue had just begun to be resolved. At Pronto's restaurant in late 2009, one respected solid waste expert explained over dinner that the problem with the Hebron regional landfill had been convincing landowners to sell.³³ Finally things were going more smoothly: "One of the reasons it's going smoother," she said leaning back in her chair, "is that there was an attempt to make [an Israeli] settlement in the area. People think it's a winning situation to have a *Palestinian* landfill there instead of a settlement...Because it's a *Palestinian project!*" Her assumption here was double: both that the landfill was a Palestinian project and that that fact had been *recognized* by local communities as well. While neither the National Strategy nor Zahrat al-Finjan nor the Hebron landfill-to-be may have been hypermodern or spectacular, to many who managed them they were thus national—albeit understatedly so.³⁴

My argument that the Authority's solid waste strategy was experienced and posited as part of a technical-national field does not stop at the performative statements of politicians at the Best Eastern hotel or in the change of the name from *zbaleh* (colloquial

³³ Interview in Ramallah, November 18, 2009.

³⁴ See Reno, "Beyond Risk," 527. Stephen Graham's Disrupted Cities (2010) makes a similar critique to mine (of a focus on spectacular, symbolic and monumental infrastructures). See Graham, Disrupted Cities, 19.

for garbage) to *an-nifayat as-salbah* (the official term for solid waste). In a very specific sense, garbage also *became* national in its "technical," material aspects. The reforms called for by Dr. Ghonim and expressed in the operation of Zahrat al-Finjan landfill forwarded very particular spatial and temporal logics that sutured the "technical" and the "national" into a hyphenated concept. One spatial, technical, logic involved planning and construction of regional sanitary landfills within very clearly bounded geographic spaces. These spaces rejected certain Israeli impositions of order. For example, they ignored the Separation Wall and distinctions among Areas A, B and C. The principle of "economies of scale" informed the Strategy's organization. For the garbage management of one million residents to be efficient according to that principle, and for that garbage to reach Zahrat al-Finjan, for instance, trucks arrived from hundreds of municipalities and villages across the northern West Bank. To do so, they traversed areas under full Israeli military control. The completion of two other similar regional landfills in Ramallah and Hebron would allow the entire West Bank to be conceived of as three all-encompassing "regions" in which the Authority governed solid waste, regardless of distinctions among Authority- and Israeli-controlled areas.

At the same time, Authority waste management schemes work neatly within the confines of other Israeli restrictions, for example by accepting the Green Line as the outermost boundary of governmental service extension. Along the western ("Israeli") side of the Wall are several Palestinian villages that are officially under Authority

jurisdiction.³⁵ These villages are on the eastern side of the Green Line and are therefore trapped in "the seam zone." They suffer especially difficult access to all services that work at scales that are larger than the village. Villages in this situation thus lack access to regional garbage collection—for example by Jenin's JSC for solid waste management—as well as regional water distribution, wastewater treatment, healthcare, telecommunications networks, and so on. Authority bureaucrats and activists lament the fact that the Wall prevents anyone without an ID card from those villages from entering or leaving them. Because they are east of the Green Line, Israel takes no responsibility for them either. Barta'a al-Sharqia³⁶ of the Jenin governorate is one such village. Barta'a's 4,000 residents are often forced to resort to burning their garbage instead of sending it to the landfill, even though Zahrat al-Finjan is less than fifteen minutes away. When residents in the seam zone could not be integrated into Zahrat al-Finjan's regional scheme, its managers objected that trucks could not reach them. That there was no discussion among Authority experts about the fact that Zahrat al-Finjan's trucks were *equally unable to reach Umm al-Fahim*, a Palestinian town at the same distance from Zahrat al-Finjan but *west* of the Green Line (inside Israel) was not just an instance of garbage-burden avoidance. It was an expression of the specific spatial boundaries characteristic of the Authority's technical-national solutions for management. Very clearly

³⁵ Authority schemes also acknowledged the presence of settlements by intentionally treating them as off-limits for collection despite the fact that settlements fell within each of the three "regions" to which PA landfills offered disposal services.

³⁶ Recall Barta'a from the "cross-boundary" wastewater treatment plants being planned with Israeli municipalities (see Chapter 2).

defined according to national statehood within the 1967 borders of the West Bank, the national here was not interested in management for a population that was only *ethnically* defined (i.e. Palestinian). That population was strictly geographically defined as well.

This spatially restricted version of the national was also evident in the selection of time frames and population estimates for technical waste management solutions (see also Chapter 2). It is common to hear that, in the West Bank, it is impossible to plan for the future since life is always unpredictable in ways that seem perpetually to involve external forces. However, a closer look at waste management shows that scientists, technicians and engineers daily defied this stereotype. They planned and built the future in the present (which is also how many described their work) whenever a sanitary landfill was dug, a sewage network laid, a set of pipes measured and ordered from Europe. In this case, a national future.³⁷ The estimated population growth rate with which Zahrat al-Finjan was constructed was between 1 and 3 percent over thirty years (another borrowed calculation from Israeli planners). The estimate did not account for the possibility of the return of millions of refugees to a future state within those thirty years. This was a "natural" growth rate estimated on the basis of current patterns of birthrates in the Territories.³⁸ In parallel, the population growth estimates for Zahrat al-Finjan (like those

³⁷ If state-making can be compared with Rheinberger's theory of experimental systems, it is possible to say, with Rheinberger, that (state) experimentation is "a machine for making the future." Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 32.

³⁸ It is arguable that in not accounting for refugee return, the Authority also helped foreclose the possibility that a future state could accommodate the sanitation needs of what could be a quadrupled population, were the refugees to return. It is easy to imagine donors as much as Israeli policy-makers and even Authority bureaucrats themselves arguing, down the line, that the West Bank cannot "environmentally sustain" return's realization for lack of infrastructure.

for the Ramallah and Hebron landfills that were modeled after it) did not include Jewish-only settlement populations present or future. Though Zahrat al-Finjan was initially planned by Israel as a "joint" Israeli-Palestinian landfill, it became the northern West Bank's regional landfill and receives waste from Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas, Nablus and Qalqilya governorates, but none from the area's Israeli settlements. From the perspective of the Authority's version of *national* statehood planning this made perfect sense. The example of settlements' exclusion from Authority landfill servicing highlights how the example before it—regarding population estimates and the non-accommodation of refugee return—was equally formative of the *national* within the national-technical. Like its spatial aspects, the temporal (e.g. future-oriented) character of national solid waste management inhered in management's technical and material details.

The certainty with which bureaucrats seemed to feel that landfill planning was national was publicly displayed in a controversy they failed to avoid while planning for Ramallah's regional sanitary landfill, the construction of which was expected to complete the West Bank's national, regionally-organized waste management system. As we will remember from Chapter 1, Deir Dibwan had rejected the civil administration's landfill plan in the late 1980s. In the late 1990s the Authority chose new plots of land owned mainly by residents of Rammun (and a few by Deir Dibwan residents), reviving the old landfill plan. When these landowners refused to sell as well, the Authority initiated expropriation (*istimlak*).³⁹ But the lands were in Area C, under full Israeli control. The

³⁹ Interview in Ramallah, July 26, 2012; Phone interview on November 9, 2013; See also Omar, "Trashing Four Generations."

Authority could not expropriate land there without civil administration approval. To get around this familiar bureaucratic hurdle, around 2012 the Authority asked the administration to expropriate about 800 dunams (200 acres) *on its behalf*.⁴⁰ The administration agreed. This was a historic first. Since 1967 Israel had expropriated thousands of dunams for settlements, barriers, military installations, nature reserves and industrial zones. But it had not yet confiscated privately owned Palestinian lands *for use by other Palestinians*. Just as strikingly, despite this act's political riskiness, Authority bureaucrats made little effort to hide their cooperation with the Israeli administration in working to expropriate the land. The Authority published an announcement of the project's imminent implementation in al-Quds, a local Palestinian newspaper. The ad was visibly authored by the civil administration's Environmental Quality Committee. Outraged, the landowners stepped up their campaign against the landfill. They debated Authority planners on Palestinian television. Residents were angry and journalists shocked that the Authority had "used" the occupation to attempt expropriation. Landfill planners shrugged. In one televised roundtable Husain Abu'oun, the executive director for Ramallah's landfill-to-be, made no attempt to justify the Authority's actions. The panelists were silent. I was taken aback at Abu'oun's response. He exhaled, addressing the question as though about to repeat something obvious for the umpteenth time: "We are *all* obliged to deal with the occupation." As if there were nothing special about this case.

⁴⁰ Due to the sensitive nature of this decision, it was difficult for me to learn the exact date on which permission was granted.

It was a similar surprise that hit me upon my discovery that the National Strategy had "lifted" Israel's pre-Oslo geographical, temporal and material specifications for all three "national" landfills: in Jenin, Ramallah and Hebron. According to Tahal, Israel's water authority, each landfill would operate for at least twenty years. The Authority's landfills projected twenty years as well. Zahrat al-Finjan had been built on private lands the military had expropriated for a landfill in 1994.⁴¹ The permeability of the sealant's clay layers in Hebron landfill's lining before Oslo were " $K < 10(-7)$ cm/sec." The Authority's World Bank team designed Hebron's landfill with the same measure of hydraulic conductivity. The second-to-last layer of the Hebron liner in Israel's plans was a "geotextile layer and 1.5 mm thick plastic material (HDPE)." The Authority's plans read: "Geo membrane HDPE, 1.5mm thick."⁴² In some instances Authority landfills made minor tweaks to the original plans. The Authority's Hebron landfill was designed for approximately 230 dunams (57.5 acres).⁴³ Pre-Oslo designs called for 175 dunams (44 acres). Israeli planners suggested "the landfill be sealed by a double liner that included High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) to protect the groundwater from contamination." The Authority's version was an "integrated base lining system using a geo-membrane" consisting "of an upper (primary) geo-membrane liner...and a lower (secondary) GCL mat liner...[using] HDPE."⁴⁴ While Israeli plans for Hebron had recommended that the

⁴¹ Military order 321 (1969-57290), decision number 941715, signed 29 December 1994.

⁴² JSC, "Environmental and Social Impact," 25.

⁴³ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

compacted layer "be covered daily with 15 cm thick layer," the Palestinian plan recommended "about 20 cm in thickness."⁴⁵ Israeli plans called for a clay layer 50 cm thick. The Authority recommended 45 cm.

Flash Forward: Binders on Desks

Not only had Authority planners and those they had hired "copied" much about the landfill plans from Israel's plans in the 1980s; the Israeli administrators involved in scrutinizing the Authority's plans in the 2010s saw the landfill plans as Israeli (i.e. as *their own*). In this section I present the language Israeli occupation administrators used to express this sense of Israeli ownership of Authority waste projects. I do so to underscore the extent to which Palestinian bureaucrats' sense that these were national projects was not universally shared. It was, in fact, quite powerfully contested.

It was 11am on another unbearably sunny summer Wednesday when Nitsan picked me up in front of the municipal offices of Maale Adumim, one of the largest Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Nitsan was a skinny, bearded man in his fifties. He wore sporty sandals and drove a Range Rover. He was proud to call himself a settler and held a PhD in geography from the Hebrew University. He was director of the Association for the Protection of the Environment of Judea (the southern West Bank). He had offered to drive me to Beit El military base, the administration's West Bank headquarters⁴⁶ to help me gain access to the administration's environment department. Assaf Yazdi, the head

⁴⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁶ Beit El borders Al-Bireh, Ramallah's twin city.

Officer's second-in-command, a kippah-clad, clean-shaven thirty-something environmental engineer with decent English, agreed to speak to me. Assaf's office was

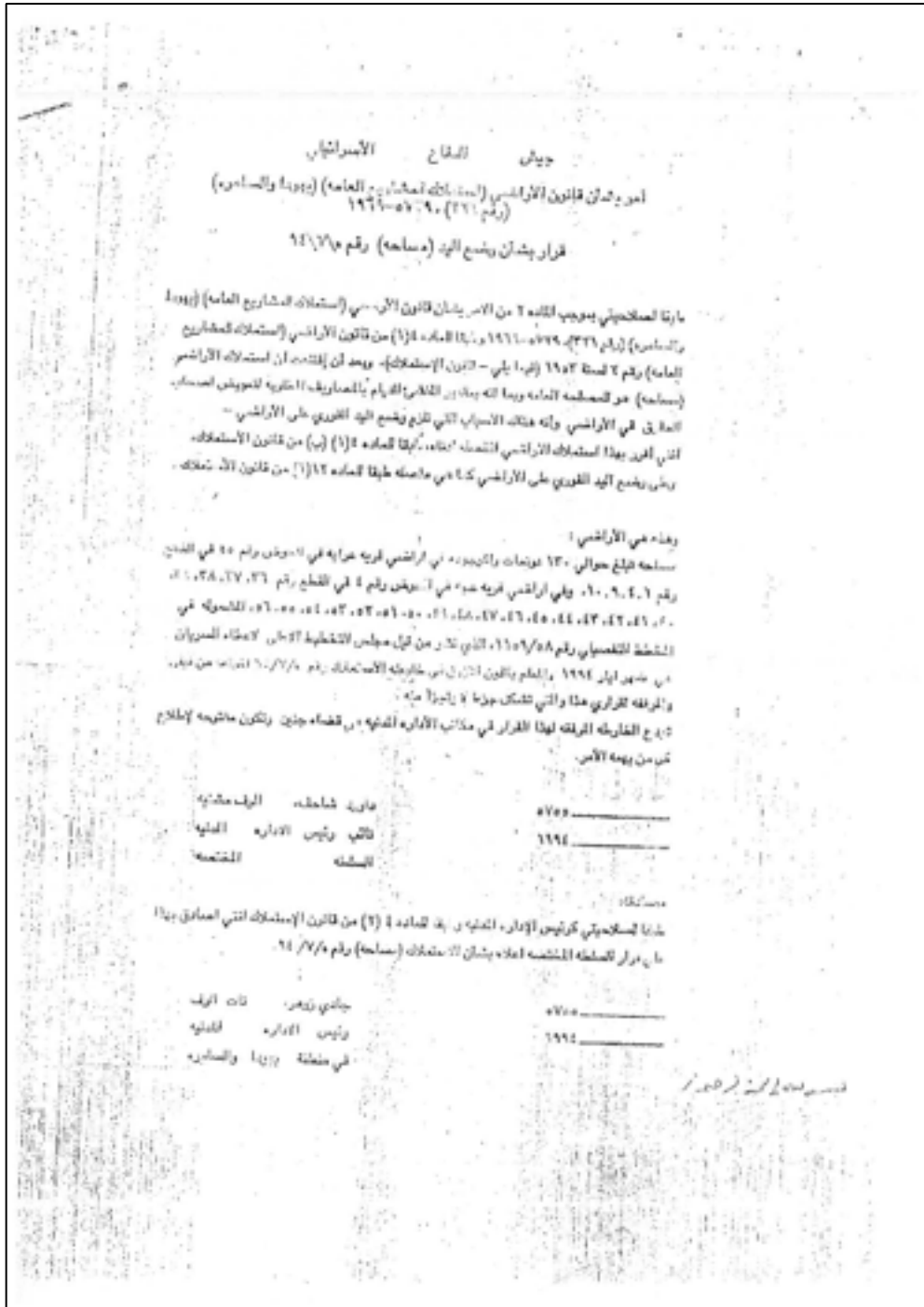


Figure 12. Israeli Military Order No. 941715 (1994) expropriating Jenin area lands for a landfill.

small. Two metal desks were arranged in an L-shape. Binders and loose papers, yellow post-it notes and an ancient-looking desktop computer cluttered them both. As we sat in the office amid piles of documents in Hebrew, the clash between my two years of accumulated information about the "Palestinianness" of Zahrat al-Finjan and the other two planned Authority landfills and the obviousness of ownership with which Assaf spoke about it was staggering. Matter-of-factly, Assaf explained that Jenin's landfill, like the Ramallah and Hebron landfills modeled after it, had been civil administration projects. He stumbled over the Arabic to tell me its name in a thick Israeli accent: "We call it *zachrat al-finjan*."

Over the course of an hour Assaf listed some of the myriad ways in which Israeli military, government, settler, environmental and other agencies were involved in the Authority's management of Palestinian garbage. I had heard these described by Palestinian experts as "external" interventions, shrugged off as "politics," that impeded the advancement of technical solutions to Palestine's waste problem. The list was long. Indeed, according to two detailed reports⁴⁷ published after Oslo, for the Authority to construct a sanitary landfill in the West Bank it must first receive approvals from the administration, after "scrutiny and review," for almost all aspects of constructing and operating a sanitary landfill, including "landfill sites, including all aspects of site engineering; dump sites; sorting and recycling facilities; compression stations; site

⁴⁷ Environmental Resources Management, Waste Management Service 2.9. This same list of components requiring civil administration scrutiny is reproduced, verbatim, in solid waste management-related assessments and reports from 1998 until 2010.

restoration; access roads; and fencing." Refusing to be recorded, one World Bank representative added that every step of building the two World Bank-sponsored landfills (in Jenin and in Hebron) had involved the Bank "liaising" with Israelis on behalf of the Authority: "Anything in Area C you have to match with dialogue," he said. "With different stakeholders. Environmentalists in Israel, the Israeli Ministry of the Environment, even the Brigadier General of the civil administration. We need everyone on our side to make the project happen." As one example, Reem Khalil, then director of the (German-sponsored) Ramallah landfill project, was required to obtain the land titles for the plots of land in Deir Dibwan and Rammun for the project from Beit El military base. That was where landholding lists had been stored after 1967 and the Authority did not have copies of all of them.

All Authority environmental impact assessments (EIAs) had to be submitted, in Hebrew, to Assaf's office for approval. They were typically returned for adjustments and rewrites. "Once you submit a study, all the documents, and if the Environmental Committee of the civil administration likes it, you have to then justify your choices, the design, etc.," Reem explained. "Then, if you get the green light, there's a sixty-day objection period during which information about the landfill is published in two newspapers so that people can see the announcement and object. In our case because it's Area C, it has to be published in four newspapers—two Palestinian and two Israeli papers. Then the objections are gathered." I asked whether there would be oppositions. She nodded: "The settlers will oppose. The Israelis tried to get settler waste disposed in

our landfill, as a condition, but the Germans said no."⁴⁸ Khalil's mention of Israeli involvement in her work was something I only heard her do in "unofficial talk" with me or with her colleagues. In presentations of the landfill project to landowners, mayors or residents through informational pamphlets about the Ramallah landfill project, the only Israeli involvements mentioned—if at all—were tanks, roadblocks or military curfews that had prevented disposal or landfill construction.

Assaf pointed to the thick hardcover binders piled high on his desk and said, with all the bored obviousness of a bureaucrat listing a rote rule: "Half of what you see on my table...I think this one and this one and this package and maybe this package, maybe also the black one, I don't know, are professional stuff and plans and EIAs. All EIAs, everything with regards to [all three] landfills, *the whole technical procedure happens here.*" He explained:

The demands for how to write the EIA is my responsibility. It's my job. Our office. How to work it, how to write it, etc. The guidelines. What you see here [he picked up one of the plastic binders]--they didn't do it right the first time. So they had to do it again and complete what was missing. And this is what was missing. This is for our comments. For Rammon [Ramallah's] landfill.

⁴⁸ Interview in Ramallah, 25 January 2010. Reading over several World Bank, Environmental Resource Management and Authority reports, I found frequent references to the requirement that a landfill project receive "Higher Planning Council" approval. I discovered that both the civil administration and the Authority have Higher Planning Councils, but the reports did not clarify which of the two they meant. I asked Reem to which of the two the reports were likely making reference. Her response was telling: "Regarding the Higher Planning Councils—if the project is implemented in area C, then all permits need to be received by the Israeli side. To be honest in that case, Palestinian approvals are useless but you need to do it because you are acting under the umbrella of the Authority. In case you don't receive permits from the Israeli side but the Palestinian side, your project will never see the light." Waste management experts in Palestine have to "go through the motions" of requesting Authority approval. This is another way in which their conditions of work resonate with Lisa Wedeen's analysis of "as if" politics in authoritarian Syria. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

Assaf told me that the committees that convened to decide on the EIAs pending ministerial approval included administration bureaucrats, settler municipal environmentalist associations (including Nitsan's) and, often, three Israeli environmental NGOs: Yaroach (Green Now, a right wing settler environmentalist organization), the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) and Adam Teva v'Din (Israeli Union for Environmental Defense, Israel's first environmental watchdog). I asked about the origins of Israel's standards for EIAs. "If you have other questions about that," offered an American soldier who was helping to translate between Assaf's Hebrew and my English, "Nitsan is around. You can ask him." "Yes, Nitsan is an expert," Assaf added." In addition to "professional" opinions Assaf received from his colleagues in Israeli central government ministries, he consulted settlers as well--whether or not the project was for settler use.

For both Assaf and for the soldier, it was clear that Nitsan served as a resident expert in the field of environmental management. He offered the base radiological testing (for a fee), he supervised municipal waste dumps under its jurisdiction and he offered advice on whether industrial zones should be closed down. He had served as an observer on civil administration health and environment department committees since the early 1990s. He had begun attending as a representative from SPNI. After cofounding his association, he continued attending as its Judea director. While as an observer he could not vote in administration committee meetings, he often raised points in the meetings

"because," as Assaf described it, "he also has expertise in that field. You know, occasionally some people will ask him some things."

These exchanges of information, dynamics of permission- and advice-giving and relationships among non-governmental Israeli environmentalists and the administration underscored the growing post-Oslo hegemony of environmentalist discourse with regard to waste. It also revealed some of its concealed origins. Before Oslo, many of the administration's sanitation reforms had drawn on advice from medical and public health professionals in universities and ministries within Israel (see Chapter 1). Microdynamics like the ones I discovered in speaking with Nitsan and the administration's environment department showed that in the post-Oslo period non-governmental and especially *environmental* Israeli organizations increasingly had the "ear" of the occupation authorities when it came to waste instead. These dynamics also suggest that, whereas Assaf represented what Nitsan called "the other side of the story" (Nitsan's association and colleagues in 42 nearby settlements⁴⁹ opposed the Ramallah landfill the administration had permitted), Assaf and Nitsan had "professional" fields of interaction in which they were on the same "side." In this sense Nitsan's relationship with Assaf paralleled that of several bureaucrats in the administration and in the Israeli environment ministry. But there were also ways in which "politics" divided Nitsan and his association from Assaf's office in the administration. Assaf was quick to tell me that it was likely the

⁴⁹ As part of the Binyamin Regional Council of the central West Bank.

settlers would object to Rammun's landfill (as they eventually did).⁵⁰ "Why would they object?" I asked. "For political reasons!" he said. These reasons "can be legitimate," he continued. "But we [in the administration] are not political people. We are trying to be objective and professional."⁵¹

Israeli involvement in Palestinian waste management was also manifest in absences. Though they were working in what they presented as the internal, national space of waste management whose three "service areas" (the north, center and south of the West Bank) were described as covering almost the entire West Bank-bank side of the would-be state, Authority bureaucrats did not have access, for example, to detailed information on *Israeli* waste in the West Bank. They had little data on settler waste contents or on whether they were toxic or hazardous, for example. Neither Palestinian environmental NGOs nor the Authority were permitted, furthermore, to conduct aerial mapping to gather information about the status of the environment it was their mandate to protect. Foreign consultants working for the Authority used maps based on Israeli institutions' research in the West Bank, both before Oslo and after it. There were several other dumpsites into which Israeli garbage (from settlements and from across the Green Line) and Palestinian garbage were both disposed in the West Bank, as in the case of Shuqba (see Chapter 2). Israel blocked the Authority from monitoring these dumpsites,

⁵⁰ I received word from Nitsan in December 2014 that the civil administration objections committee rejected the proposal in the Fall of 2014.

⁵¹ I understood that Assaf's notion of his work as professional (and not political) rested on his sense that he was treating Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank as equals. This elided the fact that the standards he was applying "equally" had been generated by the government (and, increasingly, the settlers) of only one of the two groups and that only one of the two groups could therefore have access to shaping them (e.g. when Nitsan campaigned against landfilling before the Knesset).

the argument went, because they were in Area C and therefore under Israeli jurisdiction. The ongoing environmental impacts of these dumpsites were monitored instead by two Israeli settler organizations: the Association for the Protection of the Environment of Samaria and the Jordan Valley, and the Association for the Protection of the Environment of Judea – whose director was Nitsan. On our drive back to his office in Maale Adumim settlement, Nitsan explained that although Authority planners had had more say in how Jenin's landfill had been constructed, in the case of “the other two sites [Hebron and Ramallah]—*Israeli* engineers planned those landfills. Even though as settlers we opposed those landfills, the civil administration approved. Their claim when I said, 'It's not good to have Palestinian landfills in Area C,' that they 'should put landfills in PA areas,' is that they say 'It's better because the civil administration has control that way.'”

On the top floor of Zahrat al-Finjan's administrative offices in Jenin, meanwhile, it is easy to forget that Assaf's office exists. One feels just as far away from piles of half-eaten yogurt cups, rotting fruit and other unmentionables decomposing just meters away. The landfill's odors do not reach here. The windows are shut tight and the air is AC-crisp. Heavy brown curtains are drawn across all four walls of windows. The light on the faces of thirty-five visitors—mayors and village council members from Ramallah being shown what their landfill will look like once built—is burnt orange. This is the visitors' center. Weekly, hundreds of students, NGO employees and donor representatives, I am told, would come to marvel at how “We are doing self government through scientific and technical capacities in Palestine...with law and organization.” Those are the words of the

ten-minute film on a plasma screen TV blaring from one corner in Arabic. Hani Shawahneh, the Jenin-born head engineer of the landfill, interrupts the film to assure the mayors: "We are responsible for everything." Reem Khalil smiles optimistically, turning to the mayors to add: "Yes, we can develop ourselves."⁵²

Bureaucrats in the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority (EQA)⁵³ told similarly proud, "auto-authorizing"⁵⁴ development stories, repeating the word "we" to emphasize the Authority having hatched the idea of the project: "We knew that solid waste was one source of pollution to the environment," one told me in his office in Al-Bireh (incidentally, a five minute drive from Assaf's office in Beit El). "So we started to think to create landfills...We started thinking to build one in the North, one central in Ramallah and one in the South." Others boasted that Jenin's landfill had been such a success that *even* the Israeli army had been visiting, and in big groups! "Not just little soldiers," one World Bank representative told me, "even high ranking people! To me and Hani this is a plus, because it makes people in the [Israeli] army aware of what we're doing. So when we initiate other projects, we have fewer problems." The inconsistency between this representative enjoying the army's "awareness" of the project and Assaf's description of the project *as army-led* was remarkable. It suggested that Authority experts were performing "official knowledge" as a way of performing "knowledge of what kind

⁵² Ownership of the project thus described was more often than not accompanied by references to the (Israeli) occupation in the past tense.

⁵³ The EQA is the equivalent of an environment ministry, though like the Palestinian Water Authority, it is one step below a ministry in the PA's institutional hierarchy. Neither the EQA nor the PWA have ministers.

⁵⁴ See Feldman, Governing Gaza.

of thing the state" – or their own state-in-the-making –"is" or would be.⁵⁵ As experts who auto-authorized the Authority's position as one that could offer Israelis "awareness" of its national projects, they performed sovereignty over the process of state-building and therefore over state-building itself.

My point is not of course to say that experts were *unaware* of the alternative stories that could be (or even *were* being) told about Israeli involvement in the everyday work of managing Palestinian waste. On the contrary, it was from them that I first became acquainted with those gruelingly complicated, Israeli-imposed bureaucratic processes that made managers' work so difficult. What is significant is, I think, that compared with other domains of West Bank life where stories of violent Israeli encounter (incursions, land confiscation, detentions, home demolitions and killings) saturated everyday talk, as Allen has aptly pointed out,⁵⁶ in the technical-national domain of garbage governance there were audible silences. Rather than be part of the narrative of a landfill's construction or operation, talk about driving down through checkpoints and around road blocks to Beit El base to submit EIAs to Assaf's office in Hebrew, or faxing his office to request permits for the Authority to use private Palestinian-owned land

⁵⁵ See Matthews, *Instituting Nature*, 4. The emphasis on authorship, on the "we," is echoed in the dozens of texts describing, evaluating, offering updates on and publicizing the landfill. "We" alternately denotes Palestinians, or the Authority, or Palestinian municipalities in the West Bank. In its reports about the progress of the landfill for which it provided a \$9.5 million loan, the World Bank's "we" usually slides between the World Bank and its "local" partners: the Palestinians. (The lead bureaucrat for the World Bank on this project is Palestinian.) Matthew Hull has argued that "Official procedures of file production are designed to determine agency (and therefore responsibility) absolutely by the documentation of authorship. Through autographic writing the actions of individuals within an organization are made visible." Hull, "The File," 294. This is exactly what the Palestinian and the World Bank reports and speeches did *not* do. Or, rather, by making themselves authors, they seek to make themselves agents as well, all the while rendering other agents authoritative precisely by also rendering them invisible.

⁵⁶ Allen, "Getting by the Occupation."

because it was located in Area C (as in Rammun), or to pave a new access road to the landfill that would prevent trucks from passing through nearby villages, or working with Israeli middlemen to import the landfill's pipes and lining from Europe, or years of delays with planning designs because settlers had vetoed a location arguing that the smell of the landfill would reach their hilltop homes – all these daily elements of Authority bureaucratic management – appeared only anecdotally. They appeared as *outside* the technical-national process of getting the landfill built. In most public contexts, experts therefore performed scientific knowledge—and work—in ways that helped "define the contours of the political by making and remaking the boundary between science and politics."⁵⁷

Recalling the politicized character of refuse management during the first Intifada (Chapter 1) and considering its national character after Oslo, by the late 1990s the notion that any aspect of planning, transportation, education, health, law or infrastructure would be intervened upon by Israel had become both undesirable and controversial for most occupied residents, their governors included. The Authority's use of the pre-Oslo measurements (and Israeli expropriation capacities, for that matter) *should* therefore have been political in Andrew Barry's sense.⁵⁸ Landfill measurements may have lain hidden in dusty offices, trapped in binders on bureaucrats' desks or in thousands of meters of lining. But their having been translated into the infrastructures indexing Palestinian national

⁵⁷ See Matthews, *Instituting Nature*, 23.

⁵⁸ Barry, "The Anti-Political Economy."

statecraft should have opened up the possibility for disagreement—*especially* among Authority bureaucrats who were most invested in the national character of Palestinian landfill planning.

But it didn't.

How or why was that possible? Hans-Jörg Rheinberger argues that the difference between "technical objects" and "epistemic things" in experimental systems is that the properties of the former are known, precise, pure, and provide specificity and structure.⁵⁹ The latter embody what scientists do not yet know. For Authority bureaucrats experimenting with and performing statehood,⁶⁰ Israeli measurements were constituted as technical objects in Rheinberger's terms. Bureaucrats framed their work as technical and national, pushing the question of the political outside the frame of debate. Israeli metrics that could have taken on a political life were instead recoded into technical and national matter-of-factness. When PA bureaucrats called the landfill projects theirs, political or national, they were not merely *ignoring* Israeli involvements in their planning, design and construction. They were actively “digesting,” or absorbing, those involvements into the technical-national lens through which they governed. In what follows I analyze the process through which they achieved this, with special attention to what it means to render something a technical object, and to what effect.

⁵⁹ Rheinberger, Toward a History of Epistemic Things.

⁶⁰ Matthews, Instituting Nature.

In most parts of the world where attempts are made to establish a regional sanitary landfill collection and disposal system, *where* landfills are built is the most hotly disputed decision that must be made. Palestine's small size and explosive contestations over land over the past century have exacerbated the process of choosing a site in the Territories. Tahal's 1980s plans had evaluated ten to sixteen locations for each of the seven proposed regional landfills before the occupation authorities had chosen seven sites. A close reading of the EIAs the Authority commissioned *a decade later* for its landfills shows that, although they had undergone numerous studies, the Authority's sites had come preselected: as with the design measurements, the Authority's sites overlapped with Israel's early choices. PA plans limited the choices the government considered viable for landfill sites to the choices Israel had already chosen to consider within its own pre-Oslo plans. What was interesting to me was the fact that, although privately they may have, in the context of their work in PA ministries and related agencies the waste managers with whom I worked did not question Israel's early location options. Instead, they treated prior measurements as givens akin to what Bourdieu calls structuring structures.⁶¹

In one sense, pre-Oslo measurements thus functioned like the "recalcitrant," even "vibrant"⁶² rockiness of valleys and like the sensitivity of freshwater springs. Like the aquifers below the West Bank's mountain ranges as described by Baqa's mayor (Chapter 2), Israeli measurements became technical objects some of whose "properties were

⁶¹ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 41, 52-3, 95.

⁶² Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, Mitchell, "Are Environmental Imaginaries Culturally Constructed?"

known, precise, pure, and provided specificity and structure."⁶³ The non-negotiable power of the origin of the measurements—the institutions and processes of occupation—was treated as fixed. Measurements were accorded something like the "strange sovereignty of the colonial ruler" in India: "Once a colonial administrator made a decision it was, however inconvenient and unreasonable, irreversible. Colonial subjects had to learn to live within these inconvenient rules, *treating them like natural things*, rather than try to open them up and contest their official content by rational argument or political dissent."⁶⁴

It should be said that much of the backstory to how Israeli measurements had been arrived at remained unknown to Authority planners. It could be argued that much about Israeli decisions thus *had* to be treated as a given since so little about their details was knowable. The logics, interests and relationships that had informed military decision-making were largely inaccessible to PA bureaucrats. They could know little about the details of Tahal's relationship to the administration, for instance, or about that between the Israeli environment ministry and the administration's environment, housing and transportation departments, or between settler organizations and individual officers. Those were necessarily "blackboxed" in Authority planning processes. "They're like that," (*homeh hayk*) or "just like that" (*hayk*)" frequently accompanied shrugs in PA ministry hallways and meeting rooms. Authority planners subsumed what was unknown

⁶³ Rheinberger, Toward a History of Epistemic Things.

⁶⁴ Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere," 88, italics mine.

about the reasoning behind Israeli calculations into the occupation authorities' *known* power to issue or withhold permits.

Nevertheless, as the 2012 decision to expropriate Rammun's lands through the Civil Administration suggests, bureaucrats seemed sure enough of the administration's knownness, in another sense. As a result they approached it not as a force that repressed them but as a bureaucratic *tool* in the building of national infrastructures. As in the case of municipal employees' "use" of Israeli police officers for enforcement of anti-littering regulations Israeli trainings in equipment use before the first Intifada (Chapter 1), compliance with Israeli measurements' parameters could therefore function to boost Authority planners' own bureaucratic authority.⁶⁵ Compliance served as a technical prosthesis for the execution of landfilling projects bureaucrats could deem national. Thus engineer Abu'oun defended the Ramallah plan against Rammun objectors by stating, "the Zahrat al-Finjan project is considered an exemplary project and a national project...*from the technical point of view* [emphasis mine]." Here it was the landfill's technical nature that rendered it national.

The significance of Authority landfill planners' commitment to landfills' technical and national character was further demonstrated in conversations I had with Nitsan. He explained how, for civil administration bureaucrats, granting permits for an Authority-run landfill was another opportunity to *control* Palestinian infrastructure. At the same time, for my PA interlocutors, receiving permits served to advance the technical capacities—

⁶⁵ Feldman, *Governing Gaza*. Matthews, *Instituting Nature*.

and to promote the econationalism⁶⁶ —of a future Palestinian state. Nitsan had a high degree of access to the administration approval process far greater than that of his counterparts (who were also objecting to the landfill) in Rammun. He came and went at Beit El military base on a weekly basis. He was on friendly terms with staff members there. And he sat in on administration meetings that determined whether, when and how Palestinian projects would be implemented. He was therefore able to offer a sense of how the administration's officers evaluated the landfill proposal and objections to it. The administration had initially approved the plan, he told me. It had done so because allowing the project in an area under complete Israeli jurisdiction *assured the occupation authorities' own greater control over construction and operation*. Nitsan took this logic so seriously that he encouraged the settlements with which he worked to make it central to the arguments they presented to the administration's Objections Committee when objecting to the landfill plans:

We're arguing that the civil administration will not be able...to supervise the site properly. Because it doesn't have...the manpower for it, and the knowledge...In the case that there's a malfunction of the landfill and they can't operate it well--what can the civil administration do? It can shut down the landfill? It can't!...because there is no alternative!...So he will say to himself, it's better to operate a landfill that might be less than the standards, than shutting it down!⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Dawson, Eco-Nationalism.

⁶⁷ Phone interview on July 2, 2013.

What seems to have given greater control to the Authority over land and people, extending albeit limited control over the nation's territories, offered occupiers the very same thing.

But these mutually exclusive "senses" of control were not mere differences of opinion: two opposite, abstract "ways of seeing" the same infrastructure. They were interpretations with effects. The most obvious resulted from the construction of landfills themselves. Below I discuss the less obvious, though related, effect. That was the effect the technical-national absorption of Israeli measurements had on the dynamics between governed and governors within the "internal" Palestinian governance of waste. Infrastructural achievements are frequently the fruit of the labor of multiple individuals and institutions.

Chandra Mukerji calls the multiple authorships of a single infrastructure "collective engineering," "collective intelligence" and "distributed cognition."⁶⁸ Time lags between the development of socio-technical blueprints for infrastructure and construction are inherent to any infrastructural endeavor.⁶⁹ It is common, furthermore, for governing institutions to duplicate one another's designs. Patrick Carroll shows that measurements produced under one form of rule often survive transition into another form of rule.⁷⁰ Drawing on the techniques of other institutions, even without special coercion, can be the

⁶⁸ Mukerji, Impossible Engineering.

⁶⁹ Callon and Law, "Engineering and Sociology."

⁷⁰ Carroll, Science, Culture and Modern State Formation.

product of "infrastructural fetishism."⁷¹ Palestinian police, for example, adopted Israeli policing techniques in the transition from "direct" Israeli rule to Authority governance in the territories.⁷² But while such cases usually highlight the durability of ideologies or of practices across time, their descriptions pay scant attention to the media through which duplicated, "abstract" ideas travel. Infrastructures (and their measurements) appear as either embodiments of traveling ideas or material conduits for their eventual materialization. Theories that a canal should be built for France to be great, that policing maintains order, that living spaces discipline individuals, become abstractions slapped onto the material worlds in which they find themselves.

The story of the Authority's translation of Israeli measurements tells us that measurements were translatable because, counter to what their numerical precision might imply, they were generous and fluid. They imposed themselves, but only partially. They had teeth but were adaptable. Like the Zimbabwe Bush pump's, their fluidity was the source of their durability across regimes.⁷³ But while the Bush pump traveled across space, landfill measurements traveled across *time*. As they did so, the measurements were not entirely unmoored from their origins.

Initially, I assumed that the fact that Israeli measurements were "reused" fifteen years later suggested those measurements' continued scientific legitimacy. After all, many Authority bureaucrats were experts in water, wastewater and environmental engineering.

⁷¹ Dalakoglou, "The Road."

⁷² Parsons, "The Palestinian Security Apparatus," 361.

⁷³ Laet and Mol, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump."

Many had recent degrees from the United States, Canada, Europe, India, Turkey and from new Palestinian university research labs (see Chapter 2). They had gone on "study tours" to Japan, Germany, Israel and the U.S. observing "best practices" in mitigating waste's polluting tendencies.

However, by the time the National Strategy was launched (in 2010), the use of land filling in many of these places was declining. Many considered landfills an inefficient use of landmasses and a danger to groundwater resources, especially where populations are dense and areas are land-scarce. Incineration and recycling had begun to replace landfills, reducing impacts on water and requiring less land. By the mid-2000s Israel, Japan, China, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Italy and Britain had either banned landfilling or were in the process of doing so. Germany had banned landfills in 2005. (Ironically, in 2009 Germany approved funding for the construction of Ramallah's landfill. Israel, which had committed to eradicating landfills by 2020, approved the Authority's plans for three regional West Bank landfills designed to operate until at least 2040.) Alternatives were thus available to the Authority and its donors. Their decision to organize Palestine's national waste management system around large-scale landfilling therefore highlighted the (necessarily?) anachronistic character of the measurements' translation. Two decades after calculation, pre-Oslo measurements continued to serve the purposes for which they had initially been calculated: to duplicate Israeli waste management practices in the occupied West Bank. This time duplication was diachronic rather than synchronic.

Ironically, again, it was Palestinian experts who first told me about the predicament in which they found themselves. Most of each day's work was dedicated to constructing infrastructures on their way to obsolescence. Worse, Authority and municipal employees saw themselves as working toward international recognition of their capacity to manage a *modern* (i.e. hi-tech) state. Planners' borrowing of Israeli measurements was thus doubly puzzling. On the one hand because the measurements of occupation were building the infrastructures of liberation. And on the other hand because measurements from 1987 no longer corresponded with what the Israeli and European governments—whose recognition Palestinian bureaucrats sought—considered appropriate (see Chapter 2). This seemed to be the performance of statehood at the expense of itself.⁷⁴

Treating pre-Oslo Israeli measurements as technical objects also meant that Palestinian landfill planners ignored other, more recent, calculations. This included their *own* findings, which often suggested that the sites they had chosen were not ideal for construction of a large-scale landfill. The Authority had commissioned two Ramallah-based hydrogeologists to conduct a geotechnical investigation of the proposed Rammun site, for example. In 2008, Nazzal and Messerschmid⁷⁵ described what they saw as a "danger of pollution of deep-seated but unconfined groundwater resources, used

⁷⁴ Thanks to Audra Simpson for this phrasing.

⁷⁵ I refer to Messerschmid here as a member of the PA's waste and wastewater planning teams because he is one of the few non-Palestinian experts who has been based in Palestine for a number of years. When I met him he was living permanently in al-Bireh, had spent a long time in Gaza and was generally recognized as an "insider" foreigner by Palestinian experts who knew him.

downstream for drinking water supply." They noted that "high content of boulders, loose stones and pebbles within the soil can considerably increase the real field condition soil permeability."⁷⁶ A year earlier Messerschmid had also written that the:

Rammun proposed sanitary landfill site lies in a *highly sensitive area* of karstic aquifer outcrops and a *thin cover of generally permeable chinks*. The site is situated within the recharge zone of important springs North of Jericho that are *used for domestic supply* and mineral water production. In general, this is *clearly not a favorable setting for a major dumping site*. However, no better location can be offered in the immediate surrounding, from a hydrogeological and geotechnical point of view. The next locations that are clearly more suitable...are located 3 km to the East, and some 300m further below, towards the Jordan Rift Valley.⁷⁷

Authority bureaucrats faced frequent public criticism. It came in whispers, on social media sites, at municipal meetings, radio and television broadcasts and in newspapers. Though not the most important critique of PA governance, it was part of the daily hum of public critique across the West Bank. Many residents with whom I spoke connected negative experiences of Zahrat al-Finjan in Jenin to what was likely to come in Ramallah and in Hebron, for example.⁷⁸ Jenin district residents had comments at the ready whenever they heard of my interest in landfills. Apropos of my research, one employee at the Jenin Chamber of Commerce was eager to tell me that Anza village,

⁷⁶ Messerschmid and Nazzal, "Preliminary Report," 2.

⁷⁷ Messerschmid, "Rammun Landfill," 13. *Emphasis mine*.

⁷⁸ This was another sign that waste management had taken on a West Bank-wide, national scale that allowed for comparisons of a national program in multiple "local" sites.

"located near Zahrat al-Finjan" had a problem with "flies and mosquitoes. These are new since Zahrat al-Finjan was built," he said.

In the 1980s, the Israelis wanted to build a landfill there. The municipalities rejected the project. Why we accept it now, I don't know. Now between 7pm and 7am the areas near Zahrat al-Finjan have a terrible smell. You have to close the windows of your car as you pass on the road between Jenin and Nablus. The effect of all this is terrible not only on agriculture, but also on farms, villages, animals and people.⁷⁹

I met a woman from Arrabi, a Jenin district village, while having dinner at a friend's house in Ramallah. "Mansoura, Fahme, Muchayem Fahme, 'Ajja and Arrabi—all these are villages around the landfill," she said, eyes wide. "The smell is *awful*. In winter or summer, since in the summer it's hot and the garbage is cooked and in the winter there is rain and it is soaked and smells as well. People can no longer open their windows." "Just in the mornings?" I asked. "No, anytime of day or night," she said. "It's because of the bad location they chose."⁸⁰

When confronted with similar critiques, it was striking that Authority bureaucrats chose *not to blame Israeli restrictions* around where a Palestinian landfill could be located in order to defend their own decisions. They alluded instead to the scientific and technical character of landfilling. I understood this rhetorical move to be based on the assumption that that which was considered technical must also be understood as national, and therefore good. Emphasizing the technical character of designs also implied

⁷⁹ Interview in Jenin city, 6 December 2009.

⁸⁰ Conversation in Ramallah on 16 October 2009.

knowledge forms that objectors to the plans could not grasp, as waste management—now twinned with environmental protection—had become an elite knowledge form and practice.

The latter assumption corresponded with the experiences residents described having had when they attempted to engage the PA on its landfill plans. Rammun residents objecting to the Ramallah landfill proposal, for example, sent dozens of letters to Authority ministers and met nearly 40 times with various Authority offices. Rabbah Thabta, one of Rammun's leading activists against the landfill, told me that they had not received a single substantive response.⁸¹ By substantive he meant that not a single Authority office or expert had explained *why* the landfill had to be on that site. He was especially perplexed because Rammun had offered alternative lands for the landfill in a gesture of compromise. These alternative plots were owned by Rammun's village council and were therefore less complicated to acquire. No response to this either. Rammun made its offer public.

Ramallah's deputy mayor finally replied, but again only vaguely: "This is the most appropriate of the fourteen sites that were considered. *In studies!*" he exclaimed. "Not based on something *random*. If we look at all the sites, this one is the furthest away from..." He trailed off. "...from the surrounding villages." The TV host pressed him: "Further or furthest? Is there further than this?" "No," replied the deputy. "In the existing maps this was the furthest site." Neither the host nor Ahmed, another member of

⁸¹ Phone interview, November 9, 2013.

Rammun's objections committee, looked persuaded. Ahmed took over: "We would like to see *more studies*, so the alternative site suggested by the families of Rammun is considered." Silence. An Authority engineer stepped in, again raising the cracked shield of the technical: "We promised the families of Rammun that we will manage the landfill *on the basis of the technical and environmental studies*," he concluded, again leaving *claims* to the technical to stand in for an explanation of their relative merits. In another debate, this time with the Ministry of Local Government's Walid Halayqa, Thabta returned to the question of location:

We are against the location. We have alternatives...We suggested a piece of land—a piece owned by the village council whose area is 8,722 dunams [2,180 acres]...We suggested that it be taken, since it is in Area C, and the current location is also in Area C. This one is Rammun's and that one is Rammun's. Please go ahead (*tafaddalo*), move the location east approximately 2 km, and take any site from the 8,722 dunams!

The host turned to Thabta: "I am sorry to ask this but...is it possible that the Ministry of Local Government and all the responsible people [*al-mas'olin*] there who are also experts in this field, I mean, are you smarter and more capable than they are in choosing a site?" Thabta's response reminded the host and viewers that the Authority had tried to build Ramallah's landfill in two other villages before turning to Rammun. The question hinged on the meaning of "only possible site." Halayqa's retort was evasive: "The only location that was the most preferred among those that were studied in the whole area was the site in what they call the Rammun location...Not all areas, not just any area is appropriate for the construction of a landfill," he said flatly. "These studies...on the locations, they

determined that the only location that meets all the environmental conditions is this location...If you want to begin all over again—" The host interrupted again, raising his voice: "What *are* the environmental conditions? *Who determines them?*" "Studies!" said Halayqa. Thabta tried again. "There was never any consideration of the alternatives we recommended!" Halayqa sighed. "There are alternatives that were studied, all the alternatives that were possible. Not every piece of land can be studied."

As I watched, I wondered why Halayqa, with whom I had spoken several times, had not drawn on his years of experience in charge of the Ministry's Joint Service Councils for Solid Waste Management. I wondered why Abu'oun, an electromechanical engineer, had not drawn on his training at the University of Northumbria to placate those questioning the project's "technical" details. Perhaps the design of the shape, size and location of the landfills were not what Halayqa, Abu'oun and others involved themselves would have chosen for Palestine—had the pre-Oslo measurements not become technical givens. Perhaps the men were as convincing as they were convinced. In any case one effect of the Authority's borrowing of pre-Oslo measurements was a seemingly inevitable disavowal of the same expertise that had ostensibly given them authority to build the nation's waste infrastructures in the first place (see Chapter 2).

This disavowal affected the extent to which the governed, represented here by the Rammun landowners, could get on board with the idea that these projects were indeed national—and therefore *legitimate*. Without evidence of the Authority's expertise, it seemed clear to Rammun objectors that the Authority's project was not a national one. So

much so, in fact, that they could show greater commitment to the nation by working *against* the Authority with the help of Israeli settlers.⁸² "I consider the defense of my land a duty," said Thabta, again on television. "Palestine begins from Rammun...Whoever does not defend one *shibir* in Rammun will not defend any of Palestine's lands." The Authority's recoding had made it possible for the measurements to become "internal" to Palestinian governance.

Nevertheless, however unconvincing it was to critical publics, bureaucrats' treatment of measurements as technical-national thus became an evaluative discourse, inciting residents as "local witnesses"⁸³ who evaluated proposed infrastructures on that basis. The measurements thus functioned as their own numerical patina. Neither Israel's initial intentions behind the calculation of the numbers, nor the meaning Authority experts later ascribed to them solely determined their effects. Infrastructures built and proposed based on them were therefore far from neutral conduits. They mediated between social actors, shaping their relations.⁸⁴ This suggests that new meaning-making does not always eradicate that which preceded it. Instead, the infrastructures, like the meanings sometimes encrusted within them, are layered over one another.⁸⁵ This is precisely

⁸² Another effect of translation was the creation of unlikely alliances among landfill critics. As I discuss in an article entitled "Occupational Hazards" (2014), this occurred in 2013 when Rammun residents, Israeli environmental NGOs and Israelis settlers (including Nitsan) worked *together* to oppose Ramallah's regional landfill.

⁸³ Shapin and Schaffer, Leviathan and the Air-Pump.

⁸⁴ Larkin, Signal and Noise, 4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

because the measurements were products of sociotechnical assemblages⁸⁶ whose "social" and "technical" attributes could not be divorced from one another. In this sense, neither the fluidity nor the durability of the measurements were mere matters of interpretation but were instead built into the calculations themselves.⁸⁷

That Israel continued its involvement in the management of Palestinian waste in a number of—albeit less publicly visible—ways suggests that the technical-national had given rise to what Kaviraj has dubbed a "double-layered 'public sphere'."⁸⁸ This was achieved through a number of simplifications and elisions. PA experts' work of purification separating "internal" national governance from "external" occupation⁸⁹ necessarily yielded excesses and remainders that, as the above disavowals suggest, had unpredictable and often incoherent effects (see also Chapter 2). The division between internal and external appeared to be both territorial-geographical and institutional. Geographically, it envisioned the West Bank as (a much-reduced) Palestine and the Authority's rightful area of rule as the West Bank. But institutionally, the division was less clear. It depended on the nature of the work involved. *Some* work managing West

⁸⁶ Callon and Law, "Engineering and Sociology."

⁸⁷ Laet and Moll, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump," 225.

⁸⁸ See Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere," 101.

⁸⁹ I draw on Bruno Latour's concept of "purification" here. I am interested in the way experts have effected separations between the worlds of solid waste management (broadly, of science) and of politics, on the one hand, and between the objects they call "solid waste" and "the environment," on the other. Experts located themselves between the two latter objects: solid waste and the environment. Their work is to manage the former (a byproduct of society) as part of their role as custodians of the latter (ubiquitous nature). Latour argues that the work of purification fails in the face of the constant proliferation of hybrids, or quasi-objects, that not only refuse to be purified but are in fact produced through the process of purification. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

Bank waste, when it was technical, was "internal" to Authority governance. Other work was external to it. The internal work depended on classifying (basically unavoidable) interventions by Israeli or other foreign institutions as technical. This occurred either because the foreigners intervening in Palestinians' work were deemed "professionals"⁹⁰ or because the parameters they set were treated as "technical objects." Those interventions, while structuring in fundamental ways for the daily processes and materials of waste governance, were thereby neutralized and *nationalized*. They were enfolded within and used as tools for new Authority-led national projects designed for managing waste.

Israeli interventions were dubbed "external" when they were classified as "political,"⁹¹ and vice versa. When soldiers stormed an infrastructural site, for example, when a permit was denied, when a project was handed a "stop work" order or when a garbage truck was prevented access to a dumpsite, these were "external" and therefore political interventions. Dr. Shaheen, the deputy mayor of Nablus, was interviewed by a BBC journalist about why sewage was flowing through the streets of Nablus, for example. The journalist had just interviewed the father of an infant whose face had been chewed on by a rat the sewage had carried to their home. "Why does the West Bank's largest city, which has had a sewage system since Roman times, not have a treatment

⁹⁰ In her book *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza* (2011), Sara Roy discusses how al-Wafa organization in Gaza (known on the Gaza "street") as a Hamas organization, has "professional" relationships with various Israeli hospitals and/or other organizations.

⁹¹ By political I mean that an intervention was open to public debate or disagreement and usually associated with the trappings of military aspects of occupation when they obstructed Authority work.

plant?" the journalist asked. "Dr. Shaheen put it down to 'technical and political difficulties,'" he reported. "There has been a plan on the table, he says, for more than 15 years; there is funding, too, from Germany. The problem has been receiving approval from the Israeli authorities,"⁹² said Shaheen. When the Authority was *permitted* or *encouraged* to do something, by contrast, that was usually treated as "professional" or "technical" involvement instead. This occurred in contexts like those above, where the Authority was authorized to build on a certain site or "opted" to hire an Israeli company for its environmental impact assessment, for instance. In these settings Israeli bureaucratic hurdles were posited as mere administrative aspects of Palestinian bureaucrats' own work. They could also thereby become technical tools if need be.

Isolation of Israeli involvement as external and political was therefore not absolute. This ambivalent division of techno-political labor also suggested that, in one sense, Palestinian waste experts' work was not viewed as political. The political swooped in from an imagined outside. Despite the national character of the technical, in other words, it was not necessarily part of "politics" per se. This is interesting in part because many of Palestine's most prominent environmental and waste management experts had cut their teeth as public health and environmental researchers and activists when environmental research and education had been part of mass-based, collective action towards national liberation during the first Intifada (see Chapter 1). This had been a time when environmental work had therefore been political work both for the people doing it

⁹² Franks, "Jerusalem Diary."

and for the Israeli army that encountered it. It was in that context that, for Dr. Isaac (of the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem), completing an environmental profile for the Territories during the Oslo talks had been "a national obligation." It had allowed him to "do what we could not achieve fully in the multilaterals."⁹³ After Oslo, by contrast, many experts who joined the Authority's efforts to reform Palestine's environmental landscape presented their work as that of the few, the specially trained and now, the non-political.

The notion that the technical-national was internal was also in tension with the idea that the problem of waste was environmental. It was in tension with the environment's purported *regional* and *global* scales. For the post-Oslo bureaucrats, waste management was national in that it appeared to be limited to the geographical boundaries of the West Bank (and Gaza). At the same time, what had necessitated experts' technical intervention was in part the fact that the management of pollution functioned at much broader geographical scales. Like Palestinian experts' public speech in the presence of Israelis and donor representatives, the optic of management was required to exceed the scale of national territory. The two developments—the rise of waste's environmentalist experts and the emergence of the technical-national realm—were made possible by the same processes. Most prominent among them was the transformation of waste into an environmental pollutant. Consequently, the environment gave new meaning to borders as well as to the distinction between internal and external governance. The expansiveness of

⁹³ By documenting how Israel had negatively impacted what was, implicitly, no one's--or everyone's--environment, at the moment of the "transfer of authority" over it, ARIJ could both help hold Israel accountable for what by then was the globally perceived crime of environmental destruction and put preemptive pressure on the Authority to do differently.

the environment heightened borders' significance. Keeping flows "inside" borders or, if one let them flow outside borders, knowing where they were produced, allowed for flows of legal, financial and moral accountability to be activated. It was in this context that the technical-national also framed waste as an issue internal to somewhat nebulous national-jurisdictional-geographical borders.

For the people the PA governed within those borders, PA bureaucrats' attachment to managing waste within a technical-national field sometimes undermined the PA's legitimacy as keeper of expert knowledge. But the technical-national view on waste management also allowed the PA to implement waste-related reforms because it provided a framework through which enough people could be convinced their own work was national *despite being heavily shaped by Israeli institutions*. As such, these reforms necessarily affected the daily lives of publics critical, supportive and indifferent. In the following chapters, I explore how, despite the absence of a solid, generalized PA legitimacy, the PA did gain a form of authority—or at least compliance with its rule—through its sanitation plans and through the reforms it implemented. Given the PA's inability to persuade publics with a coherent narrative or moral discourse, what did compliance look like and how was it achieved?

Chapter 4

Their Modernity: Sense-making, Technoaesthetics and Culture

[B]y teaching us to employ the methods of reason, universal modernity enables us to identify the forms of our own particular modernity.⁹⁴

Introduction

Many nationalisms have been characterized by two different, and sometimes contradictory, historical imperatives. One professes respect for a past national culture, organizing itself around a loyalty to that culture's purported main features.⁹⁵ This imperative has characterized some strands of Palestinian nationalism at least since the 1960s both in Palestine and in exile. Palestinian nationalisms have emphasized a "return" to traditional Palestinian culture or heritage (*turath*).⁹⁶ Culture's "preservation" has entailed celebration of people's attachments to land through agriculture as well as the incorporation of religion (especially Islam) and "folk" culture (e.g. art, poetry, dance,

⁹⁴ Chatterjee, "Our Modernity," 141.

⁹⁵ On the cultural bases of the nation in China, for example, see Schein, *Minority Rules*; on the reinvention of the customary in Mozambique, see Obarrio, "Remains: To Be Seen"; on multiculturalism in settler colonial contexts (in Australia), see Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition*; on dreaming the nation's heritage in Greece, see Gourgouris, *Dream Nation*; on anti-colonial nationalist attachments to culture in India, see Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation*.

⁹⁶ For an analysis of heritage politics in among Palestinian NGOs, for instance, see De Cesari, "Creative Heritage: Palestinian Heritage NGOs and Defiant Arts of Government." For how the past has figured in the

music and dress) into political organizing, community festivities and now into government functions.⁹⁷

The other, counter-imperative of nationalisms commits itself to modernizing, and therefore to transforming, inhabitants into citizens of a state or state-to-be.⁹⁸ Here the modern present serves “as the site of one’s escape from the past,”⁹⁹ including from modernity-impeding aspects of culture. Aided by the radical social transformations that took place as a result of the mass expulsions of 1948 and 1967, the nationalist movements that led to the first Intifada (1987-1993) aimed to reinvent Palestinian society according to new class and gender frameworks.¹⁰⁰ More recently, Islamist movements such as Hamas have also propagated social transformation through inward-looking, pious cultivation of the self in the Territories. By virtue of forwarding a project to build a modern state, PA governance can be understood as another force of nationalist reformism over the past two decades as well.

This chapter examines the PA’s approach to the question of social transformation as it appeared in its West Bank sanitation reforms. It aims to describe the national(ist) aspect of the PA’s technical-national field of waste management by taking the pulse of the

⁹⁷ See Rashid Khalidi, Palestinian Identity; On PLO institutions concerned with Palestinian culture, see Rubenberg, “The Civilian Infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization.”

⁹⁸ For examples see Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen; Gellner, Nations and Nationalism; Chatterjee, “Our Modernity.”

⁹⁹ Chatterjee, “Our Modernity,” 152.

¹⁰⁰ For examples, see Khalidi, Palestinian Identity; Hammami, “Women, the Hijab and the Intifada”; Tamari, “The Palestinian Movement in Transition”; Hazboun, Doumani and Tamari, “Palestinian Communists and the National Movement.”

PA's version of modernity as it was manifest in the lives of the governed. PA state-building through the building of institutions and infrastructures for managing waste combined features of nationalisms organized around both the imperatives I outline above. But it also differed from both imperatives in interesting ways. Despite the fact that PA bureaucrats took strident steps toward setting up the foundations of a state, the period I examine (between 2007 and 2014) was characterized by a profound ambivalence toward the question of social transformation.

PA and municipal waste reformers resembled other nationalist reformers in that they attempted, for example, to alter inhabitants' practices vis-à-vis discards.¹⁰¹ They instructed local publics through short films on Palestinian television, stickers on shop fronts, pamphlets, radio spots and school textbooks. In Jenin, for example, under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government, the municipal health department created stickers for business owners. The sticker below describes how and when garbage should be taken out and in what it should be stored. It asks that plastic bags, papers, newspapers and empty cardboard boxes not be left on sidewalks or streets. It asks that cardboard boxes be tied together before being discarded and that they, along with garbage contained in special bags, be left on the street after 5pm. It asks that shopkeepers keep the sidewalk and street outside their shops clean. The sticker apologizes on behalf of the municipality that any violator of these rules will be ticketed according to the public health law.

¹⁰¹ See Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere" and Chakrabarty, "Of Garbage, Modernity and the Citizen's Gaze."

Reformers also attempted to reorient residents' senses of sight and olfaction toward new modes of disgust. In March 2011, I attended an event in Jerusalem called "Harvesting the Sun Twice: Cross-Border Initiatives for Environmental Peace Building."¹⁰² It was hosted by an Israeli organization called the Van Leer Institute.¹⁰³ Ibrahim Absa was one of three Palestinian speakers. His bio told us that he had "spent most of his life outside Palestine." He had lived in Kuwait, Germany and in Holland, where he had received an MA in Environmental Studies. He had returned to Palestine in



Figure 13. Jenin Municipality Health Department Sticker. Courtesy of Muhammad Abu Surour, Director of the Health Department.

1990 as head of the PA's consumer protection department and chief of control and inspection in the Ministry of National Economy. We were told that as "an

¹⁰² The event was held on 29 March 2011, Jerusalem.

¹⁰³ The Institute was established in 1959 to promote "humanistic, democratic, and liberal values in the social discourse in Israel."

environmentalist he was looking for opportunities to improve the environmental situation in Palestine."¹⁰⁴

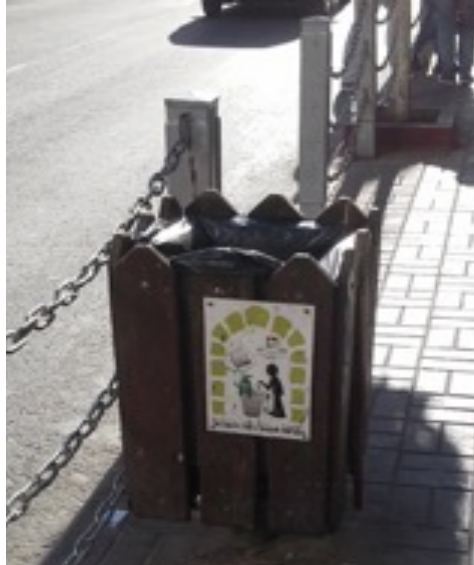


Figure 14. Ramallah public bin discouraging littering. The bottom line reads: “The preservation of our city’s cleanliness is proof of our civilization.” Photo by the author, 2012.

Absa was one of hundreds of Palestinians now working in the PA, in NGOs, as consultants for international aid organizations and in private companies, who had branded themselves as pioneers of Palestine’s urgently needed environmental movement. As professionals building the would-be state, they were actually less a movement than a new “social type”¹⁰⁵ whose ability to design the environmental future of the state derived from the idea that they possessed a greater environmental “awareness” than did their

¹⁰⁴ A You-tube video is available online. <http://up-grade.me/frame/viewonline.htm?onlineId=25i29015910&term=> (accessed 29 July 2014).

¹⁰⁵ Mukerji, *Impossible Engineering*. See also Matthews, *Instituting Nature*.

compatriots.¹⁰⁶ At Van Leer, the Israeli MC asked what had made Absa an environmentalist. When he had returned to his hometown—‘Anabta, near Tulkarem in the West Bank—it was "the bad smells...especially in the Alexander River" that had shocked him, Absa said. He called Anabta "the black town." Piles of burning garbage and raw sewage seemed to be everywhere. Among environmentalist reformers like Absa, articulations of the need for reforms were often accompanied by talk about their own sensory experiences of public wastes. Shocked at what they saw as the population’s complacency in the face of intolerable conditions, they asked, for example: “Have you seen the garbage there? I don’t know how people can *live* with that!” In asking such questions they performed their own qualifications to speak on behalf of the environment and to demand that others “care” about it as they did.

Reformers also encouraged a technoaesthetics of awe toward new infrastructures and techniques for managing waste.¹⁰⁷ These doubled as attempts to reorganize residents’ approaches to themselves as governors of the nation and can be viewed as attempts to “modernize” the population out of old habits and into new ones. In that context, there was much talk in ministry and municipal offices, in meetings and in waste-related policy briefs, about the questions of residents’ culture (*thaqafah*) and mentality (*‘aqliyyah*). “We came to have this kind of culture,” the head of Jenin’s municipal health department said,

¹⁰⁶ As such, they were sometimes rewarded by Israel and by foreign donors for their ability to think “with the world” on environmental issues. That is likely how Absa and two other Palestinians had presumably been granted Israeli permits to be in Jerusalem for the event.

¹⁰⁷ Here I borrow Masco’s use of the term, by which he means “the evaluative aesthetic categories embedded in the expert practices of,” in this case, post-Oslo waste reformers. Masco, “Nuclear Technoaesthetics,” 350.

for example, “that with all the ease in the world someone will throw anything into the streets.” If residents could be educated into an appreciation of modern collection and disposal, the theory went, that might counteract the culture that was keeping them from full participation in reforms.

However, reformers’ discussion of culture revolved most around how to improve waste management *without addressing the problem of culture* directly. Reformers concentrated resources on the development of large-scale infrastructures, equipment and institutional rearrangements. This was a conscious choice. Reforms were designed in such a way as to leave the culture and mentality of the people *as they were*—if not to preserve them as heritage, at least to avoid conflict with them. Individuals’ daily habits and “environmental awareness” thus received comparatively little investment. By contrast, one of the largest municipal investment priorities was distribution of public waste containers.¹⁰⁸ But pursuit of “litterbugs” was sparse. There was no “green police,”¹⁰⁹ either. Jenin municipality's health and accounting departments estimated that the number of violations filed annually did not exceed two hundred. In a city of roughly

A “Full Cost Analysis”¹⁰⁸ conducted in 2004 by ARIJ calculated that the “full economic costs of the current MSW [municipal solid waste] management system for the year 2002” included \$2,748,572 just for the cost of solid waste bins in the West Bank. The report also estimated solid waste management project costs until the year 2022. For bins, the total cost was \$13,705,898. For both years the bin costs were greater than the amounts spent on insurance, fuel and use of regional dumpsites. The cost of dumping up to 2023 was only marginally higher than the cost of bins.

¹⁰⁹ Israel, for example, has had a Green Police for several years. This is the Ministry of Environmental Protection’s “principal compliance monitoring and enforcement force.” It includes “40 inspectors” who “work in co-operation with the Ministry’s national headquarters and regional offices (there are five to six Green Police inspectors in each district, but they do not report to regional office directors). The inspectors carry out facility inspections and field surveillance, investigate non-compliance, and transfer cases to the MoEP’s Legal Division for the preparation of formal enforcement actions.” It also includes “13 Marine and Coastal Inspectors.” Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Israel 2011, 51.

60,000 that number was negligible. Meanwhile, garbage piled daily next to telephone poles, beneath and beside dumpsters, on ledges, under trees and in empty lots.

Campaigns to educate the public about the deleterious relationship of waste to the environment (the “science” of environmental pollution) were few, as were efforts to persuade communities to separate domestic wastes “at the source” and to recycle locally.¹¹⁰ Reformers decided not to compel residents to pay increasingly expensive waste management fees by persuading them of the public good of which waste management was a part, for instance. Instead, in much of the northern and southern West Bank, fees were rendered automatic. They were connected to prepaid electricity meters.¹¹¹ In the central West Bank, persuasion of residents was also foregone in favor of fee collection through collection of building license fees—another automatization of payment.

Nationalisms, it seems, tend either to be described as modernizing *or* as culturally celebratory. As far as their “intent” is concerned, colonialisms are similarly branded as “either or” types. Colonial rule is said to be indirect, in the British mode, such that local cultures are left as they are. Or it is said to be direct, in the French mode, such that the colonized population is assimilated into the colonial culture. Together, the above two features of the PA’s waste-related reforms share a great deal with the two types of nationalism with which I began. But they also contradict one another. The first way in

¹¹⁰ Though donors and consultants offered PA reformers the option to institute community- or household-level recycling (or separation “at the source”), the latter decided to pursue centralized recycling in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron.

¹¹¹ These efforts intensified after 2008 and that trend was only growing when I last visited in August 2014.

which PA sanitation reforms differed from other nationalist reform efforts is therefore in the contradictory *combination* represented by the former.¹¹²

Another difference involves the *reasons* behind Palestinian reformers' claims not to be intervening at the level of culture. This reluctance did not index a pious respect for, or loyalty to, what was presumed to constitute people's attachment to an older culture or mentality. Nor did it index a straightforward instrumentalization of that culture.¹¹³ For the reformers with whom I spent time, the relationship between the concept of culture and reforms first indicated that their stance toward culture was *critical* rather than celebratory. Like most nationalist modernizers, they critiqued residents' culture for its propensity to block participation in statebuilding reforms. They critiqued its resistance to environmentally sound, efficient waste management. They asserted that residents refused to use garbage bins properly, for example, or to pay municipal waste management fees. They claimed that asking residents to separate organic wastes from plastics would be impractical because residents lacked the culture for it. Crucially, reformers insisted that cultural changes *were* nevertheless possible. It was the time it would take for changes to be made that was the problem. *Cultural change was just too slow*. Specifically, it was too slow for the temporality of building a state. State-building was often described as

¹¹² More recently, scholars have pointed to the many ways in which "tradition," "custom" and "culture" have been mobilized toward the ends of "modernization." See for example Wright, "Tradition in the Service of Modernity," in Cooper and Stoler (eds.), Tensions of Empire.

¹¹³ Mahmood Mamdani has written about the tendency of indirect colonial rule to discourage "modernization" of colonial subjects. Instead it encourages the colonized to attach themselves to select useful aspects of what the colonizers consider traditional culture. This sustains an apparently cultural (and always hierarchical) distinction between the two by preventing the colonized from ever becoming fully modernized. This is what I refer to as the cynical (if conscious) instrumentalization of culture. Mamdani, Citizen and Subject. See also Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth.

“preparation for the day”¹¹⁴ when Palestinian statehood would be recognized by the international community.

The temporality within which experts experienced their efforts to build the institutions and infrastructures of the state was a doubled one. According to one of statecraft’s timescales, PA engineers planned for the otherwise unimaginably long-term future. They planned landfills, underground sewage networks and wastewater treatment plants designed to serve the governed population over thirty to fifty years. For Palestine, this represented a long duree vision of governance. But the imperative to build the infrastructures of the deep future *as quickly as possible* was just as powerful. Constructing infrastructures and institutions to demonstrate PA readiness to the outside world was presented as both urgent and, interestingly, as *achievable*. Its urgency may have stemmed, in fact, from the fact that it was perceived as achievable. The international community would not be around forever, nor would Israel’s commitment to maintaining the PA as a proxy government. The rush of state-building was palpable even among those most stoic in the face of Israeli- and donor-imposed delays. The PA had been established as an *interim* arrangement to govern only until 1999, after all. Though seldom articulated explicitly, it was in the air that the PA was an always-already expired governing body. It could be disbanded, just as it could have the rug of international aid pulled out from under it, at any moment. Infrastructures were treated as both more urgent and more achievable than was the transformation of inhabitants into environmentally savvy,

¹¹⁴ Interview in Ramallah, September 16, 2010.

sanitary citizens. The technoaesthetics of PA statebuilding thus favored “stuff” over citizens, the material over the spiritual, in its push to transition Palestine from coloniality to postcoloniality (in part) through the management of waste.

The idea that culture was too slow to change also implied a theory of culture specific to PA sanitary governance. That theory read culture in certain practices and people but not in others. Culture was identified and isolated. Reforms excised it from among the objects of intervention with which waste management was most concerned. Through reiterated processes of inclusive exclusion, a theory of culture was key to technical-national praxis for managing waste.¹¹⁵ PA reforms’ third departure from other nationalist modes of governing can thus be located in PA reforms’ *non*-orientation toward the rehabilitation of residents’ interiorities. In this PA reforms both resembled and diverged from sanitary reforms in colonial and post-colonial contexts elsewhere. Much has been written about the disciplinary and biopolitical logics that characterized the latter. Governors sought to hygienically rehabilitate the governed, to alter their sanitary architectures and to inspect and to segregate their bodies.¹¹⁶ Though PA reforms did aim to change people’s sensory experiences of public wastes, for example, the assumption was that, should such changes occur, they would not necessarily constitute *cultural* changes. They would indicate a compliance with Authority governance, leaving a culture gap between governors and governed intact (see Chapter 5).

¹¹⁵ Agamben, Homo Sacer.

¹¹⁶ See for example Rabinow, French Modern; Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome"; Stoler, Haunted by Empire; Collingham, Imperial Bodies; Argyrou, "Keep Cyprus Clean"; Anderson, "States of Hygiene."

The disarticulation of the ability to alter people's practices, on the one hand, from the ability to alter their culture (as a repository of knowledge), on the other, was most evident in one especially paradoxical aspect of reforms. The environment's emergence in the late twentieth century had prioritized the dangers of invisible, odorless and tasteless environmental pollutants such as nitrates, methane and carbon dioxide. Even if retrained by reforms, the public's sensorium was now of little *scientific* use in detecting dangers or in evaluating the benefits of waste management techniques. Similarly, inundation of residents' sensoria with the technical details of "advanced" waste management usually functioned in the place of *scientific explanations* behind its logics. While encouraging the development of a technoaesthetics around waste management reforms, reformers thus reiterated the distinction between expert and lay, awareness and ignorance. Residents' reliance on experts was thereby reproduced.

In what follows, I focus on some of the reforms' micropractices as I observed them. I explore the techniques deployed in association with the two large-scale infrastructures built within the framework of the National Strategy for Solid Waste Management. One is the first PA-run sanitary landfill in the West Bank, called Zahrat al-Finjan. It opened in 2007 in Jenin governorate. I look at two engagements between PA experts and residents that resulted from its construction. These involved the reorganization of waste disposal in Faqu'a, a village in which I often stayed during my time in Jenin. And they involved the use of the landfill as a site where PA-appointed engineers exposed local publics to sanitary landfilling. The other is the recently (2013)

opened landfill for the southern West Bank, called al-Minya and designed to service the Hebron and Bethlehem governorates. I consider the Bethlehem governorate's 2014 campaign to encourage municipalities to improve garbage collection. Through the proliferation of images of clean and dirty streets, and by attaching financial and moral rewards to the proper identification of a dirty street and its remediation, Bethlehem engineers sought to refashion municipal employees into efficient and environmentally savvy service providers.

Fridays in Faqu'a

Thikra and her sister Abeer were wearing matching sweat suits with pant legs pulled up knee-high, plastic slip-on sandals and unpainted toenails. My skinny jeans were pulled as high up as they would go around my shins. Thikra kicked off her smaller sandals in my direction and slipped into the oversized pair located in its place outside the bathroom. We pulled rugs and cushions off the floor, plopping them on beds in the girls' room. Two plastic buckets brimming with sudsy water stood on the tile floor. In dramatic strokes as if putting out a fire, we tipped them and the water filled the family sitting room. Kitchen, bedrooms, bathroom and living room flooded as we dumped sudsy bucketfuls. Every room in the house had a fist-sized hole in the floor, called a *masraf*, whose tiny cover was pulled up with a fork and moved aside on cleaning days. We used squeegees on long wooden broom handles to make waves against the walls. We then collected the water back towards us and guided it into each room's *masraf*. Two younger brothers half helped, half played, swishing sideways through the ankle-high suds. Lebanese and

Egyptian pop songs played from a small television. The goal was to fill the corners of each room—with force. When water waved back in the direction of the *masraf* it carried any matter lodged there with it. We squeegeed until thin streaks of water remained. Then a dry, white clean cloth was folded over the squeegee at its corners. We went over the floor as many times (and through as many cloths) as it took for the cloth to come up white. In the kitchen Latifa, Thikra and Abeer's mother, told me to wash the walls. She filled a plastic jug with clean water and put it in my left hand. A three-inch nailbrush went in my right. The walls were glazed up to about six feet off the floor so weekly *shatif* (rinsing or washing) left the paint unscathed.



Figure 15. A friend's apartment in Nablus while he was mopping (*shatif*). Photo by Ahmad Al-Nimir, 2012.

For women, Fridays in Faqu'a were constituted by this cleaning ritual, usually before preparation of the main meal. This was in part how it was possible for the family to eat on the floor, the food laid out on a low table in the center of the central sitting room.¹¹⁷ Fridays involved an intensified version of the sweeping, dusting and mopping that took place every day. Women learned to do this from their mothers, Latifa told me. She learned from hers and taught her daughters.

While Thikra helped me with the walls, Latifa took the surfaces that needed a more practiced touch: the top of the fridge, the windows and the *saha* – a large open concrete area outside the front door. She took a broom to the bottle caps, fallen flower petals and tissues in the *saha*, where most of last night's dancing and singing had taken place. Her sweeping took her down some steps, through a driveway, all the way to the paved street where taxis would pass on the way to and from Jenin city. Congratulations on Thikra's graduation and other neighborly talk with the women of the *hara* (neighborhood, lane), brooms in hand, could be heard from the living room.

Like the water well in Slyomovics' description of old Nazareth, the *hara* in Faqu'a was still a place where "men and women mingle, animals and children meet, news is exchanged, and rumors circulate."¹¹⁸ When the weather was warm enough, evenings were spent in the *saha* on chairs brought from indoors, arranged in a circle. Tea

¹¹⁷ When I visited again in August 2014, the family had begun eating at a high table (sitting on chairs) in the salon, or official dining room, at the front of the house. The back sitting room had been transformed, now housing full-height couches all along three of four walls. Sitting on the floor was no longer practiced.

¹¹⁸ Slyomovics, "Edward Said's Nazareth."

accompanied the day's political commentary, stories from a relative who worked in the PA “coordination” office with the Israeli authorities, and backgammon. Since the *saha* is connected to the *hara* by a short paved driveway such that the *hara* is visible from the slightly elevated *saha*, neighbors would stop by to say hello, ask a favor, ask after a sick relative or university entrance exam results, offer a bag of cucumbers—all without paying a “formal” house visit. *Hara-saha* proximity provided an off-street space safe from cars where sociality could take place without burdening the household to make tea or bring food. It offered interaction without entailing expenditure of time that neither party might have to spare; without the dish washing or the eventual returning of the favor the gift of hospitality would necessitate. For many twenty-first century Palestine households, *saha* and *hara* cleanliness – especially in rural areas and camps where more family life takes place outside the walls of the home – were key both to the domestic infrastructure of hospitality and to neighborhood sociality.

The night before had been the party for Thikra's graduation in social work from the Arab American University in Jenin. Now it was noon on Friday. *Athan alduhr* (the midday call to prayer) had just sounded. Any minute now, Mahmoud would be coming by the house with a tractor to pick up the garbage. Barring Israeli military curfews, incursions or other occasional misfortunes, he had been coming at the same time every day, including Fridays and holidays, for about the past fifteen years. He came by appointment because for as long as Faqu'a had had a "garbage problem," residents had preferred household pickup to the placement of dumpsters in the *hara*. Mahmoud would

be done with his rounds in less than two hours, with ample time left over for conversation and tea before he headed over the hill to Faqu'a's local dumpsite. There, banana peels dangling off rubber tires and animal remains would together be burned as they had been since the 1960s.

But Mahmoud did not appear. Was he late? Had a “flying checkpoint” blocked his path? Had the tractor broken down? We wrapped the stems from preparation of stuffed grape leaves in a copy of last week's al-Quds newspaper and added them to the dozens of plastic bags tied in bows by the door. The afternoon came and went. So did Saturday and Sunday. Where to put the bags of garbage that were proliferating hourly? It was inconceivable for them to stay by the door where the family would be receiving guests for further congratulations. Nor could they be stored in the kitchen, which had no space for them. But the *hara* – swept and social as it was – was no more appropriate. Frustrated looks shot back and forth at the sounding of the third midday's *athan alduhr*. Forced to choose the lesser of only evils, Latifa decided on the *hara*. Within hours, cats had scratched through several of the bags. Bones and peels, al-Quds pages, soda bottles and *dawali* stems tumbled out onto the street.

On Monday, a truck finally appeared. But it was not Mahmoud's. Across its side was written "Joint Services Council for Solid Waste Management-Jenin" (*majlis alkhadamat almushtaraq la-idarat alnifayat alsalbeh-jenin*). It barely fit through the street without scraping house walls crowding the *hara*. Two workers in brown jumpsuits gathered the awkward scrap heap into the back. Rather than drive it to Faqu'a's local

dumpsite meters over the hill, they would take it thirty minutes away to Zahrat al-Finjan. Faqu'a's local dumpsite had been closed. A fence surrounded it. An order had come down from the Authority. Latifa had heard the news from Dr. 'Amer, the head of Faqu'a's village council. The order required all "random dumpsites" to be "rehabilitated" and all solid waste to be disposed of at Zahrat al-Finjan. Faqu'a residents were told that the new hour-long drive to and from the landfill as well as use of "formal" JSC workers would more than double Faqu'a's garbage collection fees.¹¹⁹

After Zahrat al-Finjan opened in 2007, the PA forced the closure of over eighty local dumpsites like Faqu'a's. All waste in the Jenin governorate was now destined for Zahrat al-Finjan. Because transport to and from the landfill became too expensive to maintain on a daily basis, Faqu'a's council had agreed to let Jenin's JSC collect and transport Faqu'a's waste instead of Mahmoud. Because JSC staff served multiple villages, collection became less frequent and less predictable. It averaged twice a week. For a time, Faqu'a kept Mahmoud for the JSC's off days. But within weeks that proved both unaffordable and impractical.

Since no one was willing to keep garbage indoors for more than a day, the JSC suggested that dumpsters be distributed throughout the village. Though standard in cities like Jenin since the 1970s, Faqu'a had long avoided them. Latifa and others had been outraged. Dumpsters attracted cats, rats, and other vermin, they argued. Dumpsters dirtied

¹¹⁹ Faqu'a's village council had been paying a monthly 150 JD (about \$211.69, according to July 2014 conversion rates) to rent the land for the old dumpsite. With the combination of the increased cost of gas (to reach Zahrat al-Finjan, 30 minutes away by car) and the shift from renting land nearby to paying 30 NIS (\$8.75) *per ton* to dump at Zahrat al-Finjan, residents' fees for waste management doubled.

the streets and made social interactions out-of-doors less appealing. Through Dr. 'Amer, Faqu'a's delivered their refusal to the PA. Dr. 'Amer sent letters to ministries and to the JSC registering residents' refusal. When I spoke with him in the midst of the controversy, he was visibly frustrated. He argued that “this landfill will cause the level of cleanliness in Faqu'a to fall, *'aozubillah* (God forbid).” He continued: “You mean garbage should sit outside our doors and be ripped through by cats so it can attract vermin and dirty the *hara*--where children play and where we see our families?”

In the only English words Dr. Amer used with me—as if to highlight this as the most important message for the foreign researcher to tell the world—he announced: "Impossible. No way." But soon, as part of a parallel Authority plan to reduce the number of administrative units in the West Bank—a plan framed in the language of cost-effective state-building—Faqu'a was amalgamated into a new, larger municipality that encompassed over ten other small villages. Faqu'a's council, along with Dr. 'Amer's position, were dissolved in 2011. That resolved the issue of the dumpsters. Several dozen were installed throughout Faqu'a's streets months later.

A Visit to Zahrat al-Finjan

In part because of Israeli restrictions, the landfills in Jenin and in Hebron were built on private Palestinian lands nearby Palestinian communities. Each landfill cost over \$14 million to build and costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to operate annually. As in Faqu'a, garbage collection, transport and disposal is now much more expensive for the two thirds of the West Bank's municipalities forced to use the landfills instead of their

own local dumpsites. The PA and municipalities that have taken on the reforms have thus faced defiance as well as demands that they prove what credentials allow them to impose reforms. One way in which reformers have met these challenges is by inviting potential opponents to their projects to visit the infrastructures in order to see for themselves.

In March 2010, I accompanied about three dozen Ramallah area mayors and village council heads on a visit to Zahrat al-Finjan. These were the leaders of communities that would be serviced by a Ramallah regional landfill, should it be built. Their bus was the only one turning left at the intersection where a newly paved road peels off of Nablus Road toward Jenin's southern villages. The bus wobbled as it slowed to turn. Mayors' heads swayed in unison with the wobble like a school of fish. Some, sitting in window seats, rested foreheads on the glass. Energies were drained after the two-hour drive up half the West Bank. Hijab-clad, in her mid-thirties, engineer Reem Khalil stood next to the driver. She steadied herself on the back of a seat with her left hand and held the bus's wired microphone with her right. "*Hamdillah salamitna* (thank God we have arrived safely)," the microphone blared. Those awoken by her broadcast heard her repeat what the mayor of Rammun village—where Ramallah's own landfill was slated to be built—had announced on the same microphone before the group left Ramallah: "This is a national project. At the very least, we will be able to benefit from Area C." Some of the wobbling heads may have meant agreement.

Throughout the day, visitors were inundated with messages conveying the depth of the landfill managers' expertise, in part through the inundation of visitors' senses of

sight, smell and touch with the landfill's "technical" details.¹²⁰ To those gazing out of the right side of the bus at pavement, grass, olive trees and a hill pockmarked with rocks and shrubs, a rather unremarkable white and black placard became visible as the bus turned. At the top was a small Authority logo (an eagle with the Palestinian national flag on its chest). Above it was written: "In the name if God, the merciful, the compassionate." The sign, to which I return below, was almost too detailed to be interesting. But for busloads of groups like this one who weekly visit Jenin's landfill, slowing down at this intersection was just the beginning of landfill detail saturation of this sort. It marked the introduction to a day not of infrastructural spectacles but of the repetitive inundation of each visitor's sensorium with the landfill's behind-the-scenes, technical workings.¹²¹



Figure 16. Zahrat al-Finjan Landfill Sign, Nablus Road. Photo by the author, 2010.

¹²⁰ In her work on water in Oman, Limbert also found that some who claimed expertise sought to make that fact known at the expense of transmitting the knowledge their expertise granted them to those who lacked it. Limbert, "The Senses of Water in an Omani Town," 35.

¹²¹ On state spectacles staged through infrastructure, Coronil, *The Magical State*; Larkin, *Signal and Noise*; Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

The visit that transpired after the turn at this intersection entailed a technical-national detail saturation of the visitor's sensorium. The first stop at the landfill site was the administrative building of the JSC. Air-conditioned air replaced warm, sweet landfill gusts that swelled momentarily in the mayors' nostrils between the bus and building. The smell of human mastery over material degradation. Inside and up a flight of stairs, mayors passed accounting and engineering offices and a table with an open guestbook on it. A few leafed through scribbled signatures from schoolchildren on their way up to the visitors' hall on the top floor. Moist hands left fingerprints on the plexiglass in which a miniature model of the landfill, complete with service roads, mock garbage piles to scale, administrative buildings, weigh bridge and fencing, was encased. Other cases boasted cross-sections of the landfill's lining and sample plastics after incineration and recycling (from foreign factories). The mayors were encouraged to handle pails made of recycled plastics. Heads bent down to look at the cases were soon reoriented to a view of the landfill from wall-to-wall windows.

The Jenin JSC's project manager pressed play and Zahrat al-Finjan's PR video started to play on a flat screen television perched in a corner. It opened with a history of the landfill that began with the signing of a loan contract between the JSC and the World Bank—in 2000—thirteen years *after* Israel had first put landfill plans on paper. The film featured footage of middle-aged men (and some women) in suits, meeting around tables in sparsely furnished municipal meeting halls, in the landfill's visitors' hall and in what

looked like the offices of foreign donors. They were muted; the content of their conversations was inaccessible. A voiceover offered the rather ambiguous explanation that "they are discussing the importance of managing and treating waste." There was also footage of the landfill's opening ceremony. Ties and Palestinian flags flapped in the landfill breeze. People pointed around them and shook hands. Other shots showed veiled schoolgirls watching a Powerpoint presentation of stills from the same PR video.

Mirroring the meetings in the film they had just watched, the mayors were invited to ask questions. There were questions about how much municipal collection and dumping fees cost, about controlling the smell, about effects on the value of land, and about the landfill's lifespan. Ramallah mayors worried that because of the cost of running the site, managers might be inclined to encourage dumping from other areas as well. This would reduce the landfill's lifespan. That, in turn, would necessitate the purchasing and cleaving off of more precious land to dispose of more garbage. "How long will the landfill last?" asked one mayor. Hani Shawahneh, the landfill's engineering director, explained that this same concern over lifespan had catalyzed the decision to undertake recycling:

If it were only Jenin by herself, it would last thirty years. It can take about 3 million tons. Since we brought in waste from Tubas, Tulkarem and Nablus, though, it's been reduced to fifteen. That is why we decided to arrange for separation and recycling. This will expand the number of years. The company we hired will separate off about 50 percent of the waste, so the landfill's age will increase by about five or ten years.

But another Ramallah mayor remained unsatisfied: "Wouldn't it be better if we could have separation at the source? What if we had dumpsters in the streets where we could put the glass by itself, the plastic by itself, and the organic waste by itself, for example?" That way, he was proposing, the municipalities required to pay 30 NIS (about \$8.75) per ton to dump waste at the regional sanitary landfill would end up sending less garbage— and spending less money—for transport and disposal. Recycling could be done on a household, neighborhood or municipal level. Shawahneh responded in a lamenting tone, with a shrug and head tilt. He seemed to be signaling his own humility in the face of an incapacity to apply technology or expertise to the one impenetrable problem: culture. "It would definitely be easier, yes," he conceded. And "this kind of thing has succeeded in European countries 100 percent. "

God willing we will have that kind of culture one day in Ramallah and in Jenin. Every governorate will get to that level, God willing...But it requires a lot of work, and you need to convince the citizen of the need and the way to separate the glass by itself, the plastic by itself, and then to put them into dumpsters on the streets, in neighborhoods and markets.

Shawahneh's argument echoed what I heard repeatedly during my fieldwork. When I asked Jenin's then governor, Qadoura Musa, if the new deal between Zahrat al-Finjan and al-Awartani recycling company would include separation in homes, for example, he responded: "I mean, that needs a big culture (*thaqafah kabirah*). I visited Cologne," he continued, "they told me it took over fifteen years to pass the laws for separation in the home. It took a long time before it arrived at the way it is now. It needs *culture*." As if in a trance he repeated, "it needs culture (*biddo thaqafah*)" another two or

three times, staring blankly out his office window.¹²² The deputy director at Zahrat al-Finjan said almost the same thing when I visited days after al-Awartani's recycling machines had arrived. I asked whether residents would be encouraged to recycle. "If only we had such a culture (*ya rayt 'andna thaqafeh zay hayk*)," he pined.¹²³

Finally, it was time for the mayors to walk through the landfill itself. Though it was less than fifty meters away, mayors were ushered back onto the bus for the ten-second trip. Atop the landfill, their ears were bombarded with the grinding motorized clamor of bulldozers churning trash. Shouting over the racket, the head engineer explained how churning helps prevent methane and other gases from becoming trapped. He turned mayors' attention into the distance, where a second cell was being prepared. Swaths of black plastic lining, like the one they had seen in encased cross-section, reflected the midday sun. Lunch had been planned in a hall built on what the engineers called a "newly rehabilitated dumpsite." On the way, the bus made three more stops at other similar sites. "Unsanitary" garbage dumps, many dating back to the late Jordanian period, had been covered over by playgrounds, becoming hilltop spots for families to spend days off. Squinting, mayors watched children play in gardens lined with used tires painted in primary colors. Mayors walked in twos and threes, smoking cigarettes. "Not bad, no smell," I overheard a few saying to one another. Their hands in suit-pant pockets, shoulders shrugging, "*Wallah* (really), the things we can do when we develop ourselves."

¹²² Interview with Jenin governor Qaddoura Musa, Jenin city, 17 July 2010

¹²³ Interview with Mohammed al-Sa'adi, Zahrat al-Finjan landfill, 3 July 2011.

For Authority bureaucrats, World Bank representatives and their German, Japanese and American colleagues, exposing local publics to new infrastructures in this way meant "good governance." To them, governing well meant rendering details visible to rights-claiming publics called "stakeholders." It meant performative transparency. But the visit produced opacity at the same time as—or perhaps because—it flooded visitors with evidence that it was experts who were at work managing waste in the north.

The sign at the turnoff to Zahrat al-Finjan, for example, highlighted the Palestinian *National* Authority's role—implying Authority authorship of the project—while presenting the JSC as the owner, the World Bank as the funder, Hydroplan Ingenieur and AYGL as the supervisors and Al-Tarifi Group as the contractor. But as we know from Chapter 3, the relationship among these institutions was not captured by what was recorded on the sign. Not only had PA engineers borrowed many of the parameters for its plans from the occupation authorities; the JSC—presented on the sign as the owner and, implicitly from its positioning under the words "Palestinian National Authority," as an institutional branch of the Authority—had been created as a condition of World Bank funding.¹²⁴ The World Bank may thus have been better represented here not as the "funder" but as one of the co-authors along with the Israeli civil administration (not featured on the sign) and with the PA. The funders, also left unmentioned, turned out to be the residents of Jenin. In Jenin, waste management fees had been connected to prepaid

¹²⁴ Part of the JSC was what the World Bank called a "project implementation unit." According to World Bank requirements, it was comprised of a Project manager, an Administrative Assistant, a Financial Manager, assisted by an Accountant/Book-Keeper, and an Operations Manager. The World Bank had outlined both whom the JSC should hire (their qualifications) and what their day-to-day duties would be. That is, not only what the landfill would look like but also how it would be managed.

meters collecting electricity fees in 2008. When the \$9.5 million World Bank loan came due in 2010, Jenin residents began to be charged—automatically—for its repayment.

The sign also obscured because the details it presented (like World Bank Credit Number TF 024699 and the acronym A.Y.G.L.) were, for visitors like these Ramallah mayors or for the hundreds of student and other visitors, at best irrelevant and, at worst, illegible. It had taken me nearly a year to confirm why A.Y.G.L., an Israeli environmental consulting company, had been hired to assess the landfill plans. Once I did, it proved impossible for me to get myself invited to any of the ongoing meetings between JSC staff and A.Y.G.L. This was surprising given the relative ease with which I had been able to attend other meetings (e.g. between Palestinians and foreign donors) in the West Bank and even to meet with civil administration staff. In hushed, off-the-record tones, a foreign consultant, Khalil and an Israeli military bureaucrat each told me (separately) that although PA regulations forbade it from hiring Israeli companies, planners had hired one anyway. They had hired A.Y.G.L. on the Israeli military's suggestion that doing so would get the permits through the Israeli permit bureaucracy more quickly.¹²⁵

Based in Haifa just thirty minutes by car from where the landfill sat deep into the ground, A.Y.G.L. was at most a phantom presence on the project—especially for visitors. Israel's wall, the military's permit system and reformers' commitment to presenting projects like the landfill as national achievements had conspired to keep the people whose garbage was disposed of there and A.Y.G.L.'s Israeli experts invisible to one another. So

¹²⁵ Rumor had it that former administration bureaucrats were consultants with A.Y.G.L. Some said that the administration was receiving a "cut" when A.Y.G.L. supervised the assessment for a (national) Palestinian landfill.

comfortable were the landfill's managers that no one would recognize that A.Y.G.L. was the name of an Israeli company, it seemed, that they did not bother to conceal it, even on a sign aimed at presenting the landfill as an Authority initiative and as a national project.

To be sure, visitors were acutely aware of the fact of an "outside" to the landfill's technical-national framing. It was common knowledge that when donors were involved in projects (as they almost always were), they imposed conditions. Visitors knew that for a project to be approved in Area C, the Israelis had had to vet—and probably alter—Authority designs. They knew that even if the landfill was “technical” in that it was a product of isolated networks of expertise, it was far from purely *national*. Nevertheless, in their participation within bureaucrats’ framing of the visit they enacted a form of compliance with that framing’s limitations. In her work on Hafez al-Asad's "cult" in Syria, Wedeen argues that the regime operated according to what she calls a "disciplinary-symbolic power." She proposes that rhetoric and symbols functioned as "disciplinary devices" that were "a subsystem of coercive compliance." Power was "generated through its representation," "habituating people to perform the gestures and pronounce the slogans constitutive of their obedience"—whatever they happened to believe.¹²⁶

Over the course of a day at Zahrat al-Finjan, visitors were habituated, if briefly, to perform the gestures of participation in the visit. They handled recycled plastic pails, asked questions, sat patiently through the video, walked across the landfill. Whatever

¹²⁶ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 145.

they believed about the landfill or the people who managed it, they allowed themselves to be led through a tour of the technical-national in action. This seemed to be power generated through its representation. But it was for Authority technocrats, I want to suggest, that landfill visits were most frequently repeated, that encounters with Israeli measurements, with donor conditions and with Israeli consulting firms occasioned the systematic labor of technical-national (re)framing. Residents' participation in similar events thus most reinforced a sense *among the bureaucrats themselves* that they were in the business of building something like a state.

Carrots and Sticks in Bethlehem

Al-Minya landfill opened in the Hebron governorate in the Spring of 2014. As occurred in the north, the municipalities of Hebron and Bethlehem came to be required to use the landfill instead of their own local dumpsites. This was met with further resistance. To compel sixty-eight Bethlehem-area municipalities to use al-Minya, the Bethlehem governorate's new Joint Service Council decided to offer subsidies (funded by the World Bank) for municipalities with cleaner streets. To do this the JSC partnered with a UK-based company called Integrated Skills.¹²⁷ Together they created a computerized rubric for evaluating municipal cleanliness through which municipalities would be assigned cleanliness scores every few months. The scores ranged from zero (very dirty) to three (very clean). Municipalities with higher scores receive higher subsidies. Below are two examples of how the JSC fieldworker who evaluated Bethlehem municipality presented

¹²⁷ The company website can be found at: <http://www.integrated-skills.com/>.

its streets to the municipal accounting office in the Fall of 2014. For these two streets the city received scores of 2 and 3.¹²⁸

Figure 18 depicts an image from the JSC brochure that maps the relationship between discards, streets and dumpsters—and the score a municipality receives. These brochures were disseminated to all participating Bethlehem-area municipalities. They were also used by fieldworkers who evaluated streets. While these tended to come with moral rather than financial rewards, cities like Bethlehem and Jenin also posted images of streets on the municipality Facebook pages. These displayed the city’s actual streets, often in litter-strewn conditions, accompanied by commentaries inviting residents to take greater care of public spaces. The Bethlehem JSC’s executive director posted similar images on his personal page on Facebook. Some also (re)posted generic, placeless images of clean and dirty streets or of acts of littering and cleaning. Below are examples of images of both kinds.

Many of these were depictions of streets with which residents were presumably familiar. These were mechanical reproductions. They can be seen as attempts to create a *punctum* into people’s heretofore ignored “real” through the mechanical reproduction of familiar images; using the reproduction to imbue the real with a new aura.¹²⁹ Dirty street images could not offer state power through power’s ideal representation.¹³⁰ Rather than

¹²⁸ Evaluations were produced in English.

¹²⁹ Foster, “Death in America,” 42.

¹³⁰ Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State*.

More details

2 - Predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from some small items



3 - Clean streets; no visible accumulation of waste



Figure 17. Evaluation of Bethlehem municipality streets Fall 2014

depicting an exemplary, ideal order to be emulated, these images depicted trash in piles—the *nonideal* management of waste run amok. These were not spectacles of an ideal order designed to inspire the awe of the (would-be) state.

In depicting order and disorder in repetition for municipal employees and for the municipality’s Facebook followers (Jenin had 4,519 “likes” in December 2014 and Bethlehem had 9,790), and in attaching depictions to financial and to moral rewards, waste managers were, again, trying to change people’s practices by reorienting their sensory sensitivities to garbage. But did these represent instances of disciplinary power often associated with this kind of reform?

The Sensory Paradox

On the one hand, the only way to answer this question is to determine whether the targets of these techniques were in fact reformed, or *changed*, by their repeated deployment. But the reforms I have described here had only a part of municipal life since 2007. It is thus too soon to say whether residents' sensoria have been successfully reoriented, for example, as it is too soon to say how their daily practices—and the meaning they derive from them—may have been affected by reforms. It is too soon to tell whether their practices have changed such that their interiorities—what reformers called culture or mentality—have changed with them. Here I analyze the ambivalent relationship of PA waste governance to its objects of intervention, paying attention to the techniques deployed through the reforms themselves.

On the other hand, that attempting to reorganize the management of Palestine's wastes was a sensorial process meant that reforms did present people with new frames through which to view their own streets. If retraining people's senses was key to acceptance of fee hikes and public dumpsters, was this not a form of discipline at least insofar as it attempted to turn residents into environmentalist subjects?

This is where the paradox with which I opened the chapter becomes important. Palestine's environmental reformers used the language of "awareness" (*wa'i*) when they spoke about the need for landfill visits, instructive stickers and carrot-and-stick measures like the subsidies recently offered in Bethlehem. However, the environmental pollutants they were most worried about could not be captured by the human sensorium. Methane

score

(2)



(3)

(1)

(2)

(3)

(0)

(1)

Figure 18. JSC brochure scoring Bethlehem street cleanliness (2014).



Figure 19. Photographs from the Bethlehem JSC director's personal Facebook page 2014.



Figure 20. Generic photograph reposted on Jenin municipality Facebook page 2014. Under each of the two thick arrows are the words “litterbug” (*zabbal*) and “one who does work for the nation” (*amil watan*).

and carbon dioxide—considered “greenhouse gases”—are both colorless and odorless.¹³¹ Nitrate water contamination, which results from raw sewage, fertilizer and pesticide percolation into groundwater are also tasteless, odorless and colorless.¹³² One German-sponsored report thus explained that “some [landfill] gases may have *aesthetic* impacts; i.e. they smell unpleasant. Other gases have important *environmental* impacts; methane is one of the most serious gases producing the 'greenhouse effect' that is leading to global climate change, and waste disposal sites are one of the most important global sources of methane generation.”¹³³ In her description of what was wrong with sewage in Habla village, where water was “very polluted” (“they have high nitrate in their water,” she

¹³¹ Dakota Gasification Company, “Carbon Dioxide Safety.” In 2012, carbon dioxide “accounted for about 82% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from human activities.” EPA, “Overview of Greenhouse Gases.”

¹³² Avisar et al., “Amelioration of Groundwater,” 515.

¹³³ KfW, “Concept Report,” 3-14. Emphasis mine.

said), a medical waste expert told me, "there was pressure from the communities themselves to come up with a solution. There were problems with smells *as well as* the pollution itself." Water pollution is odorless and invisible also because it is physically inaccessible. Some West Bank aquifers are up to 300 meters below the earth's surface.¹³⁴ And it can take up to 30 years for sewage pollution to percolate into an aquifer.

When experts presented Palestine's streets as part of a limitless environment vulnerable to wastes, they were therefore implicitly disavowing the use of their physical senses for acquiring knowledge about pollution themselves. While experts regularly performed disgust at the sights and smells around them, as had Absa at the Van Leer Institute, the sights and smells of waste were thus most often presented as "aesthetic," "unpleasant"¹³⁵ nuisances in the policy documents upon which reforms were based. Sensory impressions were repeatedly described as problems that had to be addressed because they were a problem "for residents"¹³⁶ as opposed to experts who, it was suggested, knew better.¹³⁷

Showing too much concern with sights and smells of garbage could therefore be taken as a sign of environmental *ignorance*. Ignorance was marked by sensory coarseness

¹³⁴ Interview in Ramallah, 17 May 2011.

¹³⁵ Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 33. Khatib, "Medical Waste Study on Jenin," 9.

¹³⁶ ERM, Waste Management Service, 8.3.

¹³⁷ KfW, "Concept Report." A KfW-sponsored report argued, for example, that the "anaerobic degradation of organic wastes results in...the generation of landfill gas...Some of these gases (e.g. methane and carbon dioxide) are important 'greenhouse gases' (i.e. Gases that contribute to the warming of global climates). Other gases (e.g. Hydrogen sulphide) create an unpleasant smell and are therefore of aesthetic concern."

—what we might call the failure to gag. But environmental awareness (or at least the kind that could legitimize the authority to regulate the relationship between people and discards) was not, inversely, based on sensorial sensitivity—or the ability to gag. Real, expert awareness thus meant awareness of one’s *inability* to attain sensorial awareness. Environmentalist reformers tread a fine line between performances of disgust at their compatriots’ living conditions and avoidance of what Bourdieu calls "disgust at the 'facile'" or "visceral" disgust.¹³⁸ Experiencing municipal waste pollution through one’s own sensorium was thus not an arrival point. It was a *phase*—a vehicle for moving between states of awareness and ignorance, expertise and layness. In prioritizing the enhancement of residents’ sensorial capabilities, governing environmentalists showed an unusual reluctance to fully “civilize,” discipline or to “uplift” their sensorially deficient constituents. Rendered sensorially more astute, residents could be better plugged in as necessary but subordinate points in a wider environmental management system in which *their* relevant awareness was only a corporeal one. One effect of treating residents as sensorial plugins was the re-entrenchment of residents’ inability to be anything *but* dependent on the new social type: the environmental expert.

However, and although it could easily seem so, for reformers, attempting to alter people’s waste-related practices through their sensoria was not conspiratorial. These were not cynical efforts to consolidate PA authority as a kind of expert state (or state-like) power. As far as I could tell, those who expressed pessimism about the possibility of

¹³⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 486.

changing residents' culture were sincere about that pessimism, just as they were about the rushed—if never defined—timeframe of statecraft. The rush came from what I saw as a desire to secure compliance with reforms they saw as environmentally necessary *and* as necessary for the performance of state readiness.

The fact that experts more reliably "knew" when a sensory experience was a negative one both offered them authority to govern *and* the sense that they were members of wider, post-national epistemic communities, furthermore. In Jerusalem, Absa's narrative of disgust in 'Anabta served "to fix a shared orientation to a perceptual referent"¹³⁹ with his Israeli audience. He was smart to go this route in such a setting. Olfactory disgust was code for shared civilizational standards. That Palestinians were a perceptually inferior, desensitized society was an Israeli characterization many of my West Bank interlocutors implicitly felt the need to disprove. For "foreign" audiences especially, reorganizing Palestine's waste management as one protecting a vulnerable environment served to legitimize PA governors' authority to govern Palestinian wastes.

But the cases above also reveal that, in addition to international recognition, PA bureaucrats sought recognition of their status as governors authorized to pronounce on, and to regulate, the environmental future of the *nation*. In some cases, that recognition came in the form not of statements of praise or support but rather in the form of measurable, material changes to the PA's new governmental landscape. In under five years Zahrat al-Finjan became an infrastructural center, for example. It helped produce

¹³⁹ Reno, "Beyond Risk," 521.

Faqu'a as one of the landfill's service peripheries. It did so by integrating the village, which was thirty minutes away and across areas deemed Area C, into a newly standardized system for managing garbage. This is not to say that Faqu'a was simply standardized away, melted into the Authority's new national homogeneity. It is rather to point out that Authority reforms had impacts on how residents managed what was now glossed as "domestic" refuse. Though reluctantly, residents' habitual discarding practices, like their relationship to local government, were both altered. Daily door-to-door collection, disposal and burning down the road were replaced by twice weekly collection and disposal in a faraway place to which residents had no access. Residents' ability to gauge for themselves whether their wastes were being disposed of safely was eclipsed by monitoring by the Environmental Quality Authority and other PA-appointed experts.

In Faqu'a, meanwhile, the expected cats and rats arrived. Soon there was garbage outside, as well as inside, Faqu'a's dumpsters. Newly circulating objects included animal carcasses, produced as a separate, "hazardous" type of waste and left behind by JSC collection trucks. As "special waste," carcasses were forbidden at Zahrat al-Finjan. Residents had no choice but to burn carcasses on their own properties. For Dr. 'Amer—no longer head of the Faqu'a's village council—this was Faqu'a's new and most pressing "environmental problem." "Now we have a new problem," he grumbled. "There are animals. Animals die. But Zahrat al-Finjan doesn't accept carcasses...So everyone disposes of them in a random way. Every person dumps it in a place on his own. Some

burn them some don't. Wherever there's a valley they might dump them there. Right now our environmental problem is disposing of the animals.”¹⁴⁰

The case of Faqu'a shows that Authority reforms were not merely registered in discursive presences, though these—described in Chapter 5—were incredibly important. They also worked on spaces “public” and “domestic,” not least by rendering the distinction between the two more acute. The scale at which centers were sutured to newly “public” peripheries, and vice versa, extended beyond any scale at which other infrastructural “grids” had done until then in the West Bank, furthermore. Most water networks did not extend from central cities like Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin to their peripheries, for example. Unable to drill wells (due to Israeli restrictions), many West Bank villages have been purchasing water tanks (brought by truck from private companies) or collecting rainwater for decades. Sewage lines do not extend from urban to rural areas, and they are generally absent altogether in the latter. Electric grids have long connected most Palestinian cities and villages *to Israel* rather than to each other.¹⁴¹ There had therefore been little else about PA-run infrastructures that was organized according to a grid system across regional blocks—let alone across the West Bank as a whole. In that

¹⁴⁰ This was another example of how the relative success or failure of a project was less important than were its effects and the new objects that it sent into circulation. The production of animal carcasses as a new environmental problem in Faqu'a echoed the production of the problem of X-ray images in Shuqba (see Chapter 5). In Faqu'a, the “success” of Zahrat al-Finjan landfill in maintaining certain standards meant that animal carcasses could not be sent there and piled up. In Shuqba, the “failure” of the Ramallah JSC to build a similar sanitary landfill with facilities for treating medical waste meant that X-rays that had nowhere to go also piled up and were burned. On understanding development “failure” and its consequences, see also Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*.

¹⁴¹ See forthcoming work by Omar Jabary Salamanca. See also Dumper, “Jerusalem’s Infrastructure.”

sense little about the other infrastructures the Authority ostensibly governed resembled a modern state in the terms most familiar to social scientists.¹⁴²

Between 1967 and the late 1990s, when the West Bank was sealed off from Israel, moreover, West Bank Palestinians had been able to move relatively freely in and out of Israel, and Israeli citizens had done the same in the West Bank. Thus until very recently the economic, social and political centers of life for many West Bank Palestinians were across the Green Line. Places like Jerusalem and Jaffa were central to the lives of people in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron in the central and southern West Bank, while places like Haifa, Jaffa and Nazareth were central to the lives of residents of Jenin and Nablus. Residents' experiences of the "national" space in which they moved had therefore also not been organized at the scale of the West Bank (or, perhaps, of the nation at all).

The same techniques that attempted to convince local publics of the benefits of waste reforms thus allowed bureaucrats to see their own work as anti-colonial (or at least as contestations of occupation) and as state-like simultaneously. For the reformers who organized them, one effect of "educational" visits to landfills, for example, was the transmission of the message that the landfill was a technical-national achievement. Another effect was the sense that, although separated by territories controlled by Israel and funded by two distinct international agencies (Zahrat al-Finjan and al-Minya by the World Bank and the Ramallah landfill-to-be by Germany), the three landfills were together part of a single, national plan.

¹⁴² See for example Scott, *Seeing like a State*. For a critique of the gridlike nature of modern capitalism in relation to states, see James Ferguson's "Seeing like an Oil Company."

Borrowed Israeli measurements thus seemed to extend Authority governance geographically across territories occupation actively fragmented. Though a known "political fiction...that emerge[d] from hard political and epistemic work," measurements offered technocrats the sense of having "unmediated vision" across a national-governmental landscape.¹⁴³ They helped the Authority "regionalize" the governance of dispersed geographies through the mundane work of collecting, transporting and disposing of municipal waste in several ways.¹⁴⁴ First, they made "sites" of privately owned lands in disparate West Bank villages, integrating them into central government's national regime of intelligibility.¹⁴⁵ Like the Ordnance Survey in colonial Ireland, Zahrat al-Finjan was a socioscope, making "a land, a built environment, and a people legible with a geographic, orthographic, and ethnographic detail¹⁴⁶" previously unavailable to West Bank Palestinians working in sanitation or in municipal government more generally.¹⁴⁷ As possible disposal sites, private lands on the peripheries of large municipalities became "discrete particulars," "material-cultural objects" that stood in "for

¹⁴³ Matthews, *Instituting Nature*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ Feldman, *Governing Gaza*, 157.

¹⁴⁵ Thanks to Audra Simpson for helping me phrase this. See also Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

¹⁴⁶ Carroll, *Science, Culture*, 8.

¹⁴⁷ Bier, "Mapping Israel, Mapping Palestine." This entailed what Messick calls "a thorough reconstitution of the form and scope of the state," or in this case of the would-be state. Messick *Calligraphic State*, 101.

a category of objects": the sanitary periphery.¹⁴⁸ These formed the building blocks of the proto-state's "systematic knowledge."¹⁴⁹

The landfill's reach produced other potential Faqu'a's – other locations from which garbage should be collected – as more or less "reachable," as "seen" by the would-be state, "like a state."¹⁵⁰ In doing so, landfills allowed bureaucrats to perform a form of state power that "rests on officials' ability to enact a distinction between the local and the global or the national, between a regulation and its specific local case, between the political and the technical."¹⁵¹ These were not just meanings attributed to infrastructures, as such scenarios are so often framed.¹⁵² These measurements made certain material realities—and ways of thinking—*possible*. For example, in addition to extending the Authority's vision across larger swaths of territory, they gave bureaucrats a "powerful claim on a deep future" in environmentalist plans projecting twenty to thirty years ahead.¹⁵³ This countered occupation's tendency to render accurate, reliable planning for Palestinians an almost unthinkable enterprise.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Abu El-Haj, Facts on the Ground, 119.

¹⁴⁹ Poovey, A History of the Modern Fact, xii.

¹⁵⁰ Scott, Seeing like a State.

¹⁵¹ Matthews, Instituting Nature, 5.

¹⁵² See for example Denes, "From Tanks to Wheelchairs," 178.

¹⁵³ Masco, The Nuclear Borderlands, 318, 156)

¹⁵⁴ In this sense the Authority differed markedly from the governments of Gaza between 1918 and 1967. "Responding to the difficult conditions in Gaza and to the uncertain status and future of rule itself," writes Feldman, "government there was tactical, that is, focused more on coping with current conditions than with long-range planning." Feldman, Governing Gaza, 18.

The making of infrastructural centers and peripheries was significant in helping to produce an effect that Authority governance was post- *and* anti-colonial at the same time. The public relations video screened for visitors to Zahrat al-Finjan, for instance, told the story of how, despite obstacles presented to the landfill's managers from the Israeli military and from the consequent anxieties of its World Bank and European Union donors, JSC engineers had prevailed in building a Palestinian, technically modern sanitary landfill.¹⁵⁵ In the second minute of the ten-minute film, we see the map featured below (Figure 21). It is a map of the Jenin governorate, highlighting the localities into which the landfill (the central black spot on the map) had succeeded in "reaching." The original map was produced in 2002 by the Palestinian Ministry of Planning.

To that map Zahrat al-Finjan's managers had added the division of Zones 1-5 (in red circles) and lines from "rehabilitated dumpsites" (the black spots) to Zahrat al-Finjan, in the center. The map performed two opposite functions. First, by marking Areas A and B rather than naming them "PA-controlled areas," for example, it acknowledged Oslo's territorial carvings, thereby acknowledging the limits of Authority control over this part of the West Bank. In doing so, it created a sense that the lines from each of the five Zones on the landfill's periphery were accomplishing a feat despite significant jurisdictional

¹⁵⁵ In a similar PR video produced for Jericho's semi-regulated, Japanese-funded landfill, the landfill's public relations officer, Marwan Samarat, tells the Jericho JSC's story of coming into being as follows: "We overcame all the Israeli checkpoints...We didn't only pass over the Israeli checkpoints. But also, we passed through the social obstacles that were limiting the establishment of the JCspd." In the same video, a Japanese expert adds: "People are actors in nation-building! So they have to extend their own effort by themselves and support the local government as well as the national government! So positive participation from the community people and from beneficiaries--this is the most important element." (JICA film, al-Nour TV, 2007), (Public Relations JCSPD) Interestingly, the English translation is "we overlapped all the barriers, we reached every body," thereby omitting the words "Israeli" and "checkpoint."

obstacles. The Authority emblem in the lower right-hand corner, in addition to the fact that footage of the map was followed by footage of Palestinian flags flying high over Hani Shawahneh, one of the landfill's chief engineers, shaking hands with Authority officials, donors and municipal bureaucrats, lent it a national quality as well.

But the map also performed another, seemingly contradictory function. Area C (60-70% of the West Bank), which was figured in the map in white, was not marked in the map's legend. The only reference to an Israeli presence in the Territory appeared in small pockets of fuchsia, marked in the legend as "Israeli Controlled Area." The absence of Area C areas from the map served to diminish its significance in the functioning of daily governance. In doing so, it suggested the Authority managed *all* waste within the confines of the Green Line. This was untrue. Zahrat al-Finjan had been designed for Palestinian wastes only.

This, too, lent a national quality to the map as well as to the achievement of designing a regional sanitary landfill and an "integrated" collection system to go with it. But in appearing to be a feat always-already achieved, the national quality expressed here appeared to *follow*, rather than to precede, achievement of sovereign statehood. The national character lent to the landfill in its acknowledgement of Areas A and B thus lent an anti-colonial – or at least anti-occupation – valence to the national quality of the map and to the waste management system it depicted. Nevertheless, the underplaying of the power of Area C to limit the Authority's control lent its national quality a different meaning. That meaning paralleled other performances that suggest the Authority was

already a sovereign state. It was the map's ability to attribute both anti-colonial and post-colonial national qualities to Authority reforms that allowed those reforms to contribute to what, in Chapter 5, I call the phantom state effect.

Finally, the cases above reveal that an important, if unintended, effect of reforms was attraction of attention to reformers' own, technically superior alterity vis-à-vis the governed. This seemed to clarify, and did maintain, the divide between experts and laypersons. Messages declaring that divide—and the hierarchy it implied—were systematically delivered by the Authority to non-PA institutions and organizations across the West Bank in a number of governing fields. The main thrust of these messages was that the PA was in pursuit of an institutional overhaul in which those institutions would play a new and subordinate part.

As we saw in Faqu'a, the Authority ordered the amalgamation—and therefore the dissolution—of entire clusters of West Bank village councils after 2007. Amalgamation has occurred without recourse to municipal elections. Arguing that village-level and municipal methods of managing waste were inefficient, environmentally hazardous and without technical expertise, the Ministry of Local Government also orchestrated the replacement of a number of municipal services (e.g. solid waste, wastewater, water, etc.) in dozens of municipalities by expert regional Joint Service Councils.¹⁵⁶ Each JSC board is made up of the elected mayors whose communities are serviced by it. But the JSC

¹⁵⁶ The amalgamation meetings I attended in September 2010 at the Ministry of Local Government offices in al-Bireh included dissolution of villages in the Jenin and Nablus governorates.

technical and financial directors who design and manage the infrastructure and its services are appointed directly by the PA.

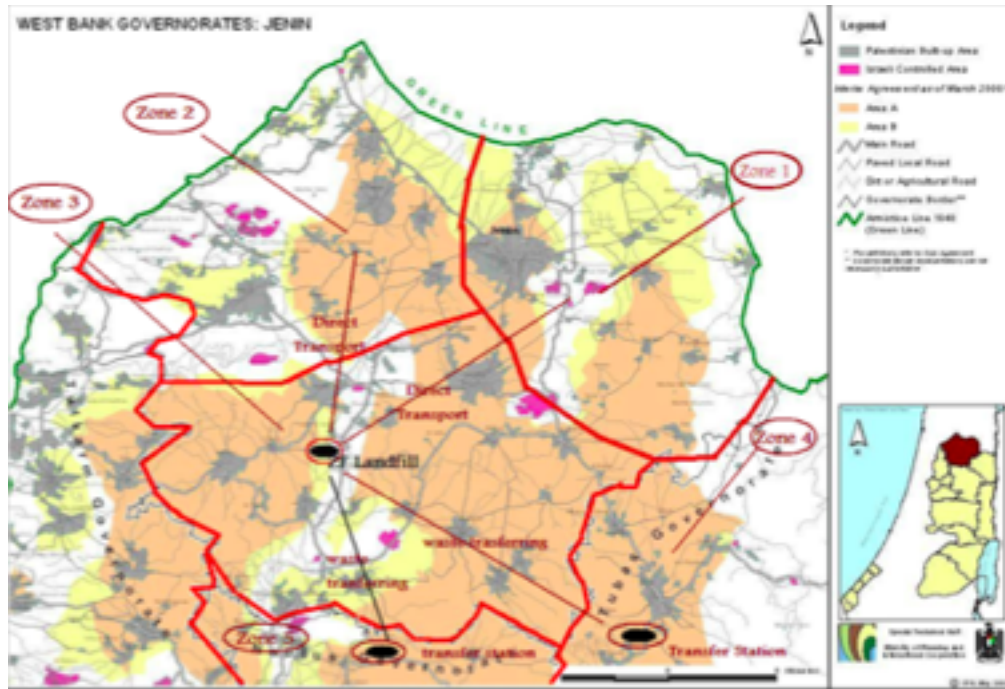


Figure (5): Zones of study area.

Figure 21. Image of JSC collection "orbit" taken from a JSC Jenin administrator's powerpoint presentation and featured in the Zahrat al-Finjan PR video. Areas A and B are marked in peach (Area A) and light yellow (Area B). Area C, in white, is unmarked in the legend. Faqu'a is located along the Green Line in Zone 1, just above the encircled "Zone 1" in the upper right hand corner of the map.

Messages were also delivered through law. Several articles of the 1999 Palestinian Environment Law posited that protection of the environment from waste should be left to those with the expertise, with the appropriate training, technical equipment and knowledge of "internal regulations and procedures" required for monitoring waste. Article 6 stipulates that the "*competent authorities* in cooperation with the Ministry shall

prepare the general policy for the land use so as to observe the optimum utilization, protection of natural resources, areas with special nature and preservation of the environment." ¹⁵⁷ Article 7 of the section on solid waste adds: "The Ministry in coordination with the *competent authorities* shall formulate a comprehensive plan for managing solid waste *at the national level* including the determination of the methods and disposal sites thereof as well as *supervise the execution of this plan* by the local entities."

Similar messages were even transmitted at the level of municipal stationary. The Authority seems to have insisted that local councils—some of which, like Nablus and Jenin, predated the Authority by over a century—replace the header on their stationary for official correspondence with "Palestinian National Authority" header. In Nablus, for instance, municipal header lacked any reference to the Authority until 1998.¹⁵⁸ It had originally only featured the Nablus municipality insignia on the top center. It was later changed to include the words "Palestinian National Authority" above "Nablus Municipality." Compare the two letters (see Appendix I), one from former Nablus mayor Ghassan al-Shaka'a (1994) and the other, from Amal Sa'eed Hodhod (2007).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ This appears in Chapter 2 of the article, on "environment protection," part one: "ground environment." In the Arabic version of the law, "competent authorities" is articulated as "*aljihat almukhtasah*," meaning the specializing or expert authorities. *Emphasis mine*.

¹⁵⁸ I photographed the Nablus municipality solid waste archives in the Spring of 2010.

¹⁵⁹ With the exception of al-Bireh municipality, which had not incorporated "Palestinian National Authority" into its stationary when I conducted archival research there in 2010, every other piece of municipal correspondence featured "Palestinian National Authority," and sometimes "Ministry of Local Government" as part of the header. This included the local councils of Ar-Ram, Birzeit, Deir Dibwan, Beitunia, Taybeh, W. Bani Zaid, Silwad, and Ramallah.

It is in this context that reformers' pessimism about cultural change can best be understood. Reformers' claims to be bypassing culture helped them perform a kind of distance from residents—and from culturally “stagnant” municipalities—they sought to govern. These messages helped reify the idea of “population” as distinct from a standalone Authority that governed it. Chapter 5 explores how that distinction figured in residents' lives when they attempted to solve waste-related problems that could not be solved “locally.”

Chapter 5

Matter of Fact: Uncertainty, Expertise and the Phantom State Effect

"Something like a State"

During fieldwork, I often heard West Bank Palestinians use words such as "state" (*dowlah*) and expressions such as "like a state" or "phantom state" (*shibih dowlah*) to describe aspects of life there in the 2010s. People used the word *muwatin*, meaning citizen, to describe themselves as residents under settler colonial rule and they referred to Mahmoud Abbas, the Authority's president at the time, as and "president of the state" (*ra'is ad-dowlah*). Pronouncements such as "*sar fi nitham*" (there came to be order) and "*sar fi qanun*" (there came to be law) were commonplace descriptors for the post-2007 period. It was usual for friends and interviewees to speak of the occupation in the past tense, too, even as they acknowledged hardship as a result of ongoing occupation. In passing, for example, Abdul Kareem Sidir of the Ministry of Local Government described the *past* time when mukhtars had worked as intermediaries between West Bank residents and Israelis as "in the time of the Israelis" (*biwaqt al-israili'in*). He spoke of *waqt al-israili'in* in the past tense even as we sat looking out at Beit El military compound, where he and his colleagues applied to Israeli officers for permits for much of their daily work. In 2010, an engineer and lawyer working for the Authority to build Ramallah's regional landfill visited landowners in Deir Dibwan village

to negotiate land purchases.¹ An older man and leader in the community explained why they would all refuse to sell (as they eventually did): “Fine that it's a national (*watani*) project. But these are dear and expensive lands. Many people wouldn't sell for even \$20,000 or \$50,000 or \$100,000—the way they wouldn't have sold them in the time of the Jews (*zaman al-yahud*)!” In Shuqba, I interviewed the head of the village council, Mr. Ramadan al-Masri, about Israeli waste dumping on Shuqba lands.² Toward the beginning and end of the interview, which took place in 2012, we had the following two brief exchanges. He too referred to the pre-Oslo period as “the time of the Israelis” after first explaining the PA’s current lack of sovereignty. I provoked him by saying that, “outside Palestine, some people see the Authority and they think it's a state.” “No!” he replied:

Even in Ramallah the Authority doesn't have control! The Israeli military can enter when it wants to. Let's say I have a house. When anyone can just come into my house without ringing the bell or asking me, it's not my house! It became everyone’s house! In Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, the military comes in anytime.

Thirty minutes later he clarified that, although Palestine was in that sense “not his house,” the “time of the Israelis” had nevertheless passed. “Before the Authority came,” he continued, “in 1990, I became a mukhtar and a member of a council. This was at the time of the Israelis (*'azaman al-israili 'in*). When the civil administration was here.”

If the present could no longer be characterized as the time of the Jews, the Israelis, or the occupation at the time of my fieldwork, what was the most appropriate

¹ Visit to Deir Dibwan, 5 May 2010.

² Interview in Shuqba, 21 July 2012.

characterization for this period? If, as Mr. Al-Masri put it, "when the civil administration was here" was a time of the past, what was "here" in its stead? And of what was this highly local new periodization an effect?³ This chapter argues that what has emerged to fill the place of "here," after *zaman al-yahud*, is a phantom state effect—which closely resembles Timothy Mitchell's "state effect"—whereby some governing practices have allowed residents to experience PA involvements in waste management as something with "the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form."⁴ The phantom state effect was itself in part an effect of the Authority's performance of statehood. Painfully aware of their own lack of sovereignty and reluctant to impose dominance or other forms of persuasive control over the population they served, Authority reformers nevertheless performed aspirations to statehood through infrastructural experiments, one of which was regional landfill planning. These aspirations presupposed the state's absence at the same time as they self-consciously sought to bring a state into being performatively.

Most importantly for this chapter, infrastructural experiments and reforms were *experienced* as part of a phantom state effect by many of the people whose waste was being managed. Despite the stubborn presence of critical publics and the circulation of critical commentaries in the West Bank, aspects of the Authority's waste management

³ I say local here because, outside of Palestine (and especially in Europe and North America), it is basically unheard of for Palestinians or for people who self-identify as advocates for Palestinian rights to refer to the occupation in the past tense.

⁴ Timothy Mitchell argues that "the phenomenon we name 'the state' arises from techniques that enable mundane material practices to take on the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form." Mitchell, "Society, Economy, and the State Effect," 170. The semi-state effect can also be understood as the subject's ambivalent positioning between the once-colonized and the still-colonized. On being the "once-colonized," see Chatterjee's "Our Modernity."

reforms thus secured the Authority a kind of compliance from residents. Compliance was not based on tradition or on charisma,⁵ as these post-Arafat-era bureaucrats possessed neither. Nor was it based on belief in the rule of law, per Weber's definition of legitimacy. Recognition proffered to the Authority was not consonant with residents believing the Authority to possess authority over (i.e. the ability to determine the outcome of) cases pertaining to public waste such as illegal waste dumping. The Authority had proven ineffective in solving residents' waste problems at least for as long as those problems had plagued them. After Israel, the Authority did represent the most effective enforcer of law—or at least a semblance of order—present locally. But the PA's ability to enforce law was systematically undermined. This was therefore not also a clear-cut case of what Wedeen calls utilitarian compliance.⁶ Nor was compliance secured through "spectacular display of [government's] imperious presence" or with "dazzling development projects"⁷ with which colonial and post-colonial infrastructural projects are often characterized. Residents may have needed the most (relatively) powerful *and* appropriate body to help solve their problems. But, again, residents did not appear to believe in the legitimacy of Authority rule, as doubt about the Authority's "moral authority"⁸ to rule was also strong among many. Furthermore, Authority bureaucrats themselves were ambivalent about the extent to which their rule constituted something state-like. They were also ambivalent

⁵ On non-charismatic yet authoritative regimes, see Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 6.

⁶ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 144.

⁷ Coronil, *The Magical State*, Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.

⁸ This is one way Wedeen describes legitimacy (and its absence) in Syria. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

about the extent to which they sought to enlist residents as citizen-reformers within Authority reforms at all. Compliance was thus not secured through concerted efforts at persuasion either.

I nevertheless discovered that, among residents and their local representatives, the choice to address the Authority was made, seemingly by default, time and again. This reiteration of the choice to appeal to, or to expect care from, the PA, may well have contributed to the relative stability that has characterized Authority rule in the West Bank over nearly two decades.⁹ I call the form of compliance that made this possible “matter-of-factness” in order to highlight the alternative possibilities for political (and bureaucratic) authority with which this case presents us. Matter-of-factness was one form that appearing “like a state” assumed in a context in which a monopoly on the use of physical force—if not the legitimate monopoly—was possessed by *another* state (Israel).¹⁰ The object of matter-of-factness was the Authority's agreed-upon role as (sometimes expert) mediator in matters of public waste. It came to be within what Stuart Hall calls “the horizon of the taken-for-granted”¹¹ that residents, through their village and municipal councils, would appeal to the Authority when faced with waste-related problems they were unable to resolve locally.

⁹ In her historical ethnography of governance in Gaza from 1917 to 1967, Ilana Feldman argues that in Gaza the persistence of relatively stable rule relied on bureaucratic authority in the absence of legitimacy. Feldman, Governing Gaza, 17-18.

¹⁰ I am borrowing the phrase from James Scott’s Seeing Like a State.

¹¹ I draw on the definition of hegemony developed by Stuart Hall to make this point. Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology,” 100.

In this sense residents' recognition of the Authority seemed to represent a misrecognition both of the Authority's identity and of residents' "own fundamental situation or circumstances."¹² But it was a misrecognition of which everyone was to some extent aware and in which nearly everyone, sharing that awareness, participated. Facing the choice between calling or sending letters of complaint to the Israeli authorities (which *had* the authority to intervene) and sending them to Authority ministries (which repeatedly failed to do so), as I describe below, it still went without saying that residents would do the latter.¹³ But were residents' practices "as if" the Authority had authority dissimulation in Wedeen's sense? Hafez al-Asad's regime once secured citizens' compliance, she writes, by initiating rituals in which it enlisted the populace to participate in "rituals of obeisance."¹⁴ The populace dutifully, if sometimes cynically, dissimulated reverence to Asad.¹⁵ At the same time, Wedeen maintains that many actually believed the Asad regime to be characterized by a transparent "phoniness." An important feature of matter-of-factness as I observed it in Palestine was that there, too, it was sometimes

¹² Markell, *Bound by Recognition*, 5. Here Markell is paraphrasing Hannah Arendt in her discussion of human finitude, which is the condition "imposed upon us by the openness and unpredictability of the future--what Hannah Arendt called the 'non-sovereign' character of human action."

¹³ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 12.

¹⁴ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 6 and 145.

¹⁵ On dissimulation of obeisance to state power in postcolonies, see also Mbembe: "[T]he postcolony is the simulacral regime *par excellence*," he writes. "Indeed, by freeing up the potential for play, improvisation and amusement, within the very limits of its officialdom, the simulacrum allows ordinary people to a) simulate adherence to the innumerable official rituals that life in the postcolony requires)..and b) thus avoid the annoyances which necessarily arise from the frontal opposition to the orders of power and its decrees. Mbembe, "The Banality of Power," 11.

manifest in response to practices by the Authority that were "patently unbelievable."¹⁶ Suggestions that the Authority was a state, that the occupation was a thing of the past, that the rule of law ruled, for example, were both incredible and were repeated by residents and local government officials. But, importantly, the PA's management of waste was not evaluated *according to its relative phoniness*. How "real" it was was not the main problem in question.

What emerged in people's speech about the PA and in their engagements with it was, rather, their treatment of it as its own, albeit weak and ineffective, standalone entity. As an entity that could bear exclusive responsibility for protecting the nation's environment from wastes. One entrepreneur thus said to me, "we have to talk to the government and to municipalities," implying that the PA *was* "the government" and that it was distinct from the municipalities. Jenin's then mayor, 'Ali Shati, also commented in his office that "we have a government that is completely conscious of the need for financial and administrative reform." Again suggesting that the municipality and the government were distinct he continued, raising a stapled set of pages off his desk: "We are working within the framework of the government's plan."¹⁷ One of Jenin's mukhtars also explained that "the *makhtara* is useful to the citizens, for the government, for the municipality and for the families."¹⁸ As a standalone entity, the Authority (*as-sulta*)—or "the government" (*al-houkoumah*)—could be deemed irresponsible or neglectful. Virtues

¹⁶ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 6.

¹⁷ Interview in Jenin city, 25 September 2010.

¹⁸ Interview in Jenin city, 2 October 2010.

and vices could accrue to it as a separate body. Echoing comments I heard repeatedly, a sanitation NGO employee put it this way: "the government has a responsibility to inform citizens and to take their voices into account."¹⁹ A Jenin resident in his early twenties described the Authority's duty to the population as just as natural as that of a mother to a child. Failure to provide care was just as *unnatural*: "You know a mother?" He asked. "If her son is sick, what's the normal reaction? She should cry, she should care. But the Authority doesn't care about us at all."²⁰

None of the people who made the above comments worked, or saw themselves as working, within the PA itself. This chapter looks specifically at how people working outside the PA—but within local governments (elected municipalities and village councils) as representatives of local communities—engaged with the PA around questions of waste. As self-described citizens (*muwatinin*), their treatment of the PA as a standalone entity matters for a number of reasons. First, because it contrasts with many PA bureaucrats' own ways of describing the government and their work in governance. While ambivalent, bureaucrats also tended to depict the PA as state-like. But in their version of it, municipalities and village councils were posited as *extensions* or *arms* of the state rather than distinct from it.

¹⁹ Interview in Ramallah city, 6 May 2010, Ramallah.

²⁰ Conversation in Jenin city, 9 April 2010. Another Jenin resident in his seventies compared the way municipal workers used to "care" about clean streets to the current period: "Now the salaried employees (*mu'athafin*) wouldn't care about the city. They wouldn't stop the guy who throws his cup in the street." Interview in Jenin city, 13 February 2011.

Second, it matters because it contrasts with critiques of the PA that tend to suggest it is an empty vessel that allows for the further entrenchment of Israeli occupation or for foreign donor goals to be realized. This idea has crystallized around the metaphor that the PA is the “subcontractor” to which occupation, or neoliberal donor logics, have been “outsourced.”²¹ These critiques parallel commentaries on infrastructure in Palestine Studies. Here infrastructures’ observable, material effects are less important than the worldview they are assumed to “embody” given who permitted or who funded them (i.e. Israel or western donors). Outsourcing arguments thus tend to treat the Authority and its infrastructures as what Latour and his colleagues call an “intermediary.” An intermediary “reflects” or “represents” social meaning—reproducing what was already there or “transporting [it] faithfully” from the entity that serves as the work’s point of origin, that is, from which the work was “outsourced.”²² Instead, I argue that the PA and its bureaucrats, experts, engineers and institutional and infrastructural iterations should be – and *were*—locally treated as what Latour and his colleagues call “mediators.”²³

²¹ This metaphor has been extended by scholars including Chomsky (1999): 533-65; Gordon (2008): 169-96, Hever (2010); Selby 2013: 15 and Weizman (2006).

²² Latour writes that an intermediary “is what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs...an intermediary can be taken not only as a black box, but also as a black box counting for one, even if it is internally made of many parts.” Latour, Reassembling the Social, 39.

²³ Mediators, writes Latour, “cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. Their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry. No matter how complicated an intermediary is, it may, for all practical purposes, count for just one—or even for nothing at all because it can be easily forgotten. No matter how apparently simple a mediator may look, it may become *complex*; it may lead in multiple directions which will modify all the contradictory accounts attributed to its role. Ibid.

While outsourcing is often used to highlight the dramatic shift from one set of governing institutions (the civil administration) to another (the PA), many of the impacts of that shift have been left unexplored. On the one hand, those who argue that PA institutions (or their donors) are the “third party” to which the occupation has been outsourced make the convincing normative claim that Israel continues to be in effective control while shedding its legal responsibility (under international humanitarian law) for taking care of the occupied population. They focus on the fact that occupied residents’ basic needs *continue* to be met under direct PA governance.²⁴ This argument is premised in part on the idea that the population’s “basic needs” have remained the same over the past four decades. It is assumed that residents need and have always needed water, street lighting, housing, sanitation, healthcare, transport, education and food, for example, and that variations in those categories have been a mere matter of quantity or degree. By historicizing waste management—which is usually listed among residents’ basic sanitation needs—my broader project questions the assumption that basic needs (and the materials that constitute them) have been unchanging over time. Changes both in the central governing system and in the field of waste management have helped reshape residents’ experiences of need—as well as how “basic” that need is—with regard to solid waste and wastewater. Residents’ senses of ethics, rights and duties around where, whether and how garbage and sewage will be disposed of, sold or used have been

²⁴ Le More, for example, has argued that “aid not only relieves Israel of its responsibilities under international law but it has also clearly helped sustain its occupation, which would have been much trickier and more onerous to maintain had the international community not footed the bills.” Le More, “International Assistance to the Palestinians after Oslo,” 128.

radically transformed since the mid-twentieth century. The post-Oslo emergence of PA experts, engineers, bureaucrats and others as infrastructural mediators, managers and planners has given rise to qualitative changes and to new intersubjective relations —both for those working within the PA and for those they govern. The fact that outsourcing arguments deploy the metaphor without extending their investigations to the “third party” itself leaves little room for understanding the impacts or dynamics of these shifts.

Despite the PA’s appearance as a standalone entity, residents’ practices *as if* the PA had authority were also clearly not based on the belief that the Authority’s ontological status as a sovereign, technical-national regime was settled. Nor could they have been based on the belief that Israeli dumping on Palestinian lands (discussed below) could have been an issue entirely internal to the PA’s post-Oslo, technical-national realm. The *content* of statements and practices suggesting the Authority's ability to rule did not therefore go without saying or seem natural. It was not part of a “belief system” anyone I met would have supported if questioned directly. It was, rather, the *act of making such statements* and the repetition of practices exhibiting matter-of-fact expectations of PA rule, that seemed like common sense. This was especially the case, as we will see, when residents were faced with waste problems on a scale or magnitude that surpassed what, following the emergence both of the environment (and its pollution) and of the technical-national realm, had now become the "local."

Juxtaposed with Authority reforms (Chapters 3 and 4) with the landscape of waste problems into which the Authority inserted itself, this chapter describes three effects the

Authority's waste governance had with regard to the phantom state effect. One, it oriented residents toward the PA (as “the government”) in addressing problems of public waste, whether the origin of that waste was Palestinian or Israeli. Two, it contributed to residents' differentiation between two *types* of government: the one was the visible, practical work carried out by municipalities and village councils. The other was the regulatory work carried out, or expected to be carried out, by the Authority through science-based expertise. Three, it contributed to the production of uncertainty among residents, thereby reinscribing the distinction between experts and laypersons on the terrain of dilemmas about how to deal with waste problems. I primarily explore ways in which Authority sanitation reforms—including their failures and delays—were experienced by residents in one rural locality: the village of Shuqba in the central West Bank. I look at three major waste-related problems that had plagued the village for years. Those were Israeli industrial dumping, the burning of X-ray images from Ramallah-area hospitals for silver extraction, and the spillage of raw domestic sewage onto privately owned lands.



Figure 22. Smoke from burning garbage in Shuqba.
Photograph posted on the village Facebook page in 2012.

Shuqba

Israelis from both sides of the Green Line had been dumping municipal and industrial wastes on Shuqba's lands for over a decade when I visited the village in 2012. A small number of local landowners had been accepting fees from truck drivers to allow dumping on their lands.²⁵ Residents set fire to the dumps to shrink them. When they did, they reported that the dumps sometimes burned for three or four months on end, even when it rained. There was a strong feeling in the village that this burning—and the toxic

²⁵ Four or five Palestinian landowners from Shuqba were allowing dumping in exchange for about 200 NIS (about \$50) per truckload. Large trucks may carry up to sixty tons. Were they to dump waste in sanitary landfills inside Israel or in settler-run sanitary landfills in the West Bank (e.g. the Veolia's Tovlan Landfill in the Jordan Valley), disposal companies would pay a minimum of 60 NIS (about \$17.49) per ton. That would mean paying at least 1,800 NIS (\$524.57, according to July 2014 conversion rates) per truckload instead of 200 NIS.

materials that burned—were among the causes of lung and reproductive problems from which people had been suffering in Shuqba.

Because dumping occurred in parts of Shuqba designated Area C, environmental pollution and threats to public health originating there were Israel's responsibility, according to the Oslo Accords. The Israeli authorities involved in monitoring Area C's environmental issues were the civil administration and two settler organizations: the Associations for the Protection of the Environment of Judea and Samaria. Shuqba's elected village council, which had been trying to solve the problem for years, was well aware of the jurisdictional feature of their problem. But the solutions the council pursued to Shuqba's piles of smoking garbage almost never involved the Israeli authorities above. The council had chosen a two-pronged strategy instead: On the one hand, it attempted direct mediation with the landowners. And on the other hand it solicited the Authority's help.

Seven Letters: Tansiq and the Technical-National

The roads that connected Shuqba to its administrative center in Ramallah were also located in Area C. These are figured in the map above in blue, which means that Israel controls the land and the passage of the Palestinian police between the two. This caused delays in police responses and alleged beneficiaries of the dumping an easy escape. I asked Mr. al-Masri what the response of the village had been. "The people are yelling," he said. "So we [the council] issued letters of complaint to the Health

[Ministry], to the Environment [Authority], to the Governorate," and to several other Authority offices.²⁶

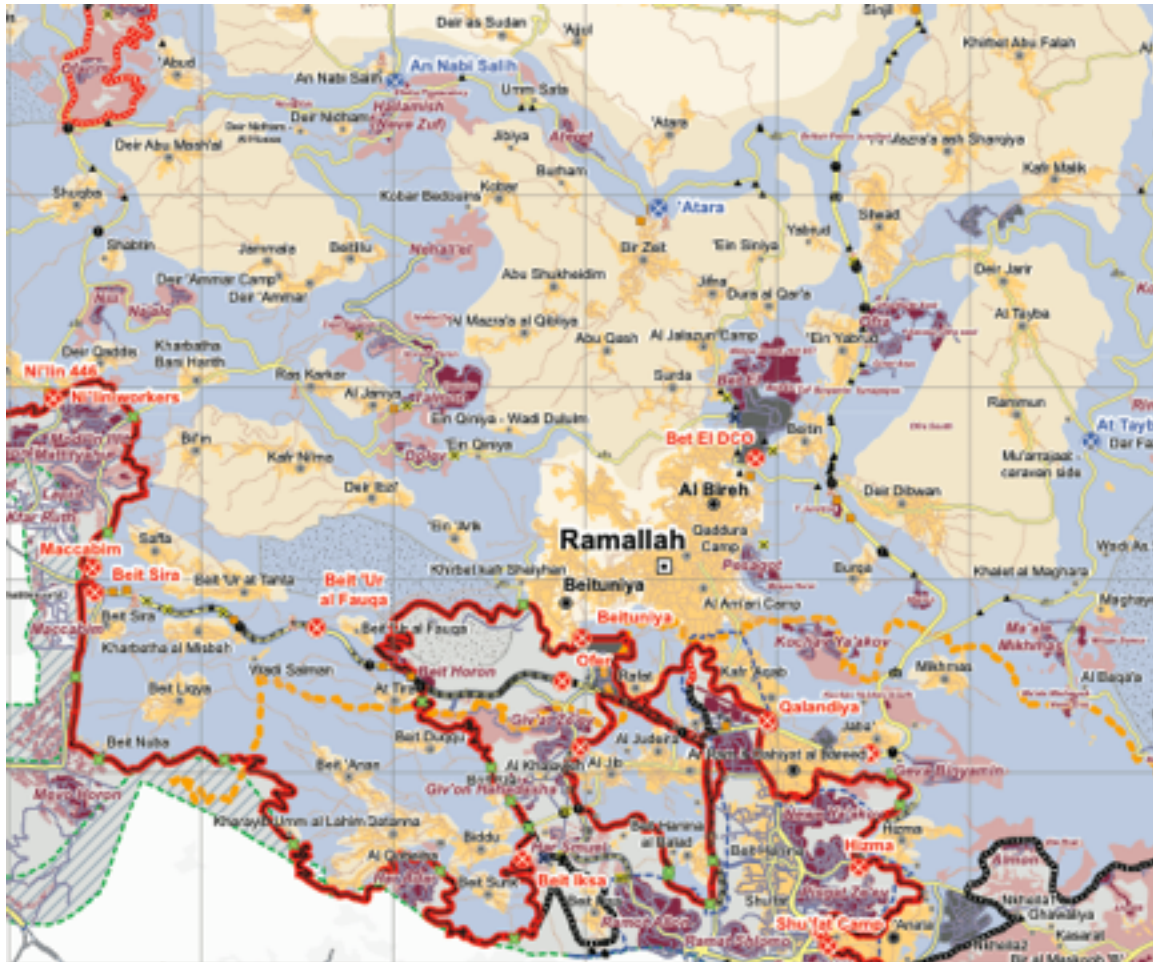


Figure 23. Section of "Ramallah: West Bank Access Restrictions," map produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, December 2011. Shuqba is in the upper left hand corner of this map and Ramallah is in the center.

Shuqba's council had sent the letters to different Authority institutions between 2006 and 2012. A reading of seven of these letters, alongside my conversations with Sami (the council's secretary) and Mr. al-Masri, reveals how matter-of-factly Shuqba residents treated the idea that waste should be dealt with as an internal (national) and technical

²⁶ Governorates are administrative units whose administrative offices and chief administrators (governors) are considered regional branches of the PA.

issue—whatever its origin. Mr. al-Masri read the following letter aloud to me during one of our meetings. This was one of two letters about Israeli dumping they gave me, though interestingly the words "Israeli," "Jewish," "settlement," "occupation" and "colony" did not appear in any part of either letter. The letter in Figure 24 was addressed to the PA-appointed Governor of Ramallah and al-Bireh on April 8th, 2007:

We write to you about Mr. [blacked out] about whom a complaint was issued about the waste, and after his pledge to stop and his being bound by a financial guarantee valuing 3,000 JD in front of the leadership of the police. But he returned now to the practice of doing this and the council began to receive many complaints from the citizens. For this reason we ask you to issue the required directives to stop [the practices], thanking you for participating and for your patience with us, and may you always remain an asset to your homeland.

After Oslo, Israeli constraints were especially limiting in the implementation of sewage-related projects.²⁷ It is therefore not surprising that four of the seven letters involved problems with sewage in the village: three to the Ramallah Governorate Directorate of Environmental Health and one to the Ministry of Local Government. Among the sewage-related letters, the one in 2012 had incorporated an entire paragraph from the letter in 2006. This is likely due to the fact that the Authority had done little to solve the problems between 2006 and 2012, allowing them to become exacerbated. Six years apart, both letters were addressed to the Ramallah Governorate General Director of Environmental Health, one on 22 August 2006 and the other on 11 July 2012:

...we hope that you will do something to present a solution to the problem of the health abomination that is located at the entrance of our village from the side of Shabtin Village and that happened after some of the

²⁷ This is the case because of wastewater's status as a subcategory of water (see also Chapter 2).

citizens from among the owners of the homes there in the neighborhood moved their private sewage in their homes to a private sewage network in their neighborhood in that direction (near Shabtin) without a license or a consultation from any responsible authority particular to it, and this network created a health and environmental problem...

Seeing that the Authority had done so little to fix the sewage problem at its point of origin, in July 2012 the Shuqba council appealed for a solution that would at least address its symptoms. The council sent another letter to Ramallah's General Director of Environmental Health, also on 11 July 2012. This letter requested that Shuqba be included in a campaign to spray insecticides on Authority-controlled areas of the Governorate, which the village needed because of the insects that had collected as a result of the privately-installed sewage network:²⁸

We in the Shuqba Village Council, hoping you will agree to include the name of our village among the villages in which there will be a spraying with insecticides. Considering that our village suffers from many injurious insects and mosquitoes, noting that there was the discovery of cases of illnesses in the village health clinic that were caused by what is called the Jericho mosquito, as we were informed by the medical team in the clinic, and for that reason we ask of you that you deal with this issue of a dangerous situation for the public in the village and especially for the children among them, which increases the need of the village for insecticides.

Offering extreme respect,

Head of the Shuqba Village Council, Ramadan al-Masri

²⁸ According to Tal in his history of the Israeli environment, 90 percent of Israel's mosquitoes were a direct result of the flowing of untreated, pooling wastewater in the 1960s. Tal, Pollution in a Promised Land, 219.

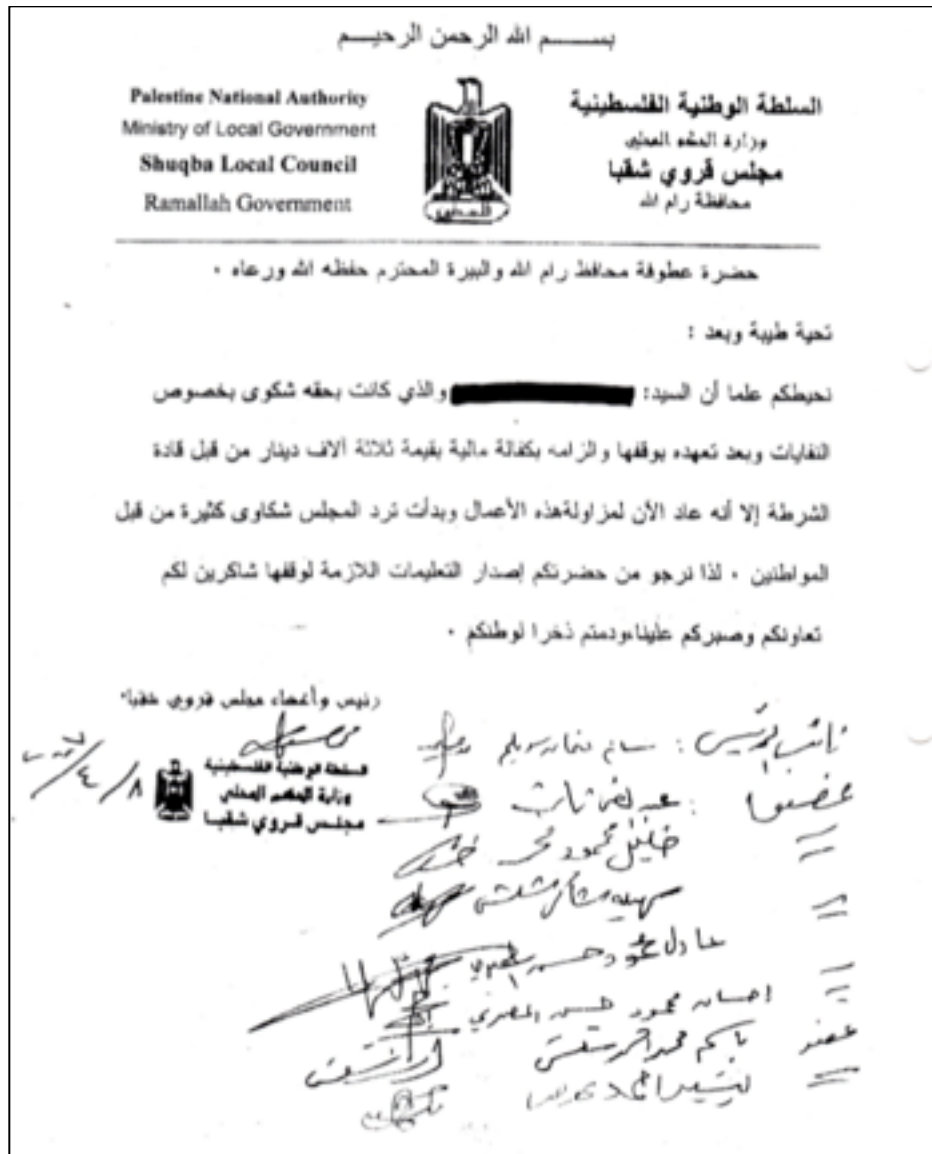


Figure 24. Letter from Shuqba village council to the Governor of Ramallah and al-Bireh on April 8, 2007.

The privately moved sewage was flowing through and pooling in areas of Shuqba's periphery that are also designated Area C (blue on the map in Figure 23). This meant, again, that all environmental issues—including sewage and insects—that resulted from its flow were the responsibility of the civil administration and two settler

organizations. Nitsan Levy, an environmentalist settler I introduced in Chapter 3, was the director of the Judea branch. He was technically the supervisor for Shuqba's problems as well. He never mentioned Shuqba's case in our two years of conversations. In my 2011 conversation at Beit El military base with environmental engineer Assaf Yazdi, however, I discovered that the administration had long had its own staff for spraying insecticides and for extermination throughout the West Bank, irrespective of Areas A, B or C.

Assaf Yazdi: Samir has six or eight Palestinian workers who work under our office, our department. And their job is every day all the year to exterminate against mosquitoes.

SSR: Only mosquitoes?

Joshua (soldier-translator): Yes, unless there's a rodent problem or someone complains. Then Samir and his team will bring the proper cages to catch them. But it's mostly mosquitoes. And mosquitoes...grow in sewage. In standing waters.

AY: And they work in Area A and B also. Not only in C.

Joshua: Because Samir and his team are all Palestinian, and obviously they don't have a problem going into [Area] A. And this is a regional problem, since there are no borders with mosquitoes...

SSR: So what do they do exactly?

AY: Because they're Palestinian they're allowed to go to A and B areas, with all their chemical stuff and materials, and just exterminate them.

Joshua: They have a big truck with a big tank.

AY: Or a tank on their back and they just go around spraying. They use pipes to do it...We have a lot of pictures if you want to see...This is also very important because it is our understanding that there is a problem that crosses borders, and if you don't deal with this problem also in A and B areas it will impact not only in A and B areas it will impact also in C areas and also in Israeli areas.

Technically speaking, the area where the insects were gathering, at Shuqba's entrance toward Shabtin village, should have been included in the administration's insecticide spraying instead. But the Shuqba council had appealed in the letter above (11 July 2012) to be included only in the *Authority's* insecticide spraying campaign. Shuqba had tried to enlist the Authority despite additional fact that the latter had not proven responsive to the previous six years of sewage problems in the village. Sewage networks and treatment plants were aspects of infrastructure that required Israeli military and governmental permits as well as international funding, and were therefore hardly spheres autonomous to Palestinian governance. Nevertheless, both infrastructures and the symptoms of their absence or failure were treated as Authority responsibilities. The letters and language used by Shuqba's council were symptomatic of the palpable, if quiet and unsatisfactory, presence of the Authority in residents' everyday lives. Even without the materialization of Ramallah's regional sanitary landfill to dazzle or impress them, and while Ramallah's wastewater treatment plant faltered and decayed, the Authority was accountable to the people it governed.

For the Sake of the Blood of the Martyrs

Another letter was sent on 1 May 2010 to the Governor of Ramallah and al-Bireh. It was a request that they help stop a Shuqba-based businessman from dumping X-ray images from Ramallah hospitals. He and his business partners had been burning the images in Shuqba to extract silver and sell it. The council's letter closed with a similar national appeal: "We plead for the sake of the blood of the martyrs that this is a severe

phenomenon, this situation of waste." It was signed "your brothers in the Shuqba Village Council." Both letters concerning Shuqba landowners allowing dumping on their land closed with the statement "*wa dumtum thikhran lawatankum.*" I found this statement in much correspondence from municipal and village councils to Palestinian ministries in other contexts as well. The statement can be translated as "May you remain an asset for your homeland," or "may you always stay active, or work for the benefit of your homeland."

When I asked Palestinian friends to help me translate it, one explanation I received was that "the statement is usually said as a compliment for somebody who just did a nationalist task. You could translate it as 'I wish you to continue being a national source for your country.'" Another friend and daughter of an employee in the Authority's Ministry of Information offered that "it means in general that we are proud of you, our Authority, and God willing you will remain an asset for your country...Symbolically you can say it means we respect you and we want you to stay." A Lebanese-Egyptian friend was more dismissive: "That line is pretty standard courtesy language when addressing higher officials in a letter. I don't think they are including it for a specific message or meaning, besides standard courtesy."

But the inclusion of this language in the letters deserves another reading. One that extends beyond its utility in the service of politically strategic flattery. It can be read, I think, as an interpellating gesture. Its repetition throughout the village's correspondence served as the council's attempt to interpellate the Ministry and Governorate employees

who were recipients of the letters. This was attempted interpellation into a locally-oriented, national sense of duty. The significance of such statements resides less in the possibility that they express belief in the political legitimacy of the Authority as a national(ist) body and more in their enactment *as if* the Authority possessed the legitimate authority that it had not been able to exhibit in any sustained way. In this type of enactment I see compliance, though the terms of that compliance were open to negotiation. Both closing statements can then be read as appeals to bureaucrats' auto-authorized knowledge.²⁹ They represented recognition, albeit a cynical one, that these governors governed *in the name* of (if not as) the nation as it built itself a state.

Another letter from the Shuqba council on 17 November 2006 was also addressed to the Governor of Ramallah and al-Bireh. It appealed to the Joint Service Council for Western Ramallah—which, the letter stated, "represents" the Shuqba Council—to stop illegal dumping of wastes on Shuqba's lands. That the appeal was to the JSC, which had yet to have a landfill to administer, also indicates again that Shuqba was already orienting itself toward the Authority institutions that were meant to serve as "infrastructural centers" for "peripheral," usually rural communities, even during preparations for that infrastructure's construction.

All seven letters were copied for me on the agreement that Sami would black out the names of persons accused of facilitating Shuqba's use as a regional dumpsite. He blacked them out regardless of whether those names were associated with Israeli

²⁹ Feldman, *Governing Gaza*, 15.

dumping or with one of what I realized were Shuqba's many other waste-related problems. As far as my interviewees were concerned, Israeli dumping was thus included in the same category (Shuqba's problems with waste dumping) as were the dumping and burning in Shuqba of X-ray images from twelve Ramallah hospitals by Shuqba businessmen, the absence of a sewage system and the need for insecticide spraying as a result. I took the council's inclusion of these other five letters as another sign that there was also a sense in which Israeli dumping was part of a broader, national waste problem, or a problem for "the government"—even if not all experienced as equally internal or local.

Islah, *Sweet Words*

Mr. al-Masri remarked to me that the Authority "would deal with the dumping" only "sometimes." Showing his frustration, he said the police "would come and put them [the landowners] in jail! They would arrest and imprison them." But none were held for very long. As soon as landowners were released many were back to work making arrangements with Israeli truck drivers to dump more waste. "Because they were profiting, as soon as they would come out of prison, they would go back to doing it. Some people would stop bringing [waste] and other people would just start doing it again." Even the Authority's arrests, then, did not solve the problem. "So it's still happening," Masri went on. It was back in the council's hands to do something about it.

He recounted a recent example:

About two weeks ago, at about 9pm at night, a phone call came to me that someone was dumping at the entrance of the village. We went there and

we stopped a driver. I even brought young men with me who wanted to beat him up. I said "No." But we reprimanded him and we closed the street so that when [the driver] returns he'll find it closed! But we have to open the road because we need to reach our own lands. In other words we were forced to close the road that we *ourselves* would use so that he wouldn't come back and do it again and dump here. A while ago I filmed a guy on my phone. I took a picture of the license plates of the cars of the Israelis who dump here.

Mr. al-Masri told me the council had also held *sulha*³⁰ meetings between the profiting landowners and men from Shuqba's three leading families.

RM: We have *islah* committees. That's the main way we solve our problems. Through the *islah* committees. But there are people who are hardheaded. You can't give or take with them. They don't listen to words. There are people who get embarrassed. You say how could you dirty your village? Because the *islah* committees don't beat people or punish people. They embarrass them. With words. Sweet words.

SSR: This didn't work?

RM: Maybe if my brother is dumping, maybe they'll come to me and through me try to talk to him. Like that. But there are people who don't listen to anything or anyone.

Shuqba was organized around three strong families. Each had run on a different political party list in the municipal elections of 2004/5. When his family had chosen him to run in the municipal elections, Mr. Al-Masri had spoken with the two main parties: Fatah and

³⁰ According to Fares, et. Al., the Palestinian "*sulha* system of resolving disputes exists outside the framework of the official court system and its main objective is to reconcile the conflicting parties on the basis of the customs and traditions of the society. The main incentive in undertaking such reconciliation processes is to prevent social chaos, often taking the form of cycles of retaliation after an initial crime is committed." Fares et al., "The Sulha System," 21. Fares et al. also argue that "Ultimately, sulh has become the prevailing method of resolving all kinds of disputes, from criminal, to land, personal status, and minor commercial disputes" (21-22). It is not, however, legally binding. A detailed analysis of informal justice in the West Bank and Gaza can be found in Informal Justice: Rule of Law and Dispute Resolution in Palestine, National Report on Field Research Results, Institute of Law, Birzeit University, 2006. See also Gellman and Vuinovich, "From Sulha to Salaam," Jabbour, "*Sulha*," USAID, "Civil Peace in the West Bank" as well as Birzeit Law center bibliographical collection, available at: <http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/iol/en/project/outputfile/5/b9cb9dfab0.pdf?PHPSESSID=ryonrxlahb>

Hamas. He and Hamas had found common ground. He decided to run on their ticket, though he told me he was politically independent. The village had elected seven Hamas members and four Fatah members to its council. Hamas was the stronger of the two in Shuqba, he explained. Mr. Al-Masri had also been Shuqba's mukhtar before becoming head of the council. He had become mukhtar at the unusually young age of 28. "Normally," he said, "you have to be old. So I was maybe one of the youngest people to become mukhtar." He served along with two other mukhtars from the two other leading families in Shuqba from 1990-1997. His position as mukhtar had involved recording the births and deaths of the village, he said, solving problems within or among families and forging useful connections with the Israelis, for example when residents had needed permits to visit Jerusalem. He recalled that in 1997, the Authority had called all the mukhtars to meet. Each mukhtar was asked to give up his stamp. "We gave them up," he said. The mukhtarship was over. "That was it," he continued. But "being head of the council is basically the same thing." Given that Mr. Al-Masri was now village council head, was a former mukhtar with the strength of a party and his family behind him, it was especially striking that he had nevertheless been unable to solve any of Shuqba's waste problems locally.

The Insignificance of Failure?

Just as striking, though not unexpected, again, it seemed to be less the success or failure imputed to the Authority's landfill projects and more the material changes they afforded in their partial or complete implementations that rendered the Authority's

presence palpable—and the Authority accountable—in residents' lives.³¹ Some of the effects of these infrastructural changes were unintended, propelling new objects and discourses into circulation.³² In Faqu'a, Zahrat al-Finjan landfill's new objects included the novel presence of public garbage—garbage in the streets as a result of the replacement of at-home collection by the dissemination of public dumpsters. Newly circulating discourses set in motion by the landfill's operation near Faqu'a included talk about the Authority's environmental negligence and inadequacy, often brought on by the sights, and smells, of public garbage. In the quote below from Dr. 'Amer, Faqu'a's village council head, note that he insisted on foregrounding the national, and technically sophisticated, "well-studied" character of the landfill even while accusing its managers of failing to adequately protect the environment. In coupling these particular forms of praise and critique, Dr. 'Amer's words can be read as another example of the assumption that the Authority was obliged to handle the problem of waste, despite the fact that its handling had been unsatisfactory.

In the beginning we came to an agreement with the administration of Zahrat al-Finjan. There is no doubt, I should say, that it is of course a national project (*mashrou'a watani*) and well-studied (*madrous*) and a large project...But it cannot help but have some issues in it that are negative...Imagine that we had been daily collecting the waste. We had been preserving cleanliness and conserving the environment in a much better way. And because they wanted to lighten the load, the cost for themselves, they wanted to make it three days a week only. And this was bad for the environment!

³¹ On productive state and development failures, see Wedeen, [Peripheral Visions](#) and Ferguson, [The Anti-Politics Machine](#).

³² On infrastructures' unintended consequences, see for example Ferguson, [The Anti-Politics Machine](#) and Larkin, [Signal and Noise](#).

Dr. 'Amer's critique was not that Zahrat al-Finjan's managers lacked the scientific expertise to properly manage waste. Rather, it was that the reforms they imposed ignored local management techniques and residents' financial and hygienic limitations. This was the Authority being held accountable despite—or because of?—what were seen as its failures. Again, that sense was achieved less because of the end result (e.g. a dazzling landfill or clean streets) and more because of the Authority's repeated claims to the authorized knowledge required to take responsibility for the nation's waste, as I discuss below and in Chapter 4. Dr. 'Amer thus referred several times to Faqu'a's superior ways of solving "environmental problems." At the same time, he conceded that Faqu'a's pre-Zahrat al-Finjan techniques for managing waste had not been what he called scientific (*ilmi*). "How were we disposing of the waste? That too was in a primitive way (*bitariqah bida'iyah*)," he said. "The style was primitive...The style was not scientific." "Now," he continued, "the JSC car comes in. Of course it's a modern car with a compressor and that kind of thing."

In referring to the JSC car as modern, was Dr. 'Amer merely paying lip service to the language proposed by the Authority? He did speak as if the Authority's project had done what it had set out to do, knowing full well that it had also produced new problems. And those problems were not dissimilar to those that Faqu'a's initial "primitive" dumpsite had caused. Speaking as if Zahrat al-Finjan had demonstrated its scientific characteristics did not indicate belief, I argue—especially as it was followed by a lengthy critique of its effects on the village. Rather, it was as though statements about the Authority's claim to

be managing waste scientifically and for the national good were a discursive "obligatory point of passage,"³³ perhaps aimed at an international audience I represented in that moment. At their most basic, statements like these performed recognition of the Authority's position as a player in the field of waste management, even if they did not index the Authority's transcendental, that is, national, legitimacy to rule. Recall that much about Zahrat al-Finjan landfill had actually been determined by other institutions—including the civil administration, Tahal (Israel's national water authority), the World Bank and AYGL (the Haifa-based consulting group). Nevertheless Dr. 'Amer made not mention of any other institution from the landfill's much more diverse bureaucracy. He made reference to but three "players" in this particular aspect of the sanitary field: the village council, residents and the Authority (as the JSC).

Put another way, one of the landfill's effects was the production of a new "third player"—the Authority—in the sanitary landscape of the village. The PA appeared as distinct from local government (the village council) and from residents. And, crucially, the Authority appeared to have *replaced* the civil administration in that field. The Authority had become distinct from "external" institutions such as the administration (which now appeared to be located just at Beit El) and donors (e.g. the World Bank). These were left unmentioned in conversations both with Dr. 'Amer and Mr. Al-Masri. Replacement of Israeli rule by the Authority came in the place of another sense that was sometimes articulated in other contexts: that was a sense of the occupation's bureaucratic

³³ Latour, Science in Action, 150 and 245.

expansion to encompass the PA as part of it. The latter might have been indexed by open critiques of the addition of the Authority to the administration's bureaucracy, for example in Shuqba's letters to the Authority or in village talk about Authority failure. In a context in which the very fact of the Authority's role in West Bank governance was subject to perpetual questioning, statements like Dr. 'Amer's affirmed that many residents thus objectified the Authority's presence even while they critiqued its effects.

Mr. al-Masri confirmed this point when he lamented the effects the Authority's ineffective presence had had on residents in times of local dispute. "You know," he said, "things were easier and better before the Authority, before Oslo. Because there was no police. There was no idea that we should call the police if there's a problem." He was suggesting that local mediation systems had been weakened as a result of expectations now oriented toward the PA. He gave the example of *islah*, whose sweet words were losing their grip in the village:

We would just solve problems among ourselves. With the *sulha*. We didn't depend on some police. Because the police was Israeli! Even if the officers were sometimes Arabs. Or even West Bank Palestinians. They would still wear the hat that had a Star of David on the front, like the police officers in Tel Aviv. Same thing. So we wouldn't call them for anything. That's it.

Interestingly, at another point in the conversation he argued that now that residents recognized the Authority's *potential* to possess authority if not its actual authority, the nature of the problem of governance had changed. That which now had to be solved was the fact that the police were unable to perform their proper function. "If the police could come on the very same day and catch them and put them in jail, if I could pick up the

phone and the police would come—not one of them would dump!" he exclaimed. I asked him whether he meant that fear of the PA police would solve Shuqba's problems. He did not answer directly. He looked out the window as if distracted: "If only there were police in our area..." he repeated several times more.

This shift in the identification of a problem, and therefore of its solution, should be analyzed in light of the way that critiques of municipalities were deployed during the first Intifada. In the 1980s, municipalities came to be viewed as prostheses of occupation. Residents paid taxes to the municipalities and those taxes were transferred to the occupiers that controlled municipal governance. Critiques of the functioning or malfunctioning of municipalities at the time were thus critiques of occupation. Solutions to that compound problem were sought in the creation of alternative forms of governance—through community- and neighborhood-level committees—based *outside* of municipal governance. Between the late 1990s and the 2010s, by contrast, problems and solutions to illegal dumping in Shuqba were identified with the PA and with the PA only. The people to whom the Shuqba Council had appealed to *least* frequently had been the people with the actual capacity to stop the dumping: the Israeli military and the two Israeli settler councils with which it cooperated. The former head engineer of Ramallah's landfill project (and the Ramallah JSC) told me in 2012 that, independently of any Shuqba directive, she had discussed the Shuqba case with civil administration staff. "Not that I believe them," she said, referring to the Israelis. "But the Israelis in the civil

administration said 'Just give us their names and we will take care of it.' But apparently the village didn't want to give the names."³⁴

What would "take care of it" have meant for men in Shuqba, for their families or for the village as a whole? Would it be prison, an excuse to demolish a house? Military court? Arbitrary detention or exorbitant fines? What further shame would be brought upon the families of those allowing dumping if it were to become even more widely known that they were complicit in Israeli desecration of Palestinian lands? On the one hand, Shuqba's choice not to give up the names to the occupation authorities was to be expected. This was in large part an issue of trust. On the other hand, writing to ineffectual Authority bureaucrats instead of to those Israelis with the power to solve the problem deserves greater attention. It also returns us to the realm of the technical-national: In the midst of prolonged periods of frustration and confusion, Mr. al-Masri and Sami were both clear to me about one thing. That it was the Authority that should be taking care of Shuqba's waste problem, regardless of Areas A, B or C. Writing letters and using a language of accountability about the PA can be seen as forms of participation in the technical-national field that had taken hold in waste-related affairs after Oslo. Performing compliance with Authority bureaucrats' own language about themselves—by holding them accountable—can thus be read as a sign of bureaucrats' political effectiveness

³⁴ Interview in Ramallah, 26 July 2012.

despite their ineffectiveness in governing garbage.³⁵ Political effectiveness was registered regardless of governmental successes.

Risk Discourse, Uncertainty and Environmental Expertise

In Chapter 3 I described how PA bureaucrats' borrowing of measurements from Israeli institutions often led them to disavow their own expertise when the need arose for them to defend PA-led reforms. I also described how critical publics therefore remained unsatisfied at the scientific capabilities of the self-proclaimed environmental experts who now governed them. At the same time, *some* scientific authority did accrue to PA experts. It accrued to them at least enough for critical publics to demand greater scientific rigor of the *same institutions that seemed to be at fault* when waste governance went wrong. This began to appear in Dr. 'Amer's statements about Zahrat al-Finjan, above. Below I consider another case of dumping in Shuqba, this time of Palestinian wastes transported by Palestinian waste traders. This case suggests that the matter-of-fact participation of residents in Authority waste governance was at least partly tethered to the monopoly of the latter over risk discourses concerning the relationship between wastes and the environment.³⁶

Among all the waste problems that Shuqba had faced over the past decade, the one about which Mr. al-Masri and Sami were most keen to speak was the dumping and

³⁵ On the political effectiveness of Asad's "cult," see Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 6, 14, 19, 30.

³⁶ Reno, "Beyond Risk," 519.

burning of X-ray images from Ramallah area hospitals for the extraction of silver.³⁷ Sami read aloud parts of an article about the X-ray burning as we sat in his office. It had been written in an official Authority newspaper, *al-Hayah al-Jadidah*. He printed an online copy and insisted I take it. The article, published on 15 July 2010, was written in Arabic by Muntaser Hamdan. Its title was "Does the burning of X-rays threaten the health of the citizens of Shuqba in the West of Ramallah and pollute their environment, as documented by 38 cases of miscarriage in the last two years?"

Experts are one of the main features of the six-page story. The article reveals the apparently indisputable nature of evidence that the burning of X-rays had been occurring, and that it had been occurring near enough to residential areas in the village for residents to inhale the smoke. The supervising doctor in the village health clinic, Dr. Mustafa Nimir, as well as the village pharmacist, Noh Farsa, confirmed that the number of miscarriages in the village of about 5,000 people had reached 100-150 cases in the last three years, asserting that this was higher than the natural average. Dr. George Masih, who had supervised the children's clinic in Shuqba for four years, testified that there were skin and eye infections caused by the emissions. Insam Sawalha, Director of al-Najah University's Poison Center, also confirmed the danger to humans of inhaling dioxin, emissions' chemical components released by the burning of plastics such as X-rays. Another medical professional, Dr. 'Imad 'Abid from Ramallah Government Hospital and

³⁷ In addition to photocopying the letter from Shuqba to the Ramallah Governorate for me, they put me in touch with a former Birzeit University student and Shuqba resident named Huwaida. Huwaida had made a documentary film about the man responsible for the burning (who also turned out to be her uncle).

a specialist in women's reproductive health, also confirmed that waste burning (whether medical or regular waste) is one practice that can lead to miscarriages if smoke is inhaled.

But a solution to this problem, too, had been stalled for years. It seemed to hinge on provision of a form of proof that could only be gained through environmental impact assessments³⁸ and tests using "laboratory facilities." Thus, Dr. 'Abid continued, "about the relationship between exposure to dioxin and exposure to miscarriage... There are not clear studies on humans that prove this relationship, though there are many studies conducted on other mammals and it was proven through studies on the increase of the miscarriage rates and abnormalities in embryos in these mammals." Dr. 'Abid was reluctant to conclude that the correlation between miscarriages and dioxin in humans was significant, even if smoke could be smelled and miscarriages were being recorded. He implied that the absence of particular forms of proof made such a conclusion impossible. The call was for a kind of expertise missing from the case.

More interestingly, though, a similar reluctance was expressed among almost all the people interviewed for the article, *regardless of the side of the controversy on which they found themselves*. All seemed to agree that confirmations from medical professionals and poison experts *outside* the relevant Authority ministries did not suffice. A solution to Shuqba's problem would require *authorized* expertise of a specific kind—a kind vetted by, and internal to, the technical-national field of PA waste governance. It would require

³⁸ Environmental Impact Assessments are documents required for large-scale infrastructural planning in much of the West Bank, as they have been in many countries since the late twentieth century. Assessments have been one of the most important calculative devices for the construction of sanitary landfills in a number of countries since the 1960s (Latour, "Pasteurization of France"). For my analysis of the place of EIAs in the politics of landfill construction in the West Bank, see my article entitled "Occupational Hazards."

"scientific" rather than experiential expertise. As I describe in the Introduction, the environment had been constituted by new approaches to the management of water, land and air. Environmental management operated at spatial scales much broader (horizontally across territory) and much deeper and higher (vertically underground and into the air and atmosphere) than had concerns with sanitation and public health before it. The Authority's mandate thus called for protection from pollution on a scale broader than that for which any government in Palestine had heretofore been responsible. The new limitlessness of waste's polluting potential had fueled the growth of environmental expertise. Academic disciplines including environmental science, environmental engineering, water engineering, solid waste management, environmental studies, environmental sustainability had helped shape the dominant way of thinking about the protection of the environment against society's excesses. These fields together had shaped "the most influential language for explaining the relationship between humans and nature³⁹" with regard to human-produced wastes.

Within under a decade, more than 49 Joint Service Councils had been created in the West Bank and Gaza, 26 of which had been established solely for solid waste management, and one for sewage.⁴⁰ JSCs were run by small teams of experts hired directly by the Authority. The establishment of JSCs and planning for large-scale infrastructures (e.g. regional landfills) often catalyzed municipal personnel changes as

³⁹ Mitchell, "Are Environmental Imaginaries Culturally Constructed?" 272-3.

⁴⁰ UNDP and PAPP, "Support to Local Government," 72.

well. What independent planning functions municipalities had once had had been slowly eroded.⁴¹ The reshuffling of responsibilities in pollution prevention that ensued was premised on newly drawn lines between experts and laypersons.⁴² Experts congealed around "centers of calculation"⁴³ that were both "socially and spatially distant from local concerns."⁴⁴ Centers were also increasingly influential in distant localities such as Shuqba and Faqu'a. The Authority had sought to people its growing set of elite management offices with "technically" trained staff.⁴⁵ The sometimes interchangeable terms "technical," "scientific" and "professional" came to indicate specific forms of training and degrees—often from abroad. To name three of many possible examples, the first executive director of Ramallah's JSC for solid waste management had obtained an Msc. in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering from the University of Texas in Austin. Her replacement had an engineering degree from the University of

⁴¹ The law continues to yield confusion among Palestinian Authority and municipal bureaucrats, as the location of authority in determining waste management schemes remains an open question. For example, the law allowed municipalities to set their own "bylaws to organize their work, needs and interests (Article 15a). But it did not make clear "whether the minister should always approve laws and regulations that include fees, fines, or taxes." Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 9. Local councils gained the ability to issue regulations "to instruct how the collection should take place." Again, however, "centralization ensure[d] that a cost recovery scheme is in place, as local councils must gain Minister approval in advance."

⁴² On the monopoly on legitimate expertise, see Eyal, The Disenchantment of the Orient, 68. See also Matthews, Instituting Nature, 6. Matthews argues that "official knowledge and various forms of ignorance are coproduced in encounters between officials and their audiences," calling for us to "rethink knowledge as being always linked to ignorance...Power of publics to affect official knowledge" (6-7).

⁴³ Latour, Science in Action.

⁴⁴ See Holifield, "How to Speak to Aquifers."

⁴⁵ The legislation the Authority passed during its first few years "empowered a new breed of professional public administrators," engineers and experts much the way the establishment of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers' mandate had done in London in the mid-19th century. Benedickson, The Culture of Flushing, 84.

Northumbria at Newcastle. The person who, in 2014, became director of Bethlehem's JSC for solid waste, has an Msc. in Environmental Science and Policy from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

The Accords had acted as a centrifugal force, assembling Palestinians from disparate geographies and educational backgrounds into new or revamped institutions of governance. Many were the so-called "returnees," or diaspora Palestinians headhunted by the PLO and the PA's early donors. The divide between those with authorized knowledge, or the bureaucratic authority, on the question of waste and those without it steadily grew. But it did not grow watered by inertia. It was produced. Soon Authority bureaucrats were advising non-Authority waste specialists, for example, that their time working on pollution was over. Shaking his head, Dr. Isaac, director of the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem, for example, told me that "[t]he Ministry of Planning met with our board of directors." The Ministry representative said "Thank you for your good work but now we have an Authority, so I suggest that you dismantle yourself." A Jerusalem-based "returnee" working for the World Bank corroborated Dr. Isaac's story. Soon after Oslo "all the information that [ARIJ] had collected for doing the environment profiles, all the environmental database, was transferred to the Ministry of Planning, to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), to the Ministry of Local Government, and to the

Water Authority⁴⁶." The Orient House environmental technical committee was "dismantled."⁴⁷

This kind of changing of the guard is of course typical to "regime change" as it is to any significant epistemic shift, both of which occurred in Palestine in the last quarter of the twentieth century. In the Territories and in the field of waste management in particular, these two types of shift intersected with the establishment of Palestinian "self-government." The fact that waste had become an environmental pollutant thus *shaped the form and texture of the distinction between governors and governed* as governing responsibilities were transferred through Oslo. Among other things, this meant that the transformation of garbage into an environmental pollutant was catalyzed by, and necessitated, "technical" solutions to waste management that reshaped the practices and standards according to which that management could be evaluated.

Detection and prediction of pollution were radically transformed. Pollution of the underground aquifers could not be detected by sight, smell or taste as had water contamination by the water carriers of the Ottoman period. Since the mid-nineteenth century, public health efforts aimed at disease prevention had focused attention on visible and horizontal distances from water sources such as springs, wells and ponds. They had focused on specific individuals or groups of people, for instance disease treatment,

⁴⁶ Interview with Jad Isaac at the ARIJ main offices in Bethlehem, 16 May 2011.

⁴⁷ When I asked what had happened to the database, one of the program's former coordinators recounted that "Now some of the database is housed at the Ministry of Planning, but it's probably not been maintained. More likely more information at ARIJ." Dr. Isaac lamented the breakdown in initial cooperation: "We trained them in GPS. We gave them computers...The idea was that they would be responsible for upgrading it. But they didn't. In 2007, they forced me again to produce a report on the status of the environment for the West Bank and Gaza. And in 2011 I'm doing it again..."

vaccines, waste disposal at a specific distance from wells and residential areas. With regard to waste in particular, public health had been a greater concern in urban areas where populations were denser and where distances between humans and their wastes were more compressed. In the Ottoman period "confirmation of water potability [had] involved both observations made using the various sense [sic] (relevant to color, smell and taste) or ascertainment whether water is polluted with materials of visible qualities."⁴⁸ Odors had been admitted as evidence of environmental pollution in cases of industrial pollution in Israel as well.⁴⁹

Authority technocrats' greatest concern was now with the underground and with geographies that extended beyond the immediate reach of municipal or village council government. This brought with it the prioritization of the invisible and the inaccessible. In addition to the uses to which olfaction had been put, the roles of visibility and sight, so often described as central to the reproduction of disciplinary power and of the power of the modern state, were also gradually transformed. The governmental gaze turned *away*

⁴⁸ Marie et al., "Water Quality Legislation," 2. For how the British also used olfaction to detect contamination, see McFarlane, "Governing the Contaminated City." McFarlane tells us that "Conybeare (1852:17) wrote of 'cesspools'--open drains, that emanated smells into houses and over food--while Leith (1864:36) wrote of 'noxious matters', 'poisonous gases' and 'accumulated filth', arguing that 'filthiness' was the worst of Bombay's 'many Eviles'" (419). Ottoman conceptions of pollution had coincided with those prevailing in late nineteenth century European and American imperial contexts as well. "Of all the manifold sources of germs--whether soil, water, food, blood, urine, pus, mucus, or saliva--feces appeared to public health officers the most conspicuous and the most dangerous, just as to an earlier generation of physicians the odor of human waste had been generally the most feared of all noxious emanations." Alain Corbin cited in Anderson, "Excremental Colonialism," 642.

⁴⁹ The Israeli Geshuri factory specialized in pesticides and other chemical products and was located near the Israeli seaside city of Netanya until 1985. When local residents "complained about the bad smell coming from the factory...the owners decided to move to an area where the laws are more flexible and neighbors are less vocal--the West Bank." They moved the factory to an Israeli industrial zone beside Tulkarem, in whose direction the factory's smoke now blows. Rappaport, "Industrial Estates along the Wall," 2.

from the individual subject and toward that which no individual could see or access. If wastewater was disposed of in a rural area, as it was in Shuqba, for example, the fact that water flowed underground from one area to another meant that it could pollute the springs of a city fifty kilometers away. And it could do so invisibly. Similarly, air moving across a mountain ridge meant that smoke emitted by an urban factory could, again invisibly, pollute the air of towns and villages that had never seen it with their own eyes. Shifts in expertise thus signaled the decline of the experiential in water quality testing, on the one hand, and the reinvention of appropriate places in which to dispose of wastes, on the other. With the environment's emergence, then, detection increasingly required specific training and equipment with regard to which the "naked" sensorium played a very different and diminutive role.⁵⁰

Smelling the smoke from the burning X-ray images and seeing skin rashes or disease on the bodies of Shuqba residents could now less easily amount to proof of environmental pollution. What was most interesting in the Shuqba case was that village residents and their representatives also participated in this new sensorial-bureaucratic divide. Mr. Qadih, the man responsible for the X-ray burning in Shuqba, and Fathi Abu Mughli, the Minister of Health⁵¹ who granted him an Authority license to collect and

⁵⁰ This affirms the argument that olfaction has a history, which is something Laporte also demonstrates in The History of Shit. This may complicate Reno's proposition that olfaction has an inherent "interpretive flexibility." Reno, "Beyond Risk."

⁵¹ It should also be noted that the Minister of Health had just resigned after being investigated for corruption (in May 2012). Before resigning he had denied a relationship between the emission of gases and the increase in the rate of miscarriages and other illnesses. He had argued that "the burning is done like the burning of any plastic materials. Silver extraction is done and then there is burning without damage to the air since it is done far from residential areas."

burn the X-rays from twelve Ramallah hospitals, both demanded further expert evidence. This stalled proceedings toward a solution for Shuqba. Qadih acknowledged what he called "damage due to the burning of the images." But he demanded it be proven. He is quoted saying "if it is proven I am prepared to stop doing it." He confirms that he had invited the Ministry of Health and the Environmental Quality Authority to "conduct a test but they had not done so." "*I believe that there is damage in our work,*" he says, "*but we are in need of expert authorities to conduct medical tests to prove it.*" That Qadih stalled the investigation process is unsurprising. What is noteworthy, is the fact that Qadih could on the one hand publicly acknowledge damage done when he burned X-rays while, on the other hand, demanding further expert proof. This suggests he possessed a degree of confidence that the other parties to the controversy would agree that PA-authorized, expert mediation was necessary, even if some level of guilt had already been admitted.

Indeed, those against the burning also demanded the further application of expertise to the case. The head of Shuqba's council at the time—the same person who had been writing letters to the Authority on behalf of concerned residents—cited studies that had already taken place in his critique. But he too demanded further tests. "Head of the Village Council Salim Abu Souilem," writes Hamdan, "confirms that the burning of X-ray images threatens the health of citizens. Emphasizing the importance of procedures of studies of operating to reveal the diseases and miscarriages, especially after the confirmation of doctors of the increase in the percentage of miscarriages, in comparison with other villages." The husband of one woman who had miscarried from what he

believed to have been inhalation of X-ray emissions demanded the same: “[H]er husband...demands the formation of a medical committee 'to supervise the procedures of laboratory tests on the air and environment of the village that is polluted because of the burning of X-ray images and the emission of smoke,'" wrote Hamdan. This suggests an expectation that particular types of training, monitoring and equipment should have been mobilized to prevent a situation like Shuqba's. Acting as if expertise were the solution—the mediating force most likely to render a *just* solution—was again apparent here.

Granted, *al-Hayah al-Jadidah* was a newspaper known to support and be supported by the Authority. The interviewees Hamdan had chosen for the piece may have been chosen with that in mind. But it is notable that even Hamdan, as well as several interviewees, cited the Authority's *lack* of expertise, its lack of machines, lack of laboratories and the lack of Authority monitoring as the main government failings to have been foregrounded by the case of X-ray burning. Despite its failings, there seemed in other words to be a general consensus that expertise specifically authorized *by the Authority* was still the only viable solution to the problem. An Authority-sponsored paper was critiquing the Authority's own expert and equipment failings. At the same time, it continued to demand that the Authority be the one to address Shuqba's problems, as well as its own expert failings. The call was not, in other words, for *independent* experts. After all, many such experts (e.g. Nimir, Farsa, Masih and Sawalha) and had already and quite publicly weighed in. Nor was there a call for an immediate stop to the burning just yet. Nor, importantly, was there mention of the fact that some of the limits that were being

experienced in the Authority's response were *partial results of Israeli restrictions* on PA police movement (as in the case of Israeli dumping) and on the movement of goods such as equipment for lab tests, for example.

This last point echoes what I described in Chapter 3. During the Rammun landfill controversy, Authority experts came under heavy criticism for their choice of a site for the landfill. The case for that site had not been convincingly made to landowners being asked to sell. When faced with direct questions on the matter, experts made no gestures toward explaining that the site and many of its measurements had been chosen by Israel. They did *not attempt to blame the occupation for their own limitations*. They seemed to accept instead the disavowal of their own expertise with little more than a shrug. In the Shuqba case, Authority bureaucrats went further, *affirming* that it was their own institutions that had been lacking:

...the Vice President of the Environmental Quality Authority, Jamil Motor, confirms the need for the existence of central laboratories for the revealing of the sources of pollution. And he adds: 'We are interested in the monitoring and inspection and reports of the characteristics of the materials whether they are damaging or polluting at the permitted rate. To that he confirms the need 'for testing and measurement laboratories for all of the radiological pollutants such as the numerous elements that have many sources,' inviting 'the unity of all the efforts of the governmental institutions to face the health and environmental dangers.

Rather than hold military occupation accountable for making lab equipment imports difficult, and rather than accept independent expertise, the Health Minister focused on the Ministry's lack of equipment to prove the case one way or another. As for residents

experiencing the effects of PA governance, for Authority experts "successes" and "failures" had a similar way of being somewhat irrelevant. Both tended to create new imperatives for further Authority-driven, technical intervention. Dr. Ibrahim 'Atiyeh, the Director General of Environmental Health in the Ministry of Health, wrote Hamdan, thus "attributes the problem [of X-ray burning] to the absence of a sanitary landfill for the disposal of medical waste, confirming that the burning produces dangerous pollution that causes diseases of the lungs and of breathing and cancer." Taghreed Najjar, an employee with UNDP, who had worked on the National Strategy for Solid Waste Management, echoed 'Atiyeh's evaluation in a private conversation with me. She called "medical waste" "a big problem." "We don't have a special landfill," she went on:

But you need special facilities for this. I mean, not necessarily separate landfills, but special facilities. Special cells for medical waste. Systems should also be installed inside the hospitals themselves. You have to separate the hazardous medical waste in special bins, for example, so it goes in a special facility in the landfill itself...In the Jenin site, medical waste was not included. Medical waste is too complicated to address. Too scattered. There's no legal background, no bylaws. Bylaws are in final draft stage. They were just sent to be passed. You need equipment, too, training manuals public awareness.

Khalil Nijim had also been involved in drafting the National Strategy. He lamented that the Public Health Law of 2004 was too general when it came to medical waste. Over the course of two long conversations in 2010, he explained that "Medical waste is a part of hazardous waste. It needs collection. Treatment...We want to get it inert, then dispose of it. It shouldn't even exit a clinic without being "safe." We need to know the following things: Types. Magnitudes. The routes it goes through. Otherwise no collection,

treatment, disposal will work." The following description of the Authority's "failure" to deal with medical waste by an Environmental Quality Authority (EQA) expert also called for intervention in the form of autoclaves technologies and legal reforms, again by the Authority:

Still we don't have separation system for medical and hazardous waste. But there are some pilot projects. For example, in Ramallah government hospital. There they are trying management of medical waste on campus. It's called the "autoclave." They add some chemicals to perform sterilization. This should be developed to cover all hospitals and medical services in the Ramallah governorate and should be carried out in other places, possibly in Jenin at Zahrat al-Finjan...We should have an umbrella strategy!

Similarly, both the head of Shuqba's council and the husband of the woman who had miscarried requested further tests on the relative toxicity of the waste being dumped. In fact, the letters from Shuqba's council, Hamdan's article, interviews with Authority bureaucrats, as well as the Environment Law of 1999, *all* placed responsibility for waste management on the Authority in this case. It was according to this logic that Authority-sanctioned "environmental impact" studies could trump the testimonies of local doctors and pharmacists, and even those of specialized university research centers. These and the above examples underscore two things: One, that a differentiation between expertise sanctioned by Authority institutions and expertise outside them (e.g. in universities) had become salient and persuasive. This was another sign that the Authority had come to serve as a standalone entity in an *internal* hierarchy of expertise within which the Authority stood at the top. And two, that, again, Authority bureaucrats' tended not to hold

Israel accountable for limits placed on their own ability to govern when engaging with local publics.

For both residents and governors, it also remained uncertain which of the Authority institutions trumped the others *within* its system of ministries and directorates. According to Hamdan's article, for example, the Ministry of Health and the Environmental Quality Authority were at odds on the issue of X-ray burning. The Shuqba council had written letters both to the two "clashing" ministries and to the Governor of Ramallah and al-Bireh, an institution with its own bylaws, priorities and limitations. For residents, the sum of these exchanges contributed to a slew of uncertainties added to the uncertainties of living in a possibly toxic environment. Residents lived with uncertainties about the relationship between "the environment" and the health of the public, a relationship increasingly posited as technically "unknowable" by the ordinary residents involved.⁵² Residents thus developed a heightened sense of "awareness" of the dangers posed by wastes in their surroundings and of the Authority's accumulation of technical expertise, even when that was ineffectively or unevenly applied to meeting residents' needs. In contributing to a sense of "uncertainty and unknowability" among residents, Authority waste governance resembled Soviet and Ukrainian, post-Soviet responses to the 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl.⁵³ Adriana Petryna argues that, while it was interested in delivering measurable benefits to preserve the biological welfare of citizens

⁵² Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

and the health of its future population, state governance in Ukraine cannot be read as biopolitical in Foucault's terms. Its effects were not always the fine-tuning of knowledge and precision of scales and standards of measurement. Instead they included the proliferation of new uncertainties for citizens and governors alike. She writes: "state power is as concerned with making bodies and behaviors ever more predictable and knowable as it is with creating—both intentionally and inadvertently—spaces of nonknowledge and unpredictability...In short, daily life is characterized by overwhelming uncertainty and unknowability."⁵⁴ Authority sanitation reforms and their failures together contributed to new experiences of uncertainty even while experts attempted to demonstrate the scientific precision of measurements, calculations and the specific material conditions that made them possible. These were new uncertainties about what material hazards produced diseases and other health problems. They were uncertainties about the sources of environmental pollution. They were also uncertainties about which institutions—given a choice of Authority ministries, Authority-appointed regional governments, elected municipal councils and independent experts—could be held accountable for problems having to do with waste.

A key part of the problem was that environmental problems connected to the dumping of wastes develop at a variety of rates and rhythms.⁵⁵ In the West Bank, the vertical distance between land surfaces and underground aquifers, like the horizontal

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ See for example Masco, [The Nuclear Borderlands](#).

distances between sources of pollution and the distant place they could impact, meant relatively slow detection rates for environmental pollution from wastes. Waste dumping in Shuqba had been taking place for at least twelve years. According to dominant estimates evaluating wastes' impacts on water quality in the West Bank, the impacts of dumping and burning would only begin to show with a temporal delay of up to thirty years. Residents who identified smoke, smells, cancers and miscarriages as results of the dumping and the burning that usually followed were told to wait until national annual statistics could be collected, until Authority studies could be conducted with the right equipment, even while several doctors had confirmed a likely relationship.

This compounded the Authority's already multiyear delay in solving Shuqba's myriad problems. It contributed to a sense in Shuqba that residents must brace themselves to endure a period during which unwanted wastes would remain on village lands. To me it seemed that for people in Shuqba that period, like the temporalities of so many forms of suffering under military occupation, was assumed to be of *unknown* but *temporary* duration. There was thus another implicit expectation of "the government" among residents and their local representatives: an expectation that the latter would continue to write letters and wait, wait and write letters. All the while, the potentially toxic water and air would continue to flow in and out of the bodies of the people in the village. Women would continue to miscarry and mysterious cancers would continue to grow and metastasize. Again they would write letters, pay angry visits to complicit neighbors, snap photos of trucks driving away.

Over the past four decades, West Bank Palestinian residents have experienced a huge and often violent array of changes to the landscapes in which they live, work and through which they move. In addition to the Nakba, the Naksa and the two intifadas, these have included urbanization in cities like Jenin, Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron and increased migration toward Ramallah as the West Bank's economic and political center. The sense of rapid, constant change brought on by urbanization has been compounded by the fact that incursions, bombings, home demolitions, restrictions on movement and buildings, and curfews continue to be experienced as potential threats (or as realities) on an ad hoc basis. The sense that they live in a built environment whose status is always potentially temporary is thus a broader fact of life for all West Bankers. One way in which residents have responded has been to develop ways of knowing how to work *around* and how to accommodate unstable material conditions characteristic of living there.⁵⁶ The following, final chapter documents some of the daily urban practices that have developed as a result.

⁵⁶ On how West Bank Palestinians accommodate the long-term yet temporary presence of fragments of the Wall in their midst by writing on them, see Bishara, *Back Stories*, 245. On the accommodation of violence, including violence inflicted on the built environment, see also Allen, "Getting by the Occupation."

Chapter 6

On the Streets of the Phantom State: Litter and the Lesser of All Possible Evils

Within this present condition, all political oppositions are replaced by the elasticity of degrees, negotiations, proportions and balances.

- Eyal Weizman ¹

The postcolony is characterized by a distinctive art of improvisation.

- Achille Mbembe ²

Introduction

Chapter 5 investigated how, after Oslo, the PA's national scale had superseded the local scale for solving waste-related problems in the rural locality of Shuqba. Shuqba's was a scenario in which residents knew each other and could, it was thought, draw on that fact to stop dumping on their lands. Instead, these residents on Ramallah's "periphery" called upon the abstract, anonymous and geographically distant power of the phantom state's center in their moments of need. The case of Shuqba thus offers insight into how residents daily responded to the designation of spaces outside urban centers—Areas B and C—as out of the phantom state's reach. These were the areas in which the PA had the

¹ Weizman, *Least of All Possible Evils*, 4.

² Mbembe, "The Banality of Power," 2.

least capacity to govern. The present chapter moves into the epicenter of PA governance, into Area A.

With the exception of Hebron,³ the urban center of every major Palestinian city in the West Bank is classified as Area A. If there are any spaces in which the fullest experience of PA governance can be observed it is therefore in these cities. Ramallah is the de facto political and commercial capital of Palestine in its West Bank-reduced condition. Ramallah's streets are thus archetypal spaces for understanding what public life, and life on the streets, under PA rule looks like.⁴ This chapter opens with two Ramallah scenes in which I observed discards being abandoned in public. Both scenes involve strangers. I first explore culturalist understanding of possession-leaving, or what reformers called "littering," that could be applied to fleeting moments like these. Such understandings were common among waste reformers. They also sometimes circulated among the governed—especially among elites.

The chapter then proposes alternative understandings of the two Ramallah scenes and of other, similar moments in which possessions were abandoned in public. These alternative understandings are based on consideration of the micropractices involved in moments of discarding. They look at what these moments show about how residents read

³ The city of Hebron was divided into two parts in 1997: H1 and H2. H1, in which about 140,000 Palestinians live, is under PA civilian control. H2, in which approximately 30,000 Palestinians and 500 Israeli settlers live, is under full Israeli civilian and military control. See Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) website: http://www.tiph.org/en/About_Hebron/Hebron_today/ Accessed 1 January 2015.

⁴ The city of Jenin, from whose streets I also include observations, is in Jenin governorate. Jenin is the governorate that has the largest contiguous area designated A from among the West Bank's ten governorates (excluding East Jerusalem). OCHA, "In the Spotlight: Area C Vulnerability Profile," 2. BIMKOM, "The Prohibited Zone," 16.

public spaces in which they abandoned objects. Given reformers' definition of culture as a residue of past habits in the present, do these alternative understandings contest the idea that culture was at work? Or do they support it, merely offering a different angle on the same problem?

I argue that in these moments and others like them we see improvisational encounters in which strangers in public consulted one another about how best to address the presence of matter that had nowhere to go. To the extent that there was something like a culture at work in the scenes I describe, its characteristics were the following: Abandoning objects in public entailed a commitment to paying attention to, to following or to tweaking, the interpretations that strangers in one's midst applied, would have or applied, or would later apply, to placing discards in public spaces. Deciding to discard an object was an individual process of selecting from a number of visible options offered by others in public. It was therefore also a collective process. This suggests that neither arguments that read litter-strewn streets as "moral surfaces,"⁵ nor arguments that pin discarding on the individual's need to affirm identity⁶ can fully capture the nature of the beast that some came to call "littering."

Abandoning objects in public also implicitly entailed adherence to the principle of the "lesser evil" or, conversely, of the "good enough." Here an unlikely parallel can be drawn between the choices residents made when doing something as small as casting

⁵ In this case I use the term moral surfaces to suggest that reading such a surface tells the reader something about the morality of the purported collective that uses that surface.

⁶ Smith, "I Discard therefore I Am." I discuss Smith's theory further below.

aside a plastic cup and the logic that architect Eyal Weizman claims characterizes “the humanitarian present”: the logic of the least of all possible evils. According to Weizman,

The principle of the lesser evil is often presented as a dilemma between two or more bad choices in situations where available options are, or seem to be, limited... Sometimes the principle is presented as the optimal result of a general field of calculations that seeks to compare, measure and evaluate different bad consequences in relation to necessary acts, and then to minimize those consequences. Both aspects of the principle are understood as taking place within a closed system in which those posing the dilemma, the options available for choice, the factors to be calculated and the very parameters of calculation are unchallenged. Each calculation is undertaken anew, as if the previous accumulation of events has not taken place, and the future implications are out of bounds.⁷

Without a public waste bin within immediate reach, and with an unwanted object in one’s hand, it was the least “evil” way of discarding that object that was pursued in the moments I observed. Determining the least negative way was organized around interpreting what others before had done in that space. It was organized around what others in the moment *would have done*. Or it was organized around what others afterward *would likely do*. Calculating the least offensive way to discard objects was thus tethered to the social within a “closed system” that was spatially bounded, that is, highly dependent on location, yet temporally flexible. It was fleeting and improvisational. And it was prestrained yet interpretive. It was not wholly organized around an abstract ethical principle, for example that one should not litter, that waste pollutes the environment, that littering indexes relative civilizational worth, etc. It did not operate according to an ideal image of what society or the state should do or look like. It was

⁷ Weizman, Least of All Possible Evils, 6.

instead based on a reading of what was locally and socially acceptable as the least offensive way to manage offensive materialities. It was therefore an act *known* to be limited by the constraints of the conditions in which it was performed. Yet it was also known to involve choice.

In this sense, the ethical positioning of residents “managing” their own wastes in public was analogous to that of PA reformers managing waste at the level of the nation. This would at first seem surprising given the alterity with which reformers viewed the residents whose waste they managed. For reformers claiming unique access to “awareness” of the environment’s vulnerability, garbage had become matter with no place to go such that no place on earth was perfect for its disposal. All disposal sites were now in this sense “evil.” But some were *less* so. That has been a fact for as many people as have believed in the environment for as long as they have done so. But for Palestinian reformers in particular, the closed system of calculations that constrained their decisions was compounded by a series of further constraints.

Donors would not fund incinerators, which could cost more than ten times what landfills cost. So at a time when the countries upon which the state was purportedly being modeled were shutting down their own landfills in favor of mass recycling and hi-tech incineration, PA reformers “chose” landfills. The occupation authorities had preapproved specific land plots for landfills in the 1980s and early 1990s. So at a time when Palestinian lands across the West Bank were being confiscated for the construction of Israeli settlements, reformers sited landfills on privately owned, agricultural lands near residential areas. Culture was said to change too slowly for a population of 2.5 million to

begin at-home recycling. So at a time when at-home recycling would have prolonged the lifespans of the landfills that had been built, sparing more lands from becoming dumpsites as well, reformers “chose” minimal, centralized recycling. Reformers were acutely aware of the conditions in which they worked. As far as they were concerned, these were choices only insofar as they were less evil than doing nothing would have been. They were the improvisations of statecraft that sought to be both anti-colonial and postcolonial at the same time.⁸

Finally, I consider commentaries that circulated among the PA’s governed on the subjects of cultural change, community solidarity and post-Oslo governance. These were commentaries that followed discussions, usually begun by me, about the relative cleanliness of urban public spaces. On the one hand, much of what people said contradicted the notion that a residual culture had lingered, wafting accidentally into the state-building present. Many maintained that the PA’s version of statecraft had, however inadvertently, transformed how people thought and acted toward one another and toward waste in public. One such argument was what I call the “societal transformation” argument. It proposed that Palestinian society in the Territories had changed as a result of the changes brought about by Oslo, and in particular by the existence of the PA. A related narrative described the problem of public dirt as the result of a social breakdown, positing that it was a sign that communal solidarities had fallen apart, again as a result of Oslo. In this sense the notion of culture that emerged from public commentaries was more complex than was that employed by those who worked in waste management. The former

⁸ On improvisation in the postcolony, see Mbembe, “The Banality of Power.”

argued that culture *had changed*—sometimes radically and rapidly—over the past two decades. At the same time, commentaries to this effect also resonated with reformers’ commentaries to the extent that a collective mentality, or culture, remained a central analytic for both. Societal transformation arguments viewed discarding in public as expressions of a collective culture or consciousness that has been changed due to the PA’s tenure in Palestine.

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Sidewalks and Ledges

Dr. Hadi was a Jenin-based dentist in his early fifties. He had been raised in a village called Ya’bad in northwestern Jenin governorate. He had studied dentistry in Greece and spoke fluent Greek. That was how I had come to be introduced to him by friends in Jenin. He was proud of his reputation as one of Jenin’s longest-serving and most well-respected dentists. One day he drove down to Ramallah with his eldest son, Iyad, who was also training to be a dentist. They had come for a meeting of the Palestinian National Association of Dentists. They were both wearing suits and ties. Dr. Hadi had just been elected to a prestigious position within the Association. He had called to let me know. Excited to celebrate, he took the three of us out for ice cream at Clocktower Square in the center of Ramallah.

As he was paying for our ice cream, Dr. Hadi accidentally dropped his spoon. Its gobs stuck it to the sidewalk dirt. He bent down to pick it up. He turned to me and to his son. In a loud voice displaying consternation at not finding one behind him on the street, he asked: "Where is the garbage bin??!" Iyad and I shrugged. He looked past us, brows

furrowed. Leaving the shopkeeper extending his arm with Dr. Hadi's change in mid-gesture, Dr. Hadi held out the sticky spoon between thumb and forefinger some distance from his body. A cluster of PA police officers stood across the street. He turned to face the street. He squinted, disgruntled. He walked a few meters down the sidewalk. Then another few meters in the other direction, looking down and around him, his arm continually extended. Now other shopkeepers were also watching. A few pedestrians stepped off the sidewalk to give him space as he paced. Dr. Hadi eyed a tree planted in a little square plot of earth with a low, decorative stone border. The earth plot was host to glittering slivers of broken glass bottles, dust-caked candy wrappers and flattened cigarette packets. He walked over to it. He made a move to add his spoon to the sparkly mix. Just as he did so, the ice cream shopkeepers waved him back. They motioned with lively hand gestures in the air. "Here, man (*ya zalameh*)! We have a bin in the shop!"

Ramallah's central bus station is a bleak concrete building with four floors of low ceilings. The ceilings barely clear the roofs of dozens of yellow minivans—shared taxis—parked, many of them engines roaring, on each of five floors. It stands in the center of Ramallah's fresh produce market. It is surrounded by shops and stands selling watches, scarves, kitchenware and handbags for negotiable sums. In dry months, cardboard boxes, rotten tomatoes, tissues, cigarette butts and ripped plastic bags squish and flurry along streets and sidewalks, moved by the wheels or exhaust of cars. In wet months all that turns to treacherous mud. The station's internal stairwell is the only alternative to a very small and always-crowded elevator. It is covered in graffiti. The floor is sticky with dripped juices and trailed muck. Aside from the men who work there, the station is a

place of strangers, like its host city. The ramp that leads to a northbound road out of town is usually choked with traffic. Passengers fan themselves with school papers or magazines. They send text messages about estimated times of arrival. Drivers shout to each other, elbows out rolled-down windows. Some smoke a last cigarette.⁹ This pre-



Figure 25. Cans and bottles rested on a fire hydrant (left) and on a house fence ledge (right) in East Jerusalem (2014). Photos by the author.

departure wait also typically features hot coffee or tea. It typically comes from a teenaged boy holding a thermos in one hand and a tower of small clear plastic cups in the other. Aside from myself, those who take up the offer tend to be men. In one stroke the boy utters a quiet “shekel” (meaning the New Israeli Shekel)¹⁰ and pours a tiny steaming cup.

⁹ According to recent Authority regulations, smoking is prohibited on mass transit, which in Palestine constitutes this system of shared taxi-vans as well as large buses. Both are privately run.

¹⁰ During my fieldwork, one NIS was roughly equal to \$0.25.

There is no telling when traffic will become unstuck so coffees are gulped down quickly or incompletely.

On morning, I was in a shared taxi (called a *servees*) waiting to head north to Jenin. There was a man sitting in the passenger seat next to the driver. Our *servees* was stuck on the ramp leading out of the station in a long, vibrating line of other taxis. The man signaled to another man who was crossing the ramp on foot on his way to the market. The man on the street was several meters away. The man in the van addressed him, voice raised to project over the engines' whir. "*Abu shabab* (father of young men)!" he yelled to get the man's attention, not knowing whose father he was and therefore not knowing what else to call him. Hearing the call, the street stranger approached, turning to walk a few meters up the ramp. The address continued from the *servees*: "If you please," said the man in the *servees*, keeping his voice raised. As he said that, with one quick, barely perceptible chin motion upwards and extending the arm holding his empty plastic cup out the window, the man in the *servees* handed the street stranger his empty coffee cup. The stranger nodded, not saying a word. He reached out, took the cup from the other man's hand. He placed it, right side up, on a concrete ledge a meter or so away from him. The ledge was waist-high. It marked the boundary between the ramp and the market. The man in the *servees* thanked him. The man on foot returned the gesture with a small nod and walked back down the ramp. A few minutes later we left for Jenin.

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In the West Bank, comparisons with Israel, like comparisons between buildings' interiors and the out-of-doors, are common. PA bureaucrats and municipal employees

frequently commented (to me and to each other) on what they saw as excessive levels of litter in the West Bank. Questions about why public dirt was there and who was responsible for it were crucial, I learned, to the way Palestinian waste governance framed its takeover from Israeli rule in the mid-1990s. The technical-national field in which Palestine's waste managers now worked had cast waste-related practices in the streets, valleys and on private properties as effects of a long-cemented, local culture (*thaqafah*), as lack of what they called awareness (*wa'i*) or as the result of a mentality (*'aqliyyah*). Dirty streets were interpreted as expressions of an automatic, spontaneous collective unconscious that could not help but freely burst forth. The idea was that public dirt(ying) was a sign that it was an anachronistic culture that prevented people from being environmentally aware and that enabled a “trash culture” to persist unabated. Residents were temporally out of sync, it was suggested, having carried over past cultural practices and values into the modern moment of state-building.

As I walked the streets of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron and East Jerusalem, I saw that ledges, like public fire extinguishers, electricity and telephone boxes and doorsteps, are lined with plastic cups, soda cans and bottles across the West Bank's urban landscape. They are often upright. I noticed that they had been carefully, intentionally, placed that way—even when empty. For Mary Douglas in her work on dirt, classification of clean objects and acts is one way of creating a symbolic order. Order is culturally determined. It also displays the outline of a culture for the savvy observer. Acts of cleaning (or ordering) thus express or manifest culture but are, otherwise, arbitrary.¹¹

¹¹ This is a principle of structuralism as espoused by Saussure and Levi-Strauss, among others.

There is a sense in which the act therefore takes place blindly — as through a pair of cultural goggles — as far as reality outside of cultural worlds is concerned. One known danger of this kind of analysis is that culture's practitioners appear as automatons. Each individual's sensorium is figured as an apparatus controlled by a particular symbolic-cultural system.

Yet it is easy to see how forms of order could be read into images of these objects, just as symbolic systems could be read into Dr. Hadi's (almost) placement of the spoon at the base of the tree and into the two men's collaboration over placement of an empty cup on a bus station ledge. One can see how the scene of Dr. Hadi and his spoon might be understood to suggest that earth plots around decorative trees on Palestinian sidewalks are symbolic spaces for the profane or the polluted. It might suggest that, according to something that can be called Palestinian culture, placing discards in earth plots created "unity of experience" among disparate individuals, allowing them to "impose system on an inherently untidy experience"—together. It might suggest too that "reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder" such that "wherever ideas of dirt are highly structured their analysis discloses a play upon such profound themes."¹²

If residents were in these moments expressing forms of order that ran counter to those propagated by reforms, it followed that the two groups—governed and governors—were characterized by two different cultures. The culture of the latter was based one set of ideas about the proper placement of waste in relation to the infrastructures set up to manage them. And the former by another. Among reformers, this is precisely how

¹² Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 6.

arguments attributed certain practices to culture. Attributions usually arose in response to, or as recollections of, the sight and smell of garbage “misplaced” on streets, in valleys and on the sides of major roads between cities. They arose when public waste containers were not used properly, for example when garbage bags were left beside the dumpster rather than inside it. Similar comments were sometimes echoed by residents, usually on the occasion of hearing what my project was about. Speaking in English, one Ramallah intellectual characterized Palestine's as a "trash culture," for example. "It's a question of alienation from the environment," he explained. "Others take it over, make big expensive projects. One feels neither close to [the environment] nor responsible for it."¹³ Others pointed to a culture of seeing the environment as a relatively superficial concern for those struggling in more important domains, such as survival under occupation.¹⁴ A few insisted that the physical properties of the streets had once “cleaned” themselves, while old discarding habits had carried over. The surfaces that had once rendered old habits harmless were now less forgiving. Jenin's streets had been unpaved until the last quarter of the twentieth century, for example. Because rainwater collection systems had been

¹³ Interview in Ramallah city, 27 June 2011. Interestingly, this cultural explanation overlaps with what some Israelis said about Palestinians—including an engineer of the civil administration's Environment Department. Interview at Beit El military base, 25 July 2011. In his work on anti-littering campaigns, anthropologist Vassos Argyrou makes a similar argument with regard to resistance to the hegemony of the "upper classes" in Cyprus. He argues that a lack of "care for," or a working class "antagonism" toward, the environment and toward "the physical world" outside the home can result in the public leave-taking of objects. Argyrou attributes this to the fact that the "attitude" of working class people to "the physical world...becomes defensive; the physical world becomes a threat to be contained." He asserts that "the physical world" becomes the material index *and* jurisdiction of the "upper class." The working class neither sees itself in it nor cares to maintain it. He argues that conformism and nonconformism with a governmental antilittering campaign in Cyprus must be understood within a "wider symbolic confrontation" between a "working class logic" and an "upper class logic." The logics are both markedly gendered. Argyrou, "'Keep Cyprus Clean,'" 165.

¹⁴ Conversation in Faqu'a, 11 February 2010. See also Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 15.

lacking, one Jenin municipal employee told me, the unpaved streets in this valley of a city had also been aboveground rainwater channels. The water had once washed the waste away.¹⁵

Others imputed a static set of virtues (or lack thereof) to discard-leaving or to the failure to clean dirt and discards. For Khalto Sana' in Jenin it was a matter of individual character or that of a family. "There are people like this and like that," she said. "Never in our lives did we throw the plastic buckets or cardboard boxes outside our house. In front of our house has to be clean. There can't be dirt all around us. Most people here are like this. It's very few who work without cleanliness." I asked Sawsan, Sana's sister, a mother of four and a high school principal in her late forties, why many said that the area that women swept outside their houses had become reduced. "It's true," she said. "Im Rami, my neighbor, does it. But I am embarrassed to go outside.¹⁶ Except by chance. If Mariam [the woman Sawsan pays for occasional domestic help] is free, or one of the children, I'll have them do it. But with workers outside for example, I'm embarrassed. It's not an appropriate image.¹⁷ For the older women it's fine, no one cares." Samia, a thirty-something, Jenin-born resident "admitted" to throwing garbage onto

¹⁵ His point echoed a question I was asked by one Ramallah intellectual who had attended a talk I had given. He offered the hypothetical of a tossed banana peel. "Did you ever stop to think that the act might always have taken place, but that the street, once paved, did not allow that peel to disintegrate naturally?" Im Reem, whose house had for decades bordered Jenin camp, also reminded me that, for a time, "[t]here was no street. People in the camp used to move in and out by donkey. There have only been streets for ten years in the camp." How, without a street, she asked me, could there be such a thing as litter?

¹⁶ Translation from: *ana bast'hi*.

¹⁷ Translation from: *mish manzar*.

Jenin's streets. She interpreted her own character as that of a follower. "If everyone is taking care of cleanliness, so I will too."

In all these commentaries it was assumed that there was meaning to be deciphered from a community's tolerance of litter—or dirt—as there was from one's capacity for littering. Most assertions about dirty streets in Palestine posited conceptualizations "of the relationship between embodied behavior" vis-a-vis discards, on the one hand, and virtues or sensibilities, on the other.¹⁸ The public leave-taking of possessions could be read as expression of an unconscious interiority and as enactment of a consciously cultivated virtue (or vice). Such readings assumed that in "external," public spaces, virtues or principles housed "internally" within the individual or collective became apparent. Abandoning an object outside a public dumpster could be read as a physical manifestation of the person's lack of the virtue of "caring," where care was attached to various possible objects, the most common of which were "the community" and "the environment." It was therefore assumed that observing littering could help explain something about an individual's *habitual* practices and thus about his or her moral virtues. But these observations circulated even in the absence of observed human activity. Commentaries were thus also based on readings of "the Palestinian street"¹⁹ as what Darryl Wilkinson calls a "moral surface." Public discards were read as part of a street's

¹⁸ On debates about veiling in Egypt Saba Mahmood asserts that "each view posits a very different conceptualization of the relationship between embodied behavior and the virtue or norm of modesty: for the priests, bodily behavior is at the core of the proper realization of the norm, and for their opponents, it is a contingent and unnecessary element in modesty's enactment." Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 23-4.

¹⁹ For a discussion of "the Palestinian street" as a trope, see Bishara, "Watching U.S. Television from the Palestinian Street."

surface that, if properly interpreted, could yield an understanding of the moral characteristics of inhabitants of the area in which the street was located—as a *collective*.²⁰ The individual virtues, principles and vices indexed by public dirt were treated as social "barometers." The collective, it was supposed, thought "out loud"²¹ through the public leave-taking of possessions or acceptance of others' discards.²² Donors, too, promoted the reading of dirty streets in their schemes for PA-run infrastructural and institutional reforms as early as 1993.²³

For the reformers with whom I spent time, culturally-informed practices were considered beyond the pale of reforms' framework that they were ignored altogether. In the taxi that had brought me to the Best Eastern Hotel in Ramallah for the National Strategy launch in 2010, for example, I had passed dozens of iron dumpsters just like the ones pictured in the booklet we were to be handed in the hotel lobby. As I heightened my attention to the discards in my midst, I came to realize that the booklet's editors had

²⁰ In this sense parallels can be drawn between commentaries on the condition of public spaces in the West Bank and commentaries that have been documented in contexts in which graffiti and women wearing Muslim headscarves appear in public spaces in the Middle East. Litter, graffiti and the headscarf (*hijab*) are all objects that both appear almost entirely in public and that, in doing so, simultaneously help render the spaces in which they appear legible *as* public. All three types of public object also incite commentaries. They incite people in their presence as well as scholars who make claims about the publics characterized by them or the institutions within whose jurisdictions they are found.

²¹ Julie Peteet makes a similar argument about graffiti during the first Intifada: "the Palestinian community thought 'out loud' in graffiti." Peteet, "The Writing on the Walls," 141.

²² Peteet writes that "the sheer ubiquity of graffiti was a constant reminder both of the abnormality of everyday life under occupation and of the mass uprising." Ibid., 143. She adds that "[t]he walls of shops, homes, and offices were littered with a jumbled profusion of graffiti; the quantity was a *barometer of discontent and resistance*." Ibid., 145; *emphasis mine*.

²³ The World Bank volume on infrastructure in the Territories (on which the PA's National Waste Management strategy was based), for example, read the "visible uncollected refuse" as "evidence that collection does not meet needs of residents." World Bank, "Developing the Occupied Territories," 83. Garbage in the streets was a result of "the poor performance of solid waste services." This, in turn, was an index of "local government arrangements that are characterized by an unclear distribution of authority and a general lack of accountability." Ibid., 2.

omitted several details about the typical West Bank dumpster. Excluded were images of charred iron dumpsters spray-painted with white Stars of David (Figure 27). Absent were images of dumpsters being used as shields for protesters being shot at by the army. Both would have been signs that garbage—and its infrastructures—had continued to be



Figure 26. Protesters using public waste containers to protect themselves from Israeli fire. Photo from an online news site, 2013.

material media through which residents communicated with, and protected themselves from, the occupation authorities. Similarly excluded were images of the thousands of small plastic bags that hang off of handles on most large green dumpsters, containing jagged pieces of day-old bread. These bags could be seen in every West Bank city and

village I visited, including in East Jerusalem.²⁴ Clear bags also hung off tree branches, fire hydrants and metal poles in industrial areas. They sat atop tree stumps, ledges and doorsteps. They were stuffed into stone wall alcoves and between buildings' outer walls and twisted metal bars that stuck out of them (see Figures 29-31).



Figure 27. Large dumpster on the road to *sama Nablus* lookout spot in Nablus city, November 2014. Photo by the author.

When I asked what people knew about the bread in plastic bags, explanations were usually dismissive. But they revealed why practices like these may have been left out of reforms due to their apparent cultural stickiness. Some saw the practice as

²⁴ Areas included: Jenin, Faqu'a, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Nablus, Ramallah, al-Bireh, East Jerusalem, as well as the roads that connect them.

symbolic: "According to Islam, it is a sin to throw away bread," a few told me. Other explanations were pragmatic: "Oh, *that* practice is left over from a time in the past when most people had animals and would go around collecting leftover bread. They would grind it down and feed it to their animals at home."²⁵ The first explanation read bread on the street as a manifestation of a neighborhood's religiosity. The second read its presence as a cultural residue or "survival" from past times.²⁶ Both used readings of streets to understand the publics to which they presumably gave shape and expressed.

At stake in attributing public discards to a collective culture were several things. One was the relationship implied between these practices and politics, governance, history and chance. For reformers, to call a practice cultural relegated it to a realm that could not easily be touched, changed or even blamed. What was cultural was treated as a special kind of fact that, to be altered, required cultural more than technical, financial or political techniques. Though a feature of daily commentary, public dirt's purportedly cultural features were therefore often absent, if latent, in Authority sanitary planning.

My own reading of the above two Ramallah moments is slightly different from those of the reformers, perhaps because I was interested in the incremental steps that led to the abandonment (or, in Dr. Hadi's case, the near-abandonment) of objects in public.

Dr. Hadi's choice of the earth plot at Clocktower Square, for example, was an on-the-spot

²⁵ When I asked whether there were still such people, I was told "of course." But, though I caught several glimpses of people – usually children – *placing* bread on ledges or on dumpster handles, never did I happen upon a person picking it up. No one else I asked could remember seeing a pick-up either. The bread seemed to disappear, as if by magic, from one day to the next. In 2012 and 2014 on the two large dumpsters on my street in Ramallah, for example, bread appeared and disappeared off the handles with almost perfect daily regularity. That, combined with the fact that I never saw or heard of anyone picking it up, indicated that it was most likely municipal garbage trucks that usually removed it.

²⁶ This is a term coined by Robertson Smith and discussed in Douglas, Purity and Danger.

interpretation of one of a number of possible improvisational solutions that could have materialized on any given West Bank street. Solutions like Dr. Hadi's were usually ephemeral at least in part because they took place in spaces made for movement. The ability to gauge their appropriateness hinged on one's ability to know the space's multiple uses, on the one hand. And it depended, on the other hand, on one's assumption that the street could be a space where it was strangers who shaped those solutions—together.

One must begin by admitting that, absent any spoken meta-commentary accompanying either act, it was close to impossible to answer the “why” question. It was impossible, for example, to determine whether Dr. Hadi's ten seconds of pacing with a fallen spoon in Clocktower Square were the result of his fear of being chastised by one of his familiar or unfamiliar observers. Over the previous few years, thousands had moved from Jenin to Ramallah for work. Jenin accents are discernable by those with a Ramallah ear. Jenin migrants in Ramallah are frequently ridiculed for being conservative and crude. Was Dr. Hadi's awareness of Jenin's reputation in Ramallah kicking in, activating a consequent desire to dissimulate that he was a Ramallah native? Was it was his desire to prove Ramallah the kind of civility Jenin was made of? Certainly, the act seemed to embody the virtue of what Vassos Argyrou calls “caring.”²⁷ Or at least caring to appear that he cared. But how would one know if his comportment was consciously or unconsciously aspirational, whether it was in some sense natural, part of a habitus, representative of Jenin as a whole, of men, or of dentists (or those trained in Greece—which had its own “trash culture”)?

²⁷ Argyrou, ““Keep Cyprus Clean,”” 165.

What did seem likely was that in a flash of thought – or something less conscious than thought – Dr. Hadi saw himself as doing the right thing. He had noted the absence of public bins in his vicinity. Raised voice, arm out, furrowed brow, he attracted attention to himself as he paced the sidewalk searching for the right place for his spoon. Dr. Hadi was in view neither of his clientele nor of the residents of his native Jenin or Ya’bad—his proverbial clan, or *hamula*. He was in Ramallah, the city of strangers. He was, however, in front of his son and myself. As a man I knew to be conscious of what it took to be looked upon favorably in public, he probably had half an eye on the eyes of the ice cream shopkeepers and another half on the Palestinian policemen across the street. If one virtue thought to be embodied in littering is caring, we can say that Dr. Hadi did care where he was going to place the spoon. And he wanted us all to know it.

Similarly, the man in the *servees* on his way to Jenin made his choice not to toss the cup out the window known to a total stranger. Unlike Dr. Hadi’s moment, there was little about his act—other than his calling out to the stranger—that called attention to what he was about to do. At the same time, he was in a *servees* full of passengers also on their way to Jenin. I never learned whether he himself was from Jenin. But that would not necessarily have made a big difference as he clearly had business there. We can assume he therefore had a stake in how we, the other passengers, would regard him. The *servees* he was in served as a kind of mobile Jenin with which he would have to reckon were he to decide to toss the cup. What was interesting was that others in his position would have tossed the cup out the window. Knowing there was no perfect solution, his too was thus an act that demonstrated care to do the right thing in the least possible problematic way.

I want to suggest that for Dr. Hadi and for the man going to Jenin, the appropriateness of their own actions likely lay in the *process* by which they searched for "the right place" for the object to be abandoned. The process involved one crucial thing: their interpretation of the street as a space of multiple uses and as a space in which use was established by precedent. It was thus a space whose uses were improvisational. To the extent that he paid attention to the policemen, to myself, to the shopkeepers and to his son, Dr. Hadi seemed to assume that our interpretations of the earth plot would have likely mirrored his—or at least that they *should* have. That on that Tuesday at around 2pm, the earth plot *was* the square's bin in the absence of municipal dumpsters.

As someone familiar with municipal governance in Palestine, it is also likely that Dr. Hadi assumed that, as in Jenin, in Ramallah a few hours later the shop keepers whose shop was nearest the earth plot would be sweeping or hosing the sidewalk clean. They would push dust and trash just off the edge of the sidewalk and onto the street. In the evening municipal street sweepers would walk by with brooms and carts (their jurisdiction ended where the sidewalk began) and take away what had been left. Dr. Hadi thus knew—and likely assumed that the rest of us knew—that the earth plot was therefore not the permanent resting place for the spoon. It was a way-station. It was his assumption of temporariness, and of the connection of one's actions with those that came before and those that would come after, that were perhaps being "expressed" in ten-second moments such as this one.

As the Ramallah bus station scene also suggests, even in the urban heart of Ramallah where many have identified the rise of an "individualist ethos" (which I return

to below), individuals were daily aiding each other in maintaining urban order, under the radar, on a minute-by-minute basis. If that part of the sidewalk that housed the tree was not *in that moment* still sidewalk it follows that, should Dr. Hadi have placed the spoon there, it might not have been *litter* either. For residents who moved through public space in these ways, littering was thus a form of cleaning, and vice versa (a point with which Douglas would agree). That being the case, for someone to present himself as one deciding *not* to litter was to inhabit both "lenses" at the same time. Litter-cleaning, or clean-littering, involved a person in spontaneous, creative, flexible, improvisational, shifting relations with other persons who were either present or imagined to have been present in the past or to be present in the future—likely in the relatively short term. Earth plots and ledges, like public telephone and electricity boxes, thus moonlighted as potential or provisional garbage bins in a similar manner. Or, in the language of the Authority's experts, these surfaces can be described as temporary and miniature "transfer stations." The least evil way to avoid "littering" was here to keep objects *in circulation*. It was to pass the baton. That included putting objects in public dumpsters, where one could assume (or expect) that the municipality would pick it up or a neighbor would set fire to it. And it included putting bread on dumpster handles and cups on ledges.

In the used goods market that borders Jenin's much older produce market, the buildings tend to be one story high. Over one hundred shopkeepers rent out spaces in this corner of the city, called the *rabish*.²⁸ Another fifty or so men display used goods on carts or sheets on the ground. The pavement outside shop doors in this area is a single, flat,

²⁸ I was told that this word had been taken from the English word for "rubbish."

surface. It does not differentiate between sidewalk and street. Saturdays are the market's busiest days. Mustafa's is one of the most elegant of Jenin's *rabish* shops. Half its colorful trinkets bring to mind Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum and half a Disney gift shop. He sells tea sets, oak grandfather clocks, salad bowls, blenders, flat screen televisions, dream-catchers and even crystal balls. His merchandise comes from across the Green Line. It arrives mainly from the two equivalent *rabish* (also called *baleh*) markets in Jaffa and Haifa. Merchandise is either Israeli-made or Israeli-imported. Smuggling is made possible by partnerships of Israeli-ID-holding Palestinians, who drive the trucks, and a few Jenin residents able to acquire permits to enter Israel because they have Israeli contacts. Origins and prices are equally incredible in the *rabish*. Tea sets in Mustafa's store are made in England and have been discarded, it is assumed, by Jewish Israeli households. That increases their value in Jenin. But prices are low enough to be affordable for those whose wages average between \$17 and \$21 per day.²⁹ An entire original twelve-piece set cost between twenty and fifty shekels (\$5 to \$13).

In the summer of 2012, Mustafa added large pieces of furniture to his stock. He displayed them on a few large rugs he had placed on the pavement just outside his shop door. We sat on a beige leather couch set one day talking prices over coffee. I realized I had been holding my tiny, now empty plastic cup for several minutes. I decided to get rid of it. I lifted it slightly, and lowered my voice to ask if he had a bin in the shop. We were

²⁹ This was the average daily wage of those living in the Jenin governorate (excluding those working in Israeli settlements), in 2013. State of Palestine Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labor Force Survey, Annual Report: 2013," 35. http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_PCBS/Downloads/Book2049.pdf Accessed 4 January 2015.

outside, technically on the street. But the municipality had refused to install water or sewage networks in this part of this city, which had only recently been built up out of the



Figure 28. An outdoor view of a corner of Jenin's *baleh* market. Photo by the author.

watermelon fields that had once covered the area. So it came as little surprise that public bins were absent as well. This was a space of relative infrastructural abandonment. Nor were there decorative trees, or empty cardboard boxes, calling my cup's name. Without me noticing, Mustafa grabbed the tiny red cup out of my hand. He threw it behind the couch he was sitting on. It landed on a corner of the carpet.

Initially, this moment reminded me that local elites and visitors sometimes remarked that littering represented Palestinians' confusion about who "owns" public space. Decades of tanks, bombings, arrests and house demolitions in addition to donor-driven urban development, it was said, had given Palestinians the feeling that they do not

own the public spaces in which they conduct their daily lives. In that spirit, an American friend teaching college in the West Bank for a semester saw parallels between Palestine and inner city Baltimore, where he had lived for several years. Below is part of an email he sent to friends and colleagues and which he later published:

The makers of the television series *The Wire*, shot in Baltimore, made sure to include litter all over sidewalks to indicate the run-down neighborhood where neither residents nor municipality seem to care about material conditions...[T]ake a traditional but non-Western sense of public space; add the specific, contemporary (and disheartening) confusion about who "owns" this land—and here the analogy with West Baltimore becomes pertinent—and further add the expense of garbage collection. Could a combination of these factors explain the trash? And would a suddenly renewed sense of enfranchisement account for the reports of the Egyptian protestors cleaning up Tahrir Square after Mubarak's fall?

The idea of confusion here is linked to the lack of a feeling of ownership over the land because of the Israeli military's imposing presence in Palestinian spaces public and private.³⁰ Was Mustafa's tossing of my cup behind the couch in the middle of the market an indication that he lacked a feeling ownership over—or was confused about the ownership over—the space in which we happened to be sitting? Was it because fresh in his mind were images of Israeli tanks rolling through central Jenin, demolishing his women's accessories shop in Jalameh village, as they had done during the second

³⁰ Confusion is often sensed by foreign visitors to Palestine—and to the West Bank in particular. But during my fieldwork I was also surprised to find that some Palestinians, too, are confused by the Area A, B and C zonings designated by the Oslo Accords. One Birzeit University student I met in Shuqba, in fact, said she had never heard of the three areas. She was a resident of East Jerusalem (Shu'afat) studying archaeology at Birzeit. Indeed, some scholars of Palestine have identified the production of confusion and complicatedness as one of the Israeli occupation apparatus's long-term goals. An example of this is the fact that after Areas A, B and C were determined in the mid-1990s, residents in the West Bank were not informed of where their homes and agricultural lands stood. Instead they often discovered that their lands fell, for example, within Area C only once they were issued demolition or "stop-work" orders for construction that, it turned out, required Israeli permits.

Intifada? Or of his family's displacement from Haifa in 1948? Did those images subconsciously compel him to feel that the streets of Jenin were not "his?" How could he have painstakingly wiped down these couches, as he did every afternoon with the tea and TV sets on the shelves inside, I wondered, and then throw a cup onto the carpet he had swept earlier that morning? Was it an indication of his working class "antagonism," as a member of a refugee family of very modest means, toward the owners of this land from the "original" Jenin family whose shop he was renting? Or was it antagonism toward the municipality for having refused numerous requests from *baleh* shopkeepers to install water and sewage networks under the market? Was it because that had prevented installation of bathrooms in shops?

It was true that for many in Palestine confusion about control over land was a feature of occupation they felt they had to "get by."³¹ But confusion was usually linked to the designation of areas as A, B and C. Most of the houses in Shuqba, for example, fall within Area B.³² A few homes, most of Shuqba's agricultural lands, the Natufian cave and all Israeli dumping sites are within Area C. But confusion about A, B and C areas did not translate into confusion about who *owned* Shuqba's lands. Especially not for Shuqba residents. Confusion arose instead over who should fix problems there. In his capacity as the Shuqba council's secretary, Sami had invited foreign and local researchers, media and government representatives to observe Israeli dumping on Shuqba's land. He hoped someone would help catalyze action against the dumping. Even in Shuqba's Area C, this

³¹ Allen, "Getting by the Occupation."

³² None of the village is Area A.

was dumping perceived to have been *committed by people who did not own the land*. It was an offense to those who *did own the land*. Mustafa and I sat in an area that was indisputably Area A, under full PA governance, despite the fact that its infrastructures were neglected by the municipality that governed it. Confusion over ownership of land thus seemed, from my own research, a rather implausible explanation for this cup toss.

I did not ask Mustafa the "why did you do it?" question. We were deep in another conversation. Had I asked, it is in any case doubtful that it would have been possible to establish precisely what he had or had not been thinking. As with Dr. Hadi, what I could determine was what information had been available to him as he abandoned this small object. I could determine the conditions within which he made his decision. Mustafa knew, for example, that around 9pm that night Jenin's municipal trucks would drive through the *rabish* to sweep the streets and collect garbage, despite other forms of municipal neglect. He knew that collection workers would have to be careful to discern what was garbage from two other types of objects – both also loosely "discards" – discernible only from the specific ways they are placed in public space. One type was the used goods *rabish* shopkeepers had decided not to sell. The market closed around 2pm daily. At around 3 or 4pm each day shopkeepers would leave a pile of objects that had formerly (until 2pm) been merchandise a meter or so outside their shops. Abu Mahmoud, a veteran *rabish* shopkeeper, specialized in used shoes. A pair went for 5 to 10 NIS (\$1.25 - \$2.50). Every two days he moved chunks of the shoe mountain, which he kept inside his hole-in-the-wall shop, outside it. Between 4pm and 9pm, Jenin's poorest residents would trickle by to sift through the piles. The lucky ones would find items to take home, stuffing

them in purses and plastic bags. They did so out of the view both of shopkeepers, who had gone home for lunch, and of the garbage collectors, who were still on residential routes.³³

The transformation of the market from a space dedicated to cash exchanges to one that allowed for anonymous donations of shoes, clothes and kitchenware necessitated the freeing up of "street" space outside shop doors. This meant that those merchants who sold off of sheets on the street (see photo of Jenin *baleh* above) spent half an hour between 2 and 3pm clearing the pavement. But because taking their goods home every night or storing them in rented storage spaces would have been expensive and unwieldy, they kept their wares on the street close by. As the market closed at 2pm, these merchants would fold together the four corners of the sheets that serve as their display cases in the mornings. They would tie them in a bow, sometimes wrapping a string around them to keep the bundle together.³⁴ Some would leave them leaning against *baleh* shops' shuttered doors. Others would take their bundles to empty lots nearby.

To the untrained eye, some of these were the same kinds of lots as those described by my American friend in Ramallah who had compared Ramallah to Baltimore: "part construction site, part garbage dump, a mix of rubbish and rubble." But when Jenin's

³³ At "street level," the placement of Abu Mahmoud's discarded shoe pile is identical to Mustafa's leather couch set, whose size prevents it from being put indoors afterhours. Both are outside each shop's entrance on the sidewalk-less pavement. Nevertheless, there is no confusion for the afterhours "shoppers" in the *rabish* about what is and what is not there for the taking for free. Abu Mahmoud's open shoe piles are not confused—either by these shoppers or by garbage collection workers—with the merchandise of *rabish* merchants who will continue to sell off sheets and carts the following day.

³⁴ This way of tying and carrying goods can be traced back to what is called the *bukji* (pl. *bukaj*). On the twentieth century history of the *bukji* in Palestine, see my article, "In Colonial Shoes: Notes on the Material Afterlife in Post-Oslo Palestine."

street sweepers would pass by in the evening, the difference between the merchandise, which was not to be touched, and the garbage, which was to be collected and dumped, was quite clear. The second type of object municipal garbage collectors learned to discern in this small but distinct part of the city was thus the tiny red plastic cup – tossed behind the couch on the street by Mustafa – from items slated for sale tomorrow or for charity today.

Jenin's *baleh* was not the only place in which I saw this. The same phenomenon appeared in the Ramallah market bordering the famously chaotic central bus station. On Fridays when the market had closed, many of the stands and tables remained. It was raining one day when I walked through the market's empty side streets. Tables were covered by plastic sheets, which were weighed down by large stones. The goods sold off the tables had been left underneath. Afterhours in the summer, the produce shop near my apartment in another Ramallah neighborhood left mountains of watermelons outside the locked shop door. They were uncovered and unmarked. The fact of their being owned and intentionally placed was marked only by their position against the shop's outer wall.

These uses of spaces out-of-doors seem to attest to a prevailing sense of trust that objects left out-of-doors would not be harmed or stolen—even in cities most densely inhabited by "strangers." This may have been an indication that the sense of an internal, national (if not technical) governance was at work in urban centers. That within cities it was possible to say, as some did, that there was now order (*sar fi nitham*). Though it was always a possibility, the sense was that the norm was *not* that settlers and soldiers would walk the streets stealing merchandise from outside shops. Some things about urban life

were predictable, in part because it was assumed that even anonymous others would abide by a set of unspoken rules. The most basic of such rules was that one was expected to attempt to interpret and abide by ways of being set by others in one's midst.

The leaving of private property unprotected in public also attested to the fact that, in interacting with materials on the street, residents were constantly changing, and interpreting others' intentions for, the use of that space. Geographers have long shown that space is produced through its multiple interpreters. Some interpretations seem to last while others are fleeting. These examples from Jenin and from Ramallah highlight the importance of understanding the *temporalities* through which interpretations of these spaces functioned. It seemed to be assumed that use and upkeep of spaces out-of-doors would vary over the course of a day, an hour or a week. If one wonders what this means for the public sphere in post-Oslo Palestine, an answer begins to form from the fact that it seemed safe for one to assume that one was surrounded by *discerning others*—others whose interpretations of the space would be both relatively predictable and at least somewhat trustworthy.

Yet trust was not the first thing that came to mind when I asked friends and acquaintances what *they* thought of the relationship between post-Oslo governance and garbage in public. By way of a conclusion to this chapter, I now turn to the commentaries of those who disagreed both with me and with the reformers who claimed to be bypassing culture. Most residents with whom I spent time agreed that Palestinians in the West Bank had taken greater responsibility for the upkeep of spaces outside their homes in past decades than they did during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Both amounts of

garbage and the regularity of "littering" seemed to have increased since Oslo. This is where societal transformation and solidarity breakdown arguments appeared most commonly. Both popular narratives, they proposed a historicized view of the relationship between public cleanliness and virtues of collective or national solidarity expressed around them. In this sense they were in direct tension with the reformers who posited culture as a residue *from times past*.

Consider the story I was told by Nasser and Nameer in the Old City of Nablus. Known for Ottoman bathhouses, *knafeh* sweets and soap factories, Nablus was just emerging from a nine-year siege when I visited Nasser in December of 2009. Nasser's butcher shop had been opened by his grandfather in 1953. Now it had a double-paned with a high-tech handle that turned perpendicular to the ground to seal out moisture. Every centimeter of the two-meter by two-meter butcher shop was spotless. The whole space was refrigerated. Tiny frost crystals were visible on the metal hooks that hung, sparkling, from the low ceiling beams. I kept my jacket on as I sat on a stool between two plastic chairs in a corner. Joining me, Nasser and his old friend Nameer, now the head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, remembered their days as teenagers in the popular committees in the first Intifada. Remembering that municipalities had been boycotted, I asked how people had dealt with public dirt during the Intifada (1987-1993).³⁵ Nasser recalled that during one forty-day curfew, the military had broken open local stores. Soldiers had defecated in a few of the stores, he said. Garbage had seeped out of the

³⁵ The two poorest and most densely populated areas of Nablus, Ballata refugee camp and the Old City, had been the most vulnerable to violence – and to dirt – during both intifadas, they told me. The Old City's narrow streets forbid the use of large municipal trucks just as the camp's shoulder-width paths forbid UNRWA's dumpsters.

houses and piled onto streets. When the curfew had finally been lifted, the people (*al-nas*) had coordinated themselves and cleaned the neighborhood together. Not only had they cleaned, in other words. Their treatment of one another—and one another's property—had been "clean" as well.

Our conversation turned to the second Intifada (2000-2006). Nameer remembered going into the Old City when another curfew had been lifted for four hours. The military had turned off the electricity. The smell had been awful: of garbage, of dead chickens, of rotting meat. Nasser's store had been demolished for the second time, and the meat inside had rotted. People had died in their houses. One was Nasser's neighbor. But no one could reach her under curfew. Her body lay decaying for ten days before Nasser, Nameer and other neighbors managed to enter her house and remove her. They put her, along with eighty or so other bodies, in a refrigerated truck usually used to transport meat, milk and produce – now putrid and unsellable – to other West Bank cities. From under Nasser's mustache peeked a bitter smile at what for him had been the end of the story. Society was now different. Even its smallest units required new names. "Citizens" (*al-muwatinin*), he said – replacing the term “the people” (*al-nas*) he had used about participants of the first Intifada – "developed a feeling after Oslo that that was it, they had given up their responsibilities, handed them over to the Authority. The Authority now bore responsibility for the nation. "There came to be someone responsible for us," he said. Citizens still helped. But the solidarity of the intifadas had quite clearly broken down.

Commentaries like Nasser's circulated widely in the West Bank after 2007. After the end of the first Intifada, it was repeated, self-interest or care for one's own nuclear

family had replaced the cross-class, regional solidarities that had characterized Palestine in the 1970s and '80s.³⁶ For some, like Nasser, change had been a direct result of radical shifts in expectations for who should provide social services and maintain infrastructure. It followed that streets were dirty because ordinary people no longer helped clean them. Most now assumed that the The Government (*al-hukoumah*) would do it instead.

Others with whom I spoke also blamed dirty streets on a lack of enforcement, on the one hand, or government failure to provide services and infrastructures such as dumpsters, on the other. Local researchers who conducted studies about littering after Oslo, for example, highlighted residents' expectations that government was responsible for public garbage.³⁷ I asked a friend in Jenin why she thought people littered. "I do like they do!" she said.

I'm drinking juice or eating ice cream or something. You don't find a garbage can very easily. So I just throw it in the street...When I traveled I saw that in other countries every two steps you see a garbage can...*Here there's no government to care.*³⁸ *If there were a government you might be punished...In other countries why do you see that they prioritize cleanliness?...Because there the government started by putting cans and*

³⁶ Lisa Taraki compares the relationship between Am'ari camp and Ramallah in the 1970s and 1980s, on the one hand, and in the post-Oslo period, on the other. She writes: "In the 1970s and 1980s, despite the tensions inherent in the juxtaposition of a community of dispossessed refugees and a differentiated town, several factors worked against open conflict between the camp and the surrounding urban area. Prior to Oslo, the reigning nationalist orthodoxy downplayed social disparities, denounced the flaunting of wealth and privilege, and discouraged a culture of 'normalcy' in the face of occupation and repression. This was especially the case during the first Intifada, when expressions of frivolity were discouraged (if not banned), and an ascetic culture of resistance informed by peasant or imagined peasant values was hegemonic. Under these circumstances, unity in the face of a common enemy muted the deep-seated antagonisms between the camp and the town." Lisa Taraki, "Enclave Metropolis," 16.

³⁷ Musleh, for example, reported that "farmers, women, and children saw irregular collection as the primary problem." Musleh, "Solid Waste Policy Making," 55. Another stud found that among most respondents who admitted to littering, the main reason given was the "insufficient availability of garbage bins (or litter cans)." Arafat, Al-Khatib and Daoud, "Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Street Litter Generation," 365.

³⁸ Translation from: *fish hukoumah tihtam*.

dumpsters, and they started making punishments for every person who throws a tissue on the ground.

Underlying Samia's reading of governmental absences was an assumption not about culture per se, but about a human need to learn through punishments and rewards. "That's it," she said. "People abroad got used to it. That if I litter I'll be punished. And the punishment is not just *against* a person. On the contrary, it helps *improve* him. It's not that if I get punished I'm guilty. No, I'm just learning! And people won't learn except this way." Samia's critique was universalist. It highlighted Palestinians' lack of experience with either sovereign or with disciplinary power, at least in the hands of Palestinian institutions. With neither discipline nor punishment, the resultant experience was one of neglect. Yet while it was undoubtedly the occupation that obstructed the PA's path to sovereignty, and thus that indirectly made neglect much more likely, many with whom I spoke were adamant that the occupation was *not* to blame for their cities' dirty streets. "The occupation can't be blamed for everything," Samia continued:

The guy who doesn't study, doesn't open his book for a second, he says it's because of the occupation. The guy who beats his wife says it's because of the occupation...The guy who wants to be strange and screw up his life, he says it's because of the occupation. No! The occupation didn't tell you to grab the wrapper and throw it on the street! The occupation didn't tell the government "don't put cans and dumpsters in the streets." She laughed. "Did the Authority come and say we want to put cans and dumpsters and Israel forbade it!???"

More laughter followed, this time tinged by hints of bitterness like those that had followed Nasser's story. "*Really?*" she asked, raising her eyebrows. "Did the government

come and make a law saying littering is illegal and Israel forbade it? Did Israel do an incursion because of this?"

Though Nasser critiqued PA ineffectiveness, for him moral accountability did not lay with the Authority or with municipal governments under its supervision. It lay with “the people” for having become individualist “citizens.” According to another logic that again resembled Nasser's, it was less that responsibility for public welfare had shifted over from the people to the government than it was that solidarities *within communities* had broken down. Culture had changed. This was by far the most common of the readings of public dirt that featured the status of social solidarity. Ramallah was the West Bank city that most invited this kind of commentary. In 2008, Birzeit University sociologist and Ramallah resident Lisa Taraki argued, for example, that in the twin cities of Ramallah and al-Bireh, “[t]he new social imaginary encompasses a new consciousness of the self, family life, and family futures. It also reconceptualizes private/domestic and public space and the relationships that are embedded in these spaces.”³⁹ Like many, she saw Ramallah as the embodiment of “the normalization of a new individualistic ethos embracing leisure, self-enhancement, and social mobility.”⁴⁰ She proposed that “the fragmentation of the nation” as manifest in Ramallah may “have enabled an ‘enclave city’ whose sights are more fixed on the outside than on the fractured nation within.”⁴¹

³⁹ Taraki, “Urban Modernity,” 64.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 65

⁴¹ Taraki, “Enclave Metropolis,” 18.

Though Ramallah is usually posited as *the* city emblematic of these transformations – often in *contrast* to other cities like Jenin, Nablus and Hebron – similar critiques circulated in other cities as well.⁴² In Jenin, for instance, I often heard that "people here used to have solidarity," as one psychology student put it. Referring to the Syrian television series, he said "they were like *Bab al-Hara*,⁴³ they were connected. Now, if my brother has a problem I get involved. But if my uncle has a problem, I don't."⁴⁴ Sawsan, the abovementioned Jenin mother of four, had also been active in Birzeit's student movement during the first Intifada. In the 1980s she had spent time in Israeli prison. "People have become more distant from each other these days," she told me in her kitchen. "Since the end of the first Intifada. Families have become more inward-looking. Like when there is time to do some visiting, they visit relatives more than they visit friends. Sure we still care about our neighbors; but we mainly spend time

⁴² ON the uniqueness of Ramallah, see for example Taraki, "Enclave Metropolis" and Khalid Mansour, "The Night of Ramallah and the Night of Jenin," *Al-Watan Voice*, 17 August 2004. www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/ cited in Taraki, "Enclave Metropolis," note 20 from p. 12.

⁴³ *Bab al-Hara* is an extremely popular Syrian television series that "chronicles the daily happenings and family dramas in a neighborhood in Damascus...in the inter-war period under French rule when the local population yearned for independence." The series airs during Ramadan. It has been so successful that, when its second season's finale was viewed by over 50 million viewers, producers were compelled to renew it for another three. *Bab al-Hara*, Wikipedia article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bab_al-Hara#External_links "The show's director, Bassam al-Malla, said he intended to create that nostalgia for a world with values, honour, gallantry...and the revolutionary spirit." According to one *New Scotsman* article, one of the mayors (of al-Bireh) who were at the forefront of mass-based political organizing during the first Intifada called the series "an escape to the past," arguing that "This is yearning for values, for men to be men and women to be women." Dalia Nammari (2007-10-13). "Hit soap calls Gaza faithful from evening prayer for a nightly dose of nostalgia". The Scotsman. <http://www.scotsman.com/news/international/hit-soap-calls-gaza-faithful-from-evening-prayer-for-a-nightly-dose-of-nostalgia-1-695556>

⁴⁴ Conversation in Jenin city, 9 April 2010.

with families."⁴⁵ A Jenin-born man in his seventies summed it up as follows: "There used to be more *intima'* (belonging)."⁴⁶

For those who argued that communal belonging had broken down, the ideas that people in 2012 swept and mopped a smaller radius outside the doors of their houses and shops than they had in 1960, and that they rarely helped clean neighbors' yards or streets in areas further away as they had in the 1980s, were spatial manifestations of the shrinking of an interest in something akin to a public sphere. Im Taoufiq remembered with nostalgia, for example, that "we would sweep the house and around it three to five times a day." Streets had become dirty, one would hear, because people only cared about their immediate families, about apartments in high-rise buildings and about pay raises. Migration to Ramallah from cities and villages in the north like Jenin, Nablus and Qalqiliya,⁴⁷ it was said, had filled Ramallah with strangers. *Ahl Ramallah* (the "original" Ramallah families), wouldn't trash their city this way, the same way *ahl Ramallah's* girls wouldn't dress so conservatively (e.g. wearing the *hijab*), nor would their boys harass women on the streets. But again, that story was not only told in Ramallah. It was repeated in and about Jenin's "original" families as well.⁴⁸ Two men, one in his seventies and the other in his eighties, sat with me in an optician's office. They went through a list of Jenin's "original" families—from which both men originated. "When the refugees and

⁴⁵ Conversation in Jenin city, 5 February 2010.

⁴⁶ Interview in Jenin city, 13 February 2011.

⁴⁷ Taraki, "Enclave Metropolis," 14.

⁴⁸ Jenin, like Ramallah, has been urbanized by migration from surrounding villages over the past thirty years.

then the villagers came the number of people in the city really increased," they told me. "After 1948 there came to be disorder (*khalal*). Before that there was a stronger connection among the families." Interestingly, for these two Jenin men, when it came to the cleaning of public space, a greater connection among families meant that *people had once been able to chastise each other more comfortably in public*. In other words, the consultative process I describe above had once been more *verbal*. It had therefore had the potential to be much more confrontational. Inhabiting public space with "strangers" was thus now figured as a condition that discouraged intervention in other people's business. It meant that some practiced the act of "care" less for their environs. In this way, "strangerliness" blocked the path to law enforcement. They offered an example:

AA: Yesterday I was walking, and I saw a guy who had had a Seven-Up. He threw it in the street. We're talking about men! I stopped. I wanted to stop and say something to him, but I didn't.

SSR: Why not?

MM: There might have been a fight between them.

AA: That's right! This is a guy who's my neighbor. He's from a village. He comes and drinks coffee and throws the cup in the street. You see this tissue? I take it but I won't throw it. If there were order in the city...In the past, if you threw dirty water in the street your neighbor would come up and write up a complaint to the municipality health department saying you dumped water on the street. He would write up a violation.

Inversely, as Nasser's story suggested, when streets *lacked* garbage, national solidarity and optimism could be assumed to be at play. This echoed notions that also circulated internationally about participants in Egypt's "Arab Spring" and the Occupy



Figure 29. Bread hanging off a fire hydrant and a large, charred dumpster in East Jerusalem, August 2014. Photo by the author.



Figure 30. Bag of bread stuffed into a piece of pipe on a wall. Below: bread hanging off a closed shop door hinge in Ramallah Tahta neighborhood, August 2014. Photo by the author.

Wall Street movement in the United States. Both had cleaned the public spaces they had temporarily occupied. Clean streets under "revolutionary" jurisdiction, it was asserted, could be read as material manifestations of participants' interest in the city, in each other, and in hope for the future.⁴⁹ Some in Palestine made the explicit connection between the virtues of citizenship, hope and solidarity, as embodied in historical moments of collective cleaning during Palestine's own uprisings, and iconic scenes from the Arab uprisings. That was why one prominent writer in Ramallah called it "*so revealing* that, after the invasion of Ramallah in 2003 there was this immediate attempt to clean up. It was almost like a ritual cleaning of Ramallah."⁵⁰

Reflecting on her archaeological work on contemporary South Asia and the ancient urban site of Sisupalgarh in eastern India, Monica Smith argues against the idea that public garbage (and its production and management) is a marker of a collective unconscious. She insists instead on the individual, autonomous nature of the leave-taking of possessions: "The simple act of discard—its timing, frequency, and location—is a matter of individual autonomy," she writes, "within a cultural context that is itself actively maintained or modified in each act of throwing away."⁵¹ The material I have discussed in this chapter suggests, I think, that both the opposing poles of collective unconscious *and* individual autonomy, in Smith's terms, offer limited options for understanding what takes place in the moment of (or before) the leave-taking of objects

⁴⁹ On cleaning up in Egypt, see Winegar, "Taking out the Trash."

⁵⁰ Interview in al-Bireh, 27 June 2011.

⁵¹ Smith, "I Discard, Therefore I Am," 139-140.

in public in post-Oslo Palestine. Read as indices of a collective unconscious, litter-laced streets cease to be spaces in which individuals relate to each other, groups form and disperse, interpolate and disappear, where temporalities mingle or where the institutional rubber hits the jurisdictional road. Read as indices of the autonomous affirmation of prestige, antagonism, instinct or of existence itself, leave-taking of possessions ceases to be relational, humble, interpretive or contradictory.

While the bulk of this dissertation has been about the question of governance, I have also tried to show that much occurs outside or at a diagonal to governance. It is of course widely accepted that as much as governance tries to be totalizing, reductive or to force the streamlining of popular habits, it rarely actually succeeds in doing so.⁵² Authority reforms in the West Bank were inserted into a rich and varied already-existing repertoire of solutions to dirt and garbage in public. Structured in such a way as to bypass "the cultural," the Authority's reforms neither aimed at nor succeeded in replacing previous practices. Nevertheless, preexisting repertoires often accommodated the Authority's reforms, shifting to make "room" for them while also not becoming eradicated altogether. At other moments existing practices seemed to ignore or to supplement them. In congested urban areas in Ramallah and Jenin, for example, women still swept outside the gates of their homes and along sidewalks.⁵³ In the afternoons and evenings, shopkeepers in central Ramallah, in Nablus and Jenin did the same, despite the

⁵² This is a critique made for example of James Scott's work. See for example Ferguson, "Seeing like an Oil Company."

⁵³ Conversation in Jenin city, 14 June 2011.

fact that municipal street sweepers were active from the early morning until late in the afternoon in both cities. In Nablus, Nasser had hired a teenaged boy to hose down his shop every few hours, to sprinkle sawdust across the floor and to place leftover bones and fat in an open cardboard box outside the door. Those, along with any other solids that did not make it into the grate, were picked up by a shiny orange Nablus municipal truck, equipped with a GIS monitoring system, that would roll by on its way to clean the rest of the city. In Jenin, Khalto Sana' paid someone who was neither a municipality employee nor a JSC worker to collect and dispose of the garbage all around her block (which included several other houses). "There's a girl who works for *'amti Sawsan*," she said. "Every day on her way home I see her and I call her over, I say come pass by me. I give her a bag. She circles around if there are cardboard boxes, dirt (*wasakh*), around us on the street from here and from here and from here. Until here," she said, pointing to the threshold of her house's outer gate. "I don't leave a single thing."

Despite the fact that I read improvisation and unpredictability in these practices, it is crucial that, to so many of my interlocutors, it was important to identify the allowance of waste in public spaces as a cultural—collective and perhaps even unconscious—phenomenon. This suggests that the fleeting improvisations of anonymous yet mutual consultation I observed were not adequate to convince those who participated in them or who saw them occur that what they saw was communal solidarity, environmental awareness or obedience to municipal regulations. It may also suggest that people said one thing and did another. Either way, for at least the past seven years, societal transformation and solidarity breakdown arguments have been circulating for a reason. They can be read

as commentaries on the effects of PA governance on the experience of public life more broadly. In the expectations and disappointments they express most clearly, perhaps we see the phantom state at work.



Figure 31. Bread stuffed into architectural feature above a door in the Old City of Nablus, November 2014. Photo by the author.

Conclusion

The current crisis [of climate change] has brought into view certain other conditions for the existence of life in the human form that have no intrinsic connection to the logics of capitalist, nationalist, or socialist identities. They are connected rather to the history of life on this planet, the way different life-forms connect to one another, and the way the mass extinction of one species could spell danger for another.¹

Anthropologies of Infrastructure and Infrastructure in Palestine Studies

I was first inspired to investigate waste management in the West Bank because infrastructure had figured prominently in numerous scholarly, journalistic, political and popular commentaries that sought to analyze the rise to popularity of the Islamist political movement known as Hamas. Many of these commentaries proposed that claims around infrastructure had served as Hamas' tool for popular mobilization because infrastructure was an object around which public expectations of government, and claims to rights, revolved. For many commentators, especially those committed to secular Palestinian nationalism, this explained why so many Palestinians had voted for Hamas both in the 2004/5 municipal elections and in the 2006 legislative elections.²

¹ Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History," 217.

² Stamatopoulou-Robbins, "The Hamas Effect." Dennis Ross argued that Hamas "provides services—clinics, after-school programs, food distribution centers—that the Palestinian Authority fails to offer," quoted in Levitt, *Hamas*: ix. Mishal and Sela argued that Fatah could not compete with Hamas' social services, and that above all other reasons, Fatah's mismanagement of the Palestinian population and the "absence of governance" is what brought Fatah to its knees. Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*: xxii. Others like Khalidi, Hilal, Nusse and Hroub similarly questioned the Islamic component of Hamas' ideological positions in order to highlight Hamas' flexibility, its pragmatic approach to changing political scenes and consequently expanding popular base. See Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*; Hilal, "Hamas's Rise as Charted in the Polls;" Nusse, *Muslim Palestine*; Hroub, "Hamas after Shaykh Yassin," *Hamas*, "Hamas's Worldview."

They proposed that the elections had revealed that Palestinians viewed infrastructural failures as a reflection of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority's failure to govern. Infrastructure here included food and water distribution, road maintenance, healthcare, education and waste management. Perceived failures in these domains, it was argued, catalyzed votes cast in favor of Hamas both because Hamas had not held the reigns of the government that had produced the failures Palestinians saw around them and because Hamas was perceived as having filled the governmental "void" while Fatah had been flagging. Stories had been written about Hamas members picking up discards with their bare hands just before the elections, and Hamas' charity work distributing food and providing orphanages for the poor. Bad or missing infrastructures under a Fatah-run PA, to simplify the argument that was repeatedly made, could compel a Christian Palestinian who had supported Fatah all her life to vote, as many did, for an untried and decidedly Islamist political movement instead.

What interested me about this argument was the relationship imputed between infrastructure, political sensibilities and collective action. Large scale public infrastructures have historically and in many contexts been planned, built and maintained by modern national or colonial states. In many of these instances accountability for infrastructure is often derived from taxation. As she drives along a road riddled with potholes, the citizen asks the state to herself "where are the public services and infrastructures I paid for?" When roads are not maintained, when streets lack lighting or are strewn with litter, the citizen recalls the state. The politician scrambles to explain or to

fix the problem in advance of another election period.³ Whether a population imagines its state as an abstract entity, as a paternalistic feature of society or as a vehicle for class domination, whether the state is perceived as virtuous or as neglectful, the modern state tends to appear as the originary locus for the provision of basic welfare and services.

In Palestine, the past hundred and fifty years have presented Palestinians neither with citizenship on the territory on which they live nor with a sense that a state with any continuity has provided them with basic infrastructures. People alive today in the West Bank remember hearing stories about the Ottomans beginning to refurbish sewage networks that were never completed because the territory was handed over to the British before they could do so. Similar stories are told about municipal funds for water and sewage network expansion being offered and then pulled with the ebbs and flows of political unrest in the Mandate period and with the Mandate's replacement by the Jordanian administration and by Israel a few years later. New roads were, literally, opened and paved—though often not “legalized”—through battles between the Jordanian and Israeli armies in the West Bank in the 1960s.⁴ The Jerusalem area's electricity utility changed hands, prices and supply areas as Israel gained control of east Jerusalem and the West Bank after 1967.⁵ After Oslo, it became increasingly difficult for Palestinians to obtain health services from Israeli hospitals, as they had done since 1967, so their

³ Israeli military personnel have also argued that the infrastructures that serve Palestinian communities can be potential tools for political mobilization, often in support of the destruction of those infrastructures. After the Israeli Defense Forces had bombed several bridges and an electric grid in Gaza, for example, an IDF spokesperson asserted that the bombings were “intended to make it difficult and to disrupt the activity of the “terror infrastructure” related directly and indirectly to the abduction of Cp. Gilad Shalit.” Li and Lein, “Act of Vengeance,” 26.

⁴ Interview with Reem Khalil, Ramallah.

⁵ Dumper, “Jerusalem's Infrastructure.”

experience of healthcare was reoriented inward, toward major Palestinian cities and especially toward Ramallah. The PA brought its own set of changes, including the proliferation and then reduction of municipal and village governments and therefore of their services. The instability of the source of service provision continues to be a part of the narratives of older generations about times past and today contributes to a sense that the infrastructural dust remains unsettled.

Meanwhile, in each period of rule and in part due to the sense of perpetual instability, Palestinians have come up with solutions to infrastructural inadequacy or failure that are either independent from, or act at a diagonal to, whatever central government happens to be in place. The most obvious examples can be drawn from the first Intifada. When municipalities, schools and hospitals ceased to function in the 1980s, communities replaced them with committees that, for several years, provided versions of the services that had been cut off. Municipalities themselves can be understood as institutions with some autonomy from the central governments that came and went between the late nineteenth century, when they were first established, and the post-Oslo period. Though they received funds and directives from, and could be created and dismantled by, the Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Israeli and now Palestinian central governments, municipalities have historically provided services of varying types, levels of quality and with political meanings that vary from one village, town or city to the next. As anywhere, the role of a municipality within its community, and in its relationship to infrastructure, is as dependent on the political makeup of its particular elected council, the organization of its internal bureaucratic workings, its particular bureaucratic culture,

its negotiated relationship to central government and the inherited material conditions of the infrastructures it is its job to manage.

All this is to say that, for a people who has lacked a sense of a stable history of sovereign statehood, it is therefore not self-evident that infrastructural failure would automatically catalyze the abandonment of longstanding party commitments or collective political action anymore than it would catalyze a shrug of the shoulders, resignation or municipal- or community-level infrastructural problem-solving designed to bypass governmental provision altogether. This realization led me to investigate some of the premises upon which the commentaries that assumed Palestinians responded a certain way to the failure of infrastructures that were meant to serve them were based. My goal was to illuminate the role that provision (or lack) of sanitation services and infrastructures in particular played in Palestinians' senses of differentiation from, proximity to, and expectations of, government, in the wake of what some have called the disintegration of the Palestinian national movement. I sought to shed light on the specificities and the contingencies of the relationship between infrastructure and politics in a place where, I argued, the absence of a modern state meant that existing frameworks for understanding that relationship (usually based on long-standing relations between states and citizens) are not necessarily applicable.

Informed by scholarship on the margins of the state and on the relationship of “non-state” forms of governance to political authority,⁶ I asked: what might an

⁶ See for example Das and Poole, *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*; Feldman, *Governing Gaza*; Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*; Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire*; Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience*.

anthropology of the ‘stateless’ post-colony-in-the-making look like, especially if we do not assume the state is necessarily the central, coordinating force and instead attend to the contrasting, competing and fragmented practices that make up what we might call a governmental landscape? I sought to examine, for instance, how and to what effect a *multiplicity* of local and international, public and private, formal and informal institutions and NGOs providing infrastructure to Palestinians in general, how Palestinian residents themselves were managing their waste and how both might have changed since Oslo. Inspired by the call of Science and Technology Studies to “follow the thing,” I imagined waste infrastructures as nodal points from which I could trace relationships among actors that scholars had heretofore conceived of in existing literatures as separate and irrelevant to one another or to a common frame of analysis.

To do this I drew on methodological propositions put forth in STS that suggest that we think of infrastructure as a socio-technical assemblage. My task was to map the web of waste management networks⁷ that cut across and at the same time helped produce the divide between “formal” and “informal”—and Palestinian, donor and Israeli—governance in the West Bank. Within STS, proponents of Actor-Network theory (AT) propose “that modern societies cannot be described without recognizing them as having a fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that is never captured by the notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structure, systems.”⁸ Mapping the sewage flows, pipelines, aquifers, institutions, official meetings and passing comments

⁷ Latour, *Pandora’s Hope*.

⁸ “It aims at explaining the effects accounted for by those traditional words without having to buy the ontology topology and politics that goes with them,” *On Actor-Network Theory*, 3 (of translation).

involved in projects like a wastewater treatment plant allowed me access to social worlds (and material networks) assembled, albeit ephemerally, through infrastructure construction. These social worlds have thus far been largely overlooked in much of the Palestine literature. My research therefore presupposed and then revealed that infrastructure's "strength does not come from concentration, purity and unity, but from dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties."⁹

Select histories and sociological works on Palestine have taken similar paths before.¹⁰ But most social scientists have tended to frame analyses through the geographic, institutional, or national units with which their interlocutors identify or with which they are conventionally associated. The social scientific study of Palestine has been characterized by an interest in bounded and identifiable units such as the village, the city, class, social groups such as peasants, workers, women, and now larger geographical units such as the West Bank, '48 Palestine and Gaza.¹¹ By "following the thing" I sought to examine how relations around infrastructure transcended, cross-cut, crystallized around and even reshaped these units. Doing so revealed understudied forms of authority, conditions through which Palestinians' expectations of government were being shaped as well as the unintended effects of built infrastructures.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*; Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient*.

¹¹ Naturally enough, much scholarship has usually attempted to give "voice" to various Palestinian "subgroups"—e.g. women, kinship groups and peasants – or to examine the "disciplinary" and other logics of occupation. Central to these accounts is the idea that Palestinian cultural and political formations are manifestations either of "coping" or "resistance" to occupation. Perhaps because the OPT have also been characterized as an exception to the international order of states with "formal" governance structures, it has been hard to see those Palestinian institutions of governance, bureaucracy and infrastructure that operate, one could say, between these "subgroups" and the occupation. My project seeks to reframe and thus to revalorize the existing scholarship.

This dissertation has therefore had several aims. One has been to show that Palestine scholarship on the relationship between infrastructure and politics can benefit from methodological approaches that extend outside conventional social, political, geographical and institutional boundaries. Another aim has been to consider what methodological and analytical challenges arise from studying infrastructure—in Palestine or elsewhere—that has yet to be built. I found that while STS methods were helpful in allowing me to see a wastewater plant project’s contradictory and competing agendas, forms of speech, materials and institutions, for example, it could not always account for shifts in the meaning of waste, of infrastructures, of the public good and of governance, primarily because of the STS emphasis on *material effects*. The shifts I observed both valorize and complicate the applicability of the idea that the occupation has been “outsourced” or “subcontracted” to the PA and its donors. It became clear that to contribute to a major debate about the role the PA has played in Palestinian society in the West Bank, combining STS methods with analyses of emergent *discourses* about waste infrastructures would be necessary.

When I first began work in Palestine in 2007 I began with things—garbage, sewage, landfills, wastewater treatment plants, dumpsters and trucks—expecting to trace the impacts of construction and operation backward as a series of domino effects. But fieldwork revealed that most of the projects that assembled the people and things I was following were still in their planning and construction phases. This meant I was set up to observe infrastructural planning and construction in “real time.” The temporalities of the infrastructural projects I followed were absorbed into the temporalities with which my

analysis contended. Geographically speaking, as well, the networks I traced among people, objects and institutions far exceeded the capacity of any one anthropologist to trace each one in its entirety.¹² Somewhat artificially, I therefore selected those to which I had access, those that remained within the geography of Israel and the West Bank (e.g. I did not visit Gaza, Jordan or Germany)

My research thus mirrors its objects of study in that it continues to be a work in progress. It did however show that the daily practices of Palestine's waste managers—like many post-Oslo governing practices at the local level—were not adequately captured by prevailing frameworks for understanding Palestinians' experiences of occupation and had therefore gone largely understudied. My fieldwork compelled me to ask new questions, such as what are the spatial and institutional boundaries of Palestinian governance? How is the PA's public constituted? What analytical, political and ethical difference does it make whether we identify an infrastructure as one in which the PA is involved, as a "PA infrastructure" in which Israelis and donors are involved, or as an Israeli- or donor-driven project? To what extent can examining infrastructures-in-the-making tell us something about the so-called "political imaginaries" of designers, funders and managers?¹³ Several approaches have been proposed for understanding the effects of PA governance both within Palestinian society and on the nature of occupation post-Oslo. The following section explores how infrastructure has been important to many of these.

¹² Strathern, "Cutting the Network."

¹³ Susan Leigh Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure," 380.

Infrastructure features in much of the scholarship on Palestine and specifically in scholarship focusing on the post-1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Until very recently¹⁴ it usually figured as a passing example of other phenomena rather than an object of scrutiny in its own right. Here I divide its thematic appearances into five categories. One is construction of Israeli infrastructures in the West Bank and Gaza. Examples include analyses of settlement construction, the Separation Wall, checkpoints, military bases and roads.¹⁵ The second, less systematically explored category is Palestinians' reinterpretation and/or reappropriation of Israeli infrastructures.¹⁶ A third is Israel's effort to prevent Palestinians from building their own infrastructures. Israel has controlled or obstructed the digging of water wells, the laying of water distribution networks, house construction, construction of tall buildings, electricity generation, sewage treatment plants and landfills, to name a few.

A fourth is Israel's destruction of Palestinian infrastructures, as in the case of the aerial bombing of sewage treatment plants in Gaza, snipers shooting holes into water tanks on roofs, tanks ripping apart roads during incursions (as occurred in Jenin), soldiers blowing holes through walls, ceilings and floors of houses (as in Nablus), bulldozers

¹⁴ Here I am thinking of work by Weizman, Petti and recent work by Rabie, Salamanca and myself, among others. Weizman, *Hollow Land*; Petti, "Spatial Ordering of Exile;" Rabie, "Ramallah's Bubbles;" Salamanca, "Unplug and Play."

¹⁵ Hever, *The Political Economy*; Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*; Trottier, "A Wall, Water and Power;" Selby, "Cooperation" and "Dressing up Domination."

¹⁶ Bishara shows for example how Palestinian practices of disfiguring or destroying parts of the Wall in Aida camp, and of writing political slogans on the bottoms of pieces of the Wall not yet erected, reminds us of some of the small but important limits to Israeli control over the Palestinian population through those infrastructures. In fact her argument complicates the idea of an infrastructure's authorship by examining one among many possible post-construction interpretive reappropriations or responses. Bishara, *Back Stories*.

demolishing homes, schools, businesses and government buildings.¹⁷ A fifth is the construction or rehabilitation of Palestinian infrastructures, either with a focus on infrastructure's relationship to foreign aid or on the explicit connection that Salam Fayyad's government began to make between infrastructure (and development) and the building of a Palestinian state.

Infrastructure built by Israel in the West Bank and Gaza has largely been understood as evidence of Israel's long-term aims there.¹⁸ The argument that infrastructure is evidence of Israel's long-term aims has been made in a number of ways. One is by documenting the effects of Israeli infrastructures on Palestinian lives and livelihoods. If a checkpoint has the effect of preventing pregnant women from reaching hospital, for instance, the conclusion drawn is that the aim of Israeli infrastructure is to make life so unbearable for Palestinians that they will emigrate "voluntarily." Another is by documenting Israeli infrastructures' effects on Palestinian government goals as articulated in PA statehood plans. Selby (2013), for instance, argues that the expansion of water infrastructure for settlements has been an impediment to Palestinian statehood. It impedes the aspirations of one segment of Palestinian society (housed mostly within the PA and among its beneficiaries) committed to PA sovereign statehood in the West Bank and Gaza.¹⁹

¹⁷ Le More, "Killing with Kindness;" Li, "The Gaza Strip as Laboratory;" Li and Lein, "Act of Vengeance;" Weizman, "Seeing Through Walls."

¹⁸ Recent activist work through the boycott movement on infrastructure considered "Israeli," has shown its dependence on companies, countries, materials and individuals without legal or national affiliations with the state of Israel. See for example www.whoprofits.org.

¹⁹ See also Hever, *The Political Economy*; Korn, "The Ghettoization of Palestinians."

Another, related approach evaluates the effects of Israeli infrastructures vis-a-vis the (usually stated) goals of the *Israeli* government, Israeli strategists, settlers or Israeli and international Zionist organizations. According to this logic, when settlements begin to bifurcate the West Bank, for example, making contiguous PA jurisdiction geographically impossible without the settlements' dismantlement or alteration, settlement construction is understood as material evidence of stated Israeli plans to annex the West Bank.²⁰

Israel's destruction of Palestinian infrastructures also features prominently in the literature. When Israeli warplanes bomb infrastructures serving Palestinian communities, this too is often understood as evidence of occupation's short- and long-term political goals. Works by Darryl Li and by Stephen Graham fit this model. In *Disrupted Cities*,²¹ Graham writes, "the site-specific bombing of infrastructure...is designed so that effects and impacts 'ripple outwards through the network, extending the envelope of destruction in space and time.'" The short-term, military goal, he says, is "to bring paralysis to an urbanized adversary."²² Its long-term goal is the "demodernization of entire urbanized societies."

Graham's approach deduces the logics of infrastructural destruction both from what planners are assumed to believe and from the effects of destruction itself. Thus he

²⁰ In this mode Neve Gordon begins his chapter on 1980s "Civilian Control" in the West Bank with a quote from Ariel Sharon: "I told [them]: don't build fences around your settlements. If you put up a fence, you put a limit to your expansion...We should place the fences around the Palestinians and not around our places." The chapter proceeds to describe how Palestinian movement and development was indeed circumscribed by Israel's construction of settlements, "forbidden roads" and "areas of jurisdiction," *just as Sharon had claimed it would be*. Cited in Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 116.

²¹ Graham, *Disrupted Cities*.

²² *Ibid.*, 115

argues that Israeli military attacks on infrastructures are “a direct reflection of changes in Israeli military doctrine where the systematic targeting of civilian infrastructure is seen as a means of coercing adversaries in the ‘non-traditional’ wars against insurgents and supportive civilian populations in cities.”²³ He states, “as in U.S. doctrine, destroying civilian infrastructure is seen by Israeli military planners as one of the few ways of bringing pressure to bear on the actions of stealthy and usually hidden insurgents and fighters,”²⁴ reiterating the IDF spokesperson’s statement after the bombing of bridges and electric grids.²⁵

Those writing about the numerous cases in which Israeli institutions have *prevented* Palestinians from operating or constructing their own infrastructures propose similar arguments. For decades the Israeli military, the Israeli High Court, the Civil Administration, the Joint Water Committee, the Israeli Jerusalem municipality or the central government, as well as Israeli companies (e.g. Mekorot, the Israeli Electric Company), have prevented the construction of infrastructures for Palestinians or wrested control over infrastructures previously operated by Palestinians.²⁶ Analytically, these obstructive acts have been treated in the scholarly and activist literatures on Palestine much the same way as Israeli destruction of Palestinian infrastructure: as material

²³ Ibid., 121

²⁴ Ibid., 121

²⁵ Li and Lein, “Act of Vengeance.”

²⁶ Gordon, Israel’s Occupation; Dumper, “Jerusalem’s Infrastructure;” Trottier, “A Wall, Water and Power;” Selby, “Cooperation” and “Dressing up Domination;” Zeitoun, Power and Water.

evidence of Israel's long-term aims and therefore as evidence of "the logic of occupation."

What concerns me is that analyses drawn from Israel's construction, obstruction or destruction of infrastructures in the West Bank and Gaza argue that it is possible to describe and to understand the logics, the short- and long-term goals of an entity assumed to be coherent in intent and in practice. That entity's name varies, including Israel, the Zionist Project, occupation, apartheid and settler-colonialism, though conclusions about the nature of its logic do differ: Roads for Gordon are a tool of control and surveillance.²⁷ For Li the destruction of bridges and electric grids in Gaza is a sign that Gaza serves as Israel's "laboratory,"²⁸ while for others like Ghanim it is evidence that Palestine is an Agambenian "space of exception" in which "thanatopolitics" reign.²⁹ But there is an underlying agreement among these arguments: Israel is a coherent entity operating according to coherent logics that can be discerned from its relationship to infrastructures in the territories it occupies.

I want to emphasize two singularities assumed in most of these analyses. One is the singularity of infrastructure's "authorship."³⁰ And the other is the related singularity of infrastructure's imputed logic. The force of both appears in *Disrupted Cities*. Graham states that his edited volume draws inspiration from Bruno Latour and from Jane Bennett,

²⁷ Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*.

²⁸ Li, "The Gaza Strip as Laboratory."

²⁹ Ghanim, "Thanatopolitics."

³⁰ Mukerji, *Technology and Territoriality*, 223.

who argues that a “vital materiality” runs through and across bodies, both human and nonhuman. Graham posits that infrastructures are socio-technical assemblages, suggesting that we investigate what he calls the “cyborg nature of contemporary urbanization: the ways in which the technological circulations sustained by infrastructural assemblages inseparably blend together the social relations of urban life and the relations between cities with the natural and biospheric processes upon which they rely.”³¹ This is part of Graham’s argument against “blackboxing,” or the taking for granted of the smoothness and apparent permanence and stability of infrastructures, where people do not think about what keeps the infrastructure going and what built it. Despite beginning with this robust theoretical architecture, his analysis is quickly simplified when it comes to the IDF’s destruction of civilian infrastructures in Gaza, losing touch with the theories both of Latour and Bennett. The destruction of Palestinian infrastructures is unequivocally Israeli. Its singular logic is destruction of the adversary.

Arguments imputing the singularities of authorship and logic may be more tenable in the context of destruction than they are in the context, say, of the “failure” of a Palestinian infrastructure or in the *construction* of infrastructures, whether they are attributed to Israel, to the PA or to international donors. My own work on waste management and its large-scale infrastructures differs in that I examine a number of agents, and networks, that are involved in the assembling of the basic infrastructures in Palestinian governance, beyond Israel. It also differs in that I focus on the planning of infrastructure rather than its subsequent destruction by a belligerent force. It therefore

³¹ Graham, *Disrupted Cities*, 12.

presented methodological and analytical challenges that made necessary a reexamination of some of the conclusions drawn in the scholarship thus far. By providing a schema for viewing the role of infrastructure in accounts of occupation I hope to provide scholars working in this growing subfield of Palestine studies with an analytical context in which to place their work.

I argue that at least two aspects of infrastructure have been “blackboxed” in the literature so far: One, the micropractices and contingencies through which infrastructures are designed, constructed and eventually operated. Who are the people doing that work? What institutions house them? How do they interact with one another, with the people the infrastructures are designed to serve, with funders? How do these dynamics change from day to day or over longer periods of time? Two, infrastructural authorship. What tells us that an infrastructure is an “Israeli,” a USAID or that it is a “PA” project? What is at stake in ascribing singular authorship (and coherent logics), when and for whom?

Authorial attribution requires that some aspects of the infrastructure be treated as more important than others. These have variously included the statements of its planners, the justification of funds by donors, its effects on Palestinian rights to resources, on settlements, the worldview it represents based on institutional or national affiliation and the institutional arrangements upon which its construction has depended. In most commentaries on infrastructure that has also relied, by a kind of circular reasoning, on one’s assumption about the infrastructure’s authorship: If the government of Israel is demonstrably involved in an infrastructure’s construction, it tends to matter less (for an understanding of its logics) who funds, builds or promotes the infrastructure because

priority is given to the fact that Israel is the sovereign. Israeli strategists' statements about infrastructure or an infrastructure's effects on Palestinian residents are treated as weightier evidence for that infrastructure's "Israeliness" than are the contingencies of the practices that went into building it.

The *physical labor* that goes into constructing infrastructures deemed Israeli is usually divorced from the infrastructure's ideological (i.e. "abstract" or discursive) qualities. This is the case in commentaries on the fact that hundreds of Palestinian workers helped construct the Separation Wall and have worked as electricians, plumbers and builders on settlements.³² Commentaries tether the negative effects of the Wall, settlements and other Israeli infrastructures on Palestinians' land tenure rights, on their social fabric and on their aspirations for independent statehood to the Zionist or settler-colonial character of those infrastructures. This tethering analytically reduces the significance of Palestinian labor and results in the attribution of "Israeliness" to the infrastructure that labor makes possible. The fact that Palestinians helped build it does not in other words change the Israeli character of an infrastructure.

Writings on the paradoxical image of the Palestinian worker building the settlement that will displace him have attempted to rectify the incoherencies presented by that image by maintaining the distinction between economic (material) necessity and (abstract) ideological principles. The argument goes that material necessities brought about by the West Bank's closure from the Israeli labor market, high unemployment, low wages and the loss of agrarian livelihoods has compelled "Palestinians to make a difficult

³² Farsakh, "Palestinian Labor Flows."

choice,” in the words of one journalist.³³ Practice (fueled by “hard economic reality”) and ideology (abstract “principle”) are treated as distinct. On the one hand there is abstract principle, expressed in speech; and on the other hand there is “hard economic reality,” expressed in labor (and other observable, non-discursive practices). Palestinians who work on settlements are quoted to prove the point that abstractions and material realities do not meet in these infrastructural scenarios: “‘Of course I hate my job,’ says Haitham Asfur. ‘But what can I do? I am forced to betray Palestine.’”³⁴

Scholarship on Palestinian infrastructures, by contrast, emphasizes who foots the bill. Here whether funding is Palestinian or international—and if it is international, whether or not it originates in “Western” or in an Arab or other Middle Eastern country—becomes important. Most English language scholarship has tended to focus on Western-funded projects and on the “neoliberal” logics that are intuitively associated with places like the United States and the EU. Some scholars maintain that public infrastructure’s effects are to entrench donors’ “neoliberal worldview”³⁵ such that neoliberalism becomes the content of PA state building. In these cases the “neoliberal” and, often relatedly, the anti-Islamist worldview with which it is associated, are framed as common denominators cohering PA donor political imaginaries with those of its donors.

³³ Collard, “Tile by Tile.”

³⁴ Putz, “Double Pay for Betrayal”; Alenat and LaOved, “Palestinian Workers in Israeli West Bank Settlements”; Collard, “Tile by Tile.”

³⁵ Khalidi and Samour, “Neoliberalism as Liberation,” 7. See also Hanafi and Tabar, The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite; Hever, The Political Economy; Bhungalia, “From the American People”; Hamdan, Foreign Aid.

There is a similarly large emphasis on the institutionalized, Oslo-based regulations that shape the process of planning and permission-seeking as a way to explain why Palestinians (especially PA experts, planners and managers) do what they do with regard to infrastructure. If it is a World Bank or an Area C project (requiring Civil Administration permissions), in other words, the absoluteness with which those organizations determine the logic of a project is assumed over what Palestinians may think or do about the project.

Missing from institution- and funding-oriented analyses is a portrayal of infrastructural work that is neither directly tied to the exigencies of funding nor explicitly stipulated by Oslo's legal and regulatory frameworks. In the interstices of those constraints infrastructure managers innovate, borrow, leverage material and social capital, disagree, try to persuade, are persuaded, make unlikely alliances, sacrifice "principles" and dissimulate belief. This is the space that David Mosse calls the "cultivation of development."³⁶ Mosse questions the unidirectional relationship between policy and development practice. He suggests that practice may produce policy rather than the other way around.³⁷ He argues not that practice is more important than policy; but that we may learn from practice about policy's characteristics and about how it is shaped. He proposes, and I agree with him, that it is not adequate to read development from its policy reports, from the laws that claim to regulate it or from the statements of politicians alone. It is in this sphere of everyday PA work that there has thus far been a gap in the

³⁶ Mosse, Cultivating Development.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

scholarship in Palestine studies in general and in the study of infrastructure (and “development”) in Palestine in particular.

On Uses and Limits to Outsourcing and Thing Following

The attribution of singular authorship for infrastructures determines who is to be held accountable for their negative effects or congratulated for their positive ones. But for infrastructures deemed “Palestinian” or “PA infrastructures” in the post-Oslo period in particular, the attribution of authorship has also been used to support arguments that posit the PA as the vehicle through which the occupation has been “outsourced” or “subcontracted.” This is a widely held position on the effects of the Authority’s presence on the occupation since 1995: that Israel has subcontracted “the major civil and policing burdens of occupation to the PA.”³⁸ PA public infrastructure becomes one among several mechanisms through which subcontracting is effected. Selby, for example, writes “Israel’s willingness to allow the PA unilateral responsibility for the Palestinian water sector in Gaza was a function of [subcontracting].”³⁹ He argues that this brought about a “disarticulation of power and responsibility—enshrining Israeli power over decision-making and key resources, whilst delegating to the PA responsibility for local water supplies and lesser value resources.”⁴⁰

There is a growing body of literature spanning the fields of economics, business, politics and management on the concept of “outsourcing,” usually as a subfield of

³⁸ Selby, “Dressing up Domination,” 15. See also Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 533-65; Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 169-96; Weizman, “Seeing Through Walls,” 2006.

³⁹ Selby, “Dressing up Domination,” 15.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

privatization. This literature tends to take into account the ways in which work that is outsourced is transformed into new kinds of work—with new, often unintended effects—in the process.⁴¹ By contrast, the Palestine scholarship that employs the concepts of outsourcing and subcontracting to describe the relationship between the occupation and the PA has been much less interested in the ways in which the entity to which work is outsourced may change the way the work gets done.⁴²

In the context of post-Oslo Palestine “outsourcing” arguments have tended to suggest that the PA (like the infrastructures attributed to it) functions largely as a vessel for Israeli or for donor intentions or political imaginaries, on the one hand, and that the intentions of Israel or of donors vis-à-vis infrastructures are singular and coherent, on the other. Infrastructures’ observable, material effects are less important than the worldview they are assumed to embody given who funded them. This is complicated by a case like Baqa’s wastewater treatment plant (Chapter 2), which was funded by the PA through the Japanese government, UNDP and by the Israeli government.

Not only did the Israeli Baqa mayor disagree with the Japanese consul’s framing of the project, and Majdi with the UNDP factsheet framing; the Japanese consul and the UNDP representatives were themselves not in perfect alignment, the one emphasizing security and the “shared environment” and the other peace between “two nations.” Yet the individuals from all four institutions who sat around that plastic table in Baqa were among those pushing for (and funding) the project and were therefore presumably among

⁴¹ I want to thank Shir Hever for helping me clarify this point.

⁴² This metaphor has been extended by scholars including Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*; Hever, *The Political Economy*, and Weizman, “Seeing through Walls.”

its ideological “authors.” Once the sewage network is laid, which of these “ideologies” would it “operationalize”? Is it tenable to argue that it served any one of their purposes mentioned (or unmentioned) in isolation?

Outsourcing arguments tend to treat the PA and its infrastructures as what Latour and his colleagues call an “intermediary.” An intermediary “reflects” or “represents” social meaning—reproducing what was already there or “transporting [it] faithfully” from the entity that serves as the work’s point of origin (i.e. from which the work was “outsourced”).⁴³ I argue instead that the PA and its bureaucrats, experts, engineers and institutional and infrastructural iterations should rather be treated as what Latour and his colleagues call “mediators,” which:

cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. Their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry. No matter how complicated an intermediary is, it may, for all practical purposes, count for just one—or even for nothing at all because it can be easily forgotten. No matter how apparently simple a mediator may look, it may become *complex*; it may lead in multiple directions which will modify all the contradictory accounts attributed to its role.⁴⁴

While outsourcing is often used to highlight the dramatic shift from one set of governing institutions (the Civil Administration) to another (the PA), many of the impacts of that shift have been left unexplored. On the one hand, those who argue that PA institutions

⁴³ Latour writes that an intermediary “is what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs...an intermediary can be taken not only as a black box, but also as a black box counting for one, even if it is internally made of many parts,” Latour, Reassembling the Social, 39.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

(and the donors that fund it) are the “third party” to which the occupation has been outsourced since 1995 make the convincing normative claim that Israel continues to be in effective control while shedding its legal responsibility (under international humanitarian law) for taking care of the occupied population. They focus on the fact that occupied residents’ basic needs continue to be met under direct PA governance.⁴⁵

This argument is premised in part on the idea that the population’s “basic needs” are a) a clearly discernable and b) have remained the same over the past four decades. It is assumed that residents need and have always needed “basic” water, street lighting, housing, sanitation, healthcare, transport, education and food. By historicizing waste management—usually listed among residents’ basic sanitation needs—my broader project questions the assumption that basic needs (and the materials that constitute them) are unchanging over time. Changes both in the central governing system (from “direct” occupation to “indirect” rule through the PA) and in the field itself (with the “environmentalization” of waste) have helped reshape residents’ experiences of need—as well as how “basic” it was—with regard to solid waste and wastewater.

Residents’ senses of ethics, rights and duties around where, whether and how garbage and sewage will be disposed of, sold or used have been radically transformed since the mid-twentieth century. The post-Oslo emergence of PA waste experts, engineers, bureaucrats and others as infrastructural mediators, managers and planners has also given rise to qualitative changes and to new intersubjective relations —not least for

⁴⁵ Le More, for example, has argued that “aid not only relieves Israel of its responsibilities under international law but it has also clearly helped sustain its occupation, which would have been much trickier and more onerous to maintain had the international community not footed the bills.” Le More, “Killing with Kindness,” 993.

the people working within the PA. The fact that outsourcing arguments deploy the metaphor without extending their investigations to the “third party” itself leaves little room for understanding the impacts or dynamics of these shifts.

On this most Palestine scholars agree: PA and NGO employees, segments of preexisting local elites and “returnees” from the 1990s were strengthened by the post-Oslo governance regime vis-à-vis their compatriots in the West Bank and Gaza.⁴⁶ NGOs⁴⁷ and the PA have been the main target of this criticism. Critics have focused on changing power relations among socio-economic classes and on shifts in Palestinians’ political consciousness as a result of new patterns of consumption, debt and the Ramallah “bubble” phenomenon.⁴⁸

But the way newly minted and aspiring elites both experience and are produced by their daily work in governance has been left largely out of the picture; especially with respect to work *not* directly tied to fundraising or to meeting donor requirements. PA bureaucrats are assumed to be one of three things: one, sincere believers in the (neoliberal, nationalist, pro-American etc.) “ideologies” associated with their work; two, cynical (and perhaps corrupt) opportunists; and three, nationalists whose hands are tied by their conditions, much like the Palestinian workers who help build settlements or the Separation Wall. As a result little investigation has gone into the incoherent ways in

⁴⁶ Bornstein, “In-Betweenness,” 176.

⁴⁷ Hanafi and Tabar’s work on Palestinian NGOs provides a critique of the process whereby a “globalized elite” was formed in the West Bank and Gaza post-Oslo. Hanafi and Tabar, The Emergence.

⁴⁸ See Rabie, “Ramallah’s Bubbles”; Taraki, “Enclave Metropolis” and “Urban Modernity”; Hilal, “The Formation of the Palestinian Elite,” “The Palestinian Political System after Oslo,” “The Palestinian Middle Class.”

which they are expected, if not required, to speak, act and even think in order to get the job done; much less how that fact might affect the structures they end up helping to build.

The idea that local elites are shaped, made or strengthened in times of governmental transition—by governing—is not new.⁴⁹ Colonialism is known for creating the need for cultural brokers who, while perhaps not “native surrogates,”⁵⁰ are nevertheless fluent in both “cultures.”⁵¹ Cultural brokerage has also long been identified as a characteristic of postcolonial contexts in which nationalist elites struggle to make their projects legible to the newly liberated masses.⁵² But interestingly, very few students of Palestine have used the concept of cultural brokerage. Avram Bornstein is one of the few to have explored it.⁵³ Bornstein argues against seeing NGO workers “as ‘missionaries’ which implies an insidious malevolence behind a façade of goodwill.”⁵⁴ He proposes that since Oslo a number of people occupying “in-between” positions “hold some power,” especially “if they can connect the otherwise unconnected.”⁵⁵ He states that

⁴⁹ Mao (1926) identified a comprador class of merchants in China that he argued were the agents of foreign imperialism. Nkruma (1965) made a similar argument about the role of the indigenous elite serving neo-imperialism in Africa after decolonization. See Bornstein, “In-Betweenness” for more global comparisons.

⁵⁰ Tamari, “In League with Zion,” 41.

⁵¹ See for example Hagedorn, “A Friend to Go Between Them”; Szasz, Between Indian and White Worlds; Wyatt, “Native Involvement.”

⁵² Sally Engle Merry argues that post-colonial development efforts have created new “translators” in the form of newly funded human rights lawyers, feminist NGO leaders, development consultants and academics. These people act as “intermediaries who negotiate between foreign donors and the global media, on the one hand, and local communities and their vernaculars on the other,” Merry, “Transnational Human Rights,” 42. See also Geertz, Negara.

⁵³ His portrait of post-Oslo civil society activities “illustrate[s] different modes of foreign engagement in local conflict and complicate[s] the fashionable characterization of NGO workers as pawns of Western imperialism,” pointing “instead to their dangerous in-betweenness,” Bornstein, “In-Betweenness,” 179. With Oslo “a new in-between state was created,” he writes. “Tension emerged between the goals and interests of multiple outsiders and of multiple insiders” (195).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 178 & 195.

“their efforts must serve both sides, and that puts them in a dangerous and precarious place in which they risk appearing to betray one side or the other by facilitating even partly an agenda they oppose.” One reason for this is that “those in-between...pull people into relationships of often misunderstood and unequal reciprocity. These bonds of presumed reciprocity can be hegemonic in that they cement coalitions around the goals of ruling elites, or they can be counter-hegemonic in that they challenge or curb the arbitrary power [of] those ruling elite[s].” Often, he concludes, “they do both.”⁵⁶

My own research on a discrete field of governance, which was shaped by the emergence of environmentalist movements, the placement (and discovery) of aquifers, the proliferation of synthetics and chemical fertilizers as well as the shifting of residents’ sense of “basic needs,” favors Bornstein’s insistence that “not all projects are the same.”⁵⁷ In attempting to prevent sewage from flowing into the mountain aquifer, into agricultural lands and across the Green Line, for example, mediators like Majdi and Tarek are called upon not only to appear as sincere partners for “peace” but, increasingly, for peace that is “environmentally sound” as well. This made it necessary, or at least wise, to become conversant in waste management’s lingua franca at the time.

Following construction of infrastructure by following the pipes and sewage flows in real time necessitated the reorientation of my ethnographic focus from the effects infrastructure’s operation has had on the broader population (e.g. people’s relative

⁵⁶ Ibid., 195.

⁵⁷ Contrary to the common critique, he asserts that “many projects under the PA were, in fact, driven by people who were decent translators, who understood popular needs for services and infrastructure, and who helped enrich Palestinian lives through things like health care while wrestling with the sometimes complimentary, and sometimes contrary interests of foreigners.” In-betweenness, he argues, “is not a social good or a social bad in and of itself,” Bornstein, “In-Betweenness,” 195.

politicization, income, access to resources) to the experiences of its managers. My research thus challenged the assumption that the ethnonational or institutional authorship of infrastructure—and therefore the extent to which one institution was using another as its ideological “vessel”—could be known prior to understanding the practices that went into its design, plan and establishment.

Exchanges in Baqa, for example, revealed competing and unstable ideas of materiality among those planning the project: ideas about the significance of “natural,” nonhuman forces and their relation to politics, for example. But among the limits of *only* following “the thing” were that dynamics such as those I witnessed in Baqa would have dropped out of the analytical picture because they involved exchanges that may lead “nowhere” — that is, exchanges whose material effects will not be easily traceable in the form that infrastructures take.

I propose that we consider thinking about “PA infrastructures” as material, or in many cases not-yet-material, objects of governance through which the practices of performing autonomous Palestinian governance in the post-Oslo period are brought to light—including their incoherencies, forms of dissimulation, their assembling of networks human and nonhuman, their unstable material ideologies and their messy involvements with institutions and individuals “foreign” and “domestic.”

If projects like the Baqa wastewater network end up being built, will that affirm the argument that the PA is a subcontractor for occupation? The answer is both yes and no. It is yes because international law does stipulate that the occupying power is responsible for the welfare of the population it occupies, and the PA’s involvement

relieves Israel of much of that burden. The answer is no in the sense that the subcontracting metaphor, like the focus on infrastructure's material effects, renders invisible the rich and complicated daily work of development's "cultivation." That cultivation, in the case of large parts of occupied Palestine, constitutes the daily work of an employer (and governing body) upon which at a large percentage of the population now relies. If we are not careful, the subcontracting metaphor can discourage us from examining the ways in which Palestine's post-Oslo infrastructure managers have both been subject to, and shapers of, the changing nature and structures of the occupation under which they live.

The Road Ahead: Environmentalism, Climate Change and the Anthropocene in Palestine

I initially chose waste management as an iconic, though not necessarily unique, realm of service provision and infrastructural development. At the same time, my fieldwork demanded I consider waste management in twenty-first century Palestine along a key, additional axis. That was the axis of environmental protection. The signing of the Oslo Accords coincided first with the rise of the emergence of the idea of the environment and its concomitant need to be protected from waste, and then with the rise of "self-conscious discussions of global warming in the public realm" that took place in the 1980s and 1990s.⁵⁸ Though I began to address this axis in my Introduction and select chapters, I look forward to layering my argument more explicitly so as to address the extent to which waste as an environmental problem is a infrastructural substrate unique among substrates like electricity, roads, water or telecommunications. I would also have

⁵⁸ Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History," 198.

liked to use my ethnographic material to further explore the relevance *in Palestine* of the argument that the environment has undergone what is called a “securitization.” What is the relationship between concerns about environmental pollution from municipal or industrial wastes, on the one hand, and the idea that environmental protection is a matter of security, on the other? How do preexisting local ideas about individual or collective security vis-a-vis occupation intersect with the much newer idea of environmental security? My aim would be to engage with the recently proliferating literature on the Anthropocene to explore these questions. In that literature questions about the local, municipal scales of governance so long important to scholars studying the state’s relationship to population and the environment⁵⁹ have in many cases given way to interest in the scales of international treaties, inequalities among states and the philosophical and material relationship between the history of humanity as a species and the natural history of the planet.⁶⁰ What lessons does the ethnography of a setting like the West Bank have to offer anthropologies of waste, of governance, of environmentalism and now of the Anthropocene?

In this dissertation I pointed to the relationship between the material transformations that took place in the mid-twentieth century and the emergence of the object of government, of research and of public concern that came to be called the environment. As I develop this project into a book, I hope to integrate a more in-depth

⁵⁹ An exception is the work of West, et. al., “Global Assemblages,” who argue that “the Anthropocene is an epoch characterized not only by the anthropogenic dominance of the Earth’s ecosystems but also by new forms of environmental governance and institutions” (341).

⁶⁰ See for example Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History.”

discussion of the *materials* that made up the wastes that piled up on the surface of the territory being governed and that percolated into its subterranean waters below. This will allow me to spend more time on how the engineers and experts with whom I worked made decisions about the technical specifications of the infrastructures they planned, built and managed. That, in turn, will help me clarify the relationship between their decisions, their training (usually abroad), and the parameters they encountered once they entered the chambers of governance in a Palestine still under military occupation. This would offer a comparative perspective for understanding the shape of Palestine's environmental governance in relation to circulating forms of expertise and technology that extend Palestine's connectedness far beyond its prison-like boundaries. A more detailed investigation of the materials, technologies and forms of expertise that have become "Palestinian" in the post-Oslo period would also offer an understanding of "the phantasmatic entanglement of materialities"⁶¹ that makes up what I call the phantom state.

Recent understandings of climate change among experts across the globe have quickened the perceived rate of environmental degradation as it was initially framed after the 1970s. The temporality of the Palestinian environmentalist's anxieties about the condition of the West Bank and Gaza has been compressed: *change is already underway*. The problem of what to do with ever-accumulating piles and pools of waste becomes all the more urgent. Crucially, like the sense of instability vis-a-vis the central locus of service provision, the feeling of a lack of control over one's surroundings has been a

⁶¹ Navarro-Yashin, *The Make Believe Space*.

constant feature of the Palestinian experience since the early twentieth century. Ramallah-based writer Raja Shehadeh captures that sense with regard to the settlements that have continued to be built since 1967 in *Palestinian Walks*:

Ever since I learned of the plans to transform our hills being prepared by successive Israeli governments, which supported the policy of establishing settlements in the Occupied Territories, I have felt like one who has contracted a terminal disease. Now when I walk in the hills I cannot but be conscious that the time when i will be able to do so is running out.⁶²

Shehadeh describes the widely shared sense that forces larger than oneself or one's own government can and will likely radically, irreversibly and destructively transform one's landscape and, in many cases, one's own land. Uncontrollable, irreversible, change, is happening in Palestine at all times. How does the sense that time is always-already possibly running out commingle with, challenge or transform a similar sense derived from the knowledge that annual temperatures are rising, rainfall is decreasing and Palestine's clean water sources are as a result being reduced every year? How, in other words, does a place always-already in crisis encounter a new type of crisis that operates at new scales? In the burgeoning literature on the Anthropocene, what can the case of Palestine tell us about experiences of the *awareness* of living in the Anthropocene differ from one socio-political and geographical context, and why? How might a sense of a lack of control over the future among communities disenfranchised by poverty, displacement or occupation be impacted by vanishing water resources, rising sea

⁶² Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, xvi.

levels or other large-scale, regional developments known now to be produced by this phenomenon called climate change?

As I develop this project, I hope to better demonstrate how Palestine can help shed light on how emergent climate change anxieties are shaping the forms, modes and parameters of what is thinkable for regimes that require the approval of actors outside their territorial boundaries in order to sustain their modes of rule. The PA is kept afloat almost exclusively by international aid. The PA is in this sense but an extreme version of many other governments in the Middle East and across the world. Conditional aid's effects have long been discussed by scholars of development. More recently, consideration of the effects of international agencies' environmentalisms on local life ways in the "Global South" have been added to these discussions. Conservation, afforestation, and other environmentalist schemes have changed communities' ways of life, their livelihoods, and have led to new mobilizations, alliances and frictions. My research can contribute to both sets of conversations—about international development and about "traveling" environmentalisms—in discussing how government-led, environmentalist schemes that are dependent on international aid help shape bureaucratic cultures, relationships between national and local governments, and the possibilities for political authority. In particular, it can shed light on the dynamics in places where the survival of the governing structures implementing the schemes is felt to depend on international recognition of their successful implementation.

I would also like to deepen my discussion of the ways in which discourses around environmental security and now climate change adaptation in Palestine are entangled

with discourses around the risk of political collapse.⁶³ The PA as I encountered it was characterized by a drive for technical advancement and a drive to distinguish the landscape it governs from the governmental landscapes that preceded it, creating a periodizing chasm between the pre- and the post-Oslo periods. This placed waste management along the PA's modernizing, developmental path. More recently, it also made it a tactic for adapting to decreased water quantities resulting from climate change. Since the same developmental path (and waste management technologies) was also oriented toward gaining international recognition of state readiness, failing to adequately manage waste could also be perceived to be contributing to a possibly impending PA collapse. Environmental protection from pollution and statecraft were in this sense braided together. Concerns about climate change are also tethered to statecraft in that Palestine-based experts argue that the Israeli occupation—and, by association, the absence of Palestinian sovereignty—has made Palestinians *unnaturally* more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.⁶⁴

At the same time, the temporalities demanded by the management of each problem—environmental degradation and state recognition or political collapse—also differed in important ways. Environmental degradation to a point that Palestine would become uninhabitable for humans, for example, was often imagined as so far off as to seem irrelevant to current governmental decisions. Like the temporal frame that has been intensified by climate change, environmental protection can present those working on it

⁶³ See also Limbert, "The Senses of Water," 37 and Rudiak-Gould, "Climate Change and Accusation."

⁶⁴ See for example Mimi, Mason and Zeitoun, "Climate Change."

with “a future beyond the grasp of historical sensibility.”⁶⁵ Political collapse, on the other hand, could be imagined as a event that could occur from one day to the next. Donors could stop funding the PA, as they had done after Hamas’ victory in 2006. The Israeli military could at any moment lay siege to all main cities, reactivate checkpoints and roadblocks, stage mass arrests, kill thousands of people and disarm the PA police and security forces. The Palestinian population, for its part, could take up arms against the PA in a broad-based effort at civil disobedience. A coup was never outside the imagined realm of possibility. In this context environmental risk in the form of a slowly polluted aquifer 300 meters below ground was less of a priority than was political risk. The two types of risk were perceived as relatively distinct.

The opposite, however, was sometimes equally true. The stakes of environmental pollution were at times during my research perceived to be more urgent than were those of the annual ebbs and flows in the political climate in the West Bank and Gaza. Scholars have argued that most societies are unable to plan for a future fifty or more years ahead because of the very short-term nature of politics.⁶⁶ In this sense most societies resemble the way Palestine is typically understood; that is, as a place beholden to the temporalities of “politics” defined by high-level negotiations and uprisings. Palestine is therefore not as unique as one might think.

But the engineers with whom I spent time were planning *most often* for the future fifty or more years ahead, while worrying less, it seemed, about the politics of the

⁶⁵ Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History,” 197.

⁶⁶ Flannery, The Weather Makers.

moment. They were especially concerned that the impacts of daily waste dumping could be producing *permanently* negative effects on the environment in general and on their small water resources in particular. Misplaced wastes could continue to affect Palestinians into such a long-term future that multiple political crises could be imagined to have occurred and have been resolved in the interim. It is in this context that PA decisions to prioritize construction of large-scale sanitation infrastructures to protect the environment for an imagined longer term can be better understood. Prioritization of infrastructures, for example to “house” all the population’s waste, was chosen over “modernization” of the current population. The latter would have involved redistributing limited donor funds to the rewriting of school textbooks and curricula to emphasize individual responsibility for the environment, to mass recycling campaigns, enforcement of anti-littering and anti-dumping laws and possibly to greater coordination with the Israeli military. Relatively little effort was made in any of these directions. For example, little was done to persuade those communities whose land was being expropriated for landfills or treatment plants of the science behind the reasons for doing so.

As in the case of Ramallah’s planned landfill, the PA sought to perform expropriations for what it argued was the national public good. PA bureaucrats were acutely aware that these attempts were introduced into contested social fields in which expropriation had long been associated with Israeli rule. Moving to expropriate land without persuasion of the collective value of doing so therefore risked political havoc for the PA. Expropriation inevitably brought that havoc upon PA bureaucrats as residents rejected the legitimacy and the benefit of the PA’s policies and the PA along with them.

The intersection, overlap and tension between the risks of environmental degradation and risk of political collapse are thus aspects of my research that lend themselves to further ethnographic and theoretical investigation. The temporal aspect of these intersections, overlaps and tensions will offer an especially promising avenue of investigation as I further develop this research. Climate change in a Middle East that was recently listed as the world's most water-insecure region is rapidly compressing both the time frame and the scales with which experts in the region pursue the placement of abject materials that remain *matter with nowhere to go*.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The report was published by the World Resources Institute. Thomson Reuters Foundation, "Israel to face extremely high water stress by 2040."

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