



Routledge Studies on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

EMPLACED RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

THE CASES OF HEBRON, SILWAN AND AL-ARAQIB

Marion Lecoquierre



Emplaced resistance in Palestine and Israel

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict gravitates constantly around the question of territorial control, notably because of the settler-colonial principle present at the core of the Zionist project. Acknowledging that space is a central tool of domination used by the Israeli authorities, this volume shows how it can also represent both a resource for and an outcome of protest, with an emphasis placed on the way it is used and produced through practices of resistance by subaltern groups.

The research relies on a comparative approach, drawing on data collected in the course of fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2016 in Palestine and Israel. It focuses on three “sites of contention,” which include the H2 area in Hebron (the occupied Old City, under Israeli authority south of the West Bank), the “core” neighbourhoods of Silwan (Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan, East Jerusalem) and the unrecognized Bedouin village of Al-Araqib, in the Negev desert (south of Israel). Through these three case studies, the book tackles different strategies that engage with the materiality of space, place, sense of place, territory, landscape, network and scale, showing the mobilization of a real “spatial repertoire” of contention. The different regimes of control enforced in the three sites give rise to strategies of resistance that are first and foremost *emplaced*, i.e. rooted in the local.

Providing an original comparison between flashpoints of the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli politics of dispossession and expulsion, the book is a key resource for scholars and readers interested in political geography, political science, sociology and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Marion Lecoquierre is a French geographer, holding a PhD in Political and Social Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence (Italy). She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki and specializes in the local practices and representations connected to the territorial struggle in Palestine and Israel.

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To my parents

Contents

List of Illustrations
Acknowledgments

Introduction

- 1 Three sites of contention - Al-Araqib, Silwan, Hebron
- 2 Inhabiting - The value of presence and the right to place
- 3 Planning - Conceiving and building space: A power game
- 4 Protesting - Disrupting hegemony in the public space and sphere
- 5 Sanctifying - Producing a sacred geography
- 6 Globalizing - International networks of solidarity and advocacy.

Conclusion: emplaced territorialization

Index

List of Illustrations

Figures

- 1.1 Localization of the three sites of contention.
- 1.2 Map of the unrecognized villages and Bedouin towns in the Negev desert.
- 1.3 The southern part of Al-Araqib.
- 1.4 The encampment of the residents after the destruction of 2014.
- 1.5 The cemetery of Al-Araqib seen from the south.
- 1.6 The land around the cemetery was ploughed in July 2014.
- 1.7 Map of Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan.
- 1.8 Regimes of closure and control within H2.
- 1.9 Blocked roads in H2.
- 2.1 Graffiti in Wadi Hilwe Street “Here is Silwan.”
- 2.2 Two young men write “Hebron” and “Palestine” on a wall during the Open Shuhada Street demonstration.
- 2.3 The official signs “Silwan” and “City of David.”
- 2.4 Renaming the houses in Silwan and designing the urban landscape.
- 2.5 Demonstration renaming Shuhada Street in “Apartheid Street.”
- 2.6 The stencils “Fight Ghost Town,” “Welcome to Apartheid Street” and “Zionism is racism.”
- 2.7 The sign “Arabs are prohibited, this is apartheid.”
- 2.8 The “sumud festival” in Al-Bustan tent.
- 2.9 “Day of fun” organized for the children of Tal Rumeida, at the YAS centre.
- 3.1 Two examples of the military urbanism and the policy of separation in Hebron.
- 3.2 Checkpoint 56, main connection between Bab al-Zawiya and Shuhada Street, seen from H1.
- 3.3 The same checkpoint in 2017.
- 4.1 Clashes in Bab al-Zawiya, with the erection of a barricade.
- 4.2 Protesters put flags on the fence blocking the access to Shuhada Street from the market during the Open Shuhada Street demonstration.
- 4.3 The Palestinian police dispersing the clashes after the Open Shuhada Street demonstration.
- 4.4 Friday prayer in front of the Al-Bustan tent.

- 4.5 Sunday demonstration of Al-Araqib inhabitants at the Lehavim junction.
- 4.6 The girls of the village and their relatives from Rahat animate the Sunday demonstration chanting slogans.
- 4.7 Demonstration in front of the JNF in Jerusalem.
- 5.1 The vicinity between the cemetery and living quarters in Al- Araqib prior to the 2014 destruction.
- 5.2 A poster for the 2014 Shuhada Street demonstration in Hebron showing the connection between land and resistance through the depiction of a tree.
- 5.3 A picture that circulates on social media, showing Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi as a tree rooted in the earth, making a sign of victory.
- 5.4 Inscriptions “I love you Silwan” on a mosaic made by children at the entrance of the Maada centre.
- 5.5 A graffiti in Al-Bustan with the word “prepare” written across a map of a unified Palestine.
- 6.1 One of the signs put by the Jewish community of Hebron in Shuhada Street.
- 6.2 Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi and Haia Noach present the situation of Al-Araqib to a group of visitors.
- 6.3 Aziz shows the visitors the site of the village and the remaining pipes and cables.

Tables

- 0.1 The triplicity of space according to Henri Lefebvre.
- 6.1 Lefebvre’s triad with, completed by the additional element that is proposed: the connectivity between places and people, the making of networks.
- 7.1 Synthesis of the sites of contention’s profiles.

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Introduction

“We will stay here as long as thyme and olives.”

This expression, along with some variations, is oftentimes heard within struggling Palestinian communities such as those studied in this volume, located in East Jerusalem (Silwan), the Palestinian territories (Hebron) and Israel (Al-Araqib). All three sites are places of heightened tension and confrontation between communities submitted to various forms of control on the part of Israeli authorities, who implement those constraints under different guise: as the occupying power in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and as an ethnocratic State in the Naqab/Negev desert.

The expression encapsulates various elements that represent the starting point of this research, notably an interest for the articulation – and more precisely the dialectic relationship – between spatialities and contention in a repressive context. It is often used in situations of struggle, as a slogan during demonstrations or punctuating everyday discourses about hardships and injustice, manifesting a will to stand up and fight.

Oriental thyme (*za'atar*, in Arabic) and olives (*zeitun*) are symbols commonly considered as metaphors for the Palestinian identity and culture: they designate at the same time a specific type of landscape, a strong relationship to the land, as well as elements of the traditional economy and local food regime. They also incarnate values considered as fundamental for the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation, such as steadfastness and “rootedness” in one’s land. The expression also evokes the Palestinian repertoire of contention and illustrates how it draws on spatial elements. In this book, I will specifically explore how the communities in the three places evoked above oppose and seek to bypass the tight control of space imposed by the Israeli authorities and in doing so produce, reconfigure and re-shape space.

Before focusing on the strategies and tactics of resistance deployed, it is necessary to unpack the Israeli politics of territorial control. Indeed, resistance and domination are “always implicated in, and mutually constitutive of one another”, thus creating an “endless circulations of power” (Sharp et al., 2000: 1).

Looking at a map of the region today means acknowledging the fragmentation of the Palestinian territory under the pressure of growing Israeli settlements and enduring military occupation (Taraki, 2008). In this splintered space (Gregory, 2005), Palestine appears to be increasingly reduced to an archipelago of separated and isolated enclaves corresponding to the Gaza Strip and the main Palestinian urban areas in the West Bank (Bousac, 2009; Ghandour-Demiri, 2011; Mackey, 2009).

Space has been and remains the primary and central stake of the Israeli policies and the Palestinian struggle. The control and ownership of land have indeed been the sinews of war in the region since the Zionist project encouraged Jewish immigration to Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century, targeting Palestinian land in order to allow for the creation of a Jewish State

(Herzl, 1896; Laqueur, 1972). Space in historic Palestine represents a palimpsest of meanings and representations connected to different religions, cultures, but also political projects and perspectives. A sacred land for the three monotheistic religions, it has been claimed as a Jewish national homeland by the Zionist enterprise, which strengthened in the process the Palestinian national identity that emerged gradually during the British Mandate (Khalidi, 1997; Muslih, 1987).

The slow dispossession of the indigenous Palestinian population and the increasing power and organization of the Jewish settlers led to resistance but also riots, the main ones being in 1929 and between 1936 and 1939. The fight between the two parties intensified after the creation of Israel in 1948 and the war between the newly created State of Israel and the neighbouring Arab States. Since then, the central concern of the Hebrew State has been to ensure the recognition of its existence and sovereignty, but also to extend its territory, ensuring continuity and a minimal Arab presence on the controlled land in order to preserve its exclusive Jewish character. For the Palestinians, the stake has been to have their rights in the region recognized in front of the partition of historical Palestine and the massive expulsions of Palestinians organized during the 1948 Nakba (Morris, 1989; Pappé, 2006), and eventually to obtain the recognition of the State of Palestine, declared in Algiers in 1988.

The three main topics critical to the peace negotiations, namely, the status of Jerusalem, the existence and extension of Jewish settlements within the West Bank and the return of the Palestinian refugees, have each a direct connection with the control of space, from either a demographic, strategic or symbolic point of view. The concerns of Israel regarding its sovereignty and security continue to be associated to expansionist policies that aim at making the control of the Hebrew State over the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) irreversible. Consequently, the territorial problematic faced by the Palestinians still centres on the obtention of a State and the recognition of their rights over the land. Despite a seemingly fixed *status quo*, the situation continues to evolve on the ground, with an ever-increasing Israeli pressure over the Palestinian space. The Oslo Accords (1993–1995), once a symbol of hope, have enabled a severe fragmentation of the West Bank, and ultimately a strengthening of the Israeli control over Palestinian spaces and lives. Subsequently, the measures taken by Israel during and after the second Intifada, with its network of walls and checkpoints, have systematically targeted and restrained Palestinian freedom of movement and have further undermined the very possibility to build a viable State. Finally, the expansion of the settlements and the power of their representatives on the Israeli political scene and within governmental coalitions is making an annexation of parts of the West Bank a probable development in years to come. The religious dimension has also gained momentum on the political scene for parts of both populations, based on a similar rhetoric on the sacred character of the land, given by God to his faithful to defend and to hold. On the Jewish-Israeli side, this dimension expands with messianic religious Zionism (Inbari, 2009), over-represented among the settlers installed in the West Bank and in Gaza before the 2005 evacuation. Among the Palestinians it has gained momentum through the mobilization of Islamic groups such as Hamas, Hizb ut-Tahrir or the Islamic Jihad.

Space thus appears as a central element for the balance of power in the region. It is instrumentalized in various ways to enforce the Israeli domination, but questions of territorial sovereignty, property, land occupation and meaning of space remain central points of focus underpinning the Palestinian struggle as well, relevant not only to the political establishment but also to the Palestinian population in general.

The research presented here stems from an interrogation: considering the centrality of space in the Israeli strategies of control, what is the role of space in the strategies of resistance? In a settler-colonial regime that now takes on two main forms, ethnocracy and occupation – the latter itself declined in various forms in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem or the Golan Heights – who produces space and how? If there is a clear imbalance of power on the ground in favour of the State of Israel, which managed to establish its political hegemony over the region, this book sheds light on the spatial dimension of practices and representations in the Palestinian popular struggles, and the way they manage to oppose or bypass this hegemonic territoriality.

Israeli hegemony and spatial control: systems and regimes of domination

The control of space in the region largely depends on Israel, which holds a position of hegemonic domination both within its official borders, with a political system favoring a majority over various minorities, and in the Palestinian territories, as the occupying power.¹ In both cases, the Israeli hegemony touches all sectors of life: political, economic, social, cultural... It is installed and maintained through legislation, administration, education, military and police actions, but also narratives, language, myths, diplomacy, etc., thus associating the Gramscian definition of hegemony – a domination imposed through the internalization of dominant cultural traits and social values (Gramsci, 1971) – and its geopolitical meaning, as a process of coercion and domination imposed by a State over a system or other territories (Gregory et al., 2009: 327).

The territorial dimension of the settler-colonial model

This hegemony can be tackled through the analytical framework of settler colonialism, often mobilized to study the Israeli case. Although it is still deemed by some to be controversial, biased or downright insulting, a solid strand of scholarship – including Israeli scholarship – has long tackled the Zionist project as colonial and the Israeli State as an occurrence of settler colonialism (see e.g. Rodinson, 1973; Kimmerling, 1983, 2001; Ram, 1993; Wolfe, 2006; Collins, 2011; Veracini, 2006; Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006; Yiftachel, 2002, 2008, 2009). Baruch Kimmerling for example designates the Israeli society as an “active immigrant settler society,” where the cultural identity of the majority is largely characterized by two pillars: “militarism” and “Jewishness” (Kimmerling, 2001: 2).

The model of settler colonialism applies to societies that colonize a land with an aim to stay; the colonizers establish a “new political orders for themselves” (Veracini, 2013: 313), as they often seek to establish a new, autonomous and in some ways ideal society (Veracini, 2010: 54). In order to establish their sovereignty over the acquired territory and ensure their property of the land, the settlers drive out the indigenous population, following what P. Wolfe calls a “logic of elimination,” which can be physical, material or symbolic (Wolfe, 2006: 387). This leads to “settler-colonial conflicts,” which find their roots in an opposition between the natives and the immigrant population, as the latter settles on the land, bringing about the dispossession and evictions of the indigenous population (Mitchell, 2000).

The term “conflict” applied to the settler-colonial dynamics opposing Israel to the Palestinians is often considered as being controversial for the equivalence it could imply between the “parties” involved, in terms of power, claims and status, with the risk – or the aim – of watering down the issues of injustice and depoliticizing the Palestinian struggle (de Jong, 2018). Here, I

will use the term merely as a description of a social and political situation of opposition: the “conflict” is characterized by asymmetrical power relations between an occupier – the State of Israel – and an occupied people – the Palestinians.

The model of the settler-colonial state is relevant here for two more reasons. First, it prompts the researchers to think and analyze under one paradigm the dynamics of control and domination at work in the Palestinian territories and within Israel proper. The interdependence, or rather the interpenetration, between the Israeli and Palestinian systems, the intertwined economies, topped by an overarching Israeli authority articulated to Palestinian institutions, support the importance of an integrated approach. It also allows to avoid the pitfall of exceptionalism often attached to the studies of the region, and the addition of artificial frontiers on top of those (numerous) already existing on the ground.

The settler-colonial paradigm puts the stress on the issue of land control and land ownership, as the settler-colonial regimes rely on a “deliberate strategy of ethnic migration and settlement that aims to alter the country’s geographic and ethnic structure” (Kedar, 2001: 925). The settler societies, which can be exemplified by the cases of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, are usually constituted by different social groups: the “founders,” “immigrants” and “natives” (Ibid.). The settler societies organize on the basis of a “grammar of race” (Wolfe, 2006: 387), thus imposing not only an “ethno-class segregation” but also an ethno-class division of space (Yiftachel, 1997: 506) creating particular land regimes that allow the dominant groups to control the territory and its resources. In the case of Israel, the 1948 war, which provided for the flight and expulsion of some 700 000 Palestinians by Jewish militias (a period named the “Nakba” by Palestinians, meaning “catastrophe”), was the founding event that allowed the newly created Israeli State to seize land and subsequently to change its property status via the enactment of various laws (see e.g. Morris, 1989; Pappé, 2006, and the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine; see also Chapter 1 in this volume).²

The construction of Israel was indeed based on a strategic process of land acquisitions, and confiscations, modifications of land status (Rouhana & Sabbagh-Khoury, 2014) that all aimed at ensuring the State’s territorial control, delineating a continuous territory where a Jewish State could be created and within which the Jewish character of the State could be protected in the long run (Kimmerling, 1983). The control of space thus represents a political project (Dieckhoff, 1989) that draws on political, religious, strategic and security rationales – a project that is still enforced through various long-term strategies (Falah, 2005) and exclusionary practices (Falah, 2003).

The Israeli control of space is commonly associated with its most visible manifestation, the military occupation of the Palestinian territories. However, it must also be considered within the borders of the State, over its own citizens, as well as under the different guise it can take on: not only material, but also administrative and legal, symbolic, linguistic, etc. Israel indeed put in place a real *system* of control (Kimmerling, 1989), meaning it is intentional, organized, with methods and strategies answering to long-term political objectives. Summed up in harsh terms they generally boil down to one principle: ensuring that the Israeli sovereignty applies over a territory as vast as possible in what is considered as the promised land of Israel, with as small an Arab population as possible living on the controlled territory.

The Israeli system of control – or “matrix of control” (Halper, 2000, 2004) – managed to compartmentalize the territory and divide the Palestinians by establishing different types of

regimes of control. M. Klein for example argues that Israel divided the Palestinian population into “groups” on territorial and legal bases. He identifies five “groups:” Israeli Palestinians, Jerusalem Palestinians, Palestinians living in the strip between the “security barrier” and the Green Line, and the Palestinians living in the West Bank and in Gaza (Klein, 2010: 96). Other distinct “groups” could be added: the population from the occupied Golan Heights, the Bedouins, both in Israel and the West Bank, and Palestinians living in areas A, B and C in the West Bank, which are far from equivalent to one another.

Israel has thus produced – and is producing – a multiplicity of territorial regimes of control that all together form a system, made up of material infrastructures but also of “invisible microgeographies of power, surveillance and control” (Soja, 2010: 41). It creates an archipelago, or a mosaic of territories, some more defined than others, some more enclaved than others, which are all managed according to similar basic principles, and remain articulated to one another and tightly interdependent despite their fragmentation. Comparing cases from across the Green Line helps show these similar logics but also the resulting heterogeneity of the Palestinian lives and space.

Military and civilian occupation of the West Bank: the settlements as facts on the ground

The Israeli spatial control applies to the West Bank, submitted to a continuous military occupation and strengthening process of colonization since 1967. In the aftermath of the 1967 Six Days War, the Israeli forces did not withdraw from the newly conquered territories (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai). If the Sinai was to be returned to Egypt in 1982, the Hebrew State on the contrary consolidated its presence and rule over the other spaces, thus entering a situation of military occupation according to the Hague Convention (“A territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army” art. 42).³ The Israeli occupation, ongoing since 1967, is often considered as having an “exceptional duration” with a direct impact on the application of international law (Roberts, 1990: 44)⁴ as the Law of war considers military occupation as constituting a temporary situation, bound to be resolved through peace negotiations and any agreement that results therefrom. The population of the West Bank settlements is currently around 400 000 people, plus around 300 000 in East Jerusalem.

Beside the military occupation, Israel engaged in an organized and official process of colonization, that has been presented as a “civilian occupation” (Segal & Weizman, 2003): the transfer of Jewish population to the occupied territories and the building of settlements, along the lines of a plan presented soon after the Six Days war by Yigal Allon, the minister of labour. The Allon plan established what would become the guidelines of the Israeli settlement programme over the following years of occupation until today, in terms of arguments, objectives and methods. It laid the ground principles that were then revised and modified with the Sharon and Drobles plans for example (respectively in 1977 and 1979): the preservation of the Jewish nature of the State through demographic engineering (renouncing the most densely populated Palestinian areas, limiting the number of Palestinians who can become Israeli citizens); the necessity for Israel to have “strategic depth,” notably by controlling the Jordan Valley; Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, isolated from its Arab environment; the establishment of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza to ensure “facts on the ground” that would define the future borders of the state and make any territorial swap complicated (Allon, 1976; CIA

Directorate of Intelligence, 1969; Smith, 1976). The similarities between the principles and map proposed then and the current map of the West Bank are striking, showing how those plans have continued to drive the Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories. The “Peace Plan” submitted by the Trump administration in 2020 draws on those same principles and spatial patterns, namely, “the virtual encirclement of West Bank Arabs” (CIA Directorate of Intelligence, 1969).⁵

Large segments of the Israeli population and political spectrum have long refused to engage the term of occupation – or colonization, for that matter –, asserting the legitimacy of the Jewish presence and the Israeli State in the region on political and religious basis. The Israeli control of the Palestinian territory is viewed in this perspective as the logic outcome of several wars won by Israel, which can thus legitimately impose its authority over it as a victor. A result of realpolitik and a dominating military, the Israeli presence in the West Bank is also seen as a necessity to ensure the State’s security and very existence. Another position insists on the land as being “Eretz Israel” – the “Greater Israel” or “whole land of Israel” – given by God to the Jewish people. From this point of view, the Israeli presence in the West Bank – designated as “Judea and Samaria” after the biblical names of the area – is seen as a legitimate integration of those regions within the State, realizing God’s promise and redeeming the land (Friedman, 1989; Morgenstern, 2006).

The administrative fragmentation of the occupied West Bank

Beyond a material presence and intervention on the ground through military and settlers’ presence, the West Bank is also controlled through legal and administrative measures. Along with the other territories occupied by Israel in 1967, it was initially administered by the Israeli Military Governorate. In 1981, the Civil Administration replaced the military government in the West Bank but it continued to depend on the Israeli Defense Ministry and the COGAT (Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories).⁶ The Oslo Accords (also called the Declaration of Principle – DOP) signed in 1993,⁷ completed by Oslo II in 1995,⁸ and the subsequent Gaza-Jericho Agreement,⁹ further modified the administrative structure in the oPt. The Accords formalized the birth of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), distinct from the PLO, and established a five-year transitional period during which the progressive transfer of control from the Israeli army to the PNA should have occurred. The DOP also provided for the transfer of the main Palestinian cities and of some 450 villages to the authority of the PNA and anticipated the future withdrawal of the IDF from the occupied territories.¹⁰

Considered at the time as a sign of hope and as an exceptional step towards peace, the Oslo Accords are now denounced as having paradoxically strengthened the occupation (Rabinowitz, 2005: 507). Following the Oslo Agreement, the West Bank was separated into areas of three types, zones A, B and C. The areas labelled ‘A’ are the main Palestinian cities: Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenine, Qalqiliya and Tulkarem, in which the Palestinian Authority is in charge of security and administration. The area ‘B’ is under mixed authority, with civilian matters being handled by the PNA and security matters by Israel. The populations of the ‘C’ areas are under the authority of the Civil Administration “in matters relating to zoning, construction and infrastructure” (COGAT website¹¹). Even though part of the administration of the West Bank has been formally transferred out of the hands of the IDF, as large areas of the region now depend on the PNA, 60% of the West Bank is still under full Israeli control.¹²

Moreover, even in areas formally under Palestinian authority (area A), the overarching power remains that of Israel, which controls the mobility, but also political and economic matters such as the collection of customs money. Over the years following the Oslo Agreements, the PNA has been undermined by political paralysis, authoritarianism, systemic corruption, but also the policy of “security cooperation” with Israel (Purkiss & Nafi, 2015). In 1994 already, Eyal Benvenisti underlined that the Israeli authorities intended to make the PA “the ‘long arm’ of Israel’s occupation administration” (1994: 299): increasingly, the PNA is seen as being a subcontractor of the Israeli governments and army, and an additional element allowing the Israeli hegemony in the West Bank. The second Intifada has provided the ground for further reinforcing this strategy of “territorial dismemberment” (Falah, 2005: 1341) through the establishment of new means of control and separation such as the “separation wall,” numerous checkpoints, bypass roads, etc.

Israel's internal hegemony: settler colonialism and ethnocracy

The internal functioning of the State of Israel is directly connected to the principles of Zionism and its history as a settler colonial project. Despite plans to create an exclusivist Jewish nation-state, Israel is a multicultural society, composed of a Jewish majority, but with important minorities. Around 20% of Israeli citizens are indeed Palestinians,¹³ often called “Israeli Arabs” in Israel, and “Palestinians from ‘48” in Palestine. Other ethnic minorities composing the Israeli society are for example Armenians, Druses or Circassians. Moreover, the Israeli “majority,” designating the Jewish citizenship, is also heavily stratified internally, with Ashkenazi Jews traditionally forming the State elite and Mizrahi, Orthodox and Ethiopian and Yemeni Jews forming the destitute classes which are commonly discriminated against.

In its Basic Laws – equivalent to a constitution – Israel is defined as being a Jewish and democratic state, a definition that has led to intense political and academic debate about the apparent contradiction opposing those terms, the very nature of the Israeli regime and the status of its non-Jewish citizens. This particular regime has been defined as a form of “diminished democracy” (Smooha, 2002: 477), an “ethnic democracy” (Peled, 1992; Smooha, 1997, 2002), an “ethno-security regime” (Klein, 2010), an “ethnic state” (Rouhana, 1997; Rouhana, 1998; Ghanem, 1998) or an “ethnocracy” (Ganim, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1998; Yiftachel, 1999, 2006; Yiftachel & Ghanem, 2004), this last one being intended as a “distinct regime type that facilitates the expansion of a dominant ethnic nation in a multi-ethnic territory” (Kedar, 2003: 402).

The Israeli regime indeed extends “restricted rights to members of the minority group”, partially integrating them “while conducting a long-term policy of control and supervision that guarantees the preservation of majority dominance and the marginalization of the minority” (Ghanem, 2011: 22). By establishing an “institutionalized ethnic dominance” (Smooha, 1990: 389) and the domination of the majority as a rule, Israel dismisses its minorities as second-class citizens. As citizens of the State, they formally have individual rights, such as the right to vote, but cannot make any claim to equality (Ghanem, 1998; Smooha, 1990).

The legal distinction made in Israel between *citizenship* and *nationality* is central to understand the nature of the regime: the country functions chiefly on the basis of the latter, the population being separated according to their “nationality,” or ethnic group. Israel has been conceived as belonging exclusively to the “Jewish nation,” which includes the Jews from the diaspora, living beyond the borders of the State (see e.g. Handelman, 1994, 1997; Tekiner, 1991). This flawed form of democracy is the product of settler colonialism and a “liberal settler

state” (Robinson, 2013), which continues to engage in “internal colonialism” (Yiftachel, 2008). Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury for example tackle the citizenship granted to the Palestinians within Israel as a “settler-colonial citizenship,” granting some essential rights connected to democratic principles, while ensuring their subjection to the majority (Rouhana & Sabbagh-Khoury, 2014). O. Yiftachel argues that ethnocratic regimes do not meet certain principles specific to democratic regimes, for example the protection of the minorities “against the tyranny of the majority” (Ibid., see also Ganim et al., 1998). The case study of the Bedouins from the Negev desert, developed in this book, is an example of the situation of those minorities who are Israeli citizens.

The hegemony of Israel over the West Bank and within its own borders proceeds from the settler-colonial nature of the State, conceived by and for an ethnic majority, according to two connected principles: ensuring the Jewish character of the land and preserving the Jewish character of the State. As such, it represents a condition to maintain the regimes and various patterns of control created.

Hebron, Al-Araqib, Silwan: three sites of high-stake confrontation

This volume relies on a comparative analysis of the situation in three different places in Israel and Palestine, three sites of contention (see Chapter 1), namely, the old city/H2 area in Hebron, located in the south of the West Bank; the “core” neighbourhoods of Silwan (Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan), in East Jerusalem, and the unrecognized Bedouin village of Al-Araqib, in the Naqab/Negev desert.

The analysis is based on an inductive approach and on original data gathered during fieldwork research conducted between 2011 and 2016.¹⁴ One contribution of this book is undoubtedly that it tackles the question of Palestinian contention in a comparative fashion, cutting across the Green Line, putting in perspective situations usually considered as separated because subjected to different types of authorities (civil and military; Israeli and Palestinian...). However, facts on the ground contradict this neat separation between two distinct territorial entities: as shown above, Israeli interventions have produced a territorial atomization of Palestine, with the division and separation in different entities, submitted to different types of regimes of control, and the isolation of minorities within Israel proper. However, the contacts, mobility, exchange – although strongly asymmetrical and constrained – between Israeli and Palestinian areas remain strong (Latte Abdallah & Parizot, 2011, 2017; Parizot, 2009b, 2009a). This research shows the many convergences existing between these different places in terms of spatial stakes, but also identity claims, issues faced, repertoire of actions mobilized, while highlighting the differences and fragmentation between struggles that are increasingly place-based.

The three places studied have different administrative statuses: the H2 area of Hebron is occupied and under military Israeli authority, Silwan is part of annexed East Jerusalem, and Al-Araqib is located in the south of Israel, its residents being Israeli citizens. These statuses translate on the ground through different patterns of control, in turn giving way to different patterns of contention and spatial repertoires.

All three cases feature colonized, subaltern populations, dominated by the structures of power installed by the settler-colonial Israeli system of control. The Bedouins constitute a minority group inside Israel; being defined as a Jewish State, they represent a minority on several levels,

as Palestinians, as Bedouins and as Muslims. Notwithstanding that they theoretically enjoy the same rights as the Jewish citizens, they are in effect second-class citizens (see e.g. Swirski & Hasson, 2006). In the two other cases, Hebron and East Jerusalem, the Palestinian population is under Israeli occupation. While East Jerusalem is considered by Israel as being part of the Jerusalem municipality, the international community does not recognize the annexation, making Jerusalem *de facto* a divided city (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009; Dumper, 2014; Dumper & Pullan, 2009; Lustick, 1997; Sorkin, 2002). Hebron, located in the West Bank, is also divided into two areas: H1 is under Palestinian authority, while H2, which covers the eastern part of the city, including the old city and the old market, is occupied, with an important population of Israeli Jewish settlers and military (Lecoquierre, 2019).

In all three cases, the local population is subjected to harsh constraints and restrictions. Residents all have a controversial administrative status, as second-rank citizens in the case of the Bedouins, as non-citizens and occupied subjects in the case of the West Bank and as stateless, “permanent residents” in Israel in the case of East Jerusalem, a very limited and constraining status (see, e.g., Rempel 1997; Braverman, 2007; Jefferis, 2012; Volinz, 2020). The residents also all contest, in some ways, the State control, imposed through different institutions and organizations, whether the army, Border Police, Israeli Land Authority, Jewish National Fund, Elad.

These common points have internal nuances, which will have to be taken into consideration and further explored. Among them, I shall pay particular attention to the issues of citizenship, implementation of the law, and participation in the public debate and decision-making process, as well as to the difference in the spatial constraints imposed in these three areas: whereas in Hebron the restrictions are especially targeting access and movement, in East Jerusalem and in the Bedouins’ unrecognized villages, these restrictions have a greater impact on matters of planning and construction, notwithstanding that the residents of East Jerusalem also have to live with very strict rules when it comes to circulation, especially with regards to their absence from the city (Jefferis, 2012).

From control to contention: exploring the spatial dimension of resistance in Israel and Palestine

If space is used as a tool of power and domination by the Israeli authorities to enforce the rule of the majority, what are the possibilities for subaltern groups to appropriate and use space for their own purposes? Within those groups, how do Palestinians (a group that includes the Bedouins) in Israel and in the West Bank use and produce space, how do they engage as spatial actors in a context where space is tightly controlled and seems “locked” (or “frozen,” according to Kimmerling, 1983)? This book looks at how popular struggles challenge the Israeli State’s hegemony over space and “resist forces of marginalization and oppression” (Staeheli, 1994: 394) through specific spatial repertoires.

Despite the Israeli hegemony, the production of space cannot be confiscated, exclusive and unilateral, made only by the majority, for the majority: no regime can totally prevent people from appropriating and producing space, even if only at a local, personal or symbolic level: Henri Lefebvre indeed insists that every society produces, or forges, its own appropriated space through spatial practice (Lefebvre, 1991: 31), but also that to the “violence of power”, answers

the “violence of subversion”, with oppositions, transgressions and struggles fuelled by repressed differences, class struggles or claimed minority rights (Ibid.: 23).

Despite the many constraints, the Palestinians retain their “territorial ability” as individuals (Di Méo, 1998: 8). Beyond the individuals, collectives such as associations, parties, NGOs or institutions also have intentions and capacities, albeit limited and controlled, to create space. Those actors often seek to “create a new territory by challenging existing political structures and geographic patterns” as Hasson observes about the urban movements of resistance in Jerusalem (2001: 41).

This volume concentrates on the role of contention in the production of space, showing how the actors involved in various modalities of resistance in three sites of contention use and produce their environment in material, symbolical and discursive ways, drawing on distinct spatialities and deploying a real “spatial repertoire.”

The empirical data represent the core of this research, advancing a better knowledge of the situation on the ground, of local protests, shedding light on the everyday practices and narratives of a range of actors, and thus allowing for a better understanding of the dynamics of contention in the region. The theoretical dimension of this work focuses chiefly on the interplay between space and contention, and, from a disciplinary point of view, between geography and social movement studies. It focuses on how the use of and the references to space influence the action and narrative of resistance, concentrating principally on the notions of repertoire and framing, two basic dimensions of protest making. This in turn generates new inputs that will allow for a better integration of space into social movements’ studies in general.

A relational approach to the spatialities of contention

The beginning of the years 2000s’ has seen an intense reflection in the field of social movements studies on the spatial dimension of contention. Space had long remained a “silence” (Aminzade et al., 2001), or an “unproblematized background” (Sewell Jr, 2001: 51) in the field, despite the changes that had taken place in other disciplines. This chronic lack of interest was then pointed out as problematic and many authors called for a “geographically sensitive understanding of social movement mobilization” (Miller & Martin, 2000: 3). Increasingly, space has been integrated into studies of contentious movements; it has been established and acknowledged that protest and resistance not only take place *in* space but they also take place *through* space, meaning they are shaped by their inscription in space but also shape – or produce – space, through a wide range of spatial practices, representations and discourses.

An intense interest in the spatiality and spatialities of social movements developed, giving rise to a rich literature on the topic. However, both terms often represent a blind spot of the theoretical and conceptual reflection: maybe because their meaning seems intuitive, the terms are seldom defined. Being at the core of the approach here, it seems important to better grasp their meaning and use. “Spatiality” and “spatialities” often represent convenient synonyms to designate the spatial character or dimension of a practice, situation, process, etc. or the relation to space of a group, an institution or any other type of actors. It allows to introduce the spatial nature of the object at hand, but also to reflect on the general nature of space and its intrinsic connection with human actions as “spatiality cannot be appropriately understood and theorized apart from society and social relationships” (Soja, 1985: 92).

The notion of “spatialities” can designate the spatial dimensions of human actions in a broad

sense, but in the context of the social movement literature, it often corresponds to particular relations to or uses of space tackled through the concepts of place, territory, network and scale, commonly presented as central spatialities (Berdoulay, Da Costa Gomes, & Lolive, 2004; Ettlinger & Bosco, 2004; Leitner, 1997; Miller, 2013; Nicholls, 2011; Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013b; Routledge, 1997; Wilton & Cranford, 2002). I contend that these are better labeled as concepts, or analytical tools; spatialities designate something of a different order, of a more applied nature, directly related to human actions. Spatialities are space passed through the filter of human experiences, practices, imaginations and perceptions; they are human-made, human-thought, and human-felt, born and created in the thick of space, patterns of actions connected to its multiple dimensions. This tight connection to human action – and thus power of acting – makes it a canal for agency. Some authors indeed go as far as defining spatiality as the “spatial dimension of human agency” (Lévy, 2014; Lussault, 2007).

This notion is interesting when associated to the production of space in repressive contexts, agency being the capacity to “make a difference” (Giddens, 1981). The spatial repertoire studied here can indeed be tackled as elements of the actors’ agency, as the capacity to act *on* and *through* space, deploying a range of practices (actions, discourses, representations) that influence, deviate, alleviate or bypass the Israeli territorial hegemony, using and producing space. In order to render this human agency, the spatialities considered here are defined as broad categories around actions and representations: inhabiting, protesting, planning, sanctifying and globalizing, each one being tackled in a chapter of this book. They emphasize the different actors’ tactics and strategies related to space, observed in the three sites of contention, putting the actors’ point of view at the centre of the analysis, considering the process of organization, the meaning given to space and the connection between space and social action (Lévy & Lussault, 2003: 868).

The geographical concepts central to many analysis, namely, place, territory, scale, networks and few others such as regions are often presented as spatialities but also as “notions of space” or “spatial concepts” (Miller & Martin, 2000: 7), “spatial imaginaries” (Davies, 2012: 276) and “geographies” (Brenner, 1997; Keith & Pile, 1997; Routledge, 2015; Sharp et al., 2000). They will here be associated as the analytical tools allowing to explicit the meaning and content of these spatialities. The many studies tackling them as spatialities are often sharp and insightful, but provide only partial accounts of the spatial constitution of the social processes under consideration (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013a: 2). If these concepts are central for the comprehension of the spatial dimension of social phenomena, considering them individually, as isolated, autonomous, and sometimes mutually exclusive elements, eventually limits this very comprehension. Too often, studies of contention – but also geography, in general – are limited by binary conceptions that oppose local and global, space and place, networks and territory (Featherstone 2003: 405). Studies exploring specific concepts are necessary to go in depth in the analysis, to unpack their content, meaning and potential, as well as the way they relate to each other. However, it is essential to reinforce a more integrated approach, to try and bridge the spatialities and concepts in a more organic way. Place, territory, scale, network, regions, landscape, etc. are facets of space bringing forth specific qualities, often connected and even co-present. They shape and constitute the texture of those spatialities, often as a bundle, mixed-up and overlapping, recalling the movement of water evoked in one of Henri Lefebvre’s most striking metaphor to account for the spatialities of social life: “great movements, vast rhythms, immense waves – these all collide and ‘interfere’ with one another; lesser movements, on the

other hand, interpenetrate” (Lefebvre, 1991: 88).

Calls to adopt a more inclusive approach to scrutinize the spatialities of social life, in general, and of contentious movements, in particular, have gained momentum, insisting on the relational dimension existing between the various concepts, advancing reflections and proposing various solutions to overcome the limitations of approaches focused on single dimensions, or facets, of space. Different authors, using different terminologies, have called for the consideration of the human spatiality in all its complexity (see e.g. Jessop et al. 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Miller & Martin 2000; Nicholls et al. 2013a; Paasi 2004; Routledge, 2011). Leitner et al. developed the idea of the “co-implication” of spatialities, insisting on the fact that those various “spatialities” are closely interrelated. This “co-implication” is not presented as a theoretical framework, nor clearly defined. It is used as an analytical and empirical category, a transparent term that is immediately understandable: the different spatialities are linked, complementary and mutually constitutive. After having advocated for a “flat ontology” and the abandonment of scale as a radical sociospatial turn, authors like Brenner eventually acknowledged the importance of the multidimensional character of space, calling for a “more systematic recognition of polymorphy” that is “the organization of sociospatial relations in multiple forms” (Jessop et al. 2008: 389). Miller, in his conclusion of *Spaces of contention* (Nicholls et al., 2013b), underlines the possibilities offered by two approaches: the “TPSN framework” proposed by Jessop and al., based on the idea that territory, places, scales and networks are “mutually constitutive and relationally intertwined” (2008: 389) and the concept of “assemblage”. Originating in Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of “agencement” (1980) to tackle the interconnections between objects and bodies in a complex and fluid system, it is a “concept in translation” (Phillips, 2006) that has been largely reused in social sciences. It was notably re-interpreted in DeLanda’s “A New Philosophy of Society” (2006), and acquired new visibility in geographical approaches (see e.g. Anderson and McFarlane 2011; McFarlane 2009; Davies 2012). An assemblage takes into account the inter-relations existing between various and heterogenous elements, organizing and composing their diversity “into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation” (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011). This is in accordance with the idea of co-implication mentioned above, taking it a step further: not only are those dimensions of space present at the same time, but they are also enmeshed and correlated.

Assemblages account for the multiplicity of interactions and processes between objects (McFarlane, 2011): the idea seems particularly interesting in geography where, even in this type of approach insisting on relationality, spatialities and concepts are often considered as opposed rather than as connected, coordinated or complementary.

Following these debates, the theoretical framework adopted here seeks to integrate these dialectical principles, tackling the human spatialities as a complex, relational, interwoven and ever-changing system of interconnections. I thus engage with the plea of Nicholls, Miller and Beaumont, to “identify the various roles of different spatialities in social movements and how they intersect with one another to affect social movement dynamics” (2013: 12). I will study the spatial repertoire deployed by various actors and the related modalities of production of space relying on a conceptual assemblage constituted inductively, based on the findings of the fieldwork, more likely to embrace the complexity and diversity of the situations considered, associated with the spatialities observed and geographical concepts, both taking in the practices and representations involved.

Complex geographies: Lefebvre, space, power and the production of space

This study also involves a reflection on the nature of space, and on its corollary when tackling human actions, the production of space. The complexity of space has been largely tackled by Henri Lefebvre, a French author who durably marked the way space is conceived and integrated in the study of social phenomena, especially within the American radical scholarship (see e.g. Harvey, 1973; Gottdiener, 1993; Brenner, 2000; Brenner & Elden, 2009; Merrifield, 2006). Although his writings and objects of interest are many, his main contributions are often considered to be the reflection he proposes about space, the production of space and the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968, 1974, 1991, 1996). His book *The Production of Space*, published in France in 1974 and translated in English in 1991, has been widely quoted, studied and criticized. An inspirational read, it retains a large part of opacity due to the wide range and complexity of the author’s references that bring together political philosophy, aesthetics, art, architecture, and often leave parts of the elaboration and interpretation to the reader. In *The Production of Space* Lefebvre develops a “unitary theory of physical, mental and social space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 21). The starting point of his reflection is that “(social) space is a (social) product” (Ibid.: 26), and is composed of three dimensions: the perceived, the conceived and the lived space. By tackling space as a triad, Lefebvre seeks to overcome simplistic dualities and oppositions that doom binary models.

The spatial practice (or “perceived space”), corresponds to the space of everyday life, of people’s mobility, centred on the domestic space as well as places of work and leisure; it encompasses the daily routines and urban reality as a whole (Merrifield, 1993: 524). The “conceived” or “conceptualized” space corresponds to the space “dominant in a society” (Lefebvre, 1991: 39), linked to the abstract and technical organization of space, produced according to an intellectual design by planners, technocrats and so on. The last constitutive dimension of space is the “space of representation” – the “social” or “lived” space – which draws on qualitative elements: the symbols and images associated to space, and projected onto it by those who inhabit or seek to describe it (Ibid.: 39) (see Table 0.1).

Table 0.1 The triplicity of space according to Henri Lefebvre (1991, see notably pp. 11, 21, 33, 38, 39, 45; see also Merrifield, 1993)

<i>Perceived space</i> <i>Spatial practice</i> <i>Physical</i>	<i>Conceived space</i> <i>Representation of space</i> <i>Mental</i>	<i>Lived space</i> <i>Representational space</i> <i>Social</i>
Practiced Appropriated space of the routine, everyday life (p. 38), connected to “particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (p. 33)	Designed Dominant, abstract space of the “experts” objectified representation of the world by scientists, planners, architects... (p. 38) that reproduces the established order, draw on ideology and knowledge (p. 45)	Imagined Space associated to images and symbols, dominated and passively experienced (p. 39), qualitative, fluid and dynamic. Connected to vicinity and cosmological representations or interpretations (p. 45)

This definition of space as a triplicity has been widely used in the literature, often in a summarized way, as the various categories can be difficult to grasp, counter-intuitive or “tantalizingly vague” (Merrifield, 1993: 524) and some of the equivalence (that between spatial practice and physical space notably) are not always explicit.

This conception of space and the related concept of production of space are both heavily informed by Lefebvre’s Marxist frame of reference, largely focused on economic modes of production and reproduction and the impact of capitalism and State coercion on everyday life. This perspective can be relevant in the context of Israel and Palestine, where the political mechanisms of control often intersect with class and ethnic stratifications and draw heavily on the neoliberal doctrine. This is however not the object of this book, where I concentrate on the social and political aspect of the process, also at the core of Lefebvre’s work: he indeed argues that the production of space is a social necessity, instrumental for groups, classes or other human communities to constitute and define themselves and each other as subjects (Lefebvre, 1991: 416). It represents a decisive test, a “trial by space” (Ibid.). E. Soja agrees with Lefebvre on the fundamental and even ontological nature of this process, considering that “to be alive is to participate in the social production of space, to shape and be shaped by a constantly evolving spatiality which constitutes and concretizes social action and relationship” (Soja, 1985: 90).

The production of space is seldom a core point of focus in the study of protest, but the work of Lefebvre is regularly invoked to study the relationships of power, as it touches to both the sides of constraint and of protest. The rich and erudite work of Lefebvre indeed directly tackles this question, often addressing social dynamics, oppression and hegemony, as well as contention. His analysis encourages protests, revolts and revolutions, considering that subversion – including under its violent form – is a necessary answer to the “violence of power” (Ibid.: 23). While he underlines how space can be used by dominant authorities and can be a tool of political hegemony, he also hints at the importance of space for political struggles, affirming that space becomes “the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles” (Ibid.: 411).

The process of space production is often invoked to stress the power of the States over their citizens, each State being in charge of the material dimension of the lived environment through planning, of the elaboration and implementation of additional constraints that regulate it, through legislation, policing and sometimes direct, physical coercion. Hubbard and Sanders for example confront the “ordered” spaces of the capitalist State in the UK to the space of the prostitutes, lived through their bodies, according to the Lefebvrian definition of space (Hubbard & Sanders, 2003). In the context of Israel-Palestine, some examples calling in Lefebvre can also be mentioned: Maha Samman for example relies on Lefebvre’s theoretical framework to study the strategies of domination of Israel over the colonized space (Samman, 2013). Focusing on the specific example of Ma’ale Adumim, a West Bank colony located East of Jerusalem, Marco Allegra studies how the establishment of settlements relates to the general process of Israeli State building as a “production of territory” (Allegra, 2013: 504, 512). Yacobi underlines how the Israeli mixed city of Lod was modified through planning practices following the principles of the hegemonic ethnocentric state and its needs for surveillance, thus producing a segregated urban space. He underlines the existence of tactics of resistance, or as he terms it, “spatial protest,” identifying a process of bottom-up counter-production of space through tactics that are not necessarily conscious (2004: 73).

This definition of space completes the assemblage sketched above: the spatialities and geographical concepts/facets can be related to Lefebvre’s three dimensions of space (lived,

conceived, perceived). Each one of these categories produce space “according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period” (Lefebvre, 1991: 46). I will show how the different practices observed on the various “sites of contention” constitute a “spatial repertoire,” largely common but with internal disparities and variations due to the local patterns of opportunities and constraints.

Contentious politics informing geography: calling in repertoire and framing, threats and opportunities

The reference to a “spatial repertoire” refers to a fundamental concept in social movement theory, that needs to be made explicit: that of repertoire of action. The concept of repertoire was initially used by Tilly (1978) and has been quickly adopted by social movement scholars. Tilly defines the repertoire of contention as “a limited set of routines that are learned, shared and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice,” they are “learned cultural creations” which “emerge from struggle” (Tilly, 1993). The repertoire of a movement is made up of “learned conventions of contention” which are linked to the culture and history of the society where it takes place (Tarrow, 1998: 29). These conventions represent a “‘tool kit’ of habits, skills and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’” (Swidler, 1986: 273). The image of the “tool kit” has been often used to qualify the repertoire (see e.g. Zald, 1996: 266) as it conveys the idea of a stock of different types of practices, largely pre-existing, from which movements can draw.

If the notion of repertoire usually covers typologies of action, I will include in this category the various frames generated by the actors of contention. Framing, a process much studied since the seminal work of Goffman – who defines frames as “schemata of interpretation” (1974) – designates the way individuals organize experiences and make sense of events; it is generally studied to show how collective actors negotiate reality (Benford, 1993: 678). Tarrow underlines the importance of this construction of meaning in order to attract new supporters and to strengthen the implication of the followers already mobilized: “gaining the hearts and minds” of potential supporters or members is indeed vital for movements and activists as the media, other movements and governments create their own competing frames (Tarrow, 1998: 142). As is clear from the analysis of space undertaken by Lefebvre and outlined above, space has a fundamental symbolic dimension; it is “a tool of thought and of action” (Lefebvre, 1991: 35) and must thus be also studied in relation to the framing process.

A particular light has been shone on “place-based collective-action frame” or “place-frame” (Martin, 2003), analyzing the role of place and the neighbourhood as sources of identity building. A similar approach can be devised for other spatialities. Because of its being a dimension more vested with personal meaning, place might indeed be more bound to produce powerful frames (see Chapter 2). We will see in the empirical chapters that the place is indeed one of the facet of space on which the resistance relies most commonly; one of its characteristics, the “sense of place,” also proves crucial to framing the struggle, through the narratives and representations built around the place, and the creation or reinforcement of a strong local identity and attachment to place (see Chapter 3).

Both concepts of repertoire and framing tackle the way in which people and groups mobilize, whether this is done through the type of actions they undertake, the initiatives organized, or the narratives used to legitimize, reinforce and support the mobilization. Both concepts are thus quite

complementary and offer essential insights into the general process of contention building, including into how space can be used as a resource for the action.

The modalities of actions must be tackled considering the variations in constraints – or threats – and opportunities. Evaluating and understanding these variations often represents an objective of social movement studies, seeking to determine how and why movements appear, falter or end. This research has a different purpose, but the evolving pattern of constraints and opportunities remains important in order to identify the differences and similarities in the repertoires of action in a comparative perspective. Navigating between constraints and opportunities, the actors can thus be seen as negotiating the existing conditions and exercising their agency, “opening up new freedoms and potentials as a result of reconfigured social space” (Awan, Schneider, & Till, 2011).

Opportunities and constraints are studied in social movement studies through the models of “political process model,” then declined in “political opportunity structure” (POS) and “structure of political opportunity and threat” (SPOT), all looking at how “elements in the environment impose certain constraints on political activity or open avenues for it” (Eisinger, 1973: 11). Heavily criticized for their structural bias (see e.g. Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Meyer, 1999), these models seek to identify the changes in the various dimensions of a protest’s context, especially according to the institutional response to contention, and the way in which the protest then possibly adapts or exploits these changes. While I will not apply this type of theoretical model directly, they offer interesting insight as to how to analyze the differences in the practices observed and reflect on the influences of the political context on social movements. The core concepts of this approach are those of opportunities and constraints, opportunities being “dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics” while constraints refer to “factors – like repression, but also like authorities’ capacity to present a solid front to insurgents – that discourage contention” (Tarrow, 1998: 20).

The examination of the “opportunities” aspect has been favoured for a long time over the examination of “weak spots” and “barriers” (Eisinger, 1973: 11), subsequently re-conceptualized through the notion of “threats.” To insist on the interdependence of the two concepts, the term POS was replaced with that of SPOT (Structure of Political Opportunity and Threat), although it remained under-used (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001: 181). The notion of threat, often understood and used as a synonym of constraint, does not actually refer to the same kind of variable but I will not enter here in too many details. Suffice it to say that threats are considered as a potential “cost” of action or lack thereof (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001: 183) and appear to have more direct consequences on the protest movement itself, having the potential to modify its very structure or existence; in contrast, the constraints have an impact on the unfolding of contention, and on the possibilities of action. The very terminology highlights the differences between both terms, and the type of problems they apply to. Constraints are actual and concrete; movements have to face them, either by adapting or avoiding them. “Threats” are potential; threats, as dangers, are looming and their becoming real marks their disappearance. While “threats” refer to risks, “constraints” refer to situations of coercion, material, immaterial, or symbolical. In the context of Israel and Palestine, it seems more adequate to refer to opportunities and constraints, as those have already been implemented or are emerging.

Looking at the production of space will allow to scrutinize how space “is integral to the attribution of threats and opportunities” (Martin & Miller, 2003: 144). The unfolding of protest events seems linked, to a certain extent, to the degree of control exercised over space by the State

or the people and activists. Contention depends on the types of space in which it can evolve; access to public space and the existence of a certain visibility are crucial for the success of a demonstration, for instance.

In the context of Israel and Palestine, the control of space makes the existence of constraints quite obvious. Considering that spatial constraints are part of an Israeli political strategy of control, and have direct consequences on the daily life of the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Jerusalem and the Bedouins living around Beer-Sheva, these constraints could represent a factor that both hinders contention – a “barrier” (Eisinger, *Ibid.*) – and that can potentially discourage it (Tarrow, 1998: 20). Are spatial constraints a sign of “unripe” political opportunity (Hermann, 1996)? Or do they represent one more reason to mobilize? If a controlled space can be synonym of constraints, then an “open” space would correspond to a situation of opportunity, allowing the contention to “take place,” generating visibility and a public expression. This would mean that protest occurs exclusively when the polity includes “a space of toleration” (Meyer, 2004: 128), where the “space” has two meanings, metaphoric as well as literal, referring both to the possibility of action as well as the actual, concrete space in which it takes place.

This type of approach appears overly static and State-centric, supposing that the “opening” of space needs to be external, depending first and foremost on a slackening of the exercise of power, on concessions from the State authority. The actors of contention would thus be limited in their possibilities to take action, and condemned to be somehow necessarily passive, submitted to a context with little “space of toleration” and waiting for external decisions that would make the conditions more “ripe” for protest. What about specific contexts where access to space is not a “right,” where people are not free to move and demonstrate?

The situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and in a lesser way that of the Bedouins, is one of a highly repressive socio-political setting (see Alimi, 2003, 2009; Boudreau, 1996, 2004; Khawaja, 1993). The protest movements in repressive or non-democratic regimes evolve according to particular logics and dynamics, as authorities have increased power over the people (Khawaja, 1993: 49). The nature and effects of constraints and opportunities must however be considered carefully. Resource mobilization theory consider social movement as rational actors (Tilly, 1978) that carefully weigh the costs of engaging in collective action and acting in consequence. Increasing opportunities then means increasing action while receding opportunities entails less mobilization (Snyder & Tilly, 1972: 527). This correlation has however been proved wrong by many authors, as repression, the clearest sign of “constraint,” can increase the mobilization, despite the risks (Olivier, 1990: 9). Studying contention in the West Bank, Khawaja showed for example that far from deterring mobilizations, repression actually reinforced the protest movement (Khawaja, 1993: 64).

Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the agency of the actors involved and to take into account the “social construction of opportunity or threat” (Alimi, 2001: 67). In fact, I refute the idea that a “constrained,” controlled space necessarily means a lack of (spatial) opportunity and thus a status of “non-actors” for the purposes of social movements. I contend that opportunities can be triggered and produced, and that constraints can be bypassed by resistance and through resistance. In this perspective, and to balance the structural bias of the SPOT model, I will take into consideration the interesting concept of “spatial agency,” proposed by William H. Sewell Jr., and which he defines as:

“The way that spatial constraints are turned to advantage in political and social struggles, and the ways that such struggles can restructure the meanings, uses and strategic valence of space. Social movements and revolutions not only are shaped and constrained by the spatial environment in which they take place, but are significant agents in the production of new spatial structures and relations” (2001: 55).

At a micro level, the actors can occasion shifts in political opportunities, and also possibly trigger them. In fact, “through mobilizing structure, repertoire of action and collective action frames, social movements are capable of seizing opportunities” (Alimi, 2009: 221; see also Tarrow, 1998: 167). This directly relates to the approach I have delineated above, as opportunities and constraints could help to explain the choice of tactics within the repertoire of contention (Meyer, 2004: 128). I will concentrate on the link between the spatial constraints that the protest movements must face and the practices, the spatial repertoire adopted in consequence, which possibly create opportunities to use and integrate space into the protest.

Main outcomes: manoeuvring the archipelago, and the mediation of place to sustain the fading territories

Three main outcomes come out of this approach combining geography and the study of contention. First, it confirms that space represents a tool and resource for resistance in Israel and Palestine despite its being tightly controlled. More specifically, I will show that *place* is the main facet of space informing Palestinian resistance in the sites studied. All other facets, like territory and scale, being mediated through place.

As our focus is on the local scale, it could appear as a tautology to have place appear as the central dimension of the practices of contention under study. However, as I will show later on, it is central not because of the scale at which the conflict is considered, but because the many constraints fragmenting the space mean that the qualities of places become pivotal resources to reinforce and support the resistance. The fragmentation of the Palestinian territory – a process described as an “enclavization” (Falah, 2005; Taraki, 2008) or “bantustanization” (Farsakh, 2005) – indeed implies a contraction of the space where people live and circulate, an isolation of some communities, but also an atomization of the collective action. I will show how in the face of such constraints people invest in the local space and divest or bypass the national scale, be it represented by the PNA or the Israeli State.

Second, this research establishes that those same practices also produce space, and more precisely, aim at producing a territory. Indeed, the repertoire in all three case studies aims at the territorialization – or re-territorialization – of the Palestinian struggle and identity, in order to affirm and impose its existence. The fragmentation and control of space makes this strategy necessarily place-based; the place becomes the siege of an intense production and diffusion of narratives and representations, and symbolically incarnates the territory considered, whether national, religious, or indigenous.

Finally, I will show that while numerous similarities link the three case studies, the choices made in terms of opposing the Israeli control eventually sketch out three slightly different models of contention. The resistance in Silwan draws essentially on the local resources and identity; the contention in Hebron builds considerably on the image and international fame of the

city, while the Bedouins of Al-Araqib associate the local “steadfastness” (sumud) to an advocacy campaign towards international institutions, based on their claim of indigeneity.

Structure of the book

The first chapter exposes some background and context information on each case study, concentrating on historical, political and legal elements that allow for a better understanding of the situations analyzed. In this perspective, the stress will be put on the conditions and evolution of the Israeli control of space in each site, as they represent the main reason and target of the local contention.

The following chapters (2–6) look into the empirical data gathered on the field between 2011 and 2016. Each chapter concentrates on one broad type of spatiality, showing how it deploys as a repertoire while using and producing space, drawing on specific dimensions of space expressed through geographical concepts.

The first empirical chapter (Chapter 2) concentrates on “inhabiting:” it tackles the importance of the spaces of the daily life – the “perceived space” of Lefebvre (1991: 39) – raised to a full-fledged repertoire through active presence. I analyze in this section the type of everyday practices and representations that make the place an essential scale of resistance and the way it produces space. The physical presence, the fact of inhabiting a place and staying, are conceived by the Palestinians as a basic way to resist, which is translated through the Arabic word of “sumud” better conceptualized as an “habitational resistance” (Collins, 2011: 18). The centrality of sumud in the Palestinian resistance points to the importance invested in places, which can be nuanced in different scales, from the house to the neighborhood, but also different types of practices, from simple daily life routines to demonstrations. I develop the arguments that sumud raises concerning social and spatial justice and the “right to place.”

In the third chapter, I tackle the connections between resistance and the “conceptualized space,” intended as the space of the authorities (Lefebvre, 1991: 38), through the importance of planning. It shows how the designing of space, especially through urbanism and architecture, is made according to ideological and political guidelines in all three cases. The urban development indeed relies on the same principles that underpin the Israeli judiciary and legislative systems, principles that stand at the core of the Zionist project: namely, the control of space and of the uses of space, and the limitation of non-Jewish property, raising important questions about democracy, participation and citizenship. This hegemonic designing of space is nevertheless met with resistance, mostly with attempts to go through legal and institutional channels, but also through the development of planning projects and illegal building.

The fourth chapter looks at protests and collective actions as connecting the conceived and lived spaces. It shows the constitution of subaltern counterpublics (Fraser, 1990) and their relations to the public space and public sphere. It highlights various tactics, from violent confrontations to surveillance, and outdoor prayers. Chapter 5 scrutinizes the representations and narratives linked to space that are used in each of the three cases, creating a “sacred geography.” It shows the various processes of “sanctification” at work in the three sites, through cultural, religious and national elements that form the “lived space” – that of images, symbols and “non-verbal signs” superimposed to objects of the physical space (Lefebvre, 1991: 39). This section shows how places are invested with larger meanings and system of values connected to different senses and conceptions of the territory. Elements such as mosques, cemeteries, fountains and

trees represent landmarks that “incarnate” Palestine in places. The inputs of religion and politics in this type of framing is important as both represent firm arguments and sources of potent narratives. The example of “ribat,” a concept used by the residents of all three sites studied, is particularly interesting as it brings both dimensions together. Finally, this chapter will move to discuss the creation of sacred geographies focusing on the reference to, and the production of, a cultural landscape in line with the national territory. Both of these concepts are not only invoked at the local scale, but are also reconfigured through the place.

The following chapter is dedicated to “globalizing;” it tackles the international strategies employed in all three cases, through networking and scale shifting. We will see that through the goal of “globalizing” the struggle, it is paradoxically the place that retains a determinant role, as it represents the starting point and object of those practices. Indeed, the media work, as well as the organization and development of political tourism, are essential in order to put the sites on the map – the region’s map, but also the world’s – to diffuse information and to raise awareness about the places’ situations, both in respect of control and contention. The advocacy is also undertaken at other scales, and most notably in the arenas provided for by international institutions. Some actors, such as NGOs as well as ambassadors and representatives of the United Nations, are key figures who make the shift possible and maintain the links between the place and the global arena. I will concentrate more particularly on the examples of the Bedouins’ claim of indigeneity as being representative of this strategy. This chapter illustrates the different ways in which the actors of contention advertise their struggle, shifting scale to enhance the impact it has and the pressure that can be put on Israel.

Notes

1. In the context of this research, reference will be made exclusively to the situation in the West Bank; if Gaza is part of the occupied Palestinian territories – also designated here as Palestine – it is physically separated from the contiguous space of Israel and Egypt, distant from the West Bank and isolated from a political point of view, being under the authority of Hamas since the 2006 elections. As such, it has not been possible to conduct research in the Gaza Strip.
2. See “General progress report and supplementary report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine covering the period from 11 December 1949 to 23 October 1950” (A/1367/Rev.1), October 23, 1951, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/b792301807650d6685256cef0073cb80/93037e3b939746de?OpenDocument>.
3. The Sinai was given back to Egypt in 1979; a small part of the Golan Heights was returned to Syria following the 1973 Yom Kippur war, while the rest of the area is still occupied by Israel. The settlements in Gaza were evacuated during the Israeli “disengagement” of 2005.
4. The laws regulating military occupation are part of international humanitarian law and of the laws of war generally, as defined in the Fourth 1907 Hague Convention (*Laws and Customs of War on Land*), the Fourth 1949 Geneva Convention (*Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*), the 1954 Hague Cultural property Convention (*Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*) and the 1977 Additional Geneva Protocol (*relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts*). Israel is automatically bound to the first two treaties as they embody customary

international law and are thus considered to have universal value. It ratified the 1954 Hague Convention in 1957 but did not adhere to the 1977 Geneva Protocol. Israel has acknowledged the general relevance of international legal norms and announced it would observe most of the humanitarian provisions included in those treaties, even if officially it considers that these norms are not formally applicable as law (*de jure*), or if it objects to certain aspects of the treaties. It has, for example, contested the definition of a “belligerent occupation” (Darcy, 2003). Under these laws, Israel must “(...) take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country” (art. 43 of the Hague Convention of 1907). The Occupying power has also other obligations, like keeping childcare and education institutions functioning (art. 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention). It must also “ensure that food and medical supplies reach the population” [art. 55], “medical and hospital services must be maintained” [art.56], and “national Red Cross societies must be allowed to carry out their activities” [art.63] (Darcy, 2003: 59).

5. File CIA/BGI GM 69-4, declassified in 2005, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP84-00825R000100570001-3.pdf>.
6. See the COGAT website: <http://www.cogat.idf.il/894-en/Matpash.aspx>.
7. See “Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 13, 1993, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20principles>
8. See “Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September, 28, 1995.
9. See “Main Points of Gaza-Jericho Agreement”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 4, 1994, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/main%20points%20of%20gaza-jericho%20agreement.aspx>.
10. See the “Reference documents” of the Peace process, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/reference%20documents/>.
11. COGAT website: <http://www.cogat.idf.il/1279-en/Cogat.aspx>.
12. “Acting the Landlord: Israel’s Policy in Area C, the West Bank”, June 2013, *B’tselem*, http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201306_acting_the_landlord, http://www.btselem.org/download/201306_area_c_report_eng.pdf. See also “Movement and Access in the West Bank” September 2011, *OCHA-oPt*, https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_movementandaccess_factsheet_september_21
13. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in 2011 “The Jewish population numbers approximately 6.042 million residents (75.3% of the total population); the Arab population numbers approximately 1.658 million residents (20.7%)”, see for example the press release “65th Independence Day - More than 8 Million Residents in the State of Israel”, April 14, 2013, http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/hodaot2013n/11_13_097e.pdf or the data on the “population by population group” on the CBS website, <http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/>.
14. This volume is based on a PhD thesis entitled “Holding on to place, Spatialities of resistance in Al-Araqib, Silwan and Hebron”, defended at the European University Institute (Florence) in February 2016.

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1 Three sites of contention

Al-Araqib, Silwan, Hebron

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The study of social movements – now more often referred to under the label of contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2003) – is traditionally focused on the category of collective action, social movements being defined as collective actors involved in confrontational relations with clearly identified opponents (which often include State actors), “linked by a dense informal network,” sharing a “distinct collective identity” and privileging conflict as a form of action (della Porta Diani, 2005).

I contend that this approach presents several problematic biases, enhancing the role of the State while overlooking the potential variety of actors and methods employed and more precisely the role played by individual practices. In order to counter those biases, I propose to go beyond the scope of social movement studies. For this, I “entered” through space, defining the three case studies spatially in order to take into account the variety of actors and practices involved in the protest actions. These “sites of contention” correspond to three loosely defined areas which represent the core of the protest both in terms of stake and action (see section below). Those sites represent at the same time a theatre, an object, as well as a resource for mobilization.

The three sites of contention considered are the H2 area within Hebron, in the southern West Bank; Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan, two central and adjacent neighbourhoods located within Silwan, in East Jerusalem; and the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib situated in the Negev desert (Naqab, in Arabic), in the south of Israel. After unpacking the rationale for this approach and its implications, this chapter presents historical and political elements of context for each case, necessary for a better understanding of the situations considered and the practices then studied.

A spatial entry to the case studies: the case for sites of contention

Beyond States and collective action, a galaxy of actors

Defining the case studies spatially represented a methodological choice that allowed to take into account a variety of actors, not necessarily focusing on the State and a diversity of practices, beyond collective action. It represents a way to neutralize the possible ethnocentric but also State-centric biases present in social movement theory, as well as to defuse the methodological nationalism that often imbues the research on Israel - Palestine. As a result, I will tackle the contention as being constituted by a continuum between individual engagement and collective action, acknowledging that they can intersect and prolong each other.

Methodological nationalism establishes an equivalence between societies and nation-states and considers nation-states as a “natural” unit of human political organization, central for scientific analysis (Beck, 2003: 453; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003: 576). Methodological nationalism is a common bias in the social sciences and it represents the dominant paradigm in studies addressing the political situation in Israel-Palestine (Monterescu, 2015), but also the countries of the Arab-Persian Gulf (Hanieh, 2015). By entering through the local space and concentrating on the various actors interacting there, I chose to focus on the actors of the contention and to consider the systemic and multiscale complex set of relationships existing between the Palestinians of the West Bank and Israel, the Israeli citizens of various “nationalities” (Handelman, 1994, 1997; Tekiner, 1991), the Israeli State and the proto-state headed by the Palestinian Authority.¹

To be clear, as wielder of the monopoly on legitimate violence (Weber, 1965) and responsible for law enforcement, States are both actors and targets in the unfolding of protests. The Israeli State has a huge power over the mere possibility of protest, including in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank, influencing and shaping its forms and occurrences through its military and administrative control. It cannot – and must not – be taken out of the equation. The conflictual and discriminatory treatment of Bedouins and other minorities makes it a force to be reckoned with also regarding contention within its borders. The PA has also been repressing violently any dissent in the West Bank over the last years, and the security cooperation established with Israel weighs heavily on the unfolding of protest. So, State power and influence are not dismissed, but they are not considered *a priori* a focus of the study.

Even more to the point of methodological nationalism, the claimed national envelopes of borders and territories are not considered as natural units of the analysis and as impermeable to one another. Again, political delimitations have a very direct and concrete impact on the life of thousands of Palestinians who cannot leave Gaza, access Jerusalem, etc., but they cannot be considered as the sole element organizing the region. Focusing on sites of contention represents a way to take a step sideways and consider other angles – or rather, scales – in a region where States, territories and nations are disputed and often essentialized and the geopolitical lens often makes them unavoidable topics and separated entities.

Giving more space to the individual or hybrid forms of mobilization also seemed like a necessary correction of largely State-centric theories. It is necessary to acknowledge the differences that may exist between contention conducted in different societies, not necessarily corresponding to protest methods of Western settings. The structuring of protests and the dynamics of mobilization are directly connected to a society’s functioning and the political

regime on which it depends or that it opposes. Protests are carried on by people belonging to groups, communities and societies that have resources, codes, routines, repertoires and traditions of mobilization rooted in particular elements such as historical events or religious references. The type of regime (democratic, authoritarian), the respect of freedom of movement and speech or the level of repression restricting them, the existence and strength of trade unions and political parties, the organization of civil society, are some of the many elements that can influence and shape protests and modify the pattern of threats and opportunities (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001).

The case studies tackled here are inscribed in a context marked by specific social, political, geographical and cultural features. In the Palestinian society as in many other societies of the Middle East, the extended family and kinship ties play a fundamental role in the structure and functioning of the social fabric, also marked by a strong informality and often by mechanisms of clientelism, nepotism and corruption. In such a context, mobilizations may rely on other types of networks and interests, on contacts that are more informal and less structured than those which are considered as models in the social movement approach, relying on primary solidarities rather than on membership in associations or formal enrolment in movements (Bayat 2000: iv). Focusing exclusively on collective action would blind us to other modalities of action and organization. Bayat for example underlines how a small protest can grow into a major display of solidarity and a massive demonstration by aggregating people sharing the same interests. However, these people can also be “strangers or casual passersby” (Bayat, 2017: 13). He terms “social nonmovements” this type of contention, which is constituted by “collective actions of noncollective actors” (Ibid.: 15). This approach adopts a wide angle, taking into account the different configurations drawn by the interactions between different levels of activism and everyday life routines, individual and collective action, as well as spontaneous and organized participation.

I will show how contention in the three case studies is structured around a multitude of different actors, rather than around a single, compact and homogeneous “movement” with internal disparities. Considering “sites of contention” allows for the engagement of the whole galaxy of actors involved in those sites: residents, political activists, NGOs, associations, religious and political organizations. It also encompasses the various practices of resistance they deploy, whether collective, individual, organized or spontaneous. Moreover, it allows for consideration of actors deriving from different backgrounds and places, notably Palestinians from the West Bank and from Israel, Bedouins, Jewish Israelis and foreigners.

Resistance as a wide-angle approach of contention

It seems important to move away from collective action also in the terminology used, to not only diversify the type of actors considered, but also to widen the scope with regards to the actions and methods deployed. As such, I favor the term “resistance” – and “contention” - as generic terms – over “social movements,” as both take into account the whole range of practices existing between individual and collective action and the forms beside organized actions, acknowledging the lability of practices and strategies, while putting the stress on the question of power.

Resistance indeed makes the political dimension of the contention studied more explicit and corresponds to different categories used by actors I interviewed (with nuances, as I will show later) but also to the representations and discourses they have about their struggles. The notion of “resistance” can be rendered through several terms in Arabic, each conveying nuances according

to the level of violence, organization, but also source of inspiration. The term that corresponds best in Arabic is “muqawama.” However, the term *muqawama* refers in the Palestinian imaginary to an active and possibly armed resistance, like that deployed during the two Intifada. Popular, secular and religious types of resistance practices for example correspond to different terms and implications (see and Chapter 5). The notion of resistance I use here encompasses various categories used in Arabic, that I will examine in the course of the analysis: “*sumud*” for example refers to a type of secular and individual resistance (see Chapter 2) while “*ribat*” refers to a religious type of resistance (see Chapter 5).

The concept of resistance is widely used in everyday life, as well as in scholarly literature (see for instance, Scott, 1985, 1990); notwithstanding, its definition remains problematic for social science. It is in fact used to describe very different practices and situations but generally designates situations of contestation and confrontation, laden with inequality in power and resources (Scott, 1985: 290), that “may be open and confrontational or hidden and range from the individual to the collective” (Routledge, 1997: 69). According to Hollander and Einwohner, if resistance necessarily includes action, as an “active behaviour, whether verbal, cognitive or physical” and struggle (or “sense of opposition”), scholars do not agree on the importance of its visibility, the necessity of resistance to being an open, declared action and on the level of consciousness and intentionality of the actor (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004: 538, 542).

In this research, I retain the definition of Paul Routledge, who considers resistance as “any action, imbued with intent, that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes and/or institutions. These circumstances may involve domination, exploitation, subjection, at the material, symbolic or psychological level” (Routledge, 1997: 69). I will however expand on it on one point: considering resistance as necessarily expressed through actions is reductive. Narratives, frames, discourses, representations, are all ways of relating to reality and of possibly influencing specific “circumstances,” sometimes on the long run. They have a social and political relevance and can represent full-fledge strategies of resistance – and, as such, must be considered as modalities of political action.

Comparing sites of contention

The two approaches evoked above – considering a wider range of actors and a wider range of actions – will be applied to the studied sites of contention or “terrains of resistance.” The sites of contention considered correspond to main geographical area considered by the actors as the area directly targeted by their claims and an area of protest. Similar approaches can be found in the existing scholarship: for example with “places of activism,” which together form a “social movement space” (Nicholls, 2009: 79, 83, 85) or “sites of mobilization” (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013: 13).

Those “sites” are loosely defined and do not have strictly defined borders as they designate permeable areas, in constant and direct interactions with their surroundings. Their edges are considered as interfaces rather than boundaries, even if they can overlap with material delimitations and be administered under different regimes. The H2 area in Hebron is largely fenced off, while Silwan is a part of the continuous urban fabric of East Jerusalem and Al-Araqib associated at the time of fieldwork the delimited space of the cemetery to its immediate surroundings, an open rural area (see Figure 1.1).



- Internationally recognized borders
- - - Armistice and cease-fire lines
- Main cities
- Case studies

Map Marion Lecoquierre, 2021

Figure 1.1 Localization of the three sites of contention, Silwan (East Jerusalem), Hebron (West Bank) and Al-Araqib (Israel). Map realized by the author, 2021.

All three places are the site of local intense and protracted mobilizations against the Israeli authorities. The three sites each have a different administrative status, which in part determine the opportunities available to the various actors and constraints weighing on them. Hebron is located in the occupied West Bank and the area designated as H2 in Hebron is occupied and falls under full Israeli control; Silwan is part of annexed East Jerusalem, while the desert of the Negev has been a part of the State of Israel since its creation in 1948. The status of each place and its inhabitants has an impact on the type of law applied, the authority in charge of enforcing it (Israeli government, Civil Administration, Palestinian Authority), as well as the forces called in to support that authority (police, army, Border Police, Green Patrol) and, consequently, the issues faced by the residents and the type of resistance opposed to it.

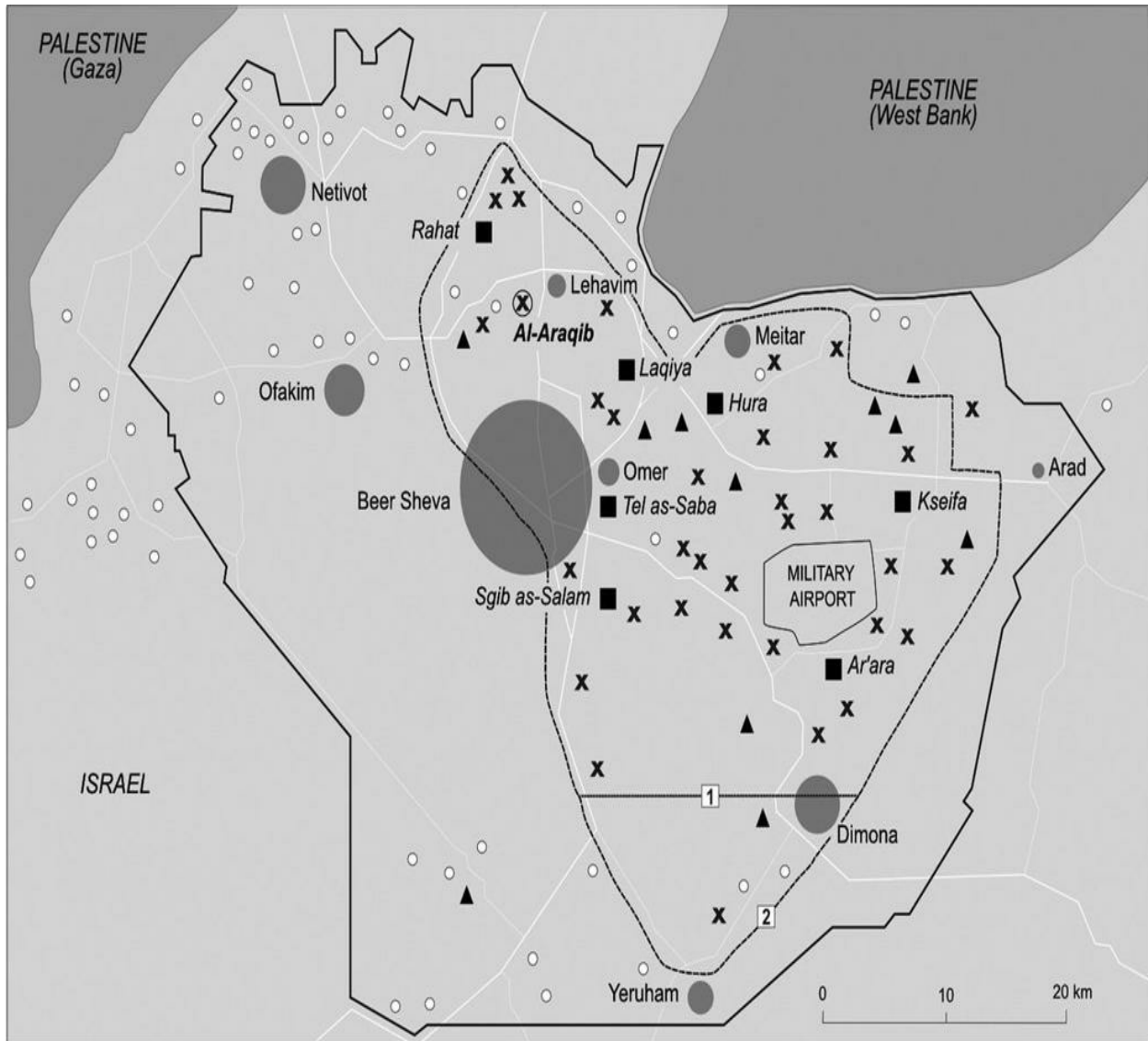
All three locations are characterized by important tensions due to their political situation: occupation in Hebron, annexation in Jerusalem and ethnocratic regime in the Negev. Those tensions developed largely around local spatial issues and are representative of the patterns existing across Israel and the Palestinian territories, notably around questions of land ownership, accessibility and sovereignty, which in part orientate the type of actions undertaken by the actors of contention.

The sites of contention correspond to the areas that are at the “core” of the protest for different reasons. They put together three dimensions, with varying intensity. All sites of contention considered here are the places where the issues are at stake and where the opposition of forces are crystallized, incarnating the protesters’ claims. Secondly, they are the places where people live, where activism and mobilization intersect with daily life. If not all the people involved in the resistance are residents and not all residents are involved in resistance, residents nevertheless represent an important contingent of the mobilized actors, involved in local groups or struggling individually. Finally, sites of contention can be the areas where the actors stage the resistance and where actions take place – although some can be located elsewhere, for example in centres of power or in places with better accessibility or increased visibility. To sum up, a “site of contention” is both a physical place and the idea associated thereto in the struggle; it concentrates the activists’ action and intentions. It may be defined by the presence or by the interests of the protesters, as well as by its physical features.

In Silwan, the site of contention examined corresponds to an urban area, namely the two neighbourhoods of Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan. Silwan is located in a valley south-east of the old city of Jerusalem: Wadi Hilwe is the first neighbourhood in the shadows of the Western Wall and the Al-Aqsa mosque. It is structured along Wadi Hilwe Street, which connects the Dung Gate, one of the points of access to the old city, down to the Silwan pool and the neighbourhoods of Al-Bustan and Ein al-Loze which sit at the bottom of the valley. The contention in Wadi Hilwe is concentrated on the presence and activities of the City of David, an archaeological park run by the Israeli organization Elad, which associates tourism to political objectives, as it works to attract and strengthen the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian neighbourhood. In Al-Bustan, the contention crystallizes around a project of urban development advanced by the municipality, which would require the destruction of the whole neighbourhood (see Figure 1.7).

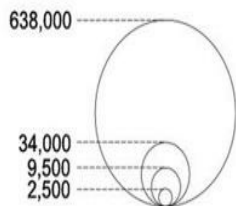
The unrecognized Bedouin village of Al-Araqib is located in the Naqab/Negev desert,

between Rahat and Beer-Sheva, in a rural area (see Figure 1.2). The core area considered is the Muslim cemetery where some families are living after the original village, which was situated on the land directly west from the cemetery, was destroyed by the Israeli administration in 2010. The area outside the cemetery also represents an important object of contention, as it belongs to different Bedouin families and has been taken over by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and planted with trees. The residents struggle to have their right to live there recognized by the State, the unrecognized villages being considered illegal and thus “off the map.” While the connection gradually decreases as the area examined stretches further and further from the cemetery, it continues to represent a site of contention, being symbolically linked through the issue of Bedouin land ownership to the struggle of Al-Araqib.



● Israeli towns

Inhabitants:



— Limit of the "Regional Master Plan"

○ Rural Jewish communities, small settlements or individual ranch owned by Jewish families

■ Bedouin towns created by the Israeli authorities in the 1970's, which should receive the Bedouin population displaced by the Praver plan

x Unrecognized Bedouin village

▲ Recognized Bedouin village

Limit of the Siyag according to:

----- 1: the archives of the Ministry of Interiors

— 2: the Regional Council of the Unrecognized villages



Figure 1.2 Map of the unrecognized villages and Bedouin towns in the Negev desert. Map by Philippe Rekacewicz, 2015, reproduced with the kind permission of the author.

Finally, in Hebron, the site of contention considered covers the central area of H2, the area under Israeli authority. It covers a wide area on the eastern part of Hebron; the site of contention encompasses the Cave of the Patriarchs (called *Haram al-Ibrahimi* by the Palestinian and *Me'arat ha-Machpelah* by the Israelis), a part of the old market, Shuhada Street and the hill of Tal Rumeida. Although it can appear as a clearly delimited area on maps or on the ground due to the material obstacles (barriers, walls, checkpoints) separating H2 from H1 - the area under Palestinian authority - it contains areas with different regimes of mobility and access. The contention in Hebron addresses the occupation and the measures of control and surveillance that hinder and prevent the Palestinian presence, mobility and very life in H2. The site of contention area expands onto the square of Bab al-Zawiya situated in H1 that represents the seam between H1 and H2 and is a traditional site for clashes (see Figure 1.8). This site of contention is characterized by its dense urban character; however, it encompasses the open area of Tal Rumeida, planted with numerous olive trees.

The three cases are each representative of a particular dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the situation in Silwan is linked to the particularity of Jerusalem as a holy city for both the parties, but also to the particular status of East Jerusalem's residents. Hebron is representative of the occupied West Bank. The situation of the Negev Bedouins brings to the fore the contradictory position of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

This also shows another important point linking all the three cases: they are all affected or threatened by processes of dispossession and deterritorialization. The policies implemented in the three sites indeed all have a strong spatial impact. In Hebron, the control relies on a politics of separation between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. The division of the city into two areas also mirrors the fragmentation of the West Bank between areas administered under different regimes (A, B and C).² The inhabitants of Silwan are being slowly dispossessed of their environment; geographically already quite isolated with respect to the other East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, Silwan has been cut off from the West Bank and the neighbouring city of Abu Dis by the "separation barrier." More locally, the various projects that aimed to develop the area based on its supposed biblical past divided the Palestinian neighbourhood into enclaves. The Bedouins, an ethnic minority within Israel, often treated as second-class citizens, became invisible when living in unrecognized villages. Their living conditions, as well as the legal decisions that created these conditions, lead to another type of deterritorialization, as the Bedouins are prevented from retaining their links with the land and their traditional lifestyle.

A knowledge of the historical background of each place and the evolution of the measures of control and strategies of resistance, appear as essential for the understanding of the local dynamics and the comparison between the cases. Indeed, despite those different sites having undergone a similar process after the creation of Israel, they have also experienced different processes of evolution in social, economic, political and legal terms. These historical accounts lay out for the three cases some measures that lead to the dispossession and separation of the Palestinian population, with a huge impact on the possible use and production of space available.

Historical and political background: putting the sites of contention in context

Hebron, Jerusalem and the Negev have all been concerned and impacted by the major events that marked the region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but with different results and consequences: the development of the Zionist project and Jewish immigration, the Nakba and the creation of Israel, the Six Days war in 1967 and the Kippur war in 1973, the expansion of the settlements and increasing dispossession of Palestinians, the Oslo process. The Bedouins, as Israeli citizens, depend directly on the internal politics of Israel and on the policies decided by the various governments. East Jerusalem has a particular status and is trapped, physically but also politically, between Israel and the West Bank, with movements and contact with the rest of the Palestinian society made more difficult by the presence of the wall (the “separation barrier”) and the harsh restrictions on the conditions of Palestinian residence in Jerusalem. Finally, H2 in Hebron is one of the places in the occupied territories where occupation is most visible, with a direct and constant impact on the Palestinians’ daily life. The city indeed hosts an important number of Jewish settlers, as well as an important contingent of soldiers. Since the Hebron Agreement (or “Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron”) signed in 1997, the city is divided, with the central H2 area under Israeli authority and its Palestinian population subjected to harsh restrictions and controls.

For each case, a brief historical overview will be provided, in order to situate the objects of contention and the main stakes of the struggle at the local level; particular attention is paid to the conditions of the Israeli presence and the means of control in each place.

Al-Araqib and the invisibilization of the Negev's Bedouin villages³

Al-Araqib, situated between Beer-Sheva and the Bedouin town of Rahat, is probably the most famous of the unrecognized Bedouin villages and is very representative of the Bedouin struggle and claims in the Negev. A long and fierce battle opposes the villagers to the Israeli government, with each party claiming ownership of the land. A result is that to this day Al-Araqib is regularly destroyed by the Israeli Land Authorities (ILA), and the residents of the village tirelessly rebuild houses and other structures to allow their living in the area. It must be noted that if the name of Al-Araqib is now used mostly to designate the village and the area of the cemetery, it is used to designate a large rural area that encompassed different inhabited areas.

The Bedouins and the State of Israel

The Naqab desert, now often referred to under its Hebrew name “Negev” as it is located in Israel,⁴ has been inhabited by Bedouin tribes since the pre-Islamic period (the seventh century). According to Bailey (1985) the tribes present in the region today would have arrived after the thirteenth century and were circulating in a wider perimeter that included the Sinai desert, now in Egypt. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the succession of different ruling authorities (the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate and the Israeli State) and the adoption of various laws relating to land ownership, destroyed the traditional division of space and the reciprocity system between clans. The issue, for the central governments, was indeed not so much nomadism but the property and availability of the lands, as the Bedouins of the Negev were already semi-nomads or fully sedentarized at the beginning of the twentieth century (Falah,

1989: 72).

The Ottoman Empire initially started to legislate on land ownership. In 1858, the Land Act classified most of the Negev as *mawat* (dead or uncultivated) in order to “arrive at a clear distinction between various kinds of public and private land ownership” (Meir, 1988: 255). The uncultivated land was then considered as State property. This classification also represented a way to encourage the cultivation of the fertile areas, under conditions of tax payment and permission of the central authority (Ginguld, Perevolotsky, & Ungar, 1997: 571; International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: 1), thus strengthening the political legitimacy of the latter.

The British Mandate marked an increased intervention of the central government body into Bedouin affairs, with another registration process launched in 1921: the Bedouins were given two months to register the cultivated land under their name. The ordinance “redefined the *mawat* in such a way that a Bedouin could officially receive the status of ‘someone possessing a tie to his land’” (Kressel, Ben-David, & Abu Rabi’a, 1991: 30). Concretely, the scope of this measure was limited as most of the Bedouins were reluctant to register their land with any central power (Kressel et al., 1991: 30; Shamir, 1996: 241).

It is also the period during which a reinforced competition for space developed, with an increase in Jewish settlement and acquisition of land. The first goal of the Zionist movement was indeed to establish its control over the land, notably through property acquisition. The Jewish National Fund (JNF; in Hebrew KKL, Keren Kayemet LeIsrael) was responsible for acquiring land, which was then “frozen” and removed from the market in order to “establish national ownership of the land which would be nontransferable” (Kimmerling, 1983: 73).⁵ Securing Jewish land ownership was seen as a political act aimed at enabling the creation of a Jewish State and guaranteeing its continuity in time. It also represents for some Jewish believers a religious requirement, that of “redeeming the land.” According to this view, the Jewish people must establish an exclusive and irreversible control over the land considered as Eretz Israel, that was given by God to the Jewish people, in order to fulfil God’s promise. This messianic vision follows the command of Leviticus: “the land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers” (25:23). The possession and control of land constitutes one of the basic principles of the Zionist ideology. It has even been said that “without it, Zionism has no value.”⁶ Before the establishment of a country, the official demarcation of its borders and the recognition of a sovereign authority, it was the creation of a territorial continuum, of a territory itself, where sovereignty could be exercised and protection of the Jewish people insured which was seen as a priority. The case of Al-Araqib shows that those principles are still topical and that the JNF, in charge of acquiring and “freezing” lands for the future State of Israel, still plays a fundamental role in ensuring the Jewish character of the land.

After the Israeli declaration of independence and the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, many of the Bedouins present in the Negev were displaced or fled to Gaza, Jordan and Egypt. The remaining Bedouin population was evacuated from their lands between 1951 and 1953 by the Israeli armed forces, often for “security reasons.” In Al-Araqib, the inhabitants were told that the area was needed for military training but that they could come back after six months. Ismail Abu-Madighem, an elderly resident of the village,⁷ recalled:

“they [the Israeli authorities] assigned to us the area where we could settle in these six months. After six months, when people tried to return, they told us that we couldn’t, because

the land became a way for the army vehicles to pass. And a year later a private company came and started to farm it.”⁸

The Bedouin population that remained in the region was concentrated in an area that stretched between Arad, Dimona and Beer-Sheva (see Figure 1.2). That area, called the “Siyaj” (meaning fence or enclosure in Arabic) is often referred to as a “reserve” (Goering, 1979), similar to the ones designed for the indigenous Indian population in the United States, and was placed under the authority of the Israeli military government, who oversaw the movement of Bedouins in the country. The martial law imposed on all the Arab citizens of Israel was finally lifted in 1966. If movement remained constrained, some Bedouins sought to return to their land. However, in the meantime, a legal arsenal had been implemented that facilitated land appropriation by the State. In the case of the Bedouins, the fact that many had not registered their properties with the preceding administrations gave a legal basis to the process.

Among others, the Land Acquisition Law (1953), largely applied in the Negev, allowed the Israeli Development Authority to take possession of land that was “not in the possession of its owners” on April 1, 1952, was “used or assigned for purposes of essential development, settlement and security” between May 1948 and April 1952 or which was still needed for one of these purposes (Laws of the State of Israel, vol.7: 44).⁹ This law allowed the State to retroactively legalize expropriations that were undertaken after the 1948 war and to prepare further expropriations (Amara, Abu-Saad, & Yiftachel, 2012: 76).¹⁰ The Bedouin lands, such as the lands in Al-Araqib, which had been vacant from 1951, when the population was made to leave, to 1966 when the martial law was lifted, fell into that category. Even then, the Bedouin presence in the area was controlled:

“In 1966 they made us a passport or permits, valid for particular area and for six months only. We were restricted to Lod, Ramleh and Tel Aviv, we used to go to the Negev only on Thursdays.”¹¹

Subsequently, several other laws consolidated the Jewish-Israeli control over land. In 1965, for instance, the Planning and building law 5725 overlooked the existence of the Bedouin population of the Negev, classifying most of the land as an agricultural area, thus contributing to making the existing Bedouin villages illegal and invisible.

The acquisition and ownership of land was complemented by measures aimed to control the population living there. This policy of “Judaization” (Rabinowitz, 1997; Yiftachel, 1999, 2006) of the Naqab, parallel to a process of “de-Arabization” (Kimmerling, 1983: 124; Yonah, Abu-Saad, & Kaplan, 2004) of the territory, consisted in the expulsion of the Arab population or its concentration in specific areas, while developing areas inhabited by Jewish citizens at the same time and sometimes in the very areas from which the Bedouin population had been expelled (Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006; Newman, 2005; Swirski & Hasson, 2006; Chiodelli, 2012).

The various laws passed after the creation of the State turned the land into State property, making existing property titles null and void and wilfully ignoring the Bedouin customary presence and organization in the southern part of the State. After the martial law was lifted and Bedouin families went back to their lands, they have been considered – and treated – as “invaders,” “squatters” or “trespassers” on State land, and the villages have been deemed

“illegal.” All of these are elements of language often used in official discourse to qualify the Bedouins.¹² The situation of Al-Araqib, presented by the inhabitants as an illustration of the fate of those “unrecognized villages” and of the displaced Bedouin populations, is presented by the authorities as the epitome of their being “squatters” on State land.

Another strategy implemented by the Israeli government was the creation of urban and semi-urban areas dedicated to the Bedouin population (Falah, 1989; Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006: 142). The declaration made by Moshe Dayan, then Minister of Agriculture, in 1963, is very revealing of the official Israeli dogma regarding its Bedouin population:

“We should transform the Bedouins into an urban proletariat (...) Indeed, this will be a radical move which means that the Bedouin would not live on his land with his herds, but would become an urban person who comes home in the afternoon and puts his slippers on. (...) Without coercion but with governmental direction... This phenomenon of the Bedouins will disappear” (interview published in Haaretz, 31 July 1963).

This declaration sheds a crude light on the treatment of the Bedouin population, but also on the path followed by the authorities; in order to avoid losing land and to oppose what is considered in official speeches as the “Bedouin spread” or “dispersal,” seven towns destined to the Bedouins were built in the region of Beer-Sheva in the 1970s: Tel Sheva (Tel As-Saba in Arabic), Rahat, Ksaife, Arara, Hura, Segev Shalom (Sgib as-Salam) and Laqiyya. These Bedouin towns lack infrastructure and urban services and are among the poorest cities in Israel. They record the lowest standard of living, with notably very high levels of unemployment and are regularly compared to the “Third World” (International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: 31) or designated as “underdeveloped areas” (Swirski & Hasson, 2006: 56). Various mechanisms encouraged the Bedouin population to move to those cities. The inhabitants of Al-Araqib are for example expected to move to the neighbouring town of Rahat. At the same time, some one hundred and four areas of Jewish settlement (moshavim or kibbutzim) have been created in the region (International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: 9).

Al-Araqib and the unrecognized villages

The unrecognized villages are one of the core topics of the Bedouin claims in the Negev. In 2020, eleven villages were recognized and around 35 remained “off the map” (see Human Rights Watch, 2008). “Illegal” for the State, these villages are not entitled to public and social services provided by the State. Some villages self-organize to have access to water, paying for the installation and connection works. Electricity is generally obtained through solar panels. “In general, the Bedouins want to be recognized in their village and that the State provide them with basic services” explained the sheikh of the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na’am.

Being “invisible” legally, the unrecognized villages are not taken into account in the local and regional development plans, like the Regional Master Plan for Beer-Sheva Metropolitan Area. Thus, not only the existing structures are considered illegal because they represent an “invasion” of the property of the State, but any type of renovation, development or new construction in these villages is prohibited and automatically entitled as illegal, if realized. The penalty for violators is the outright destruction of the building, for which they are often asked to pay or asked to destroy themselves.

An ancestral presence in the region and connection to the land is opposed by many Bedouins to these policies of criminalization of the Bedouin presence in the Naqab/Negev. Nuri Al-Okbi, a famous figure of the Bedouin struggle, who was born in the area of Al-Araqib in 1942, explains:

“Historically, Al-Araqib is the land belonging to the Al-Okbi tribe. You can see that on maps from the Turkish times. On the second map the Al-Okbi are also present, as well as the third map. In 1949 an aerial photograph was taken and Al-Araqib is marked there. The Al-Turi came to the region around 100 years ago, they came to us. They were farmers. They took land and cultivated it, then they bought it. They bought land from my grandfather, Salim, the father of my uncle, about 100 years ago. They have a document proving that too.”¹³

The sheikh of Al-Araqib and public figure of the struggle, Sayyah Al-Turi, says his family bought the land of Al-Araqib in 1905: “we have the papers from 1921 to 1947, the receipts of tax paid for the agricultural use of the land, the crops and all the products that the land was producing.”¹⁴ A fact-finding mission that inquired on the whereabouts of the unrecognized villages confirmed this fact in its report: “the inhabitants [of Al-Araqib] possess Ottoman-period documents proving their ownership of the land and aerial photographs from the British Mandate period showing their cultivation of the same” (International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: 21).

After the martial law was lifted in 1966, most of the families of Al-Araqib dispersed, some moved to find work in Jaffa or Lod, other went to live in Rahat. In 1998, when it appeared that the land was targeted by plantation programs of the Jewish National Fund seeking to “make the desert bloom” according to a well-established Israeli slogan celebrating the State’s technological and agricultural prowess, around 50 families decided to return and settle west of the cemetery (The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 9; Adalah, 2013: 2).

Various strategies were implemented in order to make them leave the area. Between 2002 and 2004, crops were sprayed with herbicides by the ILA (Israel Land Authority). On April 15, 2007, in response to a petition filed in 2004 by inhabitants of some unrecognized villages and NGOs, the Supreme Court ordered the Israel Land Authority to cease aerial spraying, as it “endangered the health of the Bedouin citizens but also harmed their dignity.”¹⁵

On July 27, 2010, the village and its crops were razed by police forces working for the ILA. At the time, Al-Araqib was made of around 30 houses (46 structures in total according to the Negev Coexistence Forum an NGO from Beer-Sheva which struggles for equal rights and is very active for the recognition of the unrecognized Bedouin villages), with a total population of around 300 persons (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 1). The debris was taken away six months later in January, 2011, making any trace of the village invisible and the Bedouins’ claims apparently without any basis. In the first few months, people regularly rebuilt their houses on the land where the village had been standing, west of the cemetery, which were also regularly destroyed. Little by little, most of the residents went to live in Rahat as the frequent demolitions made life too harsh, too violent for the children, while the logistics of everyday life, especially for those in need of medical attention, became too complicated.

The population which remained in Al-Araqib after the first months of demolitions moved within the precinct of the Muslim cemetery located on top of the hill. Within this circular precinct, created in 1914, place occupied by the tombs occupy only the north east quarter. The precise moment and reasons underpinning the move of the inhabitants to the cemetery are not

entirely clear. The residents present it either as a strategic – even if constrained – choice or as a legal order. It seems that it was a process, imposed by different external interventions, which gradually left few other options to the remaining residents. In August, 2010, after more demolitions occurred, the Sheikh was arrested and released under conditions that he would not return to the village for ten days; he then settled temporarily in the cemetery. After the seventh demolition, at the end of November, 2010, people took shelter in the cemetery until the ILA bulldozers and police forces departed. When the ILA returned to clear the rubble at the beginning of 2011, the residents and activists who came to support them were restricted to the cemetery. Sheikh Sayyah affirms that moving inside the cemetery was the result of a direct order from the court, a fact also hinted at by his son Aziz, also a resident of the village. According to Haia Noach, from the Negev Coexistence Forum, the families still living on the site of the village at the time moved inside the cemetery after the court ordered three men of the village to be restricted to the cemetery. This change of scenery is important in material, symbolic but also cultural terms, as it puts the residents in a schizophrenic position; the cemetery was indeed perceived as a more “sheltered place” where the police would not dare enter and where the authorities would not order the demolition of the houses, an idea finally disproved in 2014. At the same time, the cemetery has a deep and painful dimension, being a sacred space, as well as the space where all of the residents had relatives buried.

Some 20 people were living in the enclosure of the cemetery at the time of the fieldwork (2011–2014), each family being settled in a specific area, with common spaces at the center of the re-established village (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011). All residents of Al-Araqib are closely related to each other and are part of the Abu-Madighem family and al-Turi clan: at the time of the fieldwork, the sheikh, Sayyah al-Turi and his wife ‘Aliya lived in a caravan. Ismail and Subhiyye, parents of ‘Aliye, wife of Aziz, the eldest son of Sheikh Sayyah, were living on the western side of the cemetery, next to the entrance, with their cattle. The sheikh’s oldest son, Aziz, his wife ‘Aliye and their children lived in a large structure in corrugated iron at the center of the village, with Myriam, mother of Subhiyye and grandmother of Aliye, who, at 95 years-old, was the oldest resident of the village. Salim and Haqma Abu-Madighem, cousins of Aziz, and their children, were living on the southern slope of the hill (see Figure 1.3). Close relatives of these families, grown-up children, sisters and brothers who used to live in Al-Araqib before the 2010 demolition are a constant presence in the village. Most of them now live in Rahat, twenty minutes away.



Figure 1.3 The southern part of Al-Araqib, with at the foreground the installations of Haqma and Salim Abi Madighem Haqma after the demolition of 2010. The white structure is the kitchen and the black one the living quarters. On the background, the structure where Aziz's family lived. Picture taken by the author on September 22, 2013.

On June 12, 2014, another step in the destruction of Al-Araqib was taken. The Israeli Land Administration's bulldozers entered the area of the cemetery. The few structures remaining, including shacks, tents and mobile homes, were destroyed and taken away, as were the water tanks and the new minaret.¹⁶ The fence marking the limits of the cemetery was removed and the ground was ploughed to prevent any further rebuilding on a large area, inside and outside the cemetery (see Figures 1.4, 1.5, 1.6).

Following this demolition, the situation and the living conditions of the remaining inhabitants seriously deteriorated; the Sheikh and his wife were now sleeping in a small tent, while Subhiyye moved back to Rahat following Ismail's death. Salim and Haqma settled near the entrance of the cemetery with tents and an old van in which the younger children sleep. Aziz and his family moved to the only structure not destroyed, which used to be for the Friday prayer. On July 17, 2014 two cars, from ILA and the "Green Patrol"¹⁷ turned up to order the residents to remove all their material possessions from the cemetery in the next three days. The expulsion was then delayed; on October 1, 2014, the district court refused an application made by the inhabitants to appeal against the expulsion order. A few days later all the shelters were destroyed, and the inhabitants' vehicles and personal possessions were confiscated.

Throughout the years, the residents of Al-Araqib have been many times convicted in the Beer Sheva court for three types of charges: unlawful entry to public land, trespass with intent to commit an offense and violation of lawful direction, being on several account incarcerated.



Figure 1.4 The encampment of the residents after the destruction of 2014. At the foreground, the ploughed land and the tent where Sheikh Sayyah and his wife lived. At the background, the rebuilt shieq. Picture taken by the author on July 15, 2014.



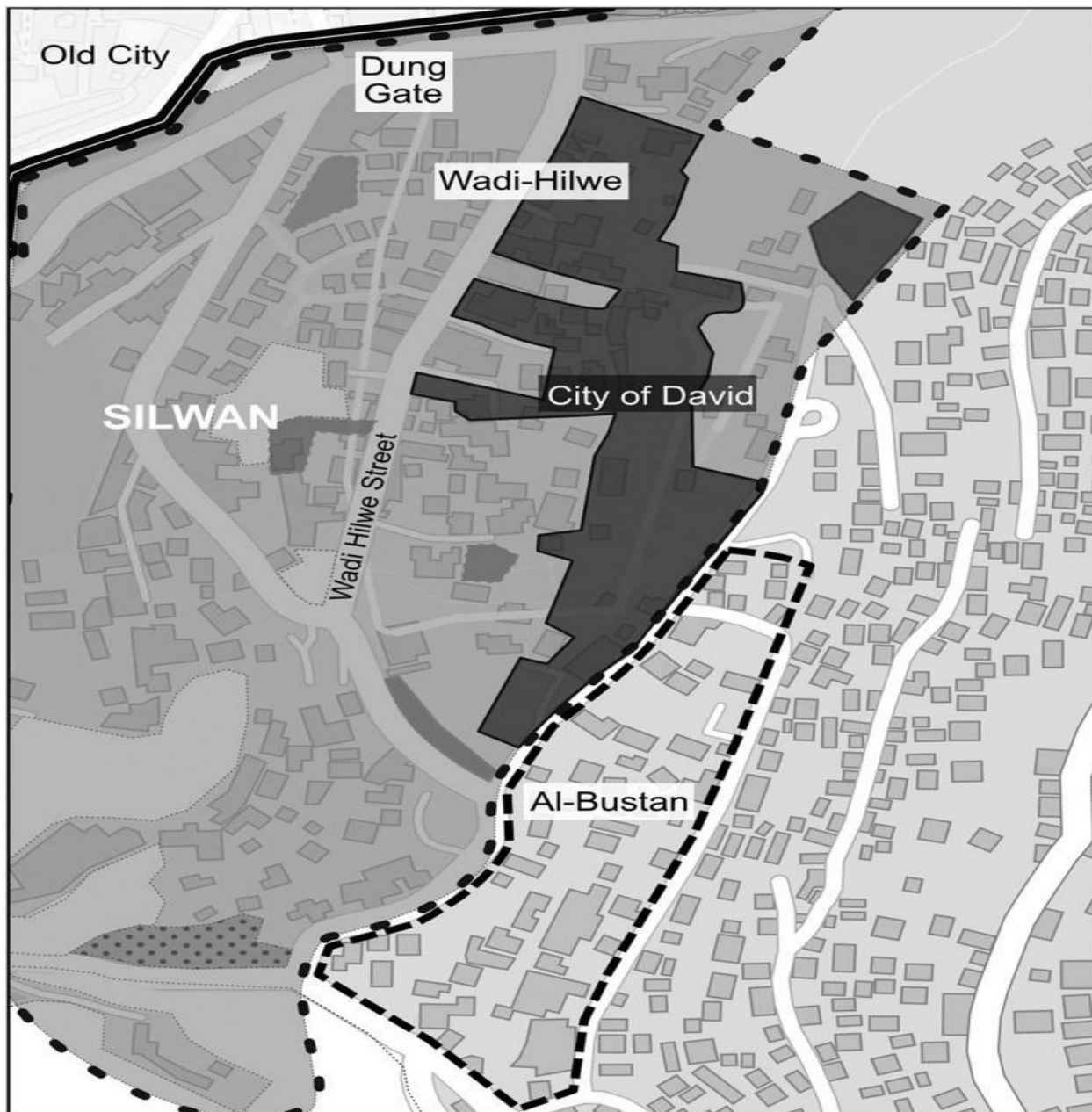
Figure 1.5 The cemetery of Al-Araqib seen from the South. Above on November 13th, 2013, under on July 18, 2014. The original village was on the left side, the cemetery proper is on the right. Photos taken by the author.



Figure 1.6 The land around the cemetery was ploughed in July 2014. Pictures taken by the author on July 18, 2014.

Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan: biblical shadows in contemporary East Jerusalem

The second site of contention considered is a part of Silwan, a neighbourhood of East Jerusalem situated to the south-east of the old city, next to the Dung Gate (Bab al-Maghariba), one of the old city's gates, in direct proximity to Al-Aqsa and the Western Wall. Silwan is an extremely ancient site of dwelling, on the site of the Shiloah pool. The Palestinian village used to be quite small and located in terraced fields until the 1950s. It now counts around 50 000 Palestinian inhabitants and represents a major neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Although very extended, Palestinians still refer to it as a village. Silwan is made up of nine different neighbourhoods: Ras al-Amud, Ein al-Lozeh, al-Bustan, Wadi-Hilwe, Wadi Qadoum, Wasat al-Balad, Kharat al-Tank, Bir Ayoub and al-Yaman (Ir Amim, 2009: 7). The site of contention considered centres on the core neighbourhoods of Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan (see Figure 1.7).



-  Old City Walls
-  Jerusalem Walls National Park
-  City of David's excavations and settlements
-  Al-Bustan neighbourhood (under demolition orders)

Sources: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Peace Now; Emek Shaveh; Bimkom.

Map by Marion Lecoquierre and Corinne Veron-Durand, 2021.

Figure 1.7 Map of Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan. Marion Lecoquierre, 2021, adapted from “East Jerusalem, Al-Bustan, Silwan,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Jerusalem, the inextricable issue of the city three times holy

The situation in Silwan is directly linked to the political issue represented by Jerusalem, and to the many specific issues faced by the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a central stake in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for political and religious, strategic and symbolical reasons. The city claimed as their capital by both Israelis and Palestinians and as such it occupies a central place in the negotiations that have been going on for years between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This importance of Jerusalem stems from its being a major Holy City for the three monotheistic religions: the Christians consider it to be the site of the passion of Jesus Christ; Temple Mount is central for the Jews as the ancient location of the two temples¹⁸ at which God chose to manifest his presence; on the same site, the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock together constitute the third holiest site of Islam, from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. Numerous religious sites of the three religions mark the geography of the city.

Jerusalem is often presented and studied as the epitome of the “divided city” (see among others, Pullan, 2009; Calame & Charlesworth, 2009; Sorkin, 2002). The city is indeed divided in various ways, the major distinction being in terms of spaces and populations, the Western part being nearly exclusively inhabited by Jewish Israelis and the Eastern part being inhabited by Palestinians, predominantly Muslims as well as an increasing number of Jewish settlers. Even if both areas are administered by the Municipality of Jerusalem, important inequalities distinguish them, notably in terms of budget allocation and municipal investments, infrastructures, services provided and planning (see for example UN-Habitat, 2015: 8).¹⁹ Israel considered the city as *de facto* unified under its authority after its conquest of East Jerusalem in 1967, and extended its jurisdiction to the area in 1980, when a Basic Law – which has a constitutional value – officialized Jerusalem, “complete and united,” as the capital of Israel (Lapidot & Hirsch, 1994). The international community strongly condemned this move (Resolution 478 of the United Nations Security Council). Until today – with the exception of a recent major shift in the United States’ position, under President Trump – most of the international community officially considers East Jerusalem as an area occupied and annexed by Israel. This last term is debated as from a legal point of view, an annexation would imply that Israeli citizenship is automatically granted to Palestinians (see for example, Lustick, 1997; Yiftachel, 2006), which is not the case.

After 1967, a census granted the population of East Jerusalem present at that time the status of “permanent resident” of the State of Israel. This status allows the Palestinian residents – including those of Silwan – to live and work in Israel, to use the health insurance system and to vote in local elections (although not in national ones). They can also circulate both in Israel and in the West Bank and apply for Israeli citizenship. While a large number of Palestinians from Jerusalem still reject the mere possibility of having Israeli citizenship for political reasons, the number of applicants has been increasing in recent years.²⁰

Various means are used to try and ensure demographic and urban control in the city: in line with the policies of “Judaization,” various Israeli governments have encouraged the development of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem.²¹ Following the twin principle of a necessary “de-

Arabization” (Kimmerling, 1983: 124) policies were also adopted to contain and prevent the Palestinian urban expansion, and to push the residents to leave either to the West Bank or abroad (Chiodelli, 2012: 6). The policy of the Jerusalem municipality adheres to the government’s aim to maintain a “demographic balance” in the city, namely to keep a Jewish majority (Margalit, 2001); the city of Jerusalem has had “demographic objectives” fixed for years. These objectives generally aim at keeping a ratio of around 70% Jews to 30% Palestinians in the city. The Jerusalem Master Plan, presented in 2004, however stated this balance was no longer realistic and adopted a 60% Jews and 40% Palestinians plan (Chiodelli, 2012; Salenson, 2005; Shragai, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2015; Weizman, 2009).

Planning and zoning (defining areas as “open areas” or “national parks”), the redefinition of the municipality boundaries to create a “Greater Jerusalem,”²² the revocation of residency for Palestinians with the “Jerusalem ID”²³ and the creation of new Jewish settlements or housing units within Palestinian neighbourhoods are some of the strategies implemented by both the State and the Jerusalem municipality to boost these parallel processes. According to B’tselem, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are estimated around 370 000 and Israeli settlers 209 000.²⁴

The extension and intensification of Jewish settlements at the very core of the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem – including the old city – and also around the city complements this official agenda of “unification” of Jerusalem under Israeli authority. The settlements have indeed created a ring of satellite neighbourhoods that isolate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and are now perceived to be suburbs in the continuation of the city, making a political solution dividing the city more difficult. While the Jewish population inside Silwan has constantly increased over the years, the neighbourhood has also become more isolated, as it lost access to its Palestinian hinterland due to the presence of the separation wall. The towns of Abu-Dis (where the al-Quds university is located) and al-Ezzariya, located in the West Bank and previously ten minutes away, now require more than an hour to be reached by car.

However, East Jerusalem remains an occupied territory under International Law, meaning that all transfers of population are considered to be illegal, as military occupation is considered as necessarily temporary. According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies” (Art. 49). The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA-oPt) underlined in a recent report a “pattern of forced evictions and demolitions” aiming at creating “facts on the ground by forging a contiguous link between West Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and settlements in the West Bank” (OCHA-oPt, 2009: 4).

Silwan caught between past and present

Silwan is considered to be one of the most threatened Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Wadi-Hilwe and Al-Bustan have similar and related problematics and will be considered as one site of contention. Both are located on the original urban site from which Jerusalem developed, which are also sites cited in the Bible; as such, the whole area is particularly coveted by the Israeli authorities and some religious Jews.

A central problematic in Silwan is indeed the development and extension of Jewish settlements, notably the slow takeover of Wadi Hilwe by Elad (Ir David Foundation), a private

organization that uses tourism and heritage to advance a political agenda in the area. Elad is running the “City of David,” an archaeological park that attracts some 400 000 visitors annually, making it one of the most important archaeological sites under Israeli control, but an exception in that it is not overlooked by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority.

The site was excavated in the late nineteenth century and many archaeological ruins dot the hillside southeast of the Old City. Wadi-Hilwe itself is located on the site of the ancient core of Jerusalem. The excavations have shown that the human presence there dated back to the early Bronze Age (3000–2550 BCE) (Vaughn & Killebrew, 2003), but the archaeological research has been concentrated on biblical episodes, notably after the Jebusite fortress built on the same site was conquered by King David, who made Jerusalem his capital. The excavations, initiated in Silwan in 1960, are still ongoing (Reich, Shukron, & Lernau, 2007). A stone structure unearthed in 2005 has been identified by the archaeologist Eilat Mazar as the palace of King David (Mazar, 2006), launching a heated debate on the dating and identification of the ruins (see for example, Finkelstein et al., 2007). The archaeological research in the area has been driven by the Bible and a “theological task of identity creation,” with questions of religious continuity and ethnicity becoming central in the political discourse (Thompson, 2004: 1–2). Far from a scientific approach, the park indeed champions a partisan line, instrumentalizing archaeology and tourism for religious and political purposes. The texts of the Bible are often used as a guideline for the archaeological research and findings, concentrating on Jewish history and ignoring subsequent stratum and thus presenting a very biased view of the city’s history. The park’s website asserts that it is “the only place on earth where the only touristic guidebook needed is the Bible itself.”²⁵ The website of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism presents the City of David as the place “where the history of the People of Israel was written.”²⁶

If Elad is officially in charge of the archaeological research and organization of tourism, it also actively works to reinforce the Jewish presence in the neighbourhood, directly developing new settlements in through a program of “residential revitalization”²⁷ of the area. The whole administration of the park corresponds to a “hegemonic ideological and territorial project” (Pullan & Gwiazda, 2009: 36). In practice, it aims at advocating the immemorial and exclusive relationship existing between the Jewish people and the land.

The staging of the Jewish settlements inside and around the park is reminiscent of the strategy implemented during the restoration of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City after 1967 (Ricca, 2007), with the use of Jerusalem limestone and the reinterpretation of the traditional Palestinian architecture (with enlarged stone houses for example) or the close coexistence of the habitation and archaeological sites. Details, such as the names given to the houses – names with a flavour of authenticity, connected to the history and culture of the region – the use of the lyre, symbol of the City of David and itself a symbol of King David, who is often depicted as an artist and the reference to the pomegranate (see Figure 13 in Chapter 2), all point at the fact that the Jewish presence in Silwan is a continuation of the biblical times and is thus legitimate.

The City of David is used as a national and religious symbol to anchor the Israeli people in the territory, legitimizing among other things the colonization process. In Wadi-Hilwe, the Jewish settlers are located in various areas, but are mostly concentrated in and around the City of David. Most of the houses directly surrounding the City of David have been taken over by Jewish families. The pseudo-biblical architecture is completed by modern touches like state-of-the-art systems of surveillance, with numerous CCTV cameras monitoring the houses and streets and

private security companies guarding the buildings and sometimes accompanying the residents in the street.²⁸

The presence of Jewish settlers in the City of David and the adjacent streets, the consequent omnipresence of the police and security guards, the continuous extension of the park, the undertaking of new excavations and tunnels underground which fragilize the existing buildings, are all elements which allow the stress to be maintained at a high level, which render moments of friction or clashes very frequent. Silwan is notably infamous for the number of Palestinian minors arrested, often during traumatizing night raids (B'Tselem, 2010). In Wadi Hilwe, people evoke a “second occupation” to characterize the situation of the area. Ahmad Qarae'en, a resident of Silwan, explains: “we lived through two occupations. The first one between 1967 and 1991. Since 1991, we live under the second, that of Elad and the settlers.”²⁹ Another resident also explained: “of course the main problem is occupation in general. But we are under a second occupation, tougher. They are making life harder and harder, they are squeezing people, because of the City of David.”³⁰ This “second occupation,” used to designate the specific local situation of Silwan, refers to the same processes referred to as the “civilian occupation” (Segal & Weizman, 2003).

The Al-Bustan neighbourhood (meaning “the Garden”) stretches south of Wadi-Hilwe, at the bottom of the Kidron valley. It is a smaller area, composed of a dense urban fabric made of narrow streets and houses that have been extended over the years. The residents of the area have been handed over demolition orders in 2005, the destruction of Al-Bustan being defended by the municipality to expand the archaeological park of the City of David, but also to create the “King’s Garden” (Gan HaMelech). The neighbourhood is indeed believed to be situated on the location of the garden of King Solomon, evoked in the Bible: “He [Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah] also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King’s Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David” (Nehemiah 3:15).³¹ The project would make Al-Bustan a continuation of the biblical park established in Wadi-Hilwe and the outcome of the same kind of logic, whereby archaeology is used as a political argument and religious elements are considered as historical facts and are used to establish territorial control.³² Uri Lupolianski, the mayor of Jerusalem between 2003 and 2008, offered the residents the possibility to try and regularize the status of their homes but none of their requests were granted.

In 2010, a new plan was presented with the support of the new mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, who succeeded Lupoliansky in 2008 and would remain mayor until 2018. He defended the will to “restore the area of the King’s Garden to its ancient glory,” taking the mythical biblical past as only historical point of reference possible, underlining the problems represented by the “illegal construction in the area.”³³ This plan provided that the eastern part of the neighbourhood would be dedicated to housing and stores, while the western part would be transformed into the park itself; moreover, the southern point would be dedicated to hostels (Ir Amim, 2012). Twenty-two houses located in the western part of al-Bustan were originally designated to be evacuated; their inhabitants would then have been given the opportunity to build in another area of the neighbourhood. The NGO Ir Amim claimed that 56 houses were slated for demolition (Ibid: 5). The residents and other NGOs usually mention that 88 houses have been threatened by the demolition orders. In 2005, two houses were demolished and another was destroyed in 2008.

The case of Al-Bustan illustrates as in Wadi-Hilwe the pressure and weight of the biblical past

over the city and especially the way it is instrumentalized as part of a political agenda, but it also highlights another phenomenon representative of the situation in East Jerusalem. Most of the houses of Al-Bustan were built illegally, without permit of the municipality. In East Jerusalem, an estimated 32% of homes have been built without the required permits – 20 000 housing units, according to Bimkom, the Israeli association working for “planning rights” (Bimkom, 2014: 28) – a lot being located on zones officially not fit for building because declared on plans as open public space, national parks, nature reserve, etc.

This housing problem in East Jerusalem is tightly linked to the municipality planning and development policies, largely considered as discriminatory towards East Jerusalem residents. The United Nations OCHA-oPt for example underlines the “failure of the Israeli authorities to provide adequate planning for Palestinian neighbourhoods” (United Nations OCHA-oPt, 2009: 2). Authorizations to build or expand houses are indeed difficult to get in Arab neighbourhood – except in precise neighbourhoods such as Bet Hanina, further from the city’s heart, even though the demographic pressure is strong. The spontaneous building, realized without formal framework, can result in an intricate and sometimes anarchic urbanism that does not suffice to resolve the problem as East Jerusalem continues to suffer from a chronic shortage of housing. The question of housing is related to the issue of Palestinian land ownership – similar to the Bedouin case. The Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem are often unregistered; the process to regularize the land ownership launched by the British Mandate and Jordan has been frozen by Israel in 1967. The requirements to register one’s land are very difficult to meet (see Ir Amim, 2012: 30; OCHA-oPt, 2011: 30) and always present the inherent risk that if refused, the State can invoke the Absentee’s property law³⁴ and officially seize the plot, making it a risky move that many land owners prefer not to take. This general situation engenders a great insecurity as at least 86,500 Palestinians run the risk of having their houses demolished (OCHA-oPt, 2011: 36).

Hebron: a multidimensional politics of separation

Hebron (*al-Khalil* in Arabic, *Chevron* in Hebrew) is the biggest city of the West Bank and one of the main economic centres of the region. It counted some 165 000 inhabitants in 2007³⁵ which now surpass 200 000. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited area in the world, as many people, conquerors and civilization succeeded each other: Canaanites, Israelites, Arabs, Crusaders, Ottomans. As Jerusalem (Sorkin, 2002; Calame & Charlesworth, 2009; Dumper, 2013), Hebron is a religious and political flashpoint, being at the same time sacred, disputed and divided. It is also like East Jerusalem, the only place where Jewish settlers live within the Palestinian city, giving rise to intense tensions and confrontations. As in East Jerusalem, the Jewish population that has settled in the centre of Hebron is known for having extremist religious and ideological positions and motivations (Shahak & Mezvinsky, 2004; Røislien, 2007), while Hebron is itself a city characterized by a strong tradition of religious conservatism.

Hebron is indeed a holy city for the three monotheist religions as the burial place of Abraham and other biblical figures. Six Patriarchs and Matriarchs are indeed believed to be buried in a cave under the Haram al-Ibrahimi (the Abraham Mosque, called Cave of the Patriarchs in English and Me'arat haMacheplah in Hebrew). Numerous documents show that this sanctity of the town is extremely ancient, notably as a site of pilgrimage. Numerous Jewish, Muslim and Christian pilgrims left accounts of their journeys to the holy city since the beginning of the Middle Ages (Barbé, 2017: 41–51; Reiter, 2009: 166–167). Hebron for example appears on the account of the journey of Sayyid Yusuf, a Muslim pilgrim, in a manuscript dated from 1433 (Chekhab-Abudaya, Couvrat Desvergnès, & Roxburgh, 2016), and on the Garrett Hebrew scroll, a sixteenth century pilgrimage scroll kept in Princeton.³⁶

From Hebronites Jews to the Jewish community in Hebron

An anciently established Jewish community used to live in the city, where they had numerous properties, encompassing houses – some still visible today in the old city, notably thanks to characteristic carvings in the stone, such as a Star of David or Menorah – synagogues, but also the Beit Hadassah complex, which opened at the end of the nineteenth century, as a medical centre for residents of the city. In a period of rising tensions between the Arab population of Palestine and the Jewish newcomers, a rumour spread about a Jewish plan to take over al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, which triggered important riots that reached Hebron. Sixty-seven members of the Hebronite Jewish community were massacred by a group of Palestinians on August 24, 1929. The survivors of the events were then sent to Jerusalem by the British army (Newman, 1985) and prevented from coming back to the city, which effectively marked the end of the Jewish community of Hebron until 1968. The event still represents an important collective trauma and has become central in the memory of the place reactivated and publicized by the new Jewish community in Hebron, composed of settlers arrived after 1968.

In 1967, the Israeli conquest of the city during the Six Days war triggered profound changes: as in Jerusalem, the newly acquired Israeli control over the city meant access to the holy sites for the Jewish people. Quickly, new rules were established to allow Jewish access to the Cave of the Patriarchs, from where they had long been excluded (Reiter, 2017; Lecoquierre, 2019a, 2019b). Under the Ottoman authority and Jordanian mandate entrance to the Haram al-Ibrahimi was

indeed forbidden to non-Muslims and Jewish believers were confined to the seventh step of the Eastern entrance's staircase. Even if the staircase has now disappeared, the site remains to this day a place of prayer for Jewish believers (Lecoquierre, 2019b).

In 1968, a group of settlers, led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, decided to reinstitute a Jewish presence in Hebron. They firstly settled in the Park Hotel and were then hosted at a military camp nearby until the government decided to legitimize their presence and build a Jewish neighbourhood in the area. On February 5, 1970, the decision was taken to build 250 housing units; this was approved on March 25, 1970 by the Knesset (Feige, 2009: 146; Zertal & Eldar, 2007: 18–21). The new “town-settlement” of Qiryat Arba, located north-east of the old town of Hebron, was ready at the end of 1971. From an initial population of 50 families, the number of settlers living in Qiryat Arba grew to around 7,200 inhabitants by the year 2008 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In 1979, the settlement effort moved again to the town itself as a group settled in the building of Bet Hadassah, in the heart of the old city.

The population of Jewish settlers in the centre of Hebron increased over the years to reach around 700 inhabitants.³⁷ The main points of settlement are now scattered along the road that connects Qiryat Arba to Tal Rumeida, running through the old centre of Hebron: Bet Hadassa, occupied by Jewish families since 1979; Avraham Avinu and Bet Romano, created in 1983 after the central vegetable market and bus terminal were taken over. Tal Rumeida/Admot Yishai, located on the hill overlooking the old city and the Muslim cemetery, was occupied in 1984 (Al-Jubeih, 2009: 23). Several other buildings are punctually claimed and occupied by the settlers, reinforcing the Jewish presence in the old city (see Figure 1.8).

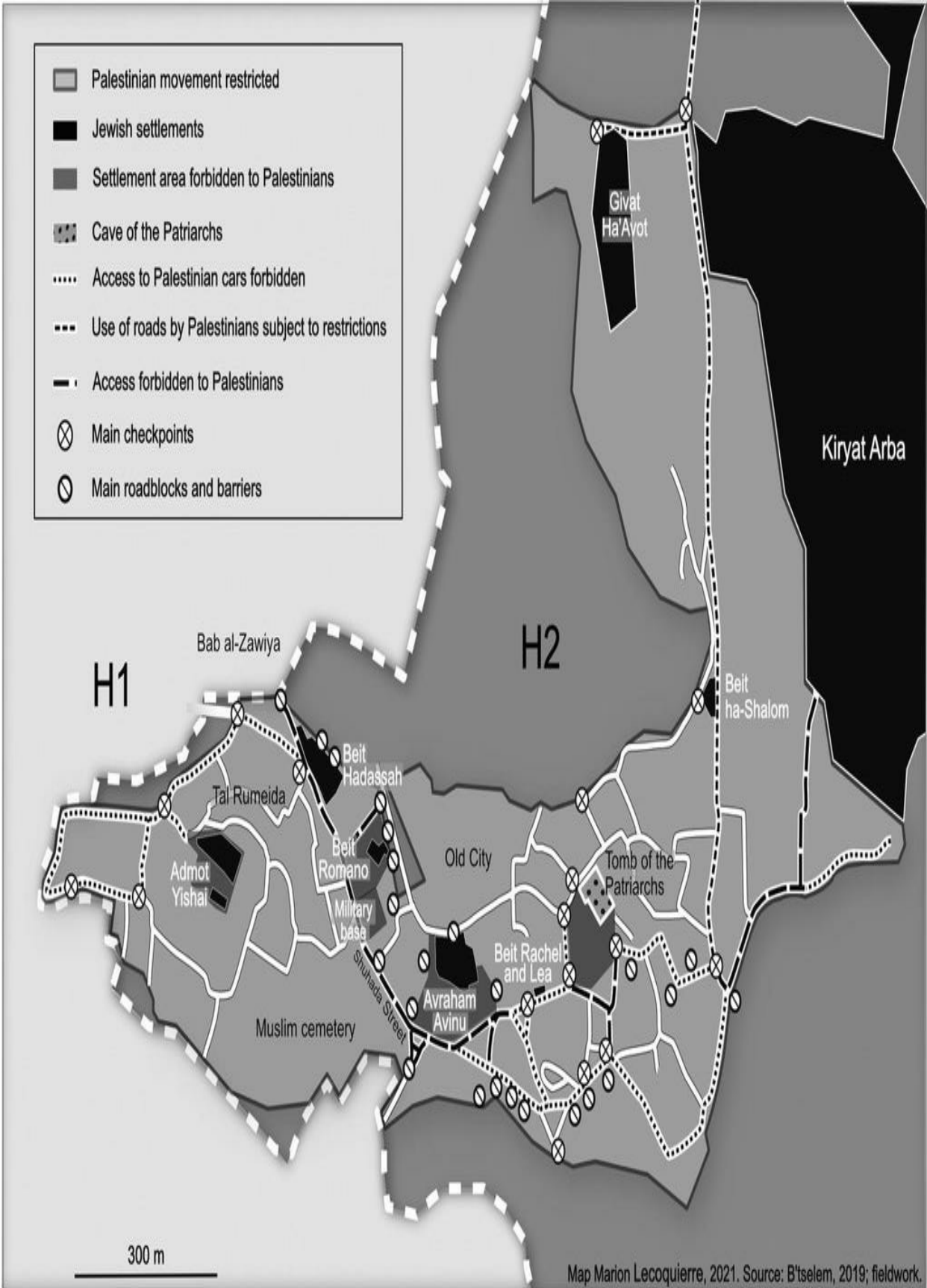


Figure 1.8 Regimes of closure and control within H2. Map by the author, 2021, sources: B'tselem, 2019; fieldwork.

This settlers' presence at the very core of a Palestinian city comes alongside a massive military presence and a string of administrative and military measures that limit the Palestinian presence in the old city, which all together contributed to keep the tension in the city at a very high level, with numerous and regular clashes, attacks and dead on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. In particular, on February 25, 1994 Baruch Goldstein, a settler from Kiriyat Arba, opened fire on Palestinians praying in the Haram al-Ibrahimi, killing 29 people (see for example Clarke, 2000; Feige, 2009).

The particularity of the settlers' presence in the heart of the city and the consequent violence resulted in Hebron being administered under a very particular regime, unique in the West Bank: the city is separated in two areas, H1 and H2 (see Figure 1.8). The Joint Declaration of Principles (DOP), based on the agreement negotiated in Oslo and signed on September 13, 1993 in Washington DC, provided for the transfer of the main Palestinian cities and of 450 villages to a yet to be created Palestinian Authority, as well as the future withdrawal of the IDF from the occupied territories.³⁸ The Gaza-Jericho Agreements³⁹ (May 4, 1994), aimed to lay the ground for Palestinian autonomy in the two eponymous areas: Jericho was the first town handed over to the PA in 1994. Thereafter, all of the main cities of the West Bank (Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Jenin) were transferred to the PA's control, forming the "Zone A," where the PA has (theoretical) full control over civilian and security matters. Hebron was excluded from those agreements, and the Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron, signed on January 17, 1997 divided the city into two areas: H1, corresponding to the modern part of the city, came to fall under Palestinian authority, with conditions equivalent to those of area A.⁴⁰ The H2 area, centred on the old city, encompassing the Jewish settlements and the Cave of the Patriarchs and extending towards the east to Qiryat Arba, remained under Israeli military control. The municipality of Hebron remained in charge of supplying water and electricity to the Palestinian and Israeli residents of H2 (and is also responsible for road maintenance).

The administration within the H2 area has evolved over time, with various levels of closure and of mobility for the Palestinians and powers for the military and settlers. Increasingly, the harsh living conditions and military orders condemning many shops drove most of the Palestinian residents out.⁴¹ According to a survey conducted by the organization for human rights B'tselem, in 2006, 76.6% of all of the commercial establishments present in the centre had closed and 41.9% of the housing units of the same areas had been deserted.⁴² 36 000 Palestinians are now considered to live in the whole of H2.⁴³ In 2017 the Israeli government voted to grant the Jewish community of Hebron the status of autonomous municipality.

A fragmented area

Three different zones can be distinguished within the apparently unified H2 area: a large "restricted" zone, a "fortified" one and a sanctuarized area at the very core of H2 (see Figure 1.8). These nuances existing within H2 seldom appear on maps, whereas they have a clear existence on the ground, corresponding to different regimes of control. Those regimes correspond to specific matrixes of power that articulate different types of measures – military,

administrative and legal – enforced over the areas and the layers of material obstacles one has to pass to access them. They correspond to various degrees of control and exclusivity: the first degree corresponds to the “restricted” area, namely parts of H2 that are accessible without specific controls and without passing material obstacles such as checkpoints. These areas, which mostly cover residential neighbourhoods and a part of the old city’s market, have more physical continuity with H1 than with the rest of H2 and the change of status is imperceptible. Movement between the two areas is usually fluid, but the “restricted” part remains formally under Israeli control and military incursions are frequent. The next area, nested within the restricted part, is “fortified.” It is partly fenced off, materially delimited by numerous checkpoints, walls, roadblocks and a changing arsenal of coercive measures. It is accessible to Palestinians after specific controls and access and movements are submitted to changing decisions: the hill of Tal Rumeida has for example been declared a closed military zone between the end of 2015 and 2018, becoming accessible only to its residents which were given an identification number. One of the main access to this area is Checkpoint 56, located above the square of Bab al-Zawiya, an area that represents the central hinge between H1 and H2.

Finally, the core of H2 is made of “sanctuarized” areas, clusters of exclusivity accessible to Israelis and international tourists but strictly forbidden to Palestinians. The main sanctuarized area is the central portion of Shuhada street, which connects the settlements to the area of the Haram and to the neighbouring settlement of Kiryat Arba and Highway 60, which connects the city to Jerusalem. All access points to the street are controlled by the Israeli military or materially closed. The parallel street of Shalala Street, which runs from Bab al-Zawiye to the Ibrahimi mosque cutting through the old city and market area in the “restricted” area of H2, is completely cut off from Shuhada Street: all transversal roads have been blocked and shut down with metal panels or concrete walls. Access to this area is controlled by soldiers posted on Shuhada street. Streets connecting to this area are blocked off to vehicles (see Figure 1.9, and Figure 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in Chapter 3).



Figure 1.9 Blocked roads in H2. Pictures taken on August 13, 2011 and March 24, 2013.

The Cave of Patriarchs, the historic and religious centre of Hebron, is the second “sanctuarized” area. It is itself divided into two parts, Muslim and Jewish, access to which is controlled by the Israeli Border Police. This division followed the massacre committed by Baruch Goldstein in 1994 (Lecoquierre, 2019a). The Commission of Inquiry in charge of examining this event recommended a “complete separation between the Moslem and Jewish worshippers to prevent friction, disputes and acts of violence.”⁴⁴ The place was thus divided into two different areas, dedicated respectively to Muslim or Jewish prayer, each space being off limit for believers of the other religion: Muslims cannot access the Jewish side and Jews cannot access the Muslim side. The cenotaphs of the seven patriarchs and matriarchs believed to be buried in the cave under the sanctuary are also separated: those of Isaac and Rebecca are located within the mosque and those of Jacob and Leah in the “synagogue” part. Abraham and Sarah are situated in the middle, visible to both Jewish and Muslim believers, the involuntary go-between between beliefs, spaces and people. The whole building is open to members of each religion for around ten days per year, during the major religious holidays (notably Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Pesach for the Jews, Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr for the Muslims) (Lecoquierre, 2019b).

The politics of Israel in H2 and more particularly on Shuhada Street rendered Hebron and the street itself symbols of the Israeli occupation and a destination for political tourism (see Chapter 6): it is one “thing to see” for groups or individuals who come to witness the reality on the ground. It is indeed considered as representing “a micro-sample of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,” concentrating “settlers, soldiers, discrimination, apartheid...”⁴⁵ The yearly Open Shuhada Street campaign, launched by YAS on February 25, 2010 and organized mainly around a demonstration in the centre of the town, made the street an icon of injustice, and as a result, turned the name of the street into a symbol which has been adopted internationally (see Chapter 4).

This overview of the situation in the Negev, Hebron and Silwan, shows the major historical, legal and political processes at work in each site of contention considered. I have concentrated on the mechanisms and strategies of control implemented by the Israeli authorities as they are the prime target of the resistance practices analysed in the next chapters.

Putting those three cases in parallel is interesting as it allows to unpack common patterns of control and coercion imposed by the Israeli State on the Palestinian populations even if with varying intensity and modalities of implementation, notably with regards to the laws used and the corps in charge of law enforcement. Those patterns highlight also similar political objectives, notably the importance for Israel to secure control over as much land as possible and to limit the number of Arab on the land it controls. Divergences also distinguish those three sites, notably the regime of governance implemented. Scrutinizing the various modalities of actions employed by the actors of contention will go more in detail into the similarities and differences between the cases.

Notes

1. The State of Palestine is recognized by a majority of world States with the notable exception of the United-States, Japan, Australia, Canada and most of the countries members of the European Unions. Palestine is also an observatory member at the UN General Assembly. It has the structure of a State, with a Parliament, ministries and elections, but very few prerogatives of a sovereign power.
2. See “Freedom of movement” on B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/splitting_of_the_west_bank
3. Parts of this section have been used for various articles published on the author’s personal blog, on the websites Visions Carto, Orient XXI and in the journal “Justice Spatiale – Spatial Justice.”
4. The use of Arabic or Hebrew terminology is a topic of constant debate as it is vested with heavy political meaning, the various Israeli governments having largely hebraized names of places on its territory and in the West Bank, in a move to assert its sovereignty and cancelling the Arabic, representing the Palestinian memory and presence from the land. On this, see, Chapter 3. As for the Naqab/Negev both terms are used here as they correspond to two narratives on the same space.
5. For more details on the mechanisms of land acquisition see Kimmerling (1983).
6. Aaronovitz, “The conquest of Labor and the conquest of Land,” Hapoel Hatzair 12, 1908, in Kimmerling, 1983: 80.
7. Ismail Abu-Madighem died in January, 2014.
8. Interview realized on November 13, 2013.
9. For the text of the law, see “Land Acquisition Law,” Israel Legal Resource Center, <http://www.israellawresourcecenter.org/israelaws/fulltext/landacquisitionlaw.htm>.
10. The account of this process made on the website of the Knesset under the rubric “Bedouins in the State of Israel” is particularly interesting and honest; it is worth noting that it indirectly recognizes the rights of Bedouins to the land when stating that “the Land Purchasing Law in 1953 (...) caused the Bedouins to lose all rights on their lands outside their living area.” See http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/bedouim_eng.htm. Several reports describe the process of expulsion and the situation of the Bedouins in detail; see for example Swirski and Hasson (2006), International Fact-Finding Mission (2010), Amara, Abu-Saad and Yiftachel (2012).
11. Interview with Ismail Abu Madighem realized on November 13, 2013.
12. See for example: “Bedouin Squatters to Get Land, Cash As Settlement Law Approved,” Arutz Sheva, 5/6/2013, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/167774#.Vae66Pntmko>; or the enlightening information document about the Bedouins and the situation in the Negev of the Israel Land Authority: *The Beduin of the Negev* [sic], no date indicated, http://www.land.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin_information.pdf, redirected from http://www.land.gov.il/Envelope/indexeng.asp?page=/static/eng/f_project.html.
13. Interview realized on April 21, 2012. See Amara and Yiftachel (2013).
14. Interview realized on April 9, 2012.
15. See Adalah, “Supreme Court in Precedent-Setting Decision: Spraying Toxic Chemicals on Crops of Arab Bedouin Farmers in the Unrecognized Villages is Insensitive, Disrespectful and Endangers their Lives and Health,” April, 15th, 2004, <http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/6807>.

16. Video made by Silvia Boarini, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rNv_zBixJ0.
17. The official mission of the “Green Patrol,” created in 1976, is to protect the environment and to prevent illegal uses of State land. It acts on behalf of different governmental organizations such as the ILA or the JNF, but also the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Defence.
18. The First Temple was the Temple of Salomon, destroyed in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar II. The Second Temple was rebuilt in 515 BCE and enlarged under Herod the Great; it was then destroyed by the Romans in 70 BCE.
19. For a quick overview, see also e.g. “East Jerusalem, Facts and Figures,” ACRI, <https://www.english.acri.org.il/east-jerusalem-2019>.
20. See “The Withering of Arab Jerusalem, International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/135-extreme-makeover-ii-the-withering-of-arab-jerusalem.aspx>; “3,374 East Jerusalem residents received full Israeli citizenship in past decade,” Haaretz, October 21 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/3-374-east-jerusalem-residents-received-full-israeli-citizenship-in-past-decade.premium-1.471189>, “More East Jerusalem Palestinians seeking Israeli citizenship, report shows,” Haaretz, April 22 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/more-east-jerusalem-palestinians-seeking-israeli-citizenship-report-shows.premium-1.516906>.
21. For an overview of the narrative supporting this politics, see for example Weiner (2003).
22. The project to expand Jerusalem towards the East, in the so-called “E1 area,” connecting its eastern Jewish neighbourhoods with the settlement of Maale Adumim, would create an urban continuum and cut through the West Bank, further reducing the space that could be claimed by Palestinians in case of peace, fragmenting the territory of the West Bank and hindering the Palestinian freedom of movement. See for example “The E1 plan and its implications for human rights in the West Bank”, B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20121202_e1_human_rights_ramifications; “What is the E1 area, and why is it so important?,” +972, <http://972mag.com/resource-what-is-the-e1-area-and-why-is-it-so-important/61298/>; “The E-1 Plan and Other Jerusalem Disaster” (Halper, 2005).
23. “Revocation of residency,” B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_of_residency; Revocation statistics, B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_statistics.
24. “East Jerusalem,” on B’tselem website, <https://www.btselem.org/jerusalem>.
25. City of David website, section “About us: Rediscover Biblical Jerusalem,” <http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/fr/node/1431> (accessed August 2013).
26. “The City of David,” Ministry of Tourism, http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Articles/Attractions/Pages/CityOfDavid.aspx.
27. City of David/Ir David Foundation, <https://www.cityofdavid.org.il/en/The-Ir-David-Foundation>.
28. Those private security companies are under contract the Housing and Construction Ministry. See for example “East Jerusalem: Jews only private security guards:” <http://www.acri.org.il/he/17285> [in Hebrew].
29. Interview realized on October 28, 2012.
30. Interview with T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, February 18, 2013.

31. Holy Bible, New International Version, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah%203:15>.
32. See the section “Archaeological interpretation and its political implications” in the online version of the booklet published by Emek Shaveh, *Archeology in the Shadow of the Conflict*, http://alt-arch.org/en/booklet_online/.
33. The Israel Project, <http://www.theisraelproject.org/atf/cf/%7B84dc5887-741e-4056-8d91-a389164bc94e%7D/20100302LAUNCH%20OF%20DEVELOPMENT%20OF%20GAN%2> (accessed July 2012). The document has since then been removed, but quotes can be found for example in “Justice for Jerusalem,” T’ruah, <http://www.truah.org/images/stories/truah-jfj-text2-facilitator.pdf>, p.18, and in “Rejected plan for Silwan includes zero forced evictions,” Ma’an, May 18, 2010, <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=285150>.
34. The Absentees Property Law, adopted in 1950, transferred the property of “absentees” to a Custodian. Absentees were defined, amongst other things, as any Palestinian citizens who had left their habitual place of residence for a place outside Palestine before September 1, 1948 or for a place within Palestine held by forces hostile to Israel. See <http://www.israellawresourcecenter.org/israellaws/fulltext/absenteepropertylaw.htm>.
35. Statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 2007 Locality Population Statistics Hebron Governorate Population, Housing and Establishment Census 2007.
36. See “A Pilgrimage of Memory,” Don Skemer, RBSC Manuscripts Division News, November 21, 2017, <https://blogs.princeton.edu/manuscripts/2017/11/21/a-pilgrimage-of-memory/>, but also “Genealogy of the Patriarchs (Yichus ha-Avot),” Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/688582?exhibitionId=%7B3e2bd038-7aea-4779-9951-974efca566d%7D&oid=688582&pgids=372&pg=0&rpp=20&pos=16&ft=*&offset=20 and the “Holy cities plaque” showing the four holy Jewish cities – namely, Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias and Safed, in the article “The Holy Land,” Hebraic Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/hs-holyland.html>.
37. The numbers vary greatly, between 500 and 800 (see for instance, Katz & Lazaroff, 2007 for this last figure; Medina, 2007; Clarke, 2000). In 2000, Richard Clarke justly underlined the highly political character of those statistics, but also the difficulty that the temporary presence of around 300 Yeshiva students caused (*ibid.*: 15).
38. See the “reference documents” of the Peace process, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/reference%20documents/http://www.mfa.gov>.
39. See “Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area,” website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 4th, 1994, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/A> and “Gaza-Jericho Agreement Annex” (*ibid*) <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/Gaza-Jericho%20Agreement%20Annex%20I.aspx>, and “The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement-Main points,” September 28, 1995, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20israeli-palestinian%20interim%20agreement%20-%20main%20p.aspx>.
40. “Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron,” Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Protocol+Concer>

41. For more detailed map the Humanitarian Atlas 2011 of the Ocha-oPt: http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_humanitarian_atlas_dec_2011_full_resolution.pdf
42. Website: <http://www.btselem.org/hebron>.
43. “Hebron City Center,” B’tselem, available at: <https://www.btselem.org/hebron>.
44. See “Commission of inquiry – massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron,” June 26, 1994, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/commission%20of%20inquiry-%20massacre%20at%20the%20tomb%20of%20the.aspx.
45. Interview with G., EAPPI volunteer, realized on May 8 and 9, 2013.

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2 Inhabiting

The value of presence and the right to place

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The first set of practices of resistance observed in all three case studies relates to the presence and permanence in space. I regroup these under the spatiality of “inhabiting,” that, as a repertoire, consists in affirming and publicizing one’s connections and attachment to the space of

daily life, a space encapsulating various spheres and scales ranging from the home to the city. This corresponds to the space of spatial practices, appropriated and perceived by people throughout their routines and daily practices (Lefebvre, 1991: 38).

Confronted to various policies of dispossession and displacement (see Chapter 1), many Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank indeed oppose their own individual and collective presence in space as a means to claim their rights – right to stay, but also to property, to movement, to build, to access an area ... In so doing they produce a place and claim its legitimacy.

This presence in space is made visible, publicized and translated through bodily presence, material manifestations such as human-made objects, constructions and interventions on the landscape, for example road signs and graffiti. The presence can also be conveyed symbolically, through the diffusion of narratives connected to the place, for example, by publicizing the place's name, history and identity, thus affirming its existence and challenging other representations – in the case studied here, the official ones, defended by the State of Israel and other institutional actors. One concept in particular encapsulates this centrality of presence, that of “*sumud*,” often translated as “steadfastness.”

These tactics of resistance, if they aim at claiming and appropriating space, also contribute to the production of space. More precisely, they directly produce places, through localized practices and representations. This chapter looks at the political dimension of place-making, showing how the spaces lived out by individuals and the immaterial relationships woven around and between them can become venue and medium for the resistance. If place is the central facet of space involved here, other dimensions are tightly interrelated, such as networks and scales, embedded within the places, giving them thickness, relief and texture, but also embedding the places within larger geographical units like regions and territories prolonging them through interconnections and exchanges.

This chapter explores different practices of resistance that occur in place, drawing on the resources of the local and producing a space that is at the same time personal and informed by the stakes of the resistance movement. First, I explore the legal and symbolic meaning of presence, which underlies the importance of staying in place as a means of protest, showing how in each case studies marking and naming the space are essential elements of the spatial repertoire adopted. The centrality of *sumud* in the Palestinian repertoire similarly demonstrates the importance vested in the place, which can be nuanced in different scales, from the house to the neighbourhood, then possibly connecting to the city and national territory. *Sumud*, based on an enduring presence in space despite hardship, attached to both place and protest, can be better approached as an “habitational resistance” (Collins, 2011: 18), as it relies on presence as much as on the local practices and daily life people weave through their mobility, routines, social relationships, etc. I will also engage with its place in the Palestinian repertoire of contention, its being a means of resistance being considered as ambiguous and even contradictory within the Palestinian society. Finally, I underline how the place-centred strategies of resistance examined here can be formulated as assertions of a “right to place,” a reformulation of the “right to the city” proposed by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1968) and largely diffused by authors such as David Harvey (Harvey, 2003, 2008, 2012), which allows to consider those practices within the broader framework of spatial justice.

Being present and staying: turning space into place

The contention in the three case studies relies on place at several levels: it is firstly the location of the protest but also an object of claims and the base or inspiration for many practices of resistance, thus produced in a dialectical way. Residents and activists in all three sites of contention concentrate on making the place emerge, imposing and defending its existence both materially and politically. This section focuses on the practices of resistance that intend to have such an effect, focusing on the appropriation of space through physical presence and marking.

Physical presence constitutes a real political stake as it implies or demonstrates a kind of power: occupying¹ and appropriating an area is a way of ensuring the control of that space; it generates the ability to act there, and also provides the possibility to regulate and modify that space. Ensuring a presence in space is thus a real stake for the Palestinian population as well as for the Israeli authorities, as it constitutes a way to contend power, materially and symbolically.

Beside bodily presence, the first way to display the appropriation of space is to mark human presence physically through signs, for example indicating the name given to the appropriated space, bringing out its particularity. The naming of a place can be in itself a challenge to the official writing of history and the production of space: the language used and the place where the sign is put, but also the very existence of the place itself, can be challenged.

The stakes of physical presence: between legal status and individual practice

Physical presence is a sign and a message: it displays a form of appropriation, even if ephemeral or superficial, and implies a possession or property over a space, thus generating a form of legitimacy. In his seminal work on *Zionism and territory*, Baruch Kimmerling defines presence as representing “(a) a basis for claims of possession without regard to ownership, or (b) demonstration of ownership upon land or the putting into effect of that ownership – especially if that claim is contested” (1983: 20). The presence amounts to claiming a right over the space occupied and establishing a “possession” in space, not necessarily corresponding to a formal or long-term claim of property.

In the cases studied here, people appropriate space first as the location where their daily life unfurls, but this very localization has at the same time a political dimension: it is a root of their struggle and an argument in their efforts to make their claims heard.

The value of presence is all the more important that it has clear legal implications in the Israeli judiciary. Physical presence – or absence – in a place can be key in disputes for determining property rights. I must insist on the importance of this point, as land property is a crucial instrument to ensure territorial control and is extensively used in the Israeli legal system. The successive Israeli governments have indeed consistently resorted to the creation of a legal apparatus allowing and justifying massive acquisition of land playing on the distinction present/absent. One facet of the strategy is based on the exploitation of absence, often created or encouraged on purpose. The absence of Palestinian landowners who were expelled by the Jewish armed forces has been one of the main arguments used by the State of Israel to seize large amounts of Palestinian land after the 1948 war (Morris, 1989; Pappé, 2006). The Absentees’ Property Law (1950) for example formulates that an ‘absentee’ is “a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel” who (among other situations) “was a Palestinian citizen and left his ordinary place of residence in Palestine.”² The other side of this strategy is the organization of

presence through “facts on the ground,” meaning that presence and the material realizations that sustain it install a *status quo* considered as difficult – or impossible – to reverse.

In Hebron, facts on the ground were established through the durable presence of Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers in the city, which eventually lead to the city being divided and the old city being slowly transformed, making the Israeli control more visible and rooted in place. In Silwan, the expansion of the City of David and the presence of settlers in Wadi Hilwe both affirm a durable Israeli presence in the area. In the Negev, the development of urban centres, of numerous military areas, but also other policies such as the afforestation of the desert, are all decisions that establish facts on the ground, ensuring the long-term control of the State over the area.

Considering these three situations, it is clear that physical presence has political implications and can represent an instrument of domination. As a result, it is also conceived as a central feature of the power struggle by the protestors who use it to challenge or thwart Israeli control. It represents, in all three case studies, a resistance practice *per se*, both for its demonstrative and symbolical power and for its legal aspect.

Presence is important not only from a legal point of view but also from a symbolical one: it plays a central role in many founding Israeli narratives justifying the creation of Israel. The spatial dimension of presence must indeed be connected to a time dimension: showing one’s presence is important, but claiming a permanence in time is as crucial. If projecting a presence in the future can show one’s commitment to the land and to the political claims advanced, claiming a presence throughout past times is essential to dispel possible claims underlining discontinuity. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a dispute over the territory, but also over a timeline and the chronology of presence, whereby both parties seek to prove their rights through an ancient presence. The scriptures of the Torah and the construction of the two Temples in Jerusalem represent the main arguments mobilized to support the Jewish people’s presence and rights, to which certain Palestinian, entering the chronological debate, opposed a continuity with the Canaanites (Tamari, 2009). Edward Said underlined the stakes of presence, affirming that “the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence and, with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality” (Said, 2000: 175).

In Al-Araqib, presence is considered as the most basic practice of resistance; the continuous presence of people on the area is considered as a way to defend the land, even if this strategy is engaged without much hope as to its efficacy. The inhabitants insist on the importance of having a constant presence on the site of the village, for example when they participate in an event or a demonstration elsewhere, as leaving the village empty would allow for an easy takeover on the part of the authorities and could prevent anyone returning inside the area of the cemetery, bringing to an end any possibility of resistance. Presence is seen as a means of defence, but it is also conceived as a proof of the residents’ attachment to the land, their determination and the seriousness of their claims.

The presence on the land of Al-Araqib is also presented as a natural continuity of the Bedouins’ presence in the Naqab, asserting a spatial and temporal legitimacy of the residents’ claims to the land. As such the residents of the village do not like to evoke the period in which they were away from the land in the 1980s and 1990s until they settled back on the land of Al-Araqib in 1998. They insist on the expulsion of 1951–1953, but often describe their presence and contact with the area as continuous, often failing to mention or skipping that period in any

account of their personal history. Avoiding mentioning this absence, that could be used as an argument delegitimizing their fight can be seen as part and parcel of the resistance strategy connected to presence.

The importance of presence can be further illustrated by the regular decisions of the district court, following the arrest of residents or activists, whereby they are required not to return to the ground of the village for some time (see Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011 and the NCF newsletters). It is also illustrated through the imaginary strategies evoked by the inhabitants to show their determination: during the fieldwork, Haqma Abu-Madighem, one of the residents of the village, sometimes daydreamed about living on a tractor in order to enter and leave the cemetery at will, or about living underground. Evoking this last “solution,” she specified that in this case the State could not expel her or argue that she was occupying State land, meaning she could maintain her presence and live in Al-Araqib. In more realistic ways, other residents sought solutions that would ensure a continuous presence on the ground; after the destruction of June 2014, Haqma’s husband, Salim, mentioned the possibility of buying trucks in which the family could sleep. The sheikh of Al-Araqib, Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, announced: “If we have to, we will sleep in the cemetery, among the tombs” (field notes, July 27, 2014).

In Silwan and Hebron, presence as a deterrent is also a central strategy of struggle: M., a teenage girl whose family lives next to the settlement of Tal Rumeida, explained: “women stay at home because if they are not in their house the settlers will attack or they will take the houses. So resistance for women is to be in their houses.”³ Jawad Siyam, a community leader in Wadi Hilwe, insisted that in Silwan people “have to be awoken 24 hours [on 24], with open eyes. Someone has to be in the house, you can’t switch off the light – switching off the light means the house is empty. Small things like keeping on the light is struggling!”⁴ On the same note, Fakhre Abu-Diab, a responsible in the local committee of Al-Bustan, explained: “we don’t like to travel outside of Palestine for one or two weeks, we are afraid that when we come back, we will have no home, it will be demolished... If we go to travel our minds will be in our houses here, and our bodies will be outside.”⁵

Presence is thus an element that can represent a basis for legal claims made in respect to property, or to officiously assert an attachment to the land through the appropriation of space. In the case of expulsion or demolition, physical presence allows for physical opposition and a direct protest. However, if it represents a common and basic means of resistance, physical presence remains a relatively weak strategy as the State or other authorities can resort to coercion but also to various laws to establish property rights and thus bypass the claims that this presence expressed in the first place. Presence is thus used as an immediate display of power over a space, but is nevertheless submitted to higher forces.

Beyond legal and strategic implications, human presence in a specific area is crucial because it represents a basis for defining or creating a place. It materializes a location in space, establishing the “where” in relation to all the other locations possible. Presence represents a fundamental – yet not indispensable – element in order to define the existence, delimitation and characteristics of a place as it not only materially links the people to the land through material structures but it also feeds the place with representations, attachment, meanings and values that contribute to producing it as a part of the inhabitants’ identity (Cresswell, 2009). Human presence does not necessarily have to be physical to make a place exist: rather, it depends on the human perception, which identifies and delimitates an area as a particular place. Cohen and Kliot consider that the

definition of place depends on “an observing consciousness” which “separates [it], by whatever means, from other places” (1992: 655). Places are indeed connected to human experience, and as such are transforming in a constant process of “becoming” (Pred, 1984).

Naming and marking a place, claiming its existence

If physical presence can be an essential element in the production of place, the long-term permanency can also be decisive in that it allows people to develop attachment and meanings, giving shape to characteristics of the place beyond the mere location, developing the “locale” and the “sense of place” (Agnew, 1987).

The “sense of place” is one of the three dimensions of place defined by Agnew; it designates the “structure of feeling” (1987, 1993), and the intangible cultural elements, like ideas or values, that construct the place (Leader-Elliott, 2012: 207), encompassing “the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place” (Cresswell 2004: 7), or “the way in which human experiences and imagination appropriates the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location” (Oslender, 2004: 961). In addition to occupying and appropriating the place, displaying presence and reinforcing the local cohesion, the actors also respond to control and coercion by using or changing the meaning of those places. Various variables, such as the symbols used, the physical setting or the cultural aspects highlighted, make the meaning of each place, and consequently each terrains of resistance and each repertoire adopted, unique (Routledge & Simons, 1995: 491).

The naming of places is an essential element of this material and symbolic investment in the local. It represents another basic way of appropriating and claiming an area and complements the physical presence by affirming the singularity and existence of the place. In a way, naming is a condition for existence; it has a performative dimension, consecrating and attributing its singularity to a place and distinguishing it from its environment (Cresswell, 2004: 10). It also represents another way to claim a ‘right’ over a place or to claim its appropriation, challenging the authority and the official writing of history (Langlais, 2005). The territory “crystallizes itself in the toponyms, the names given to places to make them come out of their anonymity, to single them out and, this way, to make them enter in the memory and in a History” (Collignon, 2002: 46, translation by the author). Thus, the processes of marking and naming have to be considered not only as a material process that makes the place emerge, but also as a symbolic one that is part of an effort to frame the place and its identity and impose a certain discourse on history and memory (see also Chapter 5).

The politics of place-naming and marking

The politics of place-naming has been extensively studied in relation to Israel, usually with a focus on the concepts of place and landscape (see for example Alderman, 2008; Azaryahu & Golan, 2001; Cohen & Kliot, 1992b; Jett, 1997; Kearns & Berg, 2002; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010) and on issues of memory and heritage (Azaryahu & Kellerman, 1999; Azaryahu & Kook, 2002), but also names given to the streets (Alderman, 2002, 2003; Azaryahu, 1997; Bar-Gal, 1989; Pinchevski & Torgovnik, 2002; Shoval, 2013). The erasure of the Palestinian presence after the Nakba was realized notably through a systematic policy of “hebraicization of the map” (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001: 178) that replaced Arabic names with Hebrew ones, combining the two processes of nation-building and language revival.

Concentrating on the territories conquered after the 1967 war, Cohen and Kliot have shown that the modification of names was a “manipulation of [the] political landscape” answering to the objectives of Israeli nationalism (1992: 654). Naming is indeed a process tightly connected to history or more precisely to the historical narratives that are allowed into the public sphere: it represents a “powerful vehicle for promoting identification with the past and locating oneself within wider networks of memory” (Alderman, 2008: 195). As such, place names often explicit ideological views: in Israel, they are instrumental in reinforcing the Jewish collective identity and affirm the link of the Jewish people with the land.

If naming can be merely declarative or descriptive, a mere way to qualify and designate a portion of space, it also implies appropriation and “a demonstration of authority” (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001: 181). As such, it is often tackled in relation to strategies of domination and hegemonic powers. However, the process can also represent a *claim* for such an authority on place. As such, not only naming but also the definition of place boundaries are “strategies exercised both by those having a great deal of social power and by those comparatively lacking in it” (Myers, 1996: 244). It can be used by protestors or minorities as an oppositional tactic, contesting names given and sanctioned by other actors or authorities – State, municipality or other – and proposing new or alternative ones in keeping with their claims, or even inscribing those claims in space and minds. Naming a place indeed inscribes relationships of power, and sometimes even an open challenge, in space (Myers, 1996: 237). To render those two different standpoints, Alderman proposes two conceptual frameworks to study the process of heritage and identity-building through naming: naming as symbolic capital and naming as symbolic resistance (2008: 196). In respect of the latter, he underlines that it can be the doing of “marginalized stakeholders who wish to have a greater voice in determining what vision of the past is inscribed into the landscape” (Ibid.: 197). Naming indeed has a symbolic and performative dimensions, signalling “a conquest in the city” (Zeneidi, 2006: 197, translation by the author). In Israel and Palestine, re-affirming the Arabic names of places – whether neighbourhoods or streets – that have been appropriated by Israel, is a typical way to try and reconquer them, at least symbolically.

Naming and marking are strategies that go together and conform to similar logics and objectives. The marking of space, both symbolic and material, claims a presence and “manifests the appropriation of a space, or at least the claim of such an appropriation” (Veschambre, 2004: 73). The marking can be formal, for example mimicking the official road signs, but also be more informal, for examples through banners or graffiti.

As shown by Julie Peteet in her study of the graffiti in the first Intifada, the “writings on the walls” represented common and “accessible weapons of communication, assault and defence” (1996: 139). As non-official signs made by individuals they constitute ways to “mark the territory” (Calvet, 1990: 75) and influence the “linguistic landscape” (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, & Trumper-Hecht, 2006). Marking the space with graffiti in Arabic and English are clear political acts claiming the identity of the place and trying to inform external visitors of the ongoing struggle. In the old city of Hebron, as well as in Silwan, it is common to see graffiti claiming the name of the place or affirming the existence of Palestine (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The graffiti being a typically urban mode of action, Al-Araqib is less concerned with this kind of appropriation and marking. The marking would have less of an impact in this area, as there are no passers-by to read it. However, some kinds of affirmation and claims of this kind can still be found, reflected, for example, in the writing “my villeg al-Arakib” made by one of the children

on the door of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem's house, destroyed in 2014.

If the naming and marking processes can be revelatory of dynamics of domination and ideological interpretation of history, they also reflect and reveal contemporary political issues. The geographical location of markings but also the very language used to attribute a name can for example represent a contestation of the dominant group by affirming and inscribing in space an alternative identity; in Israel - Palestine the affirmation of place-names in Arabic connected to the Palestinian identity and memory can be highly political and even controversial, considering the process of Hebraicization mentioned above.



هنا بيتنا
Here is Silwan

بیتنا
هنا بيتنا

Figure 2.1 Graffiti in Wadi Hilwe Street “Here is Silwan.” Picture taken by the author on October 19, 2012.



Figure 2.2 Two young men write “Hebron” and “Palestine” on a wall during the Open Shuhada Street demonstration. Picture taken by the author on February 23, 2013.

Putting Al-Araqib on the map

In Al-Araqib, and in the Negev in general, obtaining an official recognition is the main political goal concerning the “unrecognized” Bedouin villages. As such, the names of those village have a crucial symbolic meaning; their very existence, their being used and visible in the public space or landscape is an act of resistance to impose their existence to the State and the public. In Al-Araqib, the name of the village constitutes a central stake for the residents, as its existence is denied by the successive demolitions and the creation of a forest in the area by the JNF. The village’s presence “on the map” – literal and metaphorical – is an essential objective of the struggle around Al-Araqib.

The importance of the name in this case is embodied by the last-born daughter of Aziz Abu-Madighem. Born in 2015, she was named Araqib, linking the village to the very life of its inhabitants, thus affirming its centrality in their identity and their attachment to the place. Her mother, Sabbah, explained the rationale for this choice, underlining that the name itself, be it of a child or of a place, is not accepted by representatives of the State authority, and that in this case too she had to fight to have it accepted:

We had already thought about it before the birth, but then she was born on the day they were destroying Al-Araqib for the 62th time, so it was obvious. When I said the name we chose at the hospital they refused, then the nurse wrote it without the “i”, “Araqb.” I took the pen from her hands, and I added it. She has a history, she is the daughter of *sumud*” (field notes, November 11, 2013).

This choice illustrates clearly the importance given to the place and the meaning invested in it; it also highlights the necessity of displaying it and affirming it publicly so that this attachment cannot be denied.

A common practice in the unrecognized Bedouin villages associates the acts of naming and materially marking the space, with the installation of signs indicating the name of the village on the nearest road or at the entrance of the village. A sign used in Al-Araqib, which has now disappeared, seemed to answer a dual purpose: firstly to impose the name and thus the existence of the place, and secondly, by copying the style of the official road signs, to claim a legitimate presence and a desire for official and permanent acceptance. The indication of the names in three languages – or three different alphabets: Arabic, Latin and Hebrew – reflected the common practice in Israel, integrating the villages into the State landscape. It also shows that a wide, English-speaking audience is targeted, reflecting another strategy used by Bedouins and sympathizers: the appeal to international opinion (see Chapter 6).

The inhabitants of Al-Araqib have also written the name of the village on the side of Highway 40, passing within the vicinity of the village and from which one can access the village. Made of coloured pebbles, the sign was intended as a means of claiming the existence of the village: as the writing is in Arabic, it is also an implicit reminder of the presence of a large Arab population in the region.

The inhabitants of Al-Araqib have other ways of using the materiality of their environment to

mark and reclaim the place. One of the most enduring tactics is to rebuild the destroyed structures. Since the destruction of 2010, they have rebuilt the *shieq* (the tent where men meet and where guests are welcomed) and two or three shelters on the land where the village was located after each demolition. This is done in order to establish their presence, and thus their resistance, to generate greater visibility, to illustrate their obstinacy, but also to maintain a material indication of where the destroyed village used to stand. Maryam, a young woman living in the village, daughter of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem, stated: “These tents are symbols, we watch them and we remember that this is our land.”⁶ The addition of electric lights in the cemetery was explained in the same way; visible from the street, they “indicate the presence of Al-Araqib, they show that people live here.”⁷

Silwan, affirming the Palestinian identity of East Jerusalem

In Silwan, the name is officially recognized and is indicated at the beginning of Wadi Hilwe Street. The importance of the names is made acute by the accelerating transformation of the neighbourhood under the influence of Elad and the municipality (see Chapter 1). A sign similar to the one indicating the entrance of Silwan for example designates, on the other side of the street, the area as being “City of David” with the same signage style (see Figure 2.3), making explicit the competition taking place in the neighbourhood between two sets of memories and two readings of history. It also illustrates the way the area is evolving, with clear efforts to change the meaning attached to the place. It indicates the reason why the inhabitants insist on the importance of the neighbourhood’s name and their fear that it is being replaced. In Silwan, the fight is rather aimed at preserving the name, the Arab identity and memory of the area. The influence on the place-names in the neighbourhood is also explicit in the streets around the City of David. Many streets there have been “landscaped,” with “spatial design strategies” aiming to fit a neo-biblical imaginary (Pullan & Gwiazda, 2009) in line with the narrative developed in the City of David (see Chapter 1 and Figure 2.4). This kind of official and very meticulous staging of space seems very difficult to challenge considering the level of control that surrounds it. The marking of space is strongly influenced by the competition between two narratives and memory, making it an essential political and ideological instrument (see also Chapter 5).



סילוואן

سِلْوَان

Silwan



עיר דוד

مدينة داود

City of David



Figure 2.3 The official signs “Silwan” and “City of David” near the City of David. Picture taken by the author on September 30, 2012.

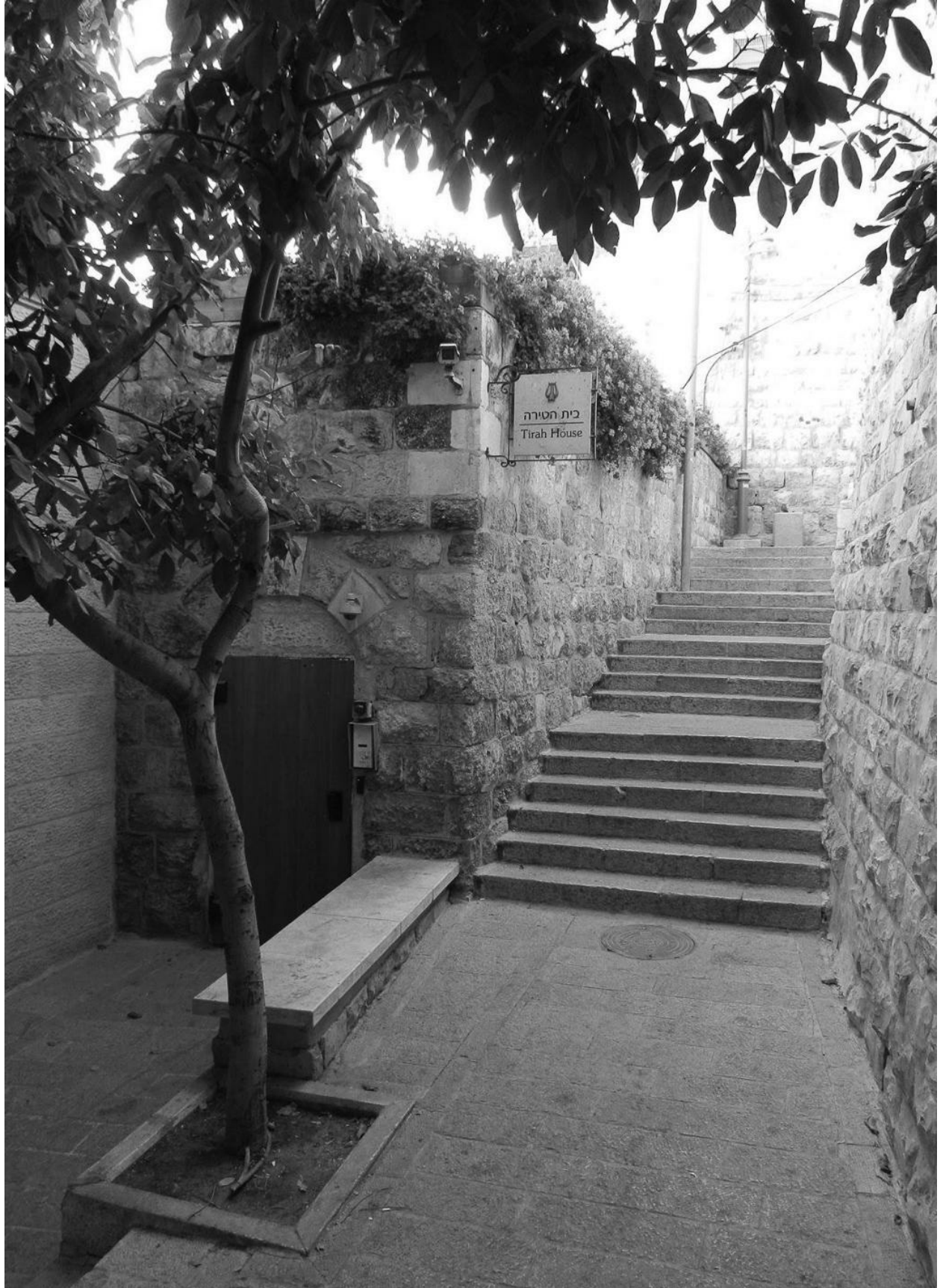


Figure 2.4 Renaming the houses in Silwan and designing the urban landscape next to the City of David. Pictures taken by the author on September 30, 2012.

In Wadi Hilwe, the name of the neighbourhood is used in order for inhabitants to locate themselves in the bigger space of Silwan. The vicinity of the City of David and the presence of settlers puts them on the front line: the Wadi Hilwe Information Center makes a claim through its name to its local roots and objectives, but they insist mainly on the common Silwanese identity. Wadi Hilwe is the main entrance to Silwan when one arrives from the old city, but the publicity of the City of David puts this identity at risk: “The settlers here change the name of our neighbourhood. They call it City of David, it was Wadi Hilwe (...) Then the tourists who come to visit here believe it’s all an archaeological site, tunnels and Jewish houses. They don’t know there are 55,000 Palestinians living here.”⁸

In Al-Bustan, the stress is put mostly on the specific struggle of the neighbourhood against demolition: the sense of urgency, the compactness and homogeneity of the neighbourhood, as well as its being slightly more isolated – being located at the bottom of the valley – makes the inhabitants concentrate more on their local struggle. The name has never been evoked as an issue, but it can be noted that a process similar to Wadi Hilwe is at work there, even if it is not indicated through markings in the neighbourhood. Indeed, an overview of the Israeli newspapers indicate that some of them already designate the neighborhood under the name of “Gan haMelech,” the King’s Garden, undermining its existence before the park is even built (see Chapter 1); this legitimizes the plan and implicitly condemns the presence of the residents, as the area seems already destined to another use.⁹

In both cases, people insist more on the importance of Silwan rather than on the two neighbourhoods’ names. Silwan is indeed one of the historic and well-known areas of East Jerusalem, and it is this name that is considered as being threatened by the creeping Israeli encroachment. In those two cases, the name constitutes a symbolic stake and represents a real issue of power: indeed, the language used changes the perspective on the history and population of the place, and thus on the legitimacy of the authorities’ policies as well as the residents’ claims. The name Silwan is used by the residents as a political slogan, expressing the issues at hand and the claims advanced by the actors of contention (see Figure 2.1). It is used as an expression of pride, encapsulating the meaning and the reasons why the residents are staying and fighting.

Hebron: a battle over history and visibility

In Hebron, the name of the city itself is less of a political issue. As one of the main Palestinian towns of the West Bank, with a long and well-known history, Hebron is indeed famous. Notwithstanding that the Arabic name, *Al-Khalil*, is not as well-known, and that the Israelis use the name *Chevron* instead, the English version is accepted as a general common name. Yet the Arabic name is used with pride: Al-Khalil indeed means “the friend,” referring to Abraham, who is designated in the Quran as the “friend of God” (Quran, 4: 125). The figure of Abraham remains central in the city’s identity. He is for example also called “Abu Dh’ifan,” the one who welcomes the guests, after the episode where he welcomed two unknown persons that turn out to be angels sent by God. This example of hospitality is considered as part and parcel of the city’s

identity, a city “where nobody goes hungry” (Lecoquierre, 2019b). This name is sometimes used as a political argument to affirm the importance of the city, often presented as the fourth holy city of Islam.

In Hebron, the conflict over place names concentrates on the H2 area, where the separation imposed on the basis of citizenship, ethnicity and religion, between Palestinian Muslims and Jewish Israelis, also applies to space in a kind of schizophrenic split. If the division separates spaces horizontally, with clear delimitations and obstacles, it also has a splitting effect vertically, with two different geographies of the city often overlapping, one layer using Arab and Muslim spheres of references, the other relying on references and episodes related to the Jewish world; Palestinians use one set of references, while the settlers and the army use another, indicating the development of specific narratives on both sides, which insist either on the Arab or Jewish identity of the old city.

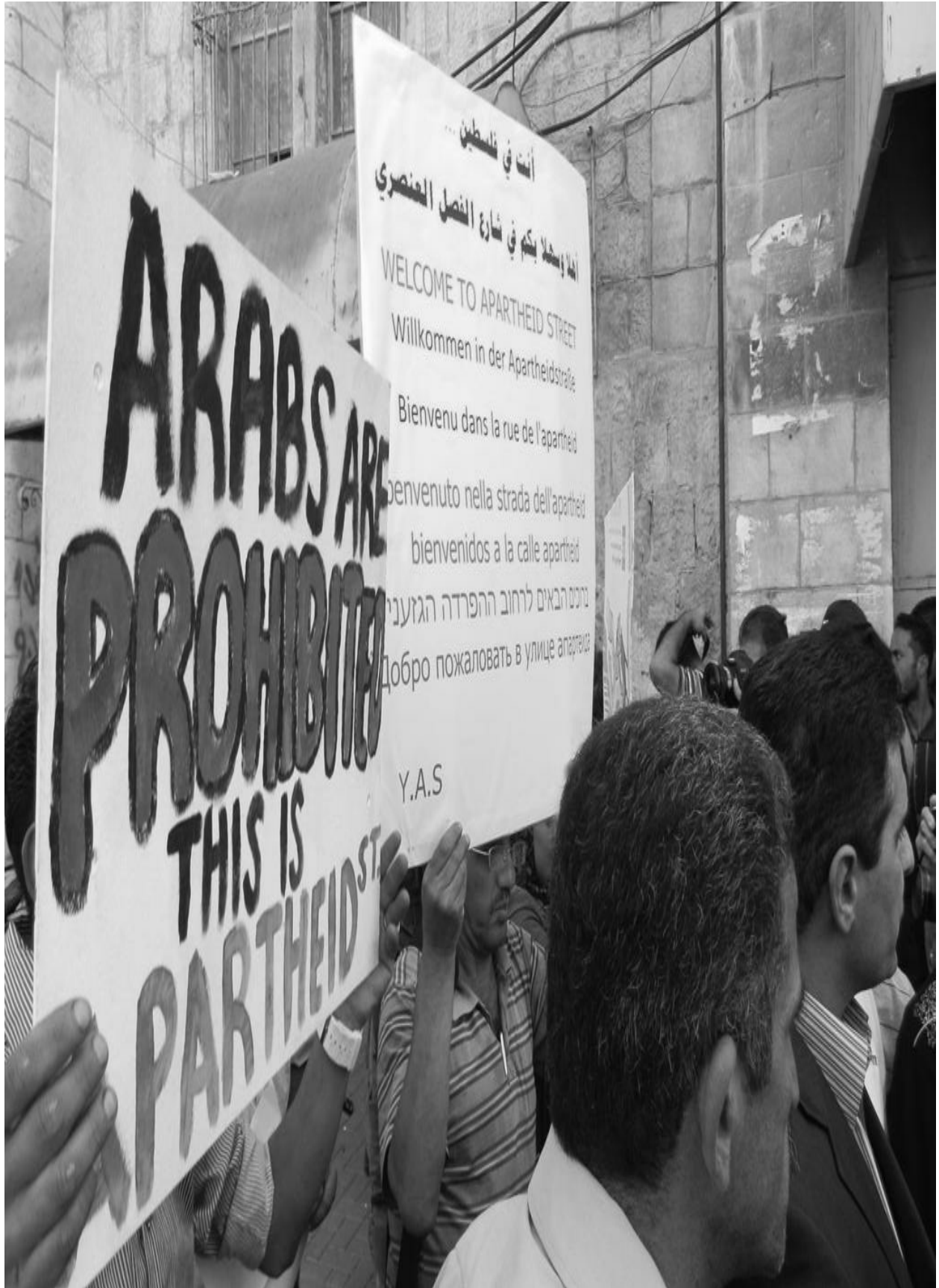
Issa Amro, the coordinator of Youth against Settlements (YAS), a group of activists struggling against the occupation, for example explained: “Shuhada Street has three names... Four maybe. Israeli settlers call it King David Street. The army calls it Chicago Street. And we say Share’a Shuhada [Street of the Martyrs] but it was in the past Share’a al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin [Muslim Brotherhood Street].”¹⁰ Similarly, the houses taken over by the settlers respond to different names: the “Rajabi building,” next to the settlement of Kiryat Arba, is called “Bet haShalom” (Pease House) by the Israeli settlers.

The Israeli names have been always more visible in the sanctuarized area of H2 since 2010. The Jewish settler community of Hebron has installed signs in the old city indicating sites connected to the Jewish history or to the current Jewish presence, and street names redefined according to the same type of references. Some signs are also explicative and aim at justifying the closure of Shuhada Street (see Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6). This system of signage and names redefines the geography of the old city, claiming Israeli sovereignty, but also advertising a Jewish identity and erasing the Palestinian character and Arab past of the city: Shuhada Street is for example named “Emek Hebron” (Hebron Valley) and “King David Street” (see Lecoquierre, 2019a).

Countering the Israeli marking of space is next to impossible in the area of Shuhada Street: signs, frescoes and graffiti found along the street are mainly realized by the different military units serving in Hebron or by the settlers, all imposing a very ideological and univocal reading of history and space. A series of frescoes located next to the central Israeli military base located on Shuhada Street for example narrates the fate of the Jewish community of Hebron; the walls built to block access between Shuhada Street and the market are also sprayed with graffiti, some representing for example the Temple of Jerusalem. This marking of space is not challenged by writings, signs, or even destroyed. As access is restricted and strictly controlled – Palestinians entering the forbidden area are automatically arrested – the Israeli authorities dominate the marking and meaning given to space and the Palestinian struggle at a distance. Removing or tagging the official signs installed by the Jewish community in Hebron, or putting other explanations, would indeed require having access to this area, which is impossible; other locations are thus used to display the alternative narrative, names and try to undermine the dominant discourse.

The municipality of Hebron and the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee have for example installed with the support of other institutions signs in Arabic and English in the “restricted” area

of H2, indicating Palestinian historical sites of the old city (Lecoquierre, 2019a). An action organized by Youth against Settlement took place in August 15, 2011 in front of Checkpoint 56 in order to symbolically rename the street “Apartheid Street” (see Figure 2.5). The original idea of the group was to turn it into an official name: Rafiq Al-Jabari, the representative of the governor who came to “inaugurate” it, instead insisted it was a temporary renaming, as the name of the street was a legacy from the past and that the memory of the eponymous martyrs (the “Shuhada”) had to be respected.¹¹ The action revolved around the symbolic affixing of a sign reading “welcome to Apartheid Street” in several languages, with the Arabic stating: “you are in Palestine, welcome to Apartheid Street” (see Figure 2.5). The sign was confiscated very quickly by the army, which intervened to block access to the checkpoint. However, the stencilled graffiti sprayed by the activists on the concrete blocks defending the checkpoint, remained in place for months. The slogans reading “welcome to Apartheid Street,” “this is apartheid” along with “Zionism is racism” and “fight ghost town” remained clearly visible (see Figure 2.6). These informal forms of marking, can thus be the most effective as they can be realized quickly and are difficult to remove, marking durably the place and imposing one particular reading of the space. Two signs carried by demonstrators, claiming “this is apartheid” and “Arabs are prohibited, this is apartheid” were later installed in on the balcony of a house overlooking Shuhada Street (see Figure 2.7). It shows that if the street itself is not accessible to Palestinian, the private domestic space represents a resource for resistance, a “safe place” here directly opposed to the public space underneath.



**ARABS ARE
PROHIBITED
THIS IS
APARTHEID STREET**

أنت في فلسطين...
أهلاً وسهلاً بكم في شارع الفصل العنصري
WELCOME TO APARTHEID STREET
Willkommen in der Apartheidstraße
Bienvenu dans la rue de l'apartheid
benvenuto nella strada dell'apartheid
bienvenidos a la calle apartheid
ברוכים הבאים לרחוב ההפרדה הגזעני
Добро пожаловать в улице апартеида
Y.A.S.

Figure 2.5 Demonstration renaming Shuhada Street in “Apartheid Street.” Pictures taken by the author on August 15, 2011.



Figure 2.6 The stencils “Fight Ghost Town,” “Welcome to Apartheid Street” and “Zionism is racism,” painted in August 2011, on cement blocks located in front of Checkpoint 56, during an Israeli incursion in H1. Picture taken by the author on February 11, 2013.



Figure 2.7 The sign “Arabs are prohibited, this is apartheid” on Zliha Muhtaseb's balcony, above Shuhada Street. Pictures taken by the author on August 23, 2011 and March 26, 2012.

The importance of names appears central in all three sites of contention; in all three of them it appears that the battle around the names, which means the cultural references and language they refer to, encapsulates one of the main points of those struggles: the perspective of disappearance, of a total erasure of the Palestinian presence, memory and right to live on the land, meaning eventually the disappearance of the very idea and reality of Palestine.

The possibility to challenge Israeli control through marking and naming is very limited in the central areas of Silwan and Hebron, which are the most contested zones and are heavily controlled making it difficult to challenge the Israeli politics of renaming and the symbolic marking deployed by the authorities. In Al-Araqib people affront a different type of constraints: the isolation of the village, making any marking much less visible and thus less efficient, the goal of any marking being to be seen and acknowledged.

These strategies are integrated into a wider repertoire, common to Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Negev, and often presented as the only available tactic to oppose the authorities. *Sumud* is indeed a means of resistance based on physical presence, and is sometimes defined only according to this dimension. However, it has a larger scope, directly linking the resistance to the place, as it implies the inhabitation of the place and its perpetuation as a lived space.

Sumud: resisting by inhabiting

The physical presence of the inhabitants is often presented as the most important, if not the only, means of resistance available to Palestinians. It represents a central resistance practice, with an eminently spatial meaning that we will develop and explore in this part.

In all three cases studied here, when asked about the means available to fight the Israeli control and occupation, the interviewees, as well as other inhabitants in more informal conversations, often answered “nothing.” However, this affirmation of helplessness was usually complemented by one precision: “we stay here.” This last assertion points to a specific practice: *sumud*.

Sumud is a rich, multi-layered term, generally translated simply as “steadfastness.” In the Palestinian context, it designates a stubborn presence and an unwavering commitment to the land through the continuation of one’s daily life. I argue that *sumud* brings together the lived space, the representations of space, and the “sense of place.”

Defining *sumud*: staying in place, defending the land

In respect of the three case studies considered here, *sumud* constitutes a fundamental term whenever resistance and struggle are evoked. A central practice of resistance deployed by the Palestinians, *sumud* combines presence (“staying”) and steadfastness (“patience”) in spite of the various hardships. It has been defined as “a personal lifestyle (...), the ‘pessoptimist’ mentality that is found in oppressed societies everywhere” (VanTeeffelen, Biggs & Sumud Story House in Bethlehem, 2011: 56).

In Al-Araqib, *sumud* is the central word used to describe the struggle of the village and the constant rebuilding of the destroyed structures. Asked about the strategies to which the Bedouin communities can resort in order to change Israeli policy, Haqma Abu-Madighem answered: “We are not able to do that... I believe only Allah could change it from above. But I believe every time we decide to stay here and resist, they have to change their policies.”¹² Aziz, son of the village’s sheikh, explained: “*sumud* is a term which means protecting a particular area with all means available, not to leave it, but to keep presence (...) *Sumud* means protecting your presence in a place.”¹³ Some slogans used during the weekly Sunday demonstration show the importance of the term,¹⁴ also used under the form “*samidun*,”¹⁵ those who perform *sumud*:

صاميدون صاميدون... مثل الزعتر والزيتون
 Samidun Samidun, like the thyme and the olives
 يا عراقيب صومود صومود... من ارضك طلغوا الاسود
 O Araqib, *sumud sumud*... from your land the lions rose
 كف بكف وايد بايد... عن اراضينا ما بنحيد
 Palm on palm, hand on hand, from our land we are not leaving

In Silwan, the term is also used to account for the narratives and practices of resistance employed. Jawad Siyam explained: “our existence here is resistance, not to leave the village, not to leave the city, it is resistance.”¹⁶ For R., a resident of the central neighbourhood of Silwan, *sumud* means “to stay, to live and to be powerful persons, to fight without fighting, to fight peacefully, to resist. If I stay in my house, I am fighting,”¹⁷ whereas for J., then secretary of the Fatah party in Silwan, who lived in Al-Bustan: “*Sumud* is to hold against all these Israeli attacks, whether they are directed against the food we eat or they are psychological and physical torture, preventing us to live with dignity. Standing against those attacks is *sumud*.”¹⁸ In general, the people interviewed agreed that staying “in our homes, in our village, in our town”¹⁹ is the “first step that everyone must take, the simplest thing we can do.”²⁰

As for Hebron, people refer to the same type of definition. Zliha Muhtaseb, whose house is deep in the old city and overlooks Shuhada Street, surrounded by numerous closed shops, explained for example: “Resistance, for me, is living in my house. We are *samidin* in our house. Just living in these conditions, yes, living in these conditions is a big *sumud*.”²¹ Similarly M., who participates in YAS activities and lives next to the settlement of Admot Yishai, underlined: “to live in the area we live in, this is resistance. To stay. Our resistance is also to be patient, because we suffer a lot from them [the settlers].”²²

The basic principle of *sumud* lies in the physical presence: the bodies of the inhabitants are conceived as protectors of the land, a kind of last rampart against total appropriation or eviction. The tight relation between *sumud* and the landdimension of protest. *Sumud* is has been expressed by various interviewees: “*Sumud* means that we resist and we will remain on this land. We will resist as long as thyme and olives [will].”²³ A resident of Wadi Hilwe insisted on the environment being itself part of *sumud*: “the people, the rocks, the houses are standing against the most awful soldiers in the world.”²⁴

In all three cases, *sumud* represents permanence in the face of territorial encroachment but also against the politics of transfer considered as being one of the main threats coming from the Israeli authorities in order to expand and effect their control over the land. The land is an

intrinsically multiscalar and multiform notion: it relates to the local, the place of life, and possibly the property, but also refers to the territory. The latter can be the national land of Palestine, usually understood as historical Palestine, or more specifically the ancestral land of indigenous people for the Bedouins. If it appeals to imaginaries connected to land and territory, the primary sphere of application of sumud remains the local, concentrating on the place, and first of all the home and the neighbourhood. The place has a dual meaning: it has value as the place of daily life, imbued with habits and affects, but it also incarnates the territory, each place incarnating the idea and existence of Palestine. Places are included within and connected to the wider frame of reference of the territory, in part incarnating the representations linked to the national territory (see Chapter 5).

I contend that this definition of sumud through presence and permanence does not render its multiple layers of meaning: sumud indeed has an intrinsic spatial dimension. Even more, it entails – and require – a production of space. It means to stay, but also to live and to keep on living in a place despite the hardships, to maintain and inspire life within places, to give them quality and thickness. Jawad Siyam for example explained that “every small thing you do here is resistance,” taking the example of switching on the lights at home to show that there is someone in the house.²⁵ Walid Abu Halawa, in charge of public relations for the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, which renovates houses in H2 and tries to bring back residents, insisted: “We are resisting by inhabiting.”²⁶ Staying, but also continuing one’s daily life, is thus considered as the basic form of resistance, and one of the only things left to oppose the Israeli control and encroachment. The practices of everyday life, the individual and collective routines, are therefore as important as the physical presence; sumud goes beyond steadfastness, it represents “habitational resistance” (Collins, 2011: 18).

The domestic sphere as object and resource of resistance

Practicing sumud means to live in space, to make the space alive. It relates above all to the basic spatiality of people’s everyday life, the space that everyone inhabits and appropriates. It is a practice that depends on the inhabitants, on their occupying and moving in space, but also on the material structures that constitute the “locale,” the material setting of this everyday life; this includes first of all the house, a concrete sign of human presence and of an ongoing “normal” life. It also highlights the role of women and the gendered dimension of protest. Sumud is deployed at the scale of the neighbourhood as well, with a variety of practices that aim at developing the place identity.

As a practice (or “lifestyle” according to VanTeeffelen and Biggs, 2011: 56) depending on presence in a certain area, the first sphere where sumud is applied is the domestic space. Residents have insisted on the connection between sumud and their house: “Resistance, for me, is living in my house”²⁷; “To sit down, to stay in my house, this is resistance.”²⁸

The house is central for sumud, both practically and symbolically. Practically, the house represents a material stake in the conflict. In the three cases studied here, the individual houses are subject to a very high degree of pressure from the Israeli government, the army or police, and the settlers, either through orders of destructions (Al-Bustan) and actual demolitions (Al-Araqib), restrictions on building permits (Silwan, Al-Araqib), invasion of properties (for example, during night raids, common in Hebron and Silwan) or through attempts to buy or occupy them (Silwan

and Hebron).

Symbolically, the house represents the privileged seat of private life, family and intimacy; inhabited, the material envelop of the house becomes a home, a lived micro-space and delimited place where the daily, private life takes place. The domestic space represents the “fundamental territory” of the human being (Staszak, 2001: 347) and carries the social identity of the individual and his family. The organization of Palestinian households gives a powerful insight into the organization of society. It often includes gendered and separated spaces, and displays elements indicative of the inhabitants’ identity, history and representations: pictures of jailed or dead parents, political parties’ flags, religious inscriptions, etc. The social position, tastes, ideology of the individuals are thus embedded in the domestic space, as an emanation of the people living there and a testimony of their social construction. The house, and more especially the “home,” its cognitive counterpart, is perceived as representing safety and a space of freedom, where people can “forge their own identities” (Cresswell, 2004: 26). The house is a primary condition to maintain a presence and inhabit place and as such it represents the primary scale of *sumud*. It is also one of the objects of *sumud*: the houses must be protected as the seat of everyday life, the material structure permitting the physical presence in place. It also constitutes the primary site for education, and as such it represents a bastion allowing the survival of the Palestinian culture. The house is often presented as the “headquarters” of *sumud*: it represents the origin and reason of the struggle, but also a means to carry it on, and a symbol of what the people defend.

It has to be noted that the women are often depicted as the real “*samadin*” as they are presented as the “guardians of the house.” The Palestinian society, and even more so the Bedouin society, is traditionally organized following a strict regime of gender segregation that is inscribed in space, opposing the public space, where women can be restricted and controlled, to the domestic space where they have more latitude. In Al-Araqib, the women and girls living in the village are particularly active in the local resistance, always participating in the demonstrations and voicing their determination. Haqma Abu-Madighem in particular became a voice of the struggle, having been interviewed for several documentaries in which she stated her determination to stay in Al-Araqib, to defend the land and the village. However, it has to be noted that this role of representation is usually limited to foreign media, who actively look for women’s testimonies. When groups come to visit Al-Araqib (see Chapter 6), the spokespersons for the village are always the sheikh, his son and other former male inhabitants of the village. The delegations are usually received in the *shieq*, a tent which is outside the area of the cemetery and is nearly exclusively used by the men. Those delegations are always mixed, making the presence of women or teenage girls problematic according to the Islamic precepts followed by the residents, as is the welcoming of men external to the family in the houses. The co-presence is not impossible but requires a certain configuration including, for example, the presence of other persons and the planning of the visit so that women are properly veiled upon arrival.

In Hebron and Silwan, many women work outside of the household, but they largely remain in charge of the domestic life. This division of spaces and activities is in constant evolution and women are gaining visibility and autonomy in the public sphere, however, the domestic sphere is still largely considered as a feminine realm, and is often claimed as such by women themselves. The constant female presence in the household is presented as a basis for *sumud*, not only because it prevents takeover, but also because it allows an active resistance to any threat. Zliha Muhtaseb for example affirmed that “Women in Hebron like in any other city in Palestine play a

big role in resistance because they live in the house, they are responsible for all the things happening around them, they are protecting their families. Just being in the house and trying to protect the children when the house is invaded or soldiers are attacking, when anything happens... It is the women who usually face it.”²⁹ M. also considered that women in H2 need “to protect or to stay in their home, because they are in an area with settlers and soldiers.”³⁰ The activities organized by the Maada community centre for the women of Silwan is very revealing of this role attributed to women in daily life. A., an occupational therapist at the centre, explained: “We did many workshops about child arrest, how we can deal with this, how you can deal if the soldiers come to your house in the middle of the night and ask for your child, so we give them information about the arrest or if they come to give you a demolition order, how to deal with it.”³¹ The empowering of women thus includes the engagement of tools allowing them to stay and face the situations with which they are confronted, such as the trauma experienced by children due to the military presence or arrests, or as a result of settlers’ violence; it also enables them to strengthen their presence in the house and their role in the neighbourhood.

This role attributed to the women in all three cases echoes with Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian’s analysis of the role of women during the second Intifada: “they have managed to develop strategies that protect the domestic space, producing innovative, if hidden, transcripts that create counter-spaces of safety to rebuild (actually or metaphorically) the family home” (2005: 113).

With this strictly separated gendered space and role, the house is often deemed to be the predominant realm of the Palestinian women, which implies that they take care of the family and the domestic space. However, while the presentation of the women as the “real samadin” is based on actual traits of the resistance and on the very social structure. The house is thus considered to be the starting point, the origin of sumud, in an attempt to try to preserve or to create safe places and a sense of security and home for the residents. It is prolonged by the neighbourhood (or village), considered as another scale essential to the practice of sumud, notably for the creation or reinforcement of a local identity.

Creating a sense of place in the neighbourhood, maintaining the public sphere

If sumud requires staying and living in one’s house, it also relies on the importance of the space surrounding the domestic space, that is lived on a daily basis. Safeguarding an active local life is indeed another basic principle of sumud, as mentioned in the interviews quoted above; sumud implies to *inhabit* space. This means that beyond the presence and permanence in the domestic sphere, the actors need to live and act in the neighbourhood (or village, in the case of Al-Araqib, as an equivalent local, “meso” unit). Some activists also try to act *on* the local life conditions to help people, in order to mitigate the impact of the occupation or of the Israeli control and to encourage them to stay and be *samadin*, giving sumud a collective and relational dimension.

It is indeed a declared goal of some activist groups and associations to actively work in their neighbourhood to improve the quality of life, to develop the inter-personal bonds at the local level in order to strengthen the community and eventually to sustain the people’s sumud. Activists focus on community building and neighbourhood activities, targeting mainly the children, in an effort to make daily life possible, or a bit more “normal.” In so doing, they also create and safeguard spaces of sociability that participate in the public sphere.

Silwan: supporting the daily life

This strategy was especially developed in Silwan; Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan both have local social centres that try to mitigate the pressure of the occupation and the creeping suspicion that dissolves the social fabric of the neighbourhood, but also to solve the problems arising from the lack of infrastructure in the village and in particular the lack of safe recreational space for children. Amani Odeh, who organizes events in Al-Bustan, underlined the powerlessness of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and advocated for this self-organization: “The only way we can resist is to make those activities and those festivals, to gather people, also from outside, not only from Jerusalem, to stand with us.”³²

Those two centres have become fundamental in the life of the neighbourhoods; indeed, in both cases, the emphasis is placed on the community itself and especially on the children and the women of the area. While these activities are presented as having a social application as a primary goal, the people working there are well aware of their political function and of the role these centres play in relation to the local resistance. Not claiming to have a political role is also a way to protect the work they are undertaking.

In Wadi Hilwe, the Maada community centre³³ plays a central role in organizing activities and in polarizing the life of the neighbourhood. Maada was established in 2007; it offers free activities for children, like music, traditional dance, theatre, summer camps and so forth.³⁴ Maada also has a psycho-social department, which mainly aims to take care of children who have been arrested³⁵ and offers support to children with learning difficulties or problems with motor skills (Al-Haq, 2020).³⁶ Officially separated from Maada – but in practice closely connected – the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre (WHIC)³⁷ offers information about Silwan to visitors and provides legal advice in case of an arrest or the receipt of a demolition order (see Chapter 6).

Children’s access to free activities and safe spaces is at the core of the centre’s actions. Indeed, not only is Silwan destitute in terms of infrastructures and services, it is also plagued by a high rate of arrests amongst children, at home or in the streets. “[The main idea] is to keep the children away from the street, to have a safe place here. Well “nothing is safe here at 100%. (...) But it is a safer place for them to learn to socialize, to be creative.”³⁸ If women are less targeted by arrests, they still are easily isolated. Group activities such as embroidery and mosaics, but also punctual courses or formations like first aid and movie screenings are organized by Maada. A group of twenty or thirty women gravitate around the centre, regularly meeting for these activities, which have clearly strengthened the bonds between them. These meetings represent important opportunities for socializing outside of the private sphere and in a neutral space with only women around. They operate as healing circles, allowing women to share their concerns and to discuss their experiences and problems; they represent arenas in which they can meet and establish new solidarities.³⁹ Wa’ed ‘Aeshe explained that “Before the center existed the women were in their home and they didn’t go out, the center makes the neighborhood here more active,⁴⁰ a fact confirmed by the women themselves. In contrast to public spaces that are perceived as threatening, the center represents a “safe house” in the sense advanced by Mary-Louise Pratt, as “social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression” (Pratt, 1991: 40).

In Al-Bustan, the social center was established in 2012 and organizes different activities for children, including music, football, poetry, and face painting.⁴¹ A tent, installed at the core of the neighbourhood, polarizes the cultural and political activities of the inhabitants. The tent is not only used for children's activities but is also the symbol of the neighbourhood's resistance and the place used for meetings and for the Friday prayer. In February 2013, a "sumud festival" was organized in the tent to celebrate the four years since its establishment and to claim "we are here and not leaving."⁴² It featured children of the neighbourhood engaged in theatre or reading poetry about Palestine (see Figure 2.8).



Figure 2.8 The “sumud festival” in Al-Bustan tent. Picture taken by the author on February 26, 2013.

In addition to this focus on social ties, we will see in the next chapter that the place identity is also strengthened through these activities, and included in the wider frame of the Palestinian culture and struggle (see Chapter 5).

Hebron: making life more liveable

In Hebron, the same concern about children has led to similar initiatives, mixing a deep social concern with a political commitment. K. explained, for example, that on this basis he has organized “restorative circles” with the Hebron defence committee to “focus on the kids who are detained, tortured or arrested. (...) If they talk about what happened to them it will be very helpful.”⁴³

The activists from Youth against Settlements also organize initiatives for the neighbourhood, for example events for the children of Tal Rumeida, as a “day of fun” on some Saturdays that involve games and political elements, like chanting slogans (“1, 2, 3, 4, occupation no more” for example) (see Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9 “Day of fun” organized for the children of Tal Rumeida, at the YAS centre. Picture taken by the author on February 14, 2013.

Other initiatives directed at helping the neighbourhood is the organization of “volunteer days” to clean up or renovate a place, an initiative baptized the “samidun project” according to Issa Amro, who explained that it aims at “strengthening the sumud.”⁴⁴ The activists help families of the area to fix their houses by painting, or renewing electrical and plumbing installations. Some individual initiatives have a similar objective and aim to make life in the neighbourhood easier: Zliha Muhtaseb, for example, created a kindergarten for the children of the old city: “There are no safe places but we try to create safe places, at least for children...”⁴⁵

This kind of intervention in the neighbourhood has an impact on the social fabric, but also on the urban one: they create points of reference in the landscape, and also actively modify it. A house renovated by the YAS activists in Tal Rumeida was therefore changed from being a garbage dump to a kindergarten painted with figures from cartoons and equipped with an artificial lawn. The actions of renovation carried out by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee in H2 (see Chapter 4), provide another good example of a politics that aims at sustaining the sumud and the presence of inhabitants by developing the conditions of life, through modification to the urban fabric: “this kind of thing is giving us more strength to stay into our home.”⁴⁶

Al-Araqib: keeping the place alive

For the Bedouins of Al-Araqib, sumud is related to the village and its land, or the area of the cemetery, that came to represent it. Being very small, the cohesion and solidarity within the village is already very strong; sumud however represents a narrative that brings the residents together and gives meaning to their struggle, strengthening the sense of place and sense of community. As such, the need to foster cohesion is not internal but external; the support from sumud is thus sought outside of the village, either with the former inhabitants or the Bedouin community as a whole. It is the outside support of the members of the family who moved to Rahat, including their regular presence in the village, which is seen as an important sign of encouragement and as a way of maintaining the cohesion.

Trying to foster mobilization or support at a wider scale in the Bedouin community and to back the cause of the villagers is also seen as essential, but is also directed towards the external environments, for example, with monthly demonstrations organized in Rahat. Events are also organized to encourage a more significant presence and a more active participation in protests: the members of the family and the old inhabitants of the village come back to Al-Araqib to participate and to show their attachment to the place for Friday prayers, as well as for all major religious festivities (weddings, Eid, but also for some Iftar, the dinners of Ramadan).

While external associations often organize activities for children in the village, any structured activity is difficult to implement in a context marked with such an intense sense of uncertainty. The appearance of normality is indeed much more difficult to establish and maintain in this case than in the other two, as the entire life of the people from Al-Araqib is marked by instability and the temporary: temporary shacks, temporary orders and decisions from the court. In this context, external support, from the NCF, from the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel or from foreign organizations, and international advocacy also become an important part of the

villagers' struggle (see Chapter 6).

As the Israeli control of space makes any direct action risky and any actual change difficult to reach, sumud is often presented as the main available practice of resistance, and sometimes as the only one. The intervention on the neighbourhood mixes social and political, material and psychological aspects, and produces space while trying to restore a semblance of normality. When “existence is resistance,”⁴⁷ the normality of everyday life, or at least some elements of normality, can facilitate both; generating a feeling of being at home, of being protected and supported, and of being active and part of a community, can allow people to go on with their lives in a difficult context. The preservation of a feeling of belonging and connection to the land is seen as essential, both as a resources to support the hardships of the everyday life but also as a political claim of a right to be there and to stay. It connects the local and the national as it is practiced locally but introduces “the local and the homely within the national struggle” (VanTeeffelen & Biggs, 2011: 56).

However, this “normality” is different across the case studies: in Silwan, it is the feeling of safety and of community that is acted upon. The social centers help to re-establish social ties which are damaged by strong tendencies to suspicion and by the constant pressure on the inhabitants. In Hebron, the activities organized by some inhabitants and at the centre of YAS also have a similar aim, but with a lesser scope. If sumud is important, strengthening the neighbourhood is not a main strategy or objective in Hebron and Al-Araqib; indeed, international advocacy and political tourism are the activities on which actors primarily concentrate (see Chapter 6).

The importance given to sumud pushes associations, NGOs and other actors to find ways to encourage and publicize it. As the general conditions of life cannot be changed, and as the people have little possibilities to counter the direct Israeli control over their lives – for example, by removing the checkpoints, by reopening the sealed shops, by countering the State's decisions, etc. – they sometimes bypass direct action to concentrate on working on the material conditions of life, in order to make everyday life slightly more comfortable and to make it more bearable in the long run. One of the only ways to do this, as nearly all the parameters regulating the “public” life are under Israeli supervision, is to work in the sphere of everyday life, that is, in the “lived space” where people's actions still have an impact; this includes the domestic space and the neighbourhood.

Sumud relies on place to nourish the resistance through daily life, and in so doing contributes to produce place and an important “sense of place,” entertaining an attachment to the local space that proves fundamental in the Palestinian resistance. Activists indeed draw on this attachment to try and mobilize the population, to reinforce the local identity and solidarity. A whole set of initiatives and narratives are developed around the notion of sumud. Those narratives insist on the value of sumud for the benefit of the residents but also for the external observers and visitors (see Chapters 5 and 6). They are also themselves an expression of sumud, and participate in making sumud an essential element of the local identity.

A “weak” repertoire, or “the art of presence”?

Sumud is often presented as “a national and moral duty”⁴⁸ and as a symbol of the Palestinian resilience in the face of adversity. It is mentioned as a “third way,” an attitude “between mute submission and blind hate” (Shehadeh, 1982), “between exile and submission, between

unproductive despair and devouring hatred – to stand fast, cling to their country, build homes and have children” (Langellier, 1987: 199). Many interviewees insisted on its being a reference common to all Palestinians, which brings them together: sumud “represents everyone” and is something “all Palestinians agree on” for Issa Amro.⁴⁹ For Aziz Abu-Madighem, “sumud became the general term that Palestinians use to describe their reality.”⁵⁰ One interviewee nuanced that according to him sumud has a “red connotation” and is a notion mobilized by the left-wing parties (PFLP and DFLP, of communist inspiration) (field notes, February 18, 2013). This assessment must be understood in light of his own position, relying more on a religious standpoint, thus favouring the concept of “ribat,” an equivalent of sumud with a more significant Islamic connotation (see Chapter 5).

However, if it has a collective meaning, the value of sumud is debated as some consider that it encourages a passive attitude and cannot be considered as resistance. Most of the Palestinians met and interviewed considered it as a fully-fledged repertoire, as the strongest means at hand to continue the resistance, while others presented it as a weak choice, a practice adopted out of discouragement and lack of alternative, which simply requires people to go on with their life without really acting further. From this latter perspective, it represents only a survival tactic, without political intent or real political perspective.

In fact, sumud raises the question of engagement even inside the Palestinian society. It is presented as a legitimate tactic of resistance but also as a passive and disillusioned attitude adopted by default; reference is sometimes made to it with mixed feelings, oscillating between the conviction that it is useful and represents a strong opposition on the one hand, and the doubt that it is not enough, that resistance ought to be more active, on the other. It is also considered as an “easy” solution, requiring only a limited commitment, one that can be totally invisible. Many interviewees underlined that this represents one of sumud’s advantage: it allows for easy identification and participation, giving a way to people who are afraid of reprisals to resist in their own way and to contribute to the common struggle at their level and according to their means, as it represents a low-risk type of commitment.⁵¹ However, the fact that one can claim to resist by just going on with his or her life was also presented as a flaw by some interviewees who consider that it a convenient way to hide one’s passivity and discourage more active mobilization and commitment, but also to depoliticize the struggle.

Many interviewees insisted that what now occurs in Palestine cannot be considered to be “resistance” (“muqawama”), a term which should be reserved to the kind of struggle that took place during the first Intifada, with more proactive and aggressive strategies like group coordinated actions, collective boycott and strikes. Aziz Abu-Madighem insisted strongly on the difference he saw between both words:

Resistance starts with an announcement; it starts by young and/or old people within a group in a defined area. Those who announce the starting of their resistance mean they will start to use force without withholding or waiting, they just start. (...) In resistance you may wish to move from a place to another, you make resistance from another point; on the contrary, steadfastness means protecting your presence in a place.⁵²

This explanation points out to differences in terms of organization and intention but also in terms of the spatiality upon which both strategies rely: sumud is localized and rooted in place, while

resistance may involve movement, to adapt and counter the opponent's reaction, in a guerrilla-type dynamic. A shopkeeper of Hebron, observing the ongoing clashes opposing the *shabab* (young men) to the Israeli army at Bab al-Zawiya, remarked ironically that it was "like Tom and Jerry, but definitely not resistance" (field notes, 5 April 2012), as it lacked proper organization. He regretted the political coordination that characterized the first Intifada, which was, for him, a requirement for an efficient resistance.

T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Committee, indicated that sumud enters into the category of "*muqawama silmiya*," or "peaceful resistance,"⁵³ underlining the nonviolent character of sumud. This nuance can be linked to the notion of passive of "static sumud" used initially after 1967 to bring people together, which evolved towards a more active acceptance, "'sumud muqawim' or 'resistance sumud' a more dynamic ideology and practice that spread self-help among the inhabitants" (Meghdessian, 1998: 41). Kimmerling and Migdal also indicate that sumud was initially attached to the figure of a "passive hero," that of the peasant who endured "the humiliations imposed by the conqueror," staying on his land at all cost (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003: 243). Eventually the meaning was enlarged to all those staying in the occupied territories, even if they were not *fellahin* working or owning the land (Ibid.).

This definition introduces a typology of sumud, which depends on the type of engagement and practices adopted; whether "static" or active, it derives from and relies on the same foundations but is practiced differently. The examples developed above show that both types of sumud are employed and intertwined: the "static type" relates to the definition advanced by the majority of people. Under this form, sumud clearly represents an "ordinary weapon of the weak" (Scott, 1985), a strategy that in its simplest form does not require organization or coordination, any economic means or even visibility and is available to all.

The various initiatives organized at the level of the neighbourhood to increase cohesion and solidarity can be included in the category of the "resistant sumud" for their proactive and political character.

Following Asef Bayat's work on the importance of everyday life and routine practices in Middle Eastern politics, I contend that sumud can be defined as the Palestinian "art of presence," as one branch of a typology of action that also exists in other countries of the region, trying to balance the need for struggle with the need to go on living. Indeed, Bayat conditions the "art of presence" to an "Active citizenship, a sustained presence of individuals, groups and movements in every available social space, whether institutional or informal, in which it asserts its rights and fulfils its responsibilities" (Bayat, 2004: 5). Sumud seems to be even more fitting with Bayat's description as he describes the actors involved in this kind of repertoire as "those who persist in the need for change through their active presence" (Ibid.).

Sumud thus represents a central practice in the Palestinian repertoire of contention as a real "weapon of the weak" (Scott, 1990), an "art of presence" (Bayat, 2004) based on ordinary and pervasive practices of everyday life carried out on a widespread basis by actors who act individually but in the same direction, according to similar principles (Ibid.: 21). While the practices and impact of sumud are not as visible as those of demonstrations for example, sumud is designated by the Palestinians as one of the most valid strategies that they have: under its active or more passive version it represents a practice that does not depend much on external opportunities but chiefly on a personal state of mind and its application. Of course, threats and constraints can influence the way it is practiced: regular demolition, arrests, and house invasions,

are all coercive measures that can make the presence or active struggle more difficult to carry on, but *sumud* specifically means the resolve to face those threats.

Sumud shows the many roles that spatialities play in the Palestinian struggle and their interrelations. The practices of *sumud* show how the place is the object, target, means and the resource of the protest, but also how it is at the same time declined in various scales, resonating notably with the territory (see Chapter 5). In consequence, I will argue that one of the fundamental claims expressed through *sumud* is the “right to place.”

Sumud, spatial justice and the right to place

Sumud draws on the importance of place but also reveals and strengthens it. Indeed the localized practices set out the importance of place in the resistance and show that the people actually fight for a place, or more precisely for what I will designate as the “right to place.”

We have seen that the Israeli settler colonial politics make space a central object in the conflict (see introduction and Chapter 1). As such, they have been defined as being “spacio-cidal,” with place being their main target (Hanafi, 2006: 93), seeking to make “inevitable the ‘voluntary’ transfer of the Palestinian population, primarily by targeting the space upon which the Palestinian people live” (Ibid.: 107).

Transfer is often presented by the Palestinian population as the ultimate goal of the Israeli authorities; all the coercive and repressive measures taken are considered to be just strategies to reach this objective. Issa Amro pointed out a “quiet transfer policy” in Hebron⁵⁴ while Zliha Muhtaseb indicated: “Everywhere the occupation is fighting people. It is trying to transfer the people.”⁵⁵ Other interviewees pointed out: “they want us to move, it is a transfer project”⁵⁶; “The Jews are very racist; they always talk about killing and transferring the Arabs”⁵⁷; “the arrest of children, fines, harassment disruption of normal life for the residents, taxes and revenge action all aim at transferring the Palestinian people from Silwan.”⁵⁸

The “transfer” of the Arab population of Palestine – a euphemism meaning its expulsion towards other Arab countries – has indeed represented and still represents an actual political option for the Zionist and Israeli governing circle. Despite the slogan of “a people without land for a land without people,” pre-1948 Zionist leaders were well aware that the coveted land was inhabited and that the Jewish population would represent a minority in a future Jewish State. The territorial conquest thus had to go hand in hand with strategies to limit the demographic weight of the Arab population in the controlled area (R. Khalidi, 1988; W. Khalidi, 1988). The 1948 war famously led to the expulsion of thousands of Palestinian – the Nakba – notably with the application of Plan Dalet (W. Khalidi, 1988; Morris, 1989; Pappé, 2006), but the 1967 Six Days war represented another occasion of “transfer,” with Palestinians being expelled towards Jordan, Syria and Egypt. A UN Committee established in 1971 that:

A large number of persons have been forcibly deported regularly from the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities. The fact of deportation is established beyond all reasonable doubt in the view of the Special Committee, and the frequency with which it has taken place since the June 1967 hostilities leads the Special Committee to believe that this is part of the Government of Israel’s policy. (UN General Assembly, 1971).

This demographic balance between the Jewish and Arab population remains at the core of Israeli policies and the “voluntary transfer” of Palestinians towards neighbouring Arab countries in order to secure territorial sovereignty and Jewish majority is still advocated by some far-right affiliates.⁵⁹ In light of this politics, *sumud* is considered as a fundamental strategy to oppose transfer, that is, by holding on to one’s house and to the place in general: “The Israelis, at the end, they have one goal. To transfer the Palestinians from their houses. That’s their strategy. As for me, my strategy, I will never leave my home.”⁶⁰ As such, I contend that *sumud* can be defined not only as habitational resistance, but also as a strategy claiming the “right to place,” conceived of on the basis of the “right to the city.”

The concept of the “right to the city,” coined by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1968) and then largely reused in sociology and geography, notably in the writings of David Harvey (Harvey, 1973, 2012) and Don Mitchell (2003, 2010), is attached to a Marxist and urbano-centrist reading of society (see also Dikeç, 2002, 2009; Lopes De Souza, 2010; McCann, 2002; Purcell, 2002, 2009). The concept concentrates on cities as a privileged environment for the reproduction of inequalities, but also one where change can emerge. The term connects to reflections on capitalism and neoliberalism (Harvey, 2003) in contemporary life, as well as social and spatial justice (Iveson, 2011; Marcuse, 2009, 2014; Soja, 2010, 2011).

The right to the city designates the possibility for each citizen not only to “inhabit the city” (Mitchell, 2003; Purcell, 2013), but to partake in the collective and constant shaping of the city, to participate in the invention and production of the urban space. It is “a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization” (Harvey, 2012: 4; see also Harvey, 2003). It seems particularly interesting to invoke this concept in the context of Israel and Palestine, considering the exclusive Jewish take on space that the Israeli policies seek to impose and the constraints the State enforces over minorities over access, movements and forms of habitat in many cities in Israel and Palestine. However, the right to the city is a notion that denotes social conflict, not geopolitical or settler colonial conflict; the claim of a right to the city comes from citizens kept aside from urban and civic life, like in the suburbs of Paris (Dikeç, 2002), and are addressed to the governing bodies, national or municipal.

In Silwan and Hebron – both urban areas, which experience intense struggles over space and the rights of their inhabitants – the “right to the city” could be applied to generate interesting perspectives. However, concentrating on the city and on urban politics is too specific and does not account for the aims of the contention: the protestors do not ask for an inclusion into the city as such. They do not seek to share equally the resources or the possibilities of participation and consideration. Rather, their claim to a presence in the city represents a local equivalent of the national claim to sovereignty and independence.

The resistance carried on in Hebron and Silwan can be read at two different levels; it underlines the existing discriminations at work and the various constraints weighing on the residents and hindering their daily lives, demands to be taken into account, to be able to freely access and circulate in the city, and to fully participate in the urban life. From that point of view, those two sites of contention certainly activate claims related to the right to the city, despite the term not being invoked as such. The second level however, which conditions everything else, is the demand to end the occupation and to recognize Palestinians’ right to self-determination and to an independent country. In this wider framework, the right to the city is much less relevant, as

the main claim is not a right *to* the city but a right *on* cities.

The struggle of Al-Araqib differs in terms of context, but it is literally a struggle for the right *to a village*. The very existence of the village is denied, physically as well as symbolically, with the houses being demolished and the presence of the people being countered through force and actions in court. A recent call to parallel the “right to the city” with a “right to the village” (El Nour, Gharios, Mundy, & Zurayk, 2015; Landy & Moreau, 2015) has emerged, insisting on the legitimacy of the study of the rural, as an area where “inequalities, frustrations and conflicts are experienced” (Ibid.: 3). Nevertheless, a “right to the village” would retain the same kind of flaws that one can find in the “right to the city.” The ongoing ethno-territorial conflict and the nature of the Israeli State, as well as the conditions of its presence and of the enforcement of its authority, make the “right to the city” and “to the village” seem slightly misplaced when applied to the Palestinian movements.

Drawing on Lefebvre’s right to the city, I want to make a case for a larger concept, which would neither oppose village and city, nor urban and rural, but which would concentrate on the importance of the place of life, including matters of property and land, as well as culture and identity. It seems that it could be fruitful in the Israeli - Palestinian case to evoke a general “right to place.” Even though the concept can appear very broad, it allows for consideration of the political context, including the main elements of the right to the city, and similar dynamics that occur in rural areas, while highlighting the central point of the claims: the place, the presence in place and attachment to place, not the type of environment *per se*.

Referring to the claims of those struggles under the single expression of “right to place” allows us to take into account the importance of the local scale and of the claims applied to it, and at the same time to maintain, as a fundamental consideration, the elements constituting the original concept of the “right to the city”: appropriation, inhabitation, and modification of the lived space. As such, sumud appears as a strategy of resistance directly connected to the right to place.

The right to place would then encompass a right to *be in place* and a right to *place-making*. The right to the city, and by extension, the right to place, indeed requires the opportunity to be active, and to “make space,” as the inhabitants must have “full and complete usage” of the place (Lefebvre, 1996: 179).

This production of space can be material, by modifying the material environment according to needs, but Harvey also underlines on a number of occasions the cognitive and even emotional dimensions of this action and of presence in space, which is linked to the “heart’s desire” (Harvey, 2003, 2012). The right to place is indeed also linked to feelings and attachment, as well as to culture and memory, all invested in particular sites (see Chapter 5).

The “right to place” can thus account for a wide range of the claims and strategies adopted in the sites of resistance. It is important to underline once again that I am not advancing that the place represents the only or even the main claim of the actors considered; however it brings together many of the core dimensions of the local resistance, and allows for their consideration together in a complex framework. It expresses the tight links and dialectic movement between politics, power and space: the right to place would thus refer to a right to stay (recognition of the presence and against transfer), to have a place of life (habits and house), to have an impact on its environment (participation and planning). It would also provide for the recognition of the “sense of place,” and the possibility to live according to a culture, to deploy their emotional attachment to place, to the land or a specific area.

This chapter shows that the resistance in the three sites of contention is largely articulated around one spatiality: the place. The existence of specific places is claimed in each site of contention through different strategies, which allow for them to emerge and stand out: the human presence, the occupation and appropriation, the attribution of a name and the will to make this name recognized and accepted officially (often in Arabic, a language that is not the dominant language) as well as the material and symbolic marking, with signs or graffiti, for example, are all strategies of resistance aiming to counter the Israeli spatial hegemony that tends to reduce or erase the signs of the Palestinian presence in space.

All of these strategies show the deep attachment to place claimed by the Palestinian population; they illustrate their will to remain and are often intended as declaration of their intention to resist the hardships and repression. They represent both a practice of resistance and the objectives that they hope to achieve: to put it simply, they stay to be able to stay. The “place-framing” not only aims to empower the community by insisting on its cohesion and collective identity, but also purports to present the place as a meaningful and legitimate site of resistance. As Nicholls and al. put it, “activists draw on the common symbolic repertoire found in places to assemble mobilizing frames and harness collective emotions” (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013: 5). Sumud is the first example of such a “place-frame,” insisting on the importance of the place, allowing people to get involved via a low-risk type of commitment, creating a “common symbolic repertoire” and representing a “motivation place-frame” articulating community values and everyday life experiences (Martin, 2003: 636).

Notes

1. This presence in space can be conveyed through the notion of occupation, but I favour here that of “staying” to avoid any confusion with the specificity of the Israeli military occupation. “Staying” introduces however an interesting additional element of will and intentionality. It also introduces the idea of time and daily life in a clearer fashion.
2. See “Absentee Property Law,” Israel Law Resource Centre, <http://www.israelawresourcecentre.org/israelaws/fulltext/absenteepropertylaw.htm>.
3. Interview realized on April 2, 2013.
4. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
5. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
6. Field notes, April 8, 2012.
7. Field notes, October 13, 2013.
8. Interview with Ahmad Qara’een realized on October 28, 2012.
9. See for example “Gan Hamelech residents wary of Barkat’s redevelopment plan,” The Jerusalem Post, February 16, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Gan-Hamelech-residents-wary-of-Barkats-redevelopment-plan>.
10. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
11. “Hebron road renamed ‘Apartheid Street’,” Ma’an News Agency, September 15, 2011, <http://web.archive.org/web/20111102190205/http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=420542>.
12. Interview realized on April 8, 2012.
13. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
14. From the list of slogans used during the demonstrations by the girls of the village, retrieved

- on November 10, 2013.
15. Samidin or samidun, those practicing *sumud*. The singular form is “*samid*.”
 16. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
 17. Interview realized on October 31, 2012.
 18. Interview realized on February 27, 2013.
 19. Interview with Sahar Al-Abbassi, Maada center, February 11, 2013.
 20. Interview with A., employed at the Maada center, realized on 26 November 2012.
 21. Interview realized with Zliha Muhtaseb on March 15, 2013.
 22. Interview realized on April 2, 2013.
 23. Interview realized on April 8, 2012.
 24. Interview with R., resident of Silwan, October 31, 2012.
 25. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
 26. Interview realized on May 3, 2013.
 27. Interview with M., YAS activist and resident of Tal Rumeida, realized on April 2, 2013.
 28. Interview with a shopkeeper in the old city of Hebron, May 4, 2013.
 29. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
 30. Interview realized on April 2, 2013.
 31. Interview realized on November 26, 2012.
 32. Interview realized on March 02, 2013.
 33. See Maada Silwan, <http://madaasilwan.org/>.
 34. Interviews with A., Jawad Siyam and Sahar Al-Abbassi, respectively, realized on November 26, 2012; November 27, 2012 and February 11, 2013.
 35. Children arrests are very common in Silwan, see for example, the report by B'tselem “*Caution: children ahead*” (2010).
 36. Interview with A. on November 26, 2012 and with Sahar Al-Abbassi, February 11, 2013.
 37. Wadi Hilwe Information Center, <http://www.silwanic.net/>.
 38. Interview with Sahar Al-Abbassi, February 11, 2013.
 39. Interviews with women from Silwan at the Maada center on December 16, 2012, December 12, 2012 and December 20, 2012.
 40. Interview realized on 26, 2012.
 41. Interview with Amani Odeh on March 2, 2013.
 42. Note: Ibid.
 43. Interview realized on April 8, 2013.
 44. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
 45. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
 46. Interview with K., resident of Tal Rumeida, realized on April 4, 2013.
 47. Interview with Jawad Siyam, November 27, 2012.
 48. Interview with J., secretary of the Fatah in Silwan and resident in Al-Bustan, February 27, 2013.
 49. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
 50. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
 51. Interview with Jawad Siyam, November 27, 2012 and Amani Odeh, March 2, 2013.
 52. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
 53. Interview realized on February 18, 2013.
 54. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.

55. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
56. Interview with Ahmad Qara'een, resident of Wadi Hilwe and director of the Maada community Center, October 28, 2012.
57. Interview with Ismail Abu-Madighem, resident of Al-Araqib, November 13, 2013.
58. Interview with T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Committee, February 18, 2013.
59. See for example "Israeli Right Resurrects 'Voluntary Transfer' of Palestinians, Despite 50 Years of Failure," Amira Hass, Haaretz, August 25, 2019.
60. Interview with K., Hebron Defense Committee, resident of Tal Rumeida, April 16, 2013.

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3 Planning

Conceiving and building space: a power game

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If inhabiting the space and producing places is essential in the spatial repertoire of the Palestinians, the fabric of the practiced space, its materiality, shapes and volumes are all elements that can thwart this being-in-place. This chapter tackles the “representations of space,” which according to Henri Lefebvre is the “dominant space in a society” (Lefebvre, 1991: 39). It corresponds to the “representations of space”, or the space intellectually conceived by the authorities and by actors who have power over the making and ordering of social space (Ibid.).

Even though Lefebvre intends the “conceived space” as being abstract, I envisage it as a process encompassing three main stages, as the “conception” does not go unheeded: it is acted upon, actualized within the space of physical interactions. Those three stages are the designing, the material production and the administration of space, which are comprised in the spatial repertoire I tackle as “planning.” The “designing” applies to the intellectual conception of an organized space and is mainly carried out through planning and architecture; the “production” refers here to the realization, the material transformation of space through building and developing and the “administration” concerns the subsequent management of space, through the production of norms and the definition of the practices and population tolerated in those spaces, in line with the State’s and other authorities’ ideology. The Israeli authorities resort to experts

from different fields to organize and regulate the human presence in space. Planning and architecture, but also other disciplines such as archaeology and ecology, can be used as a way of transforming space according to a political agenda (Segal & Weizman, 2003; Sorkin, 2002; Weizman, 2008, 2012).¹ Sharon Rotbard goes as far as to affirm that “in Israel, architecture, just like war, is a continuation of politics through other means” (2003: 40). This process results in domination being inscribed within the material fabric of cities (Meade, 2011: 71), but also, as Lefebvre underlined, within “the devastating conquest of the lived by the conceived, by abstraction” (Lefebvre, 1980; see also Wilson, 2013).

Space in Israel and Palestine is indeed controlled through planning and architecture, disciplinary fields which became battle fields: in the cases at hand, the conception of space is not only dominated by the authorities – State, State institutions and affiliated professionals; it is also used as an efficient means to advance their political agenda. Despite the “conception of space” being dependant on the Israeli State and its apparatus’s hegemony, their conquests and encroachment over the lived space are contested through various strategies. Confronted with this overarching power from the authorities, the population of the three case studies tries to challenge it and to appropriate and possibly influence the shape of the urban fabric and produce new forms of space, advancing a conception of space that proceeds from their experience of the lived space.

In order to study how people challenge the Israeli authorities’ hegemony over the “conceived” space, it is necessary to briefly lay out and develop how space is conceptualized and produced by the authorities in the three case studies, shedding light on the ideological motives often underpinning the process. I will expose in a first part the main planning projects or development schemes existing in each of the three case studies, and the main strategies opposed to those, often the advancement of alternative planning projects, advocating for an entirely different approach to space and place via consultation and participation, in order to try to integrate or to create debates and dialogue with the authorities. Another common practice is the recourse to legal channels, addressing the Israeli courts. These official and administrative actions, made within the frame of legality, are intrinsically limited due to the very nature of the regime that produced and codified them. In those two types of processes, the case of Hebron differs slightly as residents are ruled under a system in which they do not have access to the same type of resources or interlocutors.

The second part of this chapter is dedicated to the direct intervention of the inhabitants on space through house building and renovation, producing a material envelop for their daily life and actively producing the urban fabric. We will see that the opposition to the authorities’ hegemony over the “conception” of space eventually raises the question of the place and status granted to minorities within the Israeli society as it puts questions about public place, the public sphere and public participation, at the centre of the debate. Indeed, the Israeli intervention on the urban fabric is also an intervention on the social fabric and contributes to the fragmentation of space and the isolation of segments of the Palestinian society.

The final part of this chapter tackles more generally the terms of the struggle opposing the State to the residents of each site of contention. The strategies adopted by both parties and the questions they raise around participation, legal constraints and access to public space, lead us to discuss the ambiguity of democratic means in an ethnocratic and occupying State. Indeed, they highlight at the same time the existence of political opportunities and the bias underlying the functioning of the Israeli State, which undermines those very opportunities.

Urban development and zoning as political and legal processes of domination

In all three sites of contention, planning – from the designing to the actual modifications of space – represents one of the central topics tackled by the local struggle. In Silwan, the enlargement of the City of David and the “King’s Garden” project in Al-Bustan represent major threats for the residents; in Al-Araqib, the JNF afforestation of the village’s land, as well as the regional Master Plan, represent major issues. In Hebron, the planning efforts of the authorities translate into the creation of a “landscape of occupation” or “military urbanism,” characterized by obstacles and separation.

In Al-Bustan and the Negev, the plans were met with propositions of alternative projects advanced by the inhabitants and organizations representing them via institutional legal procedures to challenge the authorities’ decisions. People thus attempted to enter and participate in the public debate, resorting to channels provided for by the Israeli political system. This raises the question not only of opportunities but also of the functioning of democracy, as those channels are often fundamentally flawed by the biased principles underpinning them. Hebron appears as being apart from the point of view of the conception of space and the possibilities to challenge it: there are no claims as to the occupation being democratic, and the legal system used in the West Bank is different from that in Israel and East Jerusalem, giving protesters even smaller margins of actions against the production of a dominant and domineering space.

Wadi Hilwe, Al-Bustan and the “green occupation” of East Jerusalem

Jerusalem has been labelled a “laboratory for the production of extreme spatial configurations” (Misselwitz & Rieniets, 2006: 25), notably in terms of severe forms of divisions between spaces and between people. In Silwan, the neighbourhood of Wadi Hilwe is threatened by the plans to expand the City of David and the use of archaeology to justify the Jewish presence and domination in the area. In Al-Bustan, the municipality of Jerusalem plans to demolish the neighbourhood in order to make way for the “King’s garden” (Gan haMelech), a “biblical” park covering the bottom of the valley, designed to recall the ancient gardens of Solomon, mentioned in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 2:5), which are believed to have been located there (see Chapter 1). If matters related to planning as such often “do not seem to stir inhabitants into collective action” according to Irène Salenson, the demolition of houses or perspective of house demolition stirs protests (Salenson, 2009: 244), as shown vividly by the mobilizations for Sheikh Jarrah in May 2021. In Al-Bustan, it is at the same time the planning project and the vision it promoted, and the destructions it implied, that fostered the mobilization in the neighbourhood.

A planning strategy often used in Jerusalem to prevent the expansion of the Palestinian communities has been applied to both Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan: the land surrounding the Palestinian residential areas, which represents the space for their “natural” expansion, is often earmarked as “green areas” (OCHA-oPt, 2011: 34) or “open spaces” on municipal plans, meaning that they cannot be developed for public use (Bimkom, 2014: 60; UN-Habitat, 2015: 14). In 2012, about 30% of the planned area in East Jerusalem had been marked as being “green” (Bimkom, 2012: 6; 2014: 40) in order to establish a continuous ring of gardens and parks, but also to reserve land for the development of Jewish settlements and further isolate the Palestinian neighbourhoods² (see also Bimkom, 2012). The delimitation of national parks proceeds from the same logic, ensuring a Jewish hold on the land by slating areas for specific uses and impeding

Palestinian development in the city, except in some predefined area such as Bet Hanina.

The Local master plan 6 (EJ/6), defined in 1970, for example created a national park around the walls of the old city of Jerusalem, and encompassed important stretches of East Jerusalem, in particular the neighbourhood of Wadi Hilwe, overlooking the development needs of the population (B'Tselem, 2014). Another crucial plan for East Jerusalem was Local master plan 9 (EJ/9): adopted in 1977; it zoned large patches of East Jerusalem as open areas of different kinds (open public area, open scenic area, national park, etc.), where building was prohibited except with special authorizations (Bimkom, 2014: 28). Another plan, adopted in 1987, specified again that building was forbidden in the Al-Bustan area (Ir Amim, 2012; OCHA-oPt, 2011).

The 2004 Jerusalem Master plan noted in a first version that the neighbourhood was already developed, only to label it later as “open landscape area,” where building was forbidden (Bimkom, 2012; Ir Amim, 2012; Local Outline Plan, Jerusalem 2000, blueprint 1, August 19, 2004, in Bimkom, 2012: 26; see also Chiodelli, 2012). Even though the population of the neighbourhood has multiplied by 4 since the late 1970s to reach around 1,000 inhabitants, no building permits have been granted to the residents since the 1970s to allow them to build or extend their houses, pushing people to build illegally (Ir Amim, *Ibid.*: 8; Imseis, 2000: 1055). This zoning is all the more important as the Planning and Building Law adopted in 1965 explicitly prohibited granting building permits for areas that had been zoned for other uses (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017).

The current mobilization in Al-Bustan started in 2005, when the residents discovered that the city engineer Uri Shitrit had ordered in November 2004 the demolition of the neighbourhood, at the same time that they were made aware of the plans to use the area to build the “King’s Garden.” Faced with staunch local opposition and an international uproar in front of this planned expulsion of the residents, then mayor Uri Lupolianski (2003–2008) agreed to let the residents of Al-Bustan present a project designed according to what they deemed to be the needs of the neighbourhood, with consideration for “important historic sites and open space in the area” (Ir Amim, 2009). The residents thus entered the process of conceiving their space of life, giving way to a strategy of “counter-planning.” This alternative Town Plan Scheme (TPS 11641), prepared in 2005 by architect Ayala Ronel and planner Imad Abu Khader, was presented to the municipality in the summer of 2008: it suggested changing the status of the area from “green” to “residential.” However, the municipality’s plan (TPS 11555),³ still zoning the area of Al-Bustan as part of a national park, had been developed in the meantime (Ir Amim, 2008). The Jerusalem District Planning Commission then rejected the alternative plan on February 17, 2009.

As the original solution was considered by the municipality, the voluntary relocation of Al-Bustan residents to the neighbourhood of Bet Hanina became always more improbable; the new mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, presented an updated plan drawn by architect Arie Rahamimov for the neighbourhood and expressed his total support for the project in the first days of March 2010.⁴ The area was to become a mixed tourism-housing area and 22 houses on its western side slated for demolition (Ir Amim, 2012: 5). The images produced by the municipality present a spectacular and idyllic garden with canals, waterfalls and an amphitheatre, in stark contrast with the level of development consented to the Palestinian neighbourhoods around.⁵

Another plan (Plan n. 14017) was then drafted by architect Yousef Jabareen at the residents’ request (Ir Amim, 2012: 9–10), in the continuation of the counter-planning process. This plan suggested that most of the houses of the area should be preserved, while still making way for a

renovated, greener area.⁶ Fakhre Abu-Diab, a resident of Al-Bustan and member of the neighbourhood committee, also underlined: “they asked the committee to show what we want; we don’t want to demolish our houses but we also don’t want to say no to everything.”⁷ J., secretary general of Fatah for Silwan and owner of a café located between Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan, explained: “We want to make gardens, parks and infrastructure but without demolishing any house, because we have experiences with the Israeli occupation: we know that demolishing one house in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood means demolishing the other eighty-eight houses later.”⁸ The Jerusalem municipality rejected this plan in June 2010, claiming that two distinct plans for the same area could not be taken into consideration at the same time.⁹

Since that date, the situation has stalled; the demolition orders continue to be valid, and the building works have not yet started. In 2021, the plan was still pursued by the municipality.¹⁰ It definitively rejected the alternative plans proposed by the residents in March 2021. There is always an expectation that the demolitions will begin at one moment or another. Amani Odeh, resident of Al-Bustan, explained fatalistically: “They think it is the park of David, they have this plan that they will change the neighbourhood to a park and make a ‘flying train,’¹¹so they look at the neighbourhood as their own. And they have the ability to take it whenever they want.”¹² Fakhre Abu-Diab also expressed his belief that the demolition would take place at a strategically chosen moment: “they have a political agenda, they don’t want us here, they want the land, they want the houses, they want to push us out.”¹³

This process of official and formal planning made by experts of the municipality is not only representative of the mathematically inclined conception of space mentioned by Henri Lefebvre, but also of the power relationships it implicates. Beyond the technical aspect, this example shows the deeply political and ideological aspect of this approach of space: it does not only produce the “dominant space,” but it also produces and reproduces the space of the dominant group. This is underlined by the failure of the attempts to propose alternative plans. As Lefebvre points out: “abstract space, which is the tool of domination, asphyxiates whatever is conceived within it and then strives to emerge” (Lefebvre, 1991: 370). The plans drawn by the municipality for Al-Bustan show how conceived spaces can influence and dominate the lived space, through the designing of public space and the strict framing of the spaces attributed to domestic life. The topic of public space is particularly interesting as it is connected to the idea of democracy and that of participation (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2007, see Chapter 4). The notion of public space is typically called in to account for the squares, parks, streets as spaces accessible to “the public,” and where this public can engage and participate in public life or in the public sphere (Habermas, 1989), a superimposition now largely re-evaluated (Barnett, 2008). Without entering here in the questions around the public sphere, which will be tackled in other parts of this work, the notion of public space, which corresponds to a given material space, raises the question of who is considered as the future recipient and user of this conceived space, and which historical and cultural framework of reference is called upon to make that space emerge. In the case of the King’s Garden, as in the City of David, the frames of reference are connected to the Biblical traditions around David and Salomon, ignoring any subsequent layer of history or traditions that marked the area as well. The conception of space is thus imbued with religious-nationalist meanings in line with the Zionist project, marked by “the reimagining of an ancient religious community as a nation” (Anderson, 2006: 149). As such, the process organically ignores and excludes a part of the population in its conception phase, and in the very way, it is mentally

constructed.

Tackling this type of practices as resistance strategies must be scrutinized critically: the institutional character of the procedure might make it appear less as a practice of resistance than as an opportunity to participate in the official decision process, an attempt to compromise with the authorities. The elaboration and proposition of alternative plans to the municipality indeed puts the inhabitants of Al-Bustan in a position where they have to establish a dialogue, or at least a contact, with the municipality, an authority they largely reject. It must be borne in mind that the Palestinians from East Jerusalem tend to boycott, in massive numbers, the municipal elections (Klein, 2001: 186) so as not to legitimize or “normalize” the occupation. This process shows a punctual insertion, even if constrained, of the residents in public and political life through participation.

This counter-planning represents a strategy of resistance as it actively contests a decision taken by the authorities, addressing criticisms and asking for a change in the same vein as a petition, only, with an elaborated alternative solution advanced. Moreover, the residents were not directly consulted by the municipality, they submitted their plans for consultation; the unfolding of the various phases of the decision and the current outcome show that there was no cooperation between the authorities and the residents. This process can be included, with the legal actions and appeals to courts, in the broad repertoire of institutional and legal actions: the various plans are indeed presented through official channels to representatives of the municipality. This means that channels have punctually been open, allowing residents to present their criticism and alternative plans.

The use of planning and architecture to set out the residents’ claims are tightly intertwined to another strategy: employing institutional channels to contest the decisions taken by the authorities. This inclusion in political life raises different questions about the opportunities provided for and arranged within the Israeli legal and administrative system, as well as about the political strategy of the protesters and their own institutional resources.

This represents a classical strategy within repertoires of contention as the possibility to challenge authorities’ decisions through administrative or legal procedures is inherent to democratic functioning. It also represents a paradox in the Israeli-Palestinian context. First, because the Palestinians in Israel (those with Israeli citizenships as well as those living in Jerusalem under Israeli authority) generally do not participate much in political life, a fact reflected in the very low turnout during municipal and national elections.¹⁴ Second, because the actors involved in these sites of protest usually express a strong defiance towards the authorities, underlining the undemocratic functioning of the Israeli regime and the ethnic bias that crosses over the legal system, making decisions favourable to their positions improbable.

In Al-Bustan, the municipality itself provided an opportunity to act and bring up the claims to the city hall; however, the opportunity was in reality provided by the international pressure that pushed the municipality to allow the Palestinians to express their needs. Channelling the protest into an official procedure indeed made the contention less vocal, and the final decision appear more democratic. A particular study would be necessary to analyze more precisely the mechanisms of the planning and counter-planning process. However, the elements presented above, combined with the position expressed by the successive mayors of Jerusalem on the subject, the “segregationist planning policies” (Pullan, 2011: 31) conducted by the municipality towards the Palestinian residents in the city and the situation in Al-Bustan in particular, all

seemingly indicate that the consultation was an “opportunity of *façade*,” an opening that “encouraged people to engage in contentious politics” (Tarrow, 1998: 20), but which directed the strategy employed and controlled the possible outcomes, eventually turning the opportunity into a “constraint.”

The battle for the Negev: developing the desert

“It is in the Negev that the people of Israel will be tested – For only with a united effort of a volunteering people and a planning and implementing State will we accomplish the great mission of populating the wilderness and bringing it to flourish.”¹⁵

(D. Ben-Gurion, speech “The Significance of the Negev,” January 17, 1955)

“The Negev is a great Zionist asset, (...) the Negev is a desolate area which is currently empty of people, and therein lies its importance. What is lacks is water and Jews.”

(D. Ben-Gurion, speech “The Renewed State of Israel,” October 6, 1963)

As these quotes of David Ben-Gurion show, the Negev has been treated traditionally in Zionist imaginary as a “frontier,” a “pioneer area” which needs to be conquered and tamed. It is still considered as a valuable territory as the major reserve of free space in the country, the area where Israel can develop, demographically as well as economically. Numerous plans, laws and political decisions aim at ensuring that the Negev can be “developed” in a way that guarantees maximum Israeli-Jewish control of space. One of their objectives is to reduce the size of the areas in which the Bedouins live, strengthening the control over them and limiting the extent of infrastructures necessary to serve their communities.¹⁶

The definition of municipal boundaries, as well as those of local and regional councils, has been used as a way to confiscate and control land; Arab local governments generally having little land to develop and expand. The seven Bedouin townships established in the Negev have thus suffered from a chronic lack of space to develop and build new residential neighbourhoods (Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006: 139; Human Rights Watch, 2008: 28–29). In 2015, land was however added to the territory of Rahat in order to develop new neighbourhoods on the south of the city, allowing the city to expand (Brandeis, 2011; Brandeis, 2013). If this process of urban development allows for the internal growth of the city and will probably better the life conditions of the residents of Rahat, it nevertheless goes hand in hand with the plans seeking to bring the Bedouins living in the unrecognized villages to settle in the Bedouin townships.

Another way this control was imposed on space after Israel was created was through zoning: most of the Negev has been designated as “firing areas” or closed military zones, and the space has been largely devoted to army bases or military exercises. According to the army website, “70% of the Negev is IDF training areas.”¹⁷ The recent Camp Ariel Sharon project, or “Ir Habahadim,” is, for example, developing the biggest military training complexes yet in Israel south of Beer-Sheva. The complex will gather various army units and activities and should be able to host 10 000 soldiers; the project not only creates infrastructures, housing, etc., it also seeks to attract new residents in the area.¹⁸ An objection against the project was presented by Bedouin citizens and three organizations supporting the rights of the Bedouins, Adalah (the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel), Bimkom (Planners for Human Rights) and the

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (RCUV) to the District Committee for Planning and Building as early as March 2012, noting that the project is presented as being developed on State land, whereas its ownership has been claimed by Bedouins citizens and the area is used for customary practices such as farming.¹⁹ Other military projects developed in the Negev imply to remove Bedouins from the targeted land and have been presented as a “golden opportunity (...) to settle a significant part of the scattered Bedouin population once and for all, and to restore to the State vast areas that were taken illegally” (Israeli Authority for the Development and Settlement of the Bedouins in the Negev, 2019). The policy of the Jewish National Fund to “plant trees” represents another way to plan and produce space; imposing and materializing the official position as the areas afforested are considered to be the property of the State, even though this determination is contested by Bedouins before the courts (see Chapter 1).

From this perspective, two other plans can be evoked here: the Regional Master Plan for the Beer-Sheva Metropolitan Area and the Prawer Plan. Both threaten the Bedouin community notably because they ignore the existence of the unrecognized villages and reproduce the politics aiming at concentrating the Bedouins in cities. They both represented topics of concern and discussions in Al-Araqib: the sheikh of the village was, for example, convinced that the real goal of the Prawer Plan was to evict them, and that the plan was “actually all about Al-Araqib” (field notes, October 27, 2013). Those two plans were met with different responses; the Master Plan was met with a counter-proposal drawn up by experts, while the Prawer Plan was contested through legal procedures and institutional hearings, as well as through popular protest.

The Regional Master Plan (4/14/23) for the Beer-Sheva Metropolitan Area raised considerable criticism from the Bedouins and the various organizations backing their cause. The plan aimed at regulating “all aspects of life in the Negev – roads, bases, infrastructure of all kinds, and settlements, including Bedouin settlement in the Negev (...)” (ACRI & Bimkom, 2013: 4). Various NGOs met with the Regional Master Plan working committee in November 2004 to discuss the plan and expose their doubts and critique as the Supreme Court had asked for a consultation process (*NCF Newsletter*, March 3, 2005, p. 7). A petition against the plan was then submitted to the Supreme Court, asking that the Bedouin citizens be included in the planning of the Negev (Human Rights Watch, 2008: 50). A lawyer declared on behalf of the petitioners that “the defendants seemingly included the petitioners in the planning in order to push forward the plan (...) the plan, if it is approved for use, will constitute a continuation of a planned discriminatory policy” (*NCF Newsletter*, January 2006: 10).

This can be put in parallel with the analysis that was made above of the planning process in Al-Bustan, where apparent opportunities to challenge official decisions and planning processes can mean playing out the authorities’ game and eventually wasting time and possibly reinforcing their position.

The RCUV and Bimkom launched the project of an alternative plan, drafted by Oren Yiftachel, Nili Baruch, Said Abu Sammur, Nava Sheer and Ronen Ben Arie, all scholars in the fields of geography, planning and architecture, involved for the rights of minorities in Israel. This “Alternative Master Plan for Bedouin Villages in the Negev” (RCUV, Bimkom, & Sidreh, 2012) attempted to counter the material production of space and the projects of the State through a proposition based on knowledge of the field and the requests of the residents of the unrecognized villages. It takes a position on several of the issues considered to be problematic by the Israeli administration or generally ignored in their plans. It notably advocates for the

recognition of the villages in situ “due to the Bedouin’s strong attachment to the land,” their inclusion in the regional frameworks and the adaptation of the municipalities’ borders. At the local level, the plan proposes to recognize the Bedouin villages “as a distinct type of locality that will be recognized and codified by the Israeli planning system, in a manner similar to a moshav or a kibbutz” (RCUV & Sidreh, 2012: 6).

The Praver plan also aims at “regulating” the Bedouin settlement (Begin, 2013b: 6; International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: ii). Drafted at the national level, it planned to move, by force if necessary, up to 30,000 Bedouins under the guise of development and social and economic progress (Begin, 2013a, 2013b). This plan was the result of a long and concerted effort of the Israeli political and military establishment; it inscribes itself in the doctrine expressed by Moshe Dayan in 1963, which is representative of the State dogma when it comes to the Bedouins. Ehud Praver, former deputy chairman of the National Security Council and head of policy planning in the Prime Minister’s Office, was charged with applying the conclusions of the Goldberg Committee.²⁰

The first propositions advanced by Ehud Praver were approved by the government in September 2011 and subsequently by Yaacov Amidror, councillor for the National Security Council. Ze’ev “Benny” Begin was then put in charge of the coordination with the Bedouin population. On January 27, 2013, the government validated his recommendations for the Praver plan. One of the pieces of advice advanced by the Goldberg Committee was endorsed: to recognize, as much as possible, the “illegal” villages and compensate in part the cases of proved land ownership. He also adopted the same position as the Goldberg report regarding the evictions that took place after the creation of Israel and the transfers to the Siyaj area, noting that it is a reality that should not be ignored. However, the substance of the report reaffirmed the national dogma: despite the “historic affinity” of the Bedouins with the land (Begin, 2013a), the Bedouins’ property claims are considered to be incompatible with the existing laws and interests of the State, and they are to be concentrated in delimited areas to limit the “spread,” ensure that infrastructures would come “at a reasonable cost” but also allow the development of the Negev (Begin, 2013a: 7). Moreover, the conditions presented as necessary to allow for the legalization of the unrecognized Bedouin villages made any implementation improbable: minimum number of inhabitants required, density, continuity of habitat, but also respect for the main lines fixed by the Regional Master Plan for the Beer-Sheva area, adopted in 2012. On June 24, 2013, the Knesset voted in favour of the project of law (43 in favour, 40 against).²¹

The final developments of this phase of the planning and decision process are especially interesting and extremely revealing. On December 9, Benny Begin clarified before the Committee for Internal Affairs of the Knesset that he did not know if the Bedouins agreed with the plan: he declared “I couldn’t say that because I didn’t present the plan to them.”²² The main arguments used by the parties of the governmental coalition to defend this policy, that the law respected the Bedouins’ rights and that a majority of them were agreeing to the terms, were thus voided of any value, and on December 12, 2013, Benny Begin declared that Benjamin Netanyahu had agreed to shelve the Praver Plan. In January 7, 2014, the “regulation” of the Bedouin presence in the Negev was entrusted to Yair Shamir; the resort to force was still considered as a possibility in case no agreement would be reached, indicating that the objectives of the plan were indeed more newsworthy than ever.²³

Those two examples of planning in the Negev, one regional and one national, confirm what

the case of Al-Bustan already hinted at: the administrative procedure to adopt and implement such plans follows legal paths, with various committees, hearings and votes sitting to either amend or adopt them. Within the Israeli system, these procedures encompass various opportunities to integrate the decision-making process, either via consultation or as a plaintiff. In Al-Bustan, the experts representing the residents presented an alternative plan directly to the municipality, laying out their claims to the concerned body. In the Negev, the alternative plan drafted to counter the Regional Master Plan was realized on the initiative of NGOs and was not integrated into the official process of decision-making. Addressing courts (district courts, as in the case of the Master Plan, until the level of the Supreme Court) is another strategy employed to counter the planning decisions, mostly by NGOs; as we will see later, the residents not only have little faith in the decisions of justice in general, but they also lack the means to undertake such actions. In the case of the Praver Plan, no counter-plan was made; however, experts, such as Israeli geographer Oren Yiftachel, testified in front of Knesset committees to defend the Bedouins' rights to the land. Major protests also took place throughout the Negev to protest the project in 2013.

This raises the question of the actors involved in these strategies: the grassroots activists are often not directly involved in the drafting of the alternative plans, even though they are usually involved in meetings and can give their opinions. In Silwan, as in Al-Araqib and more generally in the unrecognized Bedouin villages, the inhabitants relied on technicians, architects, planners, lawyers and geographers who have the technical and empirical knowledge that allows them to do such work. NGOs, such as the UK-based Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, and Planners for Human Rights (Bimkom) were involved in carrying out the project of the alternative plan for Al-Bustan, and in supporting and advertising it. In the Negev, Bimkom worked with the RCUV (Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev) and Sidreh (which organizes community planning seminars for women) to propose "a range of professional, feasible means for recognizing and developing all 46 Bedouin villages" (RCUV, Bimkom & Sidreh, 2012: 5)

Beyond the assistance and advocacy of experts and NGOs, local committees or neighbourhood organizations can also step in. In Silwan, residents have one committee for each neighbourhood and a common one, the High Committee, for the whole village.²⁴ The committees discuss practical matters, including local issues like parking.²⁵ They are not meant to coordinate or to organize the resistance but rather, as an organ of consultation and decision, they are involved in local life and support the various initiatives by, for example, inviting people to participate in meetings or in the prayers in the tent of Al-Bustan. However, Jawad Siyam and T., another resident of Wadi Hilwe, have insisted that "everything here is political"²⁶; the committees thus also play a role in the local resistance, trying to develop a dialogue with the municipality in respect of the identified problems faced by the inhabitants. The Bedouins rely not only on the local authority of sheikhs but also on organized bodies like the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, which was established in 1997 to counter the State claim that it had no official partner for negotiation and dialogue on Bedouin issues. However, the authority of the RCUV is not equally recognized by all, facing criticism from Bedouins for the position it adopts politically in its dialogue with the State, as well as for its internal functioning, the way in which its members are designated and the way it handles specific issues.²⁷

Strategies of counter-planning and participation in legal procedures represent attempts to be

heard and to enter the political game, using the tools it provides. However, as these tools form an inherent part of the legal and administrative system, the question arises as to whether they can be considered as “opportunities” for the protest. Indeed, they do not represent changing elements and dimensions in the political context, but rather constant principles integrated in the structure of the system. One could say that they still “open avenues” for a legal form of contention (Eisinger, 1973: 11), allowing the protesters to express their disagreement through official channels and to challenge the State’s decisions.

The contradictions on which the Israeli regime is based, with a strong opposition between majority and minority, are emphasized by planning matters. They crystallize questions about the citizens’ status in an ethnocracy. The case of the Praver Plan and the positions adopted by Benny Begin are particularly clear in that matter. Indeed, in his report, Begin admits that the Bedouins have historical bonds with the land but insists that “the legal framework, derived from the 1969 Land Law and other land laws, (...) does not allow, in general, for the acceptance of Bedouin ownership claims” (Begin, 2013a: 10; see also Begin, 2013b). Even more significant than the processes of designing and planning and the various disciplines used to impose the Israeli “conceived space,” it is the legal framework that represents the fundamental tool of control and provides the orientations the planners follow (Amara, 2008).

The principles upon which relies the development of the region are largely based on the same ethnocratic basis that underlies the functioning of the State of Israel. Indeed, the plans laid out above do seek to organize and develop the region to make it more attractive and the life conditions more agreeable, but those objectives are valid first and foremost for the Israeli Jewish population, in line with the Jewish character of the State and the principles expressed by the different attached institutions. Once again, this brings to the fore the debate around the democratic character of the State and the place granted to non-Jewish citizens. The organization of space indeed answers and mirrors the projects of the authorities and their conception of society according to the ideals and principles of the Zionist project (see the Introduction section and Chapter 1). As such, the Bedouins, notwithstanding that they are citizens of the State, do not fit in well in plans to extend the area populated by Jewish citizens and to reinforce control over the desert.

The next section concentrates on Hebron: while planning is a civil matter in the Negev and Jerusalem (even if it has security implications, the decision process goes through the administration), it is mainly a military matter in H2. In Jerusalem and the Negev, the police can intervene in the physical environment, erecting checkpoints or control points (for example, blocking Wadi Hilwe Street in Silwan), but those are generally temporary measures, and they do not modify the urban fabric on the long term. In Hebron, the space is conceived and produced following a military logic, engaged by military authorities.

“Military urbanism” in Hebron: the city as battle space

When it comes to the authorities “conceiving” space, the case of H2 in Hebron is slightly different than the two others: the decisions are indeed taken and implemented primarily by the Israeli army, according to security concerns and a clear policy of separation and control, not by civil and administrative bodies, even if the settler community and affiliated parties also have an impact on the decision-making and the army is under the authority of the Israeli government. The Hebron municipality also retains some powers, providing water and electricity to the residents of H2, including the settlers. The whole process of designing and producing space in H2 is more accurately tackled as “architecture of occupation” (Weizman, 2012) or “military urbanism” (Graham, 2009a, 2011).

The old city of Hebron is indeed submitted to a strict regime of occupation, enforced by a massive military presence and strict rules encompassing numerous spatial measures. H2 is characterized by a military landscape, made up of roadblocks, checkpoints, watchtowers, fences, walls and gates, barbed wire, CCTV cameras, etc. (see Figure 3.1). The space is organized according to the needs and “harsh logic” (Breaking the Silence, 2012) of the army: it is clearly established with a view to allow the movement and generally facilitate the life of the settler population, restricting and controlling the Palestinian presence as a “preventive measure” (Ibid.: 8).

Military urbanism in H2 seeks to “order” space and in so doing “discipline” the live bodies that use that space, defining and formatting what is deemed possible, legitimate and acceptable and making sure that those considered as dangerous become “docile” (Foucault, 1995; Low, 2009). This spatial organization of H2 largely relies on two principles that Michel Foucault presents in his seminal work *Surveiller et punir*, namely, “enclosure” and “partitioning” (Foucault, 1995: 141, 143). He invokes those two categories as being quintessential to the “disciplinary machineries” of control, an element confirmed by the urban setting of H2, where the “technologies of security” employed are at the same time separating and corralling, dividing and concentrating, installing differentiated regimes of continuities and discontinuities in the city depending on the bodies considered, creating a maze of embedded enclaves and exclaves that change characters depending on who considers them. The mechanisms of control, integrated in the urban landscape, contribute to “normalizing violence (...) as a strategic element of everyday life” (Bayat, 2017: 13).

Avner Gvanyahu,²⁸ an Israeli who served as a paratrooper in Hebron during his 3 years of military service and activist of Breaking the silence, insisted strongly that the Israeli presence, and that of the army, changes the scenery and the geography of the area, based on the idea of separating Israelis from Palestinian and avoiding “friction” between the two populations, notably by “sterilizing” roads and creating “buffer zones” (OCHA-oPt, 2007: 96):

“The reality is not only arresting the Palestinians. The reality is checkpoints, the reality is walls and firing zones, and preventing people to move from one place to the other, building enclaves of communities ... So this is the reality. By building these small enclaves we’re moulding the landscape.”²⁹

These principles explicit the fact that the “conception of space” is based on separation, and a

management by removal: the intervention in public space, as well as movements, residence and access in H2, is not made with the intention to organize and arrange the public co-presence in space but rather to avoid it altogether by separating the two main populations living in the area, and establishing a hierarchy between them (Lecoquierre, 2019b). The main separation in Hebron is between H1 and H2, but it pervades the city, distinguishing between not only spaces but also between people and, in few occurrences, time zones (Lecoquierre, 2019a).

Shuhada Street embodies these tactics: it represents an axis of communication and movement for the settlers, soldiers and visitors, but represents a solid barrier for the Palestinians from the West Bank, who are unable to use or even cross it; the road has the same impact on movement as a wall would have. The core of H2 thus became a “sanctuarized” area for the Jewish population, its use closed to and forbidden to the Palestinians (see Chapter 1).

These measures have practical consequences, and their impact is often very clear. The visual impact of occupation is indeed much stronger in Hebron than in any other place in the West Bank with its empty streets, forbidden areas, massive military presence and sealed off shops. It is common to hear that “in Hebron, you can really *see* the occupation.” Aver Gvryahu, who often leads groups to visit Hebron with *Breaking the Silence*, stated: “Hebron is a city where we don’t have to say much. Just walking down the street in the city... If you have a little bit of compassion and understanding of what is happening around the world and in different Western countries, you will recognize it...”³⁰ This spatial aspect of the control has led people and NGOs to designate the old city as a “ghost town” and Shuhada Street as “Apartheid Street” (see Chapter 1 and Figures 2.5–2.7 in Chapter 2).



Figure 3.1 Two examples of the military urbanism and the policy of separation in Hebron. Figure 3.1.1: the barrier that split the road leading to the Ibrahimi mosque, separating the side where the Palestinians had to walk away from the street, accessible to Israelis and tourists. It has been removed since then. Picture taken on September 23, 2011. Figure 3.1.2: the barrier installed in March 2013, next to the Ibrahimi mosque, separating the street: Palestinians must walk on the right side, while Israelis and internationals can walk on the paved street on the left. Picture taken on February 12, 2013.

This corresponds to one characteristic of the conceived space pointed out by Lefebvre: a “constitutive repression” expressed through various prohibitions that act as a “carapace” for the appropriated spaces, the properties or the places of exclusivity chosen by the elites or the dominant group. However, he insists, “Most such prohibitions are invisible. Gates and railings, ditches and other material barriers are merely the most extreme instances of this kind of separation” (Lefebvre, 1991: 319).

Indeed, H2 is organized according to spatial measures of control and a physical division between populations (see, for example, Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3); it is also governed according to different administrative and legal systems. While the Palestinians living in H2 are submitted to the military authority of the Civil Administration and to local laws, the Israeli settlers depend on the Israeli civil penal law, which puts them practically in a situation of extraterritoriality.³¹ This distinction is applied across the whole of the West Bank, between areas A, B and C, and between Palestinians and Israeli settlers. It creates a situation the characterization of which is highly debated and very controversial (see also Chapter 6). NGOs often designate this system as a “dual regime,” “different law enforcement systems” (see, for example, the Facebook page of Breaking the Silence, March 18, 2013) or a “dual system of law” (B’tselem, January 1, 2011),³² all terms that apply to the whole of the West Bank and are usually engaged strictly from a legal perspective.

With regard to Hebron, Breaking the Silence and other NGOs usually use terms such as “separation” and even “segregation”³³ (Breaking the Silence, 2012). Many residents and activists describe the policy imposed on H2 either as one of segregation or as a system of apartheid. Issa Amro described the old city as “apartheid land” (field notes, March 10, 2013).

The NGOs consciously avoid “apartheid,” arguing that it is a legal term attached to the South African reality.³⁴ It is above all a term that stirs intense controversy in the Israeli public and is often avoided by NGOs for strategic reasons; this is illustrated by the fact that an Israeli member of a NGO whom I met in Hebron described the voluntary fragmentation of the Palestinian territory on the part of the Israeli authorities as “the making of Bantustans,” thus endorsing a direct comparison with South Africa; he however expressly requested to remain anonymous following his statement.

The term of apartheid thus remains omnipresent, even implicitly: not using it is indeed presented as a conscious choice, made for diplomatic and political reasons. A Swedish volunteer for EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) explained his position and the position adopted by his organization:

“We don’t use the word. We are not saying that it isn’t apartheid or that it is apartheid, but if you write the report and you use the word apartheid, people are going to discuss the term apartheid, it takes the focus away from what you say, and the thing we are trying to tell

people about is going to get lost. But it is definitely separation. Based on ethnicity. Segregation. You can say it like that instead of saying apartheid. It is the same message. (...) It is a strategy to get our message out about what is going on here.”³⁵

Many activists and inhabitants insist on apartheid being the most accurate term to describe the combination of legal and physical separation characterizing H2. However, the term is also debated within the Palestinian community among anti-occupation activists. Hani Abu-Heikel, whose house borders the Tal Rumeida settlement, insisted: “It is not apartheid, it is occupation! Here we don’t have separation: we have occupy, we have evacuate, not apartheid!” He illustrates his position with a comment he made during a trip to South Africa:

“I told them ‘you were living in heaven!’ You had your stairs, you had your roads, your buses, your restaurants, but as Palestinians we haven’t that right! The Israelis have stolen our main road! We have no road to pass through. I accept to separate the street between us! But we haven’t that as Palestinians, we haven’t that right!”³⁶

The choice of term used is therefore very political, and depends on the strategy adopted, the claims advanced and the audience targeted. This position can be paralleled with that of some Palestinians who oppose the use of “Palestine,” and who advocate for maintaining a reference to “occupied territories” or “occupied Palestine” until such time as it actually becomes an independent country, so as to remember that it is still under occupation.

Whatever the label used to describe it, the old city of Hebron is characterized by a particular spatial regime based on a multi-layered and multi-axial policy of separation (Lecoquierre, 2019a) that can be characterized as “military urbanism” (Graham, 2010, 2011). This concept is connected to a recent trend in military theory and doctrine, linked to the “asymmetric conflicts” and “low-intensity warfare” and the related transformation of the war practices, as cities become the new sites of modern warfare (see, e.g. Weizman, 2008). As a consequence, military urbanism targets “everyday spaces, sites and infrastructures of cities – along with their civilian populations” (Graham, 2009a: 388). The city becomes the new “battle space” (Graham, 2009a, 2009b), while the architecture and planning become instruments in the conflict, as violence and war are operationalized through the infrastructures of the cities (Graham, 2011: 85).

I have argued elsewhere that military urbanism can be considered as an integral part of a process of urbicide, a term that designates the annihilation of a city, of its materiality and social fabric (Coward, 2009; Detry & Veschambre, 2015; Fregonese, 2009; Ramadan, 2009). In Hebron, the urbicide does not atomize the buildings; it atomizes the urbanity and de-structures the city (see Lecoquierre, 2019b).

This type of urbanism corresponds to the type of process we studied above, as an intervention and modification of space from the authorities. However, the “conception” of space is understood and implemented differently in Hebron than in Silwan and the Negev in that it depends largely on military decisions and rules. However, a civilian takeover of the urbanization process could be observed over the last 10 years, with the settler community, officially organized in “Jewish Community in Hebron,” increasingly intervened in the production of space in H2 (see Chapters 1 and 6) and gained municipal powers in 2017 (Magid, 2017).

The human and material means available to the Israeli army largely account for the fact that very little actions are undertaken to directly contest the militarized production of space. Framing

the situation and underlining the characteristics of the spatial regime through discourse and narratives are seen as particularly important; I will come back to this point in Chapters 5 and 6. One of the most common strategies against this “dominant space,” direct and limited in terms of risk, is the throwing of stones or Molotov cocktails at the checkpoints. Notwithstanding that these practices usually have very little impact, Checkpoint 56, which connects Bab al-Zawiya to Shuhada Street, was burnt in August 2014. The reaction was very swift: a new, stronger checkpoint was installed, first with a concrete wall, a garrot, a watch-tower and a fenced corridor to access it, then with a built-up structure similar to the checkpoints existing in Qalandiya and Bethlehem (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3).



إفتحه!
أنت داخل منطقة تحت
مطرة قوات الأمن الإسرائيلية.
قوات جهاز الدفاع الإسرائيلي والشرطة
الإسرائيلية تعمل في هذه المنطقة.
שים לב!
תוך גובה לשמור באזהרה
במרחב המוגדר כאזור
הגנת מדינת ישראל
באזור זה

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Figure 3.2 Checkpoint 56, main connection between Bab al-Zawiya and Shuhada Street, seen from H1. Picture taken on August 13, 2011.



Figure 3.3 The same checkpoint in 2017. Picture taken on July 2, 2017.

While the means deployed to conceive and control the space is different across the three cases, the particular type of enforcement in Hebron confirms what had been advanced above in the cases of Silwan and the Negev; the conception of space – its design, production and administration – by the authorities are not only motivated by politically and ideologically principles, but those very principles are translated into specific spatial forms and systems of control. Moreover, they rely on a legal system that ensures favourable conditions to implement and sustain them, allowing and legitimizing the policies applied. The primary tool of occupation and control, of course complemented by physical and material coercion, is thus the State’s legal system.

From this perspective, it is necessary to consider the relationship existing between the protestors in the three sites of contention, who mobilize against the occupation and the Israeli politics of control in general, as well as the institutions. The opposition to the authorities’ conception of space indeed seems to indicate a preferential legal and official process of contention.

As the intervention on and modification of space is an integral part of the strategies of occupation, allowing the State to impose or strengthen its control over the territory, the contestation of the authorities’ planning choices and projects is a fundamental dimension of the resistance in all three sites of contention. The cases of Al-Bustan and the Negev show that the protestors, individuals or NGOs, can employ tools similar to those employed by the State itself, designing alternative planning projects, whether elaborated in the framework of an organized and accepted consultation and submitted directly to the concerned institution (the Jerusalem municipality in the case of Al-Bustan) or independently and presented publicly (the alternative plan for the Negev). In this process, they rely on professional corps of architects and urbanists; however, these examples show that it is the backer and scope of the projects that give them their political meaning; abstract space is predominantly attached to the dominant powers but can be appropriated by other types of actors and approached in a relational fashion, with attempts to subvert and relate it more directly to the lived space and needs of the inhabitants, opening up the process of planning and mitigating the impact of rigid top-down decisions.

Building, renovating and expanding houses as “facts on the ground”

The authorities’ control of space through planning, architecture and, ultimately the Israeli legal arsenal, is imposed through means other than the planning projects and development of the urban space. One topic directly related to those examined in the first part of this chapter, but which needs to be considered independently, as it is a central issue in all three sites of contention, is that of the building policy. The decisions around the construction, expansion and demolition of Palestinian houses form a focal point of Israeli control. The potential expansion of Palestinian neighbourhoods is considered as a threat or even as a weapon by the Israeli authorities, for demographic and strategic reasons. Such expansion would indeed imply a spatial encroachment, intolerable according to the principles of Zionism (see Chapter 1). In his book *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, S. Graham quotes the intervention of Efraim Eitam, a

retired commander of the Israeli army in Southern Lebanon, addressing a military conference in Haifa; he describes the development of Palestinian housing in Israel and the West Bank as a “cancerous tumour” that threatens the State of Israel (Graham, 2004; 204). The Israeli policy regarding urban development of the Palestinian neighbourhoods in Silwan and Hebron H2, and of the unrecognized villages in the Naqab desert, is often a consequence of this approach; it largely prevents any legal development by zoning areas as not constructible, therefore preventing the issuance of building permits and criminalizing those who build anyway (OCHA-oPt, 2011; UN-Habitat, 2015).

Thus, despite the lack of authorization to build houses and the orders constraining movement and presence in certain space, people continue to modify their space of life in order to adapt it to their needs in an act of silent defiance towards the system. The material, built environment and especially the house as a primary space of life also hold a particular importance in everyday life, as the sphere of the “inhabiting” (see Chapter 2).

Demolitions and illegal building in Silwan

Beyond the designing of space for human practice according to social and technical norms, the actual translation of these plans into concrete terms represents a problematic fact in East Jerusalem. In fact, East Jerusalem is faced with a general policy of planning that has a direct impact on everyday life, stemming principally from the Israeli Planning and Building Law, passed on 1965, which stipulates that any new construction within Jerusalem must first be approved by the Local Planning and Building Committee and that an area zoned for another purpose cannot be used for residential building (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017; OCHA-oPt, 2011; see also Chapter 1). Since 1967, it has been virtually impossible to obtain the authorization to expand one’s house or to build a new one in most of the Palestinians neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, especially in those close to the old city. If neighbourhoods like Bet Hanina and Bet Safafa, respectively north and south of the old city, have seen a higher ratio of building permits, the general policy remains a strict limitation of Palestinian neighbourhood, which pushes people to build illegally (International Peace and Cooperation Center, 2013; UN-Habitat, 2015).

According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 13% of the permits granted each year for residential building concern Palestinian neighbourhoods.³⁷ According to the OCHA-oPt, “at least 32% of all Palestinian East Jerusalem have been built in violation of Israeli zoning requirements” which means that no less than 86,500 Palestinian residents are at risk of having their houses demolished (2011: 36). Ir Amim also underlines the “constitutional failure of the planning system to meet the real needs of its residents or to provide solutions to their lack of building options” (2012: 7).

The zoning and building policies applied in Jerusalem stem from a precise political agenda regarding the demographics of the city, which has been formulated in 1973 by the Interministerial committee examining the rate of development in Jerusalem as a need to maintain a Jewish majority in Jerusalem, and thus to ensure a demographic balance between 74% of Jews and 26% Arabs (UN-Habitat, 2015). This doctrine was openly endorsed by several Jerusalem mayors (see Margalit, 2001) and was explicated under its revised form in 1993 by City Engineer Elinoar Barzaki in the following terms:

“There is a government decision to maintain the proportion between the Arab and Jewish

populations in the city at 28 per cent Arab and 72 per cent Jew. The only way to cope with that ratio is through the housing potential” (B’tselem, 1995: 57).

The ratio has since varied, first to 70/30, and the 2004 Jerusalem Master Plan announced that it realistically had to change for a goal balance of 60% Jews and 40% Arabs (Chiodelli, 2012; Salenson, 2005; Shragai, 2010).

This importance of controlling the demography connects to a necessary control of the urban expansion. Ir Amim, in a report about the situation in Al-Bustan, underlines: “The planning policy in Jerusalem (...) is designed to maintain a ‘demographic balance’ between Jews and Palestinians in Jerusalem” (2012: 8), an expression, it adds, which is a euphemism for “deliberate discrimination.” This “demographic engineering” is implemented by the State and the municipality of Jerusalem in order to limit the expansion of Arab neighbourhoods and their residential construction and to ultimately limit their demographic growth (Weizman, 2009).

These planning strategies have one very concrete implication: the demolition of Palestinian houses or constructions (shop, social centres, etc.) by Israeli authorities – or, sometimes, by the owners themselves to avoid the cost of demolition. It can take years before orders of demolition are actually implemented; in the meantime, people pay fines to the municipality of Jerusalem for their illegal construction; similarly, the costs of demolitions have to be paid by the family concerned. In Silwan, as most of the area is considered as being an open, “green” area (Ir Amim, 2012), in consistent disregard of the population living there, the possibility of receiving authorization to build or expand is nearly impossible: according to Fakhre Abu-Diab “since 1965 until now just 73 permits to build were granted in Silwan,”³⁸ and as a result, all construction is considered to be illegal. According to the organization Al-Haq, a Palestinian NGO working for human rights, 98 demolitions were recorded in Silwan between 2004 and 2018, concerning around 180 Palestinians half of them children (Al-Haq, 2020).

The inhabitants of Silwan consider these policies as an attempt of “silent transfer.”³⁹ Indeed, the transfer of Palestinians (to enclaves of the West Bank or even to neighbouring Arab countries) is a political doctrine that has been advocated by right-wing parties and groups for some time (Sprinzak, 1991). Ahmad Qara’een explained: “they put pressure on our lives with fines, arrest, demolition orders. They want us to move, so it’s a transfer project. But they say ‘no, it is not transfer, it is the law, we use the law’.”⁴⁰

The resistance to this policy takes mostly one form: to keep on building, without permission, despite the risk of fines or demolition. This practice, tightly connected to that of *sumud* (see Chapter 2), raises the question of the definition of resistance, and of its repertoire: is illegal building only a question of necessity, or can it indeed be considered as an act of resistance? The construction or renovation of homes without permits is done first and foremost for practical and logistical reasons and on the basis of the need for a liveable space: the widening of the family cell, and the wedding of a son especially, often imply the need to have more space. As the permission to build or extend is expensive and only seldom granted, people go on building without Israeli authorization. If it does not necessarily aim to be an act of resistance, it is a voluntary and conscious infraction of the law, and thus a defiance towards the Israeli authority.

This process of illegal building was also often framed as resistance by Silwanese: P., an architect native from Silwan, evoked “patterns of passive resistance”: “due to very acute housing crisis, due to the Israeli planning in all Jerusalem, land that was available was land that you

cannot build in. And here you see resistance as a building process, resistance as construction.”⁴¹ As such, the practice of illegal building can be considered as an integral part of the strategy of sumud. It is a symbol of continuous presence and of plans for the future: building means remaining and planning ahead for a life in that same place (see Chapter 2). It can also represent a resistance not only against the laws imposed by the municipalities, but more generally against occupation: A., employed at the Maada centre, for example asserted “building houses? Yes, it is resistance, because when I want to build a house, when I want a permission from them I have to pay one million shekel of taxes... and this is our land!”⁴²

The perpetual rebuilding of Al-Araqib

In the unrecognized Bedouin villages, the situation is very similar to that of East Jerusalem: as the villages are “off the map” (Human Rights Watch, 2008), that is, illegal according to the government, no building or renovation is permitted or recognized. Illegal buildings are also erected in the Bedouin townships and recognized Bedouin villages, for the same reasons as in East Jerusalem: the zoning and planning decisions as, in general, the policies adopted by the State leave few alternatives to people “but to live in ramshackle villages and build illegally in order to meet their most basic shelter needs” (Ibid.: 1).

As a consequence, many of the houses and other structures built in the area are subjected to demolition orders and have actually been demolished (see, for example, the newsletters of the NCF for monthly accounts of the demolitions in each unrecognized village). Some owners actually demolish their houses so that they can empty the house and save their belongings before the destruction, but also so that they avoid the cost of demolition, which has to be paid to the State in case of intervention. The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality estimated that between July 2013 and June 2014, 859 structures were demolished, 78% of which were demolished by their owners themselves and the remaining 22% (185) by the Israeli authorities (2014: 12); this marked a stark rise in the number of demolitions carried out by the Bedouins themselves. It has to be noted that the demolitions, contrary to the past, were largely carried out in recognized villages in townships, with 46% (399 structures) demolished in the unrecognized villages (Ibid.: 13). The number of demolitions in Bedouin villages have increased dramatically since 2013, as shown by the NCF 2020 report, showing a 221% increase, from 697 demolitions in 2013, against 2,241 in 2019 (for more details, see Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2020).

Al-Araqib alone had been demolished more than 70 times between 2010 and 2015. By 2020, it has been demolished 178 times in 2021, the frequency of demolition having dramatically increased in 2016. The village is indeed known not only for those recurrent demolitions but also for the relentless rebuilding effort of its residents. After rebuilding the village on the ground where it originally stood, the inhabitants moved into the cemetery area and rebuilt houses there, with cement floors and wooden structures for walls and roofs, caravans for the sheikh and his wife and the village’s “multimedia room” and the warehouse that was previously used as a mosque for the family of Aziz Abu-Madighem (see Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1). The subsequent demolitions were aimed at the “shieq” (the tent where men gather and guests are received) and other symbolic structures rebuilt on the ground of the destroyed village. Each demolition was quickly followed by a collective effort to rebuild, with members of the family and the community coming from Rahat to help.

As the population of Al-Araqib is much smaller and more isolated than in the other case studies, the needs, and consequently the strategies, are different. Ensuring that they can stay and that everyday life can continue is a matter of ensuring they have housing, but also the provision of basic needs such as electricity (acquired thanks to solar panels) and water (bought in and brought from a nearby city). From this perspective, building is one in many practices that allows life to continue and is thus necessary from a very basic point of view; they are also practices inscribed into the wider repertoire of *sumud* (see Chapter 2), which aim at ensuring that the residents can stay and live in the area. Micro-practices of resistance are also integrated into the strategies adopted; while adding wood on the wall of the shack for the coming winter, Salim Abu-Madighem clarified, for example, that he was doing it on the side of the house where no observers could see him, and that he would cover it afterwards with plastic sheets. Additional building and works are always considered with fear as a possible detail could trigger the demolition (field notes, October 10, 2013).⁴³

Following the major demolition carried out in June 2014 inside the cemetery, rebuilding became almost impossible, as the area had been ploughed in order to avoid people going back. The “rebuilding” of the village was thus accomplished through the use of camping tents and minibuses used as rooms for the children (see Figures 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 in Chapter 1). The space of the village was reorganized around these ephemeral structures, which nevertheless recreated a home.

The rebuilding in Al-Araqib is indeed considered necessary to ensure that the inhabitants have a place to live, but it is also highly symbolic to mark the presence and the will of the inhabitants to remain (see Chapter 2). Showing the existence of a village and giving a sense of this village as a lived place is also fundamental. As in Silwan, building illegally is thought of and presented as an act of civil disobedience and of resistance: the organizing and “designing” of space outside of the authorities’ codes, plans and permissions assert the rights of the residents to the space.

Challenging the uricide: the HRC and the renovation of Hebron's old city⁴⁴

In Hebron, the main activity linked to the active modification of the built environment, is limited, as we have seen above, by the strict rules imposed on H2. When it comes to the houses, the problems or risks are not so much with the construction or demolition but with evictions, the taking over of buildings by the settlers – a problem also present in Silwan – or the departure of the Palestinian residents in the face of the tension and the difficult living conditions. It is not the construction of the buildings in themselves that is at stake, but who inhabit them.

The main strategy adopted in H2, besides the practice of *sumud* (see Chapter 2), is implemented by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC), which renovates houses in the old city of Hebron. Established by Yasser Arafat in 1996, its goal was threefold: to conserve and restore the cultural heritage of the centre, to allow people to live in good conditions and possibly instigate others to come back and to limit the Israeli expansion in the old city. The goal is not only practical, to preserve the traditional habitat of the old city, but it also has a highly symbolic dimension, materialized through the exterior aesthetics of the houses and of the old city, to show it is inhabited and taken care of. However, this symbol has to be supported by facts: that is, to make people come back and to make the area actually liveable and inhabited. As Walid Abu-Halawa, Director of Public Relations for the HRC, explained, “The idea is not to renovate just for renovation, we want life back. We are resisting by inhabiting.”⁴⁵ The HRC at first renovated

mostly empty houses, offering a lease of 5 years to the owners, offering “free housing, free maintenance, free water, free electrical consumption.” If the owners did not consider coming back to live in H2, they could rent the house to the committee, who would re-rent it to someone who had applied for a house.⁴⁶

The HRC claims that they have renovated over 1,000 apartments in the old city, which are occupied by around 6,000 Palestinians (78% of whom are tenants and 22% owners), and over 160 shops, which have since reopened their doors.⁴⁷ According to W. Abu-Halawa “Today there are 6,500 people living in the old city of Hebron. When we started, there were only 500 Palestinians living in the same space.” According to him, while it was initially necessary to go and look for people who would have volunteered to have their house renovated, the HRC now has a waiting list of houses needing renovation. Having concentrated on the housing units, the HRC now wishes to renovate shops in the old market, and in the streets leading to the mosque: in this area, the shops were not closed because of military orders but were abandoned over time as the customers deserted the area and redirected their shopping habits to H1, more accessible and placed under Palestinian authority.

The HRC thus serves resistance not only by means of architecture and planning but also by installing electricity or by painting walls: the renovated houses are a manifesto in the core of an abandoned space, a visible affirmation of *sumud*, of the will of the inhabitants to remain. Living in the old city of Hebron, and engaging in its renovation, represents a public challenge towards the Israeli occupiers, claiming that people intend to stay, and intend to do so in the long term. There is thus an effective production of space in the old city of Hebron; however, this production is made using the relative “loophole” represented by private property and domestic space. This way, the HRC does not have to ask permission of the Israeli authorities to carry out the works, as they are carried out in individual houses. “If you’re in your house and you want to paint your house inside, do you need permission? We are renovating, we don’t build, this is an important point.”⁴⁸ This type of renovation thus associated “conceived” and “lived” space, the urban space and the home, the collective and the individual.

W. Abu-Halawa underlined that the HRC nevertheless faces problems in its work of rehabilitation. As the renovation is being made in the H2 area, it is submitted to the Israeli authority’s control of movement and access; it is for example difficult to carry out works in the areas next to the settlements, and in the Palestinian houses that remain within the settlements. He evoked internal practices of resistance from the organization to bypass the constraints imposed by the Israeli army: the ban on motorized vehicles in H2 made the use of horse-drawn carriages necessary in some cases; the workers sometimes have to smuggle building materials in the middle of the night. One of the stories he often tells to visitors to illustrate the problems they have to face and the absurdity of the occupation is that of a horse arrested by an Israeli soldier because he was carrying restoration material. The story is often repeated during the tours, and a poster showing the horse has even been made (field notes March 18, 2013). Anecdotes like this represent a common strategy of communication: they are told in the tone of a joke and can easily be repeated as such, but at the same time, they still illustrate the absurdity of the rules applied by the Israeli occupiers, and the problems the Palestinian inhabitants (“and even animals!”) have to face.

In Hebron, there is a direct and ongoing intervention on the urban fabric of the old city, which pursue a clear political objective. The main actor of this intervention – the HRC – is an official

organization, which acts with the support of the PA, other NGOs and foreign governments: it has a real administrative structure, depends on a budget, a plan and so forth. The main reproach of some, for example the activists of Youth against Settlements, concerns this bureaucratic aspect and the fact that the HRC is close to the authorities and depends on their money and permission. There is thus a material production of space at work in the old city of Hebron, which is clearer and more dynamic than in Silwan, where the intervention on the urban fabric is limited and does not stand out in the landscape. In Hebron, on the contrary, all the rehabilitation works intend to be clearly visible as the newly renovated houses or squares contrast with the rest of the urban environment. This intervention on the urban fabric results in a change of the city landscape: next to abandoned shops and closed pathways are places that are looked after and practiced. However, the political meaning of such an intervention on the urban fabric and its influence on political processes are limited. Indeed, this rehabilitation work has an impact first for the inhabitants of the area, whose environment and living conditions improve. Moreover, it is still very localized, to the extent that the renovated buildings are mainly located in secondary streets around the Cave of the Patriarchs.

The intervention on the urban fabric is possible as long as it is based on the private sphere and property: the works of the HRC are made both inside and outside the houses, but cannot modify the streets, or their accesses as the military has control over the entire space. However, in so doing, they clearly challenge the dominating power, as planning on a big scale is usually a prerogative of the administrations, whether local, regional or national. The HRC was indeed founded by Yasser Arafat, which reveals how important it is as a tool for the official power, namely, the Palestinian Authority, directly in concurrence with the Israeli Civil Administration for the administration of the West Bank and the handling of H2. As a spatial actor and materially producing space in the old city, the Palestinian power shows it does not abandon the place, with the help of international support and donors.

The actors of all three sites of contention often try to bypass the hegemony of the “conceived space” rather than challenge it upfront. By proceeding with building, ignoring and disobeying the Israeli authorities’ claims over the area, building to show that their control is not absolute and exploiting the small loopholes that are left, the actors of contention can exercise means of opposing control, concentrating on the domestic space. However, the Israeli authorities can resort to legal strategies to appropriate the spaces and limit and condemn this material production of space. The construction is thus possible, but the follow-through falls mainly into the hands of the institutions, and little can be done to stop it, except to appeal the decisions.

The challenge is nevertheless inscribed in space, even if not necessarily in an obvious way for outside observers. This is at least clear for the authorities, through the illegality of the physical intervention and the modification of the built environment. By marking space in a material way and expressing their defiance of the State’s rules and constraints, the protestors materialize the area in which they live as a “site of resistance” and make this challenge more visible, imbuing the sites with the sense of not being fully under control.

The implications of a biased legal system on the conception of space

The Israeli conception and production of space raises questions linked to the conditions and applications of the Israeli power and to the functioning of the Israeli regime, especially in Silwan and the Negev. The role played by the Israeli legal system in the planning process interrogates

the declared democratic character of the State and the political opportunities and constraints met by the protesters. It makes “‘invisible’ moral orders become visible – that is, emplaced – through laws governing the production and use of property and public space” (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008: 531). As we saw above, some opportunities to protest through official channels of the administrative and legal systems are provided for by the democratic features embedded within the ethnocratic political system; if the planning process and the material production of space appear to be strictly regulated by the authorities, some opportunities for participation and consultation can emerge. As those decisions on planning and building concern the actual occupation of space and the way in which it is appropriated and used, these determinations touch at the very core of Israeli politics; as such, they are strictly supervised and directed by the legal system.

The channels available are intrinsically constituted by threats and constraints, elements that impact the way protests proceed: the Israeli authorities can indeed rely on a legal system that represents the basic resource to counter, limit or neutralize the protesters’ pleas. This is not to say that every legal process contesting the State is bound to fail; it is however important to acknowledge the biases underlying the laws, the way they can be exploited and the impact they have on concrete cases. If the law often “reinforces existing order and is an example of the State sustaining the privileges associated with class, race, religion, sexuality, ableism, and gender” (Staeheli, 2010: 71), the legal systems enforced by Israel on its territory and the West Bank are openly conceived that way, according to the hegemonic principles intrinsic to settler colonialism. The interviewed inhabitants and activists, Palestinians and Israelis, all underlined that the democratic means of participation available to people (whether consultative or judicial proceedings) only have the appearance of democracy as the laws that underlie them are all in favour of one part of the population, namely, the Jewish-Israeli majority, while discriminating, in more or less subtle ways, against the other groups present in the country, and in particular against the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Bedouins.

Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, talking about the court decision that forbade the spraying of herbicide on the Bedouin fields (see Chapter 1), in respect of which no compensation was provided to the plaintiffs, complained: “this shows the real face of the Israeli courts, who speak about justice and democracy, but where is justice? (...) We looked for justice in the court but we didn’t find it there unfortunately.”⁴⁹ Haia Noach, from the Negev Coexistence Forum, pointed out that in Israel there are “people who don’t have rights, as it is the case in the Negev, and people who have extra-rights.”⁵⁰ A Bedouin politician who served in the Knesset between 1992 and 2013 with the Arab Democratic Party and the United Arab List underlined the contradiction between the way the country presents itself and the way it treats its Bedouin minority: “no water, no schools, what kind of a citizenship is it? (...) ‘The only democracy of the Middle-East’... This democracy is a big lie...”⁵¹ In Jerusalem too, protestors have no illusions towards the opportunities the system can offer. Amani Odeh, who lives in Al-Bustan, pointed out: “it’s a peaceful resistance, here we cannot make war against the government, we live in Jerusalem and Jerusalem is under Israeli government. This is a reality.”⁵² Fakhre Abu Diab, spokesperson of the Al-Bustan committee, underlined: “we have no power. The municipality of Jerusalem they have the law of power, not the power of the law,” and went on:

“I saw the judge who made the demolition order at [the market of] Mahane Yehuda and I

told him ‘I have all the documents, I was born in my home, I went many times to the municipality... They always refused, and never wanted us to build anything’. I asked him ‘where is the justice?’ (...) He said “we, the court, go with the law, not with the justice.”⁵³

This kind of story is commonly told to illustrate the helplessness of the Palestinian population facing the Israeli legal system and their feeling of injustice in front of what is seen as a rigged system. Another resident of Silwan asserted that the courts have a political agenda: “Who can go to court? When we discovered that they are digging tunnels under our houses (...) we went to court. The judge said it is the right of the Jewish people to find their history. So the judge too shared this project.”⁵⁴

The inhabitants in Silwan and the Negev thus underline the fundamental bias introduced by the ethnocentric basis of the Israeli system which, they feel, make the authorities and their representatives systematically rule against them. It is common for Bedouins not to address the court for fear not only that the outcome would be negative but also that it would worsen the situation, for example, by leading to the expropriation of the claimed land. The institutional actors, active in the public debate and often trying to modify the terms of the law through legal action, also take this into consideration. A member of Adalah, a legal centre working to protect the rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel, explained that the organization does not engage in land cases: “We believe that there is no chance to win land cases in the court. This State, Israel, as a State, is ideologically motivated. And we don’t think that in the issue of land they will do any compromise. We don’t believe that there is a judge right now that can stand and say: the Bedouins are right, and we should recognize their claims.”⁵⁵

These statements, which complement the practical examples evoked throughout the chapter, further highlight how the fundamental tool of domination and occupation is the law; the entire legal arsenal instituted by Israel is used to legitimize the takeover of lands and the differential treatment of people based on their ethnicity. This is part and parcel of the settler-colonial structure and ethnocentric regime: “the state is not ethnically neutral; rather, it is owned and ruled by the majority, while the minorities do not enjoy autonomy and power-sharing” (Smoocha, 1997: 200). This is a difference that is also applied in the West Bank. Developing this point further is not within the scope of this research; however, it has to be underlined as it has a direct impact on the available strategies of resistance. Indeed, if formal possibilities exist allowing for the appeal and contestation of the decisions or for participation in their elaboration, their range is limited by the application of the laws, which generally aim at keeping the control of the land under Israeli State control. The opportunities that are offered by the structure of the political system to officially and legally protest are thus often bound to fail. As this outcome is acknowledged, those “opportunities” are considered, in case, as tools that need to be used to cover the whole span of possible actions; however, even this possibility is often discarded as it is considered to not even be worth trying.

This chapter shows that when it comes to challenging the Israeli control over the conceived space, there seems to be little that can be done as the constraints and decisions implemented are backed by the legal apparatus of the State. This legal apparatus has been created relying on the principles and objectives of Zionism that Sari Hanafi defines as “spacio-cidal,” explaining: “in the Israeli Palestinian conflict, the Israeli target is the place” (2006: 93).

The strategies considered here could in themselves constitute merely a form of civic action,

but represent a form of resistance as the protestors address an authority that they starkly and otherwise actively oppose, in order to undermine its decisions. In all three case studies, the protestors are in a subaltern position, limiting the resources to which they have access, which, as Sewell underlines, “limits the forms of spatial agency that are available to them.” As a result, they “generally must accept the physical environment as a given” and “produce space above all by changing the meanings and strategic use of their environments” (2001: 56). In all three cases, opposition to the “conceived space” is mainly made through a limited material production, via building or renovating houses, deemed illegal by the State in Al-Araqib and Silwan, and in Hebron is done by bypassing the authority via the concentration on the private and domestic space. In Silwan, as in the unrecognized Bedouin villages, which are under Israeli jurisdiction, illegal building is met with demolition orders and fines, making it a risky strategy. Even renovation, which requires authorization, can lead to fines being imposed or to orders for the house to be demolished.

Silwan and Al-Araqib appear closer not only in terms of stakes and practices but also of legal framework. The act of building houses without permission can be seen as the Palestinian equivalent of the “fact on the ground,” a strategy used by the Jewish community when it arrived in Palestine, and then by the settlers, to gain territory: each structure that is built represents a supplementary pawn in an attrition warfare, or a “war of position,” where the occupation of space is essential (Imseis, 2000; Rotbard, 2003). The physical “fact” makes it more difficult to take over or to regain control of the space (see Chapter 2).

H2 is less concerned with the designing of grand Master Plans for the general development of the urban area, this prerogative being still in the hands of the Palestinian municipality and H1 being largely outside of the sphere of interest of the Israeli settler community more focused on the religious and historical Jewish sites within H2. In H2, the urban fabric is seen as being threatened by the slow encroachment of the Israeli settlers in the old city, and the occasional enlargement plans considered by some governments for the settlements. This presence of settlers nevertheless represent a direct link with Silwan; if they are administered under different rules and regulations, both places are occupied and represent particular places of interests for religious and nationalist motives fitting with the Zionist narrative, Hebron because of the Cave of the Patriarchs and Silwan because of the projected past presence of David and Salomon. As such, both face the threat of settlers’ takeovers; this increasing similarity between the two places has been described as an ongoing process of “Hebronization” in East Jerusalem (Dumper, 2014: 139).

The “conceived space” was described by Lefebvre as “a lethal one which destroys the historical conditions that gave rise to it, its own (internal) differences, and any such differences that show signs of developing, in order to impose an abstract homogeneity” (Lefebvre, 1991: 370). The larger definition given here of the conceived space, as not only abstract but having also a material translation in the physical world, reinforces this dark appreciation, confirming its status as being not only a dimension prone to reproducing domination patterns but also oppression when steered by authoritative or discriminatory regimes. It is the “dominant space” in the society (Lefebvre, 1991) but also the dominant space with respect to the other dimensions of space: this stifling of difference and historical depth through abstraction indeed means stifling the lived and perceived spaces, the spaces of representations and poetic symbols, daily life and activities, movements and crossings, animated not by the authorities but by the population in all its diversity.

The place, the locality, identified with the neighbourhood or the village, represents not only the main scale of action but also the main spatial reference for the claims and the central “source of self-recognition” (Routledge, 2000: 377). The neighbourhoods mobilize locally against the control imposed by the Israeli authorities through the local conception of space, notably through the practice of *sumud*. The scope of the actions implemented to challenge or oppose these measures is limited by the discrepancies existing in the means available to the actors. Legal actions are limited by the very nature of the regime, whereas illegal actions are challenged by harsh counter-measures that include the demolition of illegal buildings, arrests and military responses to demonstrations. Confronted with these limitations, which other strategies are available to protesters?

Notes

1. A recent strand of literature, following the work of Eyal Weizman, studies the “architecture of occupation”, the “architecture of violence”, and ultimately, “forensics architecture,” where the urban fabric allows the observer to analyse the “occupation regimes and practices of control” (Weizman, 2012: 6). The authors, preoccupied with “the ways in which the different forms of Israeli rule inscribed themselves in space, analysing the geographical, territorial, urban and architectural conceptions and the interrelated practices that form and sustain them” (Ibid.: 5), thus consider, in the same piece, the various disciplines organizing the human presence in space, the political aims of the Israeli State and the ideology underlying its choice. See, for example, the website <http://www.forensic-architecture.org/>.
2. “Barakat plans to implement Al-Bustan demolitions in election bid,” WHIC website, September 5, 2011, <http://silwanic.net/?p=19778>.
3. See “The Town Plan Scheme 11 555,” WHIC website, December 28, 2009, <http://silwanic.net/?p=497>; “Maps of Plan Town Scheme 11 555”, WHIC website, January 3 2010, <http://silwanic.net/?p=618>. For another approach of the situation, see for example, “At PM’s Request, J’lem Mayor Postpones King’s Garden Plan”, Arutz Sheva, February 3, 2010, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/136273#.VRQb9fmG-sk>.
4. See the articles of the Silwan Information Centre: <http://silwanic.net/?p=3864>, <http://silwanic.net/?p=1615>, <http://silwanic.net/?p=1575>.
5. Illustrations available at “Community Plans for Silwan, King’s Garden Plan by Arieh Rahamimov,” Architect and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP), <http://apjp.org/maps-and-photos/community-plans-for-silwan/7936885>.
6. Illustrations available at “Community Plans for Silwan, The alternative community plan by Yousef Jabareen,” Architect and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP), <http://apjp.org/maps-and-photos/community-plans-for-silwan/7936879>.
7. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
8. Interview realized on February 27, 2013.
9. Interviews with Fakhre Abu Diab, Amani Odeh, P., T. and J.
10. See, for example, “Right Wing Jewish Organization Ordered to Develop Open Space for Palestinians,” Nir Hasson, 23 November 2017, Haaretz, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-right-wing-jewish-organization-ordered-to-develop-open-space-for-palestinians-1.5626799?ts=1601386741140>; “Jerusalem municipality rejects alternatives to Palestinian home demolitions”, Middle East Monitor, March 12, 2021, available at;

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210312-jerusalem-municipality-rejects-alternatives-to-palestinian-home-demolitions/>.

11. Another plan that will impact Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan should it be implemented is the cable car that would join Emek Refaim and the old city to the Mount of Olives. See “Jerusalem set to unveil controversial plan for cable car in Old City,” *Haaretz*, March 5 2015; “Le projet controversé de téléphérique au-dessus de Jérusalem,” *La Croix*, March 9 2015; “Jerusalem reboots controversial cable car plan,” *Start-Up Israel*, March 6 2015; “Jérusalem: un projet de téléphérique bientôt sur les rails?, *I24News*, March 6 2015.
12. Interview realized on March 2, 2013.
13. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
14. The national elections held in 2015, 2019 and 2020 represented exceptions in this respect, with high turnout of the Arab voters.
15. See, for example, <http://www.negev.org/>, <http://energy.gov.il/English/AboutTheOffice/SpeakerMessages/Pages/GxmsMniSpokesman> http://www.haluzasmartcity.org/smartcityen-inspired_by_ben_gurion_-inspired_by_ben_gurion_.
16. Meir, Avinoam. 1999. *Tension Between the Negev Bedouin and the State: Policy and Practice*. The Floresheimer Institute for Policy Studies. Jerusalem (In Hebrew).
17. See “5 Reasons Why You Should Care About the Negev,” Israel Defence Forces website, May 4, 2012, <https://www.idfblog.com/blog/2012/05/04/strategic-importance-negev/>.
18. See, for example, “IDF begins moving major bases to Israel’s Negev,” *Haaretz*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/idf-begins-moving-major-bases-to-israel-s-negev-1.465317>, “Giant IDF complex in Negev due for completion in 2015,” *Haaretz*, August 8, 2013; <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.540356>, “Israel starts construction on Negev army base,” *The National*, September 17, 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/israel-starts-construction-on-negev-army-base>, “IDF Facing Tough Battle to Convince Career Officers to Move to Southern Israel,” *Haaretz*, January 12, 2014, <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-idf-tempts-officers-to-move-south-1.5300552>.
19. Submitted on March 19, 2012, see <http://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/Likit%20objection%20-%20final.pdf> (in Hebrew). “Adalah, Bimkom, the RCUV and Arab Bedouin Living in the Naqab File Objection to Plans for Israeli Army ‘Intelligence City’,” 2012, <http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7717>, “Negev Bedouin file objection to IDF complex“, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Negev-Bedouin-file-objection-to-IDF-complex>.
20. The Goldberg Committee was established in 2006 and carried on public hearings and meetings on the topic of the unrecognized Bedouins villages. The commission issued its recommendations to the government in 2008; it stated that the government should “recognize, in so far as possible, every one of the unrecognized villages’ provided that the decision does not contradict the official plans for the southern district of Israel” (The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2012a: 23). See also Amara, 2008; International fact-finding mission, 2010; The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev – RCUV, n.d.
21. See, for example: “Praver Bill on Beduin land narrowly passes 1st vote”, *The Jerusalem*

- Post, June 24, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Prawer-Bill-on-Beduin-land-narrowly-passes-first-Knesset-vote-317611>; “Begin-Prawer plan. Bedouin relocation plan wins slim Knesset majority after stormy 1st reading,” *Haaretz*, June 24, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.531794>; “Collision course: Plan to displace tens of thousands of Bedouin passes first Knesset vote,” +972, June 25, 2013, <http://972mag.com/collision-course-plan-to-displace-tens-of-thousands-of-bedouins-passes-first-knesset-vote/74333/>.
22. “Israeli government halts controversial plan to resettle 30,000 Bedouin,” *Haaretz*, December 12, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/1.563200>; “Israel suspends controversial Beduin resettlement plan,” *The Jerusalem Post*, December 12 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Bennie-Begin-stops-Beduin-resettlement-plan-334862>; “MKs learn Beduin did not see, agree to resettlement plan, threatening bill’s passage”, *The Jerusalem Post*, December 10 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/MKs-learn-Beduin-were-in-the-dark-over-resettlement-plan-threatening-bills-Knesset-passage-334502>; “Government Drops Prawer Plan for Bedouins”, *Arutz Sheva*, December 12 2013, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/175108#.VbFvLvntmkp>.
 23. Communiqué “Cabinet Approves Transfer of Responsibility for Bedouin Communities in the Negev from the PMO to the Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry,” Prime Minister Office, January 5, 2014, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokebeduim050114.aspx>; “Bedouin’ will be consulted’ over resettlement plan in Negev,” *Haaretz*, January 8, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.567498>; “Shamir to ‘Post’: Changes will be made to Beduin resettlement plan before new push,” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 8th, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Shamir-to-Post-Changes-will-be-made-to-Beduin-resettlement-plan-before-new-push-337436>.
 24. Interviews with Fakhre Abu Diab, November 5, 2012; Jawad Siyam on November 27, 2012; J., on February 27, 2013.
 25. Interview with J. on February 27, 2013.
 26. Interview with Jawad Siyam realized on November 27, 2012; interview with T. realized on February 18, 2013.
 27. Interview with Haia Noach, April 17, 2012 and November 3, 2013; with Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, April 9, 2012.
 28. A. Gvanyahu now works for the Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence, an NGO made of veteran Israeli soldiers who testify about their experiences in the West Bank and the reality of the Israeli occupation.
 29. Interview realized on November 19, 2013.
 30. Interview realized on November 19, 2013.
 31. See the “Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945,” No Legal Frontiers, <http://nolegalfrontiers.org/en/military-orders/mil02>; “Defense (Emergency) Regulations”, B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/legal_documents/emergency_regulations.
 32. See *Settler violence: Lack of accountability*, B’tselem http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence/dual_legal_system.
 33. Interview with Avner Gvanyahu, realized on November 19, 2013.
 34. Note: Ibid. In January 2021, Btselem argued that Israel represented the rule of “Jewish

- supremacy” and imposed a regime of apartheid “from the river to the sea.” See “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid,” January 12, 2021, B’tselem, https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid; “We are Israel’s largest human rights group – and we are calling this apartheid,” Hagai El-Ad, The Guardian, January 12, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/12/israel-largest-human-rights-group-apartheid>.
35. Interview realized on April 9, 2013.
 36. Interview realized on April 16 2013.
 37. “Planning and building rights”, ACRI, <https://law.acri.org.il/en/category/east-jerusalem/planning-and-building-rights/>.
 38. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
 39. Interview with T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Committee, February 18, 2013.
 40. Interview realized on October 28, 2012.
 41. Interview realized on November 6, 2012.
 42. Interview realized on November 26, 2012.
 43. A new technology of control proposed by the Company Simplex has been deployed in 2018 to detect illegal building. See <https://www.simplex-mapping.com/> and Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2019: 17.
 44. Parts of this section has been used for a chapter in an edited volume, see Lecoquierre (2019b).
 45. Interview with Walid Abu-Halawah, former Director of Public Relations for the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, April 3, 2013.
 46. Note: Ibid.
 47. See World Habitat Award: <http://www.worldhabitatawards.org/winners-and-finalists/project-details.cfm?lang=00&theProjectID=9E96D36D-15C5-F4C0-99F947770C4774F4>. The list of renovated building can be found here: <http://www.hebronrc.ps/index.php/en/about-hrc/hrc-projects>.
 48. Note: Ibid.
 49. Interview realized on April 9, 2012.
 50. Interview realized on April 17, 2012.
 51. Interview realized on May 24, 2012.
 52. Interview realized on March 2, 2013.
 53. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
 54. Interview with Ahmad Qara’een realized on October 28, 2012.
 55. Interview realized on May 22, 2012.

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4 **Protesting**

Disrupting hegemony in the public space and sphere

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A central practice within the spatial repertoires employed in all three sites of contention, is that of collective action under its different forms: demonstrations, sits-in, clashes, etc. all recurring elements in repertoires of actions worldwide. Collective actions are typically deployed in public space, mainly streets and square, as “spaces for representation” (Mitchell, 1995: 115) where dynamics of power between various actors are played out, and organizations can stage their protest and make their claims towards outside observers. The public space is indeed the arena in which public life takes place, a space that can theoretically be appropriated, among other things, to express dissent. Largely designed and controlled by the authorities, but theoretically practiced and lived by the people, public space can be located at the crossroad between the “conceived” and “lived” dimensions of space. As such, and even more so in colonialist regimes, protests raise questions around both the public space and the public sphere, the expression of the contention and the location of that expression. Indeed, the preceding chapters show that in such regimes there is one “public” considered, as one unique “group of people recognized as being legitimate participants in political discussion, deliberation and governing” (Staeheli, 2010: 70).

The various strategies of control implemented in all three case studies largely aim at ensuring the Israeli domination over public space. This domination limits and hinders the type and scope of actions that can be organized; however, while the possibilities to protest are limited, and often very risky in the occupied West Bank, collective actions do take place according to different tactics.

This chapter concentrates on the different forms of collective actions deployed in the three sites of contention, not only demonstrating an active engagement against settler colonial policies, but also signaling the constitution and persistence of subaltern counterpublics (Fraser, 1990) within the hegemonic public space and sphere. In Hebron, collective action targeting H2 and the occupation regularly takes the form of organized demonstrations and violent clashes often taking place at the square of Bab al-Zawiya on the seam between H1 and H2, where young Palestinians oppose the Israeli army. In Al-Bustan, weekly prayers are organized at the tent erected next to the neighbourhood, while the residents of Al-Araqib organize demonstrations with different targets, the Bedouin community, the Israeli public and the Israeli institutions, courts and government. These examples converge in a reflection on the use of public space in these sites and definition of public space in general, which in turn calls into question what is “the public” and what this notion, tightly connected to that of democracy, can mean in a colonial context.

Demonstration and clashes in Hebron: the geopolitics of public space

One of the most visible and well-known aspects of resistance in Palestine in general is the violent opposition to the occupying forces, symbolized by the Intifada and the stone-throwing youths. Hebron, along with Nablus, is well known for its fierce resistance and for the violent form that this resistance can take. Demonstrations in the city centre, such as those that take place during the Open Shuhada Street protests or on the occasion of events such as Operation Pillar of Defence and the bombing of Gaza in October, 2012 and the hunger strike led by Palestinian prisoners in the spring of 2013, all lead to clashes of varying intensity between *shabab* (young men)¹ and the Israeli forces. I will firstly scrutinize the strategy behind those clashes and the way they use the public space, then enlarging the scope to other practices observed in Hebron which aim at countering the Israeli control by seemingly appropriating some of the authorities' prerogative especially concerning the surveillance of space.

It must be noted that if the status of public space in Israel is a complicated one, it is even more the case in H2. Streets and squares, the typical spaces that come to mind when thinking of public space, are not necessarily considered or lived as public in practice. Many streets of H2, which are theoretically public spaces, such as Shuhada Street, have been turned into exclusive areas, access to which is available only to particular segments of the population (see Chapter 1). Other, that remain accessible, are public in practice but the Israeli control of space operates to limit the access and use of these spaces. The study of demonstrations shows that the Israeli authority over the space in H2 overflows the fixed administrative limits, putting the public space at the seam between H1 and H2 within the Israeli sphere of intervention, further blurring the limits in the city and the perceptions of the various areas.

Non-violent demonstrations and violent clashes: irruption of otherness in the policed space

Some organized demonstrations take place between H1 and H2. The demonstration of Open Shuhada Street, which has been organized by YAS (Youth against Settlements) since 2010 around the date of the Baruch Goldstein massacre (February 25), is the main regular event of collective action organized in Hebron that targets the occupation of H2. It attracts a considerable number of people, Palestinians as well as internationals and involves a non-violent march between Bab al-Zawiya and the checkpoint inside H2 which bars access to the Ibrahimi mosque, frontally challenging the military control of space (see Figure 4.2). Issa Amro, coordinator of YAS and organizer of the event, explained in 2013 that the goal of the demonstration was to access the "sanctuarized" area of H2: "we want to reach the soldiers, to pass them, to get inside Shuhada Street, to protest in the street, this was our goal."² He recollected that in 2011 some activists succeeded in passing the checkpoint thanks to the fact that one of the gates between H1 and H2 was open. In 2013, he considered that the risk was too high "I saw settlers with their M-16 outside, so I was afraid for the safety of the demonstrators." Despite the 2011 example, observations showed demonstrators usually cannot access the sanctuarized area, and in reality, do not physically try to pass, but rather confront the soldiers from a distance. Forcing the entrance to the closed part of H2 represents a real risk, relying on a very unbalanced confrontation with armed soldiers. Zliha Muhtaseb, who lives in the restricted area of H2, explained: "clashes can't take place here, never. From a strategic point of view, it is not possible. The soldiers push the protestors to Bab al-Zawiya."³

Considering the topography of the old city and the layout of the Israeli presence, one element that can be noted is the surprisingly low number of protest initiatives – or more precisely, their absolute inexistence – coming from the Muslim cemetery that covers part of Tal Rumeida and overlooks a big part of Shuhada Street, or from the road that runs along the cemetery and directly branches to Shuhada Street. The access there is quite easy and direct, with no closed checkpoints or roadblocks. However, Avner Gvanyahu who served as a soldier underlines there is “a chance to get shot” arriving from there⁴ as precisely due to the space being more open it is monitored from watchtowers near the IDF military base located in Shuhada Street and above the Avraham Avinu settlement.

Very few demonstrations take place within the restricted area of H2 (see Chapter 1), and these are usually much smaller than those that take place elsewhere. On the occasion of Barack Obama’s visit to Israel and Palestine, YAS organized a demonstration to protest against occupation on March 20, 2013. Few people participated in the demonstration, as it had been kept a secret even within YAS: the protestors included some activists from YAS and a few international activists from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). The group was followed by journalists and some YAS activists filming and taking pictures: wearing masks of Martin Luther King and Barack Obama, shouting “I have a dream,” they walked down the Tal Rumeida hill towards Shuhada Street, at the entrance to which they were stopped and arrested. The activists from ISM were arrested and deported the following day. The demonstrations are also conceived as operations of communications and are thoroughly documented by activists through filming and photographing to ensure their visibility and the conveyance of their message and struggle as well as to testify on any violent repression (Benford & Hunt, 1992; Tilly, 1993; see Chapter 6).

This type of upfront provocation is a common way to materialize the rules regulating movement and access in H2. Indeed, no sign or marking indicates where the area forbidden to Palestinians in Shuhada Street starts: the stretch between Checkpoint 56 and the Bet Hadassah settlement is accessible by foot; the stretch beyond the Bet Hadassah settlement is forbidden to West Bank Palestinians. Only a military presence and control of the visitors’ identity papers gives visibility to this spatial limit that can easily be overlooked by people not aware of the situation. The control actually makes the transgression possible and visible: as crossing a line marks the illegality, the step makes more sense. Attempting the transgression and triggering the repression that ensues can be a goal, as it will generate images and events illustrating the political situation in Hebron. Zliha Muhtaseb, for example, explained that she had already illustrated to skeptical groups of foreigners the prohibition to walk in Shuhada Street by stepping past the virtual line and getting arrested.⁵ The transgression is nevertheless calculated, due to the imbalance between forces; the possibility of intervention in the restricted and sanctuarized areas of H2 are indeed very limited due to the Israeli army’s omnipresence.

Another type of collective action is the regular violent confrontations between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli army. The clashes usually take place at Bab al-Zawiya, a square at the junction of four major arteries in H1, which marks the limit between the H1 and H2 areas and is normally a market area, with numerous stands and shops selling especially clothes, fruits and vegetables. Checkpoint 56, which leads to Shuhada Street is situated right next to it, in the south of the square. The constant presence of the army and the physical obstacle represented by the checkpoint polarize the clashes there: they embody the occupation, the Israeli authority and its

injustice, while the checkpoint symbolically represents the front line of the conflict, materially displaying the city's division.

The clashes that regularly take place at Bab al-Zawiya often follow a common pattern with variations depending on the number of participants, with on one hand the *shabab*, located at the crossroads of the Clock Tower, hiding behind buildings on either sides of the street and sometimes behind barricades, masked with hoods, t-shirts or the traditional *kuffieh*, who come out to throw stones - either by hands or using slings - and Molotov cocktails towards the soldiers and checkpoint 56. The Israeli soldiers are often stationed next to the checkpoint, at the top of the street, preventing approach or access to H2 and Shuhada Street and sometimes move along the sidewalks in small group to repel the protestors, regularly firing teargas, rubber bullets and sound grenades, which accounts for regular injuries among the protestors.⁶ The confrontation is always very unbalanced, opposing informal tactics of protest – including violent ones – on the Palestinian side to military grade material, techniques and training, implying potentially an elevated price for engagement in those protests. It has to be noted however that in some account the tactics on the side of the Palestinian youths can have the appearance and intention of violence but not the means to reach or threaten the soldiers and answers to a type of codified dramaturgy (Benford & Hunt, 1992): on several occasions during clashes I observed rocks rolling far from the feet of soldiers who had entered into H1 to guard the checkpoint and were busy looking at their phone or on one occasion eating chocolates brought by Jewish settlers. Then again, the dramaturgy is often part of actually unfolding drama.

In those clashes, active *shabab* are often few in number, and the audience forms the biggest part of the crowd, amounting to between fifty and one hundred people who observe the events from the various sheltered places around the square, watching and occasionally cheering the protestors. Clashes can develop into bigger confrontations that spread from Bab al-Zawiya inside the narrow streets of the old city, towards the Cave of the Patriarchs. They also sometimes take on a more guerrilla-like character, with protestors erecting barricades, burning tyres or pieces of furniture or manoeuvring through transversal streets to approach the soldiers or to prepare ambushes against those progressing on the sidewalks (see Figure 4.1). On their part, the soldiers regularly try to find more advantageous positions to repel the protestors, progressing on the roofs to secure a vantage point for observation and firing or approaching from the ground, closing in on the sidewalks and entering in shops and building for cover.

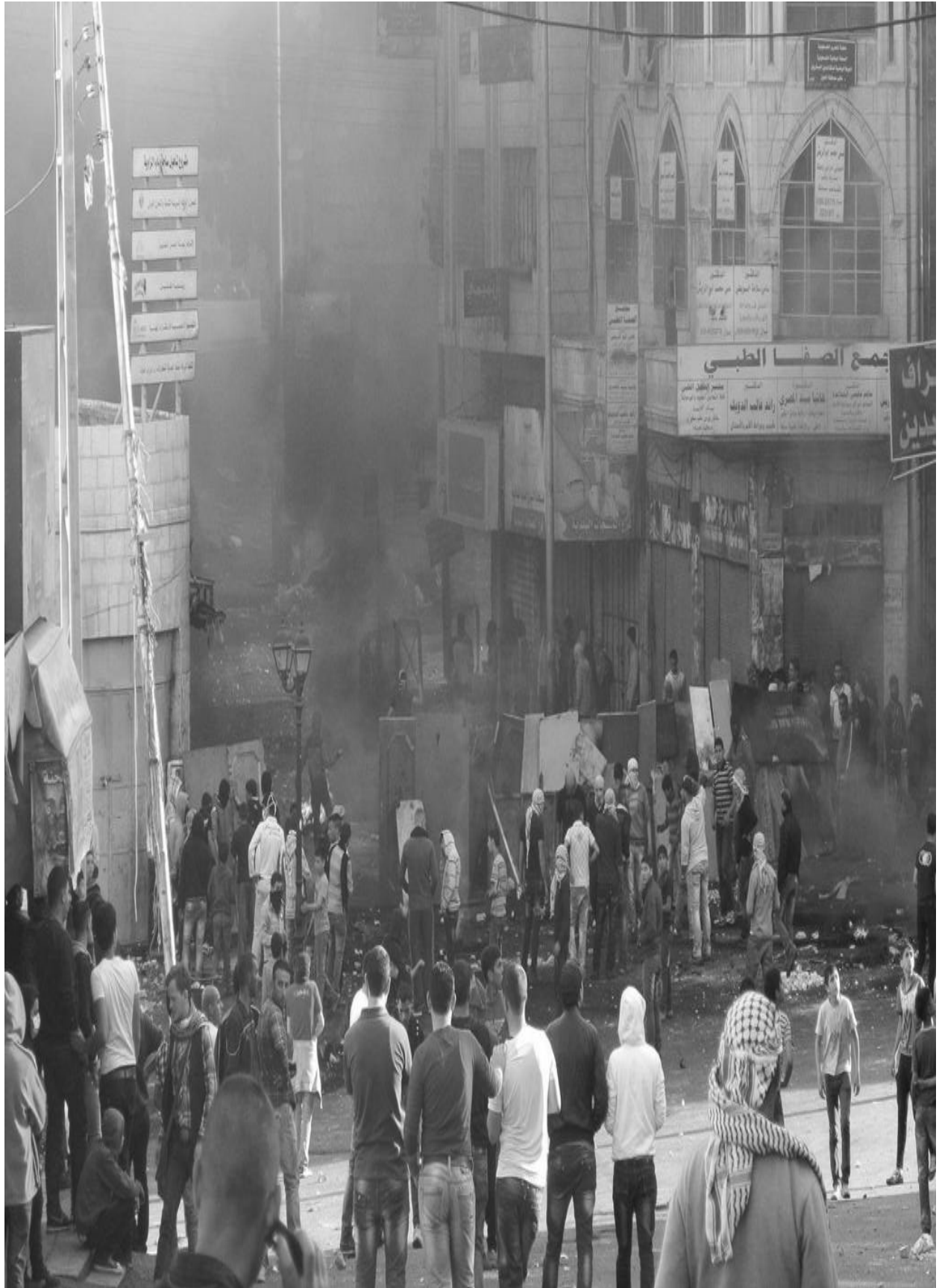


Figure 4.1 Clashes in Bab al-Zawiya, with the erection of a barricade. Picture taken on March 4, 2013.

During the February 2013 Open Shuhada Street demonstration, clashes between Palestinians and the IDF erupted at the end of the march, and spread throughout the old city, with small groups of young Palestinians harassing Israeli patrols in the intricate streets of the old city. The means of “crowd control” and “crowd dispersion” engaged by the Israeli army allowed a quick containment of the action. Beyond lethal forces, the army also employed various “non-lethal” means control: the “skunk,” a truck that hoses a terribly “foul-smelling liquid” (B’tselem, 2013: 35, see also Who Profits Research Center, 2014: 23–32) and the truck equipped with a sound cannon, a device technically called a “Long Range Acoustic Device,” and nicknamed “the Scream” (B’tselem, 2013: 47; Who Profits Research Center, 2014: 18–22). Those, as well as the large number of armed soldiers stationed in H2 all constitute efficient means of deterrence that made the protesters retreat.

Those clashes take place in H1, which in theory falls under the authority of the PA, granting a relative freedom to protest and provoke the rule and presence imposed in H2, few meters away. The Palestinian public space in H1 is nevertheless seen as being submitted to the Israeli authority as the IDF regularly enters H1 for repressing protests, but also because the PA police is often charged with containing the protests and is considered since the Oslo agreements as a “subcontractor” of the Israeli army. At the end of the 2013 Open Shuhada Street demonstration, for example, the crowd of protestors was scattered by various units of the Palestinian police and Palestinian National Security Forces, which were attacked in turn with a rain of stones by the protestors for intervening against the Palestinians but also apparently “in defence” of the Israeli soldiers, as a group of them had been cornered in Bab al-Zawiya (Figures 4.3).



Figure 4.2 Protesters put flags on the fence blocking the access to Shuhada Street from the market during the Open Shuhada Street demonstration. Pictures taken on February 22, 2013.



Figure 4.3 The Palestinian police dispersing the clashes after the Open Shuhada Street demonstration. Pictures taken on February 22, 2013.

The usefulness of this kind of protest is called into question by the population; in particular, the shopkeepers of the area treat these clashes severely, as they directly harm their interests by forcing all shops to close and preventing people to visit the area, and, according to them, bring about no change. Some bystanders, shopkeepers and youths, interviewed during these clashes criticized: “This is not resistance. The first Intifada was resistance;” “they are sent by Israel;” “most of them are thieves;” “this is Tom and Jerry, not resistance” (field notes, February 2, 2013; March 3, 2013). These criticisms illustrate the ongoing disagreements as to which strategies to adopt, between violent and non-violent, organized and spontaneous means of action and the legitimacy of each tactics. It also shows a pervading suspicion that is found also in Silwan and the Negev, that sees the long arm of the Israeli authorities behind each protest, maintaining and even fanning violence to divide the society and damage the image of the Palestinian struggle, provoking reactions to be able to better repress it.

Directly challenging the control of space and thus using “public” space during demonstrations, either by accessing or occupying it, is difficult and risky and the power balance is clearly unfavourable to protestors. The mere attempt to do so is however used to illustrate the way in which Palestinians are treated, reflective of the occupation and the constraints that govern their lives. The demonstrations often seek media attention through symbolic actions and via images of massive mobilization and repression that materialize the control of space, whereas the *shabab* generally seek direct confrontation in a more direct and spontaneous way. In clashing with the army, they do not try to access or to gain control over stretches H2, even for a short period of time but merely aim to actively and visibly oppose the presence of the Israeli army. In both cases, facing the Israeli army is a primary goal, either to show the constraints, occupation and control weighing on the life of Palestinians in H2 or to express frustration at the situation and opposition to the occupation.

The main public space practiced by the protesters, the area of Bab al-Zawiya, is tightly controlled and has different gradients of publicness depending on certain temporalities and usages: it represents a typical public space for example during daytime when the market is open but it is also a buffer zone protecting the H2 area, under the surveillance of Checkpoint 56. During demonstrations and clashes it becomes a militarized space that is an extension of H2 and over which the Israeli army takes control. It becomes a site of geopolitical confrontation (Falah & Flint, 2004) whose public character is annihilated like in the neighbouring Shuhada Street.

By acting in public space, even one that is emptied of meaning, the protestors affirm, enact and produce its very publicness, reaffirming its possible usage by the people for expression of dissent and practices considered as a threat by the occupying forces, which enter the space under PA authority to repress it. If “performing is itself empowering” (Benford & Hunt, 1992: 45), performing is itself producing: in a transient manner, contention gives meaning to a public space otherwise diminished by the vicinity of the occupier’s means of interventions.

Surveillance and pressure: staging power

Challenging the Israeli control over the public space can also take the form of an appropriation –

or at least the appearance of such appropriation – of State prerogatives, such as authority enforcement or surveillance over an area. Issa Amro for example mentioned a group called “Hebron Defenders,” created in 2011 and made up more or less of the same members as YAS. He explains that it aimed at defending the families of Tal Rumeida from the settlers. Even if it was not directly observed, the vocabulary used in his account of the group’s action is very revealing and deserves to be quoted extensively:

“We started doing visits to the families and we visited many. We were 40 or 50 Palestinians and told the families ‘don’t think that you are alone, we are ready to come to be in front of your houses’. We observed the settlers’ websites, we knew where they would attack usually, 95% of the big attacks we knew about in advance, so we were going before. That time we observed all settlements, any gathering, any movement of the settlers. We had a control room here and someone calling all the other families and other people who were outside, hiding on the olive yards, just observing the settlers (...) we told the families ‘we have a Palestinian civilian force protecting you’, we went many times to families, we were telling them ‘tonight there will be an attack in your area, we are with you’. And settlers came, they saw us, shouting, yelling at them, filming them, and making trouble for them, so the settlers escaped. The families felt they were so well protected and it worked. With Hebron defenders we hid in the olive trees too, we made an ambush and caught the settlers stealing olives. It is about that, giving the indications to the settlers that the Palestinians are not the easy target anymore. There are Palestinians who are ready to defend and to be in front and to sacrifice themselves.”⁷

The image conveyed is that of vigilantes, of strength, an image reinforced by the video “Hebron Defender”⁸ produced by the Palmedia news agency as a piece of reportage for al-Jazeera, according to Issa Amro, which presents some of the YAS activists in their nocturnal activities, with a war-like commando atmosphere.

Another example of the appropriation of the authorities’ prerogatives, or more specifically, the mirroring of Israeli control in order to challenge it, is provided by the family living in what is known as the “cage house” within the settlement of Admot Yishai, a house regularly attacked by the settlers. The family has installed a surveillance camera outside the house and wire netting covering its façade. As is the case with the cameras used by the activists to document the clashes and arrests (see Chapter 6), this kind of additional surveillance is a way of protecting the family against accusations from the settlers, allowing them to bring proof to court, but also, in this precise case, allowing them to keep an eye on the surrounding threats.⁹

These initiatives, their goal, the way they are presented and sometimes staged, either through discourse or the video evoked above, all show a claim of authority; inhabitants and activists who reclaim power, show their rejection of the Israeli control and at the same time their distrust of the Palestinian authority; they present themselves as an alternative, taking the security matter into their own hands.

All of these strategies seek to retain, gain or display authority over places and situations strictly monitored by the Israelis. They aim to oppose the dominating power and to challenge its authority more directly by using the same kind of strategies and fantasy. One example of this is the regular attempts to impose a kind of *de facto* authority over an area. It is common in Hebron

to hear children or youths shout “No, no, no!!” when soldiers or settlers pass by, pretending to stop a stone being thrown at them. This practice is clearly intended to scare them and make them feel like they are in a threatening environment. The activists of YAS often use the same strategy with the settlers who come up the Tal Rumeida hill to reach the nearby settlement. A true “weapon of the weak,” this practice – which requires no means, no organization and no competence – has no long-term impact on the situation, but is symbolically interesting as it aims at scaring the visitors who are considered a threat, maintaining the idea that the Israelis do not control the area, that their presence is still challenged and thus the environment is still dangerous for them, even in H2.

X., an ISM activist, presented the location of the ISM flat, which overlooks the entrance of the Tal Rumeida settlement and the military sentry box, as chosen for strategic reasons “the soldiers know we are watching them at all time.”¹⁰ Once again, presence and domination over space, here through a physically dominating presence, is a way of challenging the hegemony of the Israeli authority, here represented by the army.

The examples engaged in this section illustrate some of the strategies of resistance adopted, but also allude to the importance of “staging” the resistance practices. This is not to say that the actions carried out are fake, but that protestors largely acknowledge the need to rely as well on communication strategies (see Chapter 6). Images of the repression, of the army and accounts of the groups’ actions and victories are connected to these strategies and often carefully documented. This communication is also a matter of power struggle within the protest movements. In Hebron, for example, some leaders or figures involved in the resistance fight over prestige and audience with the international media.

The control of space in Hebron is thus at the same time very tightly implemented and actively challenged but the control and the challenge are not applied with the same intensity in all areas. Both nevertheless overlap in the “seam” area, between Bab al-Zawiya and the Ibrahimi checkpoint, where the clashes usually happen, challenging this internal border towards the “sanctuarized” area of H2 and what it stands for.

Silwan: an enclave in Jerusalem

Organized demonstrations are quite rare within Silwan, probably in part because of the urban fabric of the neighbourhood: as a steep-sided, densely populated place, outside of the main routes of communications around the old city and detached from the parts of East Jerusalem where circulation is important, such as Damascus Gate, Silwan represents an enclave within East Jerusalem, largely cut from the rest of the city. As such, its topography and location is not very adapted for mass gatherings and public demonstration; its isolation undermines the principle of a protest which demands visibility in order to ensure that its claims and mobilization are known and noticed. The neighbourhood has no large public open space; the main collective event, the Friday prayer which takes place in the Al-Bustan tent, often requires half of the participants to stay in the street (see Figure 4.4). Moreover, the neighbourhood suffers from another negative effect of the occupation, touching the very social structure of the village; a strong sense of suspicion and the alleged presence of numerous “collaborators” among the populations deters numerous residents from participating or getting involved in any kind of protest movement for fear of reprisal or harassment (field notes, December 16, 2012). In addition, the “public space” in

Silwan is not only limited, but it is shrinking. Part of the neighbourhood's open spaces have been included in the "City of David" national park run by Elad (see Chapter 1). Some sections of the park are accessible only with a paying ticket, including spaces that used to be open and freely accessible to residents and are tightly connected to their sense of place, like the Silwan Pool (see Chapter 5). Other parts of the park are accessible to the residents of Silwan within given times, but are closed off during evenings, Saturdays and holidays. This closure, allowed by the Supreme Court, is very political: it affirms that the park is a Jewish land, managed according to religious rules, but it also highlights the special status and power attributed to Elad, as the National Parks scattered in Israel are usually open on Saturdays.¹¹ Public space in Silwan then largely boils down to the streets, which are also not considered as being truly "public" by the Palestinians; the outside space in the neighbourhood is largely considered to be dangerous and threatening, being monitored by the police as a space where the movement of the settlers is privileged over theirs.

Some punctual events, such as the "Run for Silwan" race, organized for the children of Wadi Hilwe and foreign volunteers by the Maada community centre in 2011 and which aimed at "highlighting the checkpoint system from Bethlehem to Wadi Hilwe," represent a type of action exploiting the public space to stage a protest and express claims, here a right to movement. In this case, however, if the finish line is in Wadi Hilwe, most of the race takes place outside of the neighbourhood.¹²

The main use of public space for protests is the Friday prayer taking place in the tent and the street in Al-Bustan (see Figure 4.4). It was launched in May 20, 2010 by the neighbourhood's committee, after the municipality announced that the planned house demolitions could start as early as June. The tent is located at the centre of the Silwan valley in an area that is quite isolated. The visibility of the event is thus mostly local. The imam who said the *khutbe* (sermon) on May 28th, stated at the time: "the tent demonstrates the intention of Al-Bustan residents to stay in their homes."¹³ Similarly, Amani Odeh explained the initiative of holding collective Friday prayers there saying: "The idea is to show we are always here, we will be here and nothing will change if you destroy the neighbourhood."¹⁴ The religious moment was thus turned into a political symbol and an expression of *sumud*: by being outside and in their neighbourhood, even in a place with limited visibility, the men praying at the tent and in the street affirm their attachment to the place. Praying in the neighbourhood is indeed a choice that has political and religious meaning as "people would prefer to go to Al-Aqsa."¹⁵ Al-Aqsa, the third most holy place of Islam, towers above Silwan and determines a significant part of the neighbourhoods' identity (see Chapter 5); staying in the neighbourhood for the prayer instead of going to Al-Aqsa is therefore a political statement *per se*. The prayer also appropriates stretches of public space, often extending on the asphalt, blocking the circulation, a disruption that is an assertion of power over space but also an affirmation that the protest is more important than daily life matters. It is not only the location that gives meaning to the protest; the very content of the prayer, of the *khutbe* is often a very political speech concerning the situation of the neighbourhood and Palestinian politics, calling for example on the believers to perform *ribat* (see Chapter 5).

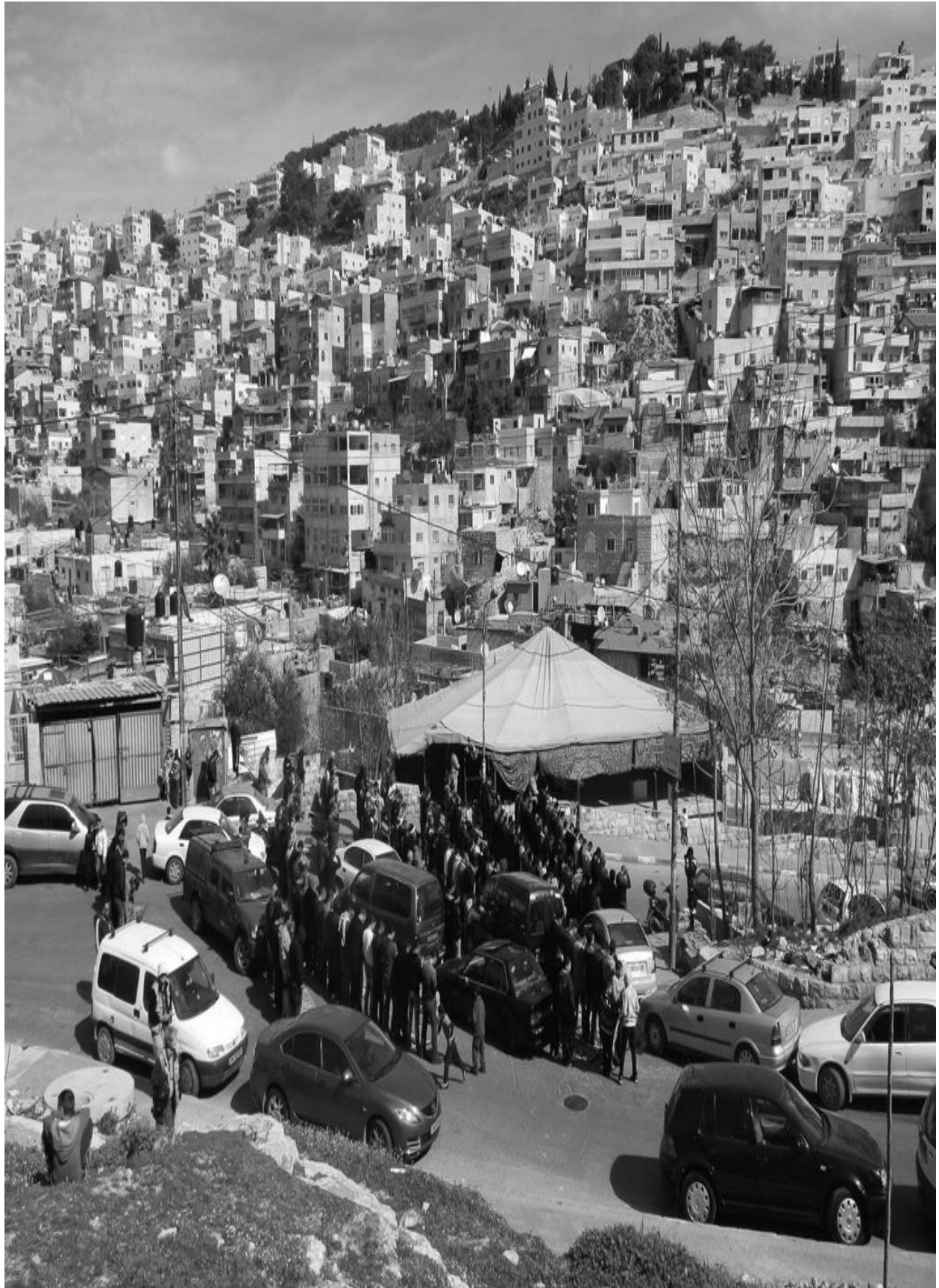


Figure 4.4 Friday prayer in front of the Al-Bustan tent. Picture taken on January 16, 2013.

According to the activists interviewed, the repression and visibility of the police around the event has reduced over the years; when the tent was first established and the initiatives of holding Friday prayers there was launched, the place was raided several times by the police. In 2013, a discreet police presence was nevertheless always maintained on the summit of the hills overlooking the tent: the gathering was known, and its political message monitored, but not actively repressed, representing only a limited disturbance in the urban space and one concentrated in a Palestinian neighbourhood with limited visibility. The public space is thus actively used and appropriated for contention; even if the immediate audience and the result in terms of pressure over the municipality are restricted, the practice is considered as important in symbolic terms, associating collective action to *sumud* and *ribat* (see Chapter 6), opposing an active and non-violent presence to the plans of the municipality.

This type of protest implies a very gendered practice of space, as in the demonstrations and clashes in Hebron, only men were allowed to participate in the Friday prayer. But generally most of the women interviewed in Silwan as well as in Hebron or those met in informal contexts, expressed their reluctance to participate in public demonstrations or in political events, as it is deemed to be the place of men. However, a few of them were involved politically, and took actively part in the demonstrations organized in Jerusalem on a wide range of topics linked to the occupation and the Palestinian struggle, becoming the voice of the local protest.

In Silwan, the protest also takes the shape of violent, nightly clashes between youths and the police, especially on Ras al-‘Amud but also in Wadi Hilwe, the main places where Jewish settlers are found in the neighbourhood. The space – the streets, especially – is thus used for violent confrontation as well as to create a threatening environment, where clashes can erupt at any moment.

The public space in Silwan is thus not necessarily an asset for protest, and is not turned into one, with the exception of the Friday prayer in Al-Bustan. Public space is an integral part of the “conceived space;” it is designed, produced and regulated according to the norms of society, or having a dominant role in this case, the rules dictated by the State and its institutions. What comes out of this is also the absence of important and common places of protest for Palestinians in Jerusalem: demonstrations for national Palestinian causes (including, for example, support for prisoners and against the bombing of Gaza) are often organized in front of Damascus Gate.¹⁶ These events are often inter-neighbourhoods events, with activists from different parts of East Jerusalem participating; the core nucleus of participants is often the same, with people linked to the Fatah Party. These mobilizations are rarely about local issues such as those faced by the people of Silwan. However, if the location is central and ensures a maximum visibility for different audiences, including tourists, Palestinians and Israelis, it is not a symbolic one. The most important place of gathering and protest which retains meaning for the Palestinians, and where protests are organized, central in terms of symbolism but that prevents visibility, except from mediatic one, is Al-Aqsa, the centre of religious life for Palestinian Muslims, where Friday prayers regularly give way to demonstrations and clashes.

Demonstrating for Al-Araqib and the unrecognized villages

The Bedouins of Al-Araqib are very active in terms of organized protests and collective action, often mobilizing with close family members and former residents who moved to Rahat and some Jewish Israeli activists who form the core of the network that supports them. The space of the village is the epicentre of the mobilization, the central place where the inhabitants protest and express their claim by staying; it also reflects the object of those claims. Punctual protests are organized on days of demolition, or when demolitions are expected. In Al-Araqib, the show of force mobilized during the demolitions depends on the period; it might include police in riot gear, mounted police, the Green patrols as well as mechanisms like water cannons. Those who gather aim above all to maintain and display a presence in the village, to demonstrate solidarity with the residents but also to show that external actors are interested in the fate of the village; it also allows for the quick organization of a larger protest in case the police and bulldozers arrive. The repertoire employed in Al-Araqib is strictly non-violent; violent episodes have already occurred during periods of major destruction, but most confrontations remain very low-intensity (the NCF refers for example to clashes and the throwing of some stones at the police on February 10, 2011, while JNF bulldozers were destroying the village – see Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 4). Clashes between Bedouins and the police erupted in the Negev on certain occasions (for example, during the “day of rage” organized against the Praver Plan on November 30, 2013).

As in Silwan, the Friday prayer is also organized in the village: people come to pray and to show their support at the same time. It is not considered as a moment of protest however, but rather of solidarity and support and of showing presence. All of the main religious holidays provide an occasion for the gathering of families and friends in the village to celebrate: the Ramadan’s iftar (evening meal) or the Eid, as well as family celebrations such as weddings, for example, provide occasions to gather in the village.

However, the main regular demonstrations for Al-Araqib take place outside of the village. Every Sunday, the inhabitants, joined by members of their families who live in Rahat and by some Israeli Jewish activists, gather at 4:00 p.m. in an empty area at the Lehavim junction, on Highway 40 which connects Beer-Sheva to the center and the north of the country (see Figure 4.5). It has been organized “every Sunday, since the first demolition (...); Sheikh Sayyah announced it in the court. To show our power. And we will not stop until the situation of Al-Araqib is solved.”¹⁷ While Beer-Sheva, the largest regional city, is only a few kilometres away, the choice to manifest at these intersections is strategic: according to Haqma Abu-Madighem, it is done firstly “to make it more visible, so that people who come from different directions can see.”¹⁸ This choice of location is also made given its proximity to the village, thus signaling its existence, ignored by much of the Israeli population. Ismail Abu-Madighem also insisted: “it is to protest and ask for our rights, to make the point that we are steadfast on our land.”¹⁹ These demonstrations are usually of restricted size, with participation often ranging between 30 and 50 people – including children – with major mobilization on some occasions, for example when groups come from the north.²⁰ It also has to be noted that contrarily to the two other cases, the women and girls of the village actively participate to many demonstrations, with the girls often in charge of the microphone chanting the slogans (see Figure 4.6). Their participation in demonstrations in other cities – and also in school excursions, a consideration that arises in respect of the teenage girls, for example – is more problematic, although possible).



די להרס אל-עראקיב!
ارقتوا هدم العراقيب!
FOR DEMOLISHING AL-ARAK

די לתוכנית פראוור - בגין!
ENOUGH WITH PRAWER-BEGIN PLAN!
کنس لخطه پراور - بیجین

לא לתוכנית פראוור!
NO! TO PRAWER PLAN
لا لخطه پراور

Figure 4.5 Sunday demonstration of Al-Araqib inhabitants at the Lehavim junction. Picture taken on October 4, 2013.



Figure 4.6 The girls of the village and their relatives from Rahat animate the Sunday demonstration chanting slogans. Picture taken on November 10, 2013.

Monthly demonstrations are also organized in Rahat, where the extended family of the villagers live, to try to generate support from the community. Mobilizing in Rahat, or in general in the Bedouin towns, appears complicated. The Bedouin society, in addition to being very scattered in space, also suffers from problems similar to those faced by the Palestinian society in East Jerusalem and the West Bank: this includes internal struggles and strong suspicions, as well as relative indifference to politics on the part of a section of society. The question of land ownership is also not considered along the same lines by all within the Bedouin society. As some Bedouins have no claim of land property, some claim a strong loyalty to the State “despite its racism” (fieldnotes April 4, 2012) and serve in the army. On several occasions in the collective taxi travelling from Beer-Sheva to Rahat, which represents the only way to reach Al-Araqib by public transportation, people commented negatively as I stopped near the village, making criticisms ranging from doubt as to the villagers’ goals – “they just want money, they didn’t even live here a few years ago” – to those considering it part of a conspiracy – “they are paid by the State to stay and make the situation harder for other Bedouins” (field notes: among others, July 10, 2011; September 14, 2013).

In terms of repertoire of action, demonstrations in Al-Araqib are usually non-violent. The inhabitants clearly declare their actions to be inscribed in the frame of the State and the democracy it proclaims, even if they criticize the government and the ethnic bias of the political regime. Their claims are expressed on the basis of their belonging to the State and their being citizens, underlining the numerous paradoxes in the way it works. Appealing to socially accepted norms of democratic regimes they ask for “recognition, acceptance and inclusion” in the public (Staeheli, Mitchell and Nagel, 2009: 634) and inclusion in the polity. Aziz Abu-Madighem asserted: “we are holders of Israeli citizenship, so we ask the State to give us our rights by law,”²¹ while Haqma explained: “what are we demanding? We are saying that we are Israeli citizens and ask only for rights that should be given to us. Our rights to land and to life in stability and security.”²² Ismail, one of the senior resident of the village, expressed a similar position, however with a slight difference regarding his own position regarding the State:

“I have an Israeli ID, but I am not saying that I belong to the Israeli society. I am saying that Israel is my State, I am a citizen here. But we were here before the State of Israel. We didn’t ask for Israeli citizenship, it is Israel which came and made us its citizens. We go after our rights. Not more. I don’t demonstrate for Jerusalem or Hebron, there are people there who will demonstrate for their own rights. We live in the State of Israel. I can’t say that I live in a Palestinian State, Palestinians should demonstrate for their own issues and land, they are free. I live in the State of Israel; I am an Israeli citizen, why I don’t have my rights like the Jews? I deserve it; they should give them to me. Why do you destroy my house? Why do you stop us from expanding normally, why don’t you care about our future?”²³

Other punctual demonstrations are also organized by the inhabitants in other places, for example in front of the district court in Beer-Sheva or outside of the police station in Rahat when inhabitants are put on trial or arrested. In 2013, a “protest tent” was erected in Rahat while the

sheikh of Al-Araqib was detained. All these strategies use open and public space to attribute greater visibility and legitimacy to the mobilization on the ground. They must nevertheless deal with the external constraints imposed by institutions; for example, on the days of demolitions or when the JNF is working on the land surrounding the village, access can be blocked, as occurred for example on April 7, 2012. The police allowed people to pass only after Taleb al-Sana, a Bedouin member of Knesset at the time, living in the township of Laqiya, intervened.

Common demonstrations with other unrecognized villages are also organized, for example at the occasion of Land day on March 30, 2012 in Wadi al-Na'am, or at the demonstrations against the Praver plan that took place in July, 2013. These are only interspersed cases however, which seldom gather big numbers of participants; even during the summer of 2013, when the pressure of the Praver plan was very high and its realization more tangible, the demonstrations remained very limited.²⁴

While often local, demonstrations also take place in the two major centers representing the core of Israeli power, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: they are then directed against the government and government bodies, targeting "seats and symbols of national public power" (Tilly, 1986: 392), and make use of urban public space to protest for the defence of their village but also for the unrecognized villages in general. Some demonstrations are common to several villages, but as Al-Araqib is particularly active and mobilized, its residents also often protest by themselves, notwithstanding the issues tackled in court or in the legislative committees. The inhabitants of Al-Araqib, for example demonstrated with Israeli Jewish activists in Tel Aviv on August 20, 2011, in front of the JNF buildings in Jerusalem in February 2012 to protest the planting of trees on land belonging to the village and in front of the Knesset on October 7, 2013, to protest the Praver Plan which was at the time being discussed inside (see Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 Demonstration in front of the JNF in Jerusalem. Picture taken on February 1, 2012.

The protests of the Bedouins from Al-Araqib appear as different from the cases of Hebron and Silwan, not only in terms of spatial practices but also in terms of claim, as they do claim an inscription in the State's system, and demand that the protests be considered as such, as protests of citizens that demand to be heard by the government. Their use of public space depends on a specific "regime of publicity" attached to the marginalized publics in Israel (Staeheli et al., 2009), that recognize their presence and allow a use of public space but considers the legitimacy of this presence and of their claims differently than for the group that constitutes the recognized polity, affirmed through the legal system and property rights.

Public space and the question of the public

This overview of collective actions in the three sites of contention studied shows various appropriations and uses of public space, but also different possible definitions of what is public space and where to locate it, questions largely debated in geography and other social sciences considering the intrinsic variety of meanings encompassed in the term.

Geographers have long tackled public space through its materiality, studying the sites embodying public space. The form often considered is that of "a material space developed in order to be used by the community. It is recognized as being passable and freely accessible to everybody and in consequence it cannot be appropriated in an exclusive, durable or excessively personal manner by an individual or a particular group" (Dessouroux, 2003: 23, translation by the author). This definition conveys the western ideal and idealized conception of public space, setting out features considered as essential like the freedom of access, mobility and co-presence for all. This "universal" conception is however contrasted by another meaning, more pragmatic, that considers the politics of public space and the policing and regulation of presence in open spaces according to a body of social norms and the politics of "law and order" (Bernd, 2003: 58).

The examples developed above show that these definitions are inadequate to account for the cases at hand on several accounts: first, the concept of "a" public with common interests or shared concerns (Barnett, 2008; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007) is problematic in Israel and Palestine where social interactions are marred by divisive settler colonial politics, discrimination and occupation. Moreover, this definition has to be reconsidered in light of the cultural and historic traits of the Palestinian and Bedouin societies: in both, dwelling spaces have been largely moulded by the norms and social organization of Arab societies (see e.g. Costa & Noble, 1986; Totry-Fakhoury & Alfasi, 2018), informed by family ties and tribal affiliations, but also Islam, notably in terms of gender separation and land status, but also other elements such as the geography of the place and methods of constructions available (Abu-Lughod, 1987). Public spaces are thus generally marked by social affiliations, hierarchy and gender (Totry-Fakhoury and Alfasi, 2018: 429) and imprinted with different meanings, practices and social value than those attributed to public space in western tradition.

The ideal-type of a public space open to all without "excessive" appropriation is also challenged by the ethnic component of the political life in Israel that undermines any claims of equality between citizens and directs the "allocation of resources and power" (Ghanem, 2011). It

is even more the case in occupied spaces like East Jerusalem and the West Bank where the public space is directly targeted by politics of control and repression that impose specific uses and rules – the most telling being maybe the imposition of curfews, which were current during the second Intifada and totally forbids presence in the public space.

The very notion of public space is connected to the idea of public sphere, both often being considered as overlapping and necessarily linked, the public space being considered as the siege of the public sphere *par excellence* (Staeheli, 2010). Both are linked to the idea of liberal democracy as implying the rule and participation of the population, conceiving the public as the citizenry, and considering that “the public sphere can be equally open and accessible to all members of a polity; it assumes that once membership has been achieved, there are no structural barriers that limit the ability of individuals to participate in public affairs and to decide the fate of the community” (Staeheli and Thompson, 1997: 30). However, as shown by the considerations on the legal systems in Israel and the occupied territories (see Chapters 2 and 3), the settler colonial system of Israel considers only one “public” as the “legitimate participants in political discussion, deliberation and governing” (Staeheli, 2010: 70): not its citizens, but the citizens of Jewish “nationality” (see Chapter 1). The democratic features of the regime nevertheless ensure that citizens considered as minorities can participate in the political life of the country: voting, being elected, protesting, is indeed possible. However, the Israeli Jewish polity is defined according to other elements, for example doing one’s military service, based on ethnic belonging. Even members of minorities such as Druzes and Bedouins who participate in those elements defining the national group do not fully access to the status of full-fledged member of “the public”. Beside the judaization of space, the Zionist foundations of the Hebrew State also require a judaization of the public sphere (Ghanem, 2011).

Public space in Israel is thus organized according to different overlapping “regimes of publicness” (Staeheli et al., 2009). In the occupied territories, it must be considered under its simplest definition of a space accessible by the public. Despite its diminished qualities, it does play a role in the public sphere even if only in an adverse or subversive way: in a similar way as for physical presence (see Chapter 2), totally preventing protests and expressions of dissent in the streets and squares would require the establishment of openly authoritarian measures. If clashes and protests in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are often very harshly repressed, participants can still access and use public space – and if Israel has large powers to control and repress, it cannot suppress all movements of opposition (Bayat, 2017). Nevertheless, the stifling of dissent and harsh control over public space must be connected to the reflection on the public sphere as it shows the disjunction between both: the public sphere is rooted and alimeted in other locations, as shown in Chapter 2. The social center of Wadi Hilwe for example represents a safe house where critical discourses and social networking can be realized. Homes, NGOs, universities, different spaces can allow formation of counterpublics as locations that root the public sphere in space, which much be approached as a reticulated and circulatory space of communication (Barnett, 2008).

The public sphere can rely on the opportunities offered by public space, such as visibility and audience, but also strategically avoid and bypass its inherent constraints as I will show in the next chapters.

The monitoring of public space is essential for the authorities to enforce control over bodies but also discourses. The use of public space for collective action can be easily hindered by the authorities’ conception of space, tackle in the preceding chapter, with ethnocratic planning and

discriminatory patterns of movements and presence in the urban space, as well as the means used to stifle and repress dissent.

Public space is then often emptied of its very meaning, as it becomes a space for the public to pass through – when judged appropriate-, but in no way an egalitarian space for a general public or a public sphere where people meet and differences are expressed. It can however represent a resource for the resistance, being at the core of the conflict for power, allowing an irruption and affirmation of otherness and antagonism in an otherwise tightly controlled space, like in the case of Al-Araqib. The Palestinians of East Jerusalem, who are not citizens of the State but who live on its territory and under its rules, have a mixed status: while they can access the public space and occasionally the official channels of decision-making and participate in the public sphere, the very tools of this public sphere are directed against them. In Hebron and Silwan, the protests represent an irruption on the public scene, but not in the Israeli public sphere: the moments of protests are an expression of existence by the Palestinian public that claims its differences and distinctions. It is not an attempt to be accepted as part of the legitimate “public” but a way to address another public to ask for changes.

Protestors use and transform public space, publicly expressing their claims and staging the conflict, temporarily appropriating spaces, both urban and rural through demonstrations and clashes, but also, in Hebron, through strategies of surveillance that mirror – or mimic – those of the occupier and claim or demonstrate power over public space, thus directly challenging the authority of the State and of its representatives, police and army.

Notes

1. The Palestinian participants in the clashes – and often also in the demonstrations – are exclusively men.
2. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
3. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
4. Interview realized on November 19, 2013.
5. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
6. For an overview of the various means of crowd control use, see the report of B'tselem, *Crowd Control Israel's Use of Crowd Control Weapons in the West Bank*, January 2013, http://www.btselem.org/download/201212_crowd_control_eng.pdf.
7. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
8. See the video “Hebron Defenders”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUu1HkEHZu8>.
9. Interview realized on February 22, 2013.
10. Interview realized on April 2, 2013.
11. See for example “Press Release: Israel High Court Petition filed to prevent additional site closure in ‘City of David’ archaeological park, Silwan”, Emek Shaveh, January 24, 2014, <https://alt-arch.org/en/press-release-jan-16-hcj-closure-silwan/>; “High Court of Justice – Why Public Spaces in the City of David are Closed to Silwan’s Residents on the Weekends”, Emek Shaveh, January 19, 2019, <https://alt-arch.org/en/public-spaces-in-the-city-of-david-are-closed-to-silwans-residents-on-the-sabbath/>; “High Court permits the closure of public space in Silwan to prevent violation of the Sabbath and Jewish festivals”, Emek Shaveh, January 27, 2020, <https://alt-arch.org/en/high-court-permits-the-closure-of-public-space-in-silwan/>. See also “Right Wing Jewish Organization Ordered to Develop

- Open Space for Palestinians”, Nir Hasson, November 23, 2017, Haaretz; “Israel Ordered to Explain Why Jerusalem Park in Palestinian Neighborhood Closed Off to Public”, Nir Hasson, January 19, 2019, Haaretz.
12. See for example, “Run for Silwan marathon highlights checkpoint system from Bethlehem to Wadi Hilweh”, WHICH, December 14 2011, <http://silwanic.net/?p=22811>; “Today’s “Run for Silwan” running event highlights oppression in Jerusalem”, Occupied Palestine, September 20, 2011, <https://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2011/09/20/today%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Crun-for-silwan%E2%80%9D-running-event-highlights-oppression-in-jerusalem/>.
 13. “Al Bustan protest tent holds fifth consecutive Friday prayer; representatives from Sheikh Jarrah attend”, WHICH, May 28, 2010, <http://silwanic.net/?p=3281>.
 14. Interview realized on March 2, 2013.
 15. Interview with Jawad Siyam, on November 27, 2012.
 16. In 2018, some permanent watchtowers were built around the plaza of Damascus Gate, de facto surrounding the space that is used for protest.
 17. Interview with Haqma Abu-Madighem on April 8, 2012.
 18. Note: Ibid.
 19. Interview realized on November 13, 2013.
 20. Interview with Haia Noach realized on April 17, 2012.
 21. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
 22. Interview realized on April 8, 2012.
 23. Interview realized on November 13, 2013.
 24. Interview with Haia Noach on November 3, 2013.

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5 Sanctifying

Producing a sacred geography

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In all three case studies, the place, the locality, identified with the neighbourhood, the city or the village represent the main scale of action, but also the main spatial reference for the claims and

the central “source of self-recognition” (Routledge, 2000: 377, see Chapter 2). In each site, people mobilize locally against the control imposed by the Israeli authorities through presence, collective action and counter-planning practices; however, those tactics of resistance have often a limited range, being hindered by a multiplicity of structural and contingent constraints imposed by the very nature of the Israeli regime. Confronted with these limitations, protesters engage with other strategies of resistance, notably identity-building drawing on the sense of place, corresponding to the “space of representation” that Lefebvre defines as “the dominated (...) space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre, 1991: 39).

The actors of contention claim a right to a collective identity “constructed by and experienced through shared symbols and representations” (Azaryahu & Kook, 2002: 198) anchored in space, connected to the land. The right to place thus goes with the right to “a spatial narrative” (Adalah, 2010): the actors indeed seek to challenge the Israeli control and produce space by producing a discourse on space, making use of the meaning of the places that are important to them (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 162). I will show how symbols, as well as narratives and representations, draw on the “sense of place” (see Chapter 2) to frame and strengthen the struggle through references to culture, history and memory, and in doing so also impose or produce new spatialities, as actors “set the particularities of place (e.g. culture, knowledge, history, identity and language) against the totalizing and homogenizing forces of development and domination” (Routledge, 1993: 139). Harnessing the sense of place, the actors produce strategic “place-based collective-action frames” or “place-frames” (Martin, 2003) that create a sense of identity and belonging, encourage mobilization, empower the community, increase cohesion, legitimize the struggle and tap into “collective emotions” (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont 2013: 5).

This sense of place however has to be considered in relation to other scales and types of spatialities: the “space of representation” is produced through symbols and notions that connect the place to the territory, and the territory to the place, through the land and the landscape, considered and presented as sacred for different reasons, cultural, political and religious. In all cases, the actors oppose a sacralized space, considered as the territory of the nation – Palestine –, of an ethnic group – Arab or Bedouin – or a community – the Muslim Ummah¹ to the deterritorialization brought about by Israeli politics (Abufarha, 2008: 345). The territory embodies the values considered to be fundamental for the Palestinian and Bedouin identities and struggles: these include attachment to the land, defence of a national or group memory and cohesion of the community through a common culture.

I contend that place and territory communicate, constantly informing each other through the prism of circulating narratives, symbols and representations, each being in part a far away reflection and reproduction of the other, altered, modified and appropriated. The sense of place is informed by a territorial imaginary and the place becomes a portion of that land imbued with all its characteristics and intrinsic qualities, in turn strengthening the national or community dimension.

Framing the place within the territory: incarnating and representing Palestine

Elements that are seen as attributes of the territory are called upon to inform the place identity,

and frame the local mobilization in order to support and legitimize it, to reinforce the attachment to the land but also to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Palestinian claims. Those attributes, natural and cultural, material and symbolical show an insertion of the local protests in a wider context, whether the Palestinian national struggle or the claims of indigeneity in the case of the Bedouins (see Chapter 6). These elements claim a connection: the struggle for place is really a struggle for the territory; the local represents the national, as they are symbolically the same land, only considered at a different scale.

Landmarks and landscape as links between place and territory

In the three case studies, place identity is drawn upon to foster mobilization through certain landmarks. Some elements, whether cultural or natural, are attributed particular importance by the inhabitants and are considered as foundations and expression of the local identity, referring to religion, nation and heritage. They connect the place to wider frames of reference, cultural landscape and national territory, informed by and informing the collective Arab-Palestinian identity and sense of community (Anderson, 2006). Oren Yiftachel distinguishes several “key national-cultural symbols:” “al-fida’i (the freedom fighter), al-balad (the village), al-falah (the farmer), al-ard (the land), al-zayt (the olive tree) and al-watten (the homeland)” (Yiftachel, 2002: 230).

Mosques, cemeteries, trees and water points represent archetypes of these landmarks, elements invoked in Al-Araqib, Hebron and Silwan, even if under different forms and with different influence over the framing of the mobilization. The landscape can thus be considered as a medium to the territory: the actors indeed mobilize spatial landmarks that together constitute collective “spatial imaginaries,” those “cognitive frameworks, both collective and individual, constituted through the lived experiences, perceptions and conceptions of space itself” (Wolford, 2004: 409). Mosques and cemeteries, but also trees and water points, are landmarks that draw on different aspects of the Arab-Palestinian culture and highlight the importance of memory, religion and attachment to the land in the place identity, but also in the collective conception of territory. They represent material markers that stand out in space, but also cultural markers that take on various meanings, and can be defined as “topographic writing” or “topograms,” “individual elements of the landscape imbued with historical significance through myth and ritual” (Santos-Granero, 1998: 128).

The Palestinians do not refer to the landscape as an external, detached natural scenery but rather as an environment that has a particular meaning because it reflects and embodies the group’s culture, history and identity. The landscape supposes the presence of men or their consciousness and perception (Bourassa, 1988: 241), and carries the signs of human organization: the configuration of a landscape is the result of political decisions, dwelling, movement, and so forth, but it is also a “mental space,” “culturally reproduced and mediated” (Sörlin, 1999: 103). The landscape is thus a human production, imbued with meaning and value; while it is tightly related to the territory and even directly overlaps with it, it refers to a particular type of perception and interpretation. It takes into account the value and meaning of the land for the people and sheds light on the understanding and image that the actors – and communities – have of themselves. Indeed, in addition to being used as a synonym for “environment,” landscapes are also studied because of the cultural information they carry (Whitridge, 2004: 219) and convey. D. Mitchell presents the landscapes as a “form of ideology,” which provides the

scope “to control meaning and to channel it in particular directions” (Mitchell, 2000: 100). Indeed, a landscape not only reveals the self-understanding of the population but also mediates the image a group wants to give of itself. In consequence, the landscape is often contested, as an object of competing narratives and power struggles (Alderman, 2008: 198). The Palestinian landscape is presented as an essential element of the Palestinian identity, directly threatened by the Israeli authorities, who denature it and transform its meaning and historical layers (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001; Falah, 1996; Pirinoli, 2005; Braverman, 2006; Shehadeh, 2007). As such, it is integrated as an object of the struggle but also as a spatial resource, providing elements that are then used to frame the struggle.

Mosques and places of prayer

The first type of landmarks common to the case studies are the mosques. The mosques are central for the collective life in general in the region, as they gather people for the prayer several times a day with particularly large crowds on Fridays and holidays. Both Jerusalem and Hebron have high-profile mosques. Al-Aqsa, in Jerusalem, represents the “haut lieu” *par excellence*, meaning the epitome of the landmark, as a religious site of central importance (Clerc, 2004). It can be categorized as a “public symbol,” designated by Yi-Fu Tuan as a monument that “transcend the values of a particular culture” (1977: 164). It is indeed a monument that has become a symbol for Jerusalem across the world, and that attracts tourists from all countries. It nevertheless assumes a significant meaning for all Palestinians, and more widely to Muslims, as the third holiest site of Islam. Even though it is not located in Silwan, the Silwanese have adopted it as a key element of their local identity. It represents a presence that filters through the everyday life of the village, towering over the neighbourhood, with its dome visible from the slopes of Wadi Hilwe and the valley where Al-Bustan is located. The identity of Silwan – and the pride of Silwan’s inhabitants – stems from this geographical location and is linked to the religious tradition of *ribat* (see below):

“We are the nearest point to Al-Aqsa and Al-Aqsa is very important for us. Silwan is outside the walls but it is part of Jerusalem; it is not within the old city but it is linked with the old city by the gates. There are many gates which open towards Silwan.”²

The status of Jerusalem for the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim population who live elsewhere is also fundamental given its religious meaning³: the inhabitants of Al-Araqib, for example planned to take advantage of a trip to Jerusalem on October 7th, 2013, organized to demonstrate in front of the Knesset, to pay a visit to Al-Aqsa. The impossibility to visit Jerusalem is also lamented by the people of Hebron: the access to the Holy City is indeed limited and even impossible to a large part of the population, depending on a permit given by the Civil Administration, granted on the basis of age, gender and political profile. Even more than access to the city itself, it is the impossibility to see and pray at Al-Aqsa that people often regret.

In Hebron, the mosque is also a central landmark, both practically and symbolically. It represents the physical core of the old city and is attached to the name of the town: the mosque is indeed the “Haram al-Ibrahimi,” the sanctuary of Abraham, while Hebron in Arabic is known as “Al-Khalil” (the friend), and occasionally referred to as “Al-Khalil al-Rahman” (the friend of God), or “madinat Ibrahim” (the city of Abraham)⁴ (Al-Jubeh, 2009; Lecoquierre, 2019a,

2019b). The material form, that is, the material shape of the mosque, represents the “spatial marker” (Clerc, 2004), which is practiced and visited. Its meaning and value, as in Jerusalem, is however far greater than the importance of the stone structure, linked to a spiritual sense of holiness and uniqueness. Both mosques represent the epicentre of the cities, impregnating Jerusalem and Hebron with a religious meaning and value with a global aura. Both are indeed inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List for their “outstanding universal value.”⁵ They also embody contested cultural heritage at the core of the conflict, both sites being claimed by Jews and Muslims as fundamental – and often exclusive – holy places. The Al-Aqsa mosque notably is a symbol not only of the Palestinian identity but also of the opposition between Israelis and Palestinians for the control of the holy city and its main religious sites. These two mosques are evoked by the inhabitants as being central to their identity and the identity of the place.

Al-Araqib and Al-Bustan invest symbolic meaning in places that are not mosques but their local equivalent in that they are places of prayer. They are not “monuments,” in the sense of being a building of outstanding value, beauty or even a dedicated building, being a tent in Al-Bustan and a tinfoil shack in Al-Araqib before the 2014 demolition. Those places are vested with different meaning, less material and spiritual and more exclusively political. The spiritual is manifested during the time of prayer, when it is brought through practice; the places do not have intrinsic religious value otherwise, they are not holy sites. The material shape is in itself a symbol, not of beauty or history but of the local struggle. As shown above, the Friday prayer in Al-Bustan has become a central moment of community-building, taking place in the tent rather than in Al-Aqsa to demonstrate support for the neighbourhood. In Al-Araqib, the Friday prayer is also a political symbol: even if the visibility of the event is non-existent, maintaining a place of prayer and a collective prayer in the village has a political meaning as it gives importance to the entire place and ensures a bigger presence in the village; moreover, it also generates visits and a better knowledge of the situation in the Bedouin community. In Al-Araqib, it is the moment of prayer and the place within the village that are important, not the structure presented as the mosque; depending on the weather, the demolitions and where the families of the village live, the prayer can indeed take place outside, for example under some trees.

Cemeteries

In all three cases, cemeteries are engaged as very sensitive areas and as places that ought to be defended as they reflect the ancient presence of Palestinians in those areas. They reflect at the same time a historic and emotional link to the land, embodied in the people buried there, the memory of this link and the presence that they want to preserve nearby. Cemeteries are connected not only to space, with a very clear emplacement, but also to time: the tombs represent a timeline, a chronology of presence on the land, making them the ultimate place of sumud: a cemetery not only indicates presence, it also occupies and freezes land. They are also connected to religious beliefs and rituals, and to the ever complex questions of death (Hertz, 2018). As such, they are invoked as cultural and historical places but also as arguments in the struggle.

In Al-Araqib, the cemetery takes on a particular importance, as it became a place of life for the residents, the part where the tombs are situated being only few meters from the houses or shacks, after 2014 (see Figure 5.1). It is invoked as a place of memory and proof of an ancient presence in the area as well as of the bond existing between the Bedouin people and that land. Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi asserted:

“In 1914, after we bought the land, our fathers and grandfathers built here the Islamic cemetery (...) And still they [the Israeli authorities] tried for many years to make us rent this land. And we refuse. And when they tell us ‘you abandoned this land,’ we didn’t leave it even once! On this land stands our cemetery. (...) This cemetery is the biggest proof that this was our land, that we were here.”⁶



Figure 5.1 The vicinity between the cemetery and living quarters in Al-Araqib prior to the 2014 destruction. Picture taken by the author on March 11, 2012.

The cemetery is thus invoked to prove a continuity in presence even if this presence was interrupted for a time after the Israeli evacuation of the area in the 1950s.

The cemetery is also the symbol of transmission between generations; it is a place invested with emotional meaning and values, as it is where members of the close family are laid to rest. This notion underpins the practice of *sumud* and the need to retain a presence in this specific place, as expressed by Aziz Abu-Madighem:

“I always say: I can’t sell you my dead people! In the center of the land which belongs to the Abu-Madighem family there is a cemetery built in 1914. I can’t sell out my brother and sister, my uncles and grandfathers, I have no right to do so; anyone with a little decency would not dare doing so.”⁷

In addition to being a historic and emotional symbol, the cemetery of Al-Araqib also became a symbol of the specific struggle conducted there: it represents one of the only tangible material signs of the old presence in this area after the village was destroyed and the rubble was taken away, and actually came to symbolize the village that ought to be. The very fact of living in the cemetery represents a double violence, both political and emotional, for the residents. It is an act of resistance against Israel but also against one’s repulsion towards the place. Indeed, living within the limits of the cemetery represents an ethical and religious issue for the inhabitants. Sheikh Sayyah explained: “in 2010, in Ramadan, (...) the judge ordered that we should move inside the cemetery. (...) It was decided in court that the dead people should protect the living.”⁸ Haqma Abu-Madighem often complained that it is an unnatural situation, and that it was emotionally very difficult to live so close to her families’ tombs. Haia Noach noted that it was a complex situation and a difficult one to handle for the resident to live in the cemetery; this situation has generated a significant degree of criticism against them from the Bedouin community. However, she underlined that paradoxically the cemetery represented a “sheltered place” for the inhabitants of Al-Araqib, as the police did not dare to enter the area of the cemetery to destroy the houses until 2014. She even underlined: “it is a pity not every village has such a large cemetery because it would allow them to practice the *sumud* for much larger scope.”⁹

Their presence in the cemetery was instrumentalized as a tactic of resistance, as the inhabitants promoted (and hoped for) the idea that if Israeli forces were to enter the cemetery to demolish the structures built inside, it would give rise to a local *intifada* within the Bedouin community, in defence of the holiness of the place and integrity of their deceased next of kin. The residents of Al-Araqib also affirmed that any attack on the cemetery would be perceived as an attack on the Bedouin culture as a whole and would trigger a severe backlash against the authorities, turning “their” cemetery into a widely shared cultural symbol. The demolition of the structures erected within the cemetery however took place in June 2014, with no subsequent riot. This shows that the narrative around the cemetery was used strategically by the residents, well aware of the lack of interest and the downright suspicion surrounding their cause in the Bedouin community in Rahat, but hoping for a movement of outrage, if not of solidarity. In 2014, not only did the Israeli

authorities destroyed the houses built inside the cemetery, they also removed the fence that was delimitating the cemetery area, removing any perception of a bounded protected space. Despite the violation of the sacred character of the place claimed by the residents and the demonstration that its symbolic charge did not suffice to make it a safe place, the cemetery remains the central symbol of the resistance; after the demolition of 2014, the Sheikh declared: “if we have to, we will sleep in the cemetery, among the tombs” (field notes, July 16, 2014) Figure 5.1.

In Silwan, the cemetery is not located inside the neighbourhood but above it, between the walls of the old city and Wadi Hilwe. It is disconnected from the lived space but has nevertheless been regularly mentioned as an important place for the inhabitants and an element necessary to the identity of the neighbourhood.¹⁰ It was mentioned chiefly in connection with the threat represented by Israeli planning policies around the walls of the old city and the area being zoned as a national park:

“Our cemetery is 1,400 years old. Every two or three months they [the Israeli authorities] take 50 or 60 square meters. Now they reached 1,800 square meters, they want to make a national park. It’s our graves there, our parents.”¹¹

As in Al-Araqib, the cemetery is used to demonstrate the ancient rooting of the Palestinians in the land and thus represents an additional reason to stay. An emotional link is always advanced in speaking about the cemeteries, places which are symbols of memory and history both of the families and the land; they represent a continuous presence and the rooting of people in a place. The cemetery represents a link with between the people and Jerusalem from a historical and religious point of view:

“The Israelis want to occupy it and not let us use it (...). Hundreds of people came together and went to the cemetery and we were struggling. Protesting and cleaning the cemetery to show the Israelis it is our cemetery. Soldiers tried to prevent us to enter but when they saw that many people were coming, they left. The fight is still going on between us and the Israeli authorities. But we’re not going to give our graves. It’s our graves, it’s a part of our history.”¹²

The reference to the struggle surrounding it and the assertion that it is an essential part of the place identity integrates it into the material and symbolic landscape, and shows that people do not forgo that space and are ready to defend it.

In Hebron, the cemetery located in the old city, along Shuhada Street, is the main and oldest Muslim cemetery of the city.¹³ The restrictions of access to Shuhada Street turned it into an alternative route to access places east of Tal Rumeida; people who live in this area have to cross it to reach the parking lot where they have to leave their cars. As in Al-Araqib, where living in the cemetery is an undertaking suffered at the personal level, the changing use of the cemetery in Hebron is an effect of Israeli rule over space that inhabitants have to adopt under constraint. Zliha Muhtaseb explained:

“It breaks my heart when I watch people go through the cemetery just to go from one place to another. It’s really bad, it hurts from inside; I tried it many times. (...) One time I was in

Tal Rumeida and I wanted to go near the mosque. Instead of going all the way back I took a shortcut through the cemetery. I felt it was a big mistake to do it, because you know, it is not an easy feeling to feel that you are stepping over the graves, over the dead people.”¹⁴

The cemetery, she said, is indeed a “sacred place” that should not be used in this way. The Muslim cemetery is used as an illustration of the various spatial constraints with which the inhabitants have to live, which not only disrupt their everyday lives but also their systems of value. Notwithstanding that it is used to illustrate the effects of the occupation, it does not represent one of the main frames of the Hebronite identity or of the local struggle, as the situation in the neighbouring Shuhada Street and the Ibrahimi mosque represent more powerful symbols. Reference is made to it because of the change in its use and because of its age and location in the heart of the city; as in the other cases, it illustrates the old Palestinian and Muslim presence in Hebron and Palestine, rooting it in place, and even more importantly, in the very center of the city.

Trees, land and agriculture

The trees are another element often mentioned by Palestinians across the case studies as a symbol of the Palestinian presence in the land and of Palestine itself, constitutive of the local identity. Abufarha analyzes, for example, “the saber (cactus) as a metaphor of community in pre-1948 Palestine; al-burtuqal (the orange) as a symbol of loss and robbed nationhood in the 1950s and 1960s; al-zaytouna (the olive tree) as a symbol of rootedness that came to the fore in the 1980s and persisted since as a dominant symbol” (2008: 346). Trees are associated with a memory of Palestine as a rural, cultivated area and the associated way of life that is largely being lost; similar to the elements mentioned about mosques and cemeteries, the trees are a way of demonstrating the ancient presence on the land and provide proof of the way in which the Palestinians have cared for their environment, despite the claims of the Zionist project that the Jewish population and Israel are the ones who develop it and “make it bloom.”

In Hebron, the majestic olive trees of Tal Rumeida are a symbol of the area and are often presented as being two thousand years old, planted by the Romans.¹⁵ They are invoked as providing supporting proof of the ancient presence of man in Hebron, but also as a symbol of the Palestinian culture and the historical roots upon which this culture relies. The olive tree is indeed one of the main symbols of Palestine “sprinkled throughout their poetry and nationalist iconography as a figure of interiority, home and the abiding link between generations” (Collins, 2011: 110). The olive trees of Tal Rumeida, but also in the West Bank in general, are often targeted by settlers who try to destroy them and prevent the oliving picking, adding a layer of political and economic stake. The harvest, which represents a very important time for Palestinians, is for example “protected” by the activists from YAS and ISM near the settlement of Tal Rumeida.

The absence of green spaces in Silwan is lamented by the inhabitants, who point it as a clear sign of the poor conditions of life and of terrible planning on the part of the municipality.¹⁶ Al-Bustan appears to be a very green area from the outside as many trees are present in the private courtyards, proudly presented by their owners. The presence of trees is evoked with nostalgia as a sign of freedom and of a better, more joyful life. The inhabitants of Silwan, who were interviewed and who were more than 40 years old, often mentioned that the neighbourhood was

once an open orchard, and described the area that existed during their childhood as a lost golden age – characterized especially by dense fig trees – which disappeared under concrete and occupation: “Al-Bustan was all green, with no houses, every main family in Silwan has a piece of land in al Bustan. (...) With trees, especially figs, it was famous for figs.”¹⁷

“In my elementary school years, the Bustan was a lush orchard filled with trees. When you walked in it you couldn’t even see the sun! It was so dense, with huge fig trees, but the whole development and the housing crisis in Jerusalem pushed people to start using those pieces of land for building homes instead of agriculture.”¹⁸

In Al-Araqib itself, the trees are nearly non-existent, and it is this absence that is underlined by the inhabitants. Few trees remain in and around the village. One, in particular, which stands isolated 500 meters south of the village is presented as a symbol of what existed before the Israelis came to destroy the village. It has been the subject of a video made by Alia, the 16-year-old daughter of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem in the context of a photography workshop organized by the Negev Coexistence Forum.¹⁹

The inhabitants insist on the disappearance of what they consider to be the Bedouin cultural landscape, where the specific environment of the Negev desert is linked to a particular lifestyle. The uprooting of the village trees, especially the olive trees, that followed the first destruction of the village in 2010, is presented as an especially traumatic loss; this loss has been intensified by the policy of the JNF to plant new trees on the land surrounding the village, but also by the fact that those trees are not indigenous to the region and are unproductive, such as eucalyptus and rose-bay. They are considered as a waste as they usually cannot resist the heat and require a lot of water. This policy is perceived as a means of destruction of the environment and of the traditional landscape of the desert, changing materially the scenery, but also as a strategy to restrict the possible use of the land and the movement. Aziz Abu-Madighem regularly explains to the visitors that “each tree planted here kills us a bit more. For me, each one of this tree is like a soldier armed with an M-16” (field notes, November 9, 2013) and that they are “invader trees” (field notes, November 11, 2013). Haia Noach uses the same kind of image: “these trees are soldiers in a war for space.”²⁰ The trees, like the concentration of Bedouins in cities, the non-recognition of most of the remaining villages, the demolition of the houses, the laws and limits installed in space preventing the grazing of herds and the engagement of traditional agricultural tasks, are all measures of control and repression that modify the organization and the very appearance of the Negev; moreover, they disconnect the human-nature symbiosis felt and defended by the Bedouins and that they see translated in the landscape, turning it into an acculturated, threatening environment. The transformation of the landscape is indeed perceived as an attack against both nature and culture that profoundly destructures society. “They don’t want only the land. They want to destroy us, they want us to lose our culture, our identity. It is not only the land, it is everything” asserted Salim Abu-Madighem (field notes, November 9, 2013).

As for the other case studies, trees are evoked as representing memory and rootedness in the place. When circulating around the village, showing me the land that they and the other Bedouin families owned, Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem stopped to point out definite landmarks: old destroyed stone-houses, old cemeteries and the trees that still stand next to those places. Those

trees were always invoked as a demonstration of the ancient Bedouin occupation of space, but also of their agricultural activities: each tree was presented with its name, an estimation of its age and a description of the way you could eat or use the fruits it produced, thus demonstrating their knowledge of the local environment. This knowledge of the environment is connected to the traditional Bedouin way of life and their source of income, which used to rely on farming. Aziz Abu-Madighem explained:

“Historically, we had four sources of income: agriculture, as we used to cultivate barley and wheat (...). The second source was livestock, we used to produce milk, butter and sell all sorts of dairy products. The third source of income was our olive trees, we had almost 4,500 olive trees in the village, producing almost 2 litres of olive oil per tree – most would usually be sold. Our fourth source of income was local-grown products. My wife and I used to sell eggs, we had chickens at home that produced daily eggs that we sold for 500–700 NIS weekly. Eggs and other organic products are important, and the demand is increasing.”²¹

The reference to the environment is not only made in terms of culture but also in broader terms, where the environment is not only the place of life but the natural *milieu*. The references to nature and agriculture also represent powerful framing tactics as they connect to contemporary concerns about ecology and sustainability, as well as the importance of securing local sources of food. When evoking their past activities, Aziz insists on that aspect: the production was local and biological, two characteristics that are now valued.

Finally, on the site of the village, trees are also presented as symbols of resistance and *sumud*, for the symbol of the roots but also their vigour to grow. In daily discourses, they are mentioned to symbolize the struggle and the people’s fate: Haqma Abu-Madighem declared: “I am like a tree rooted here. If they remove me, I will die” (field notes, November 16, 2013). Her brother Khaled, who lived in Al-Araqib but moved to Rahat with his family and regularly visits the village, explained: “the day they destroyed my trees, they destroyed my heart at the same time” (field notes, October 15, 2013). The inhabitants of the village thus identify with the trees: they noticed offshoots of the olive trees that were uprooted amongst the soil, the stones and the rubble of the destroyed houses; they are shown to the visitors as a material proof that *sumud* is successful and are invoked as a symbolic challenge towards Israeli policy. Haqma insisted: “we are the same, if they try to uproot us, we will grow back, we will come back. This is where I have my roots” (field notes, October 21, 2013).

The trees constitute a significant symbol of struggle and of the people’s rootedness in place, representing a direct relation (or connection) with the land, intended as the indigenous territory of Bedouins in the Negev/Naqab and as that of Palestine in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Two illustrations (Figures 5.2 and 5.3), shown underneath, highlight that value of the tree as a symbol of rootedness and resistance: a poster for the 2014 Open Shuhada Street demonstration, which shows a tree whose roots were replaced by a closed fist making a crack in the ground and in the structures of occupation. The second one is a picture that circulated on the social media which shows Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, figure of the struggle in Al-Araqib, as a man-tree centaur, being himself rooted in the earth through tree roots, while making a victory sign and welcoming a hawk, all symbols of power, resistance, *sumud* but also coexistence with nature. In the background, women in traditional dresses (*thob*) are rooted in a similar fashion, recalling the importance attributed to women in *sumud* (see Chapter 2). Parallely, the destruction of trees,

and especially of olive trees, is often shown as a metaphor of the destruction of Palestine and the dispersion of the Palestinians, who were uprooted from their land.²²



OPEN SHUHADA STREET

5th campaign
25/2/2014

افتحوا
شارع
الشهداء

Figure 5.2 A poster for the 2014 Shuhada Street demonstration in Hebron showing the connection between land and resistance through the depiction of a tree. Credit: Youth against Settlements, 2014.



Figure 5.3 A picture that circulates on social media, showing Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi as a tree rooted in the earth, making a sign of victory. Author unknown.

The importance given to trees is linked to the importance more generally attributed to the land as a lived but also cultivated, productive space. This dimension can be connected to another element that arose in the interviews or in informal conversations: various interviewees, notably those who had trees to tend to, presented themselves and the Palestinian people in general, as being “*fellahin*,” peasants used to working the ground and making a living out of it, with an intimate knowledge of the land as well as special and strong bonds with the environment.²³ One story, told by a Palestinian guide to a group of tourists in Hebron is very representative of this narrative. In front of a souvenir shop selling the traditional *kuffiyahs*, black and white and red and white, the guide asked the group: “do you know where the *kuffiyah* comes from?” before continuing:

“You know a long time ago, the *kuffiyahs* were all white, embroidered white on white. The Palestinians were fallahins, peasants. They were working since the early morning in the fields, it was very hot, so they had to cover their heads. They were working the earth, wiping their faces out with the *kuffiyah*. Because of the special way to wear the *kuffiyah*, when you were unfolding it at the end of the day, it was striped with black; it was a sign of commitment to the land. The red ones, it is because while working the earth, people were injuring their hands and were wiping the blood off them with what they had on the spot... So it is also a sign of commitment to the land” (field notes, March 14, 2013).

This story shows the importance given to the link with the land, and to the fact that the Palestinians worked and exploited it and are ready to suffer for it. This identity of the Palestinian people being “peasants” is asserted with pride, and is associated with knowledge of the place and the landscape. It is also invoked to assert a right to the land, not only because of emotional or historical reasons but also because of the work invested in it. It has to be noted that people living in urban areas for generations also often identify themselves with this claim. Some people living in Silwan, a densely populated area with very little green space and very little possibility to farm the land, asserted that they regret this fact, because deep down Palestinians are and remain “*fellahin*” (field notes, October 6, 2012). It is indeed, as Ted Swedenburg puts it, the “idiom of Palestinian nationalism,” the peasant being a “national signifier” that can be “used to ‘naturalize’ a people’s historical links to a territory (...)” (1990: 18)

The figure of the *fellah* and his attachment to the land are linked directly to the idea of *sumud*, allowing for a “passive hero” to emerge from the ranks of the non-combattant people (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003: 243). This closeness to the land is also expressed through other symbols taken directly from agricultural production and from traditional Palestinian food: *za’atar* (oriental thyme) and olives. Fakhre Abu-Diab, for example, illustrates the strength of his *sumud* by saying “We don’t need money, I can live with my children and my wife and eat only *za’atar*,”²⁴ while Haqma Abu-Madighem said they would remain on the land of Al-Araqib “as long as *za’atar* and olives.”²⁵

Water, springs and pools

The water points – pools, springs and cisterns – are also part of the elements singled out from the landscape as meaningful symbols framing identity and culture. In Silwan – especially in the “small Silwan,” the central neighbourhoods of the village – the Silwan pool (or “pool of Siloam,” also designated locally as the “’*ein*,” meaning “source”) which lies at the bottom of Wadi Hilwe Street, is presented as a central element informing the residents’ sense of place, a symbol of the area’s ancient history and uniqueness. The pool and its surroundings have been integrated into the national park of the City of David: the area is now privatized, fenced off, its access being conditioned upon an entrance fee, the pool being a touristic attraction. The pool is attributed different meanings and values: some historical, religious and even mystical, other very mundane. Residents insist that the first human presence in the area was established around the pool, and that it represents the very origin of Jerusalem:

“The specialty of Silwan today is the way we feel about the ’*ein*. If it didn’t exist, there would have been no Jerusalem; the old city would not have existed, because there would have been no water. Without the pool here they would not have built the old city.”²⁶

The presence of water indeed accounts for the archeological findings made in Silwan whose historical interpretations, subject to many heated debates between specialists will not be tackled here (Greenberg & Mizrachi, 2013; Moulis, 2014). The pool is also connected to ancient local traditions. Residents claim that the water flowing inside the Silwan pool arrives directly from Mecca: a story mentioned several times recounts that somebody who had lost money in Mecca happened to find it at home once back in Jerusalem, as it had flowed all the way via water.²⁷ “It has history for us: the water, the ’*ein*, at first when Muslims were ruling all this area, they had this idea that this water was from the water of Mecca and so they looked to this area as holy area.”²⁸ This oral tradition can be traced back as far as the Middle-Ages: Al-Muqqadasi indeed refers to it in his *Description of Syria, including Palestine* written around 985 CE:

“Sulwan (Siloam) is a place on the outskirts of the City. Below the village is the ’Ain Sulwan (Pool or Spring of Siloam), of fairly good water, which irrigates the large gardens which were given in bequest (Wakf) by the Khalif ’Othman ibn ’Affan for the poor of the city. (...) It is said that on the Night of ’Arafat the water of the holy well Zamzam, at Makkah, comes underground to the water of the Pool. The people hold a festival here on that evening.” (Mukaddasi, transl. Le Strange, 1886: 49).

Tawfiq Canaan observes a similar belief in 1927:

“Some waters derive their power from the fact that they mix once a year with the water of the holy well Zamzam in Mecca. At such a period the water is curative. Wells of this type with a special reputation are: ’En Imm ed-Daradj in Siloam” (Canaan, 1927: 110).

This connection to Mecca imbues the place with a religious aura. Some narratives go a step further, affirming a certain holiness of Silwan due to the spring beings chosen by God, a claim for example presented on the website of the Maada Creative Center, located in Wadi Hilwe,

providing a reference to the Hadiths, the sayings of the Prophet, to support it:

“The great companion Abu Huraira narrated from Prophet Mohammad (PBUH): (...) God has chosen four springs, as He the Almighty says in a verse from the Holy Quran: ‘In them (each) will be two Springs flowing (free)... In them (each) will be two Springs pouring forth water in continuous abundance.’ According to this verse the two springs that are flowing freely are Silwan Spring, and Bisan Spring. The two other springs that pour water forth in abundance are Zamzam and Akko Springs.”²⁹

The Surah these lines refer to is Surah 55 “al-Rahman” in the Quran, which mentions gardens and four springs, but with no mentions of locations.

The Silwan pool was also appreciated for mundane reasons as it used to be open, with an access to water. The fact of not being able to freely access that space, which was considered to be public, enhances its value in the place history and identity:

“Every place, every spots is important in Silwan. Especially in Wadi Hilwe, because my memories are here. Especially Silwan’s pool. It is a problem now, when I was a child we used to go there, wash my uncle’s car...”³⁰

In H2 and the centre of Hebron, the presence of water is not evident; however, the source that appears in a small pool in Tal Rumeida is also presented as one of the particularities of the area, a testimony of ancient times, like the neighbouring olive trees. It is also mentioned in connection to the history and the holiness of the city, often in the form of a joke: “Abraham was coming to swim here you know!” (field notes, October 13, 2012; October 24, 2014).

In Al-Araqib, the three cisterns that are scattered around the hill where the cemetery stand, are presented to the visitors as one of the main resources and sources of wealth of the area. Residents also indicated other cisterns scattered in the desert, always connected to an old place of dwelling, usually situated 200 or 300 meters from the ruins of an old stone house. In this case, the water does not take on religious or spiritual meaning and the places are not a source of identity construction through historical narratives. However, as for the trees, those cisterns illustrate the ancient presence of the Bedouins in the area and their traditional organization, showing how the environment and space were transformed according to their needs and way of life before the Israeli authorities prevented them from living an agricultural life on their land. It is invoked to show a connection and a certain domestication of the desert’s hostile environment by the Bedouin population, and the transmission of a specific knowledge.

The various landmarks evoked here show that the landscape itself is considered as conveying and embodying the Palestinian and Bedouin culture and identity but also the struggle to safeguard them. The reference to the landscape is relevant to this research as a strategy but also as an outcome of the resistance: it is present in the discourse of the inhabitants, in terms of how they consider and present the environment in which they live. It is one of the dimensions of space used in the framing and communication strategies elaborated upon by the activists and the inhabitants (see Chapter 6).

These four categories of landmarks have different degrees of importance and impact according to the site considered but show convergences in the elements mobilized. All point to the importance of symbolic interpretations of the local environment and landscape in producing and

maintaining a group identity and specific sense of place. The study of landmarks shows how memory is territorialized by the inhabitants: space fixates the memory of certain events or aspects of identity by anchoring them in places (Piveteau, 1995). The landmarks all establish a connection between people, time and space, as material linkages cutting through different dimensions, elements that transcend changes and generations, testifying of a legacy of continued human interventions and symbolic interpretations connected to a place. The example of the Silwan pool is an interesting example: if the presence of a spring is natural, the stone pool and steps are man-made, as is the narrative of the water coming from Mecca, a tradition that can be traced back over several centuries.

These landmarks common to all cases show how the representations of space are integrated, and used, in the narratives and discourses surrounding the struggle. They all confirm the importance of place and sense of place in the mobilization and narratives underlying the practices of resistance, but also highlight how tightly the struggles are connected to wider understandings of land and identity, referring to Palestine or the Bedouin territory.

The Palestinians present and defend – and thus continually produce and recreate – a cultural landscape, “fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent; the natural area is the medium. The cultural landscape is the result” (Sauer, 1925: 46, in Mitchell, Rössler, & Tricaud, 2009: 15). That landscape underlines a deep cultural and emotional value vested in the land, a land they can decipher and interpret drawing on cultural codes, symbols and knowledge of the place.

The landmarks represent so many scattered allusions connecting the local to the national territory and the landscape considered “typical” of Palestine, re-created and imagined at the local level. It can be noted that the cultural landscape *par excellence* is that of rural, Mandate Palestine. It is indeed the traditional agricultural landscape – which does not exclude villages and traditional buildings – that is seen as best symbolizing the Palestinian culture: it evokes the lifestyle that preceded the Nakba, with little rural communities that were free to use their land and relates directly to the nostalgia of a past era. It is the land and the relationship with the land that are thought of as representing the substrate of the traditional way of life for Palestinians and Bedouins alike; even if that way of life is being lost little by little, it is still symbolically inscribed in space. The landscape is sacred as it is the land in all its dimensions that incarnates and represents the Palestinian identity and the struggle. Rooted in the place, the representations and narratives elaborated at the local level are also projected across the whole territory, in order to give it a cohesion and reality; as such, it is re-imagined.

The place-territory continuum: sense of place and nationalism

Beyond its links to the landscape, the sense of place is also connected to the idea of a national territory. The Palestinian struggle is marked by a staunch nationalism, its primary aim being to attain self-determination and the creation of an independent Palestinian State. The Palestinian identity and “national consciousness,” formed at the beginning of the twentieth century, under the British Mandate (Khalidi, 1997), in a context of rising Arab nationalism (Khalidi, 1991; Muslih, 1987). They were tightly linked to the affirmation of a Palestinian sovereignty over the territory, itself considered as an intrinsic constituent of the national identity (Newman, 2002).

As such, references to the land often refer to the national scale, where the “national” means Palestine, considered as the territory that was previously ruled by the Ottomans and the British, a

part of which became Israel. It can also refer, in a more restrictive way, to the areas that are negotiated in the international arena to form the future State of Palestine, namely, the West Bank and Gaza.

The territory is often tackled as the extension over which States apply their sovereignty, a delimited area where their authority applies to land, people and resources (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont 2013: 6). However, this definition of territory as a strictly political entity has to be nuanced with a more social approach: the territory may be run by the State, but it is lived and produced by people, as “groups, ethnic groups and people exist by their reference to a territory, real or dreamt, inhabited or lost” (Bonnemaïson, 1981: 257, translation by the author). The notion brings together the perceived and lived spaces, and implies an appropriation of space from groups who assert a common identity (see for example Di M  o, 1998; Escobar, 2008). Beyond the territory of the State, myriad of other territories can be identified, not necessarily overlapping or intersecting, made of different configurations and extensions, different definitions and representations, some transboundary, other attached to specific identities, senses of place, etc. In that sense, territories are produced and “actively negotiated” (Paasi, 2003: 110) and represent important spatialities for mobilized groups (Zibechi, 2010, 2012) both in material and immaterial terms (Routledge, 2015).

In the cases at hand the territory is invoked locally to assert the embeddedness of the mobilization into a wider struggle. If the “sense of place can be projected on to the region or a ‘nation’ and give rise to regionalism or nationalism” (Agnew, 1993: 263), the opposite is also true: this movement of “projection” is completed by a process of “incarnation,” whereby the place is also a repository of territorial imaginaries and identities created in other places, or at the regional or national level, by institutions, communities, groups of interests, citizens... sewn together and adopted as a national ethos. The Palestinian “sense of place” is indeed connected to the national identity and the national scale; however, it is also the result of an opposite, complementary process: it is produced and strengthened by the incarnation of a national spatial imaginary in place, with place concentrating elements symbolizing the collective national identity – and national struggle – which are integrated and reused in the local struggle, making the sense of place an element which constructs and reproduces Palestinian nationalism, embedding a certain “sense of territory” within the sense of place.

Silwan, concentrating on the local to build the national

In Silwan, the affirmation of presence and appropriation of the local space goes hand in hand with the re-appropriation and strengthening of a Silwanese identity. This local effort shows the circulation between the local and national identities, the projecting and incarnating processes between place and territory.

The place-framing in Silwan relies largely on the affirmation and encouragement of a strong attachment to the neighbourhood, for the values and meaning it represents. This strategy is of course part of *sumud*, similar to the practices mentioned in Chapter 2, which try to change the conditions of life to make people keep on living in their neighbourhood. It stems from the will to keep Silwan an inhabited and lively place. The material dimension of physical presence must be complemented by an emotional attachment towards the place and a feeling of loyalty and pride.

This effort can be observed chiefly through the local work of the Maada community center in Wadi Hilwe and its engagement for children and women (see Chapter 2). The centre for example

uses the phrase “I love you Silwan” as a recurring motto during its activities. The expression is written in mosaic at the entrance of the building, as well as on t-shirts distributed to the children participating in the 2013 summer camp (see figure 5.4). During some activities, the children are also encouraged to repeat it as a slogan. The race organized by Maada between Bethlehem and Silwan in October 2012, named “Run for Silwan,” was another initiative aiming at mobilizing the children around the importance of the village and encouraging them to show their dedication and voice their love for the place. Jawad Siyam explained:

“Silwan has a small identity also. To love the village is important, to exist in the village, and not to consider the village like a hotel or a hostel, sleep, eat and when you want to have fun you leave the village... So we want to have our existence in the village. To be linked to the village... To serve the village also!”³¹

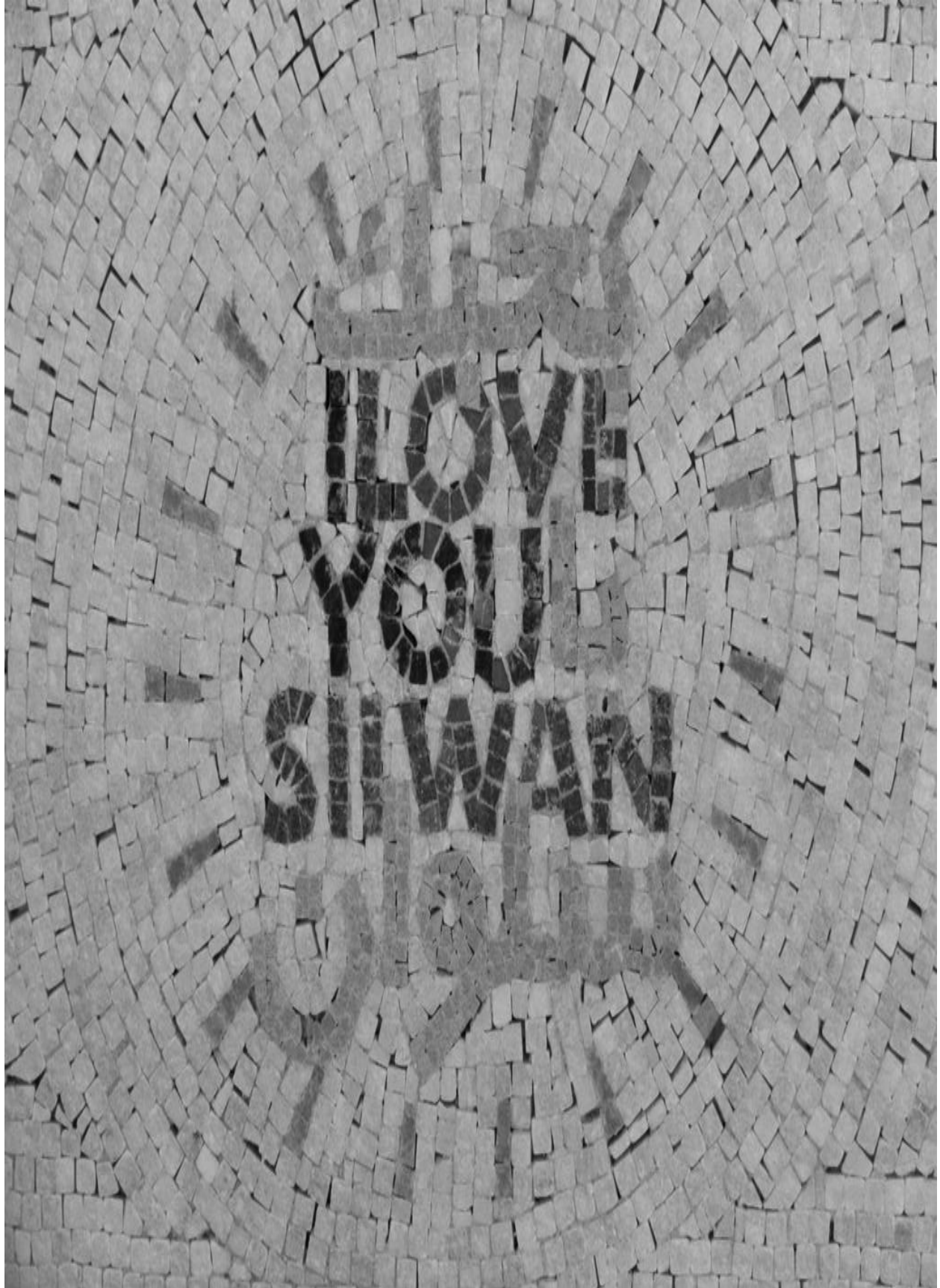


Figure 5.4 Inscription “I love you Silwan” on a mosaic made by children at the entrance of the Maada centre. Picture taken on September 9, 2012.

If this type of narrative is developed in activities with the children, the residents also resort to the same type of discourses, framing the neighbourhood as an important place to which they feel connected and for which they are ready to fight: it is for example common to see the words “Silwan” or “I love Silwan” sprayed in the streets (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2).

The valorization and transmission of the Palestinian heritage is also seen as essential, as it connects to both the history of Silwan and to its current struggle. The Silwanese and Palestinian identities are shown to be necessarily connected and intertwined, asserting at the same time a local sense of place and the belonging to a larger collective identity, framing these embedded identities in political terms: being from Silwan, being Palestinian, implies a duty of memory and resistance: “serving the village, loving the village also means automatically loving Palestine.”³² In this way, the inhabitants establish a direct and strong link between the local place and the Palestinian territory, resistance and identity. Jawad Siyam and Sahar al-Abassi insisted:

“We are doing stuff like music, art, things like that, but we connect everything with identity and awareness (...). When I teach children, I teach them songs which are linked to our history, to our traditions, connected to the life of Silwan and Palestine. We try to refresh or renew dead traditions. And we work with women, make cookbook, political cookbook, also linked to the history of Silwan, so we bring up these histories and traditions and we try to define ourselves. And we define ourselves very clearly as Palestinians.”

“The Palestinian heritage and culture are important in activities we do; dabke, also chorale... The teacher is concentrating on Palestinian traditional songs. Through library activities they’re focusing on Palestinian identity with the children, what it means to be Palestinian, living in Silwan, and sometime totally different things, according to the age of the children.”³³

Teaching *dabke* (the traditional Palestinian dance), organizing sessions of *tatriz* (traditional embroidery) for women, are tackled as tactics of resistance, engaging culture and memory that are threatened, ensuring their transmission in front of the destructive effects of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian society.

In Al-Bustan, some walls of the neighbourhood are decorated with flowers, small representations of mosques and religious sentences such as “Allah akbar” (God is great), following a common practice intended to greet people coming back from the Hajj. A resident of the neighbourhood claims an aesthetic goal: “We just wanted to make it more beautiful. (...) we made the Dome of the Rock with flowers, and after that we make something to tell the peace”.³⁴ The depiction of the Haram al-Sharif, a religious landmark of the city, as well as the inscription of religious formulas on the walls, shows the religious importance given to Jerusalem in the Palestinian imaginary, but especially in the representations and identity of Silwan’s inhabitants. The decoration of external walls indicates again the effort made to appropriate the neighbourhood and show it is inhabited and well-maintained, connected to the reflection on *sumud* and presence.

The identity of Silwan is thus strongly linked to Palestine; people are very adamant to show that their loyalty lies with the people of the West Bank and Gaza, and with the idea of a united State of Palestine, thus inscribing their struggle in a clear nationalist frame and locating the place in the national territory.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem are often shunned by the inhabitants of the West Bank who consider them as “normalizers” or “traitors” (“gays” is also an insult commonly used against them), who live and work with the Israelis and have supposedly comfortable lives and good jobs when the Palestinians in the West Bank suffer a military occupation and are restricted in their movements and daily lives. People from Silwan thus insist on the fact that if they are cut out of the West Bank, it is out of constraint, and they, too, live under Israeli occupation and are part of the Palestinian people. The fragmentation of the Palestinian territory is also bringing about a fragmentation of identities and division between people: activists in Silwan try to reconcile the belonging to Silwan, Jerusalem and Palestine:

“We are part of Jerusalem but at the same part we are Silwanese... But the Israelis are trying to play on it, to disconnect us from the Palestinian society, Jerusalemite people and Silwanese.”³⁵

A slogan chanted by the supporters of the Silwan football club in the stadium of Ram, while playing against other Palestinian teams from the West Bank, reflects a clear political statement: “*Al-Qods, Allah, Silwan arabiyye*,” that is: “Jerusalem, Allah, Silwan is Arab” (field notes, February 8, 2013), expressing the tight relation between the place, religion and nationalism. It highlights the importance of Jerusalem and their pride in being attached to it, but also voices the fact that Silwan is part of Palestine and refuses the Israeli authority and the settlers’ presence in the village. The jersey of Silwan’s football team reproduces the Palestinian flag; some sources indicated that has been the case since 1962 (field notes, February 8, 2013). If these elements assert an attachment to the national and local identities, they are also expressions of resistance against the occupation of Jerusalem, and a way of showing the other supporters that people from Silwan are as Palestinian and as nationalist as can be. Finally, it is also a message directed at the Palestinian Authority, which is often accused of abandoning the people of Jerusalem. It is common in Silwan to hear people complaining about the way Jerusalem is treated in the peace negotiations. Some interviewees have expressed their frustration in that respect:

“We try to focus on the identity which was taken, stolen from us by the Israeli policy, the Oslo agreements, which neglected the question of Jerusalem, the question of settlements, and we were very aware in Silwan about these two issues, that it damaged the village.”³⁶

“I think the PA is not working here, which is supposed to be Palestine. What are they doing here? Nothing. They can’t do anything in Jerusalem, they are kept out in order not to see what happens, not to know what happens, and they are like in a bigger prison. Here we are prisoners, but they are outside, in a bigger prison.”³⁷

The attachment to place is thus defined in relation to an attachment to a larger territory and a common culture; the sense of place in part reflects a national identity and the struggle for an independent and sovereign Palestine, a struggle that underlies the local issues faced by the

inhabitants. The inhabitants insist on the connection with the rest of the Palestinian territory, which is considered according to a dual approach. The “national territory” considered is, primarily, the “lost” pre-1948 Palestine, a territory kept alive, represented and re-invented drawing on natural and cultural landmarks considered typical of Palestine, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter; this also relies on other elements relating to the Palestinian history, memory and culture, not directly related to space but referring to the nation and homeland.

In a second sense, the territory referred to is that of a possible future Palestine, encompassing East Jerusalem and the West Bank (as well as Gaza, which appears however always more removed from the equation), the occupied Palestinian territory; this is a territory in which the Palestinian authority is more concrete and that international negotiations attempt to turn into an independent State. It is an area where people from Jerusalem go to travel, where they have family and friends, and sometimes a second house. It is thus also “lived,” notwithstanding that it is separated from Jerusalem and that many obstacles make circulation between the two areas difficult. The sense of place advocated by activists in Silwan can thus be defined as a “nationalist sense of place,” which seems to “involve the establishment of a coherence of meaning between the abstract, imagined nation, images of local and regional landscapes, and lived experience in particular locales” (Martin, 1997).

Hebron: claiming a specific Palestinian identity

In Hebron, framing the local struggle in relation to the Palestinian identity and territory is an essential part of the repertoire of contention. The situation within H2 is indeed framed as a direct transposition of the national struggle against occupation, presenting the same set of mechanisms of controls, stakes and processes, only concentrated in one area. Local and national often conflate: Hebron becomes a symbol of Palestine, the place encompassing and referring to the territory in a double movement of projection and incarnation. Numerous stencil graffiti scattered around the old city call for a “Free Palestine.” The house where Youth against Settlements is established is also covered with some graffiti claiming “this is Palestine” or “welcome to Palestine.” The very logo of the group features the map of pre-1948 Palestine covered with the Palestinian flag, indicating the national scope of the organization.

However, the inhabitants’ positioning themselves within the national struggle and their insistence on the Palestinian identity seems less important in Hebron than in Silwan, probably because it is taken for granted, as Hebron is considered to be one of the central places of resistance in the West Bank and is thus considered as a symbol in itself, a vitrine of the situation and struggle against occupation: the commitment to resistance and the Palestinian identity of the residents cannot be contested. In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, resistance is now advanced as a central element of the Hebronite identity by people active within H2. Issa Amro for example insisted that Palestine is not “as any other country, it is fragmented because of the occupation and because of the checkpoints. (...) This is why we focus on Hebron.”³⁸ Material constraints indeed have an impact on the conduct and the scope of the struggle, fragmenting the movements and activists by increasing the cost (literal and metaphorical) of the protest.

Like in Silwan, the particularities of the Hebronite identity are valued and transmitted to younger generations. Zliha Muhtaseb explained that in the summer camps she organizes:

“I do not concentrate on the Palestinian culture, but when I do the workshops of course we

say that our father and our ancestors used to do this... We do singing and dabke because we do a graduation party, like a final ceremony ending the summer camp. Yes, we need to do dabke. It is a basic thing, an important thing to do. For us in Hebron also we try to concentrate not on the Palestinian culture but the Khalili [hebronite] culture. In Hebron we have some things that we do that are not so common in the Palestinian culture, like in weddings. The weddings here are a little bit different than the Palestinian weddings.”³⁹

In Hebron, the framing of the identity indeed relies on traits considered a unique in Palestine: the religious identity of the city, a particular drawling accent, are for example considered with pride and a touch of autoderision. However, the pride of the Hebronites is also linked to the reputation of the city as a centre of business and handicraft (Al-Jubeh, 2009: 21). Glassblowing is the most famous activity of the city, along with pottery, leather-tanning and extraction of stone. Hebron is indeed a large economic centre and accounts for one-third of the West Bank GDP.⁴⁰ A story heard several times affirms that “in China, people think Hebron is a country because of the number of Hebronites they meet there, who came to make business” (field notes, September 12, 2012). This framing insists on the importance of Hebron: despite the closure and apparently terrible economic situation (the unemployment rate is the highest in the West Bank according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, reaching 25,3 % in 2013⁴¹), the city still retains power – even internationally – thanks to its dynamism.

The references to a wider scale of struggle are at the same time omnipresent and less directly used in the representations of Hebron’s interviewees. As noted above, it is probably because the correspondence with the national struggle is obvious and struggling for Hebron necessarily means struggling for Palestine.

Place framing in Al-Araqib: negotiating multiple identities

The territory the Bedouins refer to corresponds to four different configurations, each attached to a facet of the Bedouins’ identity. It can refer to pre-1948 Palestine; the territory of the State of Israel, of which they are citizens; the occupied Palestinian territories – the West Bank and Gaza – with which the Bedouins traditionally have tight relationships (Parizot, 2001) and the indigenous territory of the Bedouins, that mostly covers the Negev and used to transcended the current national borders towards the Sinai.

These territories – Israeli, Palestinian and Bedouin – represent different spatial configurations that can associate, overlap or compete, linked to moving – and sometimes opposed – ideologies and identities.

In Al-Araqib, the residents’ sense of place does not refer to a unique national territory, nor does it draw on a nationalist discourse advocating the inscription in a specific nation-state. Generally, the Bedouins do not contest their being inscribed within the Israeli system and territory (see Chapter 3). Some Bedouins met in the Negev, for example in the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na’am, did actually insist on their loyalty towards Israel, one of them insisted that he volunteered to serve in the army. In Al-Araqib, the residents underlined their will to struggle non-violently against the State’s discrimination. They firmly oppose the ethnocentric policies and decisions of the State, underlining the injustice and segregation that they have to face.

The inhabitants of Al-Araqib denounce the dissonance between the democratic principles

claimed by the State and the way in which they are treated. They insist on their status as Israeli citizens in order to claim their rights, demanding the possibility to be accepted as Arab, Palestinian and Bedouin citizens. Aziz Abu-Madighem regrets: “We thought that there was such things as democracy, law, the courts... I am simultaneously a Palestinian, raised as a Bedouin, a Muslim and an Israeli citizen, why is that a problem?”⁴² Another resident of the village, Ismail, described a similar position:

“We go after our rights. Not more. I don’t demonstrate for Jerusalem or Hebron, there are people there who will demonstrate for their own rights. We live in the State of Israel. (...) I am an Israeli citizen, why I don’t have my rights like the Jews? I deserve it; they should give it to me.”⁴³

The residents of Al-Araqib are very critical of the authorities, openly laying out their criticisms against the State or the government to people visiting the village. During their presentation of the village to visitors, Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi and his son Aziz often criticize various government officials such as Benjamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres. Shimon Peres is denounced for having won the Nobel Peace Prize⁴⁴ and being internationally hailed as a “man of peace” while he ordered the spraying of Bedouin villages with pesticides (field notes, April 7, 2012; October 20 2014); Benjamin Netanyahu is accused of being hypocritical and criminal:

“When Netanyahu is going around the world in the USA, England, France, and speaking through a microphone saying ‘we are a democratic country and our citizens are equal in rights’ this is only rhetoric and it doesn’t correspond to the facts on the ground, and to the reality. The speech rhetoric is one thing, and the treatment of the Arab minority is another thing.”⁴⁵

As a result, if they affirm their being politically and culturally connected to the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, they insist on their being disconnected from the nationalist character of the Palestinian’s struggle, and are cautious to replace and frame their own protest in an Israeli context. They refer to the territory of Palestine as the pre-1948 territory that included the Bedouin land as a lost territory that allowed freedom of movement and was connected to particular cultural traits. They criticize Israel and point out the problems that emerged following its creation, but do not make a call to fight the State: on the contrary, they usually call for a peaceful coexistence within Israel.

The Bedouins thus adopt a slightly different approach on territory, concentrating not on the territory of the nation but on a specific Bedouin territory, considered from a cultural point of view, a territory which is now partially integrated within the territory of Israel but is not recognized as such. The sense of place is thus linked to the culture of the Bedouin minority rather than to a national feeling, whether Palestinian or Israeli.

The framing of the Bedouin identity draws on the local and the particularities of the place, but is also linked to a traditional lifestyle and a particular approach to space, rooted in traditions enduring from a nomadic rural life in the desert. Indeed, the sense of place, the “spatial imaginaries” that give meaning to the Bedouins’ “particular world” (Nicholls, 2009: 79), are linked above all to the land and an indigenous identity (see Chapter 6). The importance of natural

landmarks, such as trees, and cultural or historical ones, like the cemeteries, are invoked to show how Bedouins were traditionally rooted in space and that it is the land itself which has value, as opposed to the constructed national territory.

Al-Araqib itself is considered as both a place and a territory, as a defined lived place, but also a larger spatial configuration. The name of Al-Araqib indeed refers to much more than the space of the cemetery and the area around it; it includes all of the land that was owned and cultivated by the inhabitants before being confiscated by the Israelis, prolonging the place into a group's territory, practiced, appropriated and even owned, characterized by a specific cultural landscape. The inhabitants of Al-Araqib relate to the Negev and the desert as an environment, as a territory connected to a traditional way of life, even if the nomadic dimension has disappeared long ago, other traits remain, such as herding or growing specific crops. Their sense of place is not inserted into a "nationalist" pattern but into that of a minority.

Framing the territorial struggle in religious terms: ribat and the Holy Land

If as shown above the repertoire in all three sites of contention integrates a reference to political and cultural territories to foster and frame the mobilization, another interesting aspect came into focus through fieldwork research, namely, the reference to a religious territory, whose definition goes beyond that of the Holy Land in its classical understanding. This acceptance of the territory is expressed through the concept of "ribat," a religious equivalent of sumud, which is referred to in the three case studies but is particularly strong in Silwan. It is particularly interesting to develop this concept as it is a dimension of Palestinian resistance and identity that is seldom mentioned in the existing literature. Ribat is attached to one central landmark, the Al-Aqsa mosque, but is also considered to be attached to the land of Palestine in its entirety as a holy Muslim land, also presented as the "land of ribat."

The notion of *ribat* was mentioned mainly in Silwan, but also in Hebron and Al-Araqib. It is employed as a religious equivalent of sumud, central to the practices and the very conception of the struggle. The term is entwined with old Islamic traditions that evolved over time: in particular, it has been studied with reference to architecture and religion during medieval times. It has also emerged, more recently, in the texts produced by groups connected to radical Islam. The Palestinian interpretation represents yet another nuance of the term, which is seldom studied as such, and must be tackled in relation to the long history of the concept.⁴⁶ The inclusion of *ribat* in the Palestinian narrative and repertoire appears to be quite recent, the term being appropriated and adapted in connection to the Israeli occupation and the emergence of a Palestinian national identity.

If it has recently been defined as an activity aimed at protecting the Muslim faith (Schmitt, 2017: 27), I contend that ribat must be defined in connection with the territory. It represents an instance of "territorialization of faith" (Anderson, 2006: 17) and refers to the fact of staying in place in order to specifically defend Al-Aqsa, Jerusalem and Palestine. It is tightly linked to Islam, and the practice itself is deeply religious, but it has a fundamental spatial dimension that must not be overlooked.

The ribats in Muslim history and culture: architecture, spirituality and combat

Ribat is a term with a rich semantic field, and therefore, the meaning of the term has been – and still is – widely debated. It is important to present a genealogy of those debates and their various propositions as the prolific historical analyzes and the occasional contemporary studies on the topic are never connected. Moreover, it seems absolutely indispensable to consider the contemporary use of *ribat* in Palestine in light of the rich literature existing in archaeology, history and study of Islam, not only because those studies shed light on the idea, but also because the contemporary survival of the notion might well bring new elements to the historical debate on the meaning of the term.

In his commentated bibliography on the topic, Franco Sanchez indeed underlines the overlap existing between “the form, the content and the spiritual precept” (2004: 353) designated by the word. M. Bonner, in his study of jihad, also insists on the confusion existing around a term which “varies according to the region and time” (2005: 166).

As early as 1900, Edmond Doutté’s definition of *ribat* and the related term of “*mrabet*” laid out in an article about Islam in the Maghreb attracted criticisms and launched a debate on the varying meanings of the word (Doutté, 1900b, 1900a). Doutté defined *ribats* as “forts built on the borders of Muslim empires, where a garrison of volunteers were defending the territory of Islam against foreigners’ attacks” (Doutté, 1900a: 29). Similarly, many historic studies of the early twentieth century considered *ribat* as an architectural category, designating fortified structures located on the coasts of Al-Andalus⁴⁷ and the Maghreb (Basset & Terrasse, 1927). René and Henri Basset, Alexandre Lézine and George Marçais have largely influenced the research on the topic, studying the *ribats* in Tunisia such as those of Sousse and Monastir (see for example Lézine, 1956a, 1956b; Marçais, 1956) as a type of “fortified convents” (Basset & Terrasse, 1927: 117). S. Zbiss, inspector of the Muslim monuments in Tunisia, affirmed in 1954 the primary defensive function of those “maritime fortresses” (Zbiss, 1954). Golvin, quoting sources from Al-Andalus, defends a similar position, whereby the term *ribat* designates “a very specific building or a fortified neighbourhood, or even a city or harbour” (Golvin, 1969: 99).

This type of definition remains the most commonly found today. For the New Cambridge History of Islam, the term *ribat* refers to “defensive structures” (Robinson, 2010: 319), “forts on the frontier” (Ibid.: 279) or “fortresses guarding the North African coast” (Ibid.: 321). The *Dictionnaire historique de l’Islam* refers to “high constructions in the Middle Ages, in threatened frontier areas, in order to shelter defences and garrisons” (Sourdel & Sourdel, 1996: 709, translation by the author). These definitions highlight several features considered as essential: the importance of a position of defence, of a strategic and fix location. The term of “garrisons,” often used, is particularly interesting as it is also used in the Palestinian discourse.

The Encyclopaedia of Islam proposes a very developed and more nuanced account of the variations in the sense of *ribat*, underlining that it is “impossible to present an unequivocal definition of the term” as the word always needs to be related to “a context and a chronology” (Chabbi, 1995: 493). This article highlights several facts that prove interesting for the understanding of the Palestinian *ribat*: the term originally designated a gathering of cavalry in preparation for battle, but came subsequently to refer to “a fortified edifice,” mirroring a transformation in war strategies, from movement towards “wars of position” that required “dispositions of defence” being built on the “land frontiers” (Chabbi, 1995: 494). It also entails

the “notion of staying or of attachment to a place” (Ibid.), this notion of attachment being explicit in the very root of the word, the letters r-b-ṭ- meaning to tie.

This material and military dimension of ribat is doubled by a religious aspect, which also encompasses different definitions, some harshly criticized. A general consensus considers that these buildings, originally conceived as military outposts, later became the siege of a specific spiritual practice: after the twelfth century, they became places of meditation and asceticism, with the increased presence of Sufis (Sourdel & Sourdel, 1996: 709). Some authors considered that they evolved from army barracks to some kind of “fortified convents of monk warriors” (Zbiss, 1954: 144), or “pious foundations” destined to “combatants of the faith,” or “warriors of the holy war” (Golvin, 1969: 101). Some authors present those structures as a “Muslim equivalent of a [Christian] monastery” (Kennedy, 2011: 161), and compare the participants to some medieval military orders (Bosworth, 1992: 285). Part of these propositions are however severely condemned by Jacqueline Chabbi who considers that ribat “never was” a military convent; for her, this use of the word ribat has been rewritten and reinvented for functional reasons over time (Chabbi, 1995: 506).

Franco Sánchez underlines that the militaristic dimension is traditionally favoured in the definitions of ribat, and regrets the underrepresentation of its spiritual dimension. He insists that the notion of ribat is intimately related to Islam and its functioning: as for jihad, ribat appeals to the believer’s devotion and sense of sacrifice (op. cit.: 354). Janine and Dominique Sourdel also underline the increased presence of Sufis among the combatants occupying such forts after the twelfth century, consecrating themselves to the struggle against the infidels while also practicing “persistence in the hardships” (op.cit.: 709). This perspective presents ribat as an activity that became more spiritual than military, carried out by the *morabiu*n or “guardians of the frontier” (Golvin, 1969: 97).

Evolutions of the word “morabitun,” those who are in ribat, can be found around the Mediterranean, in connection with different periods, most of them rooted in the Middle Ages and the period of Islamic expansion: the Almoravide dynasty was named after a Spanish evolution “al-Morabitun,” “the people of ribat,” or “those who set about doing ribat.” It is worth noting that the precise reason for this name remains uncertain (see, for example, Sourdel & Sourdel, 1996: 75). The Berber “marabouts” are also an evolution, through the French language this time, of “morabitun.” It designates “holy men” or “religious persons” (Meier, 1999: 354). Connected to a mystical branch of Islam that includes a particular devotion for local saints (Doutté, 1899, 1900a), the marabouts were a cast of religious notables, a medieval “rural elite” (Voguet, 2012) who transmitted this status hereditarily until today (Babès, 1991: 122). Although less exposed than Tunisia and Morocco, ribats have also been studied in the south of Italy (Campailla, 2004; Galdieri, 2000), which has been part of the Muslim empire between the ninth and eleventh centuries. The influence of the Arab presence can also be detected in the contemporary language: in Calabria and Sicily “Morabito” is still a very common last name, and in the Sicilian dialect the adjective “murabbitu” is still used to designate somebody who does not drink alcohol, thus connecting the term with a notion of asceticism. The Palestinian “morabitun,” active in the defence of Al-Aqsa, must be considered in relation to this long history of the ribat, marked by evolving meanings, but however always connected to matters of presence and spirituality.

Camille Rhoné, in a seminal article published in 2003, insists that the traditional vision of ribat remains reductive, and that it must be considered as “an attitude, a practice” connected to requirements laid out in the Quran and other religious texts (Rhoné, 2003: 73). Calls or praises

for ribat are indeed expressed in many hadiths⁴⁸ and some hadiths are often mentioned in Palestine as the reasons for doing ribat.

Similarly, Picard and Borrut lament that western historiography has “frozen” the meaning of ribat, which became nearly exclusively associated with a model of “ideal ribat” (Picard & Borrut, 2003: 33). They also propose to redefine the understanding of ribat as “the place of ribat” or “the fact of ribat” (Ibid.: 36), thus separating it from its possible architectural envelop, a distinction also made by Chabbi (1995). Picard insists on the necessity to consider ribat as a “religious practice” and to study it at the scale of the Mediterranean, but also not to underestimate the religious stakes connected to the islamization of the territory (Picard, 2011).

It seems established at this point that ribat must be considered as a practice inspired by some precepts of Islam, the forts once considered as its direct expression being only one of the forms that can be found (Rhonè, 2003; Varela Gomes & Varela Gomes, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2015), merely an envelope where the practice developed, not a condition nor a necessity.

Outlining the different facets of the term and the way it is tackled in the literature is essential to study how ribat is employed in Palestine. Indeed, this inscription in a historical context allows to see that numerous elements can be found in the Palestinian approach, even if recomposed differently: for example, the importance of presence on a land, of persistence, and the dedication to a territory considered as sacred.

Before moving on to the contemporary use encountered in Palestine, another contemporary occurrence must be evoked: mentions of ribat indeed appear in publications directly emanating from radical Islamist groups such as Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Daesh). The term is connected to the uses evoked in the historical accounts mentioned above, connected to the protection of a territory under Muslim authority. Mark Long attributes the apparition of ribat in this sphere of reference to Abdullah ‘Azzam, the Palestinian theologian and theoretician of the global jihad, who inspired Al-Qaeda. In his text “Join the Caravan,” in which he called upon Muslims to go to fight in Afghanistan, he reproached: “What is the matter with the Muslims that they do not record some days of frontier-guarding [ribat]?”⁴⁹ (Long 2009: 37). Ayman al-Zawahiri has also used the term in a similar way, and as ‘Azzam previously, he designates Palestine as one of the “lands of ribat” (“*ard al-ribat*”), an occupied territory that has to be reconquered (Azzam, Ibid.; Bar & Minzili, 2006).

More recently, magazines such as *Inspire*, the online journal of Al-Qaeda in the Arabic peninsula, *Dabiq*, the journal of Daesh, or *Azan*, a journal linked to the “Talibans in Khurasan” (Ingram, 2015), referred to the term following a similar line. In their pages, ribat designates a defensive activity, a patrol, a “shift” of watch duty or “frontier guarding” (Dabiq n.3, 2014; n.15, 2016), but also the space where those patrols are deployed, as “ribat checkpoints” (Dabiq n. 12, 2016), “ribat points” and “ribat areas” (Dabiq n. 7, 2015). Here too, ribat is a practice – defence through presence – connected to a certain type of space – borders or places considered as threatened – not linked to any type of architecture.

The mention of radical Islam must in no way be read as a comparison or even a relation between those groups and the practice of ribat advanced by Palestinians. It only seeks to underline other instances where the term is referred to in order to present a broad picture of past and present uses.

This reflection on the various nuances and definitions of ribat, considering the two fields where it is more commonly found – medieval history chiefly, but also contemporary radical

Islam – shows a thread linking together all those definitions, with some constant elements: the land, as a territory under Muslim authority, and the border, but also a situation of conflict and a link to religion. It indicates that ribat is part of a general Islamic repertoire that spans centuries, connected to a defensive posture rooted in space. Its basic feature appears to be the territorialization of Islam, a religious duty to defend Muslim lands.

The debate between the emplaced and embodied conception of ribat, between its fundamental territoriality and its being firstly a practice, is resolved in the Palestinian mobilization of the term. The territoriality of the Palestinian ribat is essential but shifting, as are its origins. Indeed, if many Palestinians defend the uniqueness of the Palestinian ribat, considering that ribat is necessarily linked to Jerusalem and Palestine, other underline the fact that it is connected to other Islamic traditions and places.

This shows how the Palestinian understanding of ribat associates the general principles evoked above, notably a strong territorialization of faith which attributes meaning and value to place, incarnating beliefs in space: this space becomes an intrinsic part of the belief system, but also of the political arena.

Forts and hospices in ancient Palestine

Before turning to the contemporary political use of the term, it is essential to underline the existence of “ribat-buildings” in Palestine, corresponding more or less to the classical definition given by archeology and architecture. There were indeed several ribats on the Mediterranean coast of historical Palestine. Al-Muqaddasi, a geographer born in Jerusalem in the tenth century, gives a very detailed account of their localization and functioning in his description of the Muslim world *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*. He indicates the existence of ribats in Gaza, Mîmâs (Maiuma of Gaza), ‘Ascalân (Ashkelon), Mâhûz Azdûd (Ashdod), Mâhûz Yubnâ, Yâfâ (Jaffa), and Arsûf (see Anabseh, 2006; Borrut, 2001; Khalilieh, 1999, 2008). Maps of the ribat system have been drawn, showing a great density along the coast (Ibid.). Besides being a “coastal warning system” (Ibid.: 124) against the Byzantine fleet, the ribats also represented centers for business and exchanges, for example of prisoners, and links between the coast and the interior of the territory (Borrut, 2001: 43). Only two of them are still visible, according to Khalilieh (1999: 216): Kefer Lâm in the north, and Ashdod in the south.

More recent structures can be found in Jerusalem, where seven ribats are known to this day. Already mentioned in the work of Mujir Al-Din (15th century), ribat Kurd, ribat al-Mansuri, ribat ‘Ala al-Din, ribat Zamani, ribat al-Nisa and ribat Mardini are of Mamluk origins (Sauvaire, 1876; for a historic and architectural overview, see Burgoyne & Richards, 1987; Van Berchem, 1922). The seventh ribat, ribat Bayram Jawish, was built by the Ottomans in 1540-1541 (Burgoyne, 1973: 17). The documentation and fieldwork research showed that all of those ribats are located in streets leading to the esplanade of Al-Aqsa, or next to one of its access doors. They are mostly forgotten by the population as such, except for the people in charge of culture and archaeology, or people living in or nearby one of those ribats.

Debates and confusion surrounded their function, but the general agreement is that they were “urban hospices” (Burgoyne, 1973: 17) for poor people and pilgrims. Inscriptions on some of the buildings, first deciphered by Van Berchem, confirm this function (Burgoyne, 1987: 117; Van Berchem, 1922: 197).⁵⁰ Burgoyne indicates that the change from military barracks to urban hospice could have been the consequence of practical considerations and need to lodge the

pilgrims. He also underlines that the terminology could have been retained as “a symbolic gesture reflecting a continuing duty to defend the faith” (Burgoyne, 1973: 17).

Beyond the coast and Jerusalem, ribats were also established in Hebron. Mujir Al-Din mentions the existence of at least four ribats in Hebron including ribat Mansouri, situated in front of the citadel (Al-Din al-‘Ulaymī, 1866; see also Dandis, 2008: 39-40). In the book “Old Hebron,” published by the Hebron Rehabilitation Center, a page is dedicated to “the Garrisons (ribat) and Hospice.” The description that follows applies the architectural definition of ribat in the Palestinian context: “a garrison was rectangular, with control and defense towers on its outer ramparts. Inside, there would be an uncovered space surrounded by architectural voids, often with a two-storied structure used as living quarters” (Ibid.). The example of Hebron shows the importance to investigate in other cities, where similar places might have existed.

This overview of ribat in historical Palestine highlights interesting points: first, it was clearly inserted in the old Mediterranean line of defence with forts on the coast, with buildings that take on the “classical” sense and probably came close to the physical structure now considered as an archetype. However, the ribats existing in Jerusalem and Hebron, founded at a later period, show that the shift was not only in the function of ribat, from war to hospitality, but also in its geography, from coastal to urban.

These elements are thus in line with the classical definition of ribat as forts or hospices. The element of defense and location on the border are weaker once it becomes an urban structure, but remain valid in symbolic terms. The contemporary use of ribat by the Palestinians, however, mostly ignores this physical dimension, while spirituality and religious duty remain fundamental notions. This rekindles the debate about the definition of ribat as an institution necessarily linked to a type of architecture or being originally a practice, independent from a physical structure.

Defining the contemporary Palestinian understanding of ribat

The specific study of ribat in the Palestinian context is almost non-existent: indeed, even when it is mentioned, it is usually done in a very anecdotal way. Moreover, the importance of Jerusalem and especially of the Al-Aqsa mosque, which informs the entire Palestinian discourse on ribat, was seldom mentioned in the academic literature until 2015 and the emergence of the morabitun and morabihat movement in Jerusalem (Schmitt, 2017). It is revealing that the reference to ribat has been engaged especially in Silwan, using the vicinity to Al-Aqsa in order to frame, justify and support the inhabitants’ resistance.

The Palestinian understanding of ribat is closely linked to the regional context, being intrinsically connected to Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem, as holy sites but also sites that are threatened by the occupation and the Israeli encroachment. As such, the term takes on not only a religious but also a strong political meaning, becoming a fundamental repertoire for religious nationalism.

I argue that the Palestinian case shows another instance where ribat has evolved, where it was appropriated, reinvented and reformulated, inscribed in the framework of the Palestinian struggle, integrating the role of religion and enhancing the importance of place in a nationalist perspective.

In Palestine, the term ribat is well-known and still in use, notably among religious Muslims and people engaged in active struggles. Ribat, just like sumud, to which it is often compared, indeed represents at the same time a repertoire and a way to frame the struggle, a practical tool for action and a set of representations directing their application. Like sumud, ribat represents a

type of “habitational resistance:” it also implies a constant and resilient physical presence on the land, conceived as a defensive position against external aggression – and here specifically against occupation or expulsion – but rooted in a religious belief and tradition. A common use of the term draws simply on the root letters of the word which mean “to tie.” T., a member of the neighbourhood committee of Silwan, for example stated: “The only thing that we can do is ribat, to say steadfast in our land, because we have no other choice (...) We work for ribat, eat for ribat... It is like jihad, it means many things, not only fighting, but also to go to work, help the family...”⁵¹ Jawad Siyam, also from Silwan, explained that “Ribat means to tie yourself to something. (...) We are tied to Jerusalem and to Al-Aqsa.”⁵² Similarly, one of the residents of the only Palestinian house remaining in the settlement of Tal Rumeida, explained: “Ribat is to stay even if you are in danger, you stay in your position (...) So ribat means to tie yourself to your land.”⁵³ This use of the term was expressed numerous times during the fieldwork interviews: “it means ‘to tie,’ so we are tied to the place, to the land” (field notes, Hebron, November 13, 2016). This approach allows for a “secular” approach to the term, very similar to *sumud*.

However, this tie to the land, when characterized through *ribat*, is usually rooted in a religious approach:

“It comes from religious culture, all the people of Palestine and the surroundings of Palestine are ‘in *ribat* until the Judgement Day.’ So it is like a privilege for people to live in Palestine or around it. Because of Jerusalem and the land of Palestine, the whole land is valuable for the Palestinians and the Muslims.”⁵⁴

This testimony points out one central element in the Palestinian *ribat*: it often draws on a recurring expression, a well-known sentence that calls upon the Palestinian Muslims to be “in *ribat* until the Judgment day, in Jerusalem and around Jerusalem” (*‘fi ribat hata yom al-Din,*⁵⁵ *fi Bayt al-Maqdis w aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis*). Although it is widely quoted and recited by heart by many Palestinians, the origin of this expression is uncertain: it is usually presented as being from the Quran or the hadiths.⁵⁶ However, being transmitted orally, its precise origins is often unclear to the people using them. Scrutinizing the origin of this expression is interesting as it hints to a political process of appropriation.

A number of hadiths insist on the importance of Jerusalem and Palestine, on the necessity to practice *ribat*, and set out the “Judgment day”, or the “Day of resurrection” as the horizon for the Muslim mobilized to defend the holy land. One of the episodes that refers to a similar expression is often quoted in the religious discussions on the topic.⁵⁷ It is mentioned in volumes of some of the authors of the hadiths considered as “*sahih*” (real, or “strong,” recognized as original), like Bukhari and Muslim, as well as in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

“Umamah Al-Bahili reports that the Prophet said, ‘a group of my community will remain on truth, they will vanquish their enemy and those who disagree with them will not be able to harm them until Allah commands.’ ‘Where are these people?’ the Companions asked. The Prophet replied: in and around Jerusalem⁵⁸” (Patel, 2006: 68; see also El-Awaisi, 1998: 54).

If this hadith does not mention specifically the word *ribat*, the hints to a continuous Muslim

presence and a fight around Jerusalem are considered as an equivalent; as such, it is often quoted to qualify or illustrate the meaning of *ribat* in Palestine in online forums, but also in interpretations or compilations of hadiths (El-Awaisi, 1998). Another interesting mention of *ribat* connected to Palestine – but without mention of the Judgment day – can be found in al-Tabarani's *Mu`jam al-Kabir*:

“The messengers of Allah said regarding the inhabitants of the Blessed Land, “they and their wives, children and slaves, are in *ribat* in the cause of Allah” (Patel, 2006: 70).

One hypothesis can be advanced here regarding the phrasing commonly recited by the Palestinians, mentioning “*ribat* in Jerusalem and around Jerusalem until the Judgment day.” This precise wording, well known but which the sheikhs and scholars consulted could not trace to a precise hadith, either “*sahih*” (real, or “strong,” recognized as original) or “*de’if*” (weak), corresponds to an element of language often used by Yasser Arafat. Many interviewees indeed insisted on the fact that this sentence had been played over and over again on the Palestinian media, making it an unmissable reference for the Palestinians, a fact also signalled by Long (2009). Some videos which can be found on the internet testify that the Palestinian leader indeed used to quote this exact sentence:

“Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: ‘There is still a group of my people protecting their religion; those people have victory on their enemies and are not hurt by those who disagree with them and they stay like this until God’s commandment comes. They asked the Prophet: ‘where are these peoples?’ The Prophet said: ‘in Jerusalem and around Jerusalem, and they are in *ribat* until the Judgment day.’”⁵⁹

An in-depth research in the Palestinian media looking for such occurrences would be interesting, to show the frequency at which the term was used in the public discourse, and study how elements of religious discourse have been mediated and adapted to the reality and needs of the political situation, giving a contemporary meaning to *ribat* as an activity. Other occurrences should be explored as well, as references to *ribat* could already be found in the leaflets distributed by Hamas during the first Intifada. Furthermore, the northern branch of the Islamic movement in Israel and its leader, Sheikh Ra’ed Salah, made *ribat* a central reference of their actions in the years 2010s: often employed in Salah’s Friday sermons, it was also instrumental in the campaign to “save Al-Aqsa.”

For Islam, Jerusalem is the third holiest place after Mecca and Medina. It is believed to have been indicated by the Prophet as the first Qibla (the direction of prayer), before it was changed for Mecca; it is also the arrival point of Muhammad’s night journey on the Buraq (a mythical winged creature) and the departure of his trip to heaven. Moreover, Jerusalem and Palestine are also believed to be the lands from which people will ascend on Judgment day.⁶⁰ Al-Aqsa thus represents the central sacred place for Palestinian Muslims, and as a consequence the epicentre of the *ribat*. By extension, the whole city of Jerusalem is considered to be holy; as the Quran indicates (17: 1) “Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs” (Nasr, 2017). The mosque, as well as the whole esplanade and the city of Jerusalem, are thus the places that should be defended through *ribat*.

In his book, *The Palestinian identity*, Rashid Khalidi insists on the importance of Jerusalem: the term of ribat is never explicitly mentioned, but parts of his analysis denote the same principles. He indeed asserts that the city “must be built up and populated if Jerusalem were to be defended against the covetousness of these external enemies.” He also underlines the existence of a “long-standing attitudes of concern for the city of Jerusalem and for Palestine as a sacred entity which were a response to perceived external threat” (Khalidi, 1997: 30).

The extension of the area “around Jerusalem,” designated as the land where people perform ribat, is another element that was a subject of speculation on the part of many of the Palestinians interviewed. The general consensus is that those “surroundings” most certainly encompass the whole of historical Palestine. A judge from the Sharia court of Jerusalem for example linked this sentence to Palestine and to the Palestinian struggle in general:

“Jerusalem was and still is a place of protection and care in the eyes of Muslims, and there is a strong connection between ribat, Jerusalem and Palestine, as in Islam, ribat reflects the protection of threatened lands.”⁶¹

Some Palestinians consider that the “surroundings” designate the whole area of Bilad ash-Sham, or “Greater Syria,” thus adding Lebanon, Syria and Jordan as external marches protecting Jerusalem.

The definition of ribat appears to be a fascinating and dynamic mosaic of various understandings that are reconfigured and recomposed according to the time and space in which they are inscribed; they have a common basis in the defense of Muslim lands and in the establishment of a presence in particular places in order to carry out this defense. The practice itself, the means used and the location, are elements that might vary. In Palestine, people do not refer to this wide acceptance of the term, but present it as being used strictly in relation to Palestine and Jerusalem:

“So al-ribat or al-sumud it is the same, it means you stay. Ribat, to stay even if you are in danger, and you stay in your position. Like the hadith about here says, the land which is closed to the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa, it is the land of ribat. So ribat, to tie yourself to your land.”⁶²

The filiation of the Palestinian use of ribat with the historic understanding of the term and that of radical Islam, is thus very clear, even if it is not presented in this way on the ground.

Palestine as “ard al-ribat” and the Silwanese as the core of the “ahl ribat”

The case of Silwan is particularly interesting and revealing in the study of Palestinian ribat, as many of the Silwanese interviewed quoted ribat instead of – or as a complement to – sumud. The notion appears to be central to the Silwanese identity and mobilization. In fact, it highlights two elements of which the Silwanese are particularly proud: their geographical location, directly on the outskirts of the old city and under the Al-Aqsa mosque, and their spirit of resistance and dedication to the city: “It is like a tree: there are the roots... Silwan is the roots of the old city. Without Silwan there is no old city.”⁶³ Many interviewees expressed this double particularity of Silwan:

“In Islam, God says about us in Jerusalem “ribat,” it means we are staying here whatever

happens, until the Judgment day. It is specifically about Jerusalem, people who live in Jerusalem.”⁶⁴

“People who are living Jerusalem are considered as being ‘*ahl ribat*’ (the people of ribat) so if you go to Al-Bustan and you tell them: ‘your house has a demolition order, your husband is being arrested, your children are being arrested, there’s no money, no one else’s working... What keeps you here? Why don’t you just leave, you are paying fines, it’s not easy, you’re afraid of everything, you don’t have anything like a normal life, what keeps you here? They will tell you: we were promised by God, by our Prophet Mhammad that we will have heaven because we are ‘*ahl ribat*,’ the ones who stand in Jerusalem... It is something people know, and believe.”⁶⁵

The prayer conducted in Al-Bustan on February 15, 2013 also illustrated the importance given to ribat in the local struggle and its being linked to a religious perspective: the opening words of the imam were “welcome to all, in Palestine, in *ard al-ribat* (the land of ribat).” During the sermon he then declared:

“To the family of arrested people, I say that your sacrifice will be for something, Allah will give you reward and the history will not forget you, because you are the murabitin [people performing ribat] and sabrin [people doing sumud]. You are always better than us because you suffer a lot. Palestinian people and especially Jerusalem people will defend Palestine. (...) To the Muslim people around the world, why are we defending Palestine and Jerusalem? (...) we do that to protect Al-Aqsa and we are suffering from the Israelis laws, everything is against the Jerusalem people.”⁶⁶

The onomastic and the representations surrounding Silwan are also very interesting as the names, nicknames and description used to characterize the neighbourhood corroborate the notion of an identity linked to resistance and Jerusalem, but also directly linked to the idea and practice of ribat. Sahar Al-Abassi, for example, affirmed that Silwan is often called “*Qal’at Al-Qods* or *qal’at issumud*” (the fortress of Jerusalem or the fortress of sumud),⁶⁷ and Jawad Siyam explained:

“Silwan was called in Arabic ‘*al-hamiye al-janubiyye*,’ ‘the southern protection of Jerusalem’ so we were always here in the front, protecting Al-Aqsa and the old city. (...) For us Jerusalem is up here [showing with his hands a high point to describe the importance of Jerusalem]. Silwan is always in our heart, but for us Jerusalem, al-Qods, is the most important... Silwan is called ‘*qal’at al-Qods*,’ ‘the castle of Jerusalem.’”⁶⁸

What Jawad translated as “protection” (the word “*hamiye*”) also means “garrison” in English, which is one of the words used to translate ribat in some dictionaries, and one of the meanings attributed to the medieval ribat found in the Maghreb: forts where military units were garrisoned. Whether forts or garrisons, or places where volunteers were stationed, they were included in a line of defence linked to a particular territory. In a similar vein, J. pointed out that as it is the village closest to Al-Aqsa mosque, Silwan has been considered as “the protector of

Al-Aqsa from the south throughout history.”⁶⁹

If the ribat is fundamental in the framing of the Silwanese identity and local struggle, it is also referred to in the other case studies as a component of a larger identity, Muslim, Arab and Palestinian, attached to Jerusalem, and a central reference for the mobilization. In Al-Araqib, Aziz explained: “ribat is special to mosques, and Islam has called for it in different ways. In Jerusalem, they are ‘murabitun’ in the Al-Aqsa mosque, and it is the place they are protecting. The Al-Aqsa mosque is the main target” (field notes, October 20, 2014). Haqma Abu-Madighem asserted: “I believe that in the end this land will go back to Palestinians, because it is ours and it is holy. I believe a day will come and our land will be liberated.”⁷⁰ She also explained, after being asked if she alluded to ribat: “of course we are in ribat, all the Muslims in Palestine are murabitun! Asking us to leave our land is like asking me to leave my daughter to the soldiers and letting them do what they want with her...” (field notes, October, 12, 2013). While the Bedouins do refer to religion and the sanctity of Jerusalem in order to assert the sanctity of Palestine, ribat is not integrated into the main narratives that they use to frame the local struggle and identity.

In Hebron, the term is slightly more applicable to the local context. Indeed, while al-Aqsa is the third holy place of Islam, Hebron also has a particular importance for Muslims, some affirming that it is the fourth holiest place in Islam. Zliha al-Muhtaseb for example pointed out:

“Here in Hebron ribat is linked with the Haram. But in general we forget about the Haram and we think about Jerusalem. When we talk about Hebron, all the people that live around the mosque are in ribat. But if we talk about Palestine, Jerusalem, all the people around Al-Aqsa mosque are in ribat.”⁷¹

Similarly, a young female student met in the city discussed the meaning of the term and explained: “I do believe in it: we will be rewarded for staying here” (fieldnotes, July 30, 2018).

The geography of ribat brings out the territorialization of faith, considering Palestine as a holy land, and Jerusalem – and Hebron, in a minor way – as the holy sites where the holiness crystallized, where it emanates from and is concentrated. This geography of holiness has a clear gradient, starting from Al-Aqsa as the main “haut lieu” and then extending to Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine. The Haram al-Ibrahimi in Hebron is considered as a minor holy site of Islam, but it still represents a secondary “haut lieu,” giving increased importance to the site and to the duty of resistance of the inhabitants. As with the “traditional” meaning of the term, that is, the way it is considered in medieval texts or in the literature on radical Islam, the Palestinian ribat is linked with land sacred for Islam.

The Palestinian – and especially the Silwanese – use of ribat is very interesting as it draws on numerous elements present in the historical and architectural conceptualization of the term; however, it is clear that it has been appropriated, adapted and included in a particular repertoire. Drawing on a well-known saying inspired by the tradition of the hadiths, the Palestinians consider that ribat depends exclusively on Jerusalem and Palestine, and thus on their persistent faith, presence and action: their resistance must be highly valued, as they fight not only for the land, but also for God. This notion draws back to the idea that ribat is a greater form of prayer and commitment to God, which will be rewarded (Long, 2009; Maqdsi, 1993).

So far, this chapter has set out some nationalist and religious representations central to the struggle, physically incarnated in symbolic local elements – that is, in the place –, but also

fundamentally attached to the territory, understood as Palestine, as an occupied national territory, or as the holy land surrounding Jerusalem. If the place is essential for the conduct and the practices of protest, the territory appears essential for its framing, from political, cultural and religious points of view. It seems interesting to confront *sumud* and *ribat* as two major narratives translated in practices, and to scrutinize their implications in terms of repertoire.

Nationalist and religious narratives: which repertoire for which geography?

The use of *sumud* and *ribat* in the Palestinian discourse and the inclusion of both notions in the repertoire of resistance are closely related, and often overlap. Both are based on representations and narratives connected to place and to the importance of the territory in the Palestinian culture and struggle for self-determination.

Both notions represent complete “packages” or “toolkits” for contention, as they designate at the same time a set of specific tactics within the Palestinian repertoire of contention and elements to foster and frame the struggle. However, while they both rely on similar principles in terms of practices, they depend on different choices and orientations when it comes to framing. Both *sumud* and *ribat* reveal a lot about the dynamics internal to the Palestinian society and to the struggle in terms of strategic choice and ideological references. They correspond to two distinct sensibilities: if *ribat* is clearly more religious, *sumud* appears as more strictly political. However, both seem to meet around nationalist claims.

As shown in Chapter 2, *sumud* represents an essential strategy in the Palestinian repertoire, relying both on practices and on a strong narrative centred on the importance of place. Referring to *sumud* thus aims primarily to invest the place with meaning, insisting on the possibility of a small-scale resistance, on the value of everyday life and practices, on the importance of the domestic place and on the neighbourhood as a scale of action. Also presented as a “way of life” and a “mentality that binds Palestinians together” (VanTeeffelen, Biggs, & Sumud Story House in Bethlehem, 2011: 9), it represents a way of relating to the space of everyday life. Anne Latendresse defines “sumudism” as a strategy that aims at the “preservation of Palestinian culture and identity” and that has become “a form of affirmation of the traditional virtue of rural society – attachment to the land, fecundity for women and self-sufficiency” (Latendresse, 1995. See also Yousef, 2009: 115). Beyond the place, *sumud* thus also draws on a territorial logic directly linked to the Palestinian culture and traditions.

Sumud is considered as a national repertoire, one “everybody agrees on, the leftists and the right-wing” according to Issa Amro, to explain the fact that Youth against Settlements favours *sumud* over *ribat* in its narrative:

“*Sumud* is something from the national parties, *ribat* is from Islam, it is religious. (...) We don’t use religion to justify what we are doing, so we use *sumud*. We say that some people are ‘murabitun,’ they are remaining and protecting their own country... It is as *sumud* but in a religious way. We don’t have religious ideology, we don’t want to try, to exploit any ideology, *sumud* for us represents everyone, murabitun and not murabitun.”⁷²

For some religious and conservatives actors, *sumud* is considered as too secular or even too heavily connoted as a left-wing notion (see Chapter 2). *Ribat* is favoured by the religious parties and devout believers as it conveys the importance of religious commandments. The concept of

ribat is presented as branching to core beliefs and commandments of Islam. As T. has stated:

“Al-ribat means just to stay. He [the Prophet] didn’t use the word war. (...) He used ribat. It means to stay, to be there. But you know, people always understand it in their own way. But I think if the Rasul [the Prophet] wanted to use the word ‘war’ he would have said ‘war.’ ‘They stayed in war until the last hour’... But he used ribat, to stay and it’s enough. If you stay it is enough, you’re doing something like *issahada* [martyrdom]. And if every hour you say: ‘I am here to be with the people who do ribat,’ it means that every minute you have something good from God.”⁷³

The Charter of Hamas for example includes a reference to ribat, quoting one hadith from Bukhari; “to guard Muslims from infidels in Allah’s cause for one day is better than the world and whatever is on its surface.”⁷⁴ It also states that the land of Palestine is an Islamic property (Waqf) “upon all Muslim generations till the Day of resurrection” (Chapter 3, art. 11, quoted in Maqdsi, 1993: 125).

Of course, the consideration of Palestine as a holy land does not necessarily dictate an automatic reference to ribat, but the lexical field used clearly points out to the notion.

There is thus an ideological distinction between both terms, *sumud* considering the territory of the nation, of the polity, *ribat* the territory intrinsically connected to Islam as a holy land, connected to the Ummah, the religious community. However, both have a limited span of interchangeability, as *sumud* can be informed by religious references, and *ribat* can be appropriated as a term going beyond religious beliefs. *Sumud* is sometimes presented as deriving from a religious commandment, the Muslim virtue of “*sabr*,” the patience and dedication asked by God in the Quran: “Allah is with the patient” (II, 153).⁷⁵ One sentence of the Quran (3: 200), associates both the ideas of steadfastness, patience (*sabr*) and continuous presence (*ribat*):

“O you who believe! Be patient [*asbiru*], vie in patience [*sabiru*], persevere [*rabatu*] and reverence God, that haply you may prosper” (Nasr, 2017).

These terms are rendered in various ways according to the translator, sometimes with expanding paraphrases for the term referring to *ribat*, making the association between the two notions more obvious:

“O you who believe! Endure and be more patient (than your enemy), and guard your territory by stationing army units permanently at the places from where the enemy can attack you, and fear Allah, so that you may be successful” (translation M. Khan).

“O you who have believed, be patient and vie in patience, and be garrisoned (i.e. Keep a standing army ready to defend you) and be pious to Allah, that possibly you would prosper” (translation Dr. Ghali)

Similarly, it has to be noted that despite this religious undertone, *ribat* was also introduced in the official discourse of Palestinian authorities, even if its main components are reputedly secular. Jawad Siyam, in Silwan, claimed the term for secular contexts as well, arguing that it is connected to the Arabic language before being linked to religion.⁷⁶

Associated to different spheres of reference, sumud and ribat have very similar meaning, and converge on nationalism, even if on different ground. This convergence of the political and religious position can be illustrated by a fresco painted at the entrance of Al-Bustan calling the people to “prepare” (“*wu’idu*”, see Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5 A graffiti in Al-Bustan with the word “prepare” written across a map of a unified Palestine. Picture taken on January 29, 2013.

This word, written across the image of a unified Palestine, accompanied by the depiction of a machine gun, is a quote referring to the Surah Al-’Anfal from the Quran (8: 60), calling the Muslims to “prepare” for battle, “frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy” (Nasr, 2017). This fresco clearly constitutes an internal call to the population to fight for Palestine, implying that it can be considered as a struggle against enemies as commanded by God. At the same time, the representation of Palestine shows a country with defined border, merging the representation of Mandate Palestine, the territory that was lost, and the claim for a future sovereign Palestinian State, the territory that can be. It shows how religion and nationalism are used as complementary narratives of the Palestinian struggle, with a different dimension being dominant, depending on the party’s or the individual’s ideology. The Charter of Hamas specifies: “nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part and parcel of religious ideology. There is not a higher peak in nationalism or depth in devotion than Jihad when and enemy lands on the Muslim territory;” “giving up part of Palestine is like giving up part of its religion” (Maqdsi, 1993: 126–127).

Sumud and ribat both show that the Palestinian repertoire is a “byproduct of everyday experience” (della Porta & Diani, 2005: 182), rooted in the presence and continuation of everyday life and practices, while at the same time drawing on traditions and notions that have long existed and have evolved in time. They are indeed both local modes of action relying on the individuals and the presence in place, attached to powerful and all-encompassing narratives. They both represent “significant examples of how the powerless and the marginalized can also employ their cultural and religious values in confronting dominance and uprooting” (Yousef, 2009: 115). Indeed, for both strategies, the need for structural opportunities is reduced, the resistance being a continuation of the daily life. The threats and constraints can neither stop the conduct of everyday life nor the practices of sumud and ribat.

Sumud and ribat intersect in their reference to the land, revealing the interrelations and articulations between place and territory as founding spatial references for the mobilization, both in terms of practice and representations. The reference to the land, in Arabic (*ard*) as in English, can indeed apply to different scales and levels of experience, to the place, the area where one lives, the zone one knows or owns, and to the territory, collectively appropriated and defined. Both sumud and ribat have this multiple scalar dimension, where place and territory coexist and coalesce and constantly inform each other, being sacralized at the local and national level for religious and nationalistic reasons. This sacralization of the land appears to be central for the conduct and the framing of the struggle but is also presented as an intrinsic part of the Palestinian identity.

The place is the main scale at which the resistance takes place and a central resource when it comes to the framing of the protest, notably through references to a strong “sense of place,” but it is completed by references to a larger scale, not so much of action, but of representations, namely, that of the territory. The attachment to place is indeed presented as ensuing from the attachment to the land, which produces a set of collective spatial imaginaries that are called in to nourish the sense of place, to characterize Palestine and to support the definition of the groups’ identity at various scales.

There is a strong and direct relation linking the scales considered here, the local, the regional and the national, meaning between the place – neighbourhood, village or city – and the territory. Territory and place constitute fundamental spatialities which contribute to the Palestinian identity and existence. Indeed, “for some there is a sense of attachment to land linked to ideas of home, locality and region,” but there are also “broader connections between land and national identity mediated through ideas of a national territory” (Storey, 2012: 11). In the case of Palestine, it appears that the connections between place, land, territory and national identity are fundamental; all those dimensions are integrated, referring to the idea of Palestine as a homeland. The examination of the narratives used in the three case studies shows that place and territory have to be considered together as they appear to be tightly co-implicated, informing and enriching each other. The place is represented as reflecting the qualities, meaning and values of the territory, incarnating Palestine locally, while the territory is also constructed through the “sense of place,” which reconstructs it through shared spatial imaginaries.

The territory to which the Palestinians refer is composed of several territorialities. It integrates the territory of the nation, Palestine, and that of a minority, in the case of the Bedouins, considered as an indigenous territory (see Chapter 6). It also engages the “holy land,” conceived through the spectre of religious beliefs, as well as the cultural landscape, which draws on the particular relations uniting the Palestinian people to a land. If they are interrelated, and reveal that the actors on all three sites refer to a similar set of narratives, those various dimensions are used and invoked in different ways in each site of contention as well as by actors who put the stress on the elements most relevant to them for ideological or strategic reasons. These different choices highlight different ways to frame not only the identity of the place and the peoples’ identity, but also different territorialities, showing that “territory is always being made and remade through processes of de/reterritorialization” (Routledge, 2015: 14).

The various elements evoked above as making up the territory all individually invest it with a sacred value; indeed, they come together to present the territory of Palestine as a sacred territory. The different dimensions designate it as a territory worth defending: for religious reasons, but also for civil, emotional and political ones, as it constitutes the space of the nation, but also a homeland sanctified by fight and sacrifice. It is presented as “al-ard al-muqaddasa,” the holy land, but also a land characterized by a familiar landscape, the land of the *fellahin*, of the workers, of the ancestors, the land where people live and grow up, made up of places to which they are attached, and where people cultivate plots and build their houses.

These various references to the territory are not only strategies to define and affirm the identity of the place and in so doing to frame the protest, but they also represent a strategy of reterritorialization in the face of Israeli control. As that control pervades not only the materiality of space but also the way in which the land is represented and perceived, with famous statements such as “a land without a people for a people without a land,”⁷⁷ it is seen as important to fight on the same ground and re-appropriate the meaning of space.

Confronted with the territorial control of the Israeli State and its various bodies, Palestinians focus on the place and the meaning of place as embodying the “spirit” of Palestine. In this sense, it appears that the territory, whether Palestinian or Bedouin, religious, nationalist or natural, is largely “imagined,” in the sense of Benedict Anderson’s analysis of “imagined communities” that represent the basis of nations. This is not to say that the territory is a pure projection, but that it is constructed through shared, collective representations. Just as people who do not know each

other create a nation, people who never debated their view of space share a common definition of what defines their territory: “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983: 49). This shared representation is one of the elements that binds the “imagined community” together, creating the nation or, in the case of the Bedouins, the group as an indigenous minority, and that establishes a basis for the contention. This imagined territory is in a way positioned outside of the possible sphere of Israeli control; it represents a reality that cannot be touched or altered. The territoriality as a “sense of territory,” rather than as a lived territory, seems to take the high ground, to be found and nurtured in these places.

The representations and narratives thus represent another tool allowing for the internal construction, of the protest; they also provide a resource that is fully part of the repertoire of contention, as their use corresponds to a definite practice. They indeed play an important role in challenging control and in maintaining an influence over and an existence on a territory, even if this is done symbolically. This way, the territory, even if occupied or controlled, is maintained as a central point of reference for the definition of the people’s identity and thus for the framing of their struggle. Representations and symbols are used to maintain and prove the existence of a Palestinian territory, composed of its landscapes and landmarks, as well as of many cultural elements, in such a way as to counter the ongoing deterritorialization and fragmentation, and to combat the fear of its disappearance. The representations, by affirming its transcendent existence, allow for the cohesion of the territory to be maintained and that of the community to be reinforced. It has a direct application at the local level, through a discourse concerning the local identity, the development of a sense of place, and the will to reappropriate, know and love the place, as incarnating a piece of the homeland; it is also a way to counter the Israeli hegemony, by not allowing the Israeli State to alienate the space and its meaning, or the memory that is attached to it. Claiming one’s attachment to the land, whether the national land or the local lived space, is not only an essential element of Palestinian culture, but is also an essential element in the repertoire of struggle applied to place.

Notes

1. The Palestinian Christians also consider Palestine as the Holy Land; however, the groups and individuals met and studied in the context of this research were all Muslims; as such, this chapter focuses on Muslim territorial representations.
2. Interview with J. secretary of Fatah in Silwan, February 27, 2013.
3. It is the case for both Christian and Muslim Palestinians, but we concentrate here on the meaning it has for the Muslim population, as it is the religion we have encountered in all three case studies.
4. Interview with Zliha Muhtaseb, realized on March 15, 2013.
5. “The criteria for selection”, UNESCO, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>.
6. Interview with Sheikh Sayyah Al-Turi, on April 9, 2012.
7. Interview with Aziz Abu-Madighem, on May 14, 2012.
8. Interview with Sheikh Sayyah Al-Turi, on April 9, 2012.
9. Interview realized on April 17, 2012.
10. Interview with T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Committee, February 18, 2013.
11. Ahmad Qara’een, resident of Wadi Hilwe and director of the Maada community Center,

October 28, 2012.

12. Interview with Jawad Siyam, resident of Wadi Hilwe, former director of the Maada community center, director of the Wadi Hilwe Information Center, November 27, 2012.
13. Interview with Issa Amro, coordinator of Youth against Settlements, April 5, 2013.
14. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
15. Interview with O. resident of Tal Rumeida, September 12, 2012.
16. Interview with Fakhre Abu-Diab, November 5, 2012.
17. Interview with Sahar Al-Abassi, realised on February 11, 2013.
18. Interview with P., architect and former resident of Al-Bustan, realized on November 6, 2012.
19. The video, “Yellow dream in the desert,” can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXLjevaw7cg>.
20. Interview realized on April 17, 2012.
21. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
22. The multiple meanings attributed to the olive tree in Palestinian art and literature is particularly well illustrated in the poem of Mahmoud Darwish, “The second olive tree” where the tree is pictured as a venerable grandmother who “lives as sister to a friendly eternity;” the Palestinians try to protect and avenge her after she is “crushed” by soldiers. One of her “grandsons” who is “martyred alongside her,” and is laid down in the hole left by the uprooted olive tree: “for some reasons we were convinced that after a while, he would become an olive tree, spiky and – green!” (2009: 107).
23. Interviews with Sheikh Sayyah Al-Turi, resident of Al-Araqib, April 9, 2012; Aziz Abu-Madighem, resident of Al-Araqib, May 14, 2012; Ismail Abu-Madighem, resident of Al-Araqib, November 13, 2013; O., resident of Tal Rumeida (H2), September 12, 2012; Fakhre Abu-Diab, resident of Al-Bustan, member of the Al-Bustan committee, November 5, 2012; T., resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Comittee, February 18, 2013.
24. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
25. Interview realized on April 8, 2012.
26. Interview with T. realized on February 18, 2013.
27. Note: Ibid.
28. Interview with Amani Odeh, resident of Al-Bustan, March 2, 2013.
29. “About Silwan”, Maada Creative center, <http://madaasilwan.org/en/1/2>.
30. Interview with Sahar Al-Abassi, resident of Wadi Hilwe, Woman and children coordinator at the Maada community center, February 11, 2013.
31. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
32. Note: Ibid.
33. Interview with Sahar Al-Abassi, resident of Wadi Hilwe, Woman and children coordinator at the Maada community center, February 11, 2013
34. Interview with Fakhre Abu-Diab, resident of Al-Bustan, member of the Al-Bustan committee, November 5, 2012.
35. Interview with Jawad Siyam realized on November 27, 2012.
36. Note: Ibid.
37. Interview with Amani Odeh, resident of Al-Bustan, March 2, 2013.
38. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
39. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.

40. “About Hebron”, Temporary International Presence in Hebron, http://www.tiph.org/en/About_Hebron/Hebron_today/.
41. Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey, 2013, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=en&itemID=1022&mid=3171&wverson=Staging>.
42. Interview realized on May 14, 2012.
43. Interview realized on November 13, 2013.
44. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in 1994 “for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East.” See the press release “the Nobel Peace Prize 1994”, October 14, 1994, on http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1994/press.html.
45. Interview with Sheikh Sayyah Al-Turi, resident of Al-Araqib, April 9, 2012.
46. The meaning of ribat in Palestine has been indirectly tackled in relation to the mobilization of the *murabitin* and *murabitat*, those Palestinians who were “doing ribat” and defending Al-Aqsa in 2015, but the focus of those studies is usually on the protestors and not on the meaning of the term itself; see for example Schmitt, 2017.
47. Al-Andalus designates the Muslim-ruled territories of Spain and Portugal, between 711 and 1492. See for example Guichard, 2000; Kennedy, 1996.
48. Sayings of the Prophets gathered and transmitted through chains of followers.
49. Abdulla Azzam, 1988, *Join the caravan*, second part, “Oh Islam!”, available on Religioscope, http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_caravan_4_part2.htm
50. The opposing ribat, Al-Mansuri, also comprises an engraved slab above the door, with the following writing: “In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. (...). There ordered the construction of this blessed hospice and gave it in trust [waqf] to benefit the poor and pilgrims to Jerusalem our Lord the Sultan al-Malik al-Mansur Abu’l-Ma’ali Sayf ak-Dunya wa’l-Din Qalawun al-Salihi (may god perpetuate his reign and accept [this work] from him) in the year 681” (Burgoyne, 1987: 129; Van Berchem, 1922: 200). See also “Museum with no frontier”, Discover Islamic art, Ribat of al-Mansur Qalawun, http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=monument;ISL;pa;Mon01;21;en
51. Interview realized on February 18, 2013.
52. Interview realized on October 10, 2016.
53. Interview realized on February 22, 2013.
54. Interview with Zliha Muhtaseb, March 15, 2013.
55. Or “*yom al-Qiyama*”, the Day of Resurrection. Interview with T. (Silwan) realized on February 18, 2013.
56. The Hadiths report sayings, actions, teachings of the Prophet, gathered by his followers and transmitted through chains of narrators. They represent an important source of authority in Islam.
57. See for example the prayer led by Ra’ed Salah on May 1, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5Kpn2Bk6D8&t=1249s>.
58. The Arabic versions of the hadith refer to “Bayt al-Maqdis,” which can refer to the complex of Al-Aqsa but also to Jerusalem as a whole, the latter being the favoured translation and the interpretation of everybody interviewed, the sanctity of Jerusalem being dependant on that of Al-Aqsa.
59. Translated by M. Nairoukh, emphasis our own. See for example

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSPcE9MUD1Y>. It was not possible until now to trace back the exact date and circumstances in which this discourse was made. See also http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=140&fld_id=140&doc_id=612&sort=d, November 25, 2003, Ramallah.

60. Extracts from a written statement. After the interview conducted on April 21, 2013 at the Sharia court, which was aiming at dealing with the religious references underlying the concept of ribat and its links with Jerusalem, the judge asked if he could further develop his response in writing.
61. Note: Ibid.
62. Interview with K. Hebron, on April 8, 2013.
63. Interview with T., Silwan, February 18, 2013.
64. Interview with R., Silwan, October 31, 2012.
65. Interview with Sahar Al-Abassi, resident of Wadi Hilwe, February 11, 2013.
66. Recorded on February 15, 2013.
67. Interview with Sahar Al-Abassi, Ibid.
68. Interview with Jawad Siyam, November 27, 2012
69. Interview realized on February 27, 2013.
70. Interview realized on April 8, 2012.
71. Interview realized on March 15, 2013.
72. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
73. Interview realized on February 18, 2013.
74. Imam Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.4, translated by M.M. Khan (Istanbul, Turkey: Hilaal yayinlari) p. 91, hadith no. 142, quoted in Maqdsi, 1993: 127.
75. See for example <http://quran.com/2/153>.
76. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
77. The first use of this expression has been attributed to several persons – among whom Golda Meir – and its importance for the Zionist movement is still contested. See for instance Muir, 2008.

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6 Globalizing

International networks of solidarity and advocacy

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This chapter tackles the strategies of active international networking employed in all three cases. The observations conducted on the field indeed showed that in each case study the protest is deeply rooted in place but also extends and develops towards the international level, through the establishment of transnational networks of solidarity and advocacy. It appears as a crucial stake for each movement to “globalize” the local struggle, meaning to gain visibility and support abroad, but also to export frames, discourses, knowledge and arguments about the situation they face.

Arguments have been made that Palestine is “globalized” and that the world is becoming “Palestinized” (Collins, 2011: x); I will show that the projection of Palestinian issues at the global level is an on-going process, and that, in the cases considered, it relies chiefly on the diffusion of place-based narratives in order to influence the international position on Palestinian issues, raise awareness and increase the international pressure put on Israel. It is paradoxically the place that retains a determinant role in this repertoire, as it represents the starting point and object of those networking practices. Far from being erased by the “globalization” of the contention, the local movements actively engage in multi-scalar strategies, scale shifting and international networking, “simultaneously broadening the scale of action while drawing strength from reinforcing the local scale” (Leitner Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 160), a process that has in return an impact on the definition, the practices and the framing of the local struggle itself. The transnational networking indeed represents an important attempt to “connect up territorialized struggles to broader global networks of support, action and debate” (Cumbers, Routledge, & Nativel, 2008: 184).

It is crucial to acknowledge that in each case study the place is inscribed in a complex network, a system of relations that connects it to other places, actors and scales: it shows that places are not bounded, hermetic areas, notwithstanding the existence of policies, representations and sometimes material settings distinguishing them from their immediate environment and territory of reference. Indeed, as asserted by Bosco, place and scale are now defined as being connected, but also “open, porous and networked, rather than as being fixed, essential and hierarchical in nature” (Bosco, 2001: 310). If this is true from a practical point of view, with the deployment of human interactions and the development of social networks through and around the place, at the local scale, it is also the case with the establishment of transnational networks aimed at developing solidarity and advocacy, beyond the local and the regional.

Two broad domains of application can be identified for this repertoire: communication,

notably through media networks and tourism, with the stress put on the need to increase international awareness. Indeed, the media coverage and elements of language used to present the protests, as well as the organization and development of political tourism, are essential in order to put the sites on the map – the region’s map, but also the world’s – to diffuse information and to raise awareness about the places’ situations, both in respect of matters of control and contention.

Local and transnational networking and scale shifting are strategies adopted by the actors of protest to bypass the constraints they have to face at the local and national level, in their attempts to increase not only the pressure placed on Israel by international actors but also the visibility of their own struggle. Scrutinizing these strategies will show that they remain fundamentally attached to place, being rooted and often initiated in the practices and representations used and diffused in the sites of contention.

I contend that the triad proposed by Lefebvre, presenting space as being conceived, lived and perceived, could fruitfully be completed by a fourth dimension, transversal and relational, taking into account the “reticulated” dimension of space. The notions he proposes in *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 1991) apply above all to the place, and less so to larger spaces. If Brenner and Elden contend that, drawing on his other works, Lefebvre can be seen as a “theorist of territory” (Brenner & Elden, 2009), it appears that the conception of space he advocates does not account for the distances, scalar configurations and articulations that characterize the networked spatialities of a globalized world.

Adding a fourth dimension removes the unbalance intrinsic to the triad model. It is problematic as it reintroduces a symmetry explicitly avoided by Lefebvre, who proposed three elements rather than two, as dualism “boils down to oppositions, contrasts or antagonisms” (Ibid.: 39). However, for the purpose of this reflection, a fourth dimension seems like a necessary complement to account for the spatialities of resistance deployed in the case studies. The relational nature of space, produced by different people in different places and at different scales, possibly according to similar frames or practices, with similar designs or temporalities, seems like a characteristic that cannot be overlooked, and which is not reducible to the facets constituting Lefebvre’s triad – even though they are themselves intrinsically relational.

This last dimension designates the space produced through social networks and through the articulation of different scales declined in the networks. Even if those concepts designate a very abstract and often virtual dimension of space, I contend that scales and networks must be added to the spatial dimensions studied in relation to contention as they connect various sites and dimensions of actions, relying on a presence and on actions in space: if they designate abstract connections and relations – the reason for which they have traditionally been opposed to the concept of territory in geography – scales and networks are nevertheless rooted in space and have as such a material dimension that needs to be acknowledged and scrutinized (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Lefebvre's triad with, completed by the additional element that is proposed: the connectivity between places and people, the making of networks

Perceived space	Physical	Practiced
Conceived space	Mental	Designed
Lived space	Social	Imagined

This fourth dimension includes the abstract facet of space created through reticulated relations, connections, exchanges and circulations, a space that is relational and communal, created through contacts and interfaces between different actors, perceptions and scales. Networks and scales can indeed be tackled through their immaterial and relational characteristics. Networks are made of connections and relations between actors: as such, they are intrinsically “communicative structures” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999: 90) which have at their core the exchange of information and services. This exchange can be established between persons, between individuals and organizations or between organizations (Bosco, 2001: 310). As such, they are “forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999: 91); a vertical dimension can also be involved as networks also connect actors through different scales from the local to the international.

It is important to acknowledge that places represent the nexus where the networks are rooted, and through which they are established. F. Bosco for example shows through the example of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina that the cohesion of the movement, despite the various groups being dispersed in the country, was allowed by place-based collective rituals (Bosco, 2001). P. Routledge also underlines that “space is bound into local to global networks, which act to configure particular places” (2003: 336). The definition advanced by Featherstone, who understands networks as “the overlapping and contested material, cultural and political flows and circuits that bind different places together through differentiated relations of power” (Featherstone, 2008: 4), is particularly interesting for this study as it points not only to the different nature of the networks, but also to their importance in reconfiguring relationships of power.

The first section of this chapter explores the importance of information and communication as strategies of resistance, showing how those strategies contribute to the production of space, with the sites of contention becoming nodes or platforms of entangled networks. Existing or newly-created networks establish a connection with “distant allies” allowing for “the flow of information, financing and political backing” (Nicholls, 2009: 78).

In each case study, the networking, the connections linking actors together, established at various scales, have as a central purpose: the diffusion of information, a central activity conceived as a fundamental strategy of resistance; it relies on an extensive use of media, and especially of social media, thus creating a type of place-based virtual network that contributes to the dissemination of information. The media and advocacy work carried out in the context of the three cases has to be taken into account as the information delivered represents a way of framing the movement and the situation on the ground; it aims at publicizing the existence and the problems of the place and, in this perspective, often relies on the presentation of the place as a “haut lieu” of resistance.

In addition to these virtual networks, the actors of contention also rely on the networks established by the individuals and the groups or NGOs supporting them, locally or abroad. Most of the NGOs working with Palestinian movements indeed include in their missions the observation and reporting of the events happening on the ground; their network of communication thus lays the basis for the development of strong transnational solidarity

networks, however with important discrepancies between sites.

In the second section, I will unpack another dimension of the networking, namely that based on human, face-to-face meetings on site, that I tackle as “political tourism.” Foreign delegations and activists regularly visit each site of contention, many coming explicitly to learn about the Palestinian struggle and see for themselves the situation on the ground. The various actors of contention regularly organize “alternative tours,” not only to present and explain the political context and illustrate the living conditions of the inhabitants, but also to facilitate direct meetings between residents and visitors. The presence of “internationals” allows inhabitants and activists to directly inform people, and to establish relationships that can be exploited at a later stage to diffuse information and the main frames mobilized to shed light on the situation. Rooted in place, those practices represent “multi-scale, network-oriented subaltern strategies of localization” (Escobar, 2001: 139). Finally, I tackle the international arena as a privileged sphere of action for activists and NGOs seeking support, developing the case of the Bedouins’ recognition as indigenous people.

Media and information as tools of resistance: from the place to the world

Networks are defined as “relations among actors” who may or may not be located in the same geographical area; as such, they represent circuits allowing the exchange of information (Olesen, 2005: 53). They put in contact “nodes in a discontinuous space” (Escobar, 2001: 169) and play a crucial role in the recruitment of activists and the formation of collective identities (Bosco, 2001: 307).¹

The concept of network must be tackled in association to that of scale, and more precisely to the scalar strategy of scale shift or “up-scaling” which represents the “ability to broaden the scope of contention” (Alimi & Norwich, 2011: 35). The connections and the strategic “jumps” linking the local and international levels rely on the cooperation of local activists and NGOs with international actors and institutions, and thus depends on the “scaling effect” inherent to networks (Escobar, 2001: 169). Scale is often invoked to designate simply “different levels of analysis” ranging from the local to the global, a “nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size” (Delaney & Leitner, 1997: 93), or is conceptualized as the product of social relations (Sewell, 2001: 66). This hierarchical approach to scale has been put into question. Leitner *et al.* for example define scale as a “relational, power-laden (...) construction” which represents a tool to claim, manipulate, challenge or legitimize power and authority (2008: 157). The literature studying scale shift in social movements often takes scale for granted as an abstract “degree,” a “level” of action, circumscribed to the local, regional or international echelons; I contend however that the vertical process of scale shifting is best tackled as a relational process rather than as a hierarchical one (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 159), as these shifts connect sites in a dialectical way, the verticality being completed by horizontal relations in place, conflating scales and networks in interpersonal relationships.

Information, social network and electronic advocacy

The networking relies primarily on the local actors: inhabitants and activists insist on the importance of reaching out to the international community in order to pressure Israel into respecting their rights. Educating and informing at the local and international levels are

considered to be essential aspects of the struggle, and largely take the form of “electronic advocacy,” with a fundamental role attributed to the media and especially to social media.

Communication campaigns are organized to challenge the Israeli *hasbara* or public diplomacy, deployed abroad and reproducing the governmental version of events. The international media is also heavily criticized as it is seen to commonly adopt pro-Israel stances, diminishing or downright ignoring the plight of the Palestinians and other minorities within Israel. The actors of contention thus insist on proposing their own vision, testimony or analysis of events, creating “rival communication networks” (Sewell Jr., 2001: 59) and actively countering the narratives advanced by the authorities or the mass-media. In so doing, they actively contribute to framing the struggle in a strategic way, relying for example on the symbolic meaning of place and the people’s sense of place (Bosco, 2001, 2006), thus furthering the production of space ongoing at the local scale.

The work on the diffusion of information targets both the local community and the foreigners, through “on-the-spot” initiatives like tours and meetings as well as via the intensive exploitation of social networks. This last type of strategy, defined as “electronic advocacy,” designates the use of “high technology to influence the decision-making process” or to “support policy-change efforts” (Hick & McNutt, 2002: 8). It can be paralleled to the intensive media campaign carried out by the Zapatista at the beginning of the 1990s, which made extensive use of the internet, a strategy that was designated as a “social netwar” (Ronfeldt & Arquilla, 1993, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 1998) or the “electronic fabric of struggle” (Cleaver, 1995) and inspired subsequent movements of resistance. The use of the media and more specifically of the tools offered by internet creates new “places” where people network (Harasim, 1993: 15), a “social space” that can “empower individuals” (Poster, 1997: 201). Although this use of space can be paralleled to that of the “public space,” where “space” designates an abstract sphere where people connect, meet, discuss and organize, these virtual spaces are rooted in reality, or can translate materially in the reality.

In Hebron and Silwan, the communication relies mostly on two local groups, respectively Youth against Settlements (YAS) and the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre (WHIC). They both enjoy major public exposure as they are central in the organization of the local struggle and receive an important number of foreign visitors. Both groups insist that the communication aspect of their work is essential. In Al-Araqib, while residents engage in diffusing information through their individual use of social media, the main actors of the electronic advocacy are the NGOs supporting the Negev Bedouins, primarily the Negev Coexistence Forum (NCF).

In Hebron, Youth against Settlements sets out that one of its main goals is to “raise the awareness level of the local and global community about the methods of land confiscation and theft from Palestinian land owners for settlement-related purposes,” vowing to inform people “through newsletters, advertisements, broadcasting footage, holding workshops and conferences and any other effective means.”² One of the main activities of the YAS activists is indeed that of documenting the infringement of human rights committed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the H2 area. This strategy has a double purpose: producing material supporting their claims and advocacy effort, but also allowing people to have proof of how events unfolded in the event of arrests or accusations made against them. The activists from YAS as well as those from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) circulate into the city depending on the events, trying to be present

and to record or take pictures in case of arrest, clashes, settlers' aggression and so forth.

The YAS centre is equipped with several computers as well as photo and video cameras provided by the Israeli human rights organization B'tselem as part of a project encouraging the residents of H2 to document their everyday life and problems in order to share them; the cameras also "provide a protective presence, contribute to deterrence and help to curtail violence."³

During clashes or arrests, soldiers often drive civilians away, whereas journalists are usually – but not always – allowed to stay. In consequence, in 2014, the YAS activists who went to film or take pictures usually tried to use the advantages attributed to journalists in order to remain on site. A set of strategies had been established to avoid their being driven away: members of YAS often wore a high-visibility jacket with the word "Press" written on the back, and presented press cards showing their affiliation to a group called "Human Rights Press" when soldiers asked them to leave. Although the origin of these cards is unclear (some members of YAS explained that they were provided for by a Canadian NGO), it would seem that the "Human Rights Press" was a campaign initially organized by YAS along with a producer from a Palestinian TV "on how to do videos, photographs, how to make short films, edit and how to put them online."⁴ Issa Amro further clarified: "The cards, we made them. (...) I know the law, you don't need a card to film, anybody can film, but we have the cards, we make it [look] official and everything can be fine with the backup of the Palestinian media" (Ibid.). He explained that those cards were made with the support of the Union of Palestinian Journalists, which was ready to back their claim of belonging to the press. The videos produced in Hebron are then broadcast via the Internet, and particularly on the Youtube channel of YAS (on the account named Human1Rights1Press⁵) and through the website of B'tselem.⁶

Youth against Settlements also has a website,⁷ which is not updated on a regular basis; it essentially uses Facebook to transmit information, through the page of the group.⁸ Without entering into a detailed analysis of its use of social media, a simple consideration of the number of people who have "liked" the page of YAS (23,445 "likes" in August 2015, 45,695 "likes" and 47,199 people following the page in November, 2020), gives an indication of the audience on which the group can count. Even if it represents only a vague set of data that should be explored for its internal nuances (followers of a page can engage very different profiles, including the activists themselves and their families, people who visited Hebron and were in direct contacts with the group, as well as people interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general), this data nevertheless provides a means of comparing the audience of the various groups active in a site of contention. For example, on the same date, the group Hebron Defense Committee had 2,212 members and the Human Rights Defenders, born from YAS, had around 3,202 "likes" and 4,593 members on their two different pages; this seems to confirm the status of YAS as a central actor and interlocutor of the Palestinian contention in Hebron. We could also hypothesize, although it would require a specific refined analysis of all contacts to be confirmed, that this audience also reflects the larger international aura of the group.

In Silwan, the WHIC has a website,⁹ with information in Arabic, Hebrew and English. It also has a Facebook page¹⁰ which had around 17,446 "likes" in August, 2015 and skyrocketed to 103641 in November, 2020, as well as a Youtube channel.¹¹ On both pages, local political news are published, as well as more general information about Jerusalem and the Palestinian struggle. The WHIC also has an SMS diffusion list, to inform people quickly about events and problems in the neighbourhood. Jawad Siyam explained: "to pass a message is also struggling. So we

make the communication to show the struggling. Today you can even go to YouTube and find songs about Silwan.”¹²

Al-Araqib, as a smaller reality with fewer residents, does not have internal groups or associations that represents the villagers, and relies more on individuals: there is, for example, no dedicated page on Facebook (only a public group called “Solidarity with al-Arakib,” which has around 220 members).¹³ However, people from Al-Araqib all publish on their personal pages daily pictures of life in the village, of demolitions and Sunday demonstration or of the groups visiting. The inhabitants organize, and work in tight relation with NGOs such as the Negev Coexistence Forum (NCF), which is the main portal of information concerning the village; its Facebook page had 2,422 “likes” in August, 2015, 7,880 in November, 2020. It also provides information on the unrecognized Bedouin villages in general. The NCF focuses particularly on the dissemination of information through its daily updates but also sends out monthly newsletters and numerous reports, often based on in-depth research. The importance of documenting first-hand the situation on the ground and giving residents opportunities to have their voices heard appears clearly in the case of Al-Araqib: the NCF has for example launched a campaign based on yearly workshops to teach children how to film and photograph.¹⁴ While it is not thought of as a deterrent *per se* but rather as an artistic and recreational project, it still aims to encourage children to document their lives and thus convey their vision of the situation. Evoking the project, Haia Noach stated during an interview: “we released two movies... The kids were shooting them. The one with the tree is very radical I think... And you can hear teenager girls talking in the village about wanting to be there and keeping the land.”¹⁵ The videos realized during these workshops, as well as other videos documenting demolitions or initiatives in the area, have been uploaded to the YouTube channel of the organization.¹⁶

The Internet in general, and social media in particular, allow the inhabitants and activists to reach outside their communities, to offer general information about the situation and their activities. It also allows for connections to be made at the personal level, for meetings and initiatives to be organized and common interests to be developed. Those networks involve family and friends, Palestinian and Israeli activists involved in various struggles and interested in the galaxy of movements and protests scattered in the region. They also rely heavily on the contacts established locally with activists and visiting groups, or on the basis of common interests or political orientation (for example, with journalists or political figures). As such, the role of political tourism and of broad communication campaigns to enlarge the public reached is essential in the advocacy and information efforts (see below).

This transnational networking is also connected to an important dimension of the local protest: the prestige brought by activism and by the contact with international activists and visitors. A real competition indeed opposes activist groups and individuals in Palestine, a dimension that is seldom mentioned in the studies of the landscape of protest, despite its having direct impact on the structuring of the local struggle, on the relationships that the activists have with the visitors and on the way they frame their activities and their conception of contention. The observation and interviews undertaken in Hebron, in particular, have shone light on the difficult relationships and various disagreements existing between the leading figures of the groups active in the city and sometimes even within those groups. As Hebron is one of the most famous sites of resistance in Palestine, the visibility given by the struggle and by the media constitutes a matter of competition. Accusations of corruption, lies and harassment, represent the “behind the scenes” of

the activism in Hebron, and appears to be particularly linked to the process of international networking, which represents, internally, a fight for power and prestige.

This “electronic advocacy” relies on existing networks of information, and on virtual channels of communication. However, it also draws on networks established by the actors of contention with organizations considered as allies, some of which are present on the sites of contention to show solidarity with the inhabitants and sometimes actively participate in the struggle.

Solidarity network and the challenge of finding allies

While Palestinian movements are aware of each other and are sometimes in contact, the difficulties of circulation, as well as the concentration on local issues tend to separate the existing movements and sites of contention. As a result, the networks established are largely international, for practical but also strategic reasons; international awareness – of the public but also the institutions – is considered as an essential tool of resistance to pressure Israel into changing its policies.

In addition to numerous Palestinian NGOs (Sullivan, 1996: 93), many international organizations are also implanted in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Some, like EAPPI and ISM aim to monitor the situation and Palestinians’ rights under occupation and have their own network of volunteers stationed in the main areas of conflict: these include Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin and Nablus, thus representing an organized and constant international presence on the ground. A few Israeli NGOs, like B’tselem, Breaking the Silence or Rabbis for Human Rights also intervene in the West Bank, supporting the Palestinians and exposing the situation to the Israeli society. In this respect the situation of Hebron is particular as a large number of NGOs and activists are focused on monitoring the situation in H2.

The international NGOs often have a double role; they maintain a presence on the ground, monitoring the situation and sometimes intervening in clashes and conflicts, and consequently they engage in electronic advocacy, reporting their observations through their own networks of information. While the number of individuals who are actually enrolled in these organizations and who are present on the sites of contention is in reality rather small, their inclusion in larger networks and their stated missions contribute to amplify their impact. John Collins similarly concludes that this international presence has “brought great energy and visibility to the struggles of ordinary Palestinians” (2011: 126).

The repartition and the number of NGOs present in each of the areas studied is very revealing of the attention given to them and of the role that international networking can play in the conduct and definition of resistance practices. Indeed, while several international NGOs are stationed permanently in Hebron, only a few monitors the situation in Silwan; NGOs rather pass through there on a more irregular basis. Al-Araqib has no permanent international presence, due to its size and its inclusion in a different regime as it is administratively detached from the logic of occupation.

Three international NGOs have a constant presence in H2, with volunteers stationed in the city who are active on a daily basis: the EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, which depends on the World Council of Churches), the CPT (Christian Peacemaker Team) and ISM (International Solidarity Movement). Israeli organizations, such as B’tselem and Breaking the Silence, have a different kind of presence on the ground, more mediated for B’tselem and punctual for Breaking the Silence, but they retain a central importance in the

advocacy against occupation in Israel and at the international level.

The first two organizations, EAPPI and CPT, primarily aim to provide testimony of the situation: the volunteers observe and report according to a “neutral mandate,” based on international law. B., a volunteer with the EAPPI in Hebron at the time of the fieldwork, explained:

“We work with the ‘protective presence’, we are in areas where people are harassed, where there are checkpoints, settlers, soldiers...We also do solidarity work, with families who are affected, we listen to their stories, we show them that people care, we work in solidarity with local organizations, try to give them more space to work in.”¹⁷

The “protective presence” is indeed one of the principles of action invoked on the EAPPI website as part of the key principles of “accompaniment,” the concept funding their model of action, considered as both theoretical and biblical, which “must combine a strategic local presence with international pressure in order to be effective.”¹⁸ The NGO presents its volunteers as “eyes on the ground,”¹⁹ an expression which highlights the power of physical presence and can be paralleled to the “facts on the ground” advanced by the Israeli governments to establish territorial gains (see Chapters 1 and 2).

The CPT has a very similar approach and mandate to that of the EAPPI. However, while the EAPPI claims a “principled impartiality,” a position of not taking a side in the conflict but rather standing “faithfully with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized” (Ibid.), the CPT defines itself as a “faith-based organization that supports Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it.”²⁰ One of the missions that these organizations commonly realize is the surveillance of the checkpoints in the morning, alongside the accompanying of Palestinian children to their schools:

“We stand there when the children go to school; we stand at the checkpoint, at the two checkpoints... Just to show that we are there. So that soldiers know, settlers know, that if they do anything, we take pictures, we are going to report it, people are going to know.”²¹

The ISM has a more radical stance, and the activists often frame the situation in more radical terms than the other NGOs, with a more openly anti-Zionist discourse. Indeed, the ISM was created with a view to accompany and support the Palestinians in their fight, and it relies on the principle of direct action alongside Palestinian activists. One of the ISM activists present in Hebron during the fieldwork explained: “ISM is more upfront in demonstrations, it shows presence.”²² ISM activists refer openly to ethnic cleansing, segregation, oppression, domination and apartheid. They are also encouraged to participate in non-violent demonstrations, “creatively disrupting activity by the Israeli occupation forces” (Ibid.), accompanying farmers to their fields or residing with Palestinian families. ISM activists are thus more prone to actively take part in initiatives; for example, after their participation in the demonstration organized by YAS on the occasion of Barack Obama’s visit to Israel in 2013, two ISM activists were arrested and deported.

These NGOs all insist on the importance of monitoring everyday life; based on different principles and modalities of action and presence, they all aim to try and protect the Palestinian

residents, and to improve their quality of life. For the NGOs too, physical presence is essential and is considered as a strategy of resistance and solidarity: indeed, the international presence on the ground and the production of external testimonies are compared to filming, that is, as a means to pressure and deter the Israeli soldiers and settlers in order to create a safer environment for the Palestinians. The ISM website states the importance of “personal witness and transmitting information” as a strategy of support, considering that “international presence alone can offer relief of day-to-day harassment and violence, especially when documenting with cameras.”²³

The central principle of these organizations is the diffusion of their members’ experiences and communicating about the situations they have witnessed: the volunteers usually make a commitment to report on what they see, either on the organizations’ website, via mailing lists or on personal blogs. For example, the ISM asks the “global mainstream media” to report more accurately on what is happening in Palestine, and asks their volunteers to “bear witness and return home to talk to their communities about what is happening.”²⁴ The EAPPI insists on the “theology of advocacy,”²⁵ and relies on the constitution of personal networks:

“Our main task is to do advocacy work. So we write reports to politicians, NGOs, journalists... It is based on our own contacts. So before we come here we contact people (...) We have two people from Sweden who have been really active in the church, so they take care of the church, myself I have an academic background, so I reach academics, one girl has worked a lot in the Unions in Sweden so she reaches the Unions... They [EAPPI] try to really have people from different backgrounds.”²⁶

In Silwan and Al-Araqib some international NGOs are also present and active on the ground. In Silwan, EAPPI volunteers based in Bethlehem sometimes pass through the village to monitor the situation; this occurred, for example, during the Friday prayer in Al-Bustan. These kinds of association are arguably less present and less active in Jerusalem, whose status is more complicated than that of the West Bank, which suffers from harsher restrictions. In the Negev the NGOs that intervened are thus mostly Israelis, and none of them are permanently stationed in the village.

Two Israeli organizations are particularly involved in Silwan: Rabbis for Human Rights, an NGO that seeks to “inform the Israeli public about human rights violations, and to pressure the State institutions to redress these injustices,”²⁷ and Emek Shaveh, which focuses on the political use of archaeology in Silwan.²⁸ Both organizations insist on the importance of informing the public, via social media and their websites, to offer insights into their position and their work, as well as reports and researched documentation on the conflict. However, their main activity in Silwan is the organization of tours, which we will examine in greater detail in the next section.

It is important to note that the relations between Palestinian activists and the Israeli organizations involved in Silwan are marked by a voluntary distance. The opposition to any action that could represent a “normalization” of the occupation and could legitimize the Israeli presence and authority over Jerusalem is indeed strongly opposed by the Palestinians (Halper, 2006: 48). The establishment of seemingly normal relations with Israeli actors or institutions is considered as an acceptance of occupation and the end of the resistance, and is often perceived as an act of treachery. The Israeli organizations thus remain external to the neighbourhood’s life, even if they have links with some residents and activists, for example, in Silwan, with the Maada

center and the tent of Al-Bustan. They are accepted as useful contacts, but are not integrated into the struggle and are not considered as direct allies, making coordinated actions difficult to implement.²⁹ Jawad Siyam explained for example that Israeli NGOs can come to the WHIC, which is open to all, but that no common activities would be organized with them: “We don’t do projects or partnerships with Israelis because we want to work for our society.”³⁰

In Al-Araqib, most of the NGOs supporting the Bedouin cause and intervening in the village are Israelis; the relations are however more pacified, and the topic of normalization is absent, even if the fear of collaborators remains present. Adalah, the Negev Forum for Coexistence and Rabbis for Human Rights are the main NGOs present on the site on a regular basis. Most of the work that is done by the associations in this case (in addition to the collection and diffusion of information) involves legal actions within the Israeli system, actions that often have an implication for the entire Bedouin community and not only for Al-Araqib. The presence of NGOs within the village can be very punctual, dictated by the events; they organize tours in the unrecognized villages and intervene to support the inhabitants in case of demolition. The work of the NCF, if it encompasses all the unrecognized villages of the Negev, however, revolves a lot around the situation of Al-Araqib. The weekly Sunday demonstration is one occasion when Israeli activists come to demonstrate their solidarity with the village. Some leading figures such as Haia Noach, CEO of the NCF and the Director of Rabbis for Humans Rights often join the protests, with some Israeli activists from Beer-Sheva or Tel Aviv also participating.

This quick overview of the solidarity networks existing around each site of contention shows that a great deal of the action that is organized by activists and NGOs is conceived as being media-oriented. Considering the virtual networks existing for the diffusion of information and those established by the NGOs present on site which also concentrate on electronic advocacy, differences emerge between the three cases. Hebron attracts a lot of attention as a symbol of occupation in the West Bank. Silwan, which suffers from the ambiguous status of East Jerusalem, caught in the meandering of Israeli and international law between the West Bank and Israel, concentrates on the local situation, counting mostly on its own forces, while Al-Araqib is tied to Israel, and is included both in the networks supporting equal rights for the Palestinians of Israel and those supporting the Bedouins in particular.

In all three cases the virtual networks established for communication and information appear closely related to the social networks existing at the local level to organize the protest, directly linking the different actors together through co-presence and active cooperation. The solidarity networks established by activists and NGOs connect different scales, the local and the international notably, through the circulation of information, producing a space that is at the same time digital and social, a space of meetings, interactions and actions, where people communicate and organize face to face and through other mediums. This networking, I contend, actively produces space; a reticulated, articulated and relational space that has ramifications in the perceived and lived dimensions as well, as such networks contribute to the diffusion of symbols and representations and are rooted in the daily practices of activists and volunteers who establish and maintain them.

Organizing political tourism, spreading the narratives

The three case studies have paradoxical touristic profiles: Hebron is well-known for the tombs of

the Patriarchs and Matriarchs and has a history of religious tourism and pilgrimage, but the occupation and the reputation of violence of the city has drastically limited the number of visitors. If Wadi Hilwe is home to the City of David, one of the major touristic attractions in Israel and Jerusalem, the park represents an enclave detached from its immediate surrounding; thousands of tourists visit the City of David every year, but only a few actually see Silwan. Finally, Al-Araqib is far from any touristic site and route.

However, as renowned sites of contention they all attract a certain type of “involved tourism,” practiced by activists and people who are interested in experiencing the situation first-hand and want to “see for themselves” what happens in Israel and Palestine. This tourism, often fuelled by political motives and interests, represents a fundamental resource from a strategic point of view as it provides an additional way of sharing the place narratives and conveying information to the international public. It also facilitates the enlargement of the network existing around the sites of contention. This “political tourism” contributes to establishing the sites of contention as “hauts lieux” of resistance; the framing deployed by the activists strategically insists on the importance and the uniqueness of their resistance. In turn, the international presence and interest for the struggles also contribute to reproducing and reinforcing the narrative and place identity.

The “globalization” of Palestine is a process that can take on a shape that is the opposite of what one might expect. The Palestinian cause is widely supported in the world by different groups, with solidarity protests and petitions taking place around the globe; the globalization and intensification of contention and the increased possibility to travel abroad and exchange information also gives rise to new contacts, paradoxically giving renewed importance to the place, and more specifically, to the Palestinian sites of contention. I will show how tourism can constitute an occasion of reterritorialization, defined by W. Hazbun as the “increased relevance of location and characteristics of place for global economic activity” (2004: 310). While he rather concentrates on an economic perspective, I will consider how the reterritorialization occurs through the importance given to place identity and politics. Indeed, each of the sites of contention studied here are considered as symbols of resistance and have succeeded in becoming iconic; Hebron stands out in particular in this respect.

To complete the analysis of the networking strategies deployed in each site, based mostly on the extension of support through contacts abroad, I will also show that the public considered is not only international, even if it is considered to be the main priority; the actors of contention, and especially the groups of activists and the NGOs, also turn towards the local community, trying to develop a local tourism that could bring about renewed knowledge and awareness, as the attitude of large sectors of the population towards the struggles that are led in these sites is often indifferent or downright hostile.

“Be ambassadors”: the role of political tourism in knowing and defining the place

All three sites of contention have become, to different extents, iconic of the Palestinian struggle against the Jewish Israeli hegemony and control, and as such, attract international attention. Individuals and groups come to those places to volunteer, as set out above, and to visit and learn more about the situation. Of course, the number of visitors coming to each of these three sites must not be exaggerated, as tourism is one of Israel’s primary sources of revenue (3.5 million tourists entered the country in 2012)³¹. All three sites fall decisively outside of the main tourist circuits in the region, which often concentrate on archaeological and biblical heritage (Cesarea

and Masada for example) and natural attractions such as the Dead Sea. The main sites of tourism in the West Bank are Bethlehem and Jericho,³² which are considered to be important historically but are also considered as safe places to visit. The West Bank indeed largely suffers from the image of being a dangerous area, which deters a lot of tourists from visiting many places, including Nablus and Hebron.

However, a small minority of the tourists visiting Israel and Palestine demonstrate a particular interest in the Palestinian situation and the areas of conflict.³³ The best example of this interest is illustrated by the wall in Bethlehem, which has become a destination where visitors seek to witness and understand “the difficulties (Israeli checkpoints, borders and walls), and stories of suffering of the Palestinian families” (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012: 158). Passing through a checkpoint, personally observing the material manifestations of the occupation and their impact on the population have become fundamental experiences of this type of tourism in the effort to understand what the Palestinians experience on a daily basis. This tourism, which attributes particular attention to places of conflict, has been dubbed “politically-oriented tourism,” “political tourism,” “alternative tourism” (Chaitin, 2011; Clarke, 2000; Hazbun, 2004; Koenler & Papa, 2011) and has developed as part of “special interest tourism” and “ethical tourism” (Clarke, 2000: 12), which recently became a real market in the sector. This tendency already existed in the 1980s but developed especially since the second Intifada (Koenler & Papa, 2011: 13). While political instability usually deters tourists, some visitors also have a fascination with sites they “may have seen or read about during a period of political turbulence, which is now not dangerous and safe to visit” (Hall & O’Sullivan, 1996: 118). Tourism connected to conflicts and violent political situations, where visitors directly seek “the thrill of political violence” (Pitts, 1996), has also been tackled as “war tourism” (Pitts, 1996) and “dark tourism” (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012).

In the cases at hand, the broader term of “political tourism” better covers the different profiles observed and met on site: many visitors are sensibilized to the Palestinian cause and want to demonstrate solidarity but also to observe and learn about the reality of occupation in order to be able to testify at a later date. Others are interested in learning about the situation out of curiosity, or in the case of Hebron just want to access a site renown for its historical and religious significance but which is considered as dangerous. Various travel agencies specialize in “alternative tours” which include visits to the West Bank; these agencies include Alternative Tourist Group,³⁴ Travel Palestine,³⁵ Visit Palestine,³⁶ and Medji Tours.³⁷ The latter for example offers tours based an approach they call “dual narratives” or “multiple perspectives,” undertaken by a Jewish-Israeli and a Palestinian guide. The organization of “alternative tours,” which are not presented as “political” even if they clearly rely on a political approach, allows people curious to learn about the situation to travel with an organized and structured programme, thus facilitating access to areas that are considered as remote, difficult to understand or dangerous, and attracting people not necessarily linked to political tourism or to the Palestinian cause.

Other types of visitors must be considered: delegations organized by Unions, associations of solidarity with Palestine, student associations etc. who travel to meet the actors of contention, to witness the situation, to hear the stories of the inhabitant and then report about what they heard and saw. International volunteers also engage in “political tourism:” the volunteers of the various NGOs present in the occupied territories usually take advantage of their presence and of the contacts they have in various places through their organizations to circulate and go to visit the

other volunteers on their site, thus enlarging and connecting the networks.³⁸

Various political figures (member of parliaments, ambassadors and people linked to governments, for example) also frequently visit the three sites of contention in order to gather information and knowledge about the situation on the ground. They cannot be considered strictly speaking as “tourists,” but their programme and perspective in touring sites of contention are often very similar to those of political tourists, even if the impact and consequences of the trip may take a very different course.

Hebron is particularly concerned by political tourism: the city is presented as the place to see in order to understand the reality of occupation and the mechanisms of settler colonialism. It also attracts tourism for its religious dimensions, but also heritage, history and culture, with the famous old city architecture and the local handicraft tradition.

Groups often come with guides from outside the city; Hebron is one of the destinations proposed by the travel agencies organizing alternative tours, usually together with a trip to Bethlehem as part of a one-day excursion. Local organizations such as the Hebron-France Association for Cultural Exchange (AECHF), the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) or Youth against Settlements also regularly organize tours for visitors who contact them ahead of their visit. Other individuals are contacted through their own network, by word of mouth and by some hostels with which they have agreements (for example in Ramallah), which send them tourists interested in a tour, and in return take a commission on the price of the visit. Some Hebronites also wait in the market, the main way of accessing the Ibrahimi mosque from H1, for the people arriving without guides, contacts or previous plans.

These tours have a political tone, the urban landscape and the very conditions of circulation the visitors have to respect being moulded by political events and decisions. K., from the Hebron Defence Committee, for example calls his tours “resistance tours.”³⁹

The visits of Hebron usually follow a common pattern, combining a series of elements: the souk, the Cave of the Patriarchs, with a visit to the Muslim part, and some time dedicated to the Jewish part – often without the guide, as the Jewish side is forbidden to Muslims, just as the Muslim part is theoretically forbidden to Jews. Then a visit to the shops still open in front of the mosque, a walk along Shuhada Street – here also often without the guide, if Palestinian from the West Bank – and a stop in the glass-blowing workshops at the entrance of the city.

This basic tour illustrates the separations that rule and organize the area, and the various criteria at play: ethnicity, but also religion. Exclusionary practices based on religion blur the limits between religion, nationality and citizenship, following the Israeli approach on the matter. A sign posted for few years near Checkpoint 56 (now removed) for example indicated that access to H1 was “forbidden to Jews,” associating Jews of other nationalities to the Israeli polity, a position vehemently denounced by Jewish tourists from other countries. This assimilation between Jews and Israel and between Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians represent a subject of surprise for many foreign visitors, notably Jews and Muslims from European countries, who have a vision of their identity which is very different than that dominant in Israel and do not easily accept to be excluded from one area on the basis of their faith.

During the tours, the visit to the Muslim side of the mosque provides an opportunity to insist on the importance of Hebron in Islam and possibly to justify an Arab and Muslim presence, or sovereignty, over the city. Not only is Abraham, supposedly buried under the mosque, considered a prophet in Islam, but his presence puts the city at the centre of a more complex

cosmogony, directly linked to Mecca. A guide leading a group in the mosque explained: “Muslim people pronounce the name of Abraham every day in their prayers, not many people know it but many things in Islam are linked with Abraham. You are here at the place where he lived and is buried” (field notes, March 18, 2013). The figure of Abraham is sometimes called in to deliver political messages against the occupation: the same guide also pointed out: “Abraham bought this land, he didn’t confiscate it; he respected the land and the culture. This way there are no problems” (field notes, March 18, 2013). He is presented by the Palestinian guides and some residents as a wise symbolic figure who would oppose the wrongdoings of the Jewish people and the occupation, rather trying to bring people together (Lecoquierre, 2019b). Abraham is also used in the tours organized by the settler community as a figure legitimizing the Jewish presence in Hebron: it is the place where he is said to have bought land to bury his wife Sarah (see Genesis 23:16), a deed sometimes invoked as the first Jewish property in the region. The movie screened in the museum open by the Jewish community in Hebron in the Bet Hadassah compound, in H2, retracing the story of the Jewish presence in the city, argues that this land purchase was strategic and realized in order to ensure that property of the land would remain in Jewish hands (fieldnotes, August 2, 2018).

The visitors also usually take a walk, with or without the guide depending on his origin – Palestinians from the West Bank being excluded from the area – in Shuhada Street. The variations in the tours are largely reflected in the meetings organized with Palestinian residents of Hebron, as each guide or travel agency has his preferred set of contacts. A meeting with a “local” is presented and understood as being part of the unique experience of the visit, as a privileged access to the authenticity of the place, allowing the visitor to hear a first-hand account of the residents’ living conditions. The local interlocutor(s) insists on different aspects of the resistance and of the local life depending on his or her affiliation: for example, people involved in YAS present the initiatives they organize and their vision of resistance, as well as the problems they face with the settlers, while the HRC insists on its activity of renovation as a key to the renewal of the old city.

Another important presence for political tourism in Hebron is that of Breaking the Silence, an Israeli organisation which gathers the testimonies of Israeli soldiers about the reality of their time in the army as part of a military occupation. In addition to the primary task of collecting information and reliable testimonies, they also provide guided tours of Hebron and the South Hebron Hills, their main goal being to reach out to the Israeli public to show “the real face of occupation.”⁴⁰

These tours generally provide means to inform and advocate for support from the international community; they rely on and diffuse specific frames about the local situation, in a real “battle of narratives” (Lecoquierre, 2019a). The places to which the groups are taken and the people that they meet can thus represent strategic choices according to the image one wants to impress upon the visitors. Z., who owns a shop in the old city and often talks to tourists, pointing the fence that towers above his shop to protect it from the objects that settlers throw underneath, explained:

“From all over the world a lot of visitors come to Hebron. Photographers, people who are interested to know more about the situation. And we tell them to talk about us back home, to be on our side, to support us. This is important because the media are not with us. A lot of internationals don’t know much about the situation unless they come down here. And when

they come here and they see the facts with their eyes they can go back home and tell people the truth.”⁴¹

The presence of visitors, and especially of foreign tourists, both on the Palestinian and Israeli sides, represents moments of choice for the communities, who claim to show the reality on the ground, as they decide how to present themselves to the outside world. The shared experience, and the possibility for the foreign visitors to briefly appropriate the gaze and understand the position of the Palestinians, dictates that the visits of international visitors are considered as “powerful political weapons” (Clarke, 2000: 17).

The diffusion of information, alongside advocacy, are two crucial dimensions of political activism in Hebron, and are at the centre of a battle between the two communities that fight for the old city. The signs put up on Zliha Muhtaseb’s balcony, which denounce apartheid (see Figure 2.7 in Chapter 2), do not enjoy the same visibility as the signs put up by the Jewish community along Shuhada Street since 2011 (see Figure 6.1). They clearly aim to reach out to visitors, including the “political tourists” and those participating in the information tours, justifying the closure of the street and its being forbidden to Palestinians. They aim to present a narrative that is different to that of the guides and the inhabitants of the areas, and thus represent an effort to impose a different reading of space; they represent a “counter-frame” advanced by the Israeli settlers of Hebron, implicitly underlining the importance of Palestinian actions and of the political tours in raising awareness. Since 2016, many other signs indicating Jewish sites in H2 have been installed, as well as new street names, which all reshape the city and produce a space that is in keeping with the claimed Jewish sovereignty over the old city (see Chapter 2, and Lecoquierre, 2019b).



לאחר יישום "הסכם חברון" ב-1997 הותרה נוכחות יהודים בחברון רק ברחוב אחד, באורך כקילומטר אחד, בעיר העתיקה. בספט' 2000 פתחו ערבים במתקפת טרור על התושבים והמבקרים היהודים. אחרי פיגועים ונכגעים רבים נסגרו חנויות הערבים ברחוב זה והן הועברו לאזור המסחרי הגדול והמשגשג במרכז העיר.

After signing the Hebron Accords in 1997, Hebron was divided, leaving Jews with access to 3% of the city. Jews were restricted to only one street, one kilometer long. In September 2000, Arabs launched the 'Oslo War' (aka The Second Intifada), a terror war against Hebron's Jewish residents and visitors. Following numerous attacks and casualties, these stores were closed by military orders for security reasons. Large, thriving commercial and shopping centers, off-limits to Jews, are open in the Arab part of the city.



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Figure 6.1 One of the signs put by the Jewish community of Hebron in Shuhada Street. Picture taken on March 26, 2012.

Palestinian activists and residents redesign the space of the old city through the use of symbols, discourse, frames and particular narratives. While these elements are part of the practices of resistance that they deploy on a daily basis, they are also given particular importance when talking to visitors: the engagement of elements of language, such as using the name “Israel Offence Forces” instead of “Israel Defence Forces” for the army, aims to assert their opposition and remind people of the reality of the occupation, but also to counter one common Israeli representation, that depicts the IDF as “the most moral army in the world.” In so doing, they produce and propose a frame through which Hebron can be considered and understood, hoping these frames will be re-used later in.

Political tourism extends beyond a sole interest in the conflict and the occupation of the West Bank, as the case of Al-Araqib shows; the mechanisms of this “special interest tourism” are the same, which is to say that the visitors are largely driven by the injustice of a situation. The case of the Bedouins has become more exposed in recent years with a series of political decisions such as the Praver Plan, which provided that an important number of the Negev Bedouins, citizens of Israel, should be displaced; this has added a motive of indignation and of involvement in respect of political tourism.

In the Negev, tours are organized mainly through the NCF and Adalah, as well as by other organizations like Tarabut-Hithabrut, an Arab-Jewish movement concentrating on social struggles within Israel.⁴² D., the director of the Adalah office in the Negev, explained: “We meet individuals, groups, European parliament members. We meet ambassadors, and they are trying to pressure their governments to do something.”⁴³

In Al-Araqib, visitors are usually welcomed in the *shieq*, a tent where the men gather, installed on the ground where the village once stood in front of the cemetery; here they hear the sheikh and his son telling them about the situation and story of the village (see Figure 6.2). Their discourse is often focused on their personal story, taking a very emotional tone; it is usually completed with more technical data by a member of the NGO that organized the tour, who presents the situation of the unrecognized villages as a whole and the State’s policies regarding the Bedouins. The oral presentation can be followed by a tour of the village. Aziz shows the “material proofs” that a village was there even if it has been wiped out; he points out the relics of the houses, pipes, tiles, cables. He deciphers the landscape for the visitors with reference to the organization of space and the meaning of those relics, explaining where the houses stood, where the cattle was kept, and where the water reserve and the trees were located (see Figure 6.3). The highlight of the tour is usually the visit to the sprouts of olive trees that have started to grow again, a fact presented as a symbol of *sumud* and of the impossibility to uproot the Bedouins from their land (see Chapter 5). A stop is also made at one of the cisterns surrounding the village, and then at the cemetery. The trees and cistern are landmarks that support the discourse of the inhabitants, in respect of their traditional practices and their ancient presence on the land, showing that they lived in harmony with their environment. To each group visiting Al-Araqib, Aziz says in substance: “be our ambassadors, tell people around you about us, tell your government to make Israel stop killing us!” (field notes, November 9, 2013).

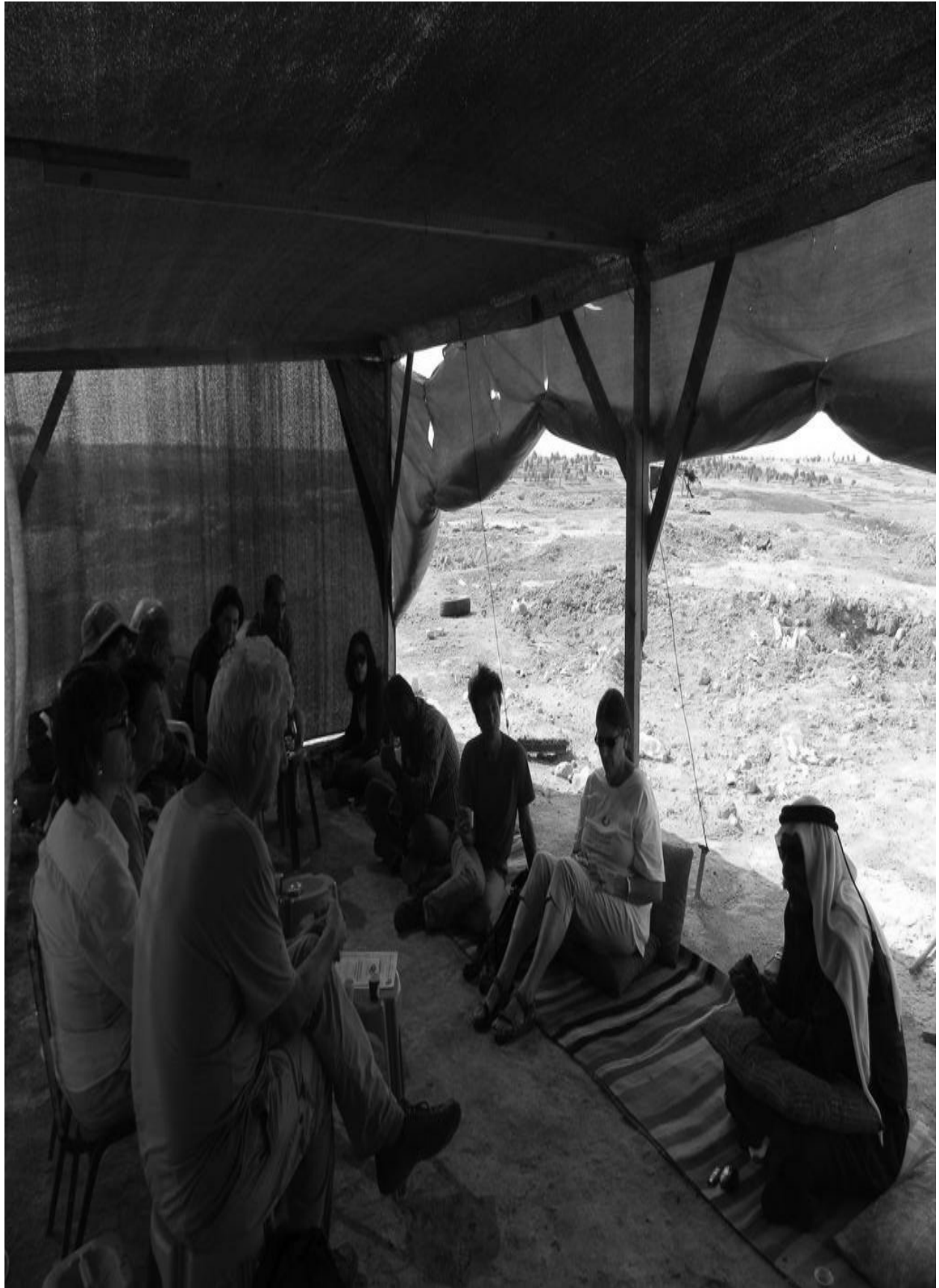


Figure 6.2 Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi and Haia Noach present the situation of Al-Araqib to a group. Picture on taken November, 2013.

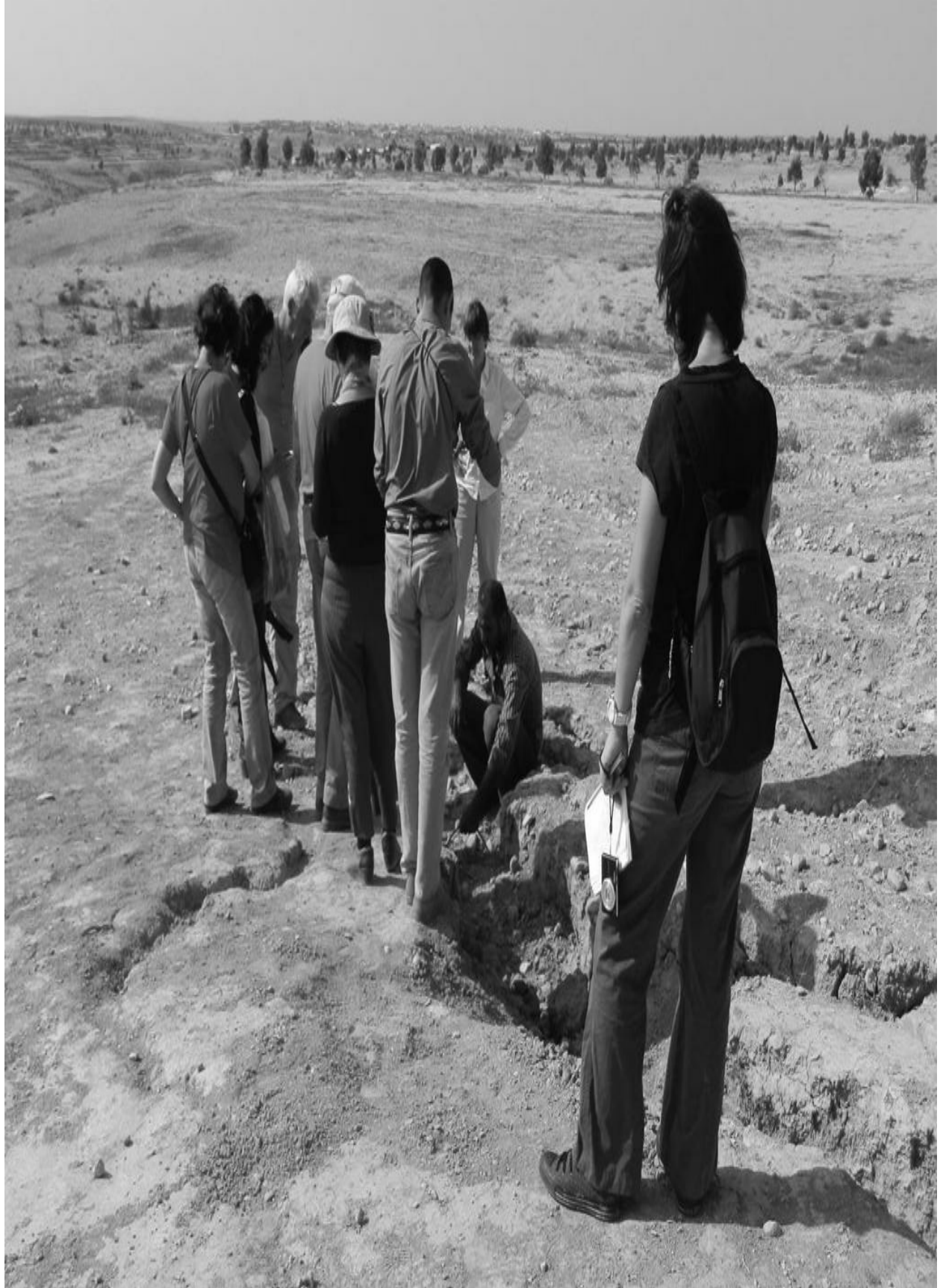


Figure 6.3 Aziz shows the visitors the site of the village and the remaining pipes and cables. Picture taken on November 13, 2013.

The information is thus transmitted using space as a medium: the space is the repository where the measures of control and repression are inscribed and can be seen. This is done in ways different than in Hebron. The inhabitants often have the role of deciphering and reading the landscape to make it intelligible for the visitors who do not have the knowledge that allows for an immediate comprehension of the events and mechanisms inscribed in space. This interpretation of space contributes to the production of place, it shows presence, rootedness and local knowledge. It also connects the visitors to the place, producing, enhancing, extending the network that radiates from the place.

Despite the place being much smaller and very difficult to reach without previously knowing how to go there, and the Bedouin struggle having less international audience than the resistance in the occupied territories, Al-Araqib still attracts a considerable number of visitors during the “high season” of tourism. Organized groups and delegations constitute the majority of the visitors coming to Al-Araqib for political tourism, while individuals – whether activists, volunteers or merely the curious – remain rare.

Adalah, for example organized a full day visit to several Bedouin villages for Hebrew and English-speaking bloggers on September 30, 2013. The bloggers were accompanied by a Bedouin employee of the NGO, who knew the situation from an internal perspective; they visited several villages during the day, obtaining first-hand accounts from inhabitants. In January and February, 2011, the NCF organized a series of meetings with ambassadors to discuss the issues raised by the “Ambassadors’ Forest,” planted by the JNF on the land of Al-Araqib.⁴⁴ The Swiss ambassador, Mr Walter Hafner, participated in a tour in the Negev and visited the villages of Al-Araqib and Al-Sira, meeting the residents. He then organized a study day on the Bedouins of the Negev at his residence, at which fourteen ambassadors were present; several residents of the unrecognized villages, as well as members of the NCF and other NGOs for human rights, also participated. In 2012 and 2013, other ambassadors from Great Britain, France and South Africa made field trips in the Negev, meeting members of the NCF and touring villages, including Al-Araqib (NCF Newsletter, 14th edition, May, 2011; 18th edition, January, 2013).

In Silwan, regular tours of the neighbourhood are organized autonomously by NGOs external to the village, including Rabbis for Human Rights and Emek Shaveh. Emek Shaveh’s tours largely focus on the impact of the archaeological excavations and settlements around the City of David; they take the groups for a tour in the City of David and show the resulting modifications to the landscape. The Silwan pool and mosque are shown as historical spots taken over or threatened by the Israeli presence. Groups usually stop at the WHIC, often to hear Jawad Siyam or Ahmad Qara’een, respectively responsible for the WHIC and for the Maada center, talk about the difficulties the inhabitants face in the neighbourhood; they then watch a short movie about the numerous arrests of children carried out in the village. The WHIC plays a pivotal role when it comes to information about Silwan and Jawad Siyam sometimes himself leads tours, giving insights into the everyday life of the neighbourhood, for example, with a stop at the tent of Al-Bustan or a meeting with inhabitants.

As Silwan, like Al-Araqib, is less famous than Hebron, it relies largely on media attention to increase its visibility and the interest of outsiders in the situation there, as well as in the

possibility to develop political tourism and extend the networks existing around the neighbourhood. The political tourism that exists in Silwan has similarities with that of Hebron and Al-Araqib; it depends considerably on local organizations and NGOs, as Silwan is not included in the main destinations of the “alternative tours” organized by travel agencies. Yonatan Mizrahi, who is leading tours in Silwan for Emek Shaveh, described the “public” attending the tours as:

“Mostly people who have an interest in the conflict, in archaeology here or in general, and Israelis in general, mostly left-wing but not only, also from the centre... But we definitely don’t have tourists, and we don’t want tourists.”⁴⁵

This confirms that the tourists visiting Silwan indeed comes from a specific type of “public,” one which is already sensitized to the difficulties existing in East Jerusalem; these groups are composed of individuals who want to know more and see for themselves a specific situation of which they have already heard or read about. A sign installed by the WHIC next to the entrance of the City of David to advertise the centre’s existence and encourage the people who come to visit the archaeological site to get acquainted with the surrounding area highlights the attempts to target and attract another type of tourists, those who do not intend to engage in “political tourism.”

The tourism in these sites is thus particular and generally has a political aspect. It represents an opportunity which “can be utilized as a political tool involving information gathering and communication of political activities on behalf of those trapped and brutalized by it” (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012: 154). Via political tourism, the discourse about the place and the presentation of the political situation can be perceived as being more legitimate and interesting and more authentic, as they come from the inhabitants themselves and can be directly illustrated on the spot: they have a weight and an influence on the representations and the understandings that people will have of the place. In addition to the actual direct experiences of the situation (passing checkpoints, seeing closed passages, hearing testimonies etc.), the elements of language used to frame each situation (resorting to the notion of apartheid or segregation for example) are also central to the message transmitted. Tourism thus represents a strategy of resistance which “expose visitors to complexities of life on the ground” and seeks to “convince visitors to advocate for and support peace and social justice efforts on returning home” (Chaitin, 2011: 40).

The tourists who come to visit these sites are considered as potential actors in the fight for power between the Palestinians and Israel: after having visited the places and having heard first-hand accounts of the residents’ experiences, they are expected to go back to their countries and share their experiences and knowledge of the situation. They are considered as a diffuse lobby which can have an influence on opinion abroad, through their own social network, their inclusion in groups or associations. In particular, they might also influence politicians through the organisation of protest events abroad, demonstrations and petitions.

Framing resistance as the place identity

Another narrative developed about the place, to encourage local mobilization but also to impose a particular image at the international level, is that presenting each site of contention as a “haut lieu” of resistance, showing that the struggle and spirit of resistance became integral parts of the

place identity. These representations and narratives are in turn reproduced and reinforced by political tourism.

A common strategy of these three places of high confrontation is to affirm that the identity of the place relies precisely on the struggle; each site of contention is being framed as a “haut lieu” of resistance. Each place has come to represent a particular aspect of the power relationships in the region, which in turn implies a different influence and audience. Hebron is a symbol of the fight against the occupation in general. Al-Araqib can symbolize the discrimination against the Palestinian citizens of Israel in general, and the treatment of the Bedouins in particular; Silwan represents the ambiguous status of East Jerusalem and the politics of territorial conquest and settlement of Israel.

Hebron is framed as presenting a unique spatial pattern of oppression and resistance, tightly linked together, which represents the reality of occupation. Three central elements of language are essential to the framing of the place: the uniqueness of the situation, the characterization of H2 as a “ghost town,” and the definition of the local reality as apartheid. The presentation of the city on the YAS website illustrates this type of framing: Hebron is presented as “one of the areas hardest hit by the Israeli occupation,” the settler violence having forced residents to flee, turning the old city into a “virtual ghost town,” while the civilians are treated “extremely differently solely on the basis of their ethnicity” which can be called “nothing but apartheid.”⁴⁶ Issa Amro explained: “here we have a special situation, there are streets where we can’t go, it is apartheid land” (field notes, March 10, 2013). Without necessarily mentioning apartheid, the residents usually underline this peculiarity of Hebron, a result of having settlers inside the city: “the settlers are inside Hebron, in the centre of Hebron, whereas in the West Bank you have settlements but they are not in the centre of the cities. Hebron is particular.”⁴⁷ Z., who owns a souvenir shop in the old city, similarly noted: “Hebron is completely different from any other city of the West Bank, because settlers live in the heart of the city, we’ve got four settlements in the heart of the city. Not one, four.”⁴⁸

The characterization of the situation as apartheid or segregation represents the core of this effort to share and diffuse a narrative. As shown in Chapter 3 the argument of apartheid is very debated when applied to the Israeli-Palestinian context; it is not even universally accepted among the Palestinian activists, as some consider that it does not describe the specificity of the Palestinian situation.⁴⁹ Some activists in Hebron use it as their main argument, referring to Shuhada Street as an illustration, going so far as to be arrested on purpose under the eyes of visitors to prove their point.⁵⁰ For the NGOs present on the ground, such as Breaking the Silence, the use of the term is too sensitive: most of them avoid it, often out of diplomatic concerns or communication strategy or because they consider it should be reserved to the South African case (see Chapter 4).

Hebron is indeed characterized first of all for its political situation, materially transposed in its spatial features; the occupation is translated there more than anywhere else through spatial measures of control. The military urbanism that is produced by the occupation (characterized by checkpoints, watchtowers and walls) is reinforced by an intricate mix of orders relating to movement and presence (see Chapter 4). The uniqueness of the pattern of control makes the place a symbol of occupation, which is presented as a unique type of response. The fierce resistance with which the occupation is met renders the city renowned, especially for the violent form it often takes. The discourses about resistance also insist on the centrality of sumud in

carrying out the struggle, explaining how it translates in the inhabitant's everyday life and how it relies on a continuous presence and a strong resilience in the face of the unending hardship brought about by the occupation.

Within this geography of resistance, the center ("*markaz*" in Arabic) of Youth against Settlements, the house where they carry out their activities and receive their visitors, located on the hill of Tal Rumeida, has become a marker in the landscape. It is common in Hebron to hear the centre being designated as "Issa's place;" the house is associated to the leader of the group which shows that it has become, at least for some of the residents, a familiar place. Even if they do not attend the center's activities, they still know about it and direct foreigners to it; this shows how the resistance as well as the development of political tourism polarizes the place in a certain way and sketches new spatialities.

Al-Araqib has also become a "haut lieu" of resistance. Even if it is less globally known than Hebron, it has gained a name, and became an "icon."⁵¹ The sheikh of Wadi al-Na'am, an unrecognized Bedouin village situated south of Beer-Sheva, asserted that people talk about Al-Araqib because of the existing networks of some former inhabitants:

"All the people in their local committee are academics. The doctor A., for example, was not only a doctor but also a public activist from before '98 and has been participating in all struggles in the Negev and he knows all the journalists and academic people. This way, through the people he knew, also from the Ben Gourion University, he managed to attract big attention to Al-Araqib, in a short time, 2–3 years only. (...) People from the committee went to speak in France, Switzerland and the news was spread world-wide."⁵²

While this statement points to the importance of the different actors gravitating around a movement, it also shows the extent to which the generation of media and international attention is seen as a fundamental goal and a resource for the local struggle. Al-Araqib is indeed the most famous of the unrecognized villages, and became in a way the symbol of the Negev Bedouins' situation, but also of the discrimination that exists within Israel against the Palestinian citizens.

Al-Araqib does not have remarkable landmarks such as the Al-Aqsa and Ibrahimi mosques or historical attractions such as the old cities of Hebron and Jerusalem or the City of David; these landmarks represent touristic attractions which underpin the renown of the place. It does not correspond to an urban setting, as is the case with Hebron and Silwan, as the village is small and isolated, and lacks infrastructures. Moreover, most of the inhabitants moved to Rahat, which polarizes the daily life (school, family, the market and so forth). In Al-Araqib, the village itself, or more precisely the struggle of which it is the theatre, is the landmark and the attraction by itself. Even more so than in Hebron, it represents the reason why people visit the village, and thus determines the identity of the place.

Indeed, the area representing the centripetal force, the symbol of the struggle, is what remains of the village inside the cemetery. Another focal point used to be the empty space where the destroyed village was located, another "center" polarizing the area was indeed, at the time of the fieldwork, the shieq, the only structure that was still standing on the ground of the old village and where people gathered. This landmark of resistance was always very ephemeral, and was regularly destroyed. These regular demolitions, which also prompted regular reconstruction, confirmed its status as a symbol of sumud and an incarnation of the place identity; indeed, it was

rather the idea and the meaning behind the shieq, as opposed to its physical existence, that represented such a symbol. The shieq was presented as such to the foreign visitors, symbolizing the inhabitants' presence on their land, their refusal to give it up as well as their attachment to Bedouin traditions. Its influence was nevertheless limited to the space of the village. The processes of destruction and eviction that took place in June, 2014, accompanied by the ploughing of the ground in order to preclude any new implantation on the part of the Bedouins, marked a series of important changes for the inhabitants of Al-Araqib. The shieq, notably, had to be reinstalled inside the cemetery, which reflected a loss of much of its direct symbolic power.

In Silwan too, the inhabitants frame resistance as a characteristic of the place's identity. The neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, located on the north of the old city, has similar problematics than those faced by the Silwanese (including houses with demolition orders and the presence of settlers) and has for a few years been the main "haut lieu" of resistance in Jerusalem due to an important mobilization that took place between 2009 and 2011, bringing together Palestinians and Israeli activists with important Friday demonstrations.⁵³ This mobilization managed to attract local as well as international media attention, and it quickly became a symbol of the non-violent resistance as well as of the possible cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli activists. However, since 2011 and the decline of the mobilization, this site of contention has lost its importance as a symbol of the East Jerusalem situation. It corresponds more or less to the period when the planning issues in Al-Bustan came to light and the problems with Elad and the City of David in Wadi Hilwe were highlighted (see Chapters 3 and 4). Silwan succeeded to Sheikh Jarrah as the site of contention at the center of media attention and representative of the situation of East Jerusalem and the fight of the residents. The neighbourhood for example made the headlines of Israeli and international newspapers after settlers seized several Palestinian houses during the summer of 2014. Silwan was presented on this occasion as a symbol of the policy of the municipality and of the government in East Jerusalem (see Chapter 3).

The Maada/Wadi Hilwe Information Center, became a central point of reference in Silwan, as a landmark of the local resistance. Maada is clearly more directed towards the local community: for some residents, like the group of women participating in the activities organized by the center, it became a primary place of sociability. Even if Maada is officially separated from the WHIC in order to protect its activities, they nevertheless depend on the same team of people and share the same building. As a result, they are often perceived as representing a single entity, which allows for the presentation at the same time of the political situation in the neighbourhood with the social work realized as part of sumud, thus producing a powerful narrative of resistance. The WHIC is situated a hundred meters from the entrance to the City of David and in the main street of Silwan, which connects to the old city; moreover, its location is publicized through a sign posted next to the entrance to the City of David. It is more visible, and more official than the tent of Al-Bustan; there is always someone in the building, whereas the tent of Al-Bustan is often empty, and the committee does not have a physical place to represent it. The Maada/WHIC center thus represents a political landmark both at the local and at the international level. The tent of Al-Bustan is also considered as a symbol of the resistance, but at a more local scale. Amani Odeh has asserted that the prayer in Al-Bustan "used to be every month because people were going to Al-Aqsa, but now it became a famous site so people come and pray here every Friday."⁵⁴ These two places represent new landmarks linked to the ongoing history of contention of the place, changing the local meaning of space, tying it to the struggle and turning this

struggle into a constitutive layer of the place itself.

In all three cases, the sites of contention became “hauts lieux” of the Palestinian resistance, which became a central element in the way the activists and residents self-define themselves but also frame the identity of the place. Not only their status of “hauts lieux” is confirmed by the political tourism developing in all three sites, but is also reproduced through this channel. Indeed, as the visits are mostly organized beforehand through NGOs, the representation of those places as symbols of resistance existed before the visits are actually made on the ground. The fact that it is framed as such by the actors themselves reinforces the impact of this narrative and allows for its diffusion; the process of networking and of the people who take the tours becoming “ambassadors” are significant, as these efforts are necessary in order to make the situation more widely known and to reproduce the frames deployed to explain the situation.

Political tourism is considered as an activity specific to “internationals;” it is important mainly for what it means in terms of increasing international awareness and potential pressure on Israel. However, the need to enlarge this awareness to the local community and to strengthen the local solidarity networks are also increasingly taken into account. In each site, activists underline the need to fight the problem of the sites of contention often having a bad reputation at the local level, but also of the widespread ignorance as to what happens there.

Developing local knowledge and Palestinian tourism

The inhabitants of these sites of contention all underline a paradox: on one hand, they regularly receive international visitors, who often already know about their situation, or develop a certain knowledge of the place, even if superficial, during their visit. On the other hand, some locals never visit and even more problematically, have no idea or no interest in what goes on close to their home. If these places indeed do have a centripetal force and attract international visitors, polarizing the local space, they also have the opposite effect: some people, usually part of the same community than that of the residents of the site of contention, are afraid or heavily suspicious about the people and events taking place in those places. The need to inform the members of their own communities is thus often presented as a priority for future action. As a result, some of the actors mentioned above try to develop this communication at a local level, and try to organize local forms of political tourism to develop their local network, enlarge local support and mobilize new recruits.

In Hebron, H2 suffers from a terrible reputation among the population of H1. The massive presence of Israeli soldiers and of radical settlers contributes to its reputation as a dangerous place. The Israeli control over the place and the many physical obstacles that one must pass to access the central part of H2 represent strong deterrents for anyone who might consider visiting the place. As most of the shops of the area are closed, many Hebronites, who do not necessarily live far from the center do not go into H2 anymore. H2 is considered by many as dangerous not only because of the presence of soldiers and settlers, but also because it is seen as a den of thieves, sexual harassers and drug dealers.⁵⁵ The drug and robbery issues are often attributed to the permissiveness of the Israeli authorities and is presented as a conscious strategy on their part to limit the Palestinian presence and activism in the area by fostering fear. Residents affirm that the thieves cooperate with the Civil administration, and that this contributes to pushing shopkeepers outside of the old city:⁵⁶ “Imagine that: a house in the old city gets robbed in front of the soldiers! Who is the one stealing? Of course he is a spy or he is dealing with the Israelis!”⁵⁷

Many young Hebronites who were born after the second Intifada have only known the city as a separated and occupied area, and therefore, they do not come to the old city. A 20 year-old girl met in H1, for example, explained that she used to come to the old city’s market when she was small but had not returned during the last six or seven years (field notes, March 4, 2013). Some young Hebronites have never set foot in H2: in March, 2013, a group of around 50 students of the Hebron University, who were participating in a workshop organized by YAS on the use of media, toured the old city on a Saturday and met with some inhabitants of H2. All of them were from Hebron, but when asked if they had already been in the area before, more than half of them stated that it was the first time they had visited (field notes, March 30, 2012). Local networking, information and awareness are considered as essential elements to develop, in order to increase the pool of allies and supporters on the ground. The effort also extends to Palestinians from Israel: the Hebron Chamber of commerce for example charters buses from the north of Israel to Hebron to encourage people to come shop in the city. If the goal is more economic than political, it also aims at normalizing the image of the city and attracting people from outside.

In Al-Araqib, and in the unrecognized villages in general, people underline a similar problem: many Bedouins are very suspicious about the villagers, and even openly condemn them. On

public transports circulating around Al-Araqib, many Bedouins have expressed fear or suspicion towards the residents' struggle and the reasons driving their mobilization. A taxi driver clearly expressed his despise, explaining that people from Al-Araqib were definitely supported and paid by the State "to make problems." Another common criticism advanced is that "they have a lot of money, they all have houses in Rahat: they chose to live like that" (field notes, October 15, 2013).

A common limit to the local solidarity is also the fear of reprisal from the authorities against those who engage in political activities; civil servants in particular are afraid to participate or even be present in such sites of contention, as they fear for their jobs.⁵⁸ On one occasion, while the sheikh was presenting the situation of the village to a group of Palestinian youth from the north of Israel, a girl whispered: "I don't like this discourse" and she left the shieq. She later explained that she was scared by the political tone of the discourse: "it is dangerous to be involved in political activities, you can go to jail, I don't want to get involved in these things" (field notes, April 10, 2012).

As is the case with the old city of Hebron, Silwan is largely considered by Palestinian Jerusalemites as a dangerous and violent place, plagued by drugs, both consumed and sold. Residents also accuse the Israeli authorities of turning a blind eye or encouraging drug dealing in the area, but also to orientate the consumption towards Palestinians, either in order to make them easier to control or to turn them into delinquents, while adopting a severe approach to the problem as soon as drugs are sold to Jews (field notes, February 8, 2013). Ahmad Qara'een for example asserted: "the municipality and the authorities need our children to stay in the streets, to go to smoke, to take drugs, they don't want them to learn or to have a better life. They want them to be stupid people."⁵⁹ However, in Silwan, unlike in Hebron and Al-Araqib, the need to inform the wider Palestinian community is not considered as a priority, beside the social media; as we have seen the focus falls rather on the development of the neighbourhood's life and the education of the residents.

These three sites thus share a paradoxical status: they are the seat of intense local struggles, and as such have become well-known internationally as symbols of the various facets of the Palestinian resistance, attracting political tourists and developing an important information network. However, they also suffer from a bad reputation within their own communities, one which is also engaged by people living only a few minutes away, often out of fear, indifference or ignorance. The attitude adopted in the face of this paradox is different in the three sites, although the residents underline in each case the responsibility of the Israeli authorities in producing and maintaining this state of affairs; indeed, it is deemed to serve their interest to control or drive people away, but also to avoid mobilization. The need to specifically act to inform and involve the local community is especially felt in Hebron; both YAS and the HRC have underlined that they started to actively work in this direction.

It appears that the processes of developing networks of information and international solidarity are seen as essential for the success of the struggle, especially to increase the global awareness about the situation and to put pressure on Israel. The media, the presence of foreign NGOs and volunteers, as well as the development of political tourism, all contribute to enlarge the network surrounding the sites of contention.

Although this section concentrated on relations and processes originating at the local scale, I contend that they create and reinforce the transnational networks that spread out around the sites

of contention, highlighting the other scales in which the contention is played out, as well as the influence that the exchanges with different actors and different sites can have on the resistance identity and orientation (Featherstone, 2008). It also shows that the production of space can be enacted and declined at different scales, in a relational way, through different types of engagements.

Entering and using the international arena

The Palestinian struggle has reached a moment at which the local contention and national politics are considered with disillusion. Although it is seen as necessary to keep up the fight – or the opposition – both are considered with resignation: the local struggle is deemed to be able to achieve only very little in the face of Israeli power, while at the national level, the Palestinian establishment in the West Bank is considered as a corrupted, weak power which works only for its own (material) sake. Similarly, in the Negev, the successive Israeli governments are seen as working against the Bedouins, with little possibility for any shift.

As a consequence, the international arena is considered to be essential to bypass or counter the limitations of the local and national scales, for international decisions or support can make a difference and potentially have a great impact. Beside tourism (see above), the actors of contention concentrate firstly – through a process of brokerage – on the transnational character of the struggle, associating with groups abroad, and forming a tight and active transnational network based on solidarity and advocacy. The contacts established locally with international activists and groups are complemented or extended by an intensive advocacy and lobbying work.

The networking is also made away from the sites of contention, notably exploiting the resources offered by the international arena to advance the activists' agenda. On all sites, the repertoires of actions employed comprise transnational strategies, relying on groups based abroad which organize initiatives to support the local struggle, and on the mobility of activists who travel to advocate for their cause, targeting notably international institutions, and resorting to tools provided by global governance. Some actors, such as the NGOs as well as ambassadors and representatives of the United Nations, are key figures who make the shift possible and maintain the links between the place and the global arena. Even if many Palestinians are suspicious about the international community's will or capacity to enforce international law in Israel and the West Bank, they still consider that international institutions are arenas in which they can bring their problems and try to make them heard, and sometimes get support and protection. I will unpack the way in which the international arena also influences the local struggle, through a top-down influence. In addition to the decisions that the institutions can take, the application of which remains uncertain on the ground, the very language and concepts used by the international institutions represent tools that the activists can appropriate and apply to their case in order to challenge the national authorities. I will concentrate here more particularly on the examples of the Bedouins' claim of indigeneity as being representative of this strategy.

Acting abroad: solidarity networks and international institutions

The international arena is used in two main ways, which prolong the place-based networking effected by the local organizations through various information channels and contacts with visitors, volunteers and tourists. The actors of contention indeed engage in conscious scalar

strategies in order to overcome “limitations of localness,” using in particular scale jumping (or up-scaling), which facilitates turning “local into regional, national and global movements to expand their power” (Smith, 1992: 160). By inserting themselves in transnational networks, place-based movements indeed increase solidarity and attention for their particular struggle but also become “linked up to much more spatially extensive coalitions of interest” (Routledge, Nativel, & Cumbers, 2006: 839).

In the three sites of contention, the activists work at establishing and maintaining contacts with foreign activists and solidarity groups acting abroad, encouraging and publicizing their action at an international level. The establishment of such transnational networks aims at facilitating advocacy, and are based on a principle of solidarity, meaning that the actors concentrate on similar issues and share “values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information and services” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 2). Such networks also allow for some activists to become themselves “ambassadors” of their cause as they go on “tours” to raise awareness, as well as meet other groups who organize presentations, screenings and other activities aiming to inform the public.

These strategies associate a scale shift with the transnational structure of pro-Palestinian movements, allies who share a similar goal but who also operate in other terrains and target different opponents (Tarrow, 2005: 122). Indeed, if these foreign activist groups eventually aim at changing Israeli policies, putting an end to occupation and advocate for Palestine self-determination, they often target their own domestic sphere, politicians and government, as well as international institutions.

The second way in which the resistance uses the international scene is through advocacy with international institutions. The contacts established on the sites of contention with various official figures (ambassadors or representatives of the United Nations for example) can lead to the formation of a different type of networking, relying on official contacts and institutional opportunities. This type of advocacy is also developed directly in the international arena, with activists or NGOs addressing the United Nations, the European Union and the United States for example, in order to try and influence policy-making, sometimes by directly participating in the process.

This strategy of scale shifting however also implies a shift in the actors involved: while the residents actively engage in local practices of resistance, and especially sumud, only a small number of them actually participates in transnational activities that rather depend mostly on high-profile activists and the NGOs. Some activists and residents nevertheless actively engage in the process as testimonies or experts.

Transnational network, global justice action

The transnational networks linking activists from different countries have been increasingly studied since the late 1990s. With various approaches or names, they are usually tackled in the framework of a global opposition to neoliberalism and capitalistic globalization. Some movements are considered as particularly representative of this type of struggle and even inspirational for subsequent movements: the protests against the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and more specifically the Zapatista rebellion that ensued, the Seattle events in 1999 opposing the World Trade Organization negotiations or the World Social Forum meetings (see for example Cumbers et al., 2008; Davies & Featherstone, 2013; Featherstone, 2003;

Glassman, 2001; Olesen, 2004, 2005). Tackled as the sign that a “global civil society” was emerging, and thus pointing out to a “shift in power” (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005), these new forms of “complex internationalism” (Ibid.) are studied under different names such as the “justice movement” (Beaumont & Nicholls, 2007), “Global Justice Network” (GJN) (Andrew Cumbers & Routledge, 2004; Andy Cumbers et al., 2008; Routledge & Cumbers, 2007; Routledge et al., 2006) or “transnational advocacy network” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, 1999) for example. All refer to “different place-based movements [that] become connected to more spatially extensive coalitions with a shared interest in articulating demands for greater social, economic and environmental justice” (Andy Cumbers et al., 2008: 184). This transnational cooperation creates new links between various actors of the civil society, individuals, NGOs, international organizations and States and allow for increased opportunities for dialogue and exchange of information, services and joint actions (Keck & Sikkink, 1999: 89).

This transnational networking implies an up-scaling of the protest, meaning the ability to “broaden the scope of contention” (Alimi & Norwich, 2011: 35), to “increase the geographical range within which [a group] can move, and from within which it can draw resources” (Glassman, 2001: 524). Scale shift has also been defined by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly as “a change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions to a different focal point, involving a new range of actors, different objects and broadened claims” (2001: 331), a process that includes several mechanisms among which are included coordination, theorization and brokerage (Davies & Featherstone, 2013; see also Tarrow & McAdam, 2005; Alimi & Norwich, 2011). All three appear as engaged in the process considered here, namely the inscription of the local actors of contention in transnational networks.

In all the three cases studied here, the activists have contacts with groups abroad who seek to organize initiatives to protest, inform or to express solidarity with Palestine in general or with specific sites of contention; they sometimes coordinate from a distance or participate in the initiatives in person. In the framework of this transnational cooperation, the local activists can indeed travel and “export” their struggle abroad by testifying as to their living conditions and resistance. From this point of view, it is mostly Hebron – and Youth against Settlements in particular – that stands out as an actor of transnational activism. I advance here the hypothesis – that should be further explored in a specific research project in order to be confirmed – that the contacts established on site with the visiting groups and delegations play a fundamental role in the construction of the transnational network. Few figures act as “brokers” between the contention and the international movements, connecting “two or more previously unconnected sites” to allow the circulation of information (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: 141): this includes local leaders, who enjoy a certain media fame and are recognized as referent or spokesperson for a determined site of contention, as well as renowned NGOs – such as the NCF in the Negev, Breaking the Silence in Hebron and Emek Shaveh in Silwan – and some exterior figures, foreign activists who have been implicated in the struggle for a long time.

These transnational contacts translate notably through the organization of solidarity events abroad and sometimes also joint events. The demonstration to open Shuhada Street is the clearest example of this “coordination” across different scales. Youth against Settlements has advertised the initiative over the years, with many Israelis and foreign activists taking part in the main demonstration in Hebron. The group has also requested that people from their network show their support by organizing events abroad or by participating in the protest in another way. The ways in which such support might be expressed have been set out on the group's website:

OSC [Open Shuhada Street Campaign] offers ordinary people around the world an opportunity to partake in something truly global. If you would like to get involved and organize your own OSC event or action let us know so that we can share with you the OSC Basis of Unity and organizing principles. Here are some ways that you can actively get involved:

1. *Demonstrations, Marches, Vigils, Flashmobs*
2. *Organize a film screening about Hebron*
3. *Arrange a lecture, workshop, Presentation*
4. *Organize a BDS action.*
5. *Join us online*
6. *Photo Exhibitions concerning Apartheid in Hebron*
7. *Twitter: Use this hashtag #OpenShuhadaSt to spread the word and educate the masses about Hebron.*
8. *Video Message: Create and send video messages to community forums, media and social media outlets urging the international community to use diplomatic pressure to re-open Shuhada Street*
9. *Letter-writing and Petitions to the Israeli Ambassador and elected officials in your country asking them to intervene*
10. *Write letters to the Palestinian Families in Hebron to show solidarity*
11. *Close roads to show the public the effects of closing the main road in Hebron.*
12. *Visit Hebron to gain an understanding of the situation and the daily suffering of the people living there.*
13. *Any other non-violent activity you feel supports the cause, be as creative as possible!*⁶⁰

This list shows the intention to coordinate actions and underlines the process of “theorization” at work – the sharing of a “core causal idea” elaborated into a “general frame that can be applied to other realities” (Tarrow, 2005: 122) – as it diffuses the frames that the protests organized abroad are expected to adhere to and present: the document mentions BDS (the “Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions” campaign), apartheid, non-violence and the closure of Shuhada Street, elements that are all central to the way in which the struggle is presented and organized locally by Youth against Settlements. However, it is worth mentioning that in this case of transnational action, the goal of adopting similar “core ideas” is not for them to be generalized and appropriated to be applied to other realities, as mentioned in the definition given by Tarrow, but to have the proposed frames adopted to designate the same situation, thus coordinating not only the actions but also the narratives used and exporting further the frames considered central to the understanding and analysis of the situation. The proposed means of action also underline once more the importance attributed to tourism, the diffusion of information and of the international pressure over the Israeli government. The networking implies a transmission of frames, of strategies of action and claims (Ibid.: 123).

The solidarity network built around Hebron is quite extended, as is illustrated by the initiatives organized in several countries to mirror and support the Open Shuhada Street demonstration that

takes place in Hebron, illustrating an instance of coordination, with planning of shared collective action and “cross-spatial collaboration” (Tarrow, *Ibid.*: 122). For example, an “Open Shuhada Street South Africa” page on Facebook was created, linked to a “South African advocacy organisation campaigning for human rights in Palestine and Israel.”⁶¹ In 2013, groups from Glasgow, Milan, London (Ontario), Rivas (Spain), Paris, New Hampshire and other places organized sit-ins, exhibitions and demonstrations in solidarity with the inhabitants of Hebron, showing their insertion within a solidarity network built around YAS and Hebron. Reaching a greater visibility abroad is seen as ensuring a wider awareness about the situation on the ground, and an increased momentum to put pressure on governments around the world. On Facebook, the page of the Hebron event has been entitled “Global day for reopening Shuhada Street,” a name which insists on the intention to make the demonstration and its message universal.⁶² The pictures of the transnational protests organized around the world have been posted online on the Facebook page of YAS, showing the support that it enjoys and the span of the network created around the topic.

Several of the activists of YAS have already travelled on behalf of the organization, mostly to Italy and Germany.⁶³ Issa Amro, considered as one of the key figures of the local resistance and of non-violent resistance in Palestine, is particularly solicited to travel and meet groups supporting the Palestinian cause: “we go to associations, we go to speak in public and we go for trainings too sometimes.”⁶⁴ He is also the main interlocutor of the international institutions, which represent another arena in which YAS actively intervenes. Activists from Hebron contribute to turning the city into a symbol of occupation in general, turning it into an international status with foreign groups and activists.

Al-Araqib and Silwan, as already stated, are symbols of more specific situations – those of the Negev and East Jerusalem – that are less known and as such resonate less universally among the global justice networks (Routledge, Cumbers, & Nativel, 2007). They also organize initiatives at a much more local scale, with which it is difficult to coordinate.

In Silwan, the networking is more limited in its international dimension as shown above, however Jawad Siyam, who is considered as one of the spokespersons of the struggle carried on in Wadi Hilwe, due to his media exposure, has also travelled to speak about the local situation. On May 15, 2013, for example, he was invited by the Association France-Palestine Solidarité (AFPS) in Lyon to give a talk about “East Jerusalem, Capital of the State of Palestine.”⁶⁵ The Bedouins from Al-Araqib also occasionally travel abroad for similar purposes: in November, 2011, Aziz Abu-Madighem travelled to Paris for a photo exhibition on the situation of the Bedouins in the Negev, organized by the Association France-Palestine Solidarity (AFPS) and Amnesty International.⁶⁶ The international dimension of the Bedouin struggle however develops especially in the institutional arena, which also implies a shift in the actors involved: the advocacy work and the networking activities are then predominantly undertaken by the NCF and Adalah. While villagers are included as much as possible, the international level raises some issues, as the head of an NGO admitted:

“It is really problematic because not a lot of people know English so it limits a lot who you can send. For example, to the European Union and to the UN committees it is very difficult because you want someone who will be eloquent and will be equal to the other people. The presentation is very important.”⁶⁷

Communication skills indeed appear as a central stake for this repertoire in order to engage and address foreign actors, but also to navigate the codes of social media and classic media. While the target of the claims may change with the scale shift, with foreign activists for example asking their own governments or constituents to put pressure on Israel, the goal of the contention remains the same; thus, the “shift” can be understood to focus more on the sites and the actors involved than on the object of contention itself. Such a strategy provides that the contention can detach itself from “familiar domestic structures of opportunity and constraints” and move to new terrains (Tarrow, *Ibid.*).

International advocacy

The advocacy engaged with international institutions is more efficient in the case of the Bedouins than in the other cases. If it is definitely linked to the choices and strategies deployed by the NGOs supporting them – especially by the NCF – by the tools provided by those institutions, the political context and the status of the residents; as the Bedouins are separated from the issue of occupation, which always implies a high degree of sensitivity for diplomatic reasons, they resort to other ways of framing their struggle, including, for example, the engagement of the notion of indigeneity.

Tarrow considered that “to come into effect internationally, scale shift must cross two distinct dimensions: the horizontal spatial divide between different political structures and the vertical gaps between levels of the international system” (*Ibid.*: 122). The recourse to the international institutions complements the media, the political tourism and the solidarity networks in the attempt to pressure Israel: the actors frame issues “to attract attention, encourage action and to ‘fit’ with favourable institutional venues” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999: 90), in so doing, they create new categories and concepts and gain leverage with governments and international institutions (*Ibid.*). It is often presented as one of the only ways to actually achieve results in terms of the protection of human rights. In the words of Fakhre Abu Diab: “we need pressure from all the governments in the world, from the international community, to make pressure on the Israeli government and the Jerusalem municipality to not demolish our houses.”⁶⁸

The identification and analysis of the precise mechanisms of international pressure and of their impact in relation to Israel and Palestine would require a precise examination of the spheres of supranational diplomacy and international relations. However, for these purposes and in the framework of this volume, the requests made and the official decisions rendered by various institutions provide good indicators of the role that local organizations and the international community can play in the struggle and the way in which they rely on certain spatialities in the process.

Similar to the way in which transnational activism is undertaken by a limited number of activists, the lobbying at the international level is done mainly by NGOs and by some leading figures of the contention; the large majority of the local population usually remains outside of the process of international advocacy. Such international action is however based on the local activities and goals of the NGOs, and as such, they act as representatives of the local population.

By 2016, the “exportation” of international advocacy to institutional spheres did not seem to be a prominent strategy in Silwan, which further confirmed that the central strategy adopted was one that concentrated on the resources of the place, seeking to reinforce the local identity and cohesion in order to encourage and strengthen the resistance. International advocacy is engaged

mostly through the place-based networking and information, but the recourse to international institutions for help, support and pressure is not seen as a priority. Silwan's location in East Jerusalem makes it a sensitive topic at the international level, as the status of Jerusalem is one of the main points of disagreement not only between the Israeli authorities and the PA but also between Israel and other countries; as such, it is usually left for the last stages of the negotiation process, making any international intervention complicated.

The case of Hebron is mentioned regularly in the frame of the international institutions; occasionally, the concerned actors make direct interventions in their forums. Issa Amro, specifically, testifies about the situation in the city, and is evoked during various proceedings on Palestine. In June, 2013, he participated in a side event held during the 23rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, during which he “presented the case of the city of Hebron as an example of the situation in Palestine as a whole.”⁶⁹ On August 14, 2013, human rights experts of the United Nations “expressed deep concern at the alleged ongoing judicial harassment, intimidation and abusive treatment directed against Issa Amro, a prominent Palestinian human rights defender.”⁷⁰ The members of the commission all expressed their concern about the situation in Hebron and in Palestine in general. Richard Falk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, specifically underlined:

“Mr. Amro appears to be the victim of a pattern of harassment that includes an effort to intimidate him prior to his participation at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in June 2013 as NGO representative where he delivered two statements” (Ibid.).

On March 6, 2014, Mr. Amro again presented a statement to the Human Rights Council, insisting on the fact that the inhabitants of Hebron were suffering “from apartheid, discrimination and displacement” and calling on the Council to “continue to support our legitimate right to self-determination and statehood by your prompt and effective actions.”⁷¹ On May 28, 2014, another communication concerning the situation of Issa was sent to the Israeli government by the commission, regretting that no reply had been sent in respect of the previous notification.⁷²

These successive exchanges show how international advocacy aims at obtaining international resolutions or decisions that can put pressure on Israel. It also aims at making the policy-makers aware of specific situations, through personal experiences. These examples illustrate how this type of intervention also seeks to diffuse or impose a narrative of the conflict, realizing, according to the language attached to scale shift, an attempt at the “transposition of the frames” (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: 123) from the local contention to the supranational sphere.

In the last few years, international advocacy has been more intense and more successful regarding the Bedouin issue. The case of the Negev Bedouins indeed seems to have a kind of preferential access in the international sphere, through the claims of indigeneity. Even if their claims are tightly connected to the settler colonial character of the Israeli State, it represents a matter of internal politics, separated from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The struggle for the Bedouins' rights relies on another strategy, corresponding to another narrative and thus to specific international forums. The fact that the Bedouins have Israeli citizenship changes the perspective from which they are considered; they can be defined as a minority within a dominant State, with a culture different from that of the majority. Their traditional lifestyle and claims on the land present the possibility to inscribe themselves in the institutional process of the

recognition of the indigenous people.

As shown above, the Negev Coexistence Forum is very active on the ground and operates to connect the local and international levels through a place-based diffusion of information, via social media and tours. The organization states, in one of its newsletters, that international lobbying “aims at implementing changes and increasing awareness of the situation regarding the Bedouin in the Negev – particularly those living in the unrecognized villages” (NCF Newsletter, 17th edition, July, 2012: 4). In the words of its executive director, Haia Noach: “we cannot influence much from within, so we try the international arena.”⁷³

The NCF has been particularly active and successful when it comes to international advocacy in respect of the Bedouins’ rights; it often partners with other Israeli NGOs, such as Adalah, the RCUV and ICAHD, for the purposes of writing petitions and reports that are submitted to the international institutions, to organize tours or to present the situation of the Negev. In this perspective, the NCF is representative of the lobbying realized in international spheres for the Negev Bedouins; it not only constitutes the main actor involved in this strategy but also covers initiatives carried on together with other organizations. Moreover, the representatives of the NCF sent to represent the NGO in the international arena are always Bedouins from the Negev. Two main approaches have been taken by the organization in order to advance its claims: first, the engagement of advocacy with various committees of the United Nations, and second, direct interaction with representatives of governments, and more specifically, with ambassadors.

Over the years, the NCF has presented the situation of the Bedouins to various interlocutors within the system of the United Nations. The first action of international advocacy took place in 2005, when the NGO presented a report drafted by several NGOs to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in order to highlight the violations of the rights of the Negev Bedouins in Israel and to propose to classify them as an indigenous group (NCF newsletter, 3rd edition, March, 2005: 7). This was “the first time that an International forum has heard a first-hand account of the situation of the Bedouins in Israel” according to the group’s newsletter (4th edition, September, 2005: 2). Members of the NCF participated in the session on Indigenous peoples, presenting an alternative report on discrimination against the Negev Bedouins at the conference of the UN Committee on Human Rights in August, 2006. Representatives of the NGO were sent to participate again in July, 2010 and June, 2013 (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011).

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was presented in February, 2006 with a report drafted by several Israeli NGOs, amongst which the NCF, proposed as an alternative to the report presented by the State of Israel. In March, 2007 it published its final recommendations, some of which concerned Arabs’ rights in Israel and Palestine. The committee asked:

“that the State Party enquires into possible alternatives to the relocation of inhabitants unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev/Naqab to planned towns, in particular through the recognition of these villages and the recognition of the rights of the Bedouins to own, develop, control, and use their communal lands, territories and resources traditionally owned otherwise inhabited or used by them” (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2007: 46; see also NCF newsletter, 9th Edition, September, 2007).

In December, 2011, after meeting with Khalil Alamour, a board member of the NCF and resident

of the unrecognized village of Al-Sira, the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural rights issued a statement recommending that the implementation of the Praver Plan should not lead to the forced eviction of Bedouins (see Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 3).

The State of Israel submitted a report in March, 2012 (CERD/C/ISR/14–15) defending the will of the government to “address the needs of the Bedouin” and arguing that the Praver Plan had been established after “consultations with representatives of various segments of the Bedouin community,”⁷⁴ a fact later proved wrong (see Chapter 1). The committee answered taking a firm position on the issue of the Negev Bedouins: recommendation n.20 indeed stated that the State party should “withdraw the 2012 discriminatory proposed Law for the Regulation of the Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, which would legalize the ongoing policy of home demolitions and forced displacement of the indigenous Bedouin communities” (UN General Assembly, 2012: 19).

Another UN body in which the NCF has intervened is the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which issues advice to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In April, 2010, the representative of the NGO, Ad. Awia Abu Rabia, made a declaration and met with Prof. James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, who had, a few months before, sent a request to come to Israel to examine the situation of the Negev Bedouins. In 2011, J. Anaya published a report on the rights of indigenous people, which included a part on the unrecognized Bedouin villages and advanced a harsh critique against Israel, underlining the duty of the State to “protect Bedouin rights to lands and resources in the Negev” (UN Human Rights Council, Annex VI – Isr 2/2011, 2011: 25). In May, 2012, the NCF representative read a statement in front of the Forum highlighting the content of the Praver Plan and the impact it would have on the Bedouin population if implemented.⁷⁵

On August 1, 2013 the NCF was appointed as a consultant NGO to the UN by the Economic and Social Council, upon proposition made by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).⁷⁶ This decision confirms the NGO’s role at the international level and represents a recognition of its impact and engagement. This new status provides the NCF with greater scope for action within the UN, including the possibility to participate in conferences, to have an official representative, and also to place issues of interest on the provisional agenda.

The NCF has also worked to raise awareness about the situation of the Bedouins with other political bodies, meeting political leaders in the USA in October, 2011 and organizing meetings at the European Parliament and the British Parliament in December, 2011 (NCF newsletter, 19th Edition, February, 2011). In 2012, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning the treatment of Israel’s Bedouin citizens.

The international lobbying undertaken by the NCF and the other associated NGOs has thus led to important results in terms of generating international awareness and recognition of the problems the Bedouins face in Israel. Using the international institutions as arenas in which they can present the situation and pressure Israel to respect its international engagements seems to be a strategy that has paid off. Of course, the international institutions, as well as the international sphere in general, also work autonomously from the Palestinian movements and actors of contention: initiatives are organized at the local level by groups existing abroad, without necessarily coordinating with the local organizations or even without being in contact with them.

Similarly, international institutions also take decisions without any intervention on the part of the activists. However, the previous section shows that the advocacy undertaken at the international level does have an impact in raising awareness and attracting attention, especially in the case of the Bedouins. The actual impact on the ground is more limited as Israel usually does not recognize or agree with the concerns expressed by the international institutions.

The scale shift, from the local to the supranational, is usually presented as one of the only ways to bypass the nation-state (Glassman, 2001) and in this precise case to influence Israeli policies through the awareness and pressure of the international community. However, it is not used consistently across the case studies; while it appears as an essential strategy for the Bedouins, this seems to be less true in the case of Silwan and Hebron.

This type of strategy appears to be better defined as multi-scalar as the “shift” or “jump” considered introduces the idea that the different spheres are separated from one another, and exclusive, while the connection between the different levels is relational and dynamic. The local and the international are connected and even entangled through numerous and various channels: the movement of actors, activists, volunteers and politicians, the rooting in place of transnational networks and international advocacy, and the place-based information diffused at the international level. Those networks of solidarity and advocacy are “heavily dependent (...) upon place-based processes of social production and reproduction” (Cumbers & Routledge, 2004: 820), which in turn represent a basis and a resource for wider and complementary connections at the international level.

A top-down influence: adopting the international frames, the example of the indigenous territory

In addition to being used as a place of expression, the international sphere also provides frames that are re-used and adapted at the local level. I will briefly examine how processes of scale shifting can also have a top-down influence, whereby it is actually the international sphere that frames the local resistance, concentrating on the concepts of indigeneity and cultural landscape. The participation of activists in international decision-making arenas indeed represents a unique experience, but also offers tools that can then be exported, appropriated, introduced and used at the local level. This does not mean that these concepts were not used or claimed beforehand, but rather that once they become part of an official discourse, backed by an institutional recognition, they are also used at the local level as they might better resonate with the international audience.

Concerning the Negev, the claim of the Bedouins’ indigeneity is central here for at least two reasons: firstly, the definition of indigeneity strongly emphasizes the link with the land. It allows the Bedouins to inscribe their struggle in a broader context than just the national framework and thus to fit into a global community claiming similar rights in order to appeal to international institutions and to put pressure on Israel. This connection to the land is the basis of another claim widely emphasized for foreign eyes: that is, the existence of a specific, threatened, Bedouin identity linked to a Bedouin territory.

The discourse about indigeneity also represents a tool used specifically by the Bedouins and not by the Palestinians, which further illustrates the different claims existing in both societies: the claim of indigeneity is that of a minority inside a dominant society, such as the Bedouins’ as citizens of Israel. The Palestinians - even if they do claim to be indigenous - do not expect to be recognized and given the rights of a minority, but rather aim to have self-determination and

independence.

Even though the term indigeneity is not necessarily used as such by Bedouins, it covers their claims; its use in part reflects a kind of top-down influence, as an element of language that fits into the global discourse on human rights. Residents adopt it from NGO members who advocate for its recognition at the international level, as well as from scholars and politicians close to their struggle who draw on tools provided by the international institutions that allow for the reinforcement of their claims. Beyond the scale envisaged for the actions and claims, it is the change in the scale of governance which is interesting here and needs to be explored further; this should focus particularly on the Bedouins as actors on the international scene and the articulation existing between the different levels at which they are engaged.

As shown above, representatives of the Bedouin community have participated in various forums and conferences organized by UN bodies, in line with the analysis highlighting that the spokespersons of the indigenous communities have indeed taken on the role of experts in conferences and in task forces set up under the aegis of the UN, going from being “the ‘victims’ on the local scenes to ‘actors’ on the international stage” (Bellier, 2012: 63), thus participating in the making of new international norms (Ibid.: 61). Another important milestone was the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People notably allowed for the “formation of a common imaginary,” which was then applied within the regional, national and local scenes (Ibid.: 62).

The definition of Indigenous peoples⁷⁷ and the recognition of Indigenous peoples’ rights (UN General Assembly, A/RES/61/295, 2007) provides the basic tools for Bedouin activists. In 2011, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, published a report stating:

“The Special Rapporteur considers there to be strong indications that Bedouin people have rights to certain areas of the Negev based on their longstanding land use and occupancy, under contemporary international standards. It is undisputed that the Bedouin have used and occupied lands within the Negev desert long before the establishment of the State of Israel and that they have continued through the present to inhabit the Negev, maintaining their culturally-distinctive land tenure and way of life” (UN Human Rights Council, 2011: 25).

The report also points out that various UN bodies such as the Human Rights Committee and the CERD, have expressed a similar position. It has to be noted that the case of Al-Araqib is specifically mentioned in the report (p.27). The report also clearly characterized the Bedouins of the Negev as Indigenous people, noting:

“The difficulties of the Bedouin in maintaining their distinct cultural identities and connections to their traditional lands are akin to the problems faced by indigenous peoples worldwide (...) [who are] groups indigenous to a territory that are in non-dominant positions and that have suffered and continue to suffer threats to their distinct identities and basic human rights, in ways not felt by dominant sectors of society” (Ibid.: 26).

The answer of the State of Israel to this statement was clear: “the State of Israel does not accept the classification of its Bedouin citizens as an indigenous people” (Ibid.: 28); it also insisted that “The so-called El-Arkib [sic] village was simply an act of squatting on State owned land. The

individuals never had ownership over this land” (Ibid.: 29).

The language and arguments used by activists on the ground can be adapted from the international scene, and refer to human rights and values promoted and defended by international institutions, such as the condemnation of colonialism and protection of minorities, in this case specifically linked with Indigenous peoples’ rights. Haia Noach stressed that the international context has become more favourable, with Indigenous rights’ being progressively recognized in New Zealand, Canada, Australia and in the United States.⁷⁸ D., head of Adalah in Beer-Sheva, also drew on the same parallel:

“We believe that the issue of land is a legal issue. It’s a moral issue, a political issue, and should be solved in a moral way. This is the case of all ethnic indigenous people around the world. It took hundreds of years for the Canadians, the Americans or the Australians to give the Aboriginal and the Native Americans their own rights.”⁷⁹

As the Bedouins struggle for the recognition of the unrecognized villages, they insist on their ancient presence on the land and make an implicit claim of indigeneity, sometimes explicitly formulated in those terms. The comparison with the Native Americans, common among NGO activists, is also used by the Bedouins, framing their struggle as a similar one, namely of an Indigenous people fighting an oppressive colonial-settler state. Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi declared for example that by moving Bedouins into cities, the Israeli government had “taught them to steal, it made them addicted to cigarettes, alcohol and sugar.”⁸⁰ Another parallel often made with the Native Americans is the designation of the Siyaj, the area where Bedouins were concentrated between 1951 and 1966, as a “reserve” (see Chapter 1). Khalil Alamour, a resident of the village of Al-Sira, who represented the NCF in various international encounters, also stated:

“Our problem is with the colonialism (...) which takes the indigenous people’s land and ignore their rights (...). The USA, their uncle and their teacher [of Israel], did that with the Native Americans, they killed them in the beginning, they just eliminated them. Then they realized that it is not moral, not true, not good. And they just tried to repair all that and they give them more reservation, more places, more space, more rights!”⁸¹

The comparison is also made on the basis of the confinement of the Bedouins within artificial cities, depriving them of the natural resources from which they usually live and of their traditional lifestyle, condemning them to the loss of their identity. Khalil Alamour, talking about the Praver Plan, also explained that if the Israeli government advances with its plan to uproot the Bedouins and to concentrate them in the cities: “if you come in five, ten years, you wouldn’t see any Bedouins. You wouldn’t recognize which are Bedouins, which are not Bedouins... They will dress the same, they will look the same, they will live the same way.”⁸²

Bedouin activists and NGOs who support their struggle defend the existence of a Bedouin territory and of the Bedouins’ territoriality, one which is threatened as it is included within the Israeli national territory and therefore subject to dominant representations and discourses.

This shows how international language can permeate the local narrative of activism, both through the meetings organized at the international level and through the experience of some members, to support already existing frames with tools employed within the sphere of global

governance. A more in-depth study would be required for this topic in order to understand the mechanisms of the diffusion of the concepts from the international sphere to the local scale. It would also be interesting to integrate the discourse of the academic world in this research; indeed, the participation of scholars in the struggles, as both experts and activists, is likely to have an impact on the grassroots representations and narratives, with the residents and activists appropriating the language that is engaged in the spheres of power.

While mainly advanced at the international level by institutional actors, the tools and language proposed by various bodies of the United Nations are in some cases appropriated by the activists, thus effectuating an additional scale-shift, back from the transnational level to the local; this eventually contributes to the framing of the place identity and the value of space. The transnational advocacy networks also has an impact on the production of the local space, as they “make international resources available to new actors in domestic political and social struggles” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999: 89). The use of concepts used by the international institutions, which also engages international law, introduces notions considered to be universal – that is, universal values and universal rights – which insert the local struggles into a global framework and further “globalize” the Palestinian struggle, resulting in the wider resonance of claims.

The strategies of resistance evoked in this chapter rely on two distinct yet linked spatialities, namely, networks and scale. Both point to an “externalization” of the struggle, beyond the local, regional and national levels, through the establishment of transnational networks. The work of advocacy and information undertaken with the international activists and visitors at the local level, as well as with the international institutions that have been presented above, represent two facets of the same strategy, which aims to globalize the protest. By increasing the awareness and the audience concerned with the Palestinian struggle around the world and by pressuring international institutions to take decisions that can counter or limit the injustice of settler colonialism, NGOs, activists and inhabitants (through individual “advocacy” via communication through Facebook, for example) complement the everyday practices and the local struggle with external, and more precisely international, action. This international action creates new spaces where meanings and interventions are negotiated. As a result, the Palestinian struggle inscribes itself within a global geography of power, becoming connected with other sites linked to global governance and activism.

Two broad types of strategies are engaged here, both using and associating scale shifting and networking in various ways. Firstly, contacts with other movements and activists establish contact of a horizontal nature. This is established not only through cyber networks but also directly, in place, on site, as a result of the presence of solidarity volunteers and of political tourism. The fact that those contacts are used to extend the networks surrounding each site of contention, to diffuse information, to export the claims and the framing of the struggle towards different sites and foreign allies, does indeed introduce a scale shift. The scale shift modifies the structure and the dynamic of the protest, but also the framing as it affects “who participates in social movements, participants’ relations to one another, their capacities to achieve goals, and the ways in which they frame their struggles” (Nicholls, 2011: 10).

The second strategy is decisively vertical and seeks to impose a change in governance, bypassing the national scale to address actors of the international sphere. The sites of contention are indeed inscribed in transnational networks, with allies located abroad who organize on their side to show support for the struggle. They also cooperate with the Palestinian activists to organize joint actions, which might be undertaken in different sites but coordinated on the object

and claims of the event; moreover, representatives of the local struggles might come to testify. The vertical dimension of the protest also stretches to the international level by addressing the national institutions such as governments and parliaments; furthermore, it particularly concentrates on the supranational sphere of governance, through the various arenas proposed by the instances of the United Nations. This strategy implies a major scale shift in the scope of action, and implies a political transformation in the relationships of power; the pressure comes from above under the form of support for the local resistance or the condemnation of the occupation.

It appears from the elements gathered on the field and exposed here that if all three case studies employ these strategies, the political tourism and solidarity networking are much more active and extended around Hebron, while the international advocacy is more developed and efficient in the case of Al-Araqib and of the Bedouins in general. The networks established through individual activists also represent an interesting link between places, imbued with relations of power as they are inscribed in wider networks of solidarity.

However, it must be underlined that the globalization of the struggle remains tightly linked to the local situation, even reinforcing the importance of the place. Political tourism, the presence on the ground of politicians and foreign tourists, as well as the existence of international decisions that concern specific situations, all contribute to generating greater visibility of the places and thus, of the cause that the people defend. As noted by John Short: “the connection between location and globalization is not simply the creation of space; it is the formation of new forms of a space-place nexus” (2001: 12). In the cases considered here, this connection between the locality and the global is established through networks and the changing scales of action. The sites of contention thus represent such nexus.

In the framework of this research, the elements scrutinized indicate the making of an alternative geography of power through globalization and the relational construction of protest (Featherstone, 2005; Routledge, 2003). These networks design an entangled assemblage of place, networks and scales working together, connecting residents, activists, governments and institutions, “preventing contestations from being contained spatially by stretching them to other places” (Leitner et al., 2008: 162). Indeed, the networking and scale shift both appear as strategic ways to bypass the constraints inherent to the Israeli system and as means to trigger new opportunities.

Notes

1. A rich and developed literature sheds light on the role of networks in connecting and mobilizing actors at the local and international level and how they represent a strategic dimension of contention (see for example Gould, 1991; Kitts, 2000; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Leenders & Heydemann, 2012; Snow et al., 1980). It is not the purpose here to recount the debates, theoretical advances and case studies that make up this field of research, however for an overview of the existing literature one can refer for example to Diani and McAdam (2003) and Diani (2013).
2. Youth against Settlements website: <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.
3. B'tselem Camera Project, http://www.btselem.org/video/cdp_background.
4. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
5. “Human Rights Press” channel on Youtube:

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/Human1Rights1Press>.
6. See “Video Channel: camera distribution project,” B’tselem, http://www.btselem.org/english/Video/CDP_Index.asp.
 7. On <http://hyas.ps/en/index.php/en/>, and previously on <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.
 8. Facebook page of Youth against Settlements: <https://www.facebook.com/media.yas?fref=ts>.
 9. Website of the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre: <http://silwanic.net/>.
 10. Facebook page of the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre: <https://www.facebook.com/Silwanic?fref=ts>.
 11. Silwanic, <https://www.youtube.com/user/silwanicNET1>.
 12. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
 13. Page “Solidarity with al-Arakib:” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/171815022864227/?fref=ts>.
 14. See for example “Photography project,” July 9, 2009, <http://www.dukium.org/photography-project/>, or “Our Photography Workshop in the Bedouin Village of Rakhameh,” August 1, 2015, <http://www.dukium.org/our-photography-workshop-in-the-bedouin-village-of-rakhameh/>.
 15. Interview realized on April 17, 2012.
 16. NCF’s Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh-O9VOj5R9RBesz0GIUw0g>.
 17. Interview realized on April 9, 2013.
 18. “Our model,” EAPPI, <https://www.eappi.org/en/our-model>.
 19. “We have the most eyes on the ground,” EAPPI website, <https://eappi.org/en/we-have-the-most-eyes-on-the-ground-1>.
 20. “About CPT Palestine,” <http://www.cpt.org/work/palestine>.
 21. Interview with B., EAPPI volunteer, realized on April 8, 2013.
 22. Interview with an activist of the ISM, realized on April 2, 2013.
 23. “About ISM,” <http://palsolidarity.org/about/>.
 24. ISM website: <http://palsolidarity.org/about/>.
 25. “Our Model is Accompaniment,” EAPPI website, <https://www.eappi.org/en/our-model>.
 26. Interview with B., EAPPI volunteer, realized on April 9, 2013. See also <https://www.eappi.org/en/where-we-work>: “Our EAs then return home to 21 countries around the world, where they share first-hand experiences to open the eyes of their governments, churches and home communities to the realities of occupation.”
 27. Rabbis for Human Rights’ website: <http://rhr.org.il/eng/>.
 28. Emek Shaveh’s website: <http://alt-arch.org/en/>.
 29. Interview with Arik Ascherman, chairman of Rabbis for Human Rights, realized on November 20, 2013.
 30. Interview realized on November 27, 2012.
 31. “Ministry: Record number of tourists visited Israel in 2012,” The Jerusalem Post, December 23, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Ministry-Record-number-of-tourists-visited-Israel-in-2012>.
 32. See the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Percentage Distribution of Inbound Visitors by Country of Residence and the Site Visited, 2009: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/IN_VS_E_tab3_2009.htm.

33. See for example “‘Visit Palestine’ says West Bank’s growing alternative tourism industry,” *The Electronic Intifada*, July 16, 2009, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/visit-palestine-says-west-banks-growing-alternative-tourism-industry/8343>.
34. Alternative Tourist Group: <http://atg.ps/>.
35. Travel Palestine: <http://travelpalestine.ps/>.
36. Visit Palestine: <http://www.visitpalestine.ps/>.
37. Medji Tours: <http://www.mejditours.com/>.
38. X., ISM activist, interview realized on April 2, 2013.; B., EAPPI volunteer, April 8, 2013.
39. Interview realized on April 16, 2013.
40. Interview with Avner Gvanyahu, realized on November 19, 2013.
41. Interview realized on April 4, 2013.
42. See “*About Us*,” Tarabut Hithabrut: <http://www.tarabut.info/en/articles/article/about/>.
43. Interview realized on May 22, 2012.
44. See for example “Inauguration of Ambassadors Forest in the Negev,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2005/pages/inauguration%20of%20ambassadors%20dec-2005.aspx>.
45. Interview realized on October 21, 2012.
46. Youth against Settlements website: <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.
47. Interview with Zliha Muhtaseb, realized on March 15, 2013.
48. Interview realized on April 4, 2013.
49. Interview realized on April 16, 2013.
50. Interview with Zliha Muhtaseb, resident of the old city (H2), March 15, 2013.
51. Interview with Khalil Alamour, resident of al-Sira, board member of the NCF) April 13, 2012.
52. Interview with the sheikh of Wadi al-Na’am, April 17, 2012.
53. The main Israeli organization supporting the local struggle announced it would cease its Friday demonstrations to focus on other issues in September 2011. See the website of Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity: <http://www.en.justjlm.org/> and the various articles published on the topic on +972 <http://972mag.com/sheikh-jarrah/>.
54. Interview realized on March 2, 2013.
55. Interviews with Zliha Muhtaseb, realized on March 15, 2013; Walid Abu-Halawah, April 3, 2013; Issa Amro, April 5, 2013; K., April 8, 2013.
56. Interview with Zliha Muhtaseb, realized on March 15, 2013.
57. Interview with Walid Abu-Halawah, April 3, 2013.
58. Interview with Khalil Alamour, April 13, 2012 and Haia Noach, April 17, 2012.
59. Interview realized on October 28, 2012.
60. Youth against Settlements website: <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.
61. “Open Shuhada Street South Africa,” <https://www.facebook.com/OpenShuhadaStreetSouthAfrica?ref=ts&fref=ts>.
62. “Global day for reopening Shuhada Street,” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/251984863283/?fref=ts>.
63. Interviews with M., April 2, 2013; Issa Amro, April 5, 2013; YAS activists, April 15, 2013.
64. Interview realized on April 5, 2013.
65. See for example <https://www.facebook.com/events/524928077570077/> and

- <http://collectif69palestine.free.fr/spip.php?article588>.
66. See for example « Luttés des Bédouins du Néguev: Exposition-Photos en Novembre 2011 », Le Post, October 21, 2011, http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/article/2011/10/21/2619747_luttés-des-bedouins-du-neguev-exposition-photos-en-novembre-2011.html; « Le 16/11 à Paris: soirée débat sur la situation des Bédouins du Néguev (Israël) », L'Humanité, November 15, 2011, <http://www.humanite.fr/le-1611-paris-soiree-debat-sur-la-situation-des-bedouins-du-neguev-israel-483693>.
 67. Interview realized on November 3, 2013.
 68. Interview realized on November 5, 2012.
 69. “Israel must stop harassment, intimidation and abusive treatment of rights defender Issa Amro,” August 13, 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/RU/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13626&LangID=E>.
 70. The commission assembled for the purposes of communicating in respect of this case was made up of: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk; the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Maina Kiai; the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Frank William La Rue; and the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Juan E. Méndez.
 71. Video of the intervention: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ7ZpiTo9VM>.
 72. See the text of the communication on [https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/27th/public_-_UA_Israel_28.05.14_\(3.2014\).pdf](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/27th/public_-_UA_Israel_28.05.14_(3.2014).pdf).
 73. Interview realized on November 3, 2013.
 74. “Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination considers Report of Israel” & “Presentation of the Report” February 16, 2012, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-198695/>.
 75. NCF Statement at UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues, May 16, 2012: <http://www.dukium.org/statement/>, full statement: <http://www.dukium.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Mansour-Nsara-Statement-to-UN-Permanent-Forum-on-Indigenous-issues.pdf>.
 76. NCF appointed as a consultative NGO to the UN: <http://www.dukium.org/ncf-appointed-as-a-consultative-ngo-to-the-un/>, and the letter received: http://www.dukium.org/hebrew/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NCF_UN-Consultative-Status.pdf.
 77. “Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system” (J. Martinez Cobo E/CN.4/sub 2/1986/7 et add 1-4, quoted in Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, PFII/2004/WS.1/3, 2004: 2).
 78. Interview realized on November 3, 2013.

79. Interview realized on May 22, 2012.
80. Interview realized on April 9, 2012.
81. Interview realized on April 13, 2012.
82. Note: Ibid.

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Conclusion: emplaced territorialization

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This study weaves together a geographical analysis and an ethnographic approach, drawing on data gathered during various periods of fieldwork. It tackles the resistance of Palestinians, a category which includes the Bedouins, confronted with the Israeli expansionist and exclusionary policies, which stem from the settler colonial nature of the State. This confrontation crystallizes around the control of territory and demography, as decisive elements in the balance of power to

establish sovereignty over the land.

This approach is original on several accounts. It focuses on the local scale, distinguishing itself from the pitfalls of methodological nationalism (Monterescu, 2015). It also compares cases across the Green Line, or more precisely beyond the separation barrier, a “border” that has dramatic implications for many Palestinians from the West Bank, but also serves as an interface for the many fluxes that still circulate between the two territories thus distinguished – the West Bank and Israel. The wall and its connected technologies of separation – checkpoints, concrete walls, fences, military patrols ... – do not prevent the circulation of Jewish Israelis rallying the settlements and cannot totally erase the integration existing between the economic and social worlds of the Palestinians living in Israel and in the occupied Territories through business, education or marriage for instance. If the separation barrier deters and hinders their movement and limits the contacts, especially for the Palestinians of the West Bank, the two territories still function in tight relations (Latte Abdallah & Parizot, 2017; Parizot, 2008, 2010), the physical border having a very differential impact depending on the population and area concerned. Finally, I defined the case studies spatially, as sites of contention, and not as monothetic movements. This allowed to take into account the dynamicity of protest as it is lived by its many actors, who maneuver in an evolving galaxy made up of residents, activists, NGO members, international supporters and institutional attention.

The spatial dimension of this conflict is often studied from the point of view of the control and constraints imposed by Israel, the ongoing process of shrinking land and land confiscation (see e.g. Falah, 2003, 2005). Resistance practices are also largely tackled in academic literature, but seldom for their spatial dimension. This research is inscribed in a recent trend in the study of contentious politics (see e.g. Aminzade et al., 2001; Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008; Miller, 2000; Routledge, 2015) which acknowledges and focuses on the intrinsic spatialities of protests. I propose here a transversal approach showing the relationality of spatialities, highlighting how resistance practices use and produce space in strategic ways.

The core contribution of this volume is represented by the five empirical chapters, which concentrate via an inductive approach on the various spatialities mobilized by the actors of contention in each case study, Al-Araqib, Hebron and Silwan. These three sites represent three flashpoints of mobilization against the Israeli State politics and encapsulate three types of regime of control applied to different areas and populations: that applied to minorities within Israel – here the Bedouins –, to Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, and to Palestinians in areas C in the West Bank.

The reflection is based on the material gathered during the various periods of fieldwork realized between 2011 and 2016, allowing for the construction of an analysis grounded in the reality of the region: it sheds light on the different regimes of control imposed on the three sites and presents a rich overview of the practices deployed at the local level to oppose and thwart them, tackling the various logics, objectives and choices underlying those strategies.

Based on original data, this study proposes detailed knowledge of local practices. It sets out similarities and differences between the three sites of contention, identifying elements crucial to each case and thus unpacking the various profiles that emerge. The empirical analysis puts the stress on how the actors of contention deploy a repertoire that is specifically spatial. Indeed, the practices of resistance do not merely take place in space, they harness space as a resource, channeling various spatialities to oppose the hegemonic and discriminatory control of the Israeli State. In doing so, protesters manage to produce space, materially and symbolically, drawing on

the various natures of space – built, lived, represented, reticulated – depending on the local stakes.

Spatialities of resistance in Israel and Palestine

I identified, based on the fieldwork data, the geographical concepts central to the main spatialities of contention observed in the three cases considered. These shed light on the differences in the strategies adopted depending on the actors' choices and priorities as well as on the constraints and opportunities with which they are confronted.

The three cases share very similar features, notably through the importance attributed to the place, and sumud being the main practice of resistance claimed in all three sites. What emerges from the various elements considered is the importance given to the territorialization (or re-territorialization) of the resistance and more generally of the Palestinian identity in the face of the Israeli occupation – or, in the case of the Bedouins, ethnocentric rule.

However, when considering detailed strategies in the three sites of contention, in connection to different elements of the context such as the structure of the social relations or the level of repression, different profiles emerge (see Table 7.1). The inhabitants of Al-Araqib rely chiefly on sumud and a stubborn presence in place in order to oppose the Israeli attempts to transfer them to the nearest town, Rahat. This strategy is associated with an international one, which aims at the recognition of the indigenous identity of the Bedouins, and hence of their right over a territory. In Hebron, the actors of contention also appeal to sumud, and draw on a wide range of spatialities; however, it appears that the main spatial resource employed is the framing of the city as a unique situation, both of occupation and resistance, which aims to attract international attention and support. Finally, the contention in Silwan appears more self-reliant, essentially centered on the neighbourhood itself in terms of mobilization and framing.

Table 7.1 Synthesis of the sites of contention's profiles

<i>Location</i>	<i>Al-Araqib</i>	<i>Silwan</i>	<i>Hebron</i>
Sites of contention	Cemetery area and surrounding land	Wadi Hilwe and Al-Bustan	Old city (H2)
Localization	Israeli territory (Negev)	Occupied ("Annexed") East Jerusalem	Occupied West Bank
Population and administrative status	Bedouins (Israeli citizens)	Palestinians (Jerusalem residents) Settlers (Jewish Israeli citizens)	Palestinians (Palestinian Authority) Settler and military population (Jewish Israeli citizens)
Main issues tackled	Unrecognized Bedouin villages, property of the land, discrimination against minorities	Occupation, Palestinian rights, settlements in Wadi Hilwe,	Military occupation, Palestinian rights, settlements within H2, division of the city, access to Shuhada Street

	within Israel	City of David, tunnels under Silwan, planned demolition of Al-Bustan	
Main actors of contention	Residents and relatives; Bedouin and Israeli activists; NGOs; local political leaders; international observers and delegations; political tourists	Residents; Palestinian and Israeli activists; NGOs; PA affiliated movements; international observers; international delegations	Residents; Palestinian, Israeli and international activists; NGOs; International solidarity movements; international observers; political tourists
Main opportunities identified	Recourse to the Israeli legal system; Notion of indigeneity (UNESCO)	Historical heritage; visibility of Jerusalem; Local network; International laws	Visibility of the occupation; Historical and religious heritage
Main constraints identified	Biased legal system; low religious relevance as part of the holy land; Important in the Zionist narrative as an area of development, where to “make the desert bloom”	High level of control and repression; Little fame; Enclaved; Reputation of violence; Disputed historical heritage	Level of control and repression; Reputation of violence; Disputed historical and religious heritage
Main “Spatial repertoire” deployed	Sumud central, ribat mentioned; Legal battle on land ownership and the use of space; Planning (NGOs, experts); “Illegal” building; Representations on cultural landscape/indigenous territory	Sumud and ribat central; Legal battle on land ownership and the use of space; Planning (residents, NGOs); “Illegal” building; Sense of place, attachment to	Sumud central, ribat mentioned; Renovation/rehabilitation; Protests and clashes; International networking with solidarity movements; Political tourism

the
neighborhood;
Protests and
clashes

Very different strategies intersect in the case of Al-Araqib; these include local rooting, territorial representation, legal challenges at the national level and international advocacy. The resistance in Al-Araqib is indeed strongly place-based, appealing to the practice of *sumud*, as the inhabitants defend above all their right to stay and live in this specific place. They act chiefly at the local level, by staying on their land and tirelessly reconstructing the village when destroyed, thus appropriating and producing the lived and conceived dimensions of space. The Bedouins are supported by various Israeli NGOs, which help them use official channels to legally challenge the State's decisions and also to act on their behalf at the international level. These last strategies concern the unrecognized villages in general, of which Al-Araqib became a symbol: the village is indeed often mentioned as an example in the legal documentation produced about the Bedouins by international institutions. As a result, on the whole, the Bedouins of Al-Araqib fight for their right to place and insert their struggle in a wider frame, defending an indigenous territory which is conceptualized as the territory of a minority; they inscribe themselves not only within the Israeli system, even while they remain very critical of its ethnocratic functioning, but also within an international indigenous community experiencing similar problematics (such as "territorial isolation" (Bellier, 2006)), using the mechanisms installed and proposed by the international community. Al-Araqib is constructed as an example of the problems faced by some of Israel's own citizens and has thus become an icon of the Bedouin and of the Palestinian Israelis' struggle.

The contention in Hebron relies on diversified modes of action; however, the strategy that seems most central in Hebron is the tactical use of the city's reputation – and actual situation – in terms of oppression and resistance, to attract attention and diffuse information and a narrative fitting with the residents' and activists' experience and objectives at the international level.

The particularly harsh conditions imposed by the Israeli occupation in Hebron contribute to giving more resonance and visibility to the local struggle. The division of the city, the strict separation imposed in H2 between Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis, the violent and repressive stance adopted by the Israeli army and the settlers, and the numerous violations of human rights that ensue have turned the city into the infamous epicenter of the occupation, where its impact is clearly visible and the resistance is considered as more legitimate. The religious importance of Hebron, considered as holy both in Judaism and in Islam, and its history contribute to the fame of the city and account for the fact that events happening there may have a particular resonance in international spheres.

This status of the city opens up opportunities for the actors of contention, generating a larger range of possibilities for the practices of resistance, attracting notably the media and international community's interest. This is relevant to the production and diffusion of powerful spatial frames, such as that of Hebron being a "ghost town" or the town of apartheid. In a context marked by violence and regular clashes, the use of *sumud* is also emphasized as the epitome of non-violence and as an illustration of the good intentions of the actors involved.

Communication and political tourism thus appear to be the key strategies in which the

inhabitant, activists and NGOs predominantly invest in Hebron. It is partly the threats and constraints attached to the occupation that paradoxically represent an opportunity for resistance. Spatial constraints become the very means that allow for challenges to be advanced; by being inscribed in space, they provide an immediate opportunity for transgression, or for illustration. This follows the approach of Goldstone on how to conceive “opportunities:” “in many cases, adversity – such as threats, excessive repression or counter-movement actions – can energize and elevate movements, increasing their support and chances of success” (Goldstone, 2004: 356). The example of Shuhada Street is a blatant example of these double-edged measures: the closure of the street is not materially inscribed in space, there are no signs indicating that access is forbidden, nor is it specified to whom or from where it applies. Although it represents a very severe constraint for the inhabitants of Hebron, it is also exploited as an opportunity to illustrate the regime of control imposed on the Palestinians, by trespassing and materializing the rule for external eyes.

The struggle in Silwan is mostly organized from and for the community, concentrating firstly on its internal cohesion. The spatial strategies employed in Silwan have indeed a limited range and aim mostly at making *sumud* possible and sustainable, at having people stay there. However, while this approach might be in part imposed by external constraints, it also represents a choice: as Silwan is annexed in practice, being under Israeli rule, the position adopted by the actors of contention is more radical in respect of cooperating and networking. For fear of collaborators or infiltrated agents, but especially to avoid anything that might represent a “normalization” of the occupation, the resistance in Silwan is thus constructed in a more isolated fashion. It seeks to prevent any possible external influence or interference that could bring about further loss of power for the inhabitants or weaken their sense of place, making the Palestinian position even more fragile in front of the Israeli authorities or the Jewish settlers.

This strategy relies on the attachment to the place and the local identity. It appears indeed as a crucial strategy of resistance and serves to claim the existence of a vital link between Silwan and Jerusalem and thus to reassert the centrality of both to the Palestinian identity. The place incarnates the homeland, the territory of the nation that was doubly lost, first as the pre-1948 Palestine and then as the neighbouring West Bank, separated from Jerusalem by the “security barrier.” The defense of Al-Aqsa is similarly related to the defense of Palestine; the use of *ribat*, particularly important in Silwan, is very revealing in this respect.

As for the two other cases, the site nevertheless became a flashpoint of resistance, and got to symbolize a particular situation. The limited presence of international NGOs highlights the difficult position in which the East Jerusalem neighborhoods find themselves. It shows the difficulty and tension of resisting within this context of “in-between;” the inhabitants of Silwan are blocked, physically and administratively, between Israel and the West Bank, the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, the place where they live and the territory to which they relate. From a strategic point of view, Silwan is situated in a political and geographical limbo. It suffers from its difficult geographical position, enclaved in the Kidron valley, with a very dense urban fabric. The Israeli policy also reinforces this isolation: Silwan is now totally cut off from its hinterland by the “security barrier.” In Silwan, networking and scaling through political tourism and international advocacy are not totally absent, but the practices to foster them are less developed than in the two other cases.

The Israeli intervention in Silwan, beyond the limits of the City of David, is much less visible in space than in Hebron, where occupation is clearly “readable,” and in Al-Araqib, where the

regular instances of destruction mark the landscapes. One of the main interventions on space about which the residents of Silwan complain, is the digging of tunnels underneath the neighborhood, which is, by definition, hidden and invisible from the surface; it is symbolically very telling as to the impact that the authorities' use of space can have and how it can also condition the resistance and paradoxically represent an opportunity.

Feeling attacked and oppressed by the Israeli presence, abandoned by the PA, forgotten in the peace negotiations and threatened by the collaboration of residents with the Israeli authorities, the struggle in Silwan concentrates first and foremost on the place through community building, the assertion and reinforcement of the residents' links to the place and the importance of mobilizing to defend the neighborhood.

This synthesis of the various profiles that emerged through the analysis shows that four main elements explain the variations between the cases despite their similar features: the level of repression met and opposed; the administrative status of the place and actors; the goal and scope of the protest; and the international attention granted to each case. Of course, a multiplicity of factors sub-enter in each of the categories described above, such as the financial one. However, all of them were shown to play a central role in the definition of each site's profile and the configuration of protest.

First, the intensity and modality of repression, whether occasional or constant, visible in space or imperceptible, can have a big impact on the mobilization and on who the actors mobilized address. It can modify the possibilities of collective action by regulating and limiting the co-presence in space, for example in Hebron with the technologies of occupation or in Silwan with numerous and constant arrests. The repression and the control of space it implies often represent a major obstacle for the conduct of protest; however, as seen above, it can also be turned into an opportunity, making it easy to illustrate the harshness or arbitrariness of the occupation.

Second, the status attributed to the place and to its residents, with the corollary of their relationships with both national entities, the State of Israel and the Palestinian government. This point underlines the importance that needs to be attributed to the question of citizenship, ethnicity and religion, all elements that define the place attributed to the individuals within the Israeli and Palestinian societies. In this respect, the Bedouins have a wider range of possible resources: as Israeli citizens they have an easier access to the Israeli judiciary and legal system and can directly address various official bodies. Even if the results are often biased due to the nature of the regime, it still represents an additional recourse. As stated above, from this point of view the residents of Silwan live in an administrative and political limbo, torn between their physical location and their political allegiance, typically considered as an internal threat and a fifth column. The H2 area in Hebron is occupied, with an important population of Israeli settlers and soldiers and Palestinians largely hostile to this presence and treated as enemies; the area is administered according to military rules with a politics of separation and confinement that aims at enforcing the occupation and the Israeli control, maintaining the security of the Israeli population and flushing out the remaining Arab population.

Another dimension that needs to be considered is the scope of the resistance strategies adopted, and the audience targeted, as it may determine the communication strategy, the type of network the resistance and the place are inscribed in, but also the number and the profile of the actors involved in the protest. External factors can of course also constrain or shift the course of action decided; however, whether the objective is to carry out local, national or international actions, to catch the attention of the government or of international institutions, all imply a

different type of repertoire. As exposed in the empirical chapters, the three sites all have broadly the same set of strategies, but employ them differently: the resistance in Silwan remains very localized, with very little recourse to the institutions or even to foreign actors. Similarly the international network, if it exists around the site, remains particularly weak and is above all not presented as a priority of the resistance. On the contrary, in Hebron and Al-Araqib, an effort is specifically made to attract visitors and build a solidarity network around their specific case.

Finally, another factor that appears as playing a crucial role in the conduct of protest is the international attention granted to each site, by foreign activists or NGOs, but also by members of governing bodies and above all by international institutions. The advocacy and lobbying, the international pressure, possibly even the making of international norms through the integration in arenas of discussion, are in part dependant on the visibility of the protests at the international level. Of course this kind of feature can be considered as being circular, as the attention granted to a place can be the result of previous strategies to publicize the protest and expand the international awareness. However, if the impact of such attention is not necessarily realized on the ground, it does expand the possibilities to oppose the Israeli power, as illustrated in the case of the Bedouins of the Negev, with the claims of indigeneity based on the definition adopted by the United Nations (Resolution 61/295, 2007) or Hebron with the attempt to be included in the Unesco World Heritage list.¹

Transposing this framework to other cases within Palestine and Israel or in totally different configurations would be necessary to see how they apply and which typology of resistance comes out of the analysis and determine which features have more influence. Studying the micro level, the local practices, means to necessarily take into account a higher level of complexity in the observations, making generalizations more uneasy to apply across cases. However, as shown in this research, it still allows for regularities to emerge. Within Palestine, we can for example suggest that the case of Bil'in would probably be similar to that of Hebron. The weekly Friday demonstrations that took place for the last ten years to protest the erection of the "separation barrier" on the land of the village turned the village into a "haut-lieu" of the Palestinian resistance.² Regular military incursions, the vicinity of a settlement, a very strong international presence – manifested mostly through the presence of foreign activists –, but also a very intense production of frames are some of the features that make it at first sight similar to Hebron. Studying other Bedouin villages, such as Wadi al-Na'am or Al-Sira, could highlight the diversity of positions existing within the Bedouin population, but would also confirm the importance attributed to sumud and the centrality of the territorial issue, as well as the disillusion in the face of the Israeli judiciary system and regime. Finally, the case of Sheikh Jarrah could be an interesting test case in Jerusalem, similar to Silwan for its location and internal dynamics, with Jewish settlers taking over the neighbourhood from its Palestinian inhabitants. Very present in the media during some years for its weekly demonstrations, it was differing radically from Silwan due to the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinians that was characterizing the protests. All those cases would allow to further illustrate how much the place-based social relations, but also international attention or repression, can influence participation and mobilization.

Co-implicated and relational spatialities

The analysis of the data sheds further light on the way in which geography and social movements' studies can be associated, insisting on the importance of space as a resource for contention. It shows not only how the spatialities deployed are tightly co-implicated and even co-dependant, but also how they are integrally part of the strategies of resistance to the extent that it sets out the existence of a real "spatial repertoire." The "spatial repertoire" can be used as a unitary concept that covers all of these strategies and underlines their particularity and common points. It also represents a term which affirms the specific role of space in the dynamics of contention, and which represents a first step in the systemization of its analysis. Drawing on the definition of the repertoire of contention, the "spatial repertoire" designates a set of tactics and practices that aim to support or strengthen contention through recourse to specific spatial features. Acknowledging the existence of a "spatial repertoire" could indeed allow to systematically tackle the geographic dimension of contention by integrating it to the study of repertoires of contention in general.

This notion has to be associated to the reflection on the use but also the production of space, inspired by Lefebvre's work: space appears as being a resource but also an outcome of contention. This transdisciplinary approach contributes to better expose the relational nature of the various spatialities deployed from and around the sites of contention. The various facets of space tackled here appear not only co-implicated but tightly connected, entangled and intertwined, through practices. It shows that despite common objectives – notably the opposition to Jewish Israeli discriminatory policies, and the fight for people's rights – the various sites adopt different strategies, depending on the location and the regime and the corresponding set of changing opportunities and constraints. This disparity shows an entrenchment of the fragmentation of the territory and division between communities, which increasingly concentrate on the here and now.

This research emphasizes the relevance of integrating more systematically a spatial perspective in the study of contention. The spatiality of the various practices deployed must be taken into account not only in the frame of interdisciplinary studies integrating geography, but should also be part of the basic features considered when studying the mechanisms of mobilization and protest.

The case of Israel and Palestine is particular from many points of view, not least as a theater of a territorial conflict that engages space as a political stake and as a central object of claims. One of the first elements that has been highlighted by this research is the centrality of space not only in the control imposed by Israel or in the claims of the Palestinians, but also in the practices of resistance deployed by the latter. The analysis of the empirical data has indeed underlined the importance of space in the Palestinian repertoire of contention; different aspects of space and of human spatialities are engaged to carry out, support or develop the protest, to mobilize or express claims.

Each empirical chapter has distinguished different types of spatial strategies that correspond to different dimensions and uses of space: inhabiting, planning, protesting, sanctifying and globalizing. Established on the basis of the triad defined by Henri Lefebvre – constituted by the perceived, conceived and lived space, to which I added a fourth dimension, the "reticulated" space – these categories have been analyzed following a set of geographical concepts relevant to the observed reality, namely, place, territory, public space, landscape, network and scale.

These various facets of space, invoked and used by the actors of contention in the three cases appear throughout the chapters as being tightly interwoven. Indeed, the inductive approach

adopted here introduces the complexity of “real-world processes” (Miller, 2000: 172) in the analysis as a result, the categories are tackled as being interdependent. The empirical chapters have indeed confirmed and illustrated the fundamental co-implication of spatialities in the strategies of contention studied. The analysis has shown that the spatialities deployed in all of the strategies evoked are not only co-implicated, being deployed simultaneously, but also that they depend upon, inform and reinforce each other.

The different strategies employed by protestors to challenge the authorities’ designing, planning and the subsequent interventions on space show first how the “conceived space” of Henri Lefebvre is a crucial dimension in the fight for power, that needs to be taken into account. The planning and organization of space, meaning the power over the materiality and the physical configuration of space, indeed represents a prerogative of the institutional powers and as such, in a context of resistance, a stake for the contention. If this specific question has been tackled here mainly through the concepts of material and public space, it also involves questions about the urban landscape, the place defined as the domestic sphere or the neighborhood, the networks organized locally to structure the protests, and also appeals to scaling strategies for example when considering the legal and administrative powers involved, between local, regional or national institutions.

Through the observation of protest practices, appeared the importance of the “perceived space,” the space of everyday life where people move, live and work. Sumud, which appears as a central strategy in all three case studies and in the Palestinian resistance in general, draws chiefly on place and the sense of place; however, as Chapter 5 shows, it is also directly related to representations of the territory and the landscape. Those four concepts, place, sense of place, territory and landscape, appear particularly entangled when it comes to the representations of the place and of the nation, bridging the “perceived” and “lived” space, the space where the daily life unfolds with that of symbols and representations. In turn, the introduction of concepts such as territory and landscape – be it natural or cultural – introduce a notion of scale-jumping, from the place to larger horizons. Indeed, they point out towards wider frames of reference like the nation or the Ummah, the Muslim community, for example through the concept of ribat.

Finally, networks and scales, often associated due to their largely immaterial nature and extension across space – and considered here together to tackle the international strategies deployed by the actors of contention – also appear inherently related to place. Both networking and scale-shifting strategies are indeed deeply rooted in place, where they initiate and develop. They appear in some cases as allowing the wider use of other concepts such as that of territory and landscape, for example in the case of the Bedouins’ claims of indigeneity.

Beyond the co-implication of those concepts, it is the relational nature of the phenomena studied, of the spatial, contentious and social dimensions considered that has to be underlined. The relational conception of space is often opposed to a territorial one (see e.g. Beaumont & Nicholls, 2007), which seems to somehow mirror the classical opposition between networks and territory, or topography and topology, with one concept looking at relations, flows and connections, while the other concentrates on areas as distinctive units. Exposing how place is also tackled according to this dual definition, Nicholls defines the territorial approach as looking at “structured cohesion of relations in particular sites,” while the relational approach looks at “contingent interactions of diverse (sociologically and geographically) actors” (Nicholls, 2009).

These represent other analytical categories that while traditionally opposed, could be considered best together and tackled as “relational territoriality.” I contend indeed that the

relational approach can (and should) integrate a territorial dimension, while a territorial-oriented analysis can also integrate an attention to the relationality and networking. As stated by J. Agnew, “territories and networks exist relationally rather than mutually exclusively” (2009: 747). The recourse to the Lefebvrian definition of space represents a way to enforce this wider acceptance of a relational approach. Indeed, it appears as being particularly adapted to encompass a wide range of different notions considered together, as it relies on space as tying together “the physical, the mental and the social” (Gottdiener, 1993: 131). Similarly, scrutinizing the use and production of space encompasses all those dimensions, while also putting the stress on relations of power, both on the side of constraints and protest.

(Re-)Territorializing Palestine through place

The firm control of space and the policies of repression and exclusion that all stem from the Israeli effort to impose an exclusive sovereignty over the region, result in the fragmentation of the West Bank and the progressive disappearance of the Palestinian territory, intended as a political entity. Within Israel too, this policy undermines minorities’ claims to a territory such as that of the Bedouins: the indigenous territory is not only contested, but also actively “nationalized” and integrated within the State’s land and imagined landscape, for example through afforestation campaigns.

Confronted with this atomization of the territorial imaginaries and claims that do not fit within the Zionist project and with the enclavisation of Palestinian cities (Falah, 2005), the research shows that all three sites of struggle point to an intensive process of “emplacement” that represents an active effort of territorialization through the local. In all three cases, the actors of contention seek to root the movement in place in order to strengthen the mobilization and affirm an identity linked with the land; this strategy aims not only to thwart any attempt of transfer and make daily life possible, but also to oppose the increasing fragmentation of the Palestinian territory and the subsequent deterritorialization of the Palestinian population. The steadfast physical presence and representations of space – or spatial imaginary (Wolford, 2004) – are central to this strategy of territorialization, as is the tactical framing of resistance as part and parcel of the local identity, and the acceptance or adoption of those same frames by foreign activists and institutions.

This emplacement means that place becomes a medium through which the contention necessarily passes, as activists fall back on actions at the local scale. But going through the place does not exhaust the other spatial dimensions of the struggle as the place is connected, crisscrossed, entangled with other spatialities and scales. The place is approached as a synecdoche, whereby a part – the place, or site of contention –, becomes an embodiment, a representation of the whole – the territory. The actors of contention oppose the appropriated, cultural and religious conception of a territory that is incarnated in place to the fading perspective of a political, united one where to build the Palestinian State, and to the disappearing Bedouin territory. This does not preclude the continuation of the fight to gain recognition and rights over such territories, but it does represent a shift in the methods of struggle.

Reterritorialization is indeed realized through the affirmation of the place identity and its explicit connection to a shared Arab-Palestinian identity. The place is constructed as a piece of the Palestinian territory, as embodying its qualities, and as such, as deserving people’s attention, affection and mobilization. Similarly, the place identity is embedded in the larger Palestinian

identity and has to be defended as an incarnation of the Palestinian territory at a smaller scale. This affirmation of the legitimacy and importance of the Palestinian culture forms the basis of a broader discourse about the territory from a nationalist perspective but also from the point of view of the community, as the space of co-presence.

This study shows the porosity between places and territories, and their being nodes in constant spatial interactions. The case of Hebron illustrates particularly well that the resistance practices, but also the place identity, are constituted in a constant flow of exchanges. Silwan, which appears as the most bounded site studied here, still needs to be considered in this relational way; it is indeed according to the possibilities, implications and meaning of those interactions that the strategic choices are made. As such, an “introverted” resistance can reflect bigger constraints, or a selection or refusal of these interactions, which means acknowledging their existence and still acting according to them – even if to ward the possibility off. The interactions also work the other way around; indeed, the connections influence the conduct of resistance in place, but also allow to diffuse frames, narratives or practices, thus having an influence on other actors.

Faced with discrimination and fragmentation, but also the enclavisation of groups considered as a threat to the Zionist ideal of a Jewish State, the contention “has literally returned to its roots” (Collins, 2011: 114) reinvesting the place and symbolic elements such as the trees, rocks and stone houses, and concentrating on sumud as “habitational resistance” (Ibid.: 18) and ribat as a religious defense of the holy land.

However, if the concentration on place represents a tactical retreat, a strategy adopted under constraint, it is also turned into a strategy to reinforce the mobilization through a stronger Palestinian identity, awareness and cultural references, where the meaning invested in place makes it a symbol of the territory.

Overall, we can conclude that sumud, at the local scale, and advocacy, at the international level (which encompasses information, networking with activists abroad, or addressing the supranational institutions) represent the main strategies employed. Place represents the main scale of action, but the territory represents the concept that connects and motivates those strategies; through the place, it is the territory that is targeted and produced, even if at a local scale. Confronted with the fragmentation of the West Bank and of the Palestinian society, torn between different authorities, allegiances and modalities of resistance, the priority is thus to ensure the continuity of the struggle and the survival of an identity based on a deep attachment to the land.

Notes

1. “Old town of Hebron al-Khalil and its environs,” see <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/listesindicatives/5705/>.
2. See for example “‘A consciousness free from occupation’, Bil’in marks 10 years of popular struggle,” +972, February 26, 2015, <http://972mag.com/a-consciousness-free-of-occupation-bilin-marks-10-years-of-popular-struggle/103266/>.

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Index

- Azzam A. 238
Abraham 83, 92, 96, 185, 208, 282, 267
Absence 20, 77, 81, 180, 196
Absentee 81, 98, 77, 140
Abu Dis 75
Adalah 60, 95, 100, 130, 171, 179, 187, 179, 274, 257, 271, 277, [305](#), [311](#), 321
Admot Yishai 85, 107, 172
Advocacy 16, 44, 46, 136, 234, 235, 239, 241, 243, 248, 249, 251, 255, 257, 269, 295, 297, 299, [303](#), [305](#), [306](#), [308](#), [311](#), 315, 317, [312](#), 324, 325, 336, 337, 298, [308](#)
 international 124, [307](#), [309](#), [311](#), 317, 326, 290
Afforestation 79, 118, 130, [306](#)
Agency 24, 36, 40, 50, 140, 173, 171, 267
Agnew, J. 83, 142, 214, 274, 282, [304](#), [310](#)
Agreement 11, 86, 134, 241
 Gaza-Jericho 49, 86, 98
 Hebron 50, 87, 98
 Oslo 11, 3, 13, 14, 60, 50, 86, 163, 220
Al-Aqsa 60, 44, 66, 70, 83, 176, 180, 184, 186, 218, 230, 231, 236, 240, 242, 243, 248, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 272, 282, 284, 287, 294
Al-Araqib 9, 12, 16, 17, 19, 22, 18, 50, 34, 41, 44, 46, 50, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 100, 79, 80, 81, 87, 89, 90, 91, 102, 106, 110, 112, 114, 122, 123, 124, 136, 118, 130, 136, 159, 161, 173, 174, 156, 180, 182, 186, 187, 188, 194, 182, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192, 194, 196, 200, 204, 208, 226, 227, 229, 230, 254, 270, 272, 243, 247, 251, 255, 257, 258, 259, 271, 273, 275, 277, 281, 283, 284, 285, 291, 292, [305](#), [319](#), 343, 290, 292, 295, 298
Al-Bustan 17, 18, 19, 44, 66, 72, 75, 79, 81, 94, 106, 110, 116, 118, 120, 121, 122, 124, 126, 132, 134, 136, 152, 157, 171, 177, 156, 174, 176, 179, 180, 184, 186, 196, 218, 251, 252, 260, 262, 270, 271, 255, 277, 286, 287, 292
Algiers 2

Allegra, M. 34
Allon Plan 11, 52
Al-Qaeda 238, 276
Ambassador 47, 261, 263, 272, 275, 277, 288, 295, 297, 301, [311](#)
Amidor, Y. 133
Anderson, B. 28, 50, 124, 183, 181, 231, 266, 275
Annexation 4, 18, 20, 58, 60, 41, 42, 73, 104, 293
Apartheid 17, 18, 92, 99, 100, 102, 104, 140, 144, 145, 146, 147, 181, 253, 269, 279, 281, 301, [303](#), [309](#), 292
 land 145, 281
 Street 18, 99, 100, 102, 104, 140
Appropriation 54, 75, 76, 82, 85, 87, 108, 137, 138, 146, 170, 172, 213, 214, 246
Arafat, Y. 163, 167, 206, 246, 272
Archaeology 75, 76, 77, 79, 107, 93, 115, 118, 196, 232, 241, 280, 255, 261, 277, 278, 279
Architecture 45, 62, 77, 115, 116, 126, 132, 140, 147, 153, 157, 164, 177, 187, 189, 154, 230, 232, 238, 242, 276, 278, 280, 265
 biblical 78
 of occupation 140, 177, 154
Area A. 14, 86, 87
Area C. 50
Arrests 62, 79, 81, 98, 113, 116, 120, 130, 132, 141, 157, 165, 177, 159, 172, 187, 251, 252, 244, 245, 253, 277, 282, 296
Ashdod 240
Ashkelon 240
Assemblage 28, 34, 58, 60, 327
Association of Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) 96, 131, 181, 183
Australia 8, 94, 321

B'tselem 181
Bailey, C. 52, 100
Bantustan 53, 145
 bantustanization 42
Barkat, N. 79, 122
Barrier 39, 143, 341
 separation 10, 48, 50, 341, 294, 298
Bayat, A. 37, 100, 130, 144, 140, 183, 194
Beaumont, J. 24, 26, 28, 60, 41, 104, 139, 148, 180, 213, 281, 299, 333, [304](#), [310](#)
Beer Sheva 39, 44, 50, 54, 58, 61, 66, 129, 130, 134, 182, 186, 187, 281, 257, 283, 321
Begin, B. 132, 133, 134, 138, 179, 183
Bellier, I. [319](#), 333, 291, [310](#)
Ben-Gurion, D. 128
Benvenisti, E. 14, 50
Bet Hadassah 85, 160, 267
Bethlehem 14, 86, 106, 114, 176, 196, 215, 258, 233, 249, 255, 261, 265
Border 17, 56, 238, 242, 262, 341

- internal 174
- national 5, 9, 226
- police 20, 41
- Borrut, A. 236, 240, 276, 282
- Bosco, F. 24, 52, 235, 237, 240, 242, 333
- Breaking the Silence 140, 143, 145, 181, 185, 250, 251, 268, 282
- Brenner, N. 26, 27, 30, 52, 56, 235, 334
- Buffer zone 141, 168
- Building
 - enclave 141
 - house 159, 174
 - identity 87, 179
 - illegal 46, 81, 155, 157, 159, 173, 181
 - law 120, 155
 - nation 85
 - permits 110, 120, 154, 155
 - policy 153, 155
 - rebuilding 64, 106, 159, 161, 295
- Burgoyne, M. 237, 240, 242, 272, 276

- Canaan, T. 114, 206, 208, 276
- Canada 8, 94, 321
- Cave of the Patriarchs 46, 83, 84, 87, 89, 90, 143, 167, 175, 158, 162, 185, 194, 255, 265, 284
- Cemetery 17, 19, 46, 41, 45, 46, 51, 60, 61, 62, 64, 68, 70, 85, 80, 81, 91, 112, 122, 161, 158, 182, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 198, 208, 228, 229, 273, 285
- Chabbi, J. 234, 236, 276
- Checkpoint 18, 19, 89, 99, 100, 149, 151, 158, 160, 161, 169, 174, 176, 196, 253, 261, 265
 - Checkpoint 56, 18, 89, 99, 149, 160, 161, 169, 265
- Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) 251, 253, 329
- Chronology 79, 187, 234
- Citizen
 - Bedouin 60, 130, 131, 226, 315, 321
 - Israeli 12, 15, 17, 18, 35, 50, 73, 96, 126, 161, 186, [311](#), 292, 296
 - Jewish Israeli 16, 19, 56, 138, 292
 - Palestinian 61, 48, 98, 281
 - second-class 16, 19, 20, 48
- Citizenship 16, 20, 46, 54, 60, 61, 63, 73, 96, 102, 96, 130, 147, 170, 199, 265, 296
 - Israeli 73, 96, 126, 186, [311](#)
 - Jewish 16
 - settler-colonial 16
- City
 - divided 20, 62, 70, 86, 87, 106, 190
 - holy 48, 68, 83, 96, 184, 186
 - of David 17, 44, 75, 77, 78, 79, 96, 105, 79, 91, 93, 148, 118, 124, 174, 196, 206, 259,

277, 279, 284, 286, 287, 292, 294
old 9, 18, 20, 44, 66, 74, 75, 77, 83, 85, 87, 89, 79, 87, 93, 96, 98, 99, 106, 122, 140, 114,
120, 140, 144, 145, 147, 155, 163, 165, 167, 175, 177, 158, 162, 174, 184, 185, 192,
193, 206, 223, 236, 250, 252, 276, 265, 267, 269, 281, 285, 287, 289, 290, 291, 331,
292
right to the 30, 75, 134, 135, 136, 137, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 114
Civil disobedience 162
Coercion 6, 30, 32, 38, 58, 92, 82, 83, 151
Cohen, S.B. 83, 85, 144
Co-implicated 265, 300
Collective action 40, 42, 46, 56, 34, 35, 37, 39, 119, 155, 158, 160, 178, 180, 189, 194, 179,
303, 333, 335, 296
Collins, J. 6, 44, 52, 75, 109, 144, 196, 277, 234, 251, 335, 308, 310
Colonial 6, 15, 19, 33, 52, 60, 62, 33, 132, 134, 138, 172, 155, 156, 191, 192, 230, 310, 321,
333, 341
Colonization 10, 11, 12, 60, 77
Communication 87, 174, 198, 210, 235, 237, 238, 241, 243, 247, 248, 249, 258, 279, 282,
289, 309, 325, 332, 336, 296
 campaign 248
 network 241
 space 194
 strategy 165, 238, 282, 296
Convention
 Geneva 48, 75
 Hague 10, 48
Cooperation 14, 60, 35, 126, 241, 258, 286, 299, 300
Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) 13, 14, 48, 50
Counterpublic *see* Subaltern 194

Daesh 238
Damascus Gate 174, 180, 196
Dayan, M. 57, 132
De-Arabization 73
DeLanda, M. 28, 52
Deleuze, G. 28, 52
Democracy 190, 198, 199
 ethnic 16, 54, 62
 liberal 192
Demography 3, 12, 73, 81, 132, 134, 153, 155, 157, 341
 demographic balance 73, 134, 155
 demographic engineering 12
 demographic objective 73
Demolition 52, 61, 62, 63, 64, 75, 79, 80, 104, 91, 94, 110, 114, 116, 130, 142, 148, 119,
121, 122, 153, 157, 159, 161, 163, 171, 174, 176, 177, 183, 187, 188, 180, 182, 188, 198,
186, 190, 192, 198, 251, 247, 257, 285, 313, 292

Demonstration 22, 112, 122, 130, 140, 177, 156, 157, 158, 166, 168, 169, 174, 178, 180, 182, 184, 186, 187, 188, 195, 196, 253, 279, 285, [303](#), 331, 298, 300
non-violent 157, 253
Open Shuhada Street 90, 164, 166, 168, 200, [303](#)
Deterritorialization 48, 180, 268, [306](#)
Diplomacy 5, 96, 179, 241, [307](#)
Discrimination 92, 104, 157, 183, 187, 191, 226, 281, 284, [309](#), [312](#), 335, 292, [308](#)
Dispossession 9, 2, 6, 48, 49, 50, 74, 188
Dome of the Rock 70, 218
Domination 9, 23, 5, 6, 7, 16, 20, 33, 62, 106, 79, 86, 88, 149, 116, 118, 124, 172, 175, 155, 172, 180, 253

East Jerusalem 22, 11, 18, 20, 52, 56, 60, 34, 41, 44, 48, 50, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 81, 82, 83, 96, 97, 100, 101, 104, 106, 91, 96, 118, 120, 125, 155, 159, 175, 183, 184, 186, 189, 154, 174, 180, 184, 192, 194, 200, 222, 279, 286, 287, [305](#), [308](#), 343, 292, 294
Palestinians of 169, 195
status 257, 281

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) 99, 145, 244, 249, 251, 252, 253, 255, 329, 330
Einwohner, R.L 39, 102
Elad 20, 44, 75, 77, 79, 91, 174, 286
Elden, S. 30, 52, 235, 334
Emek Shaveh 97, 196, 255, 277, 278, 329
Emplaced 9, 11, 12, 16, 169, 239, 341
Emplacement 187, [306](#)
Enclave 2, 62, 48, 140, 141, 157, 174, 259
Enclavization [306](#), [308](#)
Environment 21, 12, 22, 36, 48, 96, 91, 134, 136, 138, 146, 167, 172, 182, 195, 197, 198, 200, 203, 210, 229, 235, 254, 275
lived 32
material, physical, built 138, 154, 163, 167, 173
spatial 42
threatening 172, 178, 198
urban 166

Eretz Israel 12, 54
Ethnocracy 22, 4, 15, 16, 34, 54, 56, 33, 42, 73, 117, 138, 169, 171, 172, 194, 198, 226, 325, 341, 290, 291
European Union 58, 94, 104, 146, 297, [305](#), 337
Exceptionalism 8
Expulsion 9, 8, 56, 65, 66, 94, 81, 82, 132, 121, 244

Fabric
social 37, 116, 122, 116, 147
urban 41, 79, 122, 116, 138, 165, 167, 175, 177, 174, 294
Facts on the ground 10, 12, 18, 75, 79, 153, 185, 228, 253

Fatah 106, 142, 122, 180, 269
Fellahin 129, 203, 204, 266
Forest 89, 277, 330
Foucault, M. 140, 185
Fragmentation 4, 10, 12, 18, 42, 43, 48, 116, 145, 220, 268, 300, [306](#), [308](#)
 of the Palestinian territory 42, 145, 220, 300, [306](#)
 of the West Bank 4, [306](#), [308](#)
Framing 22, 34, 36, 46, 58, 33, 147, 124, 182, 200, 205, 210, 216, 222, 224, 226, 228, 254,
 256, 257, 264, 268, 234, 239, 242, 259, 281, [307](#), 321, [312](#), 325, 290, [306](#)
 identity 224, 254
 place-framing 139, 214
 protest 36, 268, 242
Freedom 4, 36, 37, 94, 96, 162, 190, 181, 196, 228
 of Indigenous Peoples [313](#)
 of movement 4, 37, 96, 190, 228
 space of 110
 to protest 162
Frontier 105, 148, 128, 232, 238, 272
 area 232, 234
 guardians 234, 238

Gaza 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 48, 49, 35, 54, 86, 98, 156, 180, 212, 219, 222, 226, 228, 240, 281,
 282
Gender 110, 112, 114, 169, 178, 192, 184
Globalization 52, 53, 234, 259, 298, 327, 335
Goffman, E. 35, 54
Golan 4, 10, 48, 85, 86, 144, 183, 275
Goldberg
 Committee 132, 133, 179
 report 133
Goldstein, B. 85, 90, 157
Graffiti 17, 19, 74, 87, 89, 98, 100, 138, 148, 223, 262
Graham, S. 143, 140, 147, 153, 185, 274, 339
Gramsci, A. 6, 54
Green Line 10, 18, 341
Green Patrol 41, 64, 96
Guattari, F. 28, 52

H1 18, 20, 48, 86, 87, 89, 143, 150, 164, 175, 156, 157, 158, 160, 162, 265, 289, 290
H2 9, 17, 18, 20, 34, 41, 46, 48, 50, 86, 87, 89, 91, 92, 96, 98, 108, 112, 122, 138, 139, 140,
 143, 144, 145, 147, 149, 153, 163, 165, 167, 173, 175, 156, 157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 168,
 172, 174, 208, 222, 224, 270, 243, 244, 250, 251, 267, 269, 281, 289, 291, 331, 292, 296
Hadith 208
Hadith(s) 236, 245, 246, 250, 256, 259, 272, 274
Hanafi, S. 132, 145, 173, 185

Harvey, D. 30, 54, 75, 134, 138, 145
Hasson, S. 19, 22, 54, 62, 56, 58, 94, 106, 177, 196
Haut lieu 277, 259, 287
Hazbun, W. 260, 261, 336
Hebraicization 85, 88
Hebron Rehabilitation Committee 163, 164, 165, 167, 265, 267, 293, 340
Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) 98, 108, 122, 163, 164, 165, 167, 182, 198, 254, 274, 265, 267, 293, 340
Hegemony 16, 4, 5, 6, 14, 17, 21, 24, 32, 34, 46, 52, 77, 86, 138, 116, 167, 169, 155, 156, 173, 268, 261, 343
 internal 15
Heritage 105, 85, 87, 143, 148, 163, 198, 181, 186, 216, 218, 274, 280, 265, 292, 293
Herzl, T. 2, 55
Hollander, J.A 39, 102
Homeland 2, 182, 222, 265, 266, 268, 294
House
 safe 118, 194
House(s) 17, 44, 51, 60, 62, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 75, 81, 87, 93, 95, 98, 100, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 122, 130, 134, 136, 138, 142, 116, 119, 120, 122, 123, 147, 153, 154, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 171, 173, 174, 175, 183, 187, 170, 172, 176, 186, 188, 190, 192, 196, 198, 200, 209, 222, 223, 244, 251, 266, 233, 273, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, [307](#), [308](#)
 demolition 81, 119, 155, 187, 176
Housing 74, 79, 81, 85, 88, 122, 130, 153, 156, 159, 163, 164, 186, 196
Hubbard, P. 32, 55

Identity
 Bedouin 228, 317
 collective 34, 139, 179, 216
 Indigenous 228, 290
 Jewish 96, 98
 Jewish Israeli 6, 85
 local 36, 114, 126, 181, 184, 194, 268, [308](#), 294, [306](#)
 Palestinian 22, 2, 56, 88, 91, 144, 181, 183, 186, 212, 218, 222, 223, 224, 230, 248, 264, 276, 278, 290, 294, [307](#), [308](#)
 place 87, 110, 120, 180, 181, 182, 186, 193, 266, 259, 260, 280, 281, 285, 287, [312](#), [307](#), [308](#)
 Silwanese 93, 214, 250
Ideology 32, 33, 110, 128, 115, 177, 182, 258, 262
 religious 258, 262
 Zionist 54
Imaginariness 39, 81, 83, 92, 179, 180, 218, [319](#)
 spatial 26, 182, 214, 228, 264, 265, [306](#)
Indigeneity 44, 47, 180, 295, [307](#), [310](#), 317, 318, 321, 292, 298, [304](#)
Indigenous 2, 6, 43, 54, 100, 108, 200, 226, 228, 266, 268, [311](#), [312](#), [313](#), [314](#), 317, [319](#),

320, 321, 333, 339, 340, 290, 293, 306, 311
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 319
identity 228, 290
minority 268
peoples 6, 108, 311, 312, 314, 319, 320, 321, 322, 339, 340, 311
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 313, 333
territory 200, 226, 266, 317, 291, 293, 306
United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations 311
Information 11, 13, 44, 46, 94, 102, 113, 116, 182, 277, 235, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243,
245, 246, 247, 249, 251, 257, 258, 259, 260, 263, 269, 275, 277, 279, 291, 293, 297, 299,
300, 303, 308, 311, 317, 324, 325, 338, 292, 308
Inhabiting 25, 44, 74, 103, 108, 115, 154, 302
International Solidarity Movement (ISM) 159, 172, 196, 244, 249, 251, 253, 254, 255, 329,
330
Intifada 39, 128, 148, 156, 329
first 248
second 4, 14, 192, 262, 289
Ir Amim 68, 80, 81, 102, 120, 121, 122, 155, 157, 186, 187
Islam 45, 62, 70, 83, 85, 90, 92, 96, 98, 158, 192, 180, 184, 193, 194, 226, 230, 231, 232,
234, 236, 238, 240, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 256, 258, 259, 260, 262, 269, 272,
276, 278, 282, 265, 266, 267, 292, 304
holy place 176, 254
Islamic Movement in Israel 124, 248
property 259
radical 230, 238, 250, 256
territorialization of 239
Israel Land Authority (ILA) 60, 94, 102
Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN) 311
Jaffa 60, 104, 240, 310
Jerusalem 19, 21, 22, 2, 4, 10, 12, 20, 22, 34, 52, 55, 58, 62, 63, 35, 42, 44, 48, 50, 68, 70,
73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 89, 96, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 79,
98, 102, 116, 140, 148, 118, 120, 122, 126, 138, 153, 155, 156, 157, 159, 171, 177, 179,
181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 190, 154, 174, 178, 180, 186, 188, 190, 196, 184, 186, 192, 196,
206, 218, 220, 221, 222, 226, 231, 236, 240, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252,
254, 255, 256, 272, 274, 276, 278, 280, 282, 233, 247, 249, 255, 256, 259, 284, 285, 305,
307, 308, 329, 343, 292, 294, 299
Jessop, B. 26, 28, 56
Jewish
citizens 16, 19, 56, 138
Community in Hebron 19, 83, 88, 98, 267, 271
identity 96, 98
immigration 2, 50
Israelis 38, 48, 70, 96, 180, 261, 341, 292, 300
land ownership 18, 54, 56

National Fund (JNF) 19, 20, 45, 52, 54, 60, 96, 89, 118, 130, 181, 188, 190, 198, 277
people 12, 53, 54, 77, 84, 79, 85, 171, 267
settlement 3, 44, 52, 58, 73, 74, 75, 77, 87, 120
settlers 2, 20, 50, 70, 77, 78, 82, 85, 79, 162, 178, 294, 299
State 2, 8, 19, 60, 53, 132, [308](#)

Jihad 232, 234, 238, 244, 272, 276, 282

Jordan Valley 12

Judaization 54, 56, 73, 193, 198

Judgment Day 246, 248, 251, 259

Justice 54, 61, 100, 148, 135, 169, 171, 299, 333, 339, [310](#)
global 297, 299, [305](#), 335, 339
injustice 22, 7, 92, 144, 171, 160, 226, 255, 271, 325
social 279
spatial 44, 62, 75, 132, 134, 146, 114

Khalidi, R. 248

Khalilieh, H.S 240, 278

Khawaja, M. 40, 56

Kimmerling, B. 6, 8, 9, 21, 56, 53, 56, 73, 94, 102, 77, 128, 146, 204, 278

Kiryat Arba 85, 98

Kliot, N. 83, 85, 144

Land 17, 19, 22, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 59, 42, 45, 48, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 66, 70, 77, 81, 93, 94, 95, 96, 100, 102, 103, 73, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 91, 101, 104, 106, 108, 112, 122, 124, 129, 132, 136, 138, 118, 120, 123, 128, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 159, 171, 173, 179, 183, 154, 175, 184, 186, 188, 192, 179, 180, 182, 187, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202, 203, 204, 210, 211, 212, 213, 228, 229, 230, 234, 238, 244, 246, 249, 250, 252, 254, 255, 256, 258, 259, 260, 264, 266, 268, 280, 233, 243, 247, 267, 274, 275, 277, 285, [311](#), 317, [319](#), 321, 322, 334, 341, 342, 290, 292, 293, 298, [306](#), [308](#), [309](#), [311](#)
ownership 8, 42, 52, 81, 133, 184, 293

Landscape 9, 17, 22, 26, 74, 85, 87, 89, 92, 95, 122, 144, 146, 148, 120, 140, 141, 166, 180, 182, 193, 198, 204, 205, 210, 211, 212, 266, 275, 276, 282, 249, 265, 273, 275, 277, 283, [302](#), [304](#), [306](#)
cultural 46, 143, 181, 197, 210, 212, 229, 266, 274, 278, 295, 293
linguistic 87

Language
elements of 56, 235, 270, 279, 281

Law
Basic 16, 70
enforcement 35, 92, 101, 145
international 10, 56, 60, 75, 186, 251, 258, 295, [312](#), 293
Land Acquisition 55, 94
martial 54, 56, 60
Planning and Building 56

Lefebvre, H. 20, 22, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 44, 45, 46, 52, 57, 58, 74, 75, 134, 136, 137, 146, 147, 148, 115, 124, 144, 175, 187, 154, 179, 280, 235, 237, 334, 337, 300, [302](#), [310](#)

Leitner, H. 24, 26, 58, 179, 280, 234, 241, 327, 335, 337, 343, [310](#)

Levinger, M. 85

Locale 83, 110

Locality 132, 175, 179, 264, 327

Location 69, 79, 75, 77, 83, 88, 155, 172, 174, 176, 180, 182, 184, 194, 233, 242, 250, 287, [308](#), 327, 296, 299, 300

Long, M. 162, 238, 246, 256, 280

Lupolianski, U. 79, 121

Maada Community Center 19, 113, 116, 140, 142, 159, 176, 208, 215, 216, 270, 257, 277, 287

Mandate 84, 253

 British 2, 52, 60, 81, 212

 neutral 251

 Palestine 212, 262

Marginalized 87, 188, 264, 253

Marking 87

 space 87, 93, 98, 167

 symbolic 102, 138

Master Plan 118, 130, 131, 132, 134, 175, 189

 for Beer-Sheva Metropolitan Area 58, 130, 134

 Jerusalem 120

 Jerusalem 73

 Jerusalem 120

 Jerusalem 156

Matrix of control 9, 54

Mazar, E. 76, 104

Mecca 206, 207, 208, 210, 248, 267

Media 36, 46, 112, 168, 235, 239, 241, 242, 243, 249, 255, 257, 269, 277, 283, 286, 291, 293, 300, 301, [305](#), [307](#), 327, 292, 299

 international 174, 241, 285

 Palestinian 246, 248, 245

 social 19, 201, 203, 239, 241, 245, 247, 255, 292, 301, [305](#), [311](#)

Memory 83, 94, 98, 85, 88, 92, 93, 99, 101, 138, 142, 149, 179, 180, 182, 187, 188, 192, 195, 198, 210, 218, 222, 268

Migdal, M. 128, 146, 204, 278

Milieu 200

Military 18, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 48, 52, 56, 60, 35, 54, 75, 85, 86, 87, 89, 79, 98, 114, 140, 118, 128, 130, 132, 138, 140, 143, 145, 147, 148, 153, 164, 167, 177, 179, 181, 185, 158, 160, 162, 163, 172, 193, 220, 234, 241, 253, 254, 268, 271, 282, 341, 292, 296, 298

 urbanism 18, 118, 139, 140, 143, 147, 185

Miller, B. 23, 24, 26, 28, 38, 58, 60, 41, 104, 139, 148, 180, 213, 281, 343, [302](#), [310](#)

Minority 5, 15, 16, 17, 18, 60, 35, 86, 134, 116, 132, 172, 192, 241, 321, 343, 292, [306](#)
Arab 62, 228
Bedouin 170, 228
Indigenous 268
Palestinian 171
Mitchell, D. 6, 58, 134, 148, 124, 169, 190, 154, 155, 186, 190, 198, 199, 182, 211, 280,
282
Mosque 44, 70, 92, 143, 161, 164, 184, 186, 194, 230, 242, 248, 250, 253, 254, 265, 266,
267, 277
Mujir Al-Din 240, 242
Municipality 20, 44, 73, 79, 81, 87, 88, 86, 91, 98, 118, 122, 123, 124, 126, 132, 134, 136,
140, 153, 157, 159, 171, 175, 176, 178, 196, 287, [307](#)
of Hebron 87
of Jerusalem 70

Nakba 2, 8, 50, 85, 132, 212
Naming 75, 77, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 102, 143, 144, 146, 114, 274, 275
place-name 144
Narrative 22, 96, 92, 98, 122, 191, 204, 210, 216, 230, 257, 258, 259, 269, 280, 281, 287,
288, [309](#), [311](#), [312](#), 292
National
identity 62, 106, 212, 214, 222, 264, 282
Park 73, 81, 120, 122, 183, 174, 192, 206
scale 43, 212, 214, 294, 325
Security Council 132, 133
struggle 124, 180, 214, 222, 223, 225
territory 46, 75, 108, 181, 211, 212, 222, 226, 229, 264, [312](#), 294
Nationalism 35, 102, 183, 212, 214, 220, 260, 262, 275, 278, 341
Israeli 85
methodological 35, 73
Palestinian 59, 146, 204, 214, 280
religious 244
Nationality 16, 54, 102, 192, 265
Nation-state 35, 226, 315
Native *see* Indigenous 33, 98, 159
Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) 60, 62, 104, 81, 124, 148, 131, 132,
159, 170, 179, 181, 187, 188, 181, 198, 197, 243, 247, 257, 271, 277, 301, [305](#), [307](#), [311](#),
[313](#), 315, 321, 329, 331, 333, 337
Netanyahu, B. 134, 227, 228
Network 9, 4, 24, 26, 46, 34, 180, 282, 234, 239, 241, 243, 249, 251, 259, 261, 265, 275,
288, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 300, 301, [303](#), [305](#), [308](#), 325, 326, 327, 339, 292, 293,
294, 297, [302](#), [304](#), [308](#)
communication 241
international 234, 235, 249, 293, 295, 297, 299, 317, 324, 298
of solidarity 257, 258, 289, 295, [303](#), [307](#), 337, 298

social 194, 235, 241, 243, 258, 279, 337
virtual 239, 257, 258
New Zealand 8, 321
Nicholls, W. 24, 26, 28, 59, 60, 41, 104, 139, 148, 180, 213, 228, 280, 281, 239, 299, 325,
333, 337, [304](#), [310](#)
Non-violence 128, 157, 158, 164, 178, 181, 186, 226, 253, 301, [303](#), [304](#), 292
Normalization 257, 294

Obama, Barack 158, 253
Occupation 22, 4, 10, 12, 14, 20, 48, 52, 56, 60, 42, 48, 50, 79, 92, 97, 104, 114, 120, 132,
136, 140, 118, 122, 125, 143, 147, 151, 165, 169, 172, 175, 177, 181, 156, 158, 160, 168,
174, 178, 191, 194, 196, 198, 200, 218, 220, 222, 224, 230, 243, 244, 282, 249, 251, 253,
256, 257, 259, 263, 264, 267, 268, 271, 281, 282, 283, 297, [305](#), [307](#), 325, 329, 290, 292,
293, 292, 294, 295, 296, [309](#)
civilian 10, 11, 62, 79, 106, 189
military 2, 9, 10, 11, 48, 60, 75, 140, 220, 268
second 79
Olive 48, 106, 170, 182, 194, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 208, 270, 274, 273
tree 48, 170, 182, 194, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 208, 270, 274, 273
Opportunities 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 50, 54, 55, 58, 37, 41, 102, 117, 130, 117, 118, 126, 132,
137, 169, 171, 173, 194, 264, 247, 297, 299, 327, 344, 292, 300
Oslo Accords 13, 14, 86
Ottoman Empire 52, 60, 82, 84, 212, 240, 275
Ownership
Bedouin 46, 321
Jewish 53
land 2, 8, 42, 51, 52, 53, 56, 60, 81, 133, 184, 293
Ownerwhip 2, 51, 52, 53, 56, 60, 77, 130, 321, 293

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) 14
Palestinian National Authority (PNA) 14, 35, 41, 68, 86, 87, 166, 167, 162, 170, 220, 221,
[309](#), 292, 294, 295
Pappe, I. 2, 8, 60, 77, 132, 148
Parliament
European 94, 315
Israeli (Knesset) 85, 94, 134, 135, 170, 179, 180, 188, 184
Partition 2, 140
Peres, S. 227
Picard, C. 236, 282
Pilgrimage 83, 98, 259, 336
Place
identity 110, 120, 180, 181, 182, 193, 259, 260, 279, 280, 285, [312](#), [307](#), [308](#)
sense of 9, 36, 83, 104, 114, 122, 125, 138, 146, 175, 179, 180, 206, 210, 212, 214, 216,
222, 226, 228, 230, 264, 265, 268, 280, 283, 242, 293, 294, [303](#), [304](#)
Plan Dalet 146

Planners for Human Rights (Bimkom) 81, 100, 120, 130, 131, 132, 136, 179, 183, 184, 189
Planning 16, 20, 25, 32, 34, 45, 46, 55, 56, 58, 59, 56, 70, 73, 81, 100, 106, 112, 138, 149,
115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 128, 130, 131, 132, 134, 136, 138, 147,
151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 164, 167, 168, 169, 181, 183, 184, 185, 189, 154, 192, 194, 198,
199, 179, 192, 196, 276, 233, 286, [303](#), 333, 335, 337, 339, 293, [302](#), [310](#)
Pratt, M-L 54, 118, 148, [310](#)
Prayer
Plan 130, 134, 135, 138, 180, 181, 188, 271, [313](#), 315, [312](#)
Prayer, E. 132, 133
Prayer 19, 64, 85, 92, 118, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 196, 184, 186, 248, 252, 256, 272,
255, 287
friday 123, 176, 177, 180
Presence 16, 2, 10, 12, 13, 44, 48, 50, 56, 59, 63, 69, 75, 76, 77, 78, 85, 94, 98, 74, 75, 76,
77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 93, 95, 98, 101, 104, 106, 108, 110, 111,
112, 114, 122, 128, 130, 136, 138, 140, 115, 118, 134, 140, 143, 154, 159, 161, 175, 177,
158, 160, 162, 168, 172, 174, 177, 180, 182, 188, 190, 192, 194, 179, 182, 184, 186, 188,
190, 192, 194, 196, 206, 208, 209, 210, 214, 218, 220, 234, 236, 238, 246, 250, 256, 260,
264, 237, 239, 250, 251, 253, 254, 256, 257, 258, 259, 263, 266, 267, 269, 274, 275, 277,
283, 285, 289, 293, 321, 325, 327, 290, 294, 295, 296, 298, [308](#)
art of 126, 130, 144
local 252
physical 44, 75, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84, 102, 103, 108, 109, 111, 194, 214, 244, 253, 254, [306](#)
protective 244, 252
Property 4, 6, 8, 48, 54, 52, 56, 58, 81, 98, 74, 77, 81, 108, 136, 130, 134, 165, 167, 169,
154, 189, 267, 292
acquisition 52
Jewish 45, 267
land 6, 77, 186, 267, 292
rights 77, 82, 189
State of Israel 52, 56, 58, 130
Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron 50, 87, 98
Public
space 16, 38, 46, 81, 89, 100, 112, 118, 144, 148, 117, 124, 143, 169, 155, 156, 163, 168,
170, 174, 176, 177, 180, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 199, 178,
243, [302](#)
sphere 46, 53, 54, 85, 112, 114, 115, 116, 124, 185, 155, 192, 194, 198, 338
Quran 96, 208, 236, 245, 248, 260, 261, 280
Rabbis for Human Rights 250, 255, 257, 277, 329
Rabin, Y. 272
Racism 18, 100, 102, 186
Rahat 19, 44, 50, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 122, 128, 161, 184, 180, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 192,
200, 285, 291, 290
Redemption 59

Regime

- democratic 17, 186
- dual 145
- ethnocratic 42, 172
- Israeli 16, 126, 138, 168, 179
- land 8
- non-democratic 40
- of control 9, 17, 10, 18, 87, 89, 343, 293
- of domination 5
- settler-colonial 4, 8

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (RCUV) 130, 132, 136, 179, 189, 154, [311](#)

Regulation 48, 125, 130, 132, 187, 160, [313](#), 296

Rehabilitation, renovation 59, 122, 116, 158, 159, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 174, 267, 293

Relational 22, 26, 28, 153, 235, 236, 237, 241, 259, 293, 316, 327, 335, 300, [304](#), [305](#), [310](#)
relationality 28, 333, 343, [304](#), [310](#)

Repertoire 18, 22, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44, 74, 83, 102, 126, 139, 157, 161, 181, 186, 222, 230, 244, 256, 258, 268, 234, 235, [305](#), 343, 297, 300
Palestinian 22, 75, 130, 256, 257, 262, [302](#)

spatial 9, 18, 21, 22, 24, 28, 34, 42, 75, 115, 155, 293, 300

Representations 10, 2, 4, 24, 28, 32, 36, 43, 39, 41, 74, 83, 108, 110, 142, 146, 115, 155, 179, 180, 210, 212, 213, 218, 224, 244, 252, 256, 262, 264, 267, 268, 274, 278, 235, 259, 271, 279, 280, 288, [312](#), [304](#), [306](#), [307](#)
spatial 115, 210, [306](#)

territorial 269, 290

Repression 38, 40, 37, 144, 160, 168, 173, 176, 192, 198, 275, 290, 293, 292, 296, 300, [306](#)

Resistance 9, 12, 19, 23, 2, 20, 22, 34, 36, 40, 42, 44, 46, 52, 53, 54, 61, 62, 37, 39, 41, 44, 92, 102, 106, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 89, 91, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 114, 124, 125, 126, 128, 132, 136, 138, 139, 149, 124, 136, 151, 157, 159, 161, 162, 164, 165, 168, 171, 173, 189, 156, 164, 174, 194, 179, 190, 200, 202, 210, 218, 220, 224, 230, 242, 250, 252, 256, 258, 264, 279, 280, 282, 238, 239, 240, 243, 249, 251, 253, 256, 259, 260, 265, 267, 270, 275, 279, 280, 281, 283, 285, 287, 288, 293, 297, 299, [304](#), [308](#), 335, 336, 341, 343, 290, 291, 292, 294, 295, 297, 298, [302](#), [308](#), [309](#), [311](#)
flashpoint of 294

framing of [306](#)

habitational 44, 75, 109, 134, 244

local 112, 116, 138, 136, 287, [304](#), 317, 325

opportunity for 292

Palestinian 9, 42, 44, 125, 230, 287, 293, 298, [303](#)

practices 39, 92, 105, 124, 138, 124, 251, 343, 344, [308](#)

spatialities of 50, 236, 343

strategies 4, 41, 49, 75, 137, 138, 125, 173, 179, 239, 254, 279, [312](#), 294, 300

Rhoné C. 236

Ribat 4, 46, 39, 94, 126, 176, 178, 184, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 254, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 262, 264, 272, 274, 276, 278, 280, 282, 233, 293, 294, [304](#), [308](#)

land of 250, 252
people of 235, 251
Right(s)
Human 50, 88, 96, 102, 114, 157, 181, 187, 243, 244, 255, 277, [303](#), [307](#), [309](#), 318, [320](#),
321, 331, 334, 292
to place 44, 74, 75, 131, 132, 134, 136, 137, 138, 179, 290
to the city 30, 75, 134, 135, 136, 137, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 114
to the village 136, 144, 146
Right(s) 106, 142, 177, 154, 196, 332
Road 85, 87, 89, 74, 87, 90, 140, 143, 147, 158, 301
bypass 14
sign 74, 87, 90
Rootedness 9, 19, 22, 37, 77, 79, 128, 194, 198, 200, 203, 228, 234, 235, 239, 244, 262,
234, 235, 237, 243, 259, 275, [304](#), [306](#)
Rotbard, S. 115
Rouhana, N.N 8, 16, 54, 60, 61
Routledge, P. 21, 39

Sabbagh-Khoury, A. 8, 17, 61
Salah, R. 248, 272
Samman, M. 33, 62
Sanctuarized 89, 90, 98, 143, 158, 174
Sanders, T. 33, 55
Scale 241, 299, 339
local 42, 46, 136, 234, 235, 242, 287, 293, [305](#), [312](#), 341, [306](#), [308](#)
multi- 35, 239
national 43, 212, 214, 294, 325
of action 175, 179, 258, 234, [308](#)
of resistance 44
shift, jump 46, 234, 235, 241, 297, [305](#), [307](#), [309](#), 315, 317, 325, 327, 333
Segregation 8, 145, 146, 226, 253, 279, 281
gender 112
Separation 18, 14, 18, 48, 49, 50, 75, 82, 92, 96, 118, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 192, 334,
341, 292, 296, 298
barrier 14, 48, 50, 75, 334, 341, 298
policy of separation 139, 143, 147
Settler colonialism 9, 6, 8, 15, 16, 63, 33, 169, 264
Settler-colonial 9, 4, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 61
citizenship 16
regime 4, 8, 16
State 7, 17
Settlers 4, 6, 13, 74, 79, 83, 85, 87, 92, 102, 104, 79, 81, 93, 96, 97, 98, 107, 110, 113, 114,
140, 143, 145, 163, 175, 187, 158, 170, 172, 176, 196, 220, 243, 252, 253, 254, 267, 269,
281, 285, 287, 289, 292, 296
Sewell, W.H. Jr 40

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 114, 149
Shamir, Y. 52, 106, 134, 181
Sharon
 Plan 12
 Sharon, A. 129
Sheikh Jarrah 196, 285, 331, 299
Short, J. 327
Sinai 10, 48, 52, 100
Site of contention 44, 46, 48, 66, 68, 75, 138, 116, 266, 239, 245, 257, 280, 281, 286, 300, 325, [307](#)
Six Days war 10, 11, 13, 56, 60, 50, 70, 73, 77, 79, 81, 83, 106, 73, 85, 128, 132, 133, 155, 279
Social movement 22, 24, 28, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 52, 58, 61, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 104, 148, 198, 280, 241, 325, 334, 335, 337, 339, 300, [310](#), [311](#)
Soja, E. 10, 24, 32, 62, 134, 146, 114
Solidarity 16, 61, 37, 122, 126, 130, 159, 180, 182, 192, 235, 247, 249, 251, 252, 254, 257, 258, 259, 263, 289, 291, 293, 295, 296, 297, 299, 301, [303](#), [305](#), [307](#), 325, 329, 331, 337, 339, 293, 298
 networks 234, 249, 317, 326
 transnational 239
South Africa 58, 145, 147, 277, 282, [303](#), 331
Sovereignty 2, 3, 4, 6, 42, 94, 135, 212, 266, 341, [306](#)
 Israeli 9, 98
 Jewish 269
 Palestinian 212
Space
 administration of 115
 appropriation 75, 76, 77, 82, 144, 213
 battle 139, 147
 conceived 30, 115, 116, 118, 124, 138, 143, 144, 148, 151, 153, 167, 168, 173, 175, 176, 154, 180, 194, 235, [302](#), [304](#)
 control of 22, 3, 5, 8, 38, 43, 44, 45, 124, 128, 153, 156, 158, 166, 168, 174, 296, [306](#)
 division 8, 52, 112
 domestic 30, 100, 110, 112, 114, 125, 114, 167, 173
 dominant 115, 124, 149, 175
 fragmentation of 116
 gendered 114
 inhabiting the 115
 lived 30, 32, 46, 102, 104, 125, 137, 116, 124, 153, 192, 213, 268, 237, [302](#)
 local 42, 35, 125, 214, 289, [312](#)
 marking 87, 93, 98
 material 124, 163, 190
 mental 182
 neutral 117
 of life 121, 154

of sociability 115
of toleration 40
open 120, 121, 174, 190
perceived 32, 237
practiced 115
presence in 74, 75, 76, 138, 140, 115, 143, 177, 296
production of 4, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 38, 43, 44, 57, 50, 74, 77, 108, 124, 138, 130,
132, 149, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 173, 187, 179, 280, 239, 242, 259, 293, 337, 343,
300, [305](#), [310](#)
public 16, 38, 46, 81, 89, 100, 112, 118, 144, 148, 117, 124, 143, 169, 155, 156, 163, 168,
170, 174, 176, 177, 180, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 194, 195, 196, 198, 199, 178, 243,
[302](#)
recreational 116
safe 116
social 30, 130, 115, 243, 336
urban 34, 55, 62, 134, 153, 165, 177, 194

Spatial
frame 292
imaginaries 26, 182, 228, 264, 265
justice 44, 62, 75, 132, 134, 146, 114
narrative 179, 274
repertoire 9, 18, 21, 22, 24, 28, 34, 42, 75, 115, 155, 300

Spatialities 22, 24, 26, 28, 34, 36, 42, 50, 52, 53, 58, 60, 104, 130, 148, 179, 180, 214, 264,
280, 281, 235, 283, [307](#), [312](#), 335, 337, 343, 344, 300, [302](#), [306](#), [310](#)
human 28, [302](#)
of resistance 22, 24, 50, 60, 104, 148, 281, 236, 343, 344
relational 300

Spatiality 24, 26, 32, 42, 44, 52, 58, 61, 62, 33, 106, 74, 109, 128, 138, 301
Staeheli, L.A 21, 62, 124, 169, 190, 154, 155, 186, 188, 190, 192, 193, 199
Staging 77, 92, 170, 173, 195
Steadfastness 22, 44, 74, 104, 106, 109, 128
Street 17, 18, 19, 44, 89, 91, 97, 98, 99, 142, 114, 138, 158, 160, 206, 276, [303](#)
Open Shuhada 17, 92, 90, 156, 157, 164, 166, 168, 200, 301, [303](#), 331
Shuhada 17, 18, 19, 47, 89, 92, 97, 98, 100, 104, 143, 149, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 166,
169, 193, 194, 202, 267, 269, 271, 301, [303](#), 331, 292

Subaltern 9, 19, 21, 46, 173, 156, 239, 335
counterpublics 46, 156
populations, groups 9, 19, 21, 173

Sumud 18, 44, 39, 94, 74, 75, 90, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 114,
115, 118, 122, 124, 125, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 137, 139, 140, 114, 157, 159, 161, 163,
165, 176, 178, 187, 190, 200, 201, 204, 214, 218, 230, 244, 250, 252, 256, 257, 258, 260,
262, 264, 233, 273, 283, 285, 287, 297, 336, 344, 290, 293, 292, 293, 299, [303](#), [308](#)

Surah 260

Surveillance 34, 46, 78, 156, 168, 170, 172, 196, 253

Survival 111, 126, 232, [309](#)

Suspicion 116, 124, 164, 174, 192, 291
Switzerland 283
Symbol 4, 77, 92, 111, 118, 126, 159, 163, 176, 184, 186, 190, 192, 194, 196, 197, 200, 206, 222, 224, 257, 273, 281, 283, 284, 285, 287, [305](#), 290, [308](#)
religious 77
System
dual 145
legal 45, 77, 118, 126, 145, 151, 168, 169, 171, 189, 192, 333, 292, 296, 299
of control *see* Regime of control 9, 19
planning 132, 155
political 5, 118, 169, 173

Tal Rumeida 18, 47, 48, 85, 81, 120, 122, 140, 142, 147, 158, 159, 172, 194, 196, 208, 244, 270, 283
Tarrow, S. 34, 35, 38, 39, 42, 50, 62, 34, 104, 126, 189, 154, 297, 299, [303](#), [306](#), [307](#), [309](#), 335, 339, [310](#)
Tel Aviv 62, 56, 101, 106, 189, 188, 257
Temple 107, 79
Mount 56, 69
Territorial 9, 10, 23, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 22, 24, 56, 33, 54, 77, 102, 77, 108, 132, 134, 136, 146, 177, 180, 214, 230, 258, 266, 269, 280, 253, 281, 290, 301, [304](#), [306](#)
atomization 18
conflict 136, 301
control 9, 23, 8, 77, 266
imaginaries 214, [306](#)
isolation 291
representation 269, 290
Territorialization 16, 43, 231, 239, 240, 254, 260, 341, 290, [306](#)
of faith 231, 239, 240, 254
Re-territorialization 43, 290
Territory 9, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 22, 24, 26, 28, 34, 42, 43, 46, 54, 56, 75, 77, 94, 96, 79, 85, 87, 108, 110, 131, 128, 151, 169, 175, 195, 180, 182, 204, 212, 214, 219, 222, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 236, 238, 240, 253, 256, 260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 282, 283, 235, 237, [320](#), 334, 290, 291, 294, [302](#), [304](#), [306](#), [307](#), [308](#)
Bedouin 210, 317, [312](#), [307](#)
control of the 341
Indigenous 200, 226, 266, 317, 291, 293, [306](#)
Israeli 292
national 46, 75, 108, 181, 211, 212, 222, 226, 229, 264, [312](#), 294
Palestinian 2, 12, 218, 222, 268, [306](#), [307](#)
sense of 214, 268
Threat 34, 36, 38, 40, 37, 108, 112, 130, 118, 153, 169, 175, 186, 170, 172, 192, 248, 264, [320](#), 337, 292, 296, [308](#)
Tilly, C. 34, 38, 40, 50, 54, 62, 63, 34, 37, 102, 104, 189, 160, 188, 199, 178, 299, 339, [310](#)
Tourism 44, 75, 77, 96, 146, 114, 122, 235, 259, 260, 261, 263, 264, 271, 275, 278, 279,

289, 295, [303](#), 329, 335, 336, 337, 338
political 46, 92, 124, 235, 239, 248, 259, 261, 263, 264, 267, 269, 271, 276, 277, 279,
280, 283, 287, 288, 289, 293, [307](#), 325, 327, 334, 337, 292, 293, 292, 294

Town 58, 83, 85, 86, 92, 106, 185, 281, 290, 292, [309](#)
Bedouin 17, 46, 50, 58, 128, 159, 184
Ghost 17, 100, 102, 144, 281, 292
old town 85, 198
Palestinian 96

Transfer (of population) 11, 14, 75, 86, 108, 132, 134, 138, 142, 157, 180, 290, [306](#)

Tree 19, 46, 45, 130, 188, 182, 186, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 209, 228, 250,
270, 247, 273, [308](#)
fig 196, 249
olive 48, 170, 182, 194, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 208, 270, 274, 273
soldier 198

United Nations 8, 47, 48, 70, 72, 73, 75, 81, 94, 100, 106, 132, 133, 114, 120, 154, 155,
154, 295, 297, [305](#), [309](#), [311](#), [313](#), 315, [319](#), [312](#), 325, 333, 339, 340, 298, [311](#)
OCHA-oPt 75
UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural rights [313](#)
UNESCO 198, 186, 269, 280, 292, [309](#)
United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations [311](#)

United States 8, 54, 71, 297, 321, 333, [310](#)

Unrecognized villages 17, 20, 46, 51, 58, 60, 61, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 153, 159, 173,
179, 189, 180, 188, 247, 257, 273, 277, 284, 291, [313](#), [314](#), 321

Urbanism 45, 81, 147, 148, 185, 187, 189, 283
military 18, 118, 140, 143, 147, 185

Urbicide 146, 147, 163, 185, 187, 189, 337

Van Berchem, M. 240, 272, 233

Visibility 28, 38, 40, 44, 91, 96, 112, 130, 160, 174, 176, 177, 180, 187, 194, 186, 234, 235,
245, 249, 251, 269, 277, [303](#), 327, 292, 298

Wadi al-Na'am 58, 188, 226, 283, 331, 298

Wadi Hilwe 9, 17, 18, 34, 44, 66, 68, 72, 75, 79, 97, 79, 81, 91, 93, 95, 108, 116, 128, 141,
142, 118, 120, 122, 136, 138, 177, 181, 176, 178, 194, 196, 184, 192, 206, 208, 215, 270,
274, 243, 259, 286, 287, [305](#), 328, 292

Wadi Hilwe Information Center (WHIC) 93, 116, 141, 177, 270, 243, 245, 247, 257, 277,
279, 287, 328

Water 26, 58, 64, 87, 128, 140, 161, 163, 170, 180, 182, 198, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210,
273

Weizman, E. 11, 62, 73, 79, 106, 115, 140, 147, 157, 177, 189, 154

West Bank 22, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 34, 38, 40, 48, 49, 50, 58, 34, 35, 38,
41, 44, 48, 50, 73, 74, 75, 82, 86, 94, 96, 104, 74, 96, 102, 118, 143, 145, 153, 157, 167,
169, 173, 181, 189, 155, 184, 192, 194, 196, 198, 196, 200, 212, 219, 220, 222, 224, 226,
228, 282, 249, 255, 257, 261, 263, 265, 267, 271, 281, 293, 295, 329, 341, 343, 292, 294

Wolfe, P. 6, 8, 33

Yacobi, H. 34, 146, 187, 337

Yiftachel, O. 6, 8, 16, 54, 56, 33, 56, 57, 73, 94, 95, 100, 102, 73, 128, 132, 135, 187, 181, 182, 233

Youth against Settlements (YAS) 18, 92, 97, 99, 107, 120, 121, 122, 124, 140, 166, 157, 158, 170, 171, 172, 196, 223, 258, 243, 244, 245, 253, 265, 267, 281, 283, 291, 293, 299, 301, 303, 304, 327, 331

Youths 156, 160, 162, 164, 172, 178

Zapatista 243, 298, 337, 338, 339

Zawahiri, A. 238, 276

Zionism 18, 15, 56, 54, 102, 77, 100, 102, 146, 153, 173, 276

and territory 56, 102, 77, 146

religious 4

Zionist 9, 2, 6, 45, 52, 55, 50, 52, 54, 102, 132, 144, 146, 124, 128, 138, 175, 193, 195, 274, 253, 292, 306, 308

ideology 54

imaginary, narrative 128, 175, 292

project 9, 2, 6, 45, 50, 52, 124, 138, 195, 274, 306

Zoning 14, 73, 118, 120, 122, 128, 153, 155, 159