



## **Holding on to place**

### Spatialities of resistance in Israel and Palestine: the cases of Hebron, Silwan and al-Araqib

Marion Lecoquierre

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

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European University Institute

**Department of Political and Social Sciences**

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*A ma marraine, Elisabeth*



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# ABSTRACT

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The Israeli-Palestinian conflict centres on ensuring the control of land and territory; space thus plays a critical role in the power relations between the parties involved in the conflict. Acknowledging space as a central tool of domination used by the Israeli authorities, the following question arises: how is space mobilized by those opposing this control? This thesis endeavours to shed light on the way in which space can become both a resource for and an outcome of protest, with an emphasis placed on the way it is used in and produced through practices of resistance.

This research will utilise a comparative approach, relying on material collected in the course of fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2014 in Israel and Palestine. The three “sites of contention” analysed here include the H2 area in Hebron (the Old City under Israeli authority), the “core” neighbourhoods of Silwan (Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan) and the unrecognized Bedouin village of al-Araqib, in the Negev desert. Through the prism of these three case studies, the thesis will tackle different strategies built around the materiality of space, place, sense of place, territory, landscape, network and scale.

We will see that beyond the struggle against occupation and discrimination, the protests also attempt to re-appropriate the local space and make territorial claims in multiple ways and at different scales. It appears that place is the fundamental spatiality used in the contention in each of the three cases: inhabiting the place, and affirming one’s attachment to the neighbourhood is considered to be one of the only viable strategies available. This attachment, or sense of place, is connected to the attachment to the land, and to a territory, conceived in light of nationalist, religious and cultural perspectives. Through place-based practices and representations, but also via international advocacy, the actors of contention attempt to affirm the everlasting Palestinian rooting in space, thus challenging the deterritorialization provoked by the Israeli measures of control.



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# INTRODUCTION

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The branches are cut: the foliage sweeps the ground. Each October, during the olive harvest, the branches and trunks of hundreds of trees in the West Bank are cut off or burned by Israeli settlers<sup>1</sup>. Olive trees, traditionally invoked as a symbol of the region, metaphorically marking the ancient presence of men and their attachment to the land, then take on another meaning: they become the symbol of the struggle occurring in Israel and Palestine, the symbol of a disputed land.

For both Israelis and Palestinians, the conflict in the region is indeed primarily about space, that is, about the territory that can be controlled, the property of the land and the meaning attributed to the space; all of these dimensions are closely linked to the nationalistic, ethnic and religious stakes of the struggle. Both parties consider the space as a national territory, one of the nation over which States develop power and authority, but also as a territory linked to a culture and a religion – Jewish, Muslim or Christian – an area imbued with a deep historic meaning.

The fight between the two parties, on-going since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, intensified after the creation of Israel in 1948; it aims to ensure the recognition, continuity and security of the Hebrew State on the one side, and the recognition of the Palestinians' rights on the other. This includes the right to self-determination, to have a State of their own, but also the protection and respect of the Palestinian population's human rights. Recalling the historical process that led to the creation of Israel and the current conflict goes far beyond the task here: the emergence of the Zionist project, the Ottoman rule over the region and the increasing tensions between Jewish and

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<sup>1</sup> See for example: "Study: 96% of destruction of Palestinian olive tree cases fall apart due to police incompetence", *The Jerusalem Post*, October 13, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Study-96-percent-of-destruction-of-Palestinian-olive-tree-cases-fall-apart-due-to-police-incompetence-378724>; "The war on the Palestinian olive harvest", *+972*, October 30, 2012, <http://972mag.com/the-war-on-the-palestinian-olive-harvest/>; "In West Bank, Palestinians gird for settlers attacks on olive trees", *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/in-west-bank-palestinians-gird-for-settler-attacks-on-olive-trees/2014/10/21/eb4f5096-54a8-11e4-892e-602188e70e9c\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/in-west-bank-palestinians-gird-for-settler-attacks-on-olive-trees/2014/10/21/eb4f5096-54a8-11e4-892e-602188e70e9c_story.html); "Israeli settlers accused of destroying Palestinian olive trees", *Al Jazeera*, October 19, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/19/israeli-settlerschopdown100treesinwestbankvillage.html>; "Palestine: Jewish Settlers Torch 100 of World's Oldest Olive Trees", *International Business Times*, October 24, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/battle-between-israel-palestine-being-fought-olive-fields-100-trees-torched-1471595>.

Palestinian communities under the British Mandate, the several wars that opposed the newly-created Hebrew State to the neighbouring Arab countries, as well as the conflict with the Palestinian population – which has experienced different peaks of tensions, notably with the two Intifadas (1987-1992 and 2000-2005) and the Gaza wars and “operations” (2008-2009, 2012, 2014) – have all been developed and analysed in an abundant literature that spans numerous disciplines.

This introduction will firstly concentrate on the way in which the Israeli control of space was established and secured, both in the West Bank and within its own borders; it will then move on to focus on how trends of domination and contention relate in the region, and on the spatial character of the contention itself. Exposing in this way the elements that represent the starting point of this research will also allow for an elaboration of the positions adopted by the author in this thesis, especially significant with regards to potentially sensitive topics such as the occupation, the names used to designate the various areas studied and the way in which the Israeli regime is tackled. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict raises passions and controversies, and as such, it seems necessary to set out clearly and justify scientifically the positions adopted in this research. Thereafter, the focus of the introduction shifts to the construction of the research question and finally sets out the structure of the thesis.

### ***Spatial control and the Israeli hegemony***

The control of space in the region depends for the most part on Israel; both within its borders, as a sovereign State, and also within the West Bank, as the occupying power<sup>2</sup>, Israel holds a position of hegemonic domination maintained through legislation, administration, political decisions and the presence of the police, the border police or the army, depending on the area.

Over the years, the issues of occupation, property, and meaning of space have been at the core of the conflict opposing Israel to the Palestinian population and their political representatives (the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and subsequently, the Palestinian Authority (PA)). The three topics critical to the peace negotiations, namely the status of Jerusalem, the existence and

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this research, reference will be made exclusively to the situation in the West Bank; even if Gaza is understood to be part of the occupied Palestinian territory – also designated here as Palestine – it is also physically separated from the contiguous space of Israel and Egypt, distant from the West Bank and isolated from a political point of view, falling under the authority of Hamas since the 2006 elections. Moreover, the access to the Gaza Strip is strictly controlled, making it very difficult to carry out any research on the ground.

extension of Jewish settlements within the West Bank, and the return of the Palestinian refugees, each have a direct connection with the control of space, from either a demographic, strategic or symbolic point of view.

The position of the Israeli State in the West Bank is recognized by the international community as a situation of military occupation. Indeed, the Israeli forces did not withdraw from the newly-conquered territories (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai) in the aftermath of the 1967 “Six Days War” but rather the State imposed its rules on them, thus entering into a situation that accorded with the definition of military occupation (“*A territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army*”, art. 42 of the Hague Convention)<sup>3</sup>. Segments of the Israeli population and political spectrum have long refused to engage the term of occupation, and rather consider the West Bank to constitute “Judea and Samaria”, two regions mentioned in the Bible that are part of Eretz Israel, the “Greater Israel” or the “whole land of Israel” that stretches “from the river to the sea”, which are rightly integrated within the State.

Military occupation is thought of in the laws of war to constitute a temporary situation, one which is bound to be resolved following the evolution of the situation on the ground, including peace negotiations and any agreement that results therefrom. Adam Roberts, in his article analysing how the “exceptional duration” of the Israeli occupation impacts the application of international law, underlines two other characteristics that render the situation in the West Bank one of military occupation: these include “*a formal system of external control by a force whose presence is not sanctioned by international agreement*” and “*a conflict of nationality and interest between the inhabitants, on the one hand, and those exercising power over them, on the other*” (1990: 44).

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*

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<sup>3</sup> 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 considered as occupied. The settlements in Gaza were evacuated during the Israeli “disengagement” of 2005.

*International Armed Conflicts*)<sup>4</sup>. 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 has 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)<sup>5</sup>.

Both the Oslo Accords (also called the Declaration of Principle – DOP) signed in 1993<sup>6</sup>, completed by Oslo II in 1995<sup>7</sup>, and the subsequent Gaza-Jericho Agreement<sup>8</sup>, have had a huge impact on the administration of the occupied territories. They formalized the birth of the Palestinian National Authority (PA), distinct from the PLO, and established a five-year transitional period during which it was intended that the progressive transfer of control from the Israeli army, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) to the PA would occur. The DOP also provided for the transfer of the main Palestinian cities and of some 450 villages to the authority of the PA, and anticipated the future withdrawal of the IDF from the occupied territories<sup>9</sup>.

The current administration of the occupied territories now relies on a very complex and paradoxical mix of military and civil, Israeli and Palestinian, authorities. Indeed, the West Bank, along with the other territories conquered by Israel in 1967, was initially administered by the Israeli Military Governorate. In 1981, the Civil Administration replaced the military government in the West Bank,

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<sup>4</sup> See the International Committee of the Red Cross: <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf>.

<sup>5</sup> 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 child care 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> See “Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September, 28, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> 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>.

<sup>9</sup> See the “reference documents” of the Peace process, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/reference%20documents/>.

but continued to depend on the Israeli Defence Ministry and the COGAT (Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories)<sup>10</sup>.

After the Oslo Agreement, the West Bank was separated into areas of three types, namely 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 PA 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 website<sup>11</sup>).

Considered at the time as a sign of hope and as an exceptional step towards peace, the Oslo Agreements are now often denounced as having paradoxically strengthened the occupation. Dan Rabinowitz describes the strategy used by the Israeli army to reinforce its control over the surrounding space when it was leaving an area:

*"Barak (...) made the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) back up each pullout with meticulous planning and elaborate construction; the tracts handed over were surrounded by new bypass roads and roadblocks, new military camps and observation points. The perimeters of Israeli settlements were expanded, and tighter control of the neighboring civilian Palestinian communities became the order of the day"* (2005: 508).

Even though part of the administration of the West Bank has been transferred out of the hands of the IDF, as large areas of the region now depend on the Palestinian authority, 60% of the West Bank is still under full Israeli control<sup>12</sup> (see map in Annex I). Moreover, the PA, even if officially in charge of determinate areas of the West Bank, is often accused of being a subcontractor of the Israeli army, and of working against the interests of the Palestinian people. As early as 1994, Eyal Benvenisti was writing that the Israeli authorities intended to make the PA "*the 'long arm' of Israel's occupation administration*" (1994: 299). According to Dan Rabinowitz, commenting on Edward

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<sup>10</sup> See the COGAT website: <http://www.cogat.idf.il/894-en/Matpash.aspx>.

<sup>11</sup> COGAT website: <http://www.cogat.idf.il/1279-en/Cogat.aspx>.

<sup>12</sup> "*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/publications/summaries/201306_acting_the_landlord), [http://www.btselem.org/download/201306\\_area\\_c\\_report\\_eng.pdf](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\\_2011.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_movementandaccess_factsheet_september_2011.pdf).

Said's criticism of the DOP, "*the Oslo process signalled the beginning—not the end—of Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza*" (ibid.: 507).

The authority of Israel over the West Bank can thus be characterised as hegemonic; enforced through its military presence, as well as its administration, planning efforts, and powerful narratives, Israel exercises a power over space that has a profound impact on the daily life of the Palestinian population.

The Israeli control of space is usually associated with the occupation of the West Bank. However, it must also be considered within the borders of the State. Israel is defined in its Basic Law as being a Jewish and democratic State, a definition contradictory in terms, and one which has led to intense academic debate. It needs to be taken into consideration here as it underlines the particularity of the Israeli political regime, which in turn points towards the structure of the Israeli society and the particular logic and dynamics underlying the control of space within Israel.

Israel is constituted around the Jewish identity; what was in the early years of the State mostly a secular and cultural point of reference has been turned into an "*ethno-nationalist citizenship that, in principle, encompassed all Jews, and only Jews, by virtue of their ethnic descent*" (Shafir & Peled, 1998: 413). The Israeli regime is indeed defined by some researchers as an "ethnic democracy" (Smoocha, 1997, 2002), an "ethnic state" (Rouhana, 1997; Rouhana, 1998; Ghanem, 1998) or an "ethnocracy" (Ganim, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1998; Yiftachel & Ghanem, 2004; Yiftachel, 1999, 2006). S. Smoocha is careful to maintain the word democracy in the expression he chooses, presenting the Israeli system as a combination of "*viable democratic institutions*" with an "*institutionalized ethnic dominance*" (1990: 389). He nevertheless underlines the deeply contradictory nature of the described 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*" (1997: 200); he proposes that it constitutes a compromise falling outwith the traditional models of liberal and "consociational" democracies, defining it rather as a model of a "*diminished form of democracy*" (Smoocha, 2002: 477).

This position has been scrutinized (see for example Dowty, 1999) and criticized for example for not distinguishing between the *features* and the *structures* of a democratic State (Ganim et al., 1998: 254, 265). Oren Yiftachel, one of the authors who defend the definition of Israel as an ethnocracy,

stresses that the ethnocratic regimes are "*neither authoritarian nor democratic*" (1999: 364) and that they do not meet certain principles specific to democratic regimes, including ensuring for the minorities "*protection against the tyranny of the majority*" (ibid., see also Ganim et al., 1998). In Israel, the "minority" is formed for the most part by the Palestinian citizens of Israel (often designated as "Israeli Arabs" by the authorities and part of the Jewish population of the country), who make up around 20% of the total population<sup>13</sup>. As citizens of the State, they formally have individual rights, such as the right to vote, but cannot make any claim to equality, and as such, remain second-class citizens (Ghanem, 1998; Smooha, 1990). It has to be noted that the Israeli "majority", designating the Jewish citizenship, is also heavily stratified internally, with Ashkenazi Jews forming the State elite and Mizrahi, Orthodox and Ethiopian Jews, forming the destitute classes.

Drawing upon this reflection on ethnocracy, O. Yiftachel takes the discourse one step further, using the conceptual frame of "internal colonialism" to tackle the policy of the Jewish state towards its Arab minority (Yiftachel, 2008). He advocates, with Israeli lawyer Sandy Kedar, for a wider engagement of another concept to designate the type of regime established in Israel: that of settler states, "settler-colonialism" or ethnocratic settler societies (S. Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006; Yiftachel, 2002, 2008, 2009. See also, for example, Kimmerling, 1983; Johnston & Lawson, 2000; Parsons, 2005; Wolfe, 2006; Collins, 2011). Although it is deemed by some to be too controversial, ideological or downright insulting, the theoretical framework proposed by the model of the "settler-colonial state" offers an interesting perspective to read and analyse the situation in Israel.

If ethnocracy is a "*distinct regime type that facilitates the expansion of a dominant ethnic nation in a multi-ethnic territory*" (Kedar, 2003: 402), the "settler-colonial" regime relies 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 regime thus imposes not only an "ethno-class segregation" but also an ethno-class division of space (Yiftachel, 1997: 506): the settler societies indeed institute particular land regimes that allow the dominant groups to control the

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<sup>13</sup> 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](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/>.

territory and its resources. In the case of Israel, the 1948 war, which provided for the flight or expulsion of some 700 000 Palestinians by Jewish militias (an event 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 for example, Morris, 1989; Pappé, 2006, and the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine<sup>14</sup>).

The construction of Israel was indeed based on a strategic process of land acquisitions, confiscations, modifications of land status and creations of borders that all aimed at ensuring the control of space, 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. The control of space is indeed considered to be one of the basic features allowing for Israel’s existence; it draws on political, religious, strategic and security rationales, and represents a principle that is still strictly applied to this day.

The Israeli State thus relies on an ethnocratic political regime which implies, in turn, the establishment of a corresponding spatial regime, based on the control of space by the dominant group, comprised of, in this case, the Jewish-Israelis.

This examination of the tight control of space implemented by the State of Israel within its own borders but also in the occupied West Bank, raises the question of the resistance opposed to this control in both cases, internally and in the occupied territories, and more specifically, of the spatiality of that resistance. The spatial dimension of the resistance against the Israeli hegemony must be studied: considering the extent of Israel’s control of space, how can contentious movements challenge the State’s hegemony? To which spatialities can they resort?

### ***From control to contention: Research question***

The control of space is a matter at stake for both parties; the control, property, occupation, and meaning of space remain central points of focus underpinning the Palestinian struggle, relevant not

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<sup>14</sup> 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/b792301807650d6685256cef0073cb80/93037e3b939746de8525610200567883?OpenDocument>.

only to the political establishment but also to the Palestinian population in general. Furthermore, once the largely hegemonic Israeli take on space is acknowledged, some closely connected questions arise: if space is used as a tool of power by the Israeli authorities, what becomes of the reactions to these constraints? In a context in which the value and meaning of space is broadly acknowledged but where space itself is tightly controlled and seems “locked”, the capacity of the dominated group to actually engage as a spatial actor seems seriously hindered and the production of space also seems bound to be unilateral. In this situation, does space become a mere container of protest? Or it is also appropriated as an instrument of power by the actors challenging the Israeli authority?

It would be wrong to halt the discussion at this stage, at what appears to be a situation of exclusive Israeli control over space. Indeed, it is important not to overlook the direct role that the Palestinians themselves play in shaping their environment, notwithstanding the control and coercion (Dixon, 1999). As Sylvaine Bulle shows in a recent article: *“political regimes (such as the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza) cannot suppress all urban and social development”* (2009: 25). In fact, all individuals have a “territorial ability” even if they do not all benefit from the same status, or the same power as “territorial creator” (Di Méo, 1998: 8). In his review of the urban movements of resistance in Jerusalem, Hasson states that *“each community struggle[s] to create a new territory by challenging existing political structures and geographic patterns”* (2001: 41). How do the mobilized actors express their “territorial ability” in a constrained environment, and how do they become spatial actors? To which spatialities do they resort, with which aims and which results?

In attempting to answer those questions, this thesis will respond to 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). In other words, it will examine the way in which the alienated space may represent a resource for resistance, focusing on how protesters challenge the Israeli control using the various dimensions of space, and eventually producing it.

The thesis concentrates on the spatialities of resistance at the local scale; it analyses the role of space as a tool and outcome of contention, thus being both used and produced through practices and discourses of resistance. It will thus expose the role of space in protests drawing not only on geography but also on social movement theory, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the

mechanisms at work. While focusing on the strategies of resistance, the extent of their tight entanglement with the strategies of domination will be uncovered. Indeed, resistance and domination are *“always implicated in, and mutually constitutive of, one another”*, creating an *“endless circulations of power”* (Sharp and al, 2000: 1).

The thesis will also relate this reflection to the call to *“think space relationally”* (Massey, 2004: 38), integrating the contentious politics in a multifactorial perspective (Alimi, Bosi, & Demetriou, 2012: 8). The current situation in Israel and Palestine is indeed the result of various historical, social and political factors, the impact of which are still on-going; the imperialistic Ottoman and British presence, the laws they created, the relation of Israel with foreign powers, the weight of the United States in shaping the country’s politics, and the place granted to the Palestinians in the International community, are some of the elements that have to be considered in *“dynamic, continuous, and processual terms”* (Emirbayer, 1997: 281). Throughout this thesis, a relational perspective will be adopted, considering the interactions existing between the struggle and the social reality in general, taking into account different factors influencing the phenomena that are analysed. One should however bear in mind that the complexity of the historical and geopolitical context and the scope of this research limit the references that can be integrated within its frame.

Combining geography and social movements, the thesis focuses on two main axes of analysis. Firstly, it lays out the main practices and frames used by the actors of the resistance in the three case studies, showing how they draw on various spatialities, namely public space, place, sense of place, landscape, territory, network and scale, spatialities which were all extracted from the empirical observations realized during the periods of fieldwork. This analysis will show that space represents a resource of the resistance despite its being tightly controlled. I will argue that the main spatialities used can be gathered in what is termed a *“spatial repertoire”*, whereby those spatialities represent a fundamental data characterizing the strategies adopted. More specifically, the analysis will show that place is the main spatiality informing the contention, notwithstanding that it remains tightly interrelated to the others. Secondly, the thesis will establish that those same practices also produce space, and more precisely, aim to produce a territory. Indeed, we will see that the contention in all three case studies aims at the territorialisation – or re-territorialisation – of the Palestinian struggle and identity, in order to impose the existence and also the importance of the territory. 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,

symbolically incarnating the territory considered, whether national, religious, or indigenous. Indeed, we will see also that while numerous similarities link the three case studies, the choices made in terms of opposing the Israeli control – while relying on a common set of strategies – eventually sketch out three different models of contention. The resistance in Silwan draws essentially on the local resources and identity, and the contention in Hebron builds considerably on the image and international fame of the city, while the Bedouins associate the local “steadfastness” (sumud) to a successful advocacy campaign in association with international institutions.

### ***Structure of the research***

This research relies on a comparative analysis of the situation in three different places in Israel and Palestine: al-Araqib, a Bedouin unrecognized village in the Negev, Hebron, located in the West Bank, and Silwan, a neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. It associates a rich empirical research with a conceptual reflection via an inductive approach; the theoretical framework is elaborated on the basis of the data collected. Indeed, the fieldwork and the empirical data represent the core of this research, advancing a better knowledge of the situation on the ground, shedding light on the practices and narratives of activists and inhabitants, and thus allowing for a better understanding of the dynamics of contention in the region. The analysis will focus on how the use of and the references to space influence the action and narrative of resistance, showing how space can be taken into account and integrated into the study of contention, concentrating principally on the repertoire and framing, two basic dimensions of protest making. This will generate new inputs that will allow for the better integration of space into social movements’ studies, developing a new angle from which the study of the conflict is approached at the local level.

The thesis is organized broadly into two parts; the first part (chapters 1, 2 and 3) focuses on the literature review, the main concepts that underlie this research, the methodological approach adopted and the presentation of the cases, while the second part (chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) concentrates on the analysis of the empirical data. Each chapter of this second part focuses on the intersection between a type of spatiality and the associated practices of resistance in the context of the three case studies.

The first chapter will provide an overview of the literature associating geography – or space – to the study of contentious movements; it concentrates on the main concepts that have been invoked

in the recent scholarship and that will be used in this research, namely place, territory, network and scale, finally discussing Henri Lefebvre's concept of "production of space" and its applicability to contentious politics. The second part will expose briefly how contention has been studied in the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and then proceed to define the way in which it will be tackled in this thesis. A choice is made to refer specifically to "resistance" for the struggle led in each case study. Considering the structure and organization of the protest, the term "social movements" was considered unfitting. Finally, the focus will shift to the presentation of the concepts borrowed from social movement theory, of repertoire, framing and opportunity structure, sketching the way in which they can enrich the analysis and integrate the multidimensional approach adopted here.

The second chapter will be dedicated to the process of research itself: it will firstly concentrate on the definition of the case studies, their physical delimitation and the actors considered, and will then turn to discuss the comparative design. The case studies are three in number: the H2 area in Hebron, the "core" neighbourhoods of Silwan (Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan) and the unrecognized Bedouin village of al-Araqib, in the Negev desert. These three places have different administrative statuses – the H2 area of Hebron is occupied and under military Israeli authority, Silwan is part of annexed East Jerusalem, and the Bedouins of the Negev are Israeli citizens - which are translated on the ground through different patterns of control. Thereafter, it will provide for a presentation of the methodology used to conduct this research: namely, a qualitative, case-oriented approach, based chiefly on extensive periods of ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation and semi-directed interviews. The chapter will proceed to examine the implications and questions that arise from such an approach, especially in respect of fieldwork; indeed, the multiple sites of field research located in an area of conflict has presented inherent challenges and difficulties that have to be made explicit and must be discussed.

The third chapter will provide some background information on each case study, concentrating on historical and legal elements that allow for a better understanding of the current situation. 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 target of the local contention.

The first empirical chapter will tackle the "conceived space" of Henri Lefebvre, meaning the space produced by the authorities. It will advance firstly a study of the way space is designed by the

authorities, through planning and architecture, highlighting the various strategies adopted to counter this process, predominantly through the advancement of alternative projects, but also by using legal channels and addressing the Israeli courts. A second part will be dedicated to the direct intervention of the inhabitants on space through house building and renovating; another strategy has been to use the materiality of space and at the same time to contest the Israeli control of Israel over that space, by organising demonstrations and other collective actions; moreover, and especially in Hebron, recourse has been made to strategies of control and surveillance that mirror – or mimic - those of the occupier. 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. We will see that the opposition to the authorities' "conceiving" 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.

Chapter five will take as a starting point the importance of displaying a physical presence in space. Indeed, the physical occupation of space and the endeavour to make this presence visible are fundamental strategies of resistance for Palestinians in all three case studies, strategies realized first of all through the naming and marking of space. The importance of presence is further illustrated by the concept of "*sumud*", usually translated as "steadfastness", but which can be better conceptualized as an "habitational resistance" (Collins, 2011: 18). The centrality of *sumud* in the Palestinian resistance points to the importance invested in the place, which can be nuanced in different scales, from the house to the neighbourhood. This advances the need to further consider on two topics. Firstly, in terms of strategy, it is worth reflecting on *sumud* and presence: do they represent practices of resistance, a "weapon of the weak" (Scott, 1985) or a mere survival strategy? Secondly, I will underline how the place-centred strategies of resistance examined here can be linked to discourses and sense of place that contribute to the claim of a "right to place".

In the continuation of these considerations on the centrality of place, the following chapter will show how the concepts of landscape and territory prolong and complement it, fed by the strong sense of place that is maintained at the local level. Firstly, it will expose the way in which particular elements of the traditional Palestinian environment are turned into symbols of identity, and eventually to a nationalist feeling; furthermore, it will show how they incarnate those elements at the local level, investing the place with a larger meaning connected to that of the territory, making

the place a concentration of those elements, making the sense of place an element building the Palestinian nationalism, wherein place is invested with the sanctity attributed to the territory. Thereafter, this chapter will concentrate more particularly on the role played by religion in the construction of this sacred sense of place, through the consideration of the definition of Palestine as a holy land and the concept of “ribat”, used especially in Silwan; it will examine how this contributes to the representations and construction of a sacred territory, as well as the way in which it relates to nationalism. Finally, this chapter will move to discuss the creation of a sacred geography, focusing on the reference to, and the production of, a cultural landscape in line with the national territory. Indeed, I will analyse how both of these concepts are not only invoked at the local scale, but are also reconfigured through the place. They are both “incarnated” in the place, which in turns “projects” the constructed – or imagined – symbols linked to culture and memories, onto the national scale.

The last chapter will be dedicated to 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 their 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 matters 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 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. I will concentrate more particularly on the examples of the Bedouins’ claim of indigeneity and the increasing resort to the institutional recognition of cultural landscape as being very 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. It also highlights how the various spatialities invoked throughout this thesis are co-implicated.

# CHAPTER 1

## **A MULTIDIMENSIONAL RESEARCH: WEAVING TOGETHER SPACE, CONTENTION AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

### Literature and conceptual reviews

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As seen in the introduction, this research will tackle, as a general question, the way in which space can be integrated into the study of contentious movements, and will examine more specifically how the actors involved in contention can use but also produce space in contexts where it is tightly controlled.

This first chapter will concentrate on literature reviews centred on the three main disciplines that come together in this research: the sociology of social movements, geography, and regional studies on Israel and Palestine. It will consider the way that these fields of study are bridged in the literature and will build on this to define the broad theoretical and conceptual lines that will serve as a basis for the research.

Firstly, we shall concentrate on how space has been introduced into social science after years of negligence, marking a clear “spatial turn”. We will scrutinize the way in which space has been integrated into social movements’ studies so far and then focus on the main geographical concepts usually used to analyze the spatiality of social movements in the existing literature, namely place, territory, scale and network. Relying on this broad overview, we will explore and define the position adopted in this research: the “co-implication” of the various spatialities. Indeed, while these notions often represent the basis for the analysis of the geographies of social movements, I have chosen not to base the approach herein on one or several concepts chosen *a priori*, but to rely on the data collected in the field in order to determine which spatialities are present in the various cases, and to also consider how they coexist and inform each other. Finally, we will explore Henri Lefebvre's conception and definition of space, concentrating on one of his major concepts, the “production of

space”; I will set out Lefebvre’s reflection, the way it has been adapted and reused in the study of contention and the way it will be integrated here.

Thereafter we will consider the way in which the study of Israel and Palestine intersects with that of social movements. Following a quick overview of the existing literature on collective action in Israel and Palestine, I will make explicit the position adopted in this research. Indeed, it seems necessary to scrutinize how the approach adopted in the study of contention, which often focuses on Western countries and events, can fit into the Middle-Eastern context; we will see that the “collective” character of the action is often problematic. Assuming that it is indeed important to be wary of any possible ethnocentrism (or Americanism) in the concepts used, the approach adopted herein will also be cautious about the exceptionalism that can easily be embraced regarding the situation of the region. As a result, I will clarify how I will use “resistance” rather than “social movement” or “contentious politics”. Finally, I will present the literature that associates the study of Israel and Palestine with a focus on space, and particularly, on what this association reveals about the existing relations of power in the region; we will see that part of this literature tackles more specifically the spatiality of contention in the area.

In the last part, we shall consider the conceptual tools borrowed from social movement studies that will be used and combined in this approach in order to allow for a fruitful fertilization across disciplines. We will turn to the concepts of “repertoire of action” and “framing”, largely used in the studies of contentious movements and also invoked in this thesis. Following a brief outline of the definitions of these concepts, we will consider how they can interact with geography and why they seem interesting for an integrated analysis of the cases under examination. We will then move on to the concepts of opportunities and constraints which will allow for the reflections presented here to be enriched: from the point of view of the contention, how do the strategies evolve, and how do they relate to the influence of external factors? As seen in the introduction, the political control over space represents a heavy constraint on the Palestinian populations of Israel and the occupied territories; can space be turned into an opportunity?

## **1. Introducing the spatial dimension of contention**

After years of neglect or its downright absence from the social sciences, space has made an

impressive comeback over the last twenty years. In the 1970s and 1980s, a few scholars, such as Foucault (1975), Giddens (1981, 1984), De Certeau (1980), and Castells (1983), highlighted the importance of space in human interactions. At the same time, significant changes were also transforming geography, which, from the regional or strictly quantitative approach of spatial analysis, took a more human and social direction. The approach that emerged in the wake of these changes, “radical geography”, developed in the United-States, was particularly sensitive to normative approaches concerning justice, inequalities, discrimination and so on.<sup>15</sup> The theoretical reflection of several radical geographers such as David Harvey (*Social justice and the city*, 1973), Henri Lefebvre (*La production de l’espace*, 1974) and Edward Soja (*Thirdspace*, 1996) has come to constitute a major inspiration for scholars intending to combine a sociological and a geographical approach. All of those geographers relied on a Marxist frame of analysis and were interested in scrutinizing the making of power relationships, with a particular focus on urban environments as laboratories for their reproduction.

### **1.1. From space and social movements to the spatialities of social movements**

What has subsequently been termed the “spatial turn” (see for instance, Warf & Arias, 2009) indeed marked a major change in the way space was considered and integrated into social sciences: it became generally accepted that human interactions, societies, were all “geographically constituted” (Miller & Martin, 2000: 1) and that the social and the spatial were mutually constituting and inseparable (Soja, 1989). It is now widely acknowledged within the social sciences that “geography matters” (Massey, 1984) and, little by little, the spatial dimension of social dynamics has been more commonly integrated into sociological research.

In the specific field of social movement studies, the chronic lack of consideration for space has been pointed out: “*the literature has treated space as an assumed and unproblematized background*” (Sewell Jr, 2001, 51). The spatial dimension of conflicts has indeed been largely under-studied, remaining for a long time a “silence” of the field (Aminzade et al., 2001) despite the change that took place in other disciplines. Space is often used as a mere metaphor (Keith and Pile 1993: 1; Miller and Martin 2000: 6); “Field”, “boundaries”, “margins”, “urban space”, “global/local” are a

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<sup>15</sup> The journal *Antipode*, associating geographic studies to a declared Marxist approach is very representative of this tendency.

few of the categories that pervade the analysis tackling the spatial dimension of contentious movements. However, as is the case with many titles that use “cartography” or “mapping”, these terms are often used for descriptive or poetic purposes, without developing the meaning of the image chosen and the purpose it serves, justifying the concept used or defining the environment or practice designated in this way.

Martin and Miller describe the evolution that took place within social movement studies, and also within geography, and undertake an exhaustive review of the literature, advocating for a “*geographically sensitive understanding of social movement mobilization*” (2000: 3). The image they invoke of movements not being “*on the head of a pin*” has inspired many (see for example Choukri, 2008) and is very representative of the debate surrounding the integration of space into social studies and its contradictions. This metaphor draws attention to movements being necessarily *situated* – the contrary of what the head of the pin stands for: a microscopic point made of steel, neutral, homogeneous, separated and immune from reality. The image speaks to the senses of the reader, but yet, it is not entirely convincing: the head of a pin is still a situation, it is a “place”, as small as it might be; it has characteristics, although limited. Even the head of a pin represents a location in space. The metaphor can thus be used for the opposite purpose of that for which it usually stands; even if seemingly neutral, space has to be taken into account, as events – episodes of mobilizations in this case - are influenced by the context (geographical, but also historical) in which they take place.

Space is now increasingly integrated into studies of contentious movements; it has been established and acknowledged that protest and resistance not only take place *in* space, they also take place *through* space, meaning they are shaped by their inscription in space but also shape space, through a wide range of spatial practices, representations and discourses. Or, to put it in another way:

*“Movements act from space, politically mobilizing from the material conditions of their (local) spaces; movements act on space appropriating it with a group identity; movements act in space, such as taking to the streets for protests, or occupying land; and movements make space: creating conditions to expand public political involvement (...)”* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Numerous studies of social movements now integrate a spatial dimension. For a long time, one unsettled problem was that even if space was finally considered and integrated into social science

research, geography, as a discipline, was nevertheless often left behind. Indeed, space was still considered simply as a frame with physical characteristics, the “context” of mobilization that often boiled down to taking into account the localisation of the action. The intense conceptual debates that were taking place and continue to take place within geography often did not transpire into transdisciplinary research. Miller and Martin for example regretted that *“geographic concepts of space, place and scale remain underdeveloped in social movements’ theory”* (ibid: 36). Sewell also pointed out weaknesses in the way that space is usually tackled within the literature on social movements, re-asserting that it is a *“constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualized explicitly and probed systematically”* (2001: 52).

The literature dealing with the spatial dimension of contention usually relies on concepts taken from geography, presented as “spatialities” (Berdoulay, Da Costa Gomes, & Lolive, 2004; Ettliger & Bosco, 2004; Leitner, 1997; Miller, 2013; Nicholls et al., 2013b; Nicholls, 2011; Routledge, 1997; Wilton & Cranford, 2002) and also called “geographies” (Brenner, 1997; Keith & Pile, 1997; Routledge, n.d.; Sharp et al., 2000), “notions of space” or “spatial concepts” (Miller & Martin, 2000: 7). These spatialities designate particular types of relations to space and are selected as a lens through which the movement under study can be considered: place, territory, network and scale are those most commonly used. Other concepts, such as positionality, spatial imaginaries or spatial inequalities, are also mentioned as possible dimensions worthy of consideration.

Several articles and chapters published in recent years synthesize this tendency, and, insisting on the relational dimension existing between the concepts, call for a more integrative model. Even as early as 2000, Martin and Miller, in their chapter “Missing Geography: Social Movements on the Head of a Pin?”, undertook to provide a rich overview of the literature and the debates agitating the field, concentrating particularly on the notions of place and scale. The seminal article of Leitner, Sheppard and Sziarto “The spatialities of contentious politics” explores the way in which contention relates to specific geographical concepts such as scale, place or network but also mobility and positionality (2008). P. Routledge, in his chapter “Geography and Social Movements” in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (della Porta & Diani, 2011) explores the role of place, scale, network, as well as spatial inequalities, relational space and social movement assemblages in contentious episodes. The recent book of W. Nicholls, B. Miller and J. Beaumont, entitled *Spaces of contention* (2013b), also presents a complete account of the state of the art when it comes to the spatialities of social movements. The introduction draws distinctions between the major concepts

studied in relation to social movements, which are then reflected in the structure of the book: place, territory and region, scale, networks and flows.

These four publications advance reflections and propose possible solutions to overcome the problems of a one-dimensional approach; Leitner and al. develop the idea of the co-implication of the spatialities, whereas Miller, in the conclusion of *Spaces of contention*, underlines the possibilities offered by two approaches, the “TPSN approach” (for Territory, Places, Scales and Networks) developed by Jessop and al. (2008), and the “assemblage” (Anderson and McFarlane 2011; McFarlane 2009; Davies 2012), an approach also advocated by P. Routledge (ibid.).

Before developing the meaning and principles of those alternative approaches, which will provide the basis for the position that will be adopted in this research to be set out, I will present the geographical concepts most commonly used in the studies on social movements as these will also be used in this research.

## **1.2. Spatialities of contention**

I will present in this part the concepts of place, territory, network and scale, corresponding to the “spatialities” that are associated more often with the study of protests. Invoking the literature of both geography and social movements, I will expose briefly the debates existing around their definition and their application to the analysis of episodes of contention. I will then move on to develop in the last part the idea of the co-implication of the various spatialities and lay out how I will inscribe myself in the current research trend and take on the call to adopt an approach that brings together and integrates the different spatialities.

### ***Place***

Place is one of the fundamental concepts of geography that never ceases to be used and discussed; scholars, such as Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 1979), marked the way it was tackled within geography. An exhaustive account of the changes and debates surrounding the concept of place in geography is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it can be noted that several geographers, such as John Agnew, David Harvey and Doreen Massey, who contributed to the reflection on place, also marked the studies on the spatiality of contentious movements.

Places are usually considered as bounded areas where people live, develop attachments, relationships and routines, or, “*sites where dense social relations within and beyond that place join up. They have a distinct materiality, a material environment that is historically constructed*” (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 161). Escobar sets out the elements usually defining place: “*experience of a particular location*”, a “*sense of boundaries (however, permeable)*” and a “*connection to everyday life*” (Escobar, 2001: 140). Places being the siege of the making of human relations, they are also imbued with meaning and power, two elements that are crucial for the study of contention and which will be at the centre of this study.

The literature associating geography and social movement studies often relies on the work and definition given by John Agnew in his seminal book *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (1987), where he distinguished three dimensions that together constitute the place: namely the location, locale and sense of place (see also Oslender, 2004; Routledge, 1993; Nicholls, 2009). The location alludes to the geographical area, where social, political and economic processes take place. The locale refers to the setting of the everyday social interactions, whereas the sense of place designates the local “*structure of feeling*” (Agnew, op.cit.: 28): the representations and interpretations, the “*ways in which human experience and imagination appropriates the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location*” (Oslender, 2004: 962). Drawing on the seminal work of Agnew, Paul Routledge advocated in *Terrains of resistance* (1993) for the recognition of the importance of a place perspective in the study of social movements, underlining that “*space (and hence places) is imbued with the relations and processes of appropriation, production, and domination*” (ibid: 138). Ulrich Oslender adopted a similar approach to tackle the micro-geographies of social movements, and more specifically, the “*specific set of spatialised social relationships*” on the Colombian Pacific coast.

The process of globalization, and the emergence of what was called a “*global village*”, presented as a cause of the growing disappearance of the local, of “*placelessness*”, and thus to the disappearance of identity, led to a renewal in the interests of the local, but also of the way in which it was articulated to the new scales and multiple connections emerging in the global era. In so doing, the disappearance of place was discussed and relativized, the attachment to place and the process of globalization not being necessarily antithetic (Massey, 1994a).

Places are often associated to the idea of community, of a defined, existing coherent group with internal solidarity links, as a taken-for-granted fact. The local is indeed considered for its role in facilitating solidarity (see for example Gould 1993, 1995) and in bringing people together to form “*a cohesive political force*” (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013a: 4). The proximity and the various types of social networks existing or established within the place (through family, culture, language, ethnicity, trust and so forth) allow for strong ties to be built and possibly mobilized for collective action (Routledge, 2011).

However, some authors also advanced criticism against the power attributed to place: Mark Purcell denounced the risk of the “local trap”, whereby the local is equated with “the good” or is considered as being inherently more democratic and preferable to other scales (2006). David Harvey famously underlined the contradictions of “militant particularism” (1996, 2001), a term borrowed from Raymond Williams (1979, 1989), arguing that the internal cohesion of a group can limit its extension and the possibilities of cooperation and alliance with other movements (see also Leitner et al., 2008: 163; Nicholls, 2009: 80; Routledge & Cumbers, 2007). This condemnation of the local is criticized by David Featherstone (2005) who advocates for a relational account of place-based contention that takes into consideration inter-local networks. He proposes to tackle militant particularism as a dynamic process resulting from interrelations, rather than as a fixed and bounded (ibid: 250) phenomena. M. Lopes De Souza also engages with the reflection on this topic; taking the example of the Zapatistas, he formulates a lapidary criticism of D. Harvey’s position, who he argues, mistakes local rootedness for parochialism (2010: 322).

It is important to mention these strands of criticisms and the different adopted positions on the topic as this research will focus on local contention and will as a result consider chiefly practices and narratives that are place-based. However, as we will see in the empirical chapters (see chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7) the local rootedness of the resistance does not exclude other scales of actions, through various connections and alliances. Indeed, the human experience is first of all an experience of the place in which we are immersed (Casey, 1996: 18), but also produces networks and is thus necessarily extra-local (Escobar, 2001: 143). Massey also advocated for this interrelation between the local and the global, evoking a “*global sense of place*” (Massey, 1994b) and underlining that places and senses of place are all made with influence and interactions from within but also from beyond the place (Massey, 2012: xiii).

The concept of “sense of place”, defined by Agnew as one of the three elements constituting the place, will also be central to this research (see chapter 5). The sense of place relates to representations, to a common imaginary and cultural meanings that together can constitute a common frame allowing people to mobilize and act (see for example Convery, Corsane, & Davis, 2012). The analysis proposed by Bosco of the spatial strategy deployed by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina highlights the symbolic power of places in the establishment of collective rituals, and their being essential nodes in constituting and maintaining an activists’ network (Bosco, 2001; see also Bosco, 2006). The article of Wendy Wolford concerning the mobilization of landless peasants in Brazil is also particularly interesting in this respect: looking at the “cognitive frameworks” or “spatial imaginaries” of two different groups, comprising their experiences and perceptions, she claims that *“the critical study of resistance requires an analysis of the ways different historical-cultural frameworks shape the decision to mobilize in particular people and places”* (Wolford, 2004: 421).

Both the materiality and the meaning of places play a fundamental role in respect of contention, not only because they are particularly meaningful for the activists, but also because they are the sites at which relations are established, negotiated and re-configured. Indeed,

*“Social movements often seek to strategically manipulate, subvert and resignify places that symbolise priorities and imaginaries they are contesting; to defend places that stand for their priorities and imaginaries; and to produce new spaces where such visions can be practised, within that place and beyond”* (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 161).

### ***Territory***

The focus on place is often associated with the concept of territory and territoriality as both are considered as bounded and imbued with meaning. At different scales, they are both linked with the formation of political subjectivities and communities, of collective representations, and thus, with questions of identity and culture.

However, territory is often used in a very unproblematized way, either as a convenient way to designate any large and delimited portion of space with a specific identity, or to designate the space under the sovereignty of a State, which corresponds to an administrative unit – where this also has borders and an imposed common identity, the existence of citizenship. Nicholls, Miller and

Beaumont acknowledge the problem presented by providing a definition of territory, and offer the following: a *“bounded space’ associated with the constitution of the modern state”*, arguing that the *“concept of territory typically implies state sovereignty over a bounded area, including the population and resources within”*(Nicholls et al., 2013a: 6). This equating of territory exclusively with the space under the State’s authority impoverishes the concept, as it does not take into account the human experience. Indeed, the territory can also be defined through practices such as mobility or also through the attachment of people to space<sup>16</sup>.

The concept of territory has largely been used in French geography, especially in the 1990s, leading to an intense epistemological debate. The works of Bonnemaïson (1981), Raffestin (1982, 1986a, 1986b), Debarbieux (1995; 1999), Di Méo (1998a, 1998b, 2007), and later outputs, such as the book edited by Martin Vanier in 2009, entitled *Territoires, territorialité, territorialisation*, have all contributed to a rich reflection on the concept and to efforts of definition. The approach to territory eventually used in French geography was wider than the mere space of sovereignty of a State; Raffestin defines it as a *“reordering of space”*, the territory then being seen as a *“space informed by the semiosphere”* (1986a: 177). For Di Méo, it gathers both the social and the lived space; it *“testifies of an appropriation of space which is at the same time economic, ideological and political (and thus social) by groups which give themselves a particular representation of the group [themselves], of their history and their specificities”* (1998a: 107).

Beyond this strand of literature, which relies largely on the meaning given to space to define the existence of a territory, researchers have adopted another position, in the wake of Robert Sack; this approach encompasses a clearer acknowledgement of its tight link with mechanisms and struggles of power. Sack defined territoriality as *“the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area”*. The area thus defined is the territory (Sack, 1986: 19; see also 1983). This definition does indeed introduce a clear concern for the dynamics and relationships of power and their inscription in space. In various works, Anssi Paasi takes this reflection further, concentrating notably on questions of boundaries and institutionalization (Paasi 2004). He interestingly argues

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<sup>16</sup> A small digression is necessary here; the territory represents a fundamental concept of French geography of years. It has been less present in Anglophone geography, and as a result was less central in the literature on social movements. Moreover, the meaning given to concepts can vary slightly according to the countries or regions where they are used (for example between *“place”* and the French equivalent, *“lieu”*). The way territory is conceptualized in this research owes a lot to the definition and use of *“territory”* in the French geography.

that, *“territories are not frozen frameworks where social life occurs. Rather, they are made, given meanings, and destroyed in social and individual action. Hence, they are typically contested and actively negotiated”* (2003: 110). Drawing on both of these definitions of territory and the attention they attribute to political and spatial strategies, Bosi and Ó Dochartaigh (2010) apply the concept of territoriality, linked to the one of scale-shifting, to their analysis of how the civil rights movements in Northern Ireland created alternative borders as a strategy to challenge the legitimacy of the State. The comprehensive account of Stuart Elden (2010) also provides an interesting basis for any integration of the concept of territory in the social movement research; he advocates for a complex approach that should start from territory rather than territoriality, and should take into account the historical, geographical and political dimensions of the territory. He defines the territory as a *“political technology”* that *“comprises techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain”* (Elden, 2010: 811).

The definition of territory in this research will rely on this approach: I will consider the territory as separated or at least as not necessarily linked to the State, in order to insist on its human dimension. Indeed, the territory is also a dimension of human life, lived or imagined. It is important to take this dimension into account as when it is associated to social movement: the control or identification with an area can be an essential means or a goal of mobilized groups. Indeed, if this control often aims at challenging that of the State, the territoriality and the territory considered are defined and redefined by the people, their actions and representations.

However, in the Anglophone literature on the spatialities of contentious politics, the concept of territory has not been fully exploited over a long period of time: it was often left undefined, or taken for granted, and was generally not used as often as other concepts such as place or networks. The seminal article of Leitner et al. for example does not mention the territory in the spatialities considered, and the word appears only twice, when referring to the territory of the USA and Europe, as an area under a specific institutionalized authority (Leitner et al., 2008). Similarly, even if the title of his book *“Territories in resistance”* (Zibechi, 2012) makes territories the centre of his analysis, Raúl Zibechi never gives a definition of the term, nor does he indicate what its use implies for his research. His very detailed analysis of South American social movements and the new ways of resisting that they have invented, does not build on the concepts used, notwithstanding that it depicts in a very rich manner the reality on the ground. The discipline often fails in this respect: that is, on reaching a balance between social movements and space, and then on the conceptual

reflections and empirical findings of the research.

The interest in territory has nevertheless increased in the recent years. Jessop and al. include it in the model they propose to tackle the polymorphy of sociospatial relations (Jessop et al., 2008). Arturo Escobar also refers to the notion of territory, defining it as *“the space of effective appropriation of ecosystems by a community”*. However, he mainly uses the concept of *“region-territory”* to define the Pacific area and as a political construction for the defence of territory by ethnic groups (Escobar 2008: 59), making it a vague concept to designate an area. Both nevertheless brought to concept to the fore in recent research on social movements, insisting on the importance of appropriation of the space and control of the resources for the mobilized groups (Zibechi, 2010, 2012) arguing that:

*“territory is the crucial space in which contentious politics are fashioned, understood as both material territory (involving struggles over the access, control, use and configuration of environmental resources [...]) and immaterial territory (involving struggles over ideas, knowledges, beliefs, conceptions of the world etc.)”* (Routledge, 2015b).

Processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation are also increasingly studied with relation to social movements (see for example Routledge, 2015). This renewed interest is due to the observed deterritorialisation induced by the globalisation and the neo-liberal economy but also to the strategies observed in various movements to invest, create or maintain relations with a particular space. Territorialisation, as territory, is often used as a category of thought based on experience, as an empirical notion that speaks to everyone and does not necessarily need to be explicated. One definition that can be set out, quoting Deleuze and Guattari, concerns territorialisation depending on a *“temporary or permanent occupation of space”*, whereas deterritorialisation *“involves a movement across space, fostering an imminent dispersion”* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, in J. P. Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000). We will see that territorialisation or reterritorialisation processes are central strategies of the Palestinian resistance, relying chiefly on place-based practices at a material but also highly abstract and symbolic level (see chapter 6).

### **Scale**

Scale is primarily used to designate *“nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size”* (Delaney and Leitner 1997: 93), usually referring to the local, regional, national and global levels. However,

it presents major issues as a concept, as it can refer to very different things depending on who uses it. This common approach to scale thus presents several flaws, one of which is to confuse the institutional level with a spatial area, or a “size” (Collinge 2006: 245). Howitt evokes size, level and relation as the main aspects constituting scale (Howitt 1998: 52), with the size and level being generally favoured; he advocates for a better consideration of the relational facet of scale, claiming that “*scale is better understood dialectically than hierarchically*” (ibid.).

The debate about the definition and theoretical use of scale intensified in at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A heated academic debate has taken place around the concept of scale in various reviews, such as *Progress in Human Geography* and the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. The debate was launched following two articles of Brenner (1997, 2000) focusing on the production of scale by the state and integrating Lefebvre’s theoretical insights on the matter, which were criticized by Sallie Marston (2000) for concentrating on the “*capitalist production of space*”, focusing, according to her, as most of the existing literature, mainly on capital, labour or the state as primary agents of scale construction (ibid.: 221). Marston underlined the importance of considering social reproduction and consumption in the making of scale. In his response, Brenner agreed on the “limits to scale” (2001) and formulated eleven hypotheses to distinguish and classify scale, proposing to tackle it as “the politics of scale”. An intense exchange followed: following the contributions of Marston and Smith (2001) and Purcell (2003), S. Marston, J. Paul III and K. Woodward published an article entitled “Human Geography without Scale” (2005). After reviewing the different approaches and the definition of the term, they criticized the divergent positions on the meaning of scale that can be found in the literature, and eventually called for a radical change of paradigm in geography, namely to “abandon hierarchical scale” and adopt a “flat ontology” (op.cit.: 420). Responses from Collinge (2006), Jonas (2006), Leitner and Miller (2007) and Escobar (2007) followed. The authors of the article then developed their proposition in another round of articles (Jones III, Woodward, & Marston, 2007; Marston, Woodward, & Jones III, 2007).

Developing and commenting on this highly theoretical debate is not the point here, but it is essential to mention that reflection on the topic is on-going and to possibly identify the implications that it has for the analysis undertaken herein. What must therefore be underlined is the relational dimension of scale, and the importance it holds in the process of shaping the spatiality of power. McKinnon for example argues convincingly to replace the notion of “politics of scale” by that of “scalar politics”, insisting on the fact that scale is usually not the central object of mobilizations,

which rather use scale strategically through “*specific processes and institutionalized practices*” (MacKinnon, 2010: 22-23).

We will conceive scale as being socially constructed (Marston, 2000) and as “*a relational, power-laden and contested construction that actors strategically engage with, in order to legitimise or challenge existing power relations*” (Leitner et al. 2008: 159). We will develop the meaning and implications of the relational approach in the next part; this conception of scale is particularly rich as it allows the researcher to put together several spatialities, and to consider the various relationships of power that are created and contested by the actors. Leitner underlines:

*“A central aspect of the practice of the political construction of scale is the manipulation of relations of power and authority between overlapping or mutually inclusive political territories, by actors operating and situating themselves at different geographic scales”* (Leitner 1997: 125).

We will see how the actors, despite their being rooted in place and acting first of all at the local scale, develop strategies to connect the place to other levels of action and to externalize their actions, thus shifting the scale of reference and constructing scales. In the three case studies considered here, we will see that this strategy aims mainly to invest the international arena and to develop their visibility and discourse at this level (see chapter 7).

### **Networks**

In social movement studies, networks usually refer to social networks or networks of communication and information, attributing less interest to another type of network studied in geography: the infrastructures (train lines, roads, etc.). In this understanding of the term, networks are made up of elements which establish relations between different places; they imply mobility, connection, flux, communication and exchange (see Hypergéó; Painter 2011). The technical representations of networks combine linear and punctual, or nodal, elements: networks are considered as being discontinuous. In this respect, they are usually opposed to the notion of ééterritory, or proposed as an alternative concept: “*networks stretch out over space, drawing the far away near*” (Painter 2011: 1). It is presented as being multi-dimensional and complex when territory is a “two-dimensional” concept, “*static and resistant to change*” (ibid.).

Studying networks in relation to social movements often means scrutinizing the connections

between actors, and more importantly, studying the transnational or cyber, information networks established between activists or groups of activists. The establishment and development of international solidarity networks have been extensively studied, scrutinizing for example the “global justice networks”, which create “*cultural and spatial configurations that connect places with each other in opposition to neoliberalism*” (Cumbers, Routledge, & Nativel, 2008: 184), and develop horizontal connections between actors and places, thus increasing and extending the possibilities of action, dialogue, debate and coordination (Routledge, Cumbers, & Nativel, 2007; see also chapter 7).

Resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) insists on the role of social networks in the making of contentious movements, recruitment and mobilization (see for example Diani and McAdam 2003; Kitts 2000; Della Porta, Kriesi, and Rucht 1999). The impact of networking on struggles, the influence of new alliances on the adoption of new repertoires, the mobilization of resources, and the adoption of new narratives have concentrated scholarly attention on these matters.

The development of communication through new technologies and the formation or organization of supra-national, transnational and global movements, have been the focus of much of the recent literature about networks. The use of the internet by activists, for example, has been studied for the resources it offers but also the risks and challenges it presents. It nevertheless represents an important tool of communication to the movements as it favours “disintermediation”, by generating the possibility of “*spreading uncensored messages, and of attempting to influence mass media*” (Della Porta and Mosca 2005: 166), and for activists to build their “*own rival communication networks*” (Sewell Jr 2001: 59). The contemporary communication technologies also allow the activists to share “*knowledge about strategies and tactics, and developing common political identities and alternative imaginaries*” (Leitner et al. 2008: 162).

However, the virtual space created by the use of contemporary technology is a complement of the actual space in which face-to-face encounters happen. Places are essential in the architecture of networks: they represent the nodes, where the identities are created and modified as well as solidarities tied up, and where the points put into communication through the network exist. These places can also have a central role in consolidating the network itself, as shown by Bosco in the case of the Madres de plaza de Mayo, who ensured the longevity and sustainability of a wide activist

network through the use of spatial strategies (2001). Nicholls (2009) analyses the importance of place-based relations in the forging of networks. The places represent “*contact points where diverse actors can come into regular interactions with one another*” (ibid.: 91).

The analyses that have concentrated on networks have been criticized and termed “network-centrism” which “*entails a one sided focus on horizontal, rhizomatic, topological and transversal interconnection of networks, frictionless spaces of flows and accelerating mobilities*” (Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008: 392). This tendency to focus on successive and exclusive “turns” leads to an impoverishing one-dimensionalism, which simplifies and narrows the scope of the analysis and thus the knowledge of the cases under study. The one-dimensionalism does not only apply to the network: as seen above, it represents the same problem when it comes to territory, place or scale (ibid.).

In this research, I will associate the concept of network to that of scale; I will show (see chapter 7) that the building of a transnational network of solidarity also entails different scales of actions and possibilities of mobility. I will take into account the abstract, computer-based type of communications but also the making of activist networks through human contact, face-to-face meetings and common initiatives, to show how connections to distant actors can enter and influence place-based actions, and how these connections are tied to – and even depend on – other spatialities. In fact, both the established networks and scalar strategies are often rooted in place, through the place-based practices of activists, NGOs or inhabitants, with variations depending on the case considered.

This research, following an inductive methodology and thus drawing on the empirical data collected on the field, will show that these four spatialities (place, territory, scale and network), traditionally those which are more often mentioned in the literature on social movements, are all present in the strategies of resistance deployed in each of the case studies; there is a pre-eminence of place, along with few others, such as public space and landscape. Drawing on the rich literature and reflections exposed above, I will explore how they are used to support or reinforce the contention and how their use corresponds in itself to a strategy, which dialectically transforms the space and produces new forms of spatialities. On a more theoretical note, I will develop an inclusive approach, insisting on the co-implication that exists between those spatialities and a few others not as used in the literature on social movements, such as public space or landscapes. As I hinted in this part, an

approach considering each spatiality independently, as an exclusive dimension of the struggle, is indeed bound to fail; the spatialities are all interwoven, and need to be considered together in a complex approach.

### ***For a multidimensional approach of spatialities***

If the geographical concepts mentioned above are indeed central for the comprehension of social phenomena, considering them individually, as isolated and autonomous elements, will eventually have a limited analytical range. Moreover, scholars studying the spatialities of contention are often limited by binary conceptions that oppose local and global, space and place, networks and territory (Featherstone 2003: 405), each one automatically excluding the other. This type of approach reproduces positions that can be found within geography and prolongs debates that have animated the disciplines over the years. I contend that it is necessary to try and bridge the concepts used in a comprehensive and coherent approach.

Calls to adopt a more inclusive approach to study the spatiality of social life, in general, and of contentious movements, in particular, have increased in the past years. Different authors, using different terminologies, have called for the consideration of the human spatiality in all its complexity (see for example Jessop et al. 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Miller and Martin 2000; Nicholls et al. 2013a; Paasi 2004; Routledge 2011). For example, 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).

Leitner and al. (2008) developed the idea of “co-implication”(2008: 159, 165) to insist on the fact that the various spatialities are closely interrelated. This “co-implication” is not presented as a theoretical framework, or as an established concept; it is not even defined by the authors who use it as an analytical and empirical category, as a transparent term that is immediately understandable: the different spatialities are linked, complementary and mutually constitutive.

I think it is important to specify one element that is implied in the term “co-implication”, but deserves to be made explicit. If the spatialities are all co-implicated in the social life – being interwoven, and thus not exclusive of one another – it is necessary to underline that they can also

be co-present, or simultaneously present, or active. We will see that one initiative, one protest action, can rely on several types of spatiality at once, for example drawing simultaneously on place, sense of place, scale and network, and at the same time modifying and producing them. This co-presence can indeed lead to the spatialities mutually reinforcing each other.

This is the approach that will be adopted for the purposes of this research; going beyond the one-dimensionalism and the dead-end of binary conceptions of space in order to expose the spatialities involved in the Palestinian resistance, taking into account the way they are related. The spatialities will still be presented separately for analytical clarity, relying on the corresponding geographical concepts that were found relevant to the movements' repertoire. Distributed thematically between the four empirical chapters, those spatialities – public space, place, sense of place, territory, landscape, scale and network – will nevertheless be scrutinized keeping in mind and eventually showing their co-implication through the empirical analysis.

This approach requires that multiple concepts and dimensions be put together, studied in three different places, in an attempt to analyse their single importance while considering in a same movement the relations linking between them. Considering that spatialities are themselves composite - place for example being already a multidimensional concept, as shown by Agnew (Miller and Martin 2000: 16) - this certainly generates a further difficulty in structuring the research and the reflection undertaken. However, as Miller puts it, "*attention to the geographic structuring of social movements may introduce an unwanted degree of complexity*" but "*real-world processes are complex*" (2000: 172). I contend that an empirical approach is particularly adapted to deploy this kind of analysis as it also allows the researcher to take into account the complexity of reality, through the fieldwork research and the empirical data it produces.

Before moving on to consider how this research will draw on social movement studies, we have to consider another conceptual tool taken from geography, that of the "production of space", presented by Henri Lefebvre in 1974 in the seminal book of the same name, a concept which has been largely adopted, re-used and developed since then and which will prove crucial to this study.

### 1.3. Lefebvre, space and production of space

Since the publication of his main work, *La production de l'espace* in 1974 (which was translated to English only in 1991), Lefebvre has been widely quoted, studied, and criticized. This book, inspirational for many, nevertheless retains a large part of opacity, notably due to the writing style of its author, largely poetic and philosophical. However, his definition of space and his account of the production of space process, are essential for contemporary human geography.

I will draw on the idea of the “production of space” to designate the process complementing the “use of space”, in a dialectical movement. Indeed, I will be looking at the way that individuals and groups use various spatialities in and for the resistance, but I contend that in so doing they also produce space, modifying and shaping it in turn. This last concept encompasses at the same time both the practices and the cognitive aspects (representations, perceptions, and symbols for example) resulting in the production of space at a collective and at an individual level. In this perspective, the concept of the “production of space” appears as a fundamental notion to associate to a relational approach as it implies a number of different processes and actors.

Scrutinizing the meaning of this “production of space” and the abundant literature that developed around the idea thus seems necessary in order to better integrate the various dimensions that constitute and create space. I will also briefly consider the literature in which the production of space is associated to the study of social movements, showing that some elements resonate with the analysis made in the empirical chapter.

#### ***Reflection and definition: space and the production of space***

The concepts and definitions elaborated by Henri Lefebvre have been largely reused, or to put it more clearly, “exported”. Indeed, it is their potential for explanation, rather than the whole theoretical work underpinning them, which is often reused; the late translation of the book in English, as well as the complexity of the writing, bringing together political philosophy, aesthetics, etc., has led a lot of scholars to export the terms and meaning of the main concepts without engaging the ideological and theoretical background involved: many do so without having read the original work, or by relying only on the first chapters of the book, which outline the goal and the basis for his arguments in a clear way. In his critique of Lefebvre's work, T. Unwin underlines that the author's arguments are often difficult to grasp, going as far as to say: “*Reading The production*

of space *can be compared to walking across quicksand or trying to find the end of a rainbow*" (2000: 14).

Before tackling the production of space in itself, it is necessary to consider the definition of space that underlies it and the entire work of Lefebvre. Indeed, the definition of space that he coined contributes to the making of the content of the book, providing a theoretical framework for other research. Lefebvre presents space as a triad: it is perceived, conceived and lived. According to Gottdiener, Lefebvre created *"a unitary theory of space that ties together the physical, the mental and the social"* (1993: 131). The introduction of a third term allows for a more complex understanding by overcoming simplistic dualities and oppositions. Lefebvre distinguishes the spatial practice (or *"perceived space"*), which corresponds to the space of everyday life, of the daily mobility, marked by the domestic space as well as places of work and leisure. The representations of space or *"conceived space"*, the *"dominating space of a society"* (Lefebvre, 1974: 48), is linked to the 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"* which Gottdiener designates as the *"mental"* and which brings together the symbols and images associated to space by those who inhabit it (Lefebvre, 1974: 43, 48, 49).

This triplicate understanding has been widely re-used in the literature, often in a summarized way, as the original text is rarely used. Gottdiener summed it up as follows:

*"Space is simultaneously a spatial practice (an externalized, material environment), a representation of space (a conceptual model used to direct practice), and a space of representation (the lived social relation of users to the environment)"* (ibid.; see also Allegra 2013: 504).

This definition of space has a direct implication on how the production of space is conceived. Indeed, each one of these dimensions corresponds to a way in which society produces space, that is, to a mode of production.

Engaging more than the Marxist definition of the production of space given by its author, as the result of modes of production and social relationships, here we will concentrate on a wider understanding of the word, set out by Lefebvre himself, whereby he seems to point towards a more generic acceptance of the production of space as a condition for identity and power.

*« Les idées, représentations, valeurs, qui ne parviennent pas à s'inscrire dans l'espace en engendrant (produisant) une morphologie appropriée se dessèchent en signes, se résolvent en récits abstraits, se changent en fantasmes. (...) L'investissement spatial, la production de l'espace, ce n'est pas un incident de parcours, mais une question de vie ou de mort » (Lefebvre, 1974: 478-479).*

It is important to go back to the original text in this case: the use of the verb “engendrer”, which means to create, conceive, or give birth, and the fact that it is used first, with “produire” coming subsequently only to explicate it a second time, relativizes the materialist dimension of the expression “production of space” and allows us to use the term outside of the strict Marxist framework. Even in the opening part of the book, Lefebvre uses another similar verb to describe the process “générer” (generate), also followed by “produire” (ibid.: 43). Through the use of words such as “engendrer”, “générer” as well as the expression “investissement spatial” (spatial investment) as synonyms for the term “production of space”, Lefebvre shows that the production of space goes beyond the material and the modes of production, to be an all-encompassing concept. To produce, to generate, or to create space, is seen as an inevitable condition for being spatial actors or “subjects”: indeed, *“rien ni personne ne peut éviter l'épreuve de l'espace”* (ibid.). In this revealing paragraph, the “production of space” is placed side-by-side with the expression “spatial investment”. If Lefebvre’s analysis is interested in the material production of space and class social relations, he is also very attentive to the immaterial aspect of the production of space: the “investment” he evokes in fact includes “values” and “ideas”, symbols, representations, as a way to appropriate and thus ultimately produce space. This is a fundamental point for our research, as we will see that narratives and representations play a central role in using and producing space in the three case studies.

Carefully reading the rich and erudite work of Lefebvre shows how concerned he was with social dynamics; indeed, the importance of power relations and how they are inscribed in space pervades *The production of space*. 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 *“always stirs up contestation and becomes the central stake of struggles and actions having an aim”* (ibid: 471-471).

The production of space thus looks to be a concept of particular interest in the study of relations of

power, both on the side of constraint and of protest. We can consider how the concept has been used in relation to social movements, mainly to highlight the spatial dimension of protest and how contentious movements can be spatial actors, modifying their environment or using it strategically.

### ***Production of space and contention***

The implications of the production of space when it comes to relations of power are often studied as opposing the State and its citizens, the State being in charge of the material dimension of the lived environment through planning, and of the additional constraints that regulate it, through legislation (for example, regulation in the public space) and sometimes direct, physical coercion.

The work of Lefebvre indeed continues to live through the academic literature, often being discussed and re-appropriated. Hubbard for example confronts the “ordered” spaces of the capitalist state to the space of the prostitutes, a “lived” space according to the lefebvrian definition: in this opposition he sees *“a conflict between representations of space (which seek to impose order on urban space) and spaces of representation (which emerge ‘organically’ from the bodily practices and behaviours of sex workers)”*. The production of space is identified in the social and spatial coping strategies to which the prostitutes resort in order to protect themselves and counter law enforcement, creating sites of resistance through the definition of the boundaries of red-light districts, mobility or symbolic control of their environment (Hubbard & Sanders, 2003: 87).

Focusing on the specific example of Ma'ale Adumim, a West Bank settlement located East of Jerusalem, Marco Allegra concentrates on an Israeli case: he studies how the establishment of settlements relates to the general process of state building. Following the analysis of Brenner and Elden, who present Lefebvre as a theorist of territory, he chooses to concentrate on “territorial strategies” and the “production of territory” (Allegra, 2013: 504; 512). Also studying an Israeli case, Yacobi underlines how the Israeli mixed city of Lod was modified through planning practices following the principles of the hegemonic ethnocratic state and its needs for surveillance, thus producing a segregated urban space. However, he underlines the existence of tactics of resistance, or as he terms it, “spatial protest”; challenging the interests of the authorities and identifying *“the limits of the state's control over those that contradict its hegemony”* (2004: 56). He identifies a process of bottom-up counter-production of space; even though the tactics adopted are not necessarily conscious, they are one way in which the inhabitants reclaim their right to the city (ibid: 73). This concern with the State’s hegemony and control, and the importance of the material

organization of space and of the right to the city, is particularly interesting as all three elements are central in our case studies and will be developed in chapter 4.

For Setha M. Low, the “production of space” has too much of a materialist emphasis; she thus proposes to use “construction of space” to designate the phenomenological and symbolic experience of space, and its transformation through people’s perception “*into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning*” (1996: 862). Drawing on these concepts, she scrutinizes two plazas in the town of San José, Costa Rica, and explores how public space was the outcome of both the production, meaning the “*physical creation of the material setting*”, and the construction, of space. This immaterial “construction” nevertheless points to the same kind of production as the “space of representation” evoked by Lefebvre. We will see that it can be applied in our case chiefly to the place, and the process of producing a place, as well as a particular “sense of place” and place identity (see chapter 5).

The production of space has been studied a few times as a main framework in the study of protests, although it is seldom a core point of focus. It is nevertheless regularly invoked in social movements’ literature and thus represents already an important and established transdisciplinary conceptual tool, bringing a geographical point of view into sociological analysis, both however meeting on their common concern for the relationships of power.

After these considerations on the way that space can be taken into account in the sociology of social movements, drawing on geographical concepts, we will move on to consider how both these disciplines intersect with the study of Israel and Palestine, before exposing more thoroughly, in a third part, the concepts taken from contentious politics that will be used in this research.

## **2. Israel-Palestine: the conflict, the protests and the resistance**

When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian situation, the literature is unending, with a very wide spectre of topics tackled and an incredible richness of analysis undertaken. Part of the literature concentrates on the big picture, namely the conflict opposing two parties, the Israeli State and the Palestinian authorities (different according to the time and area considered; PLO, PA, Hamas...) as representatives of two people. This literature tackles geopolitical, international relations and

diplomatic issues: negotiations, peace processes, events and strategies of war, and the evolution of the balance of power. Beyond the relationships between the State of Israel and the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab states, and the different shades of enmity that oppose them, an incredibly rich literature also deals with each society and its internal dynamics: the evolution of nationalism, the place of religion, parties' stance, changes in government and their impact on the policies implemented.

## 2.1. Studying the protest movements in Israel and Palestine

This conflict, often considered at the national level, has ramifications at the other scales, with people mobilizing, on both sides and for various motivations, but also at various scales and with different modes of actions. I will consider here the way that protest movements in Israel and Palestine have been studied over the years; this also allows us to briefly cover, between the lines, the recent history of contention in the region. An overview of both the protest events and the literature analysing them is important to set the framework of this research and situate our approach.

Even if this study will concentrate on Palestinian cases, we will also consider the Israeli contention; first, because two of our cases are directly inserted in the Israeli reality and both the Bedouins and the Silwanese population are *de facto* under Israeli authority, even if they are marginalized or without the status of citizenship, as in the case of Silwan. Moreover, secondly, it has also to be acknowledged that the Israeli and Palestinian realities and political life are tightly interrelated, and often interdependent. Studying one side often means to also study, even if implicitly, the other.

The conflict indeed remains an omnipresent backdrop of any event occurring in the region. As underlined by Eitan Alimi in his analysis of the 2011 "tent protest" that swept across Israel and made demands for social justice, the "security situation" and its implications are never far from the forefront, and are reactivated as soon as the "cannons roar" (Alimi, 2012: 403). As Alimi, as well as several others, have pointed out (see for example Harel, 2012), the silence that prevailed during this wave of protest in respect of topics traditionally dividing the Israeli society (religion, occupation, settlements...), only underlined their relevance, and showed that the occupation, and all matters related to it, are always in the background, even if only implicitly.

As far as contention in the Israeli society is concerned, Hermann underlined in 1996, the “*dearth of studies of protest events, especially in the early years of the state [of Israel]*” (1996: 149). This gap was quickly filled, as the history of the newly-formed state became more and more marked by conflict and social unrest. In his periodization of protest activity in Israel, Sam N. Lehman-Wilzig evokes the years from 1979 to 1989 as being characterized by the “*routinization of protest*” (1990). Ehud Sprinzak describes the same period as an era of “*maturation*”<sup>17</sup>, a description to which Hermann also subscribes (ibid: 150). The latter identifies November 4<sup>th</sup> 1995, the day on which Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in Tel Aviv, as being a decisive turning point: from an overlooked phenomenon, social protest became a central point of interest and debate for society as a whole (ibid: 149).

Prior to this, however, we can identify the first intifada, which started in 1987, as an initial turning point for the analysis of social movements in the region. The intifada indeed gave way to analysis scrutinizing the mobilization of the Palestinian population, the repertoire and tactics adopted, the challenge it represented to Israeli policy, as well as the response it brought to the Israeli public. Marwan Khawaja, for example, tackled quite early on the question of collective action and collective violence in the West Bank, with a focus on resource mobilization and the impact of coercion on mobilization (Khawaja, 1993, 1994, 1995). Eitan Alimi also studied the first Intifada through the lens of the political opportunity structure, concentrating on the impact that shifts in the Israeli political landscape could have on Palestinian framing and mobilization (Alimi, 2001, 2007b, 2007c; see also E. Alimi, Gamson, & Ryan, 2006) or the media (E. Y. Alimi, 2007a; Peleg & Alimi, 2005). The writings about the Intifada also concentrated on topics as diverse as violence (Jean-Klein, 2001; Peteet, 1994) and the construction of meaning through graffiti (Peteet, 1996), as well as the impact it had on the status and role of Palestinian women (Hammami, 1990).

The peace negotiations of the Oslo process and the assassination of Y. Rabin gave birth to a strong movement from within Israel, one which is supporting peace and more critical towards Israeli policy. This mobilization led, in turn, to a strand of literature more focused on the Israeli mechanisms of protest and on their internal meaning or impact on political life. D. Hall-Cathala and his *Peace Movement in Israel, 1967-87* (1990), M. Bar-On, with *In Pursuit of Peace: A History of the Israeli Peace Movement* (1996) and R. Kaminer all tackled the history of the Israeli peace movement.

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<sup>17</sup> E. Sprinzak, “Extra-Parliamentary Politics in Israel”, *Skira Hodshit* 31(8/9) (1984):35-45 [Hebrew], quoted in Hermann, 1996: 150.

Reuven Kaminer focused on the emergence of the Israeli peace movement, “*a strong protest movement (...) against the repression of the Intifada*” (Kaminer, 1996: xi), which brought together militants from very different background and with very different agendas. Peace Now was the forerunner of this big mobilization, and the ideological counterpart of Gush Emunim, the “Block of the faithful”, both of them created in the 1970s and specifically studied in this literature (Feige, 1998; Newman & Hermann, 1992). The mobilization for peace nevertheless came to know a steady decline after Y. Rabin’s assassination, ultimately reaching a “dead-end point” (Hermann, 2009: 21; see also Lustick, 1988; Zertal & Eldar, 2007).

The internal diversity of the peace camp has also been a source of insightful research. Numerous articles concerning the role of women and women’s movements in the protests have been published (for an overview, see Herzog, 2008), drawing on a tradition of literature scrutinizing the place of women in the social movements of the early years of the state, in the Yishuv or in the kibbutzim (see for example Bernstein, 1992; Hazelton, 1977; Tiger & Shepher, 1975). Women’s groups mobilized against the occupation, such as Women in Black (Helman & Rapoport, 1997; Shadmi, 2000; Svirsky, 2001) and Machsom Watch (Carter Hallward, 2008; Halperin, 2007; Kutz-Flamenbaum, 2012; Lamarche, 2005; Naaman, 2006) are scrutinized for their activism as much as for their particular action and original claims about the role of women in modern Israeli society.

More recent groups are also studied for their political claims and new modes of action against the occupation, such as the radical activists of “Anarchists against the Wall” (Ben-Eliezer & Feinstein, 2007; Gordon, 2010; Lamarche, 2009, 2011; Pallister-Wilkins, 2009), or the groups born from the military experience, such as Combatants for Peace (Lamarche, 2011).

An interesting research program, launched in France in 2007 with young researchers, called “Mobilities, borders and conflict in the Israeli-Palestinian spaces and their peripheries” has given way to very interesting reflections on various issues (Marteu, 2009). The choice was made in the book to concentrate on “civil mobilizations” in Israel. In her introduction, E. Marteu underlines that predominantly two fields have been studied in recent years: interest groups and third-sector organization, underlining that the stress is usually put on the state-society relations (ibid.: 7).

The study of contention in the region also examines more specifically the Palestinian protests, beyond the first intifada. The second uprising, the “Al-Aqsa Intifada”, which started gradually in

2000, was also thoroughly scrutinized: namely, for its general dynamics, the strategies employed, with a focus on terrorism and violence (Allen, 2008; Brym & Araj, 2006; Moghadam, 2003) and nonviolent resistance (Carter Hallward & Norman, 2012), the distinctive role of men and women in the struggle and the construction of gendered identity through contention (Johnson & Kuttab, 2001).

These themes are in line with the topics traditionally studied in relationship with the Palestinian struggle. The nonviolence discourse is a constant one, along with peacebuilding (see for example Cady 2010; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2005; Sharp 1989), as well as the gendered dimension of resistance and the role of Palestinian women in the struggle (Abdulhadi, 1998; Hammami, 1990; Hasso, 2001; Hanah Herzog, 1998; Jacoby, 1999; Jamal, 2001; Lentin, 2011; Zarrugh, 2011). Another topic that has been tackled on a number of occasions is the role and place of the NGOs in the Palestinian struggle (Abu-Sada, 2007, 2008; Hammami, 2000; Jad, 2007; Sullivan, 1996).

This literature treating the protest movements in Israel and Palestine must be completed with a more specific type of approach, more similar to the one I will adopt in this research. As the territorial dimension of the conflict is central, numerous studies tackle the spatial dimension underlying the Israeli politics, for example, focusing on the architecture and planning of occupation, or on separation, especially in an urban environment. Even if these topics do not seem to be directly linked with contention, we will see in the empirical chapters that they are nevertheless tightly linked. Finally, we will see that some authors do study contention in the region and spatial dynamics at the same time.

## **2.2. Introducing space in the study of Israeli-Palestinian politics and contention**

As the availability and control of space is a fundamental political stake for both sides involved in the conflict, as well as for the different communities existing at the local level (settlers, “Arab Israelis”...), the role of space in conflict, but also in the spatial organization of the Israeli society itself, has given way to a large and variegated literature. This is reflected in discourses ranging from the central role of space in Zionist ideology (Kimmerling, 1983) to the spatial characteristics of Israeli society (Dieckhoff, 1989; S. Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006; Yiftachel, Little, Hedgecock, & Alexander, 2001), and the spatial strategies implied in Israeli planning and architecture (Segal & Weizman,

2003b; Weizman, 2012) and war doctrines (Weizman, 2008).

Eyal Weizman, an Israeli architect based in London, scrutinizes how planning and architecture are used for the needs of occupation and control (Weizman, 2012). The studies of the spatiality of the occupation, of the spatial strategies implemented by the authorities to strengthen and support it, are numerous. Omar Yousef, a Palestinian architect based in Jerusalem, for example, wrote a PhD dissertation entitled *Urban Morphologies of Conflict: Palestinian life and Israeli planning in Jerusalem* (O. M. Yousef, 2009), directly linking both aspects. NGOs such as Breaking the Silence, B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch all underline in their reports and communiqué the spatial dimension of the occupation, and how the Israeli authorities, mainly the government and army, are relying on spatial strategies to control the Palestinian population (see, for example, B'Tselem 1995; Breaking the Silence 2012).

Moreover, studies of the “divided city” are a common way of tackling geography and social dynamics together, scrutinizing the spatial segregation realized along ethnic lines from the point of view of the planners (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). Jerusalem occupies a central place in the research about “divided cities”: whether in respect of the planning procedures of spatial segregation and the politics implemented by Israeli power (Philipp Misselwitz & Rieniets, 2006; Pullan, 2009; “The Next Jerusalem : Sharing the Divided City,” 2002) or the impact that the religious aspect has on the urban fabric and identity (Hassner, 2003; Hasson, 2001a). When it comes to the combination of space and contention, the amount of research is considerably smaller. One can quote, for instance, Anne Latendresse (Latendresse, 1995) who focuses on Palestinian resistance and urban change between 1967 and 1994, or the recent work of Irène Salenson on Jerusalem, who focuses on the mobilization against city planning in Jerusalem (2009). O. M. Yousef has also tackled the question of the evolution of the Palestinian resistance that has occurred in Jerusalem in the face of various Israeli strategies of spatial control, mainly with what he terms the “normalization of resistance” (O. Yousef, 2011).

A strand of literature also concentrates on specific tactics of resistance, such as the “sumud”, a term usually translated as “steadfastness”. As will become clear later in this research (see chapter 5), sumud is directly linked with space, as it stems from “*an intimate sense of connection to the land*” (VanTeeffelen, Biggs, & Sumud Story House in Bethlehem, 2011: 9). Throughout the various writings about sumud, whether concerning its place in the Palestinian arts (Salti, 2010), the

gendered version of sumud (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2005), or its link with memory (Rangitsch, 2007), the importance of space and its tight co-implication with resistance, is always present, even if only implicitly.

In fact, even if it is often engaged without being explicitly acknowledged, most of the works evoked above about Israeli or Palestinian social movements, show how tightly related to space those protests are. The account of J. Peteet on the importance of graffiti painting as a practice of resistance and internal politic during the first intifada, for example, clearly shows the importance of the neighbourhood for the Palestinian parties. Her analysis indeed makes references to the walls, the neighbourhood, public space and landscape, making it eminently geographical (Peteet, 1996). Hasson, in his review of the various forms of urban resistance existing in Jerusalem, presents four types of struggle: ethno-national (between Israeli-Jews and Palestinian-Arabs), cultural (between ultra-orthodox Jews and secular Jews), ethno-class (between advantaged and disadvantaged groups) and ecological, showing they all relate to the occupation of *“a specific territory within the city”* (Hasson, 2001: 43). In their article about the Women in Black movement, Helman and Rapoport underline, for instance, several times at which the meaningful links between the protest and the place in which it is carried on every week, stating that *“the public event creates and institutionalizes a space in which women constitute themselves as autonomous political agents, thereby reformulating their place in the socio-political order”* (Helman & Rapoport, 1997: 695).

The case of the Bedouin is probably the most developed in this respect. It is rather particular in the literature on Israel and Palestine, existing at its fringes, being considered quite external to the conflict and peripheral to Israeli society. Indeed, they are studied both as a different ethnic group within the Israeli population, and as Palestinian citizens (often called *“Arab-Israelis”*), as well as a separated group inside the Palestinian society. For this specific population, mainly due to their nomadic background but also due to the land conflict that has opposed them to the Israeli State since its creation, the spatial dimension is often central to the various studies that are consecrated to them, whether concerned with the end of the nomadism and thus the changing use of land (Kressel, Ben-David, & Abu Rabi’a, 1991; Meir, 1996) or the evolution of the Israeli legislation dealing with Bedouin lands (Shamir, 1996). The question of gender segregation and domestic space is also considered (Meir & Gekker, 2011).

In particular, Oren Yiftachel, an Israeli political geographer, has produced much of the recent

literature on the political treatment of the Negev Bedouins within the Israeli political system, drawing on post-colonial literature with what he terms “ethnocracy” and “gray space” (Yiftachel, 1999, 2006, 2008, 2009b). One article in particular is fundamental for this research: *Critical theory and ‘gray space’: Mobilization of the colonized*. In this piece of work, Yiftachel considers the policy implemented by the State of Israel, which aims mainly at concentrating the Bedouins in townships and poor urban areas, developing in parallel the mobilization pattern of the Bedouin communities and the different kind of practices adopted to counter state coercion, from democratic to radical ones (Yiftachel, 2009a). Ismael Abu-Saad also associates the themes of spatiality and indigenous resistance, linking them with the settler-colonial vision of Israel and state policies (Abu-Saad, 2008). The scholarly literature on the matter is also complemented by the publications of various NGOs such as the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF, also called Dukium) (see NCF 2012, 2009, 2012, 2014), Adalah (Adalah, 2011a, 2011b) and Human Rights Watch (Swirski & Hasson, 2006) who issue information leaflets and extensive reports on the discrimination from which the Bedouin population suffers in Israel. Often concentrating on the implementation of Israeli law, they also communicate their own initiatives of support and information, and describe the various protest events organized at a local level.

We have seen that space is a central feature in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The politics on both sides are indeed highly informed and influenced by spatial issues and strategies. The Israeli internal politics and the way it handles the occupation of the West Bank are dictated by a principle of spatial control. Yet, social movements, both Israeli and Palestinian, contest this hegemonic take on space, be it material, through architecture or planning for example, legal, as in the case of the Bedouin communities, or implemented through military coercion, as in the occupied West Bank. However, it appears that contention and space are only very sporadically studied together, especially when it comes to the Palestinian protests. They are often mentioned side-by-side or invoked unintentionally together, but very seldom are they studied in a single effort; this is even truer at a local scale. A review of this literature is however not undertaken in vain, as multiple facets mentioned here will come together when focusing on the case studies; indeed, we will see that most of these aspects of control and resistance, and of these approaches to spatialities, are involved in the three cases studied.

Israel and the Palestinian territories are obviously a rich terrain for the study of contention. However, in light of the literature, it seems necessary to reflect on the implications of the social

movement model for this region, and as a consequence, to clarify the pitfalls that might be encountered at a theoretical level, to set out how to avoid or solve them, and to identify the position that will be adopted in this research.

### **2.3. Reflection on a specific region and situation: from social movements to resistance**

This research is based on a theoretical framework combining the study of protest movements and geography. It is necessary to firstly call into question and then clarify the concepts on which we will rely. In fact, the study of social movements – now more often referred to under the label of contentious politics – is conventionally focused on the categories of “social movements” and “collective action”. Considering the case studies and the wider context in which they are inscribed – the regional conflict opposing Israel and Palestine, but also the Middle East, with its specific culture and social and political structures – the social movement model may not be the one that is in fact most appropriate.

Indeed, I contend that concentrating by default on organized and homogeneous groups represents an important bias in the study of contention. In the cases considered here, as we will see, the protests are carried on by a multitude of different actors: the core is made up of activists and NGOs, with other actors gravitating around, in a more or less organized fashion, with different levels of involvement: these other actors can be individuals, institutions, foreign activists, and so forth. They do represent in their entirety a galaxy of contention, and, generally, a “movement”. However, the problem represented by considering exclusively the “collective” dimension of the protests still arises; as a result we will tackle the contention as being constituted by a continuum between individual engagement and collective action.

We shall firstly consider the implications of and problems that the concept of collective action represents for this research, and explain why the concept of resistance will be engaged in this thesis. Beyond obvious empirical reasons linked to the characteristics of the Palestinian struggle, this position is also based on a strand of theoretical reflection that will be exposed here, itself based on methodological considerations.

### ***Contention in the Middle East: going beyond the collective***

Social movements are traditionally defined as collective actors involved in confrontational relations with clearly identified opponents, “linked by dense informal network”, sharing a “distinct collective identity” and privileging conflict as a form of action (della Porta & Diani, 2005). Similarly, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly define the more recent concept of “contentious politics” as follows:

*"By contentious politics we mean "episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their object when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants" (Ibid.: 5).*

This way of viewing protests ignores an entire aspect of the phenomenon: the role of the individual. Social movements' studies are entirely concentrated on collective configurations – and their internal nuances - and do not take into account individual actions as a possible extension of, or complement to, the group dynamic. Why separate so distinctly collective and individual actions? Even if this distinction sometimes has a basis in reality, or is necessary for methodological purposes, there might also be a continuum that deserves to be acknowledged. I contend that the consideration of the collective and the individual as categories impenetrable to one another impoverishes the analysis and the comprehension of the relevant situations.

Indeed, concentrating exclusively on collective action overlooks significant dimensions constituting a protest. Collective action has to be considered alongside individual acts of protest and resistance, acknowledging that they can intersect and have a direct link. Being involved in a collective action can, for instance, lead to a reinforced ethic, to new ideological positions or a different way of acting in everyday life (for example, boycotting products), which would represent a continuation of the activist's commitment in his or her personal life.

Moreover, the references to “social movements” have to be considered carefully as they are heavily influenced by the Western world. Indeed, a considerable part of the scholarly literature concerning social movements has been elaborated on the basis of European and American examples, by European and American scholars. If social movements' theory can be generalised and aims precisely at being applied to other contexts, it has to be acknowledged that sometimes it is not adapted to the social reality that it considers and can present important ethnocentric features.

The structuring of protests and the dynamics of mobilization are indeed deeply dependant on a society's functioning and the political regime on which it depends – or opposes. The intensity of participation, the enforcement of the freedom of gathering and of speech, but also the existence of trade unions and their strength, the role played by political parties, and the organization of civil society, are some of the many elements that shape the protest.

We can for example suppose that in the Palestinian and Bedouin societies, where the extended family and kinship ties play a fundamental role, the protests can take on a more informal shape than those which are considered as models in the social movement approach, relying on primary solidarities rather than on associations, for example (Bayat 2000: iv). As we will see later (see chapter 2 and 3), the contention in the three case studies is indeed structured around some groups of activists and NGOs, with a gravitating network of people. The “core” often depends, or relies, on the support and occasional participation of inhabitants, on daily life practices and on individual initiatives, making each case considered a galaxy consisting of different components, of groups as well as individuals, of organised and spontaneous participation, collective and private actions, rather than a single, compact and homogeneous “movement” with internal disparities.

Important insights in this respect come from the work of Asef Bayat, who looks into the politics of the Middle East from a social movement perspective, forging new conceptual tools adapted to the specificities of the region. In his book *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, Bayat for instance underlines the role of “the Arab street”, or “political street”, where conflicts between “*an individual or collective populace and the authorities*” are expressed (Bayat, 2010: 11). He highlights the “epidemic potential” of street politics, whereby a small protest can grow into a major display of solidarity and a massive demonstration simply by aggregating groups of people with the same interests. However, these people can be “*strangers or casual passersby*” (ibid: 12). Bayat terms this type of contention “social nonmovements”, which he describes as follows:

*“In general, nonmovements refers to the collective actions of noncollective actors; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology of recognizable leaderships and organizations. The terms movement implies that social nonmovement enjoy significant, consequential elements of social movements; yet they constitute distinct entities”* (ibid: 14).

This concept of “social nonmovement” thus appears fundamental to study contention in Middle Eastern societies, adding new and interesting dimensions to the reflection on the collective aspect of protest. Along with the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” (Bayat, 2000, 2010), Bayat elaborates on new analytical tools to consider the dynamics of protests in the region, encouraging the researcher to take into account both the activism and the everyday life in the same piece of scholarship, thus allowing us to consider the individual aspect of the protest without overlooking its “social movement”, collective and organized aspect.

This confirms that the concept of social movements alone, in its “classical” acceptance – meaning concentrating chiefly on collective action - is unsuitable to the cases considered here. Indeed, we will be concentrating on three cases located within Palestinian society. They are of course tightly connected to the Israeli context – which is usually treated and considered as similar to the European one – but they are also deeply marked by the cultural and political traits described by A. Bayat as the “*politics of dissent in the Muslim Middle East*” (ibid: 14).

We shall thus take into account these new concepts proposed by Bayat, amongst others, in order to study and characterize the Palestinian contention in all its complexity, with both individual and collective, informal and organized practices. Those practices, however, if not fitting completely within the theoretical framework of social movements, are usually studied as practices of resistance. Beyond the political dimension of the term, which fits the spirit and methods of the various cases examined here, all mobilized against coercive or repressive measures implemented by the State of Israel, “resistance” also allows us to consider both organized and informal forms of protest and to concentrate on the question of power. That being said, resistance is a very wide, polysemous, and debated term, and needs to be defined.

### ***Defining resistance***

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, including “*symbolic meanings, communicative processes, political discourses, religious idioms, cultural practices, social networks, physical settings, bodily practices, and envisioned desires and hopes*” (Routledge, 1997: 69). In his seminal book, *Weapons of the weak*, James C. Scott defines class resistance as including:

*“any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate*

*or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by superordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those superordinate classes"* (Scott, 1985: 290).

If this definition applies specifically to situations of class struggle, it also underlines several key-aspects of resistance: protest, social tension, inequality of power and resources. Resistance indeed seems to cover a larger span than social movements when it comes to the actors considered. It applies to collective as well as individual actions, thus allowing us to consider a wide range of practices and different scales of mobilization. Paul Routledge underlines that in resistance, *"actions may be open and confrontational or hidden, and range from the individual to the collective"* (1997: 69).

In their article "Conceptualizing resistance", Hollander and Einwohner (2004) identify two elements to which all authors who use the term implicitly refer, namely "action" (as an *"active behaviour, whether verbal, cognitive or physical"* (ibid: 538)) and a "sense of opposition". These two elements represent the points on which people agree when it comes to defining resistance. They subsequently stress two points of disagreement: "recognition", that is, the *"visibility of the resistant act"* (ibid: 539), and "intent", mainly concentrated in the debate over the consciousness of the actor (ibid: 542). Without concluding on an improbable univocal definition of resistance, their article sheds light on the construction and use of this concept in the scholarly literature: if resistance necessarily includes action and struggle, scholars do not agree on the importance of its being recognized as such, or on its perpetrator being aware of performing a resistant act.

However, an important point, which determines different uses of the term and which their argument does not tackle as such, is the question of the place of ideology and politics in the definition of resistance. In fact, evoking with this same word the struggle of a woman against a "would-be rapist" and the resistance to "institutions and social structures" (ibid: 536) is not only a difference of "target" but also of the "nature" of the resistant act. This relates directly to the fundamental question of how resistance relates to power.

In his chapter of *Geographies of resistance*, Paul Routledge defines resistance insisting on the centrality of the intention, and thus the consciousness of the actors, but also on the implied

relationship of power. Resistance is described 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. Imply some form of contestation, some form of juxtaposition of forces (...)”* (1997: 69).

The way resistance relates to power, this “juxtaposition of forces”, also needs to be scrutinized. Indeed, “power” is often used as an equivalent to domination (see for example Pile, 1997: 1), and to an “oppressive power”. However, as shown by Sharp and al. power is made of both domination and resistance; *“the power should not be viewed solely as an attribute of the dominant, expressed as coercion or political control, since it is also present in the ability to resist”* (Sharp et al. 2000: 2). The entanglement and “endless circulation” of power calls for a nuanced approach; indeed, there can be relations of domination developing within a movement of resistance, but also sparkles of resistance within a dominating group.

The concept of resistance may have paradoxical or exaggeratedly wide uses, as we have seen above. Above all, if it can encompass situations of collective action, it can also lack the proper tools to analyse them. These will necessarily come from the field of social movements’ studies. So if social movement studies have to evolve from an exclusive focus on collective action to a more inclusive vision taking into account the individual, resistance can also be enriched by external contributions.

In the definition of contentious politics, McAdam and al. include *“social movements, revolutions, strike waves, nationalism, democratization and more”* (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2003: 4). Resistance is not quoted in the enumeration, but could be included in this elusive “and more”. Considering again the definition of contentious politics and considering the definition of resistance developed above, it is obvious that contention and resistance share many characteristics. Moreover, the definition of the term given by McAdam and al. has been discussed; some authors, such as Leitner and al., have criticized it for being too state-centric and centred on interests. They propose an alternative definition of contentious politics as referring to: *“concerted, counter-hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries”* (Leitner et al., 2008: 157). This broader definition is also less concentrated on collective action,

allowing us to apply the notion of contention also to individual acts.

Resistance, considered as a large-scale phenomenon involving massive amounts of population and thus possibly collective action, fits into the definition of contentious politics. As such, contentious politics can constitute the basic common ground bridging resistance and social movements, allowing some of its conceptual tools to be applied to resistance.

In conclusion, on the one hand, the concept of social movement does not fit completely in and of itself, in respect of the kind of movement we will be considering. Nevertheless, neither it, nor the interest in collective action, should be disregarded. On the other hand, the concept of resistance seems very relevant for those cases; but while it will allow us to concentrate more on the modalities of action, it also lacks a more specific toolset to tackle the diversity of situations encountered, including organized collective action. Those approaches have to be considered as complementary and not as exclusive, so as not to generate a diminished and impoverished vision of social life and protests. This will also have an impact on the way that we will define the cases; indeed, to further correct this bias and take into account the diversity of the actors involved in resistance, I will take into account not only the activism, but also the main geographical area considered by the actors as an area of action and as the area directly targeted by their claims, defining it a “site of contention” (see chapter 2).

I shall thus tackle the cases studied here as cases of resistance. The terms “protests” and “contention” will be used as synonyms; however, we will avoid use of the term “social movements” except to refer to the specific discipline and literature linked to this area of studies, as “social movements” points to very organized and structured groups, with a clear European or Western bias, as noted above.

To tackle space and resistance together, I will draw on theoretical or conceptual tools borrowed from both geography and social movements’ studies, considering their sense and implication and the way in which they can be used in a transdisciplinary approach, informing and enriching the other discipline. In the next part, I will set out myself to define the concepts taken from the social movements’ studies that will be used here: repertoire and framing, and the political opportunity structure.

### **3. Analyzing mechanisms and processes of the struggle**

The starting point of this research will be the spatial configurations of the resistance practices that can be observed on the field, which will be developed and analysed in the empirical part of this thesis. However, some conceptual and theoretical tools from both geography and social movements' studies will be engaged in order to enrich the analysis and inscribe it into the framework of existing theoretical debates and contributions. We have set out some of the concepts that will be imported from geography in the first part, and in a second part, we exposed how the case studies in Israel and Palestine are usually tackled in social movement literature, to then develop a reflection on the approach that will be adopted here, namely to take into consideration both collective and individual action through the concept of resistance.

Thereafter the analysis will turn to the concepts that are imported from social movements' studies. First of all, repertoire and framing, both fundamental in the field of contentious politics, and which can both be associated to a focus on spatiality, allow us to consider the spatial dimension of practices and narratives. Can we identify and define distinct spatial repertoire and spatial framing? What would they bring to the analysis, and ultimately, to the theory of social movements? I will then look into the model of political opportunity structure (POS - or SPOT), examining why it might be relevant to include it in this research, and how it can shed light on some processes studied here, eventually proposing the concept of "spatial opportunities".

#### **3.1. Repertoire and framing, practices and discourses**

In order to study the mechanisms integrating space into social struggles, this research will focus on two of the main tools of mobilization generally acknowledged in the social movements' literature: repertoire and framing, corresponding to our focus on practices and discourses. Indeed, both allow for the study of the way in which people and groups mobilize, whether this is done through the type of actions they undertake and the initiatives organized, or the narratives used to legitimize and support the mobilization. Both concepts are thus quite complementary and offer good insights into the general process of contention building. They also both offer an interesting interaction with the spatial dimension of the protests and allow for it to be integrated in the conceptual frame in an interesting way: indeed, looking at the spatial dimension of repertoire and framing will allow us to

directly study how space can be used as a resource for the action.

The concept of repertoire was initially used by Tilly (1978) and has been quickly adopted by the 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 indeed made up of *“learned conventions of contention”* which are linked to the culture and history of the relevant society (Tarrow, 1998: 29). Ann Swidler for example argued that culture shapes a *“repertoire or 'tool kit' of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct 'strategies of action.'”* (1986: 273). The image of the *“tool kit”* has been reused (see for example Zald, 1996: 266) to qualify the repertoire as it gives rise to the idea of a stock or an *“assemblage”* of different elements, different types of practices, from which movements can draw. Tarrow distinguishes between three types of collective action, which correspond to three broad types of repertoires: disruption, violence, and contained behaviour (1998: 99).

In studying the role of space in the unfolding of protest, another important point to tackle is the spatial dimension of the framing process. Indeed, framing, a process much studied since the seminal work of Goffman (1974), which defines frames as *“schemata of interpretation”*, designates the way individuals organize experience and make sense of events; it is generally studied to see how collective actors negotiate reality (Benford, 1993: 678). The frames have also been defined as the result of *“the struggle over the production of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meanings”* (Benford & Snow, 2000: 612). Tarrow underlines the importance of this construction of meaning to attract new supporters and to strengthen the implication of the followers already mobilized. The formation of opinion is thus a stake for which movements or activists are fighting with either the media, other movements and governments, which are also creating their own competing frames (1998: 142).

Space seems like a central dimension to be taken into account in respect of the formation of meaning; indeed, protests are localized and are often deeply rooted in a particular place or territory. How space is influencing the framing of mobilization and protest in a context like that of Israel and Palestine, where the territorial control is so important, seems like an interesting point to develop. As is clear from the analysis of space undertaken by Lefebvre and outlined above, space has a symbolic dimension; it is *“a tool for the thought as well as for the action”* (Lefebvre, 1974: 35)

and it is also produced through immaterial means like imagination.

The article of Deborah G. Martin, *'Place-Framing' as Place-Making: Constituting a Neighborhood for Organizing and Activism*, represented a first and important milestone in attempts to tackle this analysis, and was recently developed in a chapter of the book *Spaces of Contention* (Martin, 2013). The author concentrates on the place and the neighbourhood as sources of identity building, studying what she calls "place-based collective-action frame" or "place-frame" (Martin, 2003). She includes the "place-frame" inside the broader category of collective frames defined by Snow and Benford as "*intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists*" (1988: 198). She then tackles place as being essential to the constitution of movements' identity and thus to the very rationalization of action. Nicholls et al. similarly underline that "*activists draw on the common symbolic repertoire found in places to assemble mobilizing frames and harness collective emotions*" (Nicholls et al., 2013a: 5).

Benford and Snow identify three categories of collective action frames, namely: the diagnosis of the problem; the prognosis, which points at "*the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan*" (2000: 616) and the motivational frame, which provides a rationale for mobilizing (ibid.: 617). Martin reuses this three-folded approach as follows: "*Characterizing and defining the community (motivation), describing problems and assigning blame (diagnoses), and advocating for certain types of action to solve problems (prognoses)*" (Martin, 2003: 736). This approach has to be crossed with the input of geographical concepts to provide a better and broader understanding of the role of spatial processes in the framing of protests.

Should one limit the application of framing to place when studying the spatialities of social movements? It seems necessary to take a step further and to consider the implication of other concepts such as scale, territory or network, when it comes to the framing of the protest, and to study the potential impact of spatial framing in general, and not only in place-based frames.

The directions of research suggested by D. Martin will prove fruitful for this study as they correspond to the approach adopted here. We will see in the empirical chapters that the place is indeed one of the spatialities on which the resistance relies; moreover, one of its components, the sense of place, 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.

The repertoire and framing will represent the theoretical backbone supporting the empirical analysis, providing tools to study the spatialities present or invoked in the practices and discourses of resistance in each case study, and to highlight the goal of those spatial practices and spatial framing, as well as how they seek to influence the mobilization.

In the last part of this chapter, I will consider the concept of constraints and opportunities, and the model known as the “political opportunity structure” (POS), or the “structure of political opportunity and threat” (SPOT). Also borrowed from social movements’ theory, it aims 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 it will not be a central point of focus of my analysis, it seems important to take it into account, as it can shed light on interesting aspects of the struggle, concentrating on the importance of space as an independent variable into the protest, its control or opening, as well as the scope for the political influence exerted over it to have a direct impact on the repertoire used, for example.

### **3.2. Spatial constraints and opportunities?**

The political structure of opportunity (POS) is part of the broader field of the “political process model”. Doug McAdam underlines that this model “*identifies three sets of factors that are believed to be crucial in generation of social insurgency*”: namely the readiness of the population, its consciousness and assessment of the situation and the political structure of opportunity (1982: 40). In respect of this last point, he refers to the definition that Eisinger gives in his 1973 piece: “*elements in the environment impose certain constraints on political activity or open avenues for it*” (1973: 11).

The political process model, but also the POS – later called SPOT, the added T standing for “threat”- approaches have been heavily criticized for their structural bias (see for example, Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Meyer, 1999). Goldstone has advocated to include it in a more dynamic approach

taking into account the actions and influence of different actors, proposing to rename POS approaches as “external relational fields” (2004: 256).

In his famous article, *To Explain Political Process*, Tilly exposed his dissatisfaction with the theoretical assumptions upon which sociologists base their work, and their need for “invariant models” (1995: 1594). Similarly, herein we reject the use of “invariant models” that cannot generate justice in respect of the complex functioning of society, either by using rigid categories or variables, and without taking into account the contingent and relational dimension of the relevant social life. From this perspective, we will avoid the strict application of the POS or SPOT models to the cases studied here. However we do contend that, as in many existing theoretical models, they do build on important insights and set out elements, mechanisms and processes that need to be considered and studied, notwithstanding that this is done in a less exclusive theoretical frame. As such, keeping in mind the criticisms formulated against this model but also the fact that this research does not aim to develop a theoretical critique, we will consider the main lines of the model as a basis for reflection.

We will briefly present the POS/ SPOT approaches, before considering how the association of the concepts of constraints (or threats) and opportunities to space might constitute a promising angle for the study of protest in Israel and Palestine.

The POS insists on the importance of context to analyse the way in which social movements develop (Meyer, 2004: 134), allowing for the actors' perceptions to be taken into account. So the POS is above all concerned with the interactions between the external world and the protest; in fact, it is often used as a synonym for “political context”. The POS has been extensively studied, often independently from the broader model of political process in which it was initially included (see for instance, Brockett, 1991; Kitschelt, 1986). The core concepts of this approach are those of opportunities and constraints:

*“By political opportunities, I mean consistent (...) dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics. By political constraints, I mean 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 in studies of social

movement. However, as the definition of Tarrow shows, since the outset of these studies, this aspect has been presented with its flip side, namely, the examination of “constraints”. Eisinger also refers to both as follows:

*“The manner in which individuals and groups in the political system behave, then, is not simply a function of the resources they command but of the openings, weak spots, barriers, and resources of the political system itself” (1973: 11).*

These “weak spots” and “barriers” which social movements have to face correspond to the “constraints” highlighted by Tarrow. Since then, the importance of the constraints to this model has been underlined and advanced as being as important as the opportunities. Thus, the “costs of action”, “costs of mobilizing” and the “risks and incidence of repression” have subsequently been expressed and 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), which concentrated in general on the *“origins of social movement emergence and development”* (Koopmans, 1999: 95).

Goldstone and Tilly continued to point out that the notion of “threats” was studied less than that of “opportunities”, and was often considered to reflect the negative side of opportunities, *“so that 'increased threat' simply equates with 'reduced opportunities'”* (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. Indeed, the distinction between the two is usually not made explicit; the current tendency is to use the concept of threat. Goldstone and Tilly define threat as a *“cost that a social group will incur from protest or expect to suffer if it doesn't take action”* (2001: 183). Defined as a “cost”, the threat component of the SPOT approach appears to have a more direct consequence 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, it is submitted, the differences between both terms, and the problem that their use represents. Constraints are actual and concrete; the movements must face them, either by adapting or avoiding them. The very word “threat” itself indicates that they are potential; threats, as dangers, are looming and their becoming real marks their end. While “threats”

refer to risks, “constraints” refer to situations of coercion, material, immaterial, or symbolical. The mechanisms at which we are looking here are best described as constraints, as they have already been implemented: the “cost” of the control of space to the actors is their very freedom of action. It is not a “threat”, which is implemented and which has concrete effects.

The multiplication of variables taken into account to explain the development of social movements (organizations of previous challengers, changes in public policy, international alliances, etc.) has been highlighted as a problem in the field (Meyer, 2004: 135). This profusion can indeed be seen as one of the “devilish sins” of POS evoked by Koopmans (1999: 93). However, if the inclusion of new dimensions in this model can encompass a better understanding of protest mechanisms, it is worth taking into consideration. Drawing on the definition and the elements exposed above, and following Martin and Miller, it is important to look in greater depth at how space “*is integral to the attribution of threats and opportunities*” (Martin & Miller, 2003: 144). How can space have an impact on the unfolding of a mobilization and the strategies adopted therein?

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. The protest 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 this perspective, it seems interesting to include the “availability of space” in the model, or at least to associate it with the concepts of constraints and opportunities, both to consider how the use of space can influence the forms of protests, but also to shed light on the conflict of power that this use supposes.

In the Israeli case, 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 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 these constraints represent one more reason to mobilize? Moreover, what about the opportunities? If a controlled space is a 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 approach is too static and state-centric; by subscribing to this perspective, the “opening” of space needs to be external, depending especially on a slackening of the exercise of power, on concessions from the authority, and on the decisions and actions of the Israeli state as the main implementer of those measures of control. The perpetrators of contentious actions would thus be limited in their possibilities to take action, and condemned somehow to be necessarily passive, submitted to a context with little “space of toleration”. It would mean that contenders would have to wait for external decisions or actions that would “open” the space, making 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 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. *“Authorities have, by definition, monopoly over coercive power, challengers of ruling authorities are subject to oppressive tactics used by the agents of the state”* (Khawaja, 1993: 49). The common view, in line with the resource mobilization theory, considers social movement as rational actors (Tilly, 1978) carefully weighing the costs of engaging in collective action and acting in consequence of this undertaking. Thus, increasing opportunities mean increasing action while receding opportunities entails less mobilization (Snyder & Tilly, 1972: 527). This correlation has been proved wrong by many authors. Olivier, for instance, has pointed out: *“The effect of repression on the rate [of collective action] is not negative! Repression led to a significant increase in the rate of collective action”* (1990: 9). Studying the case of contention in the West Bank, Khawaja showed that *“instead of deterring protest, repression increased subsequent collective action”* (Khawaja, 1993: 64). Alimi, in his piece, *Mobilizing under the gun*, highlighted that:

*“Despite oppressive (forbidding expressions of national sentiments) and repressive (deportations of activists) Israeli measures Palestinians faced for two decades (1967-1987), they nevertheless managed to move beyond a mode of resistance involving evasion and deception (Scott, 1985) to form a collective agent”* (Alimi, 2009: 220).

Tightly controlled space is an instrument in the range of coercive measures that a state can take.

We also have to consider in this case that being a constraint for collective action does not necessarily mean it deters mobilization. Indeed, it is crucial to consider the agency of the actors involved, and to take into account the *“integration of social construction processes of political opportunity, acknowledging that opportunity does not just stand out there in the open for everyone to see”* (Alimi, 2004: 131). 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 the 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).

The actors can in fact, at a micro level, 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). Here the references to the “political opportunities” model would not aim at assessing why and how protests were born, but rather aim to unveil the *“logic behind the specific tactics employed”* (Alimi, 2003: 130) by the contention. This directly relates to the approach I have delineated in the part above, as opportunities 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.

The goal of this chapter has been to review the existing literature from the two fields that are associated in this research, namely geography and social movements’ studies, and to scrutinize the conceptual and theoretical tools, taken from both fields, that it will rely on to conduct the analysis. Indeed, I will not apply a model or theory taken from either of these disciplines, but will rather rely on a conceptual “assemblage” constituted inductively, according to the findings of the

fieldwork; this is more likely to embrace the complexity and diversity of the situations considered.

After considering the way in which geography and social movements are bridged in the literature, the way in which the spatiality of contentious movement is usually tackled and the concepts used for this purpose, I have concluded on the proposition of Leitner et al. as to the “co-implication” of spatialities, which means that *“The central analytical task at hand is (...) to show how these spatialities articulate with one another in actually existing social movements”* (Nicholls, 2009: 78). This is the approach that will be adopted when it comes to the spatialities of contentions; they will still be studied individually, as defined categories facilitate the analysis, but we will always not only bear in mind but also show the relations existing between them. This reflection has been completed with an examination of the “production of space” in order to define it and to indicate both how and why it could prove fruitful to include it in the analysis.

The part that then followed has introduced another dimension of the research, namely the Israeli-Palestinian context. After exposing how social movements and space in the region have been studied together, we have attached ourselves to the definition of the approach that will be adopted when it comes to the analysis of Palestinian contention. Considering the limitations of the definition of social movements, concentrated on collective action and the particularities of Middle East politics and social structures as expressed by Bayat through the notion of “social nonmovements” (which will prove central to the empirical analysis), I have argued that contention should be tackled as resistance. This perspective has been shown to be more adapted to the reality on the ground, especially when it comes to the reality of protest, which not only takes on collective forms but also relies on individuals. If this choice seems obvious for political reasons, it is further justified by this theoretical reflection.

Finally, I have scrutinized the theoretical inputs deriving from social movements’ studies. First, I have argued for integrating repertoire and framing in the reflection, as they will represent useful tools for the study of the practices and narratives used in the resistance, but also for the analysis of the use and production of space and the consideration of the strategic choices on which they possibly rely. The second part has been dedicated to the POS/SPOT model, which will not be applied as such but which represents a basis for the reflections that follow, notably with regard to the concepts of constraints and opportunities. These can be interesting means to consider the way in which the changing availability of space can shape the modalities of protest, or, to put it differently,

how the control of space or the fight for this control can create opportunities of protest.

The interesting point here is thus to combine the study of contention and a geographical approach, to see how they interact and inform each other. The empirical chapters will translate and use this conceptual assemblage to analyse the reality observed on the ground. How do the actors of contention use and produce space for and through the struggle? On what spatial dimensions do the activists draw mostly? Why, and with what results? Which variations can we observe between the various case studies chosen? Before presenting the three case studies chosen in greater depth and before justifying this choice (see chapter 3), we will first turn to examine the methods used to carry out this research.

# CHAPTER 2

## METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

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This research is based on a qualitative approach, relying principally on an ethnographic methodology. Essential to this kind of research is “the field”, represented both as the centre of the data-collection and of the theory-building process. In this respect, the three cases selected have played an essential role in the way in which the research has been conducted.

The first part of this chapter entails a discussion of the rationale that underpins the delimitation and choice of the cases. Indeed, in line with the argument made in the first chapter as to the drawbacks of a classic social movement approach in the context of Middle Eastern contentious movements, the cases that are examined are defined not only according to the existence of a group or the type of activism deployed but according to the geographic area in which they are based, as well as the objects of their claims; this is defined as a “site of contention”. Thereafter, we shall scrutinize the comparative design that underlies this research, discussing the rationale adopted for this “most similar” cases approach.

In the second part of this chapter, we shall first consider the journey that led to the elaboration and definition of the topic and more specifically of the research questions, to then move on to tackle the general methodology used for this research, concentrating particularly on the ethnographic approach and detailing the organization of the research on the field: the initial contact, the fundamental use of participant observation and of regular note taking, the interviews... As every piece of research and every field entails its own challenges, it is necessary to scrutinize the methods employed and the problems that have arisen throughout the research process.

The third part of the chapter thus concentrates specifically on the field experience and the impact that the conditions encountered had on the undertaking of the research and the methodology adopted. The particularities of the Israeli-Palestinian context, as well as those of the places chosen for the case studies, and the problems faced accordingly, have had an impact on the conduct of the research; these dimensions must therefore be acknowledged and examined in order to situate the

information gathered. I will first position the fieldwork realized for this research in the broader reflection about “difficult” or “dangerous” fields, and will then expose five points that have proved in one way or another problematic or challenging for the research, and which have necessitated an adaptation or a particular reflection. These five considerations include the psychological pressure, the suspicion when “entering” the field, the gender issue, the question of language and translation, and finally, the interrogation as to ethics and objectivity to which this kind of study gives rise.

## **1. Reflections on a qualitative, case-oriented approach**

I will first expose the approach I have adopted in order to delimitate the cases, by cutting across both social and geographical dimensions in order to identify “sites of contention”. This will then be applied to the three case studies chosen for this research, in Silwan, Hebron and the Negev, thus refining the “site” considered. I will then move on to consider the objectives of this comparative approach and the contribution it is expected to generate. Defining the case studies will then allow us to consider the methodology used during the fieldwork.

### **1.1. From movements to “sites of contention” and “terrains of resistance”**

A classical approach to social movements’ studies usually features an analysis based on the cases corresponding to a specific and delimited movement, often made up of one or several groups of activists with similar purposes who act collectively (see chapter 1, 2.2.3). Each case study then corresponds to a specific movement, which is to be taken apart – with its internal mechanisms, its members’ profiles, its repertoire and claims, and its links with other movements, among other things – and scrutinised.

Following on from what I have argued in the first chapter, I contend that this methodology is not satisfactorily adapted to this research project. In fact, when looking at the existing Palestinian protest movements, especially at the local level, one cannot help but notice that they are quite fragmented. The protests are indeed very diverse in terms of the number of members and participants – beyond the political parties, the groups are usually small and active at the local level - and varied with regards to the length of their existence; they can be based on activists as well as

on informal social networks of extended family and friendships gravitating around the central core. Moreover, the resistance in Palestine is also a private matter that relies on individual practices. Concentrating only on those groups that are clearly delimited would ignore or omit a significant part of the resistance, which often brings together different component of society, including organized groups of activists, but also NGOs and single individuals - the “shabab” for example, namely young men often prone to engage in violent clashes. Moreover, the analysis herein involves an examination of contention and acts of resistance in a context where control and restrictions are omnipresent and pervade everyday life, fragmenting the Palestinian society. Thus, taking into consideration only those instances of collective action would impoverish the analysis, as they are as a consequence more difficult to organize, less likely to happen and to attract large numbers of people. As has been argued in the first chapter, the study of those situations under the lens of resistance constitutes one attempt to correct this bias, by taking into account the individual dimension of the resistance practice and the involvement of daily-life or punctual actions in the struggle.

Another way of compensating for this shortcoming is to acknowledge the environment of the protest movements, thus allowing for a wider and more complete vision of the context of contention. I chose to “enter” through space to mark the boundaries of my cases, crossing contention and space at this very first step of the research, and taking into account both the activism and the area in which it takes place, as well as that which it targets through its claims and practices. In fact, I would argue that the reliance on a territorial entry in order to define the cases that are studied reflects a promising approach, one that is adapted to the particular context of Israel and Palestine. Considering broad “sites of contention” (or “sites of conflict”) allows for the engagement of the whole galaxy of actors involved in the different cases analysed: groups of activists, NGOs, associations and organizations, and inhabitants. It also encompasses the various practices they deploy, whether collective, personal, organized or spontaneous. Moreover, it allows for consideration of actors deriving from different backgrounds and places (including Palestinians, Israelis and foreigners, as well as activists, institutional actors and members of associations); the variety of actors covered by this term account for the use of the generic term of “contention” rather than that of “resistance”, which will be used more specifically to characterize the Palestinian position in the struggle.

The approach adopted to demarcate the cases can be linked to similar positions that can be identified in the literature. Indeed, we find mention of “places of activism”, which together form a “social movement space” for example (Nicholls, 2009: 79, 83, 85), or “sites of mobilization” (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013: 13). However, these expressions are often not problematized and are rather used as a synonym for “place”, simply specifying where it is that the mobilization happens.

Thus, in order to define our cases, we shall firstly mark our preference for the expression “sites of contention”, rather than “sites of mobilization”, as “mobilization” points towards moments of active collective action or at least, overt challenges against the authorities; “contention”, on the other hand, allows for a broader understanding of the type of practices taken into account. Moreover, the expression “site of contention” (or contestation) can be found in the scientific literature as a general way of designating a “hot” issue – that is, a polemical topic – in an abstract way, one which is then used as a common element of language.

Here, the site of contention would be the area representing the “core” of the protest; it is loosely defined and does not have strictly defined borders as it designates a permeable zone, interrelated with the exterior space, and thus defined in a relational way. Indeed, the “sites of contention” considered represent the core of the protest in various ways; it puts together three dimensions, with varying intensity. Similarly to “sites of mobilization”, they can be the areas where action takes place, and where the actors stage the resistance, or try to do so. They are also the places where the issues at stake and the opposition of forces are crystallized, incarnating the protesters’ claims. Thirdly, but no less importantly, they are also the places where people live, where activism intersects with daily life. Notwithstanding that 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 “movement”, involved in groups or fighting individually. 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.

The concept of “site of contention” allows us to consider all of the movements, organizations and individuals linked and working together in (or about) one particular place, and to consider instances of collective actions as well as individual acts of resistance occurring in that particular area;

instances of both might be relevant because there is a more or less tight social network, or because activism is conveyed not only through a group situation, but also through everyday life. In this sense, the notion of site of contention can be applied at various scales: a square, a village, a neighbourhood or a city can be considered as a site of contention according to the type of movement and relations one considers. We will set out below in more detail the scale we have chosen in this research, either corresponding to that of the neighbourhood, or, in the specific case of al-Araqib, the land where the village once stood.

The actual unfolding of the actions of protests and resistance strategies in the sites thus defined, adds a dimension which has to be taken into consideration. From “sites” of resistance, we could say they become “terrains” of resistance, as defined for example by Paul Routledge (1992, 1993, 1996) as follows:

*“particular places then become sites of conflict where the relations of power, domination and resistance intersect; through the process of social conflict these places become constituted into terrains of resistance, where locally based social movements face the power of the state within the realm of civil society”* (Routledge, 1993: 124).

Marking the difference between “sites” and “terrain” is important here, as it stresses the idea of strategy and power, and thus of struggle in space. In his paper on *Land, terrain and territory*, Stuart Elden underlines the nuance introduced by the term “terrain”, inherited from the military and geological fields: *“Terrain is a relation of power (...) the control of which allows the establishment and maintenance of order. As a ‘field’, a site of work or battle, it is a political-strategic question”* (2010: 804). Routledge also insists on this highly political dimension of the “terrains of resistance”, which concentrates the relations between opposing, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, powers and discourses, between domination and resistance (1996: 516). As a result, I would argue that “terrain” designates the site once the conflict is actualized through explicit practices and the opposition between powers takes shape. Sites and terrains can correspond and coexist, as we will see with the importance of daily practices of resistance such as “sumud” (see chapter 2), which make them overlap.

We have, for the purposes of this research, selected three “sites of contention” – or “terrains of resistance” – namely, the H2 area in Hebron (the old city, under Israeli authority), the “core” neighbourhoods of Silwan, Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan, and the unrecognized Bedouin village of al-

Araqib in the Negev desert. All three places reflect the siege of local Palestinian resistance against the Israeli authorities, with an emphasis on spatial issues. All three sites have a different administrative status. Hebron is located in the occupied West Bank and the area designated as H2 in Hebron falls under full Israeli control; Silwan is part of annexed East Jerusalem, while the desert of the Negev has been part of the State of Israel since its creation in 1948. The Bedouins are thus Palestinian citizens of Israel (for more detail, see chapter 3). These understandings correspond to the position generally adopted by the international community, and are often starkly contested or disputed for different political, strategic and ideological reasons by the Israelis and the Palestinians. It is thus worth noting that for the purposes of this research we will rely on the position indicated by international law as the commonly accepted position, nevertheless pointing out the differing positions of both Israelis and Palestinians where required. This administrative dimension is important as it has an impact on the type of law applied in each place, the authority in charge of enforcing it (whether the government or the Civil Administration), as well as the forces called in to support that authority (police, army, Border Police, Green Patrol...).

As mentioned above, these three sites of contention are not strictly delimited; their edges are considered as interfaces rather than boundaries. I will nevertheless define here the geographical areas that are considered as “sites of contention” and studied as such in this research to further shed light on the methodology adopted<sup>18</sup>. A more in-depth presentation of the historical and political context of each case, as well as of the main characteristics and claims of contention, will be developed in the third chapter.

In Hebron, the site of contention is at first sight more clearly demarcated because of the very expression of power there. H2 appears as a bounded area, defined administratively and materially; it is indicated on maps, and is partly closed, its limits being materialized by checkpoints, walls, and the presence of soldiers (see Annex II for a map of Hebron). It encompasses the Cave of Patriarchs (Ibrahimi mosque for the Palestinians, and Cave of Machpelah for the Israelis), a part of the old market, Shuhada Street and the hill of Tal Rumeida. However, this definition of H2 does not follow the material elements which apparently delimitate it on the ground; H2 also covers a part of the old city’s market which is situated outside of the “sanctuarized”, closed zone, therefore having more physical continuity with H1 than with H2. Moreover, we expanded the area studied to

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<sup>18</sup> For a full list of the interviews realized and details on the interviewees see section 2.2. of this chapter and Annex VI.

encompass the whole area that stretches between the “Clock Tower” and the Ibrahimi mosque, including the square of Bab al-Zawiye, the core of the economic and social life of the city, situated in H1 but representing the seam between the area under Palestinian authority (H1) and H2, which is also the main site of violent clashes. The military presence there is more discontinuous, but is still very regular and compelling. This site of contention is therefore characterized by an urban fabric; however, as it encompasses the open (although inhabited) area of Tal Rumeida, planted with numerous olive trees, it also includes a more rural landscape.

In the case of Silwan, the area examined corresponds to the two neighbourhoods of Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan. Silwan is located south-east of the old city of Jerusalem; Wadi Hilwe is the first neighbourhood in the shadows of the Wailing Wall and the al-Aqsa mosque. Wadi Hilwe Street connects the Dung Gate, one of the points of access to the old city, to the Silwan pool and the neighbourhoods of al-Bustan and Ein al-Loze which sit at the bottom of the valley. The site of contention considered there extends around this main axis, encompassing the area occupied by the Elad-run City of David and extending to al-Bustan (see Annex III).

Finally, the Bedouin village of al-Araqib is located in the Negev desert, a few kilometres south of Rahat, in a strictly rural area. As Al-Araqib was razed in 2010, strictly speaking here is no longer a village but rather a few families attempting to have their right to live there recognized by the State. The site of contention surrounds the Muslim cemetery, which was, in the first period of the fieldwork, enclosed by a fence and inhabited by those few families still living there<sup>19</sup>. However, it should be highlighted that the area outside the cemetery is as important an object of contention as that within; this is especially true of the land that stretches immediately west of the fence and where the village once stood. The site of contention is thus concentrated on both of these areas; moreover, the land that surrounds al-Araqib, which belongs to different Bedouin families and has been taken over by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and planted with trees, is also loosely related to the struggle. While this 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 ownership to the stakes of al-Araqib.

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<sup>19</sup> In June 2014, the fence was removed and the houses built inside the cemetery were destroyed. See chapter 3, 1.3.

I will, in the next part, develop the rationales and objectives underlying the choice of confronting these situations, setting out how they all fit into the frame of a comparative approach, and more specifically, of a most-similar design.

## 1.2. A most-similar comparative design

This research relies firstly on a case-oriented (as opposed to variable-oriented) approach, meaning that it aims to understand complex units (Della Porta, 2008: 198), looking at “*dense narratives, with a large number of characteristics being taken into account (...)*” (ibid.: 204). More specifically, it will rely on a comparative design, putting together the three case studies defined above. Some questions arise when it comes to the rationale behind the choice of this methodology, of these cases and the way in which they relate to each other. Why compare the situations of Hebron, Silwan and al-Araqib? Why concentrate exclusively on the Israeli-Palestinian context, and within this region, on Palestinian cases?

The three cases identified enter into the frame of a ‘most similar’ design. They have a number of elements in common, thus “*reducing the number of ‘disturbing’ variables to be kept under control*” (ibid.: 215), especially in respect of the way in which they are administered, and the way space is administered and controlled; this makes it interesting to consider the connections between them side by side.

All three cases feature colonised, subaltern populations, dominated by the structures of power installed by the Israeli settler-colonialism. In the case of the Bedouins, they constitute a minority group inside Israel; being defined as a Jewish state (see introduction), 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 chapter 3). In the two other cases, namely Hebron and Jerusalem, the populations considered are Palestinians under occupation; Jerusalem is officially annexed to Israel, and while East Jerusalem is a part of the Jerusalem municipality, the international position is not to recognize it. Moreover, the Israeli authority is still felt and implemented on the ground as an occupation. Hebron, located in the West Bank, is separated into two areas. H1 is under Palestinian authority, while H2 is occupied; significantly, both the Israeli army and Jewish settlers are present. In all three cases, the local

population is subjected to harsh constraints and restrictions. They all have a controversial administrative status, as second-rank citizens in the case of the Bedouins, and as non-citizens in the case of the residents of the West Bank and of East Jerusalem (the latter having “permanent residency” in the country, a very limited and constraining status; see, for instance, Rempel 1997). They also all contest, in some ways, the State and its different branches, opposing the army and para-state organizations, such as the JNF.

These common points have internal nuances, which will have to be taken into consideration and further explored. Among them, we shall pay particular attention to the question of the administrative status of the different populations, particularly with regard to the issue of citizenship and the implementation of the law, as well as to the difference in the spatial constraints imposed in these three areas: whereas in Hebron, the restrictions are especially concerned with 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, and especially with regards to their absence from the city.

The choice to make a comparison between three places chosen within the borders of Israel and Palestine must be discussed. Indeed, the region is often taken as an extreme example of ethno-territorial conflict, and as such it appears difficult to compare it with any other situation. The situation of Israel and Palestine is unique for several reasons: it features a very particular mix of political and religious stakes, such as Israeli nation-building, Zionism, and the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Jewish State, the divide between religious and secular Jews, between Jews and Muslims, the importance of the army, the occupation, the Palestinian struggle, the place of the Arab population in Israel, and so forth.

However, one has to beware of any forms of exceptionalism. Although the cases are particular, certain elements can be compared, and external light can be shone on internal matters, bringing new perspectives to the studies. Of course, the region has already been included in numerous comparative approaches. Ian Lustick, in *Unsettled states, disputed lands* (1993), puts Israel and the West Bank in parallel with Britain and Ireland, and France and Algeria, choosing the colonial paradigm to tackle those situations. On more specific topics, such as the particular status of Jerusalem, the Irish frame has also been used, with Jerusalem often being compared to Belfast (for

example, in Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). A British research project, entitled “Conflict in Cities and the Contested State” carried out by the Universities of Cambridge, Exeter and Belfast, looked at “cities which are divided as a result of ethno-national and religious conflict and, in particular, those cities that are in conflict due to the contestation over the legitimacy of the state in which they are located” (Dumper and Pullan 2009: 3). With Belfast and Jerusalem as their main cases, they also considered Nicosia, Mostar, Berlin, Brussels, Beirut, Tripoli and Kirkuk.

If we take into consideration one particular feature of the Israeli-Palestinian situation (including the situation of Jerusalem, the ethnic division of society, the functioning of the institutions and so forth), it may be possible to find external cases fitting into a “most similar” design. Nevertheless, here, the three cases present many specific elements that are important and would be difficult to include in a transnational comparison.

The situation inside Israel and Palestine is highly complicated and intricate; it thus seems legitimate to focus in the first instance on internal variations, which can already teach us a lot. In fact, we not only have to take into consideration the role of Israel as a central power, the struggle of Palestinians both inside the state and in the West Bank, but we must also consider the way in which space is administered, the nature of constraints and control, and the status of the protesters. This can represent a first step towards a larger comparative approach, based on a broader spectrum of cases, including other countries or regions of the world.

Having set out this first stage of the method choice, we can move on to consider in more depth the methodology adopted for this research, from the interrogations that influenced the definition of the research question to the various strategies of research implemented on the field, as well as the way in which the research proceeded.

## **2. General methodology**

### **2.1. Building the research question(s)**

This research was conducted according to a classical model of qualitative research, following the main lines of an ethnographic methodology, which “requires the researcher to participate in the

*social life of the actors observed, while at the same time maintaining sufficient cognitive distance so that he or she can perform his or her scientific work satisfactorily*" (Gobo, 2008: 6). Following an inductive, case-oriented approach, the research problems have been predominantly formulated during or following the fieldwork. A "foreshadowed problem" (Malinowski, 1922: 8) was nevertheless elaborated in the pre-fieldwork phase of the research, drawing on existing literature. At first instance, two areas of academic literature were considered: on the one hand, the literature exploring the links between geography and social movement studies as disciplines, and between space and contention as central topics of research, and on the other, the literature specializing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with a focus on topics such as the control of space, and protests and resistance in both societies. The question of research considered was thus elaborated on the basis of my interest in the configurations of Israeli control. The Israeli take over space was then conceptualized as being "frozen" or "locked", following Kimmerling's analysis of the "freezing" of space during the years of the creation of the State, whereby all properties became "frozen" once acquired (Kimmerling, 1983). Building on this question, one that had already been largely studied, I developed the parallel question of the resistance opposing this control, possibly also through space. The alternative use of space in the face of this hegemonic control was initially intended to be studied only in Jerusalem, that is, in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan; however, it became clear that the cases were much too similar and such an approach was potentially restricting the analysis and the possible findings. It therefore became necessary to consider other cases with similar features, thereby confronting differing contexts.

From this perspective, an initial trip to Israel and Palestine was undertaken in order to develop my knowledge of the region and to elaborate on the "foreshadowed problem". It allowed me to realize a survey of the possible cases, to gather more relevant and actualized information as well as first-hand data in order to select the cases; moreover, it allowed me to establish initial contacts, to identify key informants and to establish a basic network. This initial instance of fieldwork, carried out in the summer of 2011, was a trip across realities and a first entry into several places including Hebron, the Bedouin villages, Nablus and Tel Aviv<sup>20</sup>. The reality of the movements and of the situations imposed several choices in respect of the research; in particular, it confirmed the importance of diversifying the study, and of expanding it outside of the area of Jerusalem. Hebron and the Bedouin villages imposed themselves as interesting cases, with similar stakes but different resistance practices, linked to the specificities of control and of Israeli presence in each place.

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<sup>20</sup> For an exhaustive list of the various periods spent on the field, see Annex V.

This “exploratory” fieldwork led to the selection of the cases, and the realization of preparatory interviews in respect of each, in order to obtain more precise information about those particular situations, but also to generate an exhaustive overview of the political and spatial constraints that the Palestinians and Bedouins have to face on a daily basis.

The three cases selected, namely Hebron, Silwan and the non-recognized Bedouin villages - which was subsequently narrowed down to the village of al-Araqib – defined three new areas, in respect of which it was necessary to explore the relevant literature. For each case, the historical, political, juridical and social dimensions had to be explored and understood.

The acquisition of a good general knowledge about the political, social and cultural context of the Israeli and Palestinian society, beyond the stakes of the conflict, was a primary and essential goal. This implied the need to develop an interest in international law and in particular, the strand relevant to the occupation, to look into the role and status of the Israel Defence Forces, to develop knowledge about internal Palestinian politics, to start to learn Hebrew and Arabic and, basically, to acquire as much knowledge and as much information as possible that could help with entry into the field.

The most significant part of the research was carried out during several periods of fieldwork, each of a maximum of three months, which is the period of the tourist visa delivered when entering Israel. In order not to risk the possibility of being refused entry into the country due to the topic of my research, I always entered on a tourist visa for other motives (leisure, visiting friends, or once, on the invitation of the Hebrew University). The first period of fieldwork was carried out between February and May 2012 in Beer-Sheva and the Bedouin villages. Thereafter, the period from October to December 2012 was dedicated to Silwan; February 2013 consisted of a follow-up in Silwan, while March and April 2013 were spent in Hebron. Finally, October and November 2013 were dedicated to a return visit to the Negev, and specifically to al-Araqib, after I decided to narrow down the cases considered in the Negev to only one village. A short trip to the region in July 2014 allowed for a final follow-up on each of the various situations. Notwithstanding that each period of fieldwork has been compartmentalized in respect of each case study, in order to allow for a more efficient presence in the field, they have not necessarily been exclusive. The close proximity of the three fields – and the relative freedom of movement that I enjoyed, with the geographical proximity

being translated into rather short periods of travel between each - allowed for an almost immediate presence in each area in the case of the occurrence of any relevant event. For example, notwithstanding that the total period spent in Hebron was the shortest, I visited the city very frequently during the other periods of fieldwork which focused predominantly on the other cases, either at times of demonstrations or during the olive harvest, or simply to maintain existing contacts and to establish new ones whenever a particular occasion arose.

The material and time constraints imposed both by the organization of the university year and the Israeli visa regime, along with the fact of having three cases to consider and thus three sets of fieldwork to conduct, necessarily reduced the time available for each. The practice of full-immersion when on the field was one way of countering this limit. The comparative dimension of this study also puts this drawback into perspective: notwithstanding that it might be suggested that each case deserves to be studied in more depth, it also needs to be kept in mind that the goal of this research has been to confront and compare the different situations.

## **2.2. In the field: methods of research**

The periods of fieldwork were conducted according to an ethnographic approach, which implies the researcher's participation in people's daily life, usually for a long time, either openly or covertly. The researcher observes, interviews, listens, and speaks informally with the people, "*gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry*" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 3).

The research conducted during the different periods of fieldwork was based mainly on participant observation, which has been defined as the "*methodological heart of ethnographic fieldwork*" (Glaser & Strauss, 1969). The fieldwork was indeed conducted with periods of full-immersion. This involved not only being present and participating in activists' initiatives, but living in the field, alongside and with the people. The observation was thus not only directed at the protest events, but also at the daily-life practices and discourses, the self-understanding the actors.

This method allowed me to acquire basic knowledge about the context and the social dynamics specific to each place, to understand the role played by groups and individuals and the links

between them, to observe how strategic moves are decided and justified, and which repertoire of action is used. The practice of observing “from the inside” also gave me access to the symbolical sphere, constituted by discourses and representations, which are fundamental to analyse the way in which the protest is framed. In fact, *“the condition of generating descriptions of social activity is being able to participate in it. It involves ‘mutual knowledge’, shared by observer and participants, whose actions constitutes and reconstitutes the social world”* (Giddens 1982, in Flyvbjerg, 2006: 236). The daily-life situations and informal conversations I could witness in this way indeed represented the primary source of information for this research, being often more interesting and revealing than the organized interviews and the public meetings.

An important practice entailed by this methodological choice was also the necessity to keep taking precise and regular field-notes as an *“ongoing stream of consciousness commentary about what is happening on the research, involving both observation and analysis”* (Van Maanen, 1988, in Eisenhardt, 1989: 538), precisely to keep track, among other things, of the myriad elements observed or heard during the day. The main purpose of these notes was notably to recall the information contained in informal discussions, which were numerous and often more interesting, because they were more spontaneous, than the organised interviews. It also represented an opportunity to write down some “on the spot” comments about the situation: they were used to keep track of more personal observations about the research, including problems encountered, doubts and feelings emerging in the face of these situations, and on which possible elaborations could be made at a later stage.

This written account was also complemented by the regular documenting of the situations encountered on the field through photography. This was adopted as an inherent part of the methodology. Indeed, notwithstanding that pictures by themselves can often lack context and thus be dangerous as an analytic tool, they can, as a complement to other methods, represent an interesting resource. In our case, pictures represented a way to fix situations, assisting my memory and observation; it also allowed me to keep track of the changes, especially material, which could then be confronted over time. Photographing the field also has two more uses, which are “pedagogic” and argumentative. Indeed, this method was of direct application during the research, for the researcher, but it was also useful afterwards. It represents an efficient way to share what was the reality of the field with people who are not familiar with the situation, providing an image of the areas evoked. Pictures taken during the fieldwork are also used in this thesis to illustrate the

data invoked, but also to support the analysis; as such, they are considered to be fully part of the argumentation, and are as such included in the text<sup>21</sup>.

The fieldwork, in addition to providing scope for the direct observation of daily life and resistance practices, also provided the occasion for the conduct of interviews with the different actors, including inhabitants, members of NGOs, activists, etc. The semi-structured interviews were usually preceded and prolonged by informal talks, which usually proved more interesting, or at least essential as a complement to the organised part. Indeed, the formality of the interviews, announced as such, and including the presence of the recording machine, were all elements positioning the interviewee in a context of formality; on multiple occasions, the interviewee thus reproduced discourses, ready and repeated to journalists and visitors alike. While it was important to hear that aspect of the discourse, it was also very important to have access to the personal position or to the personal information of the interviewee.

The sampling of the interviewees was made according to the “snowball” technique, or “respondent pyramiding” (Peritore, 1990: 367). Initial contacts were usually established with NGOs, or activists who could provide general information about the field and also provide contacts according to a top-down approach; those generally proved to be key-informants and leading figures in the local struggle. The engagement of institutional actors allowed for a wider approach and a multiplication of opportunities. Each interviewee was asked to whom he would advise I should talk and could often provide direct phone numbers. However, contacts with grassroots activists and mere inhabitants were also established directly when the occasion presented itself; this was mainly in informal contexts, on the basis of being invited into houses or shops, for example. The snowball sampling was nevertheless balanced by considerations of the different profiles (gender, age, status, etc.) represented. For example, it was always easier to enter in contact with men, so I was particularly focused on also organizing interviews with women.

In Hebron, the initial contacts were established with a family living in Tal-Rumeida and the group called Youth Against Settlements, several members of which I had the occasion to meet during my first stays in Palestine. In Silwan, the Wadi Hilwe information centre (WHIC) and Maada community center, which welcome tourists and organize activities for inhabitants of the neighbourhood,

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<sup>21</sup> All pictures used in this thesis, if not indicated otherwise, were taken by the author. Figures needing more space, especially maps, can be found in the Annexes.

presented a first source of contacts. Concerning the Bedouin villages, the first stay was organized from Beer-Sheva, in order to have an overview of the various realities the Bedouin community had to face in the townships and the different villages. The main contact was thus Haia Noach, coordinator of the Forum for Coexistence in the Negev (NCF). From those central figures in each community's struggle, I navigated through the different networks to meet other activists, and, once my presence was known and better accepted, inhabitants.

The fieldwork was also completed by various types of data, the "grey literature" produced by the various groups and NGOs; this included leaflets, reports and newsletters posted on their website (for instance, by the NCF of the WHIC), as well as newspapers articles. A wide range of newspapers and information websites were consulted, encompassing various political backgrounds, such as Haaretz, Arutz Sheva, the Jerusalem Post, and +972.

However, several problems were encountered in the development of this research. First of all, notwithstanding that the time spent in Israel and Palestine was about a year and a half in total (which is still short for anthropological standards, and less so for the ethnographic approach in social science), the time became even more limited when distributed across three cases, and three places. This was particularly true as each corresponded to very different contexts and thus required extensive knowledge, new contacts in each case, sensibility to the differences existing between the various contexts, and adaptation to the schizophrenia attached to the movement between the sites and the changing political situation.

The conditions of the research were indeed very different depending on the relevant sites, and the participant observation was more or less feasible depending on the place. It is necessary to keep in mind that, *"the tidy, systematic and well-rounded texts written by anthropologists are more often than not the end-product of long periods in the field characterized by boredom, illness, personal privations, disappointment and frustration"* (Eriksen, 2001: 25). Notwithstanding that this description does not correspond in all respects to the experience evoked here, it certainly points highlights some of the important aspects of working in the field.

In Silwan, for example, it was particularly difficult to make the research really "participant" on an every-day life basis; the observation was limited by the suspicion and the closed character of the neighbourhood, both from a political and an urban point of view. Indeed, the life of the

neighbourhood takes place mainly inside the houses and clubs, or at night, in the context of clashes. Indeed, one difficulty faced in Silwan was the lack of life in the public places. Silwan itself (with the exception of the roundabout at the entrance of Ras al-'Amud and the few shops in Ein al-Loze) has very few shops and coffee shops, which makes street life nearly non-existent and random informal meetings more difficult. Moreover, the tense atmosphere and regular clashes do not encourage economic life or presence in the public space. In Hebron, on the contrary, the omnipresence of the army and of the spatial constraints that ensue from the occupation, made the processes of observation very fruitful, and more direct. People were also more used, and more willing, to engage in discussion. Finally, notwithstanding that the presence of residents is forbidden in certain areas of the old city (see chapter 3 and Annex I) and that most of the shops are closed, Hebron is an economic hub in the West Bank with a strong tradition of craftsmanship and business; the presence of the few shops which remain open in H2 – and thus of shopkeepers in the street – represented a good way to enter into contact with the people.

The ethnographic methodology implies immersion in the field, which means that this field, from an external site located by its absolute otherness, becomes one's place of life, and thus has to be appropriated in some ways; it also entails that the researcher has to become integrated into social circles, enter into families, as well as village life and society, and must have access to other houses, become invited to different places and participate in the events that set the tempo of the local social life (demonstrations, but also weddings, the olive harvest, the making of bread, etc.). As noted by Romani:

*"Interpersonal and informal relationships are much more fertile than institutional approaches, an additional benefit of ethnographic investigation. Being able to say "I know so and so", being accompanied and possibly introduced by a mutual friend, dressing discreetly, behaving in a "natural" way, control the codes of politeness and honor: a whole set of "techniques" that the immersion makes possible to internalize" (Romani, 2007: 39).*

The immersion in the field is thus a long process, which requires the researcher shares all aspects of daily life; indeed, any small piece of information, whether concerning the pace, the history, the tradition or the occurrence of political events, creates a familiarity with the culture in which he or she is inserted, and which in turn helps to tackle more general questions and the topic of the research itself.

This means that the goal of this type of method is very global: that is to say, relevant information has to be extracted both from the mass of information gathered to adjust to a new lifestyle and culture as well as from related observations, and from the material gathered specifically for the intended research, including interviews, leaflets, etc. In the end, the general information has to be integrated much more quickly than the research material: it represents an immediate and direct gain as it is often a condition for the good conduct of research and it determines also the relationships one can have with the people.

From this perspective, every opportunity constitutes a potential source of information and any occasion needs to be exploited in order to increase the background knowledge of the cases. One anecdote perfectly illustrates this point; hitch-hiking in the Negev was not anticipated as a way of collecting information but simply as a way of bypassing the problems of transportation between Beer-Sheva and the Bedouin villages. However it could well have been turned into a method of research as it provided valuable insight into Israeli and Bedouin societies; indeed, the short period spent in the car and the surprise of the drivers as to the origin and destination of the researcher – namely, one of the Bedouin villages – led them to comment very openly about the situation of the Negev and to give their opinion on the issues linked to the various communities.

The ethnographic method thus implied a number of different strategies of research, relying mostly on participant observation, interviews and note taking. However, as we saw, beyond the methods used, the field chosen also had a direct impact in terms of organization, and on the way in which the research could be conducted, and the material could be gathered. The context of Israel and Palestine, a region marked by a long-lasting conflict and military occupation, among other characteristics, makes it necessary to reflect on the challenges encountered and how they influenced the research and the researcher.

### **3. The challenges of fieldwork: scrutinizing the “field experience”**

Beyond the methodology used for this research, several points need to be considered and discussed, mainly concerning the fieldwork and the conditions in which it was conducted. The reflexivity of the researcher is indeed an important step that I contend it is still an important stage

and a full-fledged part of the methodology. It indeed represents a “methodological tool” that offers a way to “*legitimize, validate, and question research practices and representations*” (Pillow, 2003: 175). Qualitative research is indeed often a personal journey; reflexivity can make it more accountable, and can help elaborate on the experience and the interpretation one has made of the fieldwork when crossed with critical reflection and the acknowledgment of the inherent subjectivity of the research process (Finlay, 2002a). One however needs to be cautious not to slip into “confessional tales” or an exaggerated catharsis (see also Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Finlay, 2002b; Watt, 2007; Noiriel, 1990)

Keeping in mind the scientific goal of this exercise, I will tackle five points that represented particular challenges while in the field. First, I will draw on the literature about “difficult” or “dangerous” fieldwork in order to build a reflection of the experience lived there, how it could be qualified, and thus how it relates to other instances of research. Thereafter, I will look at several situations that required a particular positioning or reflection while on the field: this includes the psychological pressure, the general suspicion faced when accessing the field, the question of gender, that of translation and language and finally that of ethics. Each of these points not only relate to my experience as a researcher, and represent common problems of fieldwork (see Eriksen, 2001b) but they will also allow us to evoke transversally some central characteristics of the Palestinian society.

### **3.1. A “difficult” field?**

All fieldwork can be considered challenging, as each instance constitutes relational situations, relying on “*interactions between the researcher and the people researched [enquêtés], who respectively adapt their own habitus in the situation of inquiry*” (Boumaza & Campana, 2007: 8). Fieldwork constitutes, before anything else, the daily life of the researcher; that is, a new routine, with a lot to learn and discover, directed by a specific aim, but still, a daily life with everything it implies: neighbourly relationships, an impact on food and hygiene habits, and a different rhythm of life according to the week-ends and holidays, etc.

Indeed, an instance of ethnographic fieldwork is made up of a variety of social situations within which the researcher has to navigate him or herself. The success of the fieldwork depends

considerably on the researcher's social skills, on his or her way of relating with others and ability to adapt to the different situations encountered. Indeed, research is often made of *“a succession of successful or failed contacts, of new information, ideas that come to a sudden end, imposed socialising, travels for nothing, and days where nothing happens”* (Bizeul, 1999: 111). The fundamental data of this kind of fieldwork is *“the certainty of uncertainty”* (Hoffman & Lubkemann, 2005: 318), due to the informality, pressure, sometimes danger, and extreme variability in the course of events.

Beside the fact that this research is based on a multi-sited ethnographical approach, realized abroad, it must also be taken into account that each of these sites form part of an area of conflict, which has implied the need to deal daily with the questions of occupation, violent clashes, military controls, passing of checkpoints, etc. These have certainly constituted additional difficulties, which have had to be handled on the field. There is literature abound on the notion of *“difficult fields”* (Bizeul, 2007; Boumaza & Campana, 2007), on *“dangerous”, “violent” or “crisis-ridden”* fieldworks (Belousov et al., 2007; Jacobs, 2006; Kovats-Bernat, 2002; Nilan, 2002; Peritore, 1990; Romani, 2007; Sluka, 1995, 2007), on the ‘human hazards’ of fieldwork (Howell, 2007), and on fieldwork in war or conflict areas (Bougarel, 2002a, 2002b; Bourgois, 2002a, 2002b).

There is a strong tradition for some researchers, especially in anthropology, to recount and reflect on the fieldwork they have realised. Literature treating occurrences of violence and risks in the field has developed recently, highlighting that the researchers themselves are increasingly involved in dangerous periods of fieldwork due to the development of interests in unstable states, in terror and in political violence (Belousov et al., 2007; Kovats-Bernat, 2002). Labels such as *“dangerous fieldwork”* might well apply in certain extreme cases, but it is also necessary to consider them with caution and in particular, not to understand this adjective as an exhaustive description of the situation. What is dangerous fieldwork? Kovats-Bernat defines it as follows:

*“those sites where social relationships and cultural realities are critically modified by the pervasion of fear, threat of force, or (ir)regular application of violence and where the customary approaches, methods, and ethics of anthropological fieldwork are at times insufficient, irrelevant, inapplicable, imprudent, or simply naive”* (ibid.: 208).

It is indeed this impact on the method of research and the adaptations that become necessary, as well as the impact that it leaves on the researcher, which necessarily transpire through his or her work, which render this discussion a necessary one.

When reflecting on the fieldwork, it is firstly necessary to be aware of the risks of romanticism or idealization. It is indeed tempting to downplay the difficulties met on the field, and to dismiss all potential mistakes or problems as arising due to the context; such an approach would seem to undermine the results and conclusion. The opposite problem is also true: namely, we must avoid exaggerating the problems and dangers encountered. In both cases, the trap is to turn the relevant period of fieldwork into a myth, either of facility or difficulty. Both risks render the critical scrutiny of the fieldwork particularly challenging, but even more important.

The dangers for the researcher can take on two characters: personal (or physical) and legal (Jacobs, 2006: 157-158). The first type of risk is the one most commonly discussed: it includes the risk to the safety or well-being of the researcher, who can be put in certain situations and possibly subject to robbery, aggression, shootouts, etc. The legal danger represents also a very real risk, which comes from the authorities, not from the population studied. This type of risk is significant in criminology, for example, when the very topic studied puts the researcher in a situation at the limits of legality. It can also be the case in non-democratic settings where human rights and individual freedoms are suspended. Numerous researchers have recounted being followed, interrogated, having their phones tapped, being expelled from the country, etc. Another dimension of the risks entailed by ethnographic research concerns the informants and interviewees: in certain contexts, answering questions or even being seen with a foreigner can be enough to put them in a dangerous position. There is thus also a question of responsibility on the part of the researcher, and a need for the necessary adaptation of methods according to the context, the risk he or she runs, and the danger the research might represent for others.

How should this research be understood? The political situation in the area is characterized by a constant tension; it cannot be defined as an on-going open war, but it is nevertheless a protracted low-intensity conflict (see for example, Maoz, 2007), punctuated by events that regularly heighten the level of tension and lead to direct and violent confrontations. In light of the tense political context in which it was conducted, the fact that it concentrated on minorities and populations living in a highly repressive context, and on topics that the authorities do not see with a favourable eye

(coercion and resistance), the fieldwork realized for this research could surely be placed in the “difficult” category. I reiterate that the question is important not so much for the use of the adjective – difficult, hostile, dangerous and so forth - but because it represents an occasion to offer a general and honest reflection on the fieldwork, the conditions in which it was realized and the impact those conditions had, both on the research and the researcher; it therefore introduces a subjective dimension that underlies any ethnographic research.

The situation on the ground has varied greatly between the different periods of fieldwork, but also during those periods. The entire atmosphere and political situation can indeed change within the space of a few kilometres. The logics for mobilization in Israel and in the West Bank are for example totally different. Jerusalem represents in this perspective a real interface, bringing together both aspects, with East Jerusalem often indicating, preceding or mirroring the position of the West Bank inhabitants. East Jerusalem nevertheless also has its own internal dynamics, independent from the West Bank. Thus, after the murder of Mohammad Abu Khadr in July 2014, clashes were located mainly in Jerusalem.

The first stay in the region, in the summer of 2011, came at the peak of mobilization of the Israeli “Social Justice Movement” (see for example, Alimi, 2012). While it was especially strong in Tel Aviv, it was also present in Jerusalem and Beer-Sheva. The Palestinians were generally not involved or even concerned with those protests. In Beer-Sheva however, a few Bedouins participated with the NCF in the tent protest. The trips made in the West Bank during this period of exacerbated political mobilization in Israel showed that the political situation of the West Bank remained “normal”. Normality in this case does not mean regularity; the Palestinian “normality” is indeed characterized by regular demonstrations or clashes. The situation can change from one area to another, depending on the local context; the intervention (or presence) of the Israeli army in a village or a neighbourhood, for example, almost always triggers confrontations. The Friday demonstrations organized in a number of villages around Ramallah (Bil'in, Nil'in and Kufr Qaddom amongst others) went on during this period, as a routine exercise of violence, happening outwith and independently of the wider national political context.

Three main periods of heightened tension and unrest, which had an impact on the research, can be clearly identified; namely, the operation “Pillar of Defence” conducted by the IDF against the Gaza Strip in November 2012; the hunger strike of Palestinian prisoners during the spring of 2013;

and the operation “Protective Edge” against Gaza in July and August 2014. All sets of events triggered periods of strong tension in Jerusalem and in the West Bank, with daily demonstrations and clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli police or army, or, during the two wars with Gaza, sirens sounding out around in Israel to warn against rocket attacks. It has to be noted that other punctual events, such as the two Open Shuhada Street protests organized in Hebron each February, also gave way to massive clashes.

These situations have had various impacts on the conduct of the research. Firstly, they represent moments of violence, increased activism and daily clashes. Each made the situation of the researcher more precarious. Those occurring in Hebron during the prisoners' hunger strike were the ones that I experienced most closely. As I was present on the sites of confrontation for the purpose of observation, being the only girl – and often the only European – on the spot, my presence was more noticeable and more quickly considered to be suspicious. Stones were thrown at me on several occasions in Hebron, more as a warning than with the intention to hurt me; people explained that I could have been a journalist or an Israeli. However, the main risk in this kind of situation was the heavy use made of crowd-control weapons by the IDF, including those of tear-gas, sound grenades, rubber bullets<sup>22</sup>, sound cannons (“Long Range Acoustic Device”, also called “the Scream”) (B’tselem, 2013: 47; Who Profits Research Center, 2014: 18-22) and the “Skunk”, a “foul-smelling liquid developed for dispersing demonstrations” (B’tselem, 2013: 35, see also Who Profits Research Center, 2014: 23-32).

These situations also had a big impact at the organizational level: in moments when the intensity of the conflict increased, the issues at stake mobilized the entire Palestinian society, beyond the local borders. The wars in Gaza, for example, brought all social life to a stop. People's attention was then concentrated only on what happened in the Gaza Strip. For example, during the operation “Pillar of Defence”, demonstrations were taking place regularly in support of the people of Gaza and against the war. Palestinians were following the news minute-by-minute on their phone, and all discussion revolved around it. In this context, interviews and meetings in Silwan were impossible to organize. Palestinians were focused on the war and the fate of Gazans. Whether mobilized or not for the demonstrations, they were very careful to show their respect for the situation in which

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<sup>22</sup> 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](http://www.btselem.org/download/201212_crowd_control_eng.pdf).

the Gazans were living, which meant, for example, cancelling or limiting the scope of social events. During the hunger strike of the Palestinians prisoners, the daily clashes in Hebron also jeopardized a few meetings and interviews, as most inhabitants did not want to approach Bab al-Zawiye, the central area where the clashes were taking place, and were using alternative ways to bypass it, or were modifying their work hours to avoid the moments at which the confrontation was the most intense.

Apart from the organizational aspect, these moments of increased tension were bound to have an impact at the personal and psychological level. That impact was not hindering the research as it did not have a direct influence on my presence on the field; it was rather translated into punctual moments of stress, especially in Hebron, when a soldier threw sound grenades at our feet, when tear-gas canisters or Molotov cocktails were falling close by, when people got hit by bullets, or when settlers and policemen were getting nervous, for example. The social network formed on the field, with some individuals and families becoming close friends, was important for living through these moments.

A few other coping mechanisms were developed. I tried to speak in Arabic as much as possible, avoid Hebrew, learn where to place myself during clashes as well as when to leave, or when simply not to go, for example, during night clashes; this explains that I never observed the clashes inside Silwan, which often took place after nightfall. In Hebron, I also learned of the routes to take during clashes to go around the checkpoints and access the H2 area through houses and gardens. With hindsight, the documentation of the situations encountered via photography also represented an unconscious way of maintaining a distance from the events and the violence unfolding before my eyes.

Chance also played a role, as I was never confronted with traumatizing violence, arrests or harsh and long police controls; not that this did not occur but they rather happened several times while I was absent. In Hebron, the police came to the room I rented in order to check the reasons of my presence and my possible participation in a demonstration; the landlords vouched for me and I was never investigated. Similarly, during my fieldwork when al-Araqib was destroyed, I was not in the village. Notwithstanding that these represented moments that it would have been important to witness for the research, they would also certainly have had an emotional and psychological impact.

This account of the field experience is thus very subjective, linked not only to the context, but also to coincidence.

Particular situations could certainly have become dangerous, but in this case the subjective perception of the researcher has to be taken into account. At no point did I really feel in danger. There were frequent moments of stress, but no fear. In one occasion, during the clashes in Hebron mentioned above, the environment became quite hostile and could have become dangerous. The tension was quickly defused with a few jokes made in Arabic and a slow retreat, as my presence had bothered some of the men present there.

Most of the problems I encountered are classical ones of the ethnographic research. The fieldwork presented numerous challenges, the omnipresence of violence being just one of them. However, the fieldwork never got really dangerous. Instead of a dangerous, I would call it tense; the real problem that had to be handled on a daily basis was instead the threat of the authorities' intervention, including their controls and my potential expulsion from the country. Indeed, the moments of violence were only the prolongation of the constant tension brought about by the occupation and the control exerted by the Israeli authorities that disrupt the daily life of Palestinians in a much more acute way.

### **3.2. The real threat: psychological pressure**

Of course, the occupation, and the low-intensity conflict, with everything it implies in terms of surveillance and repression also had an impact on the research. While it is now possible to say that I avoided most of the main difficulties that could have arisen in this respect, the fieldwork was clearly marked and modified by this constant pressure. As Kovats-Bernat puts it: *“Even exposure to low-intensity repression or harassment over the course of research threatens to adversely affect the ways in which we approach the field and interpret social phenomena within it”* (2002: 208).

The existence of the conflict indeed created a constant psychological pressure, which in turn affected the approach adopted. The first clear impact that can be highlighted is relevant in terms of organization. Considering the repressive environment and the problems that can arise when one mentions, let alone visits, the Palestinian territories, I never declared at the airport, when applying

for the visa, that I was coming to undertake research. It was clear that everything linked with Palestine, Palestinians, or, for that matter, Arabic countries, might come to constitute a ground of suspicion and provoke long periods of interrogation, which could easily lead to deportation and consequently, being forbidden from entering the country for ten years. As Vincent Romani puts it in his paper « Enquêter dans les Territoires palestiniens »: *“it is necessary to understand the logics behind the “security” interrogations, and to present coherent and reassuring stories”* (Romani, 2007: 42).

The mere fact of entering Israel to access the field thus gave rise to a need to lie – paradoxically an ethical necessity, as it was also a means of keeping the interviewed Palestinians out of the picture – and a subsequent fear of being discovered. The airport controls upon arrival and departure were a constant source of stress. On two occasions, I was interrogated; it has to be noted that one of these occasions was also the only time I had taken the precaution of having an invitation from an Israeli university, the Hebrew University located in Jerusalem, in order to justify my three-month stay; it was also the fourth long visit in two years. This period of fieldwork was dedicated mainly to Hebron. As Hebron was the place where controls were most likely to occur, the invitation seemed like a useful safeguard to have. On the contrary, it transpired that the only time I tried to use an official channel to enter the territory was the time that it proved most difficult. Explaining the topic of my research, or rather, lying about it, were gambles that I preferred to avoid. I thus always went for periods of three months at the maximum, the limits imposed by the visa given at the airport, under the pretext of tourism and visiting friends.

The general context of the occupation also entails surveillance on the Israeli side, and suspicion on the Palestinian side. As a foreigner, I benefited from many privileges from both points of view. My passport was rarely controlled, and even when it was, this was often done with an absent eye. I could travel freely throughout the West Bank and in Israel, and in and out of Jerusalem; in Hebron, I could access Shuhada Street as well as the part of the city under Palestinian control and I could usually pass the checkpoints without being stopped. However, the constant military – or militarized – presence continued to remind me that the situation was precarious, one that could change very rapidly. During my stay in Hebron, while the situation was tense, the controls at the checkpoints and in the street were not particularly aggressive for foreigners. A few months later, as I returned for short visits, the passports controls were taking place at every military post, even if they were only few meters apart, as a new military unit had settled in; this was also the case with the Bab al-

Zawiye checkpoint and that established at the beginning of Shuhada street. Passports were also checked on the return journey, even if the soldiers remembered perfectly having already checked them. The existence of such a situation during the fieldwork would have been much more difficult to handle and could have easily led to problems with the authorities. Once again, chance played a role in the process.

The situation was very different in each place studied, with, if we take into consideration just the control and surveillance situation, a very clear gradation between the three. In the Negev, the physical presence of soldiers and policemen was less and more punctuated; it was evident at events such as demonstrations and demolitions. The isolation of the village, its location within Israel as well as the Israeli citizenship of the inhabitants, clearly limited the surveillance that was undertaken. However, there was never a complete absence of surveillance; it was merely more discreet and discontinuous than in the other places. However, the symbolic violence was always very present, through the execution of demolition orders and the existence of demolished houses, with cement blocks preventing access, JNF bulldozers and trees; the discrimination and tension were thus always palpable. On some occasions, it was also more direct, as was the case when policemen closed access to al-Araqib to prevent any demonstrations against the planting of trees on the village ground (on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

In Silwan, the Israeli presence is very considerable around the city of David, and in the neighbourhood of Wadi Hilwe, and much less visible in al-Bustan, and in the valley. The symbolic violence, as well as the daily physical violence and the suspicion it creates, also contributes to the existence of an environment under constant pressure, which is translated mostly into suspicion (see next part, 3.3.). In the centre of Hebron, the tension is constant and always palpable; this is derived from the significant presence of soldiers and policemen, the arbitrary controls and arrests, the need to cross check-points several times a day, the need to follow a spatial pattern of control and the hostile attitude of some settlers and soldiers. The psychological pressure can be well illustrated through a common practice of the authorities: that is, filming whoever is in front of them. It is commonly used by the army during demonstrations, even peaceful ones; however it has also been used by employees of the JNF, on their visit to the Negev on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and by the spokesperson of the Jewish community of Hebron, David Wilder, when entering the Ibrahimi mosque on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014, along with members of Parliament Naftali Bennett and the “Jewish Home” (HaBayit HaYehudi, the religious Zionist political party). This practice of documenting

possible opponents represents a passive-aggressive strategy and a means of pressuring people and especially foreign activists; the myth of the omniscient Israeli intelligence services, and the many stories that circulate about their knowledge, indeed operate to sustain a high level of pressure and uncertainty about what can or cannot be done or said, for fear that it could be known and reused, especially on departure from the country. All types of contact with the authorities, or documentation that can be used by them, thus becomes a threat.

All of these characteristics have to be taken into consideration; they mainly operate to increase the pressure and have effects at a psychological level. In respect of this research project, these elements did not prevent the undertaking of the research as such, but rather rendered it more uncertain and occasionally more stressful; as such, it influenced certain choices and methods of research.

Thus, as opposed to there having been periods of dangerous fieldwork, there were rather periods of fieldwork that were undertaken under psychological pressure. While this has to be mentioned here, as it was an important dimension of the fieldwork, it should not be overemphasized. It was necessary to identify strategies to avoid or limit the risks into which one might have run in this context. These strategies were often unconscious ones. The creation of a social network on the ground and the possibility that I had to move and visit different places, where necessary or where events so required, provided a necessary outlet in my case. The tension and the pressure were aspects that had to be dealt with, but never came to constitute a major problem for me and never put the research at risk. Indeed, their significance was very light in comparison to those felt daily by the Palestinians with whom I was living, in terms of threats and constraints.

### **3.3. Gaining access to the field: suspicion, credibility and legitimacy**

Under these conditions, a crucial stage of the research arose at the time of gaining access to the field, managing the development of the initial contacts and first interviews. As Boumaza and Campana (2007) underline, “entering” into a difficult field implies being accepted by the people who are being researched and who are often surprised by and/or suspicious of the researcher; the researcher is then essentially placed under examination, and thus has to give proof of his or her good intentions, show his or her commitment, and in certain cases, his or her political position.

The access to the three case studies upon which this research relies has required that I face the same type of challenge. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the researcher has to prove his “side”. The “neutrality” of the researcher and his duty to be an “impartial observer” are thus a utopia in a number of instances of fieldwork. As June Nash underlines, in respect of her own work alongside miners in Bolivia: *“the polarization of the class struggle made it necessary to take sides or to be cast by them in one side or the other. In a revolutionary situation, no neutrals are allowed”* (2007: 224).

Indeed, the primary signs on my part that the people were looking for were those that would allow them to understand my position on the conflict, and to situate me in relation to it. The development of the first set of contacts constituted an occasion for them to test me; people were looking for proof of solidarity and loyalty to the Palestinian struggle, not neutrality. Palestinians are used to foreigners going there to express their support: many international activists go to encourage and participate in local initiatives, to lead NGO activities, and to become involved in direct action against the occupation. Journalists and researchers – both of whom are often mixed up – are expected to adopt a similar position, and express clear support for the cause. My knowledge of the country and the culture, the existence of common friends or contacts, the frequency of my trips, and the reason for my interest in the region, were all aspects that had to be exposed or alluded to during an initial conversation in order to assess my credibility and especially, my trustworthiness.

As a result, the first group of contacts established in an area often proved crucial, as they were in part conditioning the trust that people would have in me, the speed with which I could meet other people, and the contacts that would be indicated to me.

In respect of the need to “prove one’s side”, a problem could have arisen in my case; this stemmed from my participation in the various demonstrations organized, that could have been considered to be insufficiently risky or aggressive. This type of active participation is often taken for granted in respect of foreigners as a basic proof of their solidarity. Moreover, numerous foreign activists, among whom are included the activists of the ISM (International Solidarity Movement) do go to Palestine to occupy the front lines and to shed light on the repressive measures implemented by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian contention. Israeli activists who participate in NGOs and movements of solidarity, such as Anarchists against the Wall (see for example, Gordon, 2010; Lamarche, 2009), are also often arrested for engaging in such activities.

As demonstrations are usually filmed or photographed by the army or police, as indicated above (see 3.2.), I was always present but was very careful not to put myself in a position that could be used against me in a way that could put my presence in the country into difficulty, that is, to substantiate a claim that I was an activist or was participating in anti-Israeli activities. I usually explained this position to the people who I knew. The deportation of activists, or the refusal to let them re-enter the country, is common enough for those people to understand and accept my position. The regularity of my visits also highlighted my fear of being expelled and prevented from coming back again.

The proof of a “commitment to the cause” can however be reflected in different ways. Even if I did not fight soldiers, I was always present when demonstrations were organized, and I also participated in various other initiatives, which sometimes demanded a real physical and time-laborious engagement; this included the cleaning of a garden in Hebron with YAS for the purposes of turning it into a kindergarten.

Moreover, being a witness to and communicating about the experiences of Palestinians is something that most people ask for as an act of solidarity. Taking pictures, writing and spreading information are considered to be the basic “duties” of foreigners witnessing the occupation. From this perspective, the decision to adopt a more journalistic approach in parallel to my research, to start a blog and subsequently publish articles on other websites or blogs<sup>23</sup>, allowed me to produce some “results” in a more immediate fashion than is feasible via academic publications; these results could be shown to the inhabitants, and yet allowed me to maintain my position as an academic researcher. The scientific data published following a period of research is nevertheless usually inaccessible to the people studied because of “*a language or literacy block*” (Nash, 2007: 223).

The legitimacy of the researcher is nevertheless not only established through direct action and activism; it may indeed derive from regular presence, the fact of returning again and again during a long period of time, the investment of time in order to get to know people and furthermore, the

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<sup>23</sup> See for example: <http://thymeandolives.blogspot.com/>, with articles on Silwan, Hebron and al-Araqib among others, but also <http://blog.mondediplo.net/2013-12-10-Bienvenue-a-Hebronland>; <http://visionscarto.net/sumoud>; <http://orientxxi.info/magazine/pour-israel-le-plan-prawer-n-est,0525>; <http://blog.mondediplo.net/2013-12-10-Bienvenue-a-Hebronland>; <http://www.jssj.org/article/les-villages-invisibles-disrael-vers-la-disparition-des-bedouins-du-neguev/>.

effort to integrate into local life; my participation via these avenues counterbalanced any non-participation in demonstrations that could have given rise to a problem. In Hebron, for example, my inclusion in the Youth Against Settlement (YAS) group, and in the local community, emerged as a result of time spent in the YAS centre but also for example, following time spent collecting olives with families and getting to know the shopkeepers. The fact that I learned Arabic, and moreover in Jerusalem and while on the field – the types of people I was meeting reflected direct testimonies of the process and my progress – was usually perceived as an initial and very immediate proof of my commitment and good will.

However sometimes the proof required might be more specific. For example, adapting one's language might also be a prerequisite to establishing legitimacy. In fact, one example can be alluded to: as I was explaining my case studies to an interviewee in Silwan, and made mention of "the Bedouins in the South of Israel", he corrected me abruptly: "*There is no Israel, we call it occupied Palestine*". The question of terminology is a central one in respect of all research that is undertaken in areas of conflicts, not least in Israel and Palestine. In fact, the naming of places is highly political, with Israel imposing Hebrew names, usually taken from the Bible, on various places. The West Bank is thus commonly called Judea and Samaria, not only by right-wing or religious Israelis but also within State institutions. The terminology engaged on both sides thus carries heavy political meaning, sometimes in a very radical way; as such, its use can position the speaker in respect of a whole range of other questions. I was thus cautious to use an adapted vocabulary; it required that I paid constant attention according to my audience. During that same interview, I was also asked specifically about the financing of my research and the relation I had with Israeli universities: if I were depending on Israeli universities in any way, I was told explicitly that they would refuse to participate in my research.

The behaviour and background but also the very words and categories used by the researcher, thus take on a particular importance as they will directly influence the relationships with the people and the way in which the fieldwork will be conducted. They will be scrutinized and weighted, more or less carefully according to the particular situation in which one finds oneself.

The fear of spies was palpable in all three cases, especially in Silwan, where people are particularly afraid of the collaborators, that is, Palestinians working with and informing the Israeli authorities; these collaborators are numerous according to various people questioned. The process of meeting

with people, and especially of undertaking interviews and obtaining information was more difficult in Silwan than in any other place. One interview was particularly disastrous; despite the trustworthy common contact that had sent and recommended me, the interview had to be stopped after fifteen minutes of reluctant and empty answers. Following another interview, which had been organized thanks to a friend, the interviewee was arrested. Released the next day, he asked that common friend: *“so you bring me this girl, and I get arrested just after!?”*. It was said in jest – the protest he organized against the Jerusalem marathon constituted a far more likely reason for his arrest than his conversation with me -, but nevertheless, the thought was evidently there and the words were uttered. If such an idea or rumour had begun to spread, it would have been very difficult to control and would have rendered it very challenging for me to continue my research in the neighbourhood. In Hebron, on the contrary, the contact with the people was much easier. This was a result of a number of factors. Firstly, the political situation was significant: Hebron is partially under Palestinian authority, but is included in the occupied territory. Its centre is subject to harsh restrictions and is a symbol of the Palestinian situation and related hardships. As a consequence, the opposition and resistance to the Israeli presence and politics, is more clear-cut, more open, and the fear of spies is less significant. Hebron is also a symbol of the measures of occupation and of Palestinian resistance and as such, attracts international activists and visitors (see chapter 7). The inhabitants are thus more comfortable, are more used to telling their stories and to speaking to strangers.

The YAS activists usually dismissed the fear of spies by saying that they had nothing to hide and were non-violent. However, the topic was regularly mentioned as a joke, sometimes directed at me. As a result, it became a joke that I often started myself, as a defensive strategy. After several months of fieldwork, as I was tired of always being checked and of having to justify my position both to Israelis and Palestinians, I declared that from that point forward I would present myself by saying *“My name is Marion, and I’m not a spy”*. The joke was appreciated and re-used on several occasions, defusing the doubts that could have subsisted.

In the Bedouin villages, the suspicion was also mentioned but never really felt. As a matter of fact, people from the Bedouin community itself, i.e. from other villages, are more easily considered to be spies than foreigners. The Bedouin villages are all quite isolated and are difficult to reach; their public image is extremely negative in Israel and they face very strong instances of racism from both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. These villages do not receive many external visitors, with the exception of two or three of them, to which NGOs take groups and delegations (see chapter 7).

However, they always travel as groups and are accompanied by a contact, already known by the villagers. Foreigners visiting the village by themselves thus arouse more curiosity than suspicion, which in turn, makes the initial contact and conversation easier and offers the opportunity to erase any remaining doubt.

Finally, I am convinced that being a woman made the access to the field easier, as it is a profile considered less likely to be a spy. Moreover as I was a surprising or intriguing presence in a number of situations, people were more willing to engage in conversation in order to understand the reason and goal of my presence. This calls attention to another point of the research that has to be scrutinized: the nature of the gender relationships, and the way that they might have influenced the research.

### **3.4. The gender (non- ?)issue**

The question of gender has to be tackled as all three cases were conducted in Muslim communities, characterized by a traditional separation between sexes in everyday life, as well as numerous constraints regulating the conditions of their coexistence and the behaviour of women in public space and in the presence of men. It has to be noted, of course, that variations exist between the three places: segments of the Palestinian society of Jerusalem, for example, are quite liberal whereas Hebron is known for being much more conservative and religious. The Bedouin society, especially in the villages, also respects a strict separation between the sexes.

Conducting research in these conditions could have proven difficult. However, a European female is deemed to be in some kind of grey zone, considered as a female but not subject to the same expectations as Palestinian or Muslim women there, as she is also included in the external group of “internationals”. Of course, there are some basic rules that have to be respected, and the researcher has to be aware of her privileges as well as of her status and its limits: being modestly dressed is, for example, a prerequisite for everyday life. There are also drawbacks in being a woman working in such a field. Even if they are positioned in a grey zone, female researchers keep a foot in the “female” category. In my case, the difficulties that arose from this point of view were negligible, if not necessarily pleasant.

In general, my status presented a lot of advantages: as indicated above, the suspicion that I faced was lower than the level that men would have faced, and the possibilities of contacts were multiplied, as I enjoyed relatively easy access both to men and women. The problem faced in respect of establishing contact with women stemmed from their lower involvement in activities and public life in general; however, when the occasion presented itself, I then had access to the domestic sphere, which is usually not the case for male researchers. Staying in al-Araqib with a Bedouin family was possible only because I was a woman, and there were no unmarried men around or no young men old enough to get married. A man would certainly not have been allowed to stay in a family, and even sleeping in the vicinity of the village would have been problematic. While the women of the village were largely confined to the limits of the domestic space, I was accepted in the *shieq* where the men of the village met from the early morning to prepare coffee and where they receive their guests. However, in instances at which large groups of men assembled, happening especially on Fridays or on holidays, I was careful not to impose my presence, which could have embarrassed or irritated some of the men. However, this situation was not necessarily easy and was not taken for granted; this is reflected in the criticism and warnings that the Abu-Madighem family, who hosted me, received from other members of their family.

In Silwan and Hebron, the situation was very similar: I had generally facilitated access to both men and women, in sensitive situations. When attending the Friday prayer in al-Bustan, which takes place in the “protest tent” and in the street, I was clearly not in my place, as the only woman, and often the only foreigner, listening to the prayer alone. However, this never created problems. In Silwan, the main problem I encountered in this respect manifested itself once in a wife’s jealousy – and early phonecall – which ultimately made an interview impossible to realize.

My presence at Bab al-Zawiye in Hebron during the clashes between the *shabab* (young Palestinian men) and the Israeli army, was sometimes considered to be improper; this was probably as much a reflection of my being a foreigner as of my being a woman. Indeed, the main reaction to my presence in these areas was mostly surprise and curiosity, sometimes mingled with suspicion; at worst, it was expressed through indifference or through stones thrown in my direction as a warning.

My being an unveiled and unmarried European woman also led to numerous discussions about religion, my position relating to Islam, about the place of women in Islam and the treatment of Muslim women in Europe and especially in France, because of its “anti-veil” law. Those

conversations always presented an opportunity to learn more about the relevant society and to engage an interesting dialogue. However, the topic remains extremely sensitive and can easily become controversial and highly political, with some interlocutors directly linking such reflections to their own political position and their parties' line; this happened several times in Hebron with the result that the discussion turned into a passionate defence of Hamas or Hizb al-Tahrir, both Islamic parties. I was thus always careful to express my opinions in generic and acceptable terms that could not hurt or shock my interlocutors.

The gender dimension was paradoxically not a central challenge of this research, and even represented, I contend, an advantage in accessing the field and meeting people. The last point that has to be examined for its role and possible impact in the conduct of the research and on the methods engaged, is that of language; the language used and learned, as well as the languages that are not spoken, can indeed be very revealing about a situation. In respect of the research at hand, the languages represented a central challenge; not only in respect of what could be learned but also in terms of the logistic and reflection that they demanded during the fieldwork. The question of translation for example represented a crucial issue, with no easy solution.

### **3.5. Language dilemmas**

The question of language is often considered as a technicality of the research and is not mentioned in the discussion of methodology. However, in line with interpretative and non-positivist epistemology, I think that the questions of language and translations are an integral part in the making of knowledge; it is not a neutral process and implies power relationships (Temple & Young, 2004).

Two languages were spoken on the field, Hebrew and Arabic; it represented, of course, a major challenge of the fieldwork. As the research took place mainly within the Arabic-speaking population, I chose, after the acquisition of a basis of Hebrew while in Florence, to concentrate on Arabic. Learning Arabic thus became an integral part of the research, a time-consuming but absolutely necessary activity. Learning the language while doing the research of course presented obvious disadvantages, but it still had many good points, including a quicker and more specialized process

of learning. I started Arabic in August 2012, with one month of intensive classes in Jerusalem, and then continued to take classes twice a week during the two next periods of fieldwork.

Learning both languages was necessary as it made the access to the different fields, and the subsequent periods of fieldwork much easier, and allowed me to work in a more autonomous way. Indeed, one central problem was the question of whether to resort to a translator to conduct interviews with non-English speakers. Even if it constituted the easiest and more obvious solution, it still comported a set of important drawbacks. First, the process of translation requires, and even more so when speaking about simultaneous translation, a close collaboration between the researcher and the translator and a real understanding of the topic and aims of the research on the part of the translator. Indeed, translators occupy a central place in the elaboration of the discourse: they are the key to access to meaning, but they also mould it according to their own understanding. In fact, *“the translator makes assumptions about meaning equivalence that make her an analyst and cultural broker as much as a translator”* (Temple & Young, 2004: 171).

The translation work is indeed crucial, and the best solution is to resort to a professional, or at least to someone proficient in English and with experience in translation. However, it is also an option that is very costly, both for simultaneous translation, and the translation of interview documents *a posteriori*. In addition to the challenge of finding a good translator, who can be trusted with the translation, and also with the relation to the people, and, for example, their anonymity, simultaneous translation also presents other problems: it extends the length of the interview, and makes it more tedious for the interviewees. Another problem, which cannot be overlooked, is that of finding a translator ready to comply with the exigencies of the field, including the presence requirement and time constraints. The translation process indeed requires the interpreter's presence on the field, which is nearly as important as that of the researcher.

Notwithstanding that the translator can be a key to meaning and understanding, he can also raise additional challenges and obstacles. In light of the conditions in which I had to conduct the research, I decided to try and manage without translator as much as I could. Indeed, the general suspicion had to be acknowledged and I adapted the research strategies and methodology as a consequence. Introducing a third person into meetings and interviews would certainly have been a problem, creating or reinforcing reluctance and suspicion and thus changing the discourse of the interviewees. Indeed, being accompanied by a Palestinian unknown to the interviewee and external

to the local community would have been difficult, introducing an additional reason to doubt the research and my position as a researcher, or more importantly, to doubt the intentions of the translator. As noted above, it might be much more likely that insiders are considered to be spies than foreigners. Coming with an insider would also have had an impact on the content of the discourse, on the way the interviews could have been conducted, notwithstanding that it would also have been necessary to find one translator for each case study.

The question of gender was also an issue that had to be taken into account; being a European female, I was in some kind of “third sex” position, having access to both men and women as set out above (see 3.4.). However, in order to interview Palestinian women, it would certainly have been a problem to have a male interpreter; a female one would have been problematic in the opposite case, especially in certain conservative areas such as Hebron and other areas with religious people. In two or three instances, friends came with me to translate when the vocabulary was bound to be difficult, for example when interviewing the imam, Sheikh lyad al-Abassi (May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)

All of my interviews were recorded; most of them were conducted in English, and some were done in Arabic, with the intention to have them translated at a later stage. This represented an important decision as my mastery of Arabic sometimes gave me only a partial immediate access to the information; any bias however was corrected by the subsequent translation of the interviews. Other moments, in addition to the interviews (such as meetings, presentations to groups, prayers, etc.) were also recorded in order to ensure that as little information as possible was lost. These recordings were not integrally transcribed or translated, but were intended to provide additional information that could be kept and consulted in case of doubt. Notes taken during those presentations provided an initial way to set out the data, which could then be exploited.

### **3.6. Ethics, emotion and commitment**

Finally, we can close up this section with a last point, which is maybe the most important one and will also allow us to sum up various elements evoked in the paragraphs above; this discussion concerns the ethics of research, in this case more specifically linked to the question of objectivity and subjectivity, and thus to the position of the researcher in a context of conflict loaded with opposing ideologies.

The fact of doing fieldwork in an area of conflict indeed gives rise to serious ethics questions. The position of the researcher is a delicate one by definition, as he or she *“modifies the field of action through her or his participation in it”*, through the way he or she receives and interprets information, unintentionally manipulates events or through *“the quality of the affective link”* with the people (Routledge, 2002: 486). The researcher has a responsibility towards his informants, the people he interviews and meets, not to distort what they say, of course, but also to ensure they will not be threatened because of their participation in the research, either during the fieldwork or afterwards. Protecting their identity might be one of the essential tasks of the researcher. During this research, all of the people interviewed were asked whether they preferred to remain anonymous. One person, an activist of ISM who intended to return to Palestine and did not want to run the risk of being refused entrance into Israel, asked to be cited according to his chosen Arabic name, Hassan. The Palestinians usually declared they did not have anything to hide, or even, that on the contrary they wanted their opinion to be diffused and heard.

The responsibility of the researcher also goes beyond the time of fieldwork; once an analysis is produced and published, one must wonder how the data collected can be used (see for example, Nash, 2007: 223), especially by the authorities? In the case at hand, the question is central, because of the intensity of the conflict opposing the Palestinians to the Israeli authorities. Even if this research presents a considerable amount of empirical data, I do not think it is a particularly sensitive body. People voicing their disagreement with the Israeli authorities most clearly are all figures involved in the public scene, whose activism and opinions are no secret, and who have all already had problems with the Israeli authorities. As for the practices of resistance evoked, they are all made in a public fashion, and even if they are illegal according to Israeli law, cannot attract the same kind of attention as information on violent or terror actions might. The only violence referred to is that taking place at Bab al-Zawiye in Hebron, and reference is not many to any names. Similarly, in this thesis as well as in the article already published, I was careful not to publish pictures showing the faces of people participating in any clashes recorded, especially while throwing stones or Molotov cocktails, something to which they were particularly attached.

However, even if the material collected is not highly sensitive, having it confiscated or directly collected by the authorities would certainly have posed a moral and ethical problem; this would have been the case in relation to the trust people put in me but also because the pictures taken during demonstrations and showing the faces of protestors could have been used to identify them.

Before taking the plane, the interviews realized were thus saved on a USB key instead of on the computer; moreover, all of the material, photos, interviews and so forth were saved under non-identifiable names, and sometimes sent by mail to Europe. These strategies aimed at protecting the people to the same extent that they tried to protect me from invasive controls when leaving the country.

An ethnographic approach also raises the question of emotional detachment and the objectivity of the researcher, as the immersion implies the need to establish personal relationships, which can develop into tight links with the people. An emotional attachment, and the development of identification with the actors met on the field, is considered to be antithetic or downright dangerous for the scientific analysis undertaken, making objectivity impossible. June Nash insists on the gap existing (and, according to her, widening) between the two roles of the anthropologist. First, as a field researcher, *“we share the lives of the people we study and identify with them in the conflicts they face”*, while as an analyst *“we must objectify and distil our experiences”* (Nash, 2007: 223). The shared experience makes the researcher more attached and closer emotionally; while this helps build trust and facilitate integration into society, it may make it more difficult for the researcher to distance himself and adopt a critical eye in respect of the events.

The field chosen for this research was deeply political and emotionally very intense, loaded with difficult situations, injustice and violence. A certain involvement was inevitable, and represented a human position above and beyond a political one. There is however a political stance in my work, that I do not refute and this has transpired through the introduction to the research. It is a political stance, but not an emotional one; it has been constructed following observation, information and analysis, and is consistent with a critical appraisal of the situation. It is a simple one, which should not be controversial, but follows for the most part the position of the international community; Palestine is occupied by the military, the occupation is a repressive and discriminatory regime, and the Palestinians have a right to self-determination. Moreover, in these conditions, the ethical position might be to take a precise position and not ignore the issues at hand; writing blog articles was indeed intended as act of “soft” activism that I felt was necessary considering the situations to which I paid testimony, but also the information and data to which I had access and with which I was trusted. It has to be noted moreover that a strong tradition of political engagement exists in social sciences, for example, with the Marxist agenda of radical geography in the 60s and 70s or feminist anthropology and geography, which calls for social scientists to *“inhabit a difficult and*

*inherently unstable space of betweenness*" (Katz, 1994: 67), and to put together scholarship and politics, thus taking position against the forces of opposition, seeking not only to expose but also to try and overcome power relations (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, & Ballerino Cohen, 1989: 33). The current focus on topics of social and spatial justice and the right to the city, inspired by the works of David Harvey (see for example, Harvey, 1973, 1990, 2003) is a continuation of this trend, as the "activist geographies" evoked by Paul Routledge, who relies on the "*inseparability of knowledge and action*" (Routledge, forthcoming).

Could the emotional or political dimension of the fieldwork impact the objectivity of the analysis? I contend, firstly, that objectivity is generally unreachable. It nevertheless represents the goal to which any scientific analysis must tend towards. However, if objectivity cannot be achieved, it may be approached with honesty, distance and a critical eye, three tools essential to a good analysis of empirical data. Indeed, the immersion in the field must not be an obstacle to a critical account of the reality. On the ground, the Palestinian resistance or activism is often idealized by foreigners and because of a sense of loyalty to the cause, internal problems or contradictions are not exposed or discussed. It is important to acknowledge the difficulties that also derive from within Palestinian society. In addition to the issues cited above, we can add for example that the competition between groups of activists and even their leaders for attention and prestige is fierce, as is the fight for the attention from the media and foreigners. In our case, emotional attachment must not lead to a friend/enemy logic (Hage, 2009: 76), where the reality becomes simplistic and stereotypical. The article of G. Hage, *Hating Israel in the Field* (Hage, 2009), is very interesting from this point of view. A scholar researching political emotions, he reflects on the anger and hate he developed towards Israel during the bombardment of Lebanon in 2006, when the village he should have gone to for fieldwork was destroyed and his main informant, Ali, and his family, were killed. The situations I witnessed on the ground often gave rise to anger, however it never cut me off from the reality in which I was undertaking research; I never refused to speak to anyone even if in some cases, the situation was very uncomfortable or tense. I rather remained curious to discover and understand the social mechanisms pertaining to both societies with whom I was living, which implied on the contrary, the need to coexist with a strong and constant feeling of schizophrenia.

Concentrating in this chapter on method and methodology, I have exposed some of the main choices that underpin the conduct of this research. After detailing the approach adopted and more specifically the way in which the "sites of contention" were defined, both theoretically and

materially, on the ground, I have laid out the main methodological lines that were applied; a qualitative approach and comparative design were chosen and deployed during the fieldwork, that relied chiefly on participant observation and semi-structured interviews, but also significantly on informal conversations and daily activities.

In the last part, I have examined six points that represented the main challenges faced during the fieldwork, and reflected on the impact they had and the way in which they were managed. First, I have developed the question of the difficult or dangerous nature of the field. The point was not to necessarily label the situation but to engage in a reflection about the experience in order to have a more honest account of the conditions of research. The psychological pressure that was inherent to fieldwork undertaken in a situation of conflict, the access to the field, the issue of gender as well as of language and translation, are the points I then examined, concluding with considerations on the question of objectivity, ethics and emotions.

Despite each of these challenges, which represented potential or actual obstacles to the realization of this research, I enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy. The attempts to control my work, when they came to the fore, were directed more at the research than at my presence or movement: it was translated, for example, into the direct undermining of some individuals' testimonies or into the recurrent advice that I received that I needed "more open-minded" or "more knowledgeable" informants.

To conclude, it is essential to recall that "the field" is not a given, an objective place of action waiting for the researcher to give it its meaning and unwind the truth hidden behind some complex (and necessarily strange) forms of social life. The researcher enters a society, a moment, and a place, with its own human interactions, history, local events, friendships, and family histories, as well as drama, corruption and internal conflicts, which were there before him and will still be there after when the researcher is back in the library or at his desk. It is essential to recognize this reality, and, as Stein states, not to make the "work" cancel the "field". Indeed *"the field itself, the places wherein observed behavior occurs, needs to be considered in its own right"* (Stein, 2006: 59). Notwithstanding that some dimensions of the reality of the field have been considered here, they were still largely related to the "work" part. In the next chapter I draw up a historical overview for each case study, in order to integrate the empirical analysis that will be developed in the following

chapter into a wider frame, to allow for a better understanding of the various social, political and legal situations, but also to consider each “field” in a more independent manner.

## CHAPTER 3

### **PRESENTATION OF THE CASES:**

### **A POLITICS OF CONTROL AND SEPARATION**

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Before developing the empirical analysis in the next four chapters, it is necessary to dwell a moment on the cases chosen and to develop the context in which the resistance takes place in each site of contention. A knowledge of the historical background of each place, targeted to periods or events linked to the topics that interest us here, especially measures of control and strategies of resistance, appear as essential for the understanding of the local dynamics and the comparison between the cases. Indeed, even if the cases are all located in the same area, broadly defined as historical Palestine (pre-1948), today separated between Israel and Palestine, each place has still experienced different processes of evolution in social, economic, political and legal terms. These historical accounts lay out for the three case studies 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, but also point out to an evolving process of deterritorialization that will be further developed in the empirical chapters.

After 1948, the region was separated between three powers: the newly-created State of Israel, the West Bank and Jerusalem falling under Jordanian power, and Gaza falling under Egyptian authority. The 1967 “Six Days” war allowed Israel to conquer Jerusalem and occupy the West Bank and Gaza. During this war, Israel also made other territorial gains in the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. Israel withdrew totally from the Sinai Peninsula in 1981, following the 1979 Peace treaty with Egypt; it disengaged partially from the Golan Heights in 1974 after the Israeli-Syrian agreement (the remaining territory then passing under total Israeli rule), and “disengaged” unilaterally from Gaza in 2004-2005. However, an agenda of developing settlements in the occupier territories emerged during these years, starting in the late 60s with the Allon Plan. With the tacit agreement of various governments, including left-wing ones, and the active support of some ministers, above all Ariel Sharon, and the pressure of some non-institutional actors such as the Bloc of the Faithful (Gush Emunim), the Jewish settlements quickly developed in the occupied territories (Weisburd, 1989;

Zertal & Eldar, 2007). The presence of Jewish households in Gaza and the West Bank gave rise to the need for greater infrastructure and an increased military presence, generating increased tension. The settlers themselves gained more institutional power recently, being represented in the Israeli governments, especially by the religious Zionist party HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home); they also became more and more present within the army and police forces, and a part of the most radical ones, such as those called the “hilltop youths”, resorting to direct actions (such as the “price tag” strategy) against Palestinians or even Israeli authorities to advance what they see as a policy favourable to the settlements (Nir, 2011). The continuous Palestinian resistance in the face of military occupation has also had a long-lasting impact on the political situation<sup>24</sup>.

The second intifada, which started in 2000, marked a turning point in the relationship between the two societies. The use of new strategies on the part of the Palestinians differed from the first uprising (1987 to 1991, or 1993 depending on the sources), and included terror attacks and individual bombers. The Israeli response was based on a policy of separation, with the construction of the “security barrier” aiming at isolating the West Bank, and the setting up of numerous checkpoints or bypass roads accessible only to Israelis, and was deeply modified to the landscape and increased the separation between Israel and the Palestinian territories: it but also increased the divisions within the Palestinian society and the fragmentation of the Palestinian territory, already reinforced by the Oslo agreement.

These various events have marked each place in very different ways: Hebron, Jerusalem and the Negev have all been concerned and impacted, but with different results and consequences. We will see first that the Bedouins, as Israeli citizens, depend more on the situation within Israel, and especially on the policies decided by the various governments and the various laws passed. We will develop more particularly the story of al-Araqib, especially since the demolition of the village in 2010, which marked the beginning of the village’s resistance. 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 and the harsh restrictions on the conditions regarding residence in Jerusalem. We will outline, after a brief presentation of the village, the main issued that shapes Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan and

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<sup>24</sup> It is not the purpose here to recount the chronology of those events. For an overview of the historic events and evolution of the conflict opposing Israelis and Palestinians see the introduction and first chapter, part 2. See also, amongst others, Hermann, 2009; Hermann & Yuchtman-Yaar, 2002; Hermann, 1996; Laqueur, 1972; Lehman-Wilzig, 1990, 1991; Newman & Hermann, 1992; Omer & Springs, 2013; Sprinzak, 1989, 1998; Zertal & Eldar, 2007.

represents the basis for local mobilization. Finally, Hebron is one of the places in the occupied territories where occupation is more visible, having a direct 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 internally 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 object 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<sup>25</sup>.

## **1. The Negev Bedouins and the case of al-Araqib<sup>26</sup>**

The Negev (Naqab in Arabic) is inhabited by Bedouin tribes from the pre-Islamic period (the seventh century). The tribes present in the area varied then, according to waves of arrivals and departures. Tribes present in the region today would have arrived, according to Bailey (1985), after the thirteenth century. The Bedouin population of the Negev numbered around 130 000 people in 2004 according to the website of the Israeli Knesset<sup>27</sup>, making up 3,5% of the Israeli population<sup>28</sup>.

### **1.1. From the Zionist movement to the State of Israel: the Negev under control**

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the succession of different governments (the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate and the Israeli State) and the adoption of various laws relating to land, have radically altered the terms of the Bedouins' presence and influence in the region. Shamir underlines that *"historically, Bedouins had their own legal mechanisms for deciding*

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<sup>25</sup> The different actors (residents, NGOs and so forth) considered in each site of contention and thus included in this research will be presented in the empirical chapters (4 to 7), to avoid redundancy.

<sup>26</sup> Parts of this section have been used for various articles published on the author's personal blog, on Visions Carto, Orient XXI and in the journal "Spatial Justice".

<sup>27</sup> This population was 156 400 in 2006 according to Adalah (2010: 79).

<sup>28</sup> "Bedouins in the State of Israel", website of the Israeli Knesset, section "lexicon of terms", [http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/bedouim\\_eng.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/bedouim_eng.htm).

*disputes and for acquiring, leasing, selling, inheriting and marking a given area's boundaries*" (1996: 235; see also Lavie, 1994). This traditional division of space and the reciprocity system between clans have both been destroyed by several generations of state regulation on land ownership, with a huge impact on the lifestyle of those populations. The issue, for the central state, was not so much nomadism but the property and availability of the lands. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bedouins of the Negev were already semi-nomads or fully sedentarized (Falah, 1989: 72).

The Ottoman Empire initially started to legislate on the topic of land ownership. In 1858, the Land Act classified most of the Negev as *mawāt* [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, but this classification also represented a way to encourage the cultivation of the fertile areas, under conditions of tax payment and the need for the permission of the authority (Ginguld, Perevolotsky, & Ungar, 1997: 571; International Fact-finding mission, 2010: 1).

The British launched another registration process 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 (Kressel et al., 1991: 30; Shamir, 1996: 241). The British Mandate marked an increased intervention of the central authority into Bedouin affairs; it is also the period that saw a reinforced competition for space develop, with an increase in Jewish settlement and acquisition of land. According to Meir, this period saw a *"growing tendency away from the pastoral nomadic life-style towards more emphasis on agricultural activities and sedentarization"* (1988: 259).

The first battle of the Zionist movement aimed to progressively ensure its grip on the coveted space. The Jewish National Fund (JNF; in Hebrew KKL, Keren Kayemet Lelsrael) was responsible for acquiring land, which was then "frozen" and removed from the market; *"the declared goal of the Jewish National Fund was to purchase maximum territory in Palestine in order to establish national ownership of the land which would be nontransferable"* (Kimmerling, 1983: 73)<sup>29</sup>. Obtaining

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<sup>29</sup> For more details on the mechanisms of land acquisition see Kimmerling, 1983.

ownership of the land was indeed seen as a priority to enable the creation of a Jewish state, but represented also, for some people, a religious requirement. The ownership of the land, once obtained, had to be irreversible, following 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) and the concept of "redemption of the land", which consists of bringing the land of Israel under the control of the Jewish people, thus fulfilling the promise made by God in the Bible. The possession and control of land constitutes one basic principle of the Zionist ideology; it has even been said that *"without it, Zionism has no value"*<sup>30</sup>. 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. As we will see in the case of al-Araqib, the JNF still plays a fundamental role in the eviction of the Bedouin population in the Negev.

After the declaration of independence and the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, many of the Bedouins present in the Negev were displaced or fled to Gaza or the neighbouring countries of Jordan and Egypt. The remaining Bedouin population was evacuated between 1951 and 1953 "for security reasons" and concentrated in an area that stretched between Arad, Dimona and Beer-Sheva. That area, called 'Siyaj' ("containment" in Arabic) is often referred to as a "reserve" (Goering, 1979), and was placed under the authority of the Israeli military government<sup>31</sup>. The martial law that was imposed on all Arab citizens of Israel was lifted in 1966.

A legal arsenal was implemented in the meantime, giving the State the means to lawfully appropriate Palestinian lands, and bypass existing property titles. The Absentees' Property law, adopted in 1950, aimed at transferring the property of Palestinians refugees to the State of Israel. It created the category of the "absentees", defined among others as Palestinian citizens who had left their ordinary place of residence in Palestine *"for a place outside Palestine before the 27th Av, 5708 (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1948)"* or *"for a place in Palestine held at the time by forces which sought to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment"*<sup>32</sup>. The property of the absentees was then put in the care of a custodian, the chairman of the Council

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<sup>30</sup> Aaronovitz, *"The conquest of Labor and the conquest of Land"*, Hapoel Hatzair 12, 1908, in Kimmerling, 1983: 80.

<sup>31</sup> See map in Annex IV.

<sup>32</sup> For the text of the law see

<http://www.israelawresourcecenter.org/israelaws/fulltext/absenteepropertylaw.htm>.

for Absentees' Property. This law created the category of the “internally displaced”, also called “present absentees”, and was largely used against the Palestinians; it was similarly applied in East Jerusalem following its annexation in 1967, a process which resulted in the application of Israeli law (Ir Amim, 2010).

However, the Absentees’ law was not used in the Negev; instead, the law that was implemented there – and consequently in al-Araqib - was the Land Acquisition Law, passed in 1953, which allowed the State to take possession of land evacuated in 1948. According to that law, the Development Authority was authorized to take possession of the land that was “*not in the possession of its owners*” on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1952, which 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)<sup>33</sup>. This law allowed the State to retroactively legalize expropriations that were undertaken after the 1948 war, and prepare further expropriations (Amara, Abu-Saad, & Yiftachel, 2012: 76)<sup>34</sup>. Subsequently, several other laws consolidated the Israeli and Jewish control over land issues. 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.

In 1969, a procedure was launched to examine the Bedouins’ property claims. Three thousand and two hundred claims were made. As early as 1975, the Albeck Committee advised for a return to the original doctrine, still in vigour today: all of the Siyag area constituted mawat land, and thus the Bedouins have no right over it; the land thus was understood as State land (Amara et al., 2012: 78; Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2012: 8; Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2012: 7; Swirski & Hasson, 2006: 20). The Committee nevertheless called upon the State to give compensation for the expropriation; the examination of the submitted files was halted and replaced with negotiations. Those negotiations were supposed to allow the Bedouins to obtain a

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<sup>33</sup> For the text of the law, see <http://www.israelawresourcecenter.org/israelaws/fulltext/landacquisitionlaw.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> 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](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 & Hasson, 2006; International Fact-finding Mission, 2010; Amara et al., 2012.

(small) compensation for their land, on the condition that they would renounce any claim over it and move to the State-sponsored townships.

The acquisition and ownership of land was complemented by other measures for the control of the territory thus created, but also by measures aimed to control the population living there. This policy of "Judaization" (Rabinowitz, 1997; Yiftachel, 1999, 2006), parallel to a process of "de-Arabization" (Kimmerling, 1983: 124) of the territory, consisted of the expulsion of the Arab population, or its concentration in specific areas while encouraging the establishment of new areas of Jewish population at the same time and in the same areas (Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006; Newman, 2005; Swirski & Hasson, 2006; Chiodelli, 2012).

One of the initiatives of the government was, indeed, to concentrate the Bedouin population in some urban and semi-urban areas (Falah, 1989; Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006: 142). Seven towns destined to the Bedouins (Tel Sheva – Tel As-Saba in Arabic, Rahat, Ksaife, Arara, Hura, Segev Shalom -Sgib as-Salam in Arabic, and Laqiyya) were built in the region of Beer-Sheva. Since then, some one hundred and four areas of Jewish settlement (moshavim or kibbutzim) have been created in the region (International Fact-Finding Mission, 2010: 9). Unlike the latter, the townships lack infrastructure and urban services, and are among the poorest places in Israel. They record the lowest standard of living and are regularly compared to the "Third World" (International Fact-finding Mission, 2010: 31) or designated as "underdeveloped areas" (Swirski & Hasson, 2006: 56). The inhabitants of al-Araqib, the Bedouin village studied here, are for example expected to move to the neighbouring township of Rahat.

## **1.2. Solving the “problem”: making the Bedouins sedentary, urban and invisible**

In the modern states, nomadism is often considered as a deviance and a sign of backwardness, while nomads are conceived as a nuisance. In his brilliant analysis of the role of Israeli law concerning the Bedouins, Shamir points out that *“nomadism, associated with chaos and rootlessness, is the perfect mirror image of modern law, which assumes and demands the ordering of population within definite spatial and temporal boundaries”* (1996: 236). Bedouins are thus considered as living on the side of nature, and thus necessarily excluded from the sphere of culture;

they consequently become invisible to the law as well as movable objects (ibid: 237; see also Goering 1979).

When it comes to the Israeli position towards its Bedouin population, the declaration made by Moshe Dayan in 1963, when he was Minister of Agriculture, is very revealing of the official dogma:

*“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).

The position expressed in this interview continues to correspond to the politics implemented now. That is to say, legal means, repression and “governmental direction” – coercion – aim at making the Bedouins a sedentary, and especially an urban population, by concentrating them in the State’s townships. The various laws passed after the creation of the State turned the land into State property, and thus made the existing Bedouin villages illegal. When the martial law was lifted and people went back to their lands and villages, they were thus considered – and treated – as “invaders”, “squatters”, or “trespassers” on State land; all of these are elements of language often used in the Israeli public, and even in official discourse to qualify the Bedouins<sup>35</sup>. The situation of al-Araqib is often presented by the authorities as the epitome of this “trespassing” on State land.

The unrecognized villages were retroactively produced by these political choices. “Illegal” for the State, they are the core topic of the Bedouin claims in the Negev. In 2000, nine villages were recognized and thirty-six remained "off the map" (see Human Rights Watch, 2008). The recognition of the villages is tightly linked with the issue of land property, but these considerations are not necessarily always overlapping. The number of unrecognized villages involves a wide variety of situations.

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<sup>35</sup> 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](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](http://www.land.gov.il/Envelope/indexeng.asp?page=/static/eng/f_project.html).

"In general, the Bedouins want to be recognized in their village and that the State provide them with basic services" explained Abu Labad Afesh, Sheikh of the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na'am<sup>36</sup> [A4]. However, in Wadi al-Na'am, south of Beer-Sheva, the situation is slightly different. Evacuated from their village in 1951, the members of the al-Azazme tribe were displaced to the Siyaj, where the village still stands. In 1997 a court decided that the inhabitants had to be moved again. Suffering from a very harsh life, especially because of the Ramat Hovav toxic waste treatment centre, located nearby, the inhabitants accepted this displacement but refused the only option considered by the government, namely their transfer to the township of Segev Shalom. Other unrecognized villages, such as Umm al-Hiran, are the results of multiple transfers of the Bedouin population (in the case of Umm al-Hiran, in 1952 and 1956); in these cases, the claims to land property apply to the land where the original village was situated, not the land where the village stands today. The inhabitants of Umm al-Hiran are to be moved a third time to make way for a new Jewish settlement, Hiran, where the village stands now; the population is expected to be transferred to the township of Hura (Human Rights Watch, 2008: 60; see also Adalah, 2011).

The village of al-Sira is testimony of another scenario; neither was al-Sira moved, nor were its inhabitants expelled; they are located within the area that became the Siyaj. In this case, it was the creation of the Nevatim military airport nearby that has triggered the demolition orders that have been handed over to the inhabitants since 2006; the land of the village had been expropriated in the 1980s<sup>37</sup>.

Being considered "off the map", the unrecognized villages are not taken into account in the local and regional development plans, like the Regional Master Plan for Be'er Sheva Metropolitan Area (see chapter 4). Thus, not only are the existing structures declared illegal retroactively 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 illegal if realized. The penalty for violators is the outright destruction of the building.

These villages are not entitled to public and social services provided by the State. Some have access to water but only because the installation and connection works were conducted at their expense.

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<sup>36</sup> The number of inhabitants is difficult to estimate, the numbers evoked varying between 5 000 to 10 000 persons.

<sup>37</sup> After a long legal battle between the inhabitants of al-Sira and the State, the district court cancelled the demolition order on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

Electricity is generally obtained through solar panels. An appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court may be a solution for the establishment of schools and clinics, which correspond to basic rights, namely, education and health; the implementation of the judgments is much more random however. In Wadi al-Na'am, despite the decision of the Supreme Court of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999, which required that the Ministry of Health approve the construction of a clinic in the village, the realization of this project depended entirely on the involvement of several NGOs and the work of volunteers. The building is therefore still considered to be illegal. The State usually appeals to the Public Land Law of 1981 ("Removal of squatters")<sup>38</sup> to evict the Bedouins; the law was amended in 2005 in order to expand to the ILA and the municipalities the powers to expel the "invaders" and demolish their houses "without having to go through a judicial review"<sup>39</sup>.

### 1.3. Resisting the State coercion: al-Araqib and the fight for a place

The site of contention that will be considered in this case is that of al-Araqib. Situated a few kilometres north of Beer-Sheva (see Annex III), next to the Bedouin town of Rahat, it is probably the most famous of the unrecognized villages. A long battle opposes the villagers to the Israeli government, with each party claiming ownership of the land. The Sheikh of al-Araqib, 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 payed for the agricultural use of the land, the crops and all the products that the land was producing" [A2]<sup>40</sup>.

Nuri al-Okbi, a famous figure of the Bedouin struggle, who was born in al-Araqib in 1942<sup>41</sup>, explained:

*"Al-Araqib is the land belonging to the al-Okbi tribe, historically. You can see that on first map from the Turkish times, on the second map the al-Okbi is also present, so it is on the third map... and in 1949 an aerial photograph was taken and al-Araqib is marked*

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<sup>38</sup> See Laws of the State of Israel, Vol 35, 1980/81, pp. 108-110 and [http://faolex.fao.org/cgi-bin/faolex.exe?database=faolex&search\\_type=query&table=result&query=ID:LEX-FAOC026320&format\\_name=ERALL&lang=eng](http://faolex.fao.org/cgi-bin/faolex.exe?database=faolex&search_type=query&table=result&query=ID:LEX-FAOC026320&format_name=ERALL&lang=eng).

<sup>39</sup> See on the NCF website: <http://www.dukium.org/land-invaders-and-the-bedouins-in-the-negev/>.

<sup>40</sup> The code indicated between square brackets refers to the interviews; [A] refers to the al-Araqib case, [S] to Silwan and [H] to Hebron, while the number following refers to the person interviewed. For the complete list of interviewees, see Annex VI.

<sup>41</sup> It must be noted that if we employ the name of al-Araqib to designate the village and the area of the cemetery here for practical reasons, "al-Araqib" in reality designates a very large area.

*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.” [A6].*

The fact-finding mission that inquired as to 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). For its part, the State appeals to the laws on land acquisition to assert that the area, evacuated in 1951 and which remained vacant for some time, had become State property. The inhabitants were indeed told that the area was needed for military training but that they could come back after six months [A14]. Ismail Abu-Madighem recollected<sup>42</sup>:

*“We used to write papers with them [the authorities] signed by our representatives, they also 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 they started to farm it (...) 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” [A14].*

In 1953, the land was declared State property. When a law was introduced allowing Israeli citizens to submit their property titles for registration, the inhabitants of Al-Araqib presented their applications, which to this day have still not been processed, as is the case with all the applications made thus far. Most of the families then dispersed, some to live in Rahat, others moving to find work towards the coast [A1]. Around fifty families decided to return and settle near the cemetery in 1998, when it seemed likely that the land was under threat from the plantations of the Jewish National Fund (The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 9; Adalah, 2013: 2). In al-Araqib, and in the Negev in general, the long arm of the State – or rather its subcontractor – in the battle for land is the Jewish National Fund, responsible for “planting trees” in Israel<sup>43</sup>; it started planting trees on the land of al-Araqib.

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<sup>42</sup> Ismail Abu-Madighem died in January 2014. His wife, Subhiyye went to live with her family in Rahat.

<sup>43</sup> See the description of the JNF website: “plant trees in Israel”, <http://www.jnf.org/>.

The people of al-Araqib emphasize again and again one of the major contradictions of this policy; that is, all of the trees they had in the area were uprooted and taken away while the JNF plant four or five trees in a row, mostly eucalyptus, but also some rose-bays and two or three other species. The trees do not withstand well to the elements, and the water necessary to nourish them represents another major contradiction. The people of al-Araqib bring water with the help of two large trucks from a nearby city. This task takes one and a half hours for each round trip, and must be undertaken every two weeks.

Between 2002 and 2004, crops – as well as, in the process, inhabitants and cattle – were regularly sprayed with herbicides [A2]<sup>44</sup>. On April 15th 2007, in response to a petition filed in 2004 by inhabitants of some unrecognized villages and NGOs, the Supreme Court ordered the Israel Land Administration to cease aerial spraying, as it “*endangered the health of the Bedouin citizens but also harmed their dignity*”<sup>45</sup>. As an alternative, the ILA (Israel Land Authority) started ploughing the cultivated fields.

The village and its crops were razed on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The debris was taken away six months later in January 2011, making the previous existing village invisible and the Bedouins’ claims apparently without basis. In the first months, people regularly rebuilt their houses on the land where the village was standing. However, little by little, most of the population went to live in Rahat; the regular demolitions made life too harsh, and too violent for the children, while the logistics of everyday life, especially for those in need of medical attention, became too complicated.

Notwithstanding that the original village amounted to a population of around 300 persons (46 structures in total, and around 30 houses according to the NCF, see The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 1), only some twenty people were living in the enclosure of the cemetery at the time of the fieldwork, settled in four different places of dwelling (NCF, 2011). All residents are closely related to each other, and are part of the Abu Madighem family and al-Turi clan: the sheikh, Sayyah al-Turi and his wife ‘Aliye lived in a caravan. Ismain and Subhiyye, parents of ‘Aliye (see note 42 above) were living next to the entrance of the cemetery with their cattle; the Sheikh’s

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<sup>44</sup> See the decision on [http://www.shali-law.co.il/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=37](http://www.shali-law.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=37), and for example Swirski & Hasson, 2006: 90.

<sup>45</sup> 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, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004, <http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/6807>.

oldest son, Aziz, his wife Aliye and their children lived in the old mosque, with Myriam, 'mother of Subhiyye and grandmother of Aliye, who, at 95 years-old, is the oldest resident of the village. Salim and Haqma, cousins of Aziz, and their children, were living on the southern slope of the hill. Close parents of these families, grown-up children, sisters and brothers who used to live in al-Araqib, are a constant presence in the village. Most of them now live in Rahat, twenty minutes away. With a population of 58 700<sup>46</sup>, Rahat is the biggest Bedouin town in Israel, and one of the towns with the lowest quality of life.

The precise moment and reasons underpinning the move of the inhabitants to the cemetery are not entirely clear. In August 2010, after the village was destroyed twice more, the Sheikh was arrested and released under conditions that forbid him from returning to the village within 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. According to the testimonies and interviews gathered, it is not clear whether the move was made on the basis of a legal order or whether it was a choice, even if a constrained one. According to Haia Noach, the families still living in the village moved inside the cemetery after the court ordered three men of the village to be restricted to the cemetery [A5] but it also seems that they moved there because it was perceived as a more "sheltered place" as the police did not enter it and the demolition orders did not extend to the structures located within the enclosure. Sheikh Sayyah affirms that there was a direct order from the court to move inside the cemetery [S2], a fact also hinted at by his son [A8]. This indicates the central importance attributed to the presence and permanence of the inhabitants, an aspect of the resistance that will be developed in chapter 5, and points out as well to the symbolic meaning attributed to the land (see chapter 6).

Another step in the destruction of al-Araqib was taken on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2014, on what was the 70<sup>th</sup> destruction on the village grounds. The ILA'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<sup>47</sup>. The fence marking the limits of the cemetery was

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<sup>46</sup> Source: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel 2014:  
[http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html?num\\_tab=st02\\_24&CYear=2014](http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_24&CYear=2014).

<sup>47</sup> Video made by Silvia Boarini [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rNv\\_zBixJ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rNv_zBixJ0).

removed and the ground was ploughed to prevent any further rebuilding (see figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) inside the cemetery, but also outside, on the ground where the village once stood. These measures are directly concerned with the resistance practices of the residents and their relation to space, which will be tackled in the empirical chapters (see more specifically, chapters 2 and 3).

Following this demolition, the situation and the living conditions seriously deteriorated; the Sheikh and his wife were sleeping in a small tent, while Subhiyye moved back to Rahat after Ismail's death. Salim and Haqma settled near the entrance of the cemetery with tents and an old van in which the smaller children sleep. Aziz and his family moved to the only structure not destroyed, which was used for the Friday prayer. On July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 two cars, from ILA and the "Green Patrol"<sup>48</sup> 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<sup>st</sup>, 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.

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<sup>48</sup> 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 organisations such as the ILA or the JNF, but also the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Defence.



*Figure 1: Inside the house of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem. Picture taken by Haia Noach, on March, 2nd, 2010.*



*Figure 2: Haqma and Salim Abu Madighem's installation after the demolition of 2010. Picture taken on October 28, 2013.*



*Figure 3: Haqma and Salim Abu Madighem's installation after the demolition of June 2014. Picture taken on July 15, 2014.*



*Figure 4: 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.*



*Figure 5: The land around the cemetery was ploughed in July 2014. Pictures taken on July 18, 2014.*

From this overview of the situation in the Negev in general and al-Araqib in particular, we can refer to the separation of the Bedouin population and the Jewish population of Israel. The laws of the State indeed distinguish clearly its Jewish and non-Jewish citizens, ensuring a difference in their treatment, even if their rights are similar in theory. As we will see this has an enormous impact on the way space can be used and produced, on the practices of resistance but also more generally on the conditions of the daily life. The Bedouins, from the unrecognized villages but also from the townships, are clearly discriminated against; moreover, activists and inhabitants insist on the fragmentation inside the Bedouin society, because of internal suspicion and disagreements and fear of reprisal (for example, losing their jobs if they are civil servants) but also because of the

variety of issues and problems encountered at each site. Aziz Abu-Madighem insisted: *“there are demolitions in every village, almost daily, and they attack the areas individually, village by village, tribe by tribe”* [A8].

Haia Noach, underlining the difficulty of mobilizing the civil society, has also highlighted the strategy which aims at separating the various sites in order to prevent coordination. This strategy is, according to her, what would make the Praver Plan, advanced by the government to evict the Bedouins from the Negev “State land” (see chapter 4, point 1.2.), applicable:

*“This is the way they are going to deal with people: very small encampments, with many policemen, no resistance... They won’t be removing all Wadi al-Na’am at once, they will come to this family, then next day, another family, next day, another family... This is the way they are going to work! In small pieces, small neighborhoods, small families, and you know they have the time and they have the money, they have the forces, they are going to do it!”*[A5].

## **2. Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan: Silwan under attack**

Silwan is one of the neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem; it is situated to the south-east of the Old City, under the “Dung Gate”, one of the Old City’s old gates, and the main access point to the Western Wall (see Annex III, figure 6). Silwan counts its population at about 50,000 Palestinian inhabitants, and 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).

Jerusalem is a central stake in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both for strategic and symbolical reasons. It is indeed the Holy City for the three monotheistic religions; it is holy for the Christians as it is believed to be the site of the passion of Jesus Christ; the Temple Mount is central for the Jews as the ancient location of the two temples<sup>49</sup>, at which God chose to manifest his presence. On the same site, stand both the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, which together constitute the third holiest site in Islam. Numerous religious sites of the three religions mark the geography of

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<sup>49</sup> The First Temple was the Temple of Solomon, 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. See for example, Encyclopaedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Temple-of-Jerusalem>.

Jerusalem; this esplanade represents not only the religious centre of the city but also the main symbol of the conflict opposing Israelis and Palestinians, rendering it its most sensitive area.

Jerusalem is also important because it occupies a central place in the negotiations that have been going on for years between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Indeed, two of the three most significant points of disagreement opposing the two parties directly implicate the city. Firstly, the status of the city itself is a central stake, as it is claimed as a capital by both sides; in practice, the city passed entirely under Israeli control in 1967. Israel has officially adopted it as its capital, a decision which has not been recognized by the international community which still considers it to be under occupation.

The second major point of disagreement concerns the way in which the presence of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, which includes East Jerusalem<sup>50</sup>, should be handled<sup>51</sup>; the enlargement of the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and the increasing number of Jewish inhabitants in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, such as Sheikh Jarrah or Silwan, are issues of crucial concern.

The situation in Silwan is directly linked to the general situation of Jerusalem. As such, the evolution of the situation and its consequences on Silwan will firstly be explained; thereafter, the situation in the neighbourhoods examined as a case study will be described in more detail along with the stakes of the struggle and the conditions of the Israeli control.

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<sup>50</sup> The Mount Scopus area represented an exception, as a demilitarized Israeli enclave under UN supervision within the Jordanian-ruled territory (see Lapidoth & Hirsch, 1994: 20; see also Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Agreement on the demilitarisation of Mount Scopus area", <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook1/pages/14%20agreement%20for%20the%20demilitarisation%20of%20mount%20sco.aspx>).

<sup>51</sup> The third claim concerns the right of return for the Palestinian refugees.



Figure 6: Silwan seen from the South. Picture taken on October 5, 2012.

## 2.1. Jerusalem, divided and disputed

With its Old City historically divided into religious quarters, and the whole city divided between West and East, meaning between the Jewish and Arabs neighbourhoods, Jerusalem is often presented and studied as the epitome of the “divided city” (see among others, Pullan 2009; Sorkin 2002). It is however considered as “united” by the Israeli Government.

After the 1948 war, Jerusalem passed under the authority of Jordan. It was then conquered by Israel in 1967 during the Six-Day war, which went beyond the municipal borders of the city, and added some 64 km<sup>2</sup> to the 6 km<sup>2</sup> originally ruled by Jordan. Israel therefore included in the Jerusalem municipality some Palestinian villages and land belonging to Bethlehem and Beit Jalla. The whole area came to constitute what Israel called the “unified Jerusalem” (B’Tselem, 1995: 10).

In June 1967, the Israeli Parliament adopted a law stating that *“the law, jurisdiction and administration of the State shall extend to any area of Eretz Israel designated by the Government by order”* (Lapidoth & Hirsch, 1994). In 1980, the Knesset voted in favour of a “Basic Law” which declared that *“Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel”*<sup>52</sup>. These measures of

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<sup>52</sup> Adopted on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1980. See

[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/1980\\_1989/Basic%20Law-%20Jerusalem-%20Capital%20of%20Israel](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/1980_1989/Basic%20Law-%20Jerusalem-%20Capital%20of%20Israel).

“unification” were strongly condemned by the United Nations. The Security Council declared, in Resolution 478:

*“All legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent “basic law” on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith” (1980)<sup>53</sup>.*

East Jerusalem is now considered as being *de facto* annexed to Israel, notwithstanding that from a legal point of view, this definition is contested, as annexation should mean that Israeli citizenship is automatically granted to Palestinians (see for example, Lustick, 1997; Yiftachel, 2006).

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. Jerusalem residents can apply for Israeli citizenship, the conditions for which are “*swearing allegiance to the State, proving that they are not citizens of any other country, and showing some knowledge of Hebrew*”<sup>54</sup>, in addition to undergoing several interviews and security checks. While a large number of Palestinians from Jerusalem still reject the mere possibility of having the Israeli citizenship for political reasons, it must be noted that the number of applicants has been increasing in recent years<sup>55</sup>.

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); indeed, the city of Jerusalem has had “demographic objectives” fixed for years, in order to ensure a ratio of 70% Jews to 30% Palestinians in the city. The Jerusalem Master Plan, presented in 2004, however

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<sup>53</sup> See also UN Security Council Resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 471 (1980a), 477 (1980b).

<sup>54</sup> “Legal status of East Jerusalem and its residents”, B’tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/legal\\_status](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/legal_status).

<sup>55</sup> 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>.

stated this balance was no longer realistic, and adopts a 60% Jews and 40% Palestinians plan (Chiodelli, 2012; Irène Salenson, 2005; Shragai, 2010).

Various means are used to try and ensure demographic and urban control in the city, in line with the policies of “Judaization” (encouraging Jewish settlements, in particular in East Jerusalem), and “de-Arabization”, aiming at the containment of Arab urban expansion (Chiodelli, 2012: 6); planning and zoning (defining areas as “open areas” or “national parks”), the redefinition of the municipality boundaries, the revocation of residency and the creation of new settlements or housing units within Palestinian neighbourhoods are some of the strategies implemented by both bodies (see chapter 4).

The revocation of the “Jerusalem ID” is one of the means used to control the number of Palestinian residents in the city. A very strict policy is implemented by Israel: according to the human rights’ NGO B’tselem, 14,000 Palestinians have lost their residency rights since 1967<sup>56</sup>. The requirements and restrictions were reinforced in 1995: absence for more than seven consecutive years or the acquisition of another nationality (for example, by students who have studied abroad for a long period of time) will give rise to a loss of residency in Jerusalem. Jerusalem must be proven to be a “center of life”, illustrated via *“home ownership papers or a rent contract, various bills (water, electricity, municipal taxes), salary slips, proof of receiving medical care in the city, certification of children’s school registration”* (B’tselem, *ibid.*). A petition presented by several human rights’ NGOs to the High Court of Justice aimed to challenge this policy, and led to another change in 2000. The number of revocations has varied over the years, with a peak in 2008 of 4,577 revocations of residency status.

The extension and intensification of Jewish settlements at the very core of the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem and also around the city, forming a ring of satellite neighbourhoods which are perceived to be suburbs in the continuation of the city, complements this official agenda of “unification” leading to a “complete Jerusalem” under Israeli authority. However, in East Jerusalem, which remains an occupied territory under International law, all transfers of population are considered to be illegal. Indeed, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, *“The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population*

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<sup>56</sup> “Revocation of residency”, B’tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation\\_of\\_residency](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_of_residency); Revocation statistics, B’tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation\\_statistics](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_statistics).

*into the territory it occupies*” (Art. 49): occupation is intended to be a temporary, not a permanent, situation. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA-oPt) underlined in a recent report:

*“The present pattern of forced evictions and demolitions, accompanied by plans to build residential structures for settlers in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods, is indicative of efforts to create 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).

The “judaization”/ “de-arabization” process in Jerusalem also relies on a policy of containment of the Palestinian population and restriction of its development through demolition, refusal of building permission and harsh limitations on the holding of residency (Yiftachel, 2006: 262). The Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem suffer from severe discrimination on the part of the Israeli authorities, with Silwan being particularly harshly affected as we will see in the next section and chapter 4. The investment and development projects are very limited, without possible comparison with the Jewish areas of the city (B’Tselem, 1995a; OCHA-oPt, 2011). Numerous areas in East Jerusalem are threatened by Israeli planning projects, including the development of ultra-orthodox settlements and new parks; many of these developments necessitate evictions and the destruction of houses and depend on pending court orders or administrative decisions (see chapter 1). 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<sup>57</sup>.

Even as it is deemed to be “unified”, Jerusalem still retains the characteristic of a city that is clearly divided: the western and eastern parts of the city, respectively Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian, work in a very autonomous ways, with different bus systems for each, for example, and with social life being turned towards the rest of Israel for the West, and tied to the West Bank, despite the problems represented by the separation barrier, for East Jerusalem’s inhabitants.

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<sup>57</sup> On the project to build in E1, 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](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).

Silwan is considered to be one of the most threatened Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem: it is affected by all the processes described above including the demographic pressure, the Jewish settlements, and the difficult conditions surrounding residency, etc. While the Jewish population inside Silwan has constantly increased over the years, the neighbourhood has also become more isolated, having lost its Palestinian hinterland; 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, are now about a distance of one hour by car due to the presence of the separation wall. We will consider the two cases of Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan, which have very similar and related problematics, and will be considered as one site of contention. Silwan, and more specifically Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan, are located on the site where Jerusalem was originally created, which are also sites that are cited in the Bible; as such, the whole area is particularly coveted both by the Israeli authorities and the Jewish settlers.

## **2.2. Wadi-Hilwe: the ghost of King David**

Notwithstanding that Wadi-Hilwe suffers from the same issues developed above and which are common to all Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, it also has a slightly different pattern of occupation. Since 1974, the area has been part of the "Walls of the Old City" Natural Park, and a large part of the area is designated as a "green zone" on the urban plans, with the result that new constructions there are theoretically forbidden (see Bimkom, 2012). This zoning does not, however, take into account already existing buildings and the needs of the population to develop and expand.

Wadi-Hilwe is now largely occupied by the "City of David", an archaeological park that attracts some 400,000 visitors annually, making it one of the most important archaeological sites in Israel (see figure 7 and 8). The site was excavated in the late nineteenth century and many 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 the periods after the Jebusite fortress, built on the same site, was conquered by King David, who made Jerusalem his capital. In Silwan, the excavations, initiated 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), creating a heated debate on the dating and identification of the ruins (see for example, Finkelstein, Singer-Avitz, Herzog, & Ussishkin, 2007). As underlined by theologian Thomas L. Thompson, the archaeological research in the area has too often been inspired by the Bible and driven by a “*theological task of identity creation*”, with questions of religious continuity and ethnicity becoming stakes in the political discourse (2004: 1-2). The old texts of the Bible are indeed often used as a guideline for the archaeological research and findings, as the indications given to the tourists visiting the “City of David” tend to show.



Figure 7: the signs indicating the two names used for the neighbourhood, near the entrance of the City of David. Picture taken on September 30, 2012.



Figure 8: the site of the Givati parking lot, now excavated, with the entrance of the City of David in the background. Picture taken on September 4, 2012.

The organisation and running of the “City of David”, which should, on the basis of an agreement with the Antiquities Authority, be undertaken by the municipality, has been delegated to a private

organization, El-Ad, which also manages the colonization of the area. El-Ad has adopted to a greater extent, a Biblical-orientated approach, as opposed to a scientific one, in terms of the management of the park. In fact, the park's website asserts that *"the visit of the City of David allows the visitors to see with their own eyes the characters and places of the Bible. Indeed, this is the only place on earth where the only touristic guidebook needed is the Bible itself"*<sup>58</sup>. 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"*<sup>59</sup>.

El-Ad promotes *"archaeological excavation, tourism development, educational programming and residential revitalization"*<sup>60</sup> of the area. The "residential revitalization" is particularly interesting: concretely, it means inserting some real settler houses into the carefully designed "biblical landscape" of the park, and in doing so affirming the immemorial relationship existing between the Jewish people and this land. On their study of this process, W. Pullan and M. Gwiarda underline that *"In the space of a few years an entire neighbourhood of Jerusalem has been reconfigured to conform to a very particular hegemonic ideological and territorial project"* (2009: 36).

The staging of the Jewish settlements inside and around the park is indeed very strategic and reminds one clearly of the strategy implemented during the restoration of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City after 1967: this includes the use of Jerusalem limestone and the reinterpretation of the traditional Palestinian architecture (with enlarged stone houses for example), the close coexistence of the habitation and archaeological sites, as well as new paving and clean streets (Ricca, 2007, see chapter 4). Details, such as the names given to the houses – typical names, names of the region – the use of the symbol of the City of David, the lyre, itself symbolizing King David, who is often depicted as an artist, and the reference to the pomegranate, all point at the *"original and immutable meaning of a primordial relationship to the land established in the biblical era"* (ibid.: 33). In particular, the street that leads from the City of David to the Silwan pool had been totally renovated in a "neo-biblical" style (Pullan & Gwiazda, 2009: 33) (see figure 9).

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<sup>58</sup> City of David website, section "About us: Rediscover Biblical Jerusalem", <http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/fr/node/1431> (accessed August 2013).

<sup>59</sup> "The City of David", Ministry of Tourism, [http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/Articles/Attractions/Pages/CityOfDavid.aspx](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Articles/Attractions/Pages/CityOfDavid.aspx).

<sup>60</sup> City of David website, accessed 20/ 02/ 11, [http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/IrDavidFoundation\\_Eng.asp](http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/IrDavidFoundation_Eng.asp).



*Figure 9: An example of the “landscaping” of the area neighbouring the City of David. Pictures taken on September 30, 2012.*

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, who live with armed guards (private security guards, funded by the Housing and Construction Ministry) and CCTV cameras monitoring the houses.

### **2.3. Al-Bustan: a park for King Solomon**

The presence of Jewish settlers in the City of David and the adjacent streets, the extension of the park, which is still being expanded, the undertaking of new excavations (in the Givati parking lot, in front of the City of David, undertaken from 2007 to this day for example, or along the main road connecting Wadi-Hilwe to al-Bustan, undertaken after March 2012), and the consequent police omnipresence, are all elements which allow for the tension to be kept at a high level and 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).

The al-Bustan (meaning “the Garden”) neighbourhood extends from the bottom of the Kidron valley (see figure 10); the entire area has been threatened with destruction for many years, due to a

project defended by the municipality, one that intends to expand further the archaeological park, and add a garden. The neighbourhood is indeed believed to be situated on the location of the garden of King Solomon, set out 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)<sup>61</sup>. This makes al-Bustan a continuation of the biblical park established in Wadi-Hilwe, and the outcome of the same kind of logic, whereby history provides a “*way of asserting control over territory*” and whereby archaeology is thus used as very powerful political resource<sup>62</sup>.



Figure 10: A part of al-Bustan. Picture taken on September 4, 2012.

In 2005, after demolition orders were handed over to the inhabitants, people discovered the plan to transform the area into a park named the "King's Garden" (Gan HaMelech) and to “*restore the area of the King’s Garden to its ancient glory*”<sup>40</sup> (see chapter 4, section 1.1.). Uri Lupolianski, the mayor of Jerusalem between 2003 and 2008, offered the residents the possibility to try and regularize the status of their homes. Until now, none of their plans or requests have been granted. In 2010, a new plan was presented, with the support of the new mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, who justified the project by emphasizing the “*responsibility to protect and safeguard Jerusalem, its*

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<sup>61</sup> Holy Bible, New International Version, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah%203:15>.

<sup>62</sup> 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/](http://alt-arch.org/en/booklet_online/).

*landscapes and vistas (...) for the sake of future generations*"<sup>63</sup>. This plan provides that the eastern part of the neighbourhood would be dedicated to housing and stores, while the west 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 as those that should 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 fifty-six houses were slated for demolition (ibid.: 5). The residents and other NGOs usually mention that eighty-eight houses have been threatened by the demolition orders. In 2005, two houses were demolished, and another was destroyed in 2008 (see chapter 4).

The case of al-Bustan is tightly linked to the problem of Palestinian land ownership and brings to mind in some ways the case of the Bedouins developed above. The Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem are often unregistered; the process to regularize the land ownership launched by the British Mandate and Jordan had 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 law and officially seize the plot.

Most of the houses of al-Bustan are considered to be illegal as they were built without permits. This issue points to a particularity of East Jerusalem, namely, the discriminatory planning policy implemented by Israel in respect of East Jerusalem residents. The United Nations OCHA-oPt underlines the *"failure of the Israeli authorities to provide adequate planning for Palestinian neighbourhoods"* (United Nations OCHA-oPt, 2009: 2): 32% of East Jerusalem homes have been built without the required permits, located on zones officially not fit for building and thus at least 86,500 Palestinians run the risk of having their houses demolished (OCHA-oPt, 2011: 36).

These two neighbourhoods, Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan, while constituting slightly different situations, are tightly linked, both geographically and in terms of their struggle. The inhabitants of those areas are in the first line, in respect of threatening planning projects, and also because of the

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<sup>63</sup> The Israel Project, <http://www.theisraelproject.org/atf/cf/%7B84dc5887-741e-4056-8d91-a389164bc94e%7D/20100302LAUNCH%20OF%20DEVELOPMENT%20OF%20GAN%20HAMELECH.PDF> (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-ijf-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>.

presence of a hostile population of religious settlers. On two occasions in October 2014, Jewish families moved into flats both in Wadi-Hilwe and in the centre of Silwan. According to Haaretz, the number of Jewish settlers living in the neighbourhood doubled with these moves<sup>64</sup> further increasing the tension in the area.

### 3. Hebron

Hebron (*al-Khalil* in Arabic, *Chevron* in Hebrew) is the biggest city of the West Bank, with some 165,000 inhabitants<sup>65</sup>; it is also one of its main economic centres. Its history is a source of unending controversy. The area was a zone of dwelling for some 5000 years; it was successively inhabited by Canaanites, Israelites and Arabs, but also conquered by the Crusaders. Above anything else however, Hebron is sacred for the three monotheist religions as the burial place of Abraham, which makes, in the context of the conflict, the presence of both Muslim and Jewish believers an essential concern.

It is as a consequence one of the most contested places in the West Bank, and represents one of the main points of clashes between the Palestinian population and the Israeli army. Hebron has been particularly marked by two crucial events; the massacre of the Jewish inhabitants of the city by Palestinians, which occurred in 1929, and the massacre of Palestinians praying in the mosque by Baruch Goldstein in 1994 (see Dumper & Stanley, 2007); both marked the collective imagination and became a founding aspect in the identities of both Hebronites communities, while also playing a major role at the national level.

I will firstly develop the process that led to the actual pattern of governance in the city, strictly separated into two areas - H1 and H2 - a process that pertains to the implantation of Jewish settlements in the old city, but also to the numerous confrontations that marked the history of the

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<sup>64</sup> "9 Jewish families move into Jerusalem's Arab Silwan neighbourhood", Daniel K. Eisenbud, JPost, 10/20/2014 <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/9-Jewish-families-move-into-Jeruselems-Arab-Silwan-neighborhood-379275>, "Number of Jewish Silwan residents doubles in overnight mission", Nir Hasson, Haaretz, 20/10/ 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.621688>, "More Jewish Settlers Move into East Jerusalem Neighbourhood", Isabel Kershner, the New York Times, 20/ 10/ 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/21/world/middleeast/jewish-settlers-move-into-palestinian-area-of-jerusalem.html>.

<sup>65</sup> [2007 Locality Population Statistics Hebron Governorate Population, Housing and Establishment Census 2007. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics \(PCBS\)](#).

city. In the second section, I will endeavour to expose more specifically the policy of division and separation and the mechanisms of control implemented in H2.

### 3.1. Settlement in and near Hebron

The massacre that took place in Hebron on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1929, in which 67 members of the anciently established Jewish community were killed by a group of Palestinian inhabitants, has indeed come to represent an important collective trauma for the Jews then living in Palestine. The survivors of the events were then sent to Jerusalem by the British army (Newman, 1985). 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<sup>th</sup>, 1970, the decision was taken to build 250 housing units; this was approved on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1970 by the Knesset (Feige, 2009: 146; Zertal & Eldar, 2007: 18-21).

The settlement of Qiryat Arba, located north-east of the old town of Hebron was planned as an “Upper Hebron” overlooking the Arab town, on the model of “Upper Nazareth” (Natzerat Illit) built in the 1950s near the Galilean city (Rabinowitz 1997; Feige 2009: 147). This configuration then became the general model for the West Bank settlements (Segal & Weizman, 2003b). The new “town-settlement” of Qiryat Arba was ready at the end of 1971. Qiryat Arba is, according to Michael Feige, a sociological exception, in contrast with its Gush Emunim-origin:

*“In Qiryat Arba there are no restrictions on Jews wishing to join, and consequently the population is more heterogeneous. It comprises a mix of Jews of various ethnic origins and level of religious observance, including a substantial group of non-religious Jews and new immigrants”* (2009: 146).

Feige points out in fact that Qiryat Arba is a relatively “open” community in terms of the profile of the residents, unlike other settlements that usually constitute ‘communal villages’ – or what one might name a ‘gated community’, consistent with its closure, the custom of social selection of the would-be inhabitants and the significance of real-estate prices (Glasze, Webster, & Frantz, 2006; Le Goix, 2005). From an initial population of 50 families, the number of settlers living in Qiryat Arba grew to around 7,200 inhabitants in 2008 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

The population of Jewish settlers in the centre of Hebron also increased over the years to reach around 600 inhabitants<sup>66</sup>. Four points of settlement are now scattered in the old centre of Hebron along the street that leads from Qiryat Arba to the hill of Tal Rumeida, creating a clear continuum: al-Daboya/Bet Hadassa has been occupied by Jewish families since 1979 and in 1983, the central vegetable market, bus terminal and Usama Bin Munquiz were taken over, and the settlement of Avraham Avinu and Bet Romano were created. Tal Rumeida/Admot Yishai, located on the site of ancient Hebron, was occupied in 1984 (Al-Jubeh, 2009: 23) (see Annex II).

The Jewish population that has settled in the centre of Hebron is known for having ideological motivations and extremist religious positions. Its presence at the very core of a Palestinian city creates numerous problems and makes a massive military presence necessary.

This particularity of the settlers' and army presence in the heart of the city also means that Hebron is administered under a very particular regime, unique in the West Bank; this was established following the Hebron Agreements, themselves subsequent to the Oslo Agreement and the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, and also after the massacre perpetrated on February 25<sup>th</sup> 1994 by Baruch Goldstein.

In 1981, the Civil Administration was established by the State of Israel to rule the West Bank and Gaza in order to take care of the Palestinians' daily life as required by international humanitarian law. The Civil Administration is composed of both civilians and IDF soldiers and officers, and depends on the Defence Ministry. It is integrated in the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT)<sup>67</sup>, a distinct unit of the IDF which is charged among other things with the needs of the Israeli settlements of the West Bank. The Civil Administration is indeed an integral part of IDF and constitutes *"the body responsible for implementation of government policy in Judea and*

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<sup>66</sup> The numbers vary greatly, between 500 and 800 (see for instance, Katz and 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).

<sup>67</sup> The COGAT is responsible for *"implementing the government's policy in Judea and Samaria and vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip. In addition, COGAT constitutes the civilian authority for residential zoning and infrastructure and is responsible for addressing the needs of Israeli settlements in the West Bank"*, see the section "Who we are" on the website of the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories, <http://www.cogat.idf.il/894-en/Matpash.aspx>.

*Samaria and bettering these areas in civil matters in accordance with the guidelines set by the government and in coordination with ministries, the IDF and the security forces*<sup>68</sup>.

Subsequently, the Oslo Accords formalized the birth of a Palestinian National Authority (PA) distinct from the PLO, and established a five-year transitional period during which the progressive transfer of control from the IDF to the PA was planned. The joint Declaration of Principle (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 under the authority of the PA, as well as the future withdrawal of the IDF from the occupied territories<sup>69</sup>.

The Gaza-Jericho Agreements<sup>70</sup> (May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1994) aimed to lay the ground for Palestinian autonomy, initiated in the two areas cited in its very title: Jericho was the first town handed over to the PA. Thereafter, all of the main cities of the West Bank (Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus, Tulkarem, Qalqilyia) were transferred under its control, forming the “Zone A”, where the PA has (theoretical) full control over civilian and security matters. Hebron was excluded from those agreements, and only one part of the city (H1) came to fall under Palestinian authority following the 1997 agreement (Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron, signed on January 17, 1997)<sup>71</sup>. The H2 area, mainly encompassing the old town, remained under military control in order to provide protection to the community of Israeli settlers as well as authority over the Cave of Patriarchs.

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<sup>68</sup> “Civil Administration in Judea and Samaria”, COGAT website, <http://www.cogat.idf.il/1279-en/Cogat.aspx>.

<sup>69</sup> See the “reference documents” of the Peace process, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/reference%20documents/>

<sup>70</sup> See “Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area”, website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1994, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Agreement%20on%20Gaza%20Strip%20and%20Jericho%20Area> 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>.

<sup>71</sup> “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+Concerning+the+Redeploy+ment+in+Hebron.htm>.

### 3.2. H2: Division and control<sup>72</sup>

The division of the city provided for in 1997 planned for a separation of power between the PA and the Israeli State within the city itself. Hebron is indeed separated in two areas that correspond to areas A and C of the West Bank's zones. H1 covers the "modern" part of the town and corresponds to zone A, being under Palestinian authority in respect of "*municipal affairs (sanitation, health, postal delivery, education, local security, and traffic)*" (Said 1997: 32). The Palestinian police have the same powers in H1 as in the other cities in the West Bank. However Israel has maintained "*all powers and responsibilities for internal security and public order in Area H-2*"<sup>73</sup>. H2, the eastern part of the city, covers broadly the area that stretches from Bab al-Zawiye to Qiryat Arba, encompassing the old city centre, the Ibrahim's mosque and the old market.

The administration within the H2 area has evolved over time. The access to the area is tightly controlled by checkpoints at Bab al-Zawiye and the Ibrahim mosque. The main road of the area, Shuhada Street, represents a "sanctuarized" zone, where shops have been closed under military orders, and where all types of circulation of Palestinians are forbidden (see Annex II, figure 11)<sup>74</sup>. All access points to the street are controlled by the Israeli military or materially closed. The road parallel to Shuhada Street, which runs from Bab al-Zawiye to the Ibrahim mosque and goes through the old city and the area in which the market was traditionally held, is completely cut off from Shuhada Street: all transversal roads have been blocked and shut down with metal panels or concrete walls. Streets connecting to this area are blocked off to vehicles. Most of the shops are closed under military order, but many of the inhabitants have also left due to the pressure and the constraints imposed in the area<sup>75</sup>. 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<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> See also chapter 4, section 1.3.

<sup>73</sup> *Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron*:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Protocol+Concerning+the+Redeployment+in+Hebron.htm>.

<sup>74</sup> It is normally accessible to Palestinians who have Israeli citizenship.

<sup>75</sup> See annex 1, and 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](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_humanitarian_atlas_dec_2011_full_resolution.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.btselem.org/hebron>.

The Ibrahimi mosque, the religious centre of Hebron, holy both for Muslims and Jews, which represents the epicentre of the old city, is also internally divided. The 1994 massacre, committed by Baruch Goldstein, a resident of Qiryat Arba, who entered the mosque and killed 29 people (Clarke, 2000; Feige, 2009) led to this arrangement, set out in the Wye River Agreement (1996). This provides that the space has been separated into two different areas, namely a mosque and a synagogue, with access restricted respectively on each side for Jews and Muslims. The cenotaphs of the six patriarchs and matriarchs who are buried in this place are also separated: those of Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca are in the 'mosque part' and those of Jacob and Leah in the 'synagogue part'. Abraham is in the middle, visible both to Jewish and Muslim believers, separated by bulletproof glass. The whole building is open to members of each religion for around ten days per year, during the major religious holidays (Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Pesach, for the Jews, Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr for the Muslims)<sup>77</sup>.

The site of contention considered here corresponds to the core of H2, meaning the area stretching between Bab al-Zawiye to the Ibrahimi mosque, encompassing the market and the area around the mosque, Shuhada Street and Tal Rumeida. The control over the old city is where the contention, the claims and the actions of the Palestinians are concentrated. The protests and resistance practices considered here will be linked to this area and to the actors involved in contention on the topic of the constraints and control enforced there.

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<sup>77</sup> See "Welcome to Hebronland", *As long as there will be thyme and olives*, <http://thymeandolives.blogspot.com/>.



Figure 11: various means of control used in Hebron: checkpoints, walls and fences. Pictures taken on August 13 and 23, 2011.

This overview of the situation in the Negev, Hebron and Silwan, has aimed at presenting the major historical, legal and political processes at work in each cases, so that the analysis that will be developed in the four next chapters will be situated and thus more immediately understandable. Indeed, the strategies of control and resistance, even if they can be decided upon or adapted as a reaction to events or decisions of the opposing party, are nevertheless always related to a wider context, which needs to be taken into account.

This presentation has illustrated that the three case studies present numerous common points, starting with the control and coercion imposed by the Israeli State on the Palestinian populations, even if with varying intensity and modes of implementation according to the area's regime of governance. They also represent three cases of a high level of confrontation between the Palestinians and the Israeli authorities. Indeed, all three cases reflect sites where resistance is particularly fierce and lasting.

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 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 bring to the fore the contradictory position of the so-called "Israeli Arabs", the Palestinians citizens of Israel. The Bedouins represent a slightly separated case as they constitute a minority within this Palestinian minority notwithstanding that their status and position within the Israeli society is similarly linked to the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent expulsions and land appropriation.

This also shows another important point linking all three cases: they are all affected or threatened by processes of deterritorialization. The policies implemented in all three sites indeed all have a strong spatial impact. In Hebron, the control relies on a politics of separation between Palestinians and Israelis (or often even more largely, Jewish people in general). 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)<sup>78</sup>.

The inhabitants of Silwan are being slowly dispossessed of their environment; geographically

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<sup>78</sup> See "Freedom of movement" on B'tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/freedom\\_of\\_movement/splitting\\_of\\_the\\_west\\_bank](http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/splitting_of_the_west_bank)

already quite isolated with respect to the other East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, Silwan has been cut off from the West Bank by the wall, and more locally the various projects that have aimed to develop the area on the basis of the biblical past and that would transform the balance of the area, turning the Palestinian neighbourhood into enclaves and the Israeli enclaves into large places that will dominate the landscape. The Bedouins, an ethnic minority within Israel, who are already treated as second-class citizens, become, when living in unrecognized villages, invisible, as those villages are considered to be illegal and thus to be materially “off the map”. 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.

All of these common points will be developed and examined in more depth in the empirical chapters, in order to better highlight the difference between the cases. We will now turn to examine the empirical data collected during the fieldwork, analysing the spatialities of the Palestinian resistance in the three case studies.

In the first empirical chapter (chapter 4), I will tackle the connection between resistance and the “conceived space”, the space of the authorities (Lefebvre, 1974: 48). We will see how the designing of space, especially through planning 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. This has a direct impact on the material configuration of space, but also on the way space, and especially public space, can be lived by the population, 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. In al-Bustan and in the Negev for example, multiple court cases were held, and the inhabitants and NGOs proposed alternative planning projects to solve the issues at hand.

In the fifth chapter, I will concentrate on the importance of everyday practices, which make the place an essential scale of resistance. Indeed, the physical presence, the fact of inhabiting a place and staying there, are conceived by the Palestinians as a basic way to resist, which is translated

through the Arabic word of “sumud”. I contend that the concept of sumud is fundamental for this research as it brings together space and resistance. We will see what it implies in terms of practices and how it relates to the local space, from the house to the neighbourhood. Finally, I will develop the argument that sumud raises about social and spatial justice and the “right to space”.

Chapter six will scrutinize the representations and narratives linked to space that are used in the resistance in each of the three cases. We will see that in each case the symbolic dimension is primordial in order to create a sacred geography attached to the struggle, either on a cultural, religious or nationalist basis; more often than not, this is done on the basis of a mix of the three. This chapter will scrutinize the central role of the sense of place, which is often linked to a larger “sense of territory”.

Finally, in the seventh and final chapter, I will show that the importance of place and sense of place does not preclude the possibilities of other strategies. On the contrary, the centrality of place can be a basis for networking and scale shifting, illustrating even more clearly the co-implication of the various spatialities.

# CHAPTER 4

## CONCEIVING, PRODUCING AND USING THE SPACE: A POWER GAME

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In this first empirical chapter, I will scrutinize how Palestinians oppose the Israeli take on the “conception of space”. The “conceived space” is, according to Henri Lefebvre, the “*dominant space in a society*”, that of the “*scholars, planners, town-planners and technocrats*” (1974: 48). We will see that in the cases at hand, the conception of space is not only dominated by the authorities – State and State institutions – but is also used as an efficient means to advance their political agenda.

I envisage the conception of space as encompassing three main processes: the designing, the production and the administration of space. The “designing” designates the intellectual conception of an organized space, and is mainly carried out through planning and architecture; the production refers 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 ideology.

In order to study how people challenge the take of the Israeli authorities over space, it will be necessary to first lay out and develop how space is conceived and produced by the authorities in the three case studies, shedding light on the ideological motives often underpinning the process. At the same time, we will concentrate on how, despite the “conception of space” being dependant on the Israeli State and its apparatus in a seemingly hegemonic way, it is nevertheless contested through various strategies. Confronted with this overarching power from the authorities, the population tries to challenge it and thus tries to appropriate and possibly produce new forms of space. Can the inhabitants and the NGOs supporting them have an actual impact on the modelling of the urban fabric, the moulding of the landscape and their space of life?

We will firstly expose the main planning projects or schemes existing in each of the three case studies, retracing briefly the official decision-making process as well as the goals pursued, in a way that complements what has already been explained in the presentation of the cases (see chapter 3). We have seen that in Silwan, archaeology is used in Wadi-Hilwe to justify not only the development of Jewish settlements but also the appropriation of more land; here we will concentrate more specifically on the plan that the Jerusalem municipality has designed for the neighbourhood of al-Bustan, relying on similar arguments. In the Negev, the unrecognized villages are threatened by the drafting of development plans that voluntarily ignore them, such as the Master Plan for Beer-Sheva. In al-Araqib, another threat is added by the activities of the Jewish National Fund, which uses ecological and environmental arguments to legitimize its appropriation of Bedouin lands. The case of Hebron is slightly different as the transformation of space within H2 is not the outcome of a planning procedure but of military logic. The impact on space is nevertheless obvious, with the production of a real “landscape of occupation” based on separation, exclusion and control. For each case, I will expose, in parallel with these considerations on control, the strategies adopted to counter the authorities’ decisions. It will be shown that 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 entered and participated in the public debate, resorting to channels provided for by the Israeli political system. This raises the question of opportunities, but also of the functioning of democracy, as we will see that those channels are often fundamentally flawed by the biased principles underpinning them.

In the second part, I shall tackle more directly the material production of space, concentrating on the issues represented by the building and renovating of the houses. Therein, I will also devote one section to the policy of demolition that has been implemented or announced in Silwan and al-Araqib, exposing the political rationale that underlies it in both cases. Again, I will underline that the case of Hebron is slightly different as the main risk that people face in H2 is not demolition but rather the taking over of existing houses and the coercion imposed on the movement. As already hinted at in the first section, we will see that the legal system plays a fundamental role in the implementation of the planning policies and the building restrictions. The strategy adopted to counter these policies is simple: people build illegally, without the State’s permission. In this respect, we will see that notwithstanding the different types of administration in the three cases, the laws and the application of the laws are, on the contrary, very similar.

The “conceived space” *par excellence* that needs to be considered specifically is the public space. Designed, produced and controlled by the authorities, it relates to the processes evoked above and tells a lot about the functioning of a society and about who is considered to be “undesirables” (see for example, Belina, 2012; Bernd, 2003; Mitchell, 1995). The public space is indeed the arena in which public life takes place, a space that can theoretically be appropriated, among other things, for protest. However, it is also the space where public norms are expressed and imposed, its uses being strictly regulated and controlled; thus, for example, demonstrations have to be authorized. As such, the monitoring of public space is essential for the authorities, but it can also constitute a resource for the resistance, being at the core of the conflict for power. We will examine how not only demonstrations but also strategies of surveillance are used to claim or demonstrate power over public space, thus directly challenging the authority of the State and of its representatives, police and army.

In the final, conclusive part of this chapter, I will further develop the implications of this analysis. By studying the way people try and challenge the authorities’ hegemonic “conception” of space in the three case studies, I will tackle 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 of 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. Furthermore, I will examine how the legal system and the public sphere are representative of the obstacles with which the protesters are faced and have to overcome.

### **1. Politics by other means: “design and rule”**

In this first section, I will concentrate on the planning processes – from the design to the actual modification of space – at work in the three case studies as well as the strategies adopted to prevent their realization or contest their goal. In all three sites of contention planning 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 on the village's land, which has already started, as well as the regional Master Plan represent major issues. In Hebron, it is the production of a space characterized by obstacles and separation, creating a real "landscape of occupation", in which the planning of the authorities is realised and on which the criticism is concentrated.

The Israeli authorities indeed resort to the different disciplines that aim organize and regulate the human presence in space not only to "conceive" and produce space, but also to control it. As a result, *"violence is deeply inscribed in the urban fabric"* (Meade, 2011: 71). Planning and architecture, but also other disciplines such as archaeology and ecology, can be used as a way of transforming the space according to a political agenda (Segal & Weizman, 2003a; "The Next Jerusalem : Sharing the Divided City," 2002; Weizman, 2008, 2012)<sup>79</sup>. 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).

### 1.1. Al-Bustan and the "civilian occupation" of East Jerusalem

Jerusalem has been labelled a *"laboratory for the production of extreme spatial configurations"* (Misselwitz & Rieniets, 2006: 25). 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 (exposed in chapter 3, part 2). I will here concentrate on the plan of the municipality to demolish al-Bustan in order to give way to the "King's garden" (Gan HaMelech), a "biblical" park covering the bottom of the valley, designed to recall the ancient gardens of Solomon, which is thought to have been located there; this plan has been approved and has generated strong opposition in the neighbourhood.

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<sup>79</sup> 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/>, and the articles: <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/sep/01/what-can-forensic-architecture-reveal-about-the-conflict-in-gaza> and <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/rebelarchitecture/2014/06/architecture-violence-2014629113556647744.html>.

Irène Salenson, who studied the planning strategies in Jerusalem and the role of Palestinian residents in the process, underlines that *“planning issues do not seem to stir inhabitants into collective action, at least not as much as issues peripheral to planning itself, such as the demolition of houses”* (2009: 244). The case of al-Bustan seems to contradict this assessment, at least partly; indeed, the planning project (which necessitated a significant number of demolitions) is what initially fostered the mobilization in the neighbourhood.

The planning process that aims to transform al-Bustan is still ongoing, and has been marked by the participation of the residents in the procedure of deliberation. Indeed, as the plan has been drafted and approved at the institutional level, institutional channels were engaged as an initial way to try and preclude its advancement. However, the alternative plans that were proposed were never really considered or discussed, as they went against the original plan.

The destruction of al-Bustan should be examined as the whole area is deemed to have been illegally constructed. A planning strategy that is very often used in Jerusalem to prevent the expansion of the Palestinian communities has been applied to the neighbourhood: the land surrounding the Palestinian residential areas, which represent the space for their “natural” expansion, is often marked as being “green” on municipal plans (OCHA, *ibid*: 34, B5). The density of building and population are also used to limit the development of Palestinian areas (Yousef, 2009: 149) [S5]. Similarly, the first plan (AM/ 9) for East Jerusalem, adopted in 1977, indicated al-Bustan as being an open public area (or “green” area), which could thus be expropriated; it also noted that it was already partially developed (Ir Amim, 2012). Another plan, adopted in 1987, specified again that building was forbidden in the al-Bustan area (Ir Amim, 2012; OCHA-oPt, 2011). The population of the neighbourhood has multiplied by four since the late 1970s; it now has around 1000 inhabitants. Notwithstanding, in the meantime, no permits have been granted to the residents to allow them to build or extend their houses, pushing people to build illegally (Ir Amim, *ibid.*: 8; Imseis, 2000: 1055 - see point 2.1. in this chapter).

It must be noted that the first draft of the Jerusalem 2000 Master Plan, released in 2004, labelled al-Bustan as a “new residential area”; this characterisation was subsequently presented as an error and the area was re-labelled an “open landscape” (Local Outline Plan, Jerusalem 2000, blueprint 1, August 19, 2004, in Bimkom, 2012: 26; see also Chiodelli, 2012).

In November 2004, the City Engineer Uri Shitreet ordered the demolition of the houses occupying the area of al-Bustan, an order that the residents discovered slightly later in 2005, at the same time that they were made aware of the plans to use the area to build the "King's Garden".

Confronted with heavy international criticisms and opposition from the residents, Uri Lupolianski, Mayor of Jerusalem between 2003 and 2008, agreed to allow the residents of al-Bustan to present a plan scheme designed according to what they deemed to be the needs of the neighbourhood, *“while taking into consideration the preservation of important historic sites and open space in the area”* (Ir Amim, 2009a). 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 attempted to change the status of the area from “green” to “residential”. However, the municipality’s plan (TPS 11555)<sup>80</sup>, 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<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

As the voluntary relocation of al-Bustan to the neighbourhood of Bet Hanina – the original solution considered by the municipality – became ever less likely, the new Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, presented a new plan for the neighbourhood and expressed his total support for the project in the first days of March 2010<sup>81</sup>. The area was to become a mixed tourism-housing area with twenty-two houses slated for demolition (see figure 12). According to Ir Amim, *“the eastern part of the neighborhood [would] be designated for housing and storefronts, its southern part for hotels and its western part for a park. The residents who live in the western part of the neighborhood will be evicted, their homes will be demolished and they will be given permission to build in the eastern part of the neighbourhood”* (Ir Amim, 2012: 5).

The Wadi-Hilwe Information Center (WHIC) asserted that:

*“The plan is politically motivated with the goal of expanding tourism settlement in Silwan. It is noteworthy that the municipality appointed architect Arie Rahamimov to*

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<sup>80</sup> 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>.

<sup>81</sup> See the articles of the Silwan Information Centre: <http://silwanic.net/?p=3864>, <http://silwanic.net/?p=1615>, <http://silwanic.net/?p=1575>.

*draw the plan, and he is the same architect who is working on a number of plans in Silwan for the settlers of the Elad organization” (emphasis in original)<sup>82</sup>.*

Another plan was then drafted at the residents’ request (Plan n. 14017) and was prepared by architect Yousef Jabareen<sup>83</sup> (Ir Amim, 2012: 9-10). This plan suggested that most of the houses of the area should be preserved, while still making way for a renovated, greener area (see figures 13 and 14). According to Adnan Gaith, resident, secretary general of Fatah for Silwan and owner of a café located between Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan:

*“Our engineering and legal crew answered with the same plan that the municipality gave to us. But the difference between us and them was that they planned demolitions. 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 eighty eight house later” [S13].*

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” [S4].* The Jerusalem municipality rejected this plan in June 2010, claiming that the two distinct plans for the same area could not be taken into consideration at the same time [S4, 5, 11, 12, 16].

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<sup>82</sup> “Jerusalem Mayor Postpones His Municipality’s Project In Al Bustan”, WHIC website, March 3, 2010, <http://silwanic.net/?p=1575>.

<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, the many attempts of the author to access the original documents were unsuccessful.

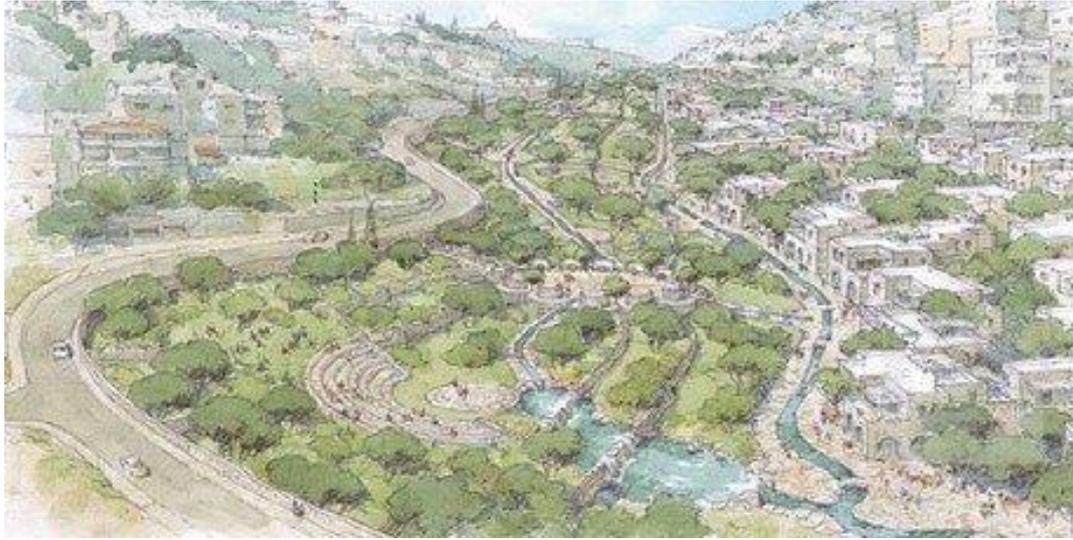


Figure 12: Illustrations from the municipality Rahamimov plan

Source: the Architect and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP) website, <http://apjp.org/maps-and-photos/community-plans-for-silwan/7936885>)



Figure 13: Illustrations from the municipality Rahamimov plan

Source: APJP website, <http://apjp.org/maps-and-photos/community-plans-for-silwan/7936885>)



Figure 14: An illustration from the al-Jabareen alternative Master Plan

(Source APJP, <http://apjp.org/maps-and-photos/community-plans-for-silwan/7936880>)

On Monday June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010 the Jerusalem Municipality Planning Committee approved the Silwan Development Plan. This plan had also been included in a larger project designed a few years before, which proposed to apply a “green” zoning to the lands around the Old City of Jerusalem, ostensibly in order to establish a continuous ring of gardens and parks, but also, according to residents, to create a “ring of Jewish residency around the contested Old City, isolating Palestinian neighborhoods”<sup>84</sup> (see also Bimkom, 2012).

Since that date, the situation has stalled; the demolition orders continue to be valid, and the building works have not yet started. However, there is always an expectation that the demolitions will begin at one moment or another. Amani Odeh, resident of al-Busta, explains:

*“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”<sup>85</sup>, so they look at the neighbourhood as their own. And they have the ability to take it whenever they want” [S16].*

<sup>84</sup> “Barakat plans to implement al-Bustan demolitions in election bid”, WHIC website, September 5, 2011, <http://silwanic.net/?p=19778>

<sup>85</sup> 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 Mount of Olive. See “Jerusalem set to unveil controversial plan for cable car in Old City”, *Haaretz*, March 5 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/premium-1.645565>, “Le projet controversé de téléphérique au-dessus de Jérusalem”, *La Croix*, March 9 2015, <http://www.la-croix.com/Actualite/Monde/Le-projet-controverse-de-telepherique-au-dessus-de-Jerusalem-2015-03-09-1289163>, “Jerusalem reboots controversial cable car plan”, *Start-Up Israel*, March 6 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-reboots-controversial-cable-car-plan/>, “Jérusalem: un projet de

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”* [S4].

We will see in the next sections that when it comes to al-Bustan, planning hinders expansion and development in other ways than through the design of space. Similarly, the residents of the neighbourhood deploy other strategies of resistance that we will expose and develop throughout the thesis. However, this initial strategy of “counter-planning” had to be pointed out as it presents many interesting facets. First, it shows the punctual insertion, even if constrained, of the residents in public and political life. 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 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.

The fact that the elaboration of the municipalities’ policy is included in the process raises the question of how this strategy should be considered: does it represent a “participation” in the official decision process? An attempt to compromise? The institutional character of the procedure indeed makes it appear less as a practice of resistance than as an attempt to compromise with the authorities. However, this represents a strategy that could be compared to that of a petition: it involves addressing the contested authorities to express criticism and ask for a change. It can be included, with the legal actions and appeals to courts, in the broad repertoire of institutional and legal actions. It indeed represents a strategy of resistance as it contests actively a decision taken by the authorities. Moreover, the residents are not consulted but their plan was merely submitted for consultation; the unfolding of the various phases of the decision and the current outcome show there is no cooperation between the authorities and the residents.

Another interesting point has to be underlined: even if this strategy does not rely on an established cooperation between the actors, the Palestinian residents of al-Bustan still need to resort to an

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téléphérique bientôt sur les rails?, *I24News*, March 6 2015, <http://www.i24news.tv/fr/actu/israel/societe/63417-150306-jerusalem-un-projet-de-telepherique-bientot-sur-les-rails>.

“institutional” action in order to counter the decisions of the authorities. This means that channels have been open, allowing them to present their criticism and alternative plans.

The control over East Jerusalem can be described using the term coined by Eyal Weizman and Rafi Segal; it is indeed a “civilian occupation” (2003), as the settlers’ presence and the control over space is enforced through the legal system, planning and architecture and the installation of settlers. In Wadi Hilwe, people evoke a “second occupation” to characterize the situation of the area. Ahmad Qaraeen, 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 El-Ad and the settlers"*. He adds: *"settlers changed the name of our neighbourhood. They call it the City of David, it was called Wadi-Hilwe"* [S2]. 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"* [S11].

This “second occupation”, used to designate the specific local situation of Silwan, refers to the same processes as the “civilian occupation”; these include the military conquest and occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, subsequently developed into a second phase encompassing mainly the development of the Jewish settlements inside and around the Palestinian zones of population. Of course, this “civilian occupation” prolongs but also complements the military occupation. In Jerusalem, while the annexation rendered the military aspect less significant, as the administration depends on the Israeli system, it also made the civilian occupation easier (see chapter 3). We will see with the example of the Negev Bedouins that the objectives and impact of planning are very similar to those applied in East Jerusalem, relying on the same legal logic.

## 1.2. 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”<sup>86</sup>*

*(D. Ben-Gurion, speech “The Significance of the Negev”, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 it lacks is water and Jews.”*

*(D. Ben-Gurion, speech “The Renewed State of Israel”, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1963)*

As these quotes of David Ben-Gurion show, the Negev has been treated traditionally as a “frontier”, a “pioneer area” which needs to be conquered and tamed. It is indeed the only area where Israel can develop, demographically as well as economically, as it represents the major reserve of free space in the country. Indeed, numerous plans, laws and political decisions aim at ensuring that the Negev can be “developed” in a way that guarantees the maximum control of space. Avinoam Meir exposes the main line of the policy implemented by the State: the reduction as much as possible of the areas in which the Bedouins live *“in order to intensify political control over them, and in order to reduce to the minimum the cost of physical and social infrastructure in the areas populated by them”* (Meir, 1999: 20, in Swirski & Hasson, 2006: 18)<sup>87</sup>.

One way this control was imposed on space after Israel was created was through zoning: most of the Negev has been labelled as “firing areas” or closed military zones, and the space has been devoted to army bases or military exercises<sup>88</sup>. A recent project also sets out plans to build one of the biggest military training complexes yet in Israel, south of Beer-Sheva, which will be able to host

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<sup>86</sup> See for example <http://www.negev.org/>, <http://energy.gov.il/English/AboutTheOffice/SpeakerMessages/Pages/GxmsMniSpokesmanRenewableEnergy.aspx>, [http://www.haluzasmartcity.org/smartcityen-inspired\\_by\\_ben\\_gurion\\_inspired\\_by\\_ben\\_gurion](http://www.haluzasmartcity.org/smartcityen-inspired_by_ben_gurion_inspired_by_ben_gurion)

<sup>87</sup> Meir, Avinoam. 1999. *Tension Between the Negev Bedouin and the State: Policy and Practice*. The Floresheimer Institute for Policy Studies. Jerusalem (In Hebrew).

<sup>88</sup> According to the army website, “According to “70% of the Negev is IDF training areas”. 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/>.

10 000 soldiers and will gather various army units and activities<sup>89</sup>. The definition of the municipal boundaries, as well as those of local and regional councils, has also been used as a way to confiscate and control land: indeed, Arab local governments generally have little land to develop and expand. The seven Bedouin townships established in the Negev thus suffer from a chronic lack of space to develop and build new residential neighbourhoods (Kedar & Yiftachel, 2006: 139; Human Rights Watch, 2008: 28-29). An objection<sup>90</sup> was filed and presented by Bedouin citizens and three organizations supporting the rights of the Bedouins, Adalah, Bimkom and the RCUV to the District Committee for Planning and Building as early as March 2012<sup>91</sup>.

This represents one of the plans currently considered or applied by the authorities to develop the Negev. The principles upon which the development of the region relies however appear to be based on the same ethnocentric basis that underlies the functioning of the State; indeed, those plans do seek to organize and develop the region to make it more attractive and the life conditions more agreeable, but it also appears that those objectives are rather valid mostly for the Israeli Jewish population, in line with the Jewish character of the State. 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 policy of the JNF to “plant trees” also represents a way to plan and produce space, imposing and materializing the official position; the areas afforested are indeed considered to be the property of the State, even though this determination is contested by Bedouins before the courts (see chapter 3, 1.3.). From this perspective, two other plans can be evoked here: the Regional Master Plan and the Praver Plan. Both threaten the Bedouin community as a whole, notably because they ignore the existence of the unrecognized villages and prolong the politics aiming at concentrating the Bedouins in cities. As such, 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

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<sup>89</sup> 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>.

<sup>90</sup> Submitted on March 19, 2012, see:

<http://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/Likit%20objection%20-%20final.pdf> (in Hebrew).

<sup>91</sup> Adalah, Bimkom, the RCUV and Arab Bedouin Living in the Naqab File Objection to Plans for Israeli Army ‘Intelligence City’ (n.d. – March 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-Beduin-file-objection-to-IDF-complex>

the Praver Plan was to evict them, and that the plan was “actually all about al-Araqib” (field notes, 27/ 10/ 2013).

They were met with different responses; the Master Plan was met with a counter-proposal drawn up by experts while the Praver 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).

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004, representatives of the NCF, Adalah, ACRI and the RCUV met with the Regional Master Plan working committee (NCF newsletter, March 3, 2005, p.7) to discuss the plan and expose their doubts and critique. The Supreme Court had indeed required that the planning authorities consult the public during the process of elaborating the plan.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005 the Supreme Court discussed the case 1991/00, a petition “*against the partial District Plan for Be’er-Sheva Metropolis*” (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2009: 17) which requested that Bedouin citizens be included in the planning of the Negev and aimed to solve the issue of Bedouin settlements (Human Rights Watch, 2008: 50). Bana Shugri Badarna, 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, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, January 2006, p. 10). This can be put in parallel with the analysis that was made above of the planning process in al-Bustan, where an apparent opportunity to challenge a decision through participation rather turns out to be a strategy which aims at wasting time and eventually reinforcing the position of the authorities.

In November 2010 after the National Council for Planning and Building recognized three villages (Atir, Um al-Hiran and Tel Arad) based on the recommendation of lawyer Talma Duchan for the Beer-Sheva Metropolitan Plan; the Prime Minister’s office, in a move very representative of the

government's approach to the issue, intervened to revoke the decision (NCF newsletter, 14<sup>th</sup> edition, May 2011).

The RCUV and Bimkom launched the project of an alternative plan, then realized by Oren Yiftachel, Nili Baruch, Said Abu Sammur, Nava Sheer and Ronen Ben Arie. This "Alternative Master Plan for Bedouin Villages in the Negev" attempted to counter the material production of space and the projects of the State through a proposition issued from the 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 including: 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 et al., 2012: 6).

The Praver plan (see above in chapter 3) – which also aims at "regulating" the Bedouin settlement – should follow the lines defined by the Regional Master Plan when it comes to planning and infrastructures (Begin, 2013: 11). This other plan, drafted at the national level, advances the move, by force if necessary, of up to 30,000 Bedouins under the guise of development and "social and economic progress". This plan was the result of a long and concerted effort of the Israeli political and military establishment; it inscribes itself in the logic expressed by Moshe Dayan in 1963, which is representative of the State dogma when it comes to the Bedouins. Ehud Praver, the 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<sup>92</sup>; both were charged with "regulating the settlement of the Bedouins in the Negev" (Begin, 2013; International Fact-finding Mission, 2010: ii). The propositions advanced by Ehud Praver were approved by the government in September 2011, and subsequently by Yaacov Amidror, councillor for the National Security Council.

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<sup>92</sup> 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.

Ze'ev "Benny" Begin was then put in charge of the coordination with the Bedouin population. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the government validated his recommendations for the Praver plan. One of the pieces of advice rendered by the Goldberg Committee was presented again: to recognize, as much as possible, the "illegal" villages. 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 rest of the report reaffirms the national dogma: despite the "historical bonds" of the Bedouins with the land, their property claims are considered to be incompatible with the existing laws and the interest of the State. The conditions required for recognizing the Bedouin villages makes the proposition difficult to actually implement: these include a 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<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Knesset voted in favour of the project of law (43 in favour, 40 against)<sup>93</sup>.

The final developments of this phase of the planning and decision process are especially interesting and extremely revealing; on December 9<sup>th</sup>, Benny Begin clarified before the Committee for Internal Affairs the conditions under which his consultation was conducted: *"I didn't tell anyone that the Bedouin agreed to my plan. I couldn't say that because I didn't present the plan to them. (...) As a result, I would not be able to know to what extent they support the law"*<sup>94</sup>. By affirming this, he was taking away the main argument used by the parties of the governmental coalition, who had always claimed that the law respected the Bedouins' rights and that a majority of them were agreeing to the terms. On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Benny Begin declared that Benyamin Netanyahu had agreed to his proposition to shelve the Praver Plan.

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<sup>93</sup> See for example: "[Praver Bill on Beduin land narrowly passes 1st vote](http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Praver-Bill-on-Beduin-land-narrowly-passes-first-Knesset-vote-317611)", *The Jerusalem Post*, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Praver-Bill-on-Beduin-land-narrowly-passes-first-Knesset-vote-317611>; "[Begin-Praver plan. Bedouin relocation plan wins slim Knesset majority after stormy 1st reading](http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/premium-1.531794)", *Haaretz*, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 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<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <http://972mag.com/collision-course-plan-to-displace-tens-of-thousands-of-bedouins-passes-first-knesset-vote/74333/>.

<sup>94</sup> "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 Bedouin resettlement plan", *The Jerusalem Post*, December 12 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Bennie-Begin-stops-Beduin-resettlement-plan-334862>; "MKs learn Bedouin 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 Praver Plan for Bedouins", *Arutz Sheva*, December 12 2013, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/175108#.VbFxlVntmkp>.

However, as early as January 7th 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<sup>95</sup>.

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 paths similar to that of a law, with various committees, hearings and votes sitting to either amend or adopt it. These procedures encompass various opportunities to integrate different possibilities into the decision-making process, either via consultation or as a plaintiff. In al-Bustan, the experts representing the residents could present an alternative plan directly to the municipality, laying out their claims directly 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. In the case of the Praver Plan, no counter-plan was made. However, experts, such as Oren Yiftachel, testified in front of Knesset committees. The possibility to address courts (district courts, as in the case of the Master Plan, and 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.

Strategies of counter-planning and participation in the legal procedures represent attempts to be heard, and to enter the political game, having the scope to utilise 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”. Indeed, they do not represent changing elements and dimensions of the political context, but rather constant principles. 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 principles. Indeed, the contradictions on which the country is based are emphasized via a consideration of the

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<sup>95</sup> 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<sup>th</sup>, 2014, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokebeduim050114.aspx>; “Bedouin ‘will be consulted’ over resettlement plan in Negev”, *Haaretz*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 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 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Shamir-to-Post-Changes-will-be-made-to-Beduin-resettlement-plan-before-new-push-337436>.

topic of planning. The case of the Praver Plan and the positions adopted by Benny Begin are particularly clear. Indeed, in his report, Begin admits that the Bedouins have historical bonds with the land but insists that *"the legal framework, as an outcome of the Lands Law (5729-1969) and of other land laws (...), does not make it possible, as a rule, to accept the ownership claims of the Bedouins"* (Begin, 2013). Even more significant than the design and the various disciplines used to impose the Israeli control on space, it is the legal framework that shapes and regulates the way they can be used and that represent the real tool of control.

The aim here is not to present an exhaustive debate on the nature of the Israeli regime and the contradictions between its Jewish and democratic nature. It seems necessary to underline and acknowledge that this aspect is central when it comes to the conceiving of the space, as it relies chiefly on the laws and the politics of the State, both elaborated according to the Zionist project. The organization of space indeed answers and mirrors the projects of the authorities and their conception of society. As such, the Bedouins, notwithstanding that they are citizens of the State do not fit in the plans to extend the populated area and reinforce control over the desert.

We have seen through these two case studies that numerous and diverse planning projects intersect. The Negev seems particularly significant. The two sites of contention tackled above present similarities in the planning process and the goals pursued through the authorities' design of space. We will see in the next section that planning in the case of Hebron is different; 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 a military matter in Hebron. The security forces may intervene in the physical environment, erecting checkpoints or control points (for example, blocking Wadi-Hilwe Street); this is generally temporary 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.

### **1.3. "Military urbanism" in Hebron: the city as a battle space**

When it comes to the authorities' "conception" of space, the case of Hebron is slightly different: the decisions are indeed taken and implemented 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

pressure and lobbying exerted by the settler organizations and affiliated parties also have an impact on the decision-making. We will see that the whole process of designing and producing space in H2 is more accurately tackled, with recurring references made to the concepts of “architecture of occupation” (Weizman, 2012) or “military urbanism” (S. Graham, 2011, 2012).

The old city of Hebron is indeed submitted to a strict regime of occupation, enforced by a massive military presence and strict rules, which encompass numerous spatial measures. 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 control it, especially by separating the two main populations living in the area. “Separation/ partition” is indeed one of the “spatial technologies” upon which the architecture of occupation relies (Weizman, 2012: 10-11): the Israeli authorities started to implement it systematically during the Second Intifada.

In Hebron, the separation was made between H1 and H2, but it is also the principle within H2. It is clearly made with a view to protect and allow the movement of the Jewish population, while restricting and controlling the Palestinian presence as a “preventive measure” (Breaking the Silence, 2012: 8). The city is organized according to the needs and “harsh logic” (ibid.) of the army; Avner Gvaryahu, an Israeli who was a paratrooper in the West Bank, including in Hebron, during his three years of military service, has explained, for example<sup>96</sup>:

*“The reality is not only arresting the Palestinians. The reality is checkpoints, the reality is walls and firing zones, and for preventing people to move from one place to the other, building enclaves of communities. So this is the reality, and by building these small enclaves we’re molding the landscape” [H13].*

The intervention on the material configuration of space, also imposed through roadblocks, watchtowers and barbed wire, is reinforced by an intricate mix of orders and laws which regulate movement and presence. The military logic indeed requires the avoidance of any “friction” between the two populations. To this end, one principle which is implemented is the “sterilization of roads” [H13]; another is the creation of “buffer zones” (OCHA-oPt, 2007: 96). Shuhada Street reflects the main example of these tactics: it represents an axis of communication and movement for the Israelis, settlers, soldiers and visitors, but represents a solid barrier for the Palestinians, who are

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<sup>96</sup> As will be mentioned later in the thesis, A. Gvaryahu 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.

unable to use or even cross it; the road has the same impact on the 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. Avner Gvanyahu insisted strongly on this point: 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 Palestinians [H13].

These elements inscribe the situation of H2 in the framework of what has been termed “military urbanism”. This concept refers 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: increasingly, the cities are considered to be the new sites of modern warfare (see for example, Weizman, 2008). As a consequence, military urbanism targets *“everyday spaces, sites and infrastructures of cities—along with their civilian populations”* (Graham, 2012: 384). The city becomes the new “battle space” (S. Graham, 2009, 2012) 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).

These measures have practical consequences, and their impact is often very clear. Asef Bayat, a specialist of Middle-Eastern contentious movements, underlines that *“a state (...) cannot easily stop the normal flow of life in the streets, unless it resorts to normalizing violence, erecting walls and checkpoints, as a strategic element of everyday life”* (Bayat, 2010: 12). This normalization of violence, integrated in the urban landscape, is striking in H2, as is the disruption of everyday life that it brings about.

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”. Avner Gvanyahu, who often leads groups to visit Hebron with Breaking the Silence, stated: *“Hebron is a city where we don’t even have to say much. Just walking down the street in the city, if you have a little bit of compassion and understanding for what is happening around the world and in different Western countries, you will recognize it...”*[H13]. This spatial aspect of the control has led people and NGOs to designate the old city as a “ghost town”.



*Figure 15: Two examples of the military urbanism and the policy of separation in Hebron: on the left, 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. On the right, 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.*

H2 is organized according to spatial measures of control and a physical division between populations (see for example figure 15); it also relies on different administrative and legal systems. Indeed, while the Palestinians living in H2 are submitted to the military authority of the Civil Administration and local laws, the Israeli settlers depend on the Israeli civil penal law, which puts them practically in a situation of extraterritoriality<sup>97</sup>. This distinction is applied across the whole of the West Bank; however, combined with the particularly strict and striking military presence, it creates a situation which is often presented as unique, and the characterization of which is highly debated and very controversial (see also chapter 7, 1.2.).

NGOs often encompass this understanding as a broader “dual regime”, as “different law enforcement systems” (see for example, the Facebook page of Breaking the Silence, March 18, 2013) or as a “dual system of law” (B’tselem, January 1, 2011)<sup>98</sup>, terms that apply to the whole of the West Bank and are usually engaged more strictly from a legal perspective. With regard to

<sup>97</sup> 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](http://www.btselem.org/legal_documents/emergency_regulations).

<sup>98</sup> See *Settler violence: Lack of accountability*, [http://www.btselem.org/settler\\_violence/dual\\_legal\\_system](http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence/dual_legal_system).

Hebron, Breaking the Silence and other NGOs, usually use terms such as “separation” and even “segregation” (Breaking the Silence, 2012, [H13]). 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 [H13]. It is indeed a term that stirs intense controversy in the Israeli public and is thus often avoided for strategic reasons; this is illustrated by the fact that an Israeli guide 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 expressly requested to remain anonymous following his statement.

The term of apartheid thus remains omnipresent, even implicitly: not using it is indeed a conscious choice, made for diplomatic and political reasons; it nevertheless forms the backdrop of the way that space is organized in H2. Peter Gustavsson, a Swedish volunteer working 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 from what you say, and the thing we’re 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”* [H8].

Many activists and inhabitants insist on apartheid being the most accurate term to describe the combination of legal and physical separation characterizing H2, exploiting the way that the term resonates in the international community’s arena for its historical background (see chapter 7, section 1.2.). However, the term is also debated within the Palestinian community, between 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 went to provide an anecdote of 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!" [H9].*

The choice of term used is therefore very political, depending on the strategy adopted. 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 separation<sup>99</sup> that, I contend, can be more accurately studied as "military urbanism". It 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 differently in Hebron than in Silwan and the Negev: it is directly realized and materialized in space, and in the street; notwithstanding that there is probably a team within the army that elaborates and decides upon the changes that must be made in respect of the relevant urban space, there is no long term public planning. The production of space depends on military decisions<sup>100</sup>.

This absence of transparency, but also the human and material means available to the Israeli army accounts for the fact that very little actions is undertaken to directly contest this militarized production of space. Framing the situation and underlining the characteristics of the spatial regime through discourse and narratives is seen as particularly important; we will come back to this point in chapter 7. One of the most common strategies however, one which is direct and limited in terms of risk, is to throw stones or Molotov cocktails at the checkpoints. Notwithstanding that these practices usually have very little impact, we must underline that the Checkpoint 56, that connects Bab al-Zawiye to Shuhada Street, was burned in August 2014. The reaction was very swift: a new,

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<sup>99</sup> The best (and most absurd) example that helps us to realize the extent of the fractured line running between Israelis and Palestinians in the center of Hebron is represented by the time zones, and more specifically by the experience of the time change. Even if anecdotal in this context, it has a very powerful evocative charge, illustrating that the separation is made along very labile geographic lines that move and adapt according to the ethnic ethnicity, more than official zoning. Indeed, in 2013, the Palestinians and the Israeli population in Hebron did not pass to wintertime on the same day. In consequence, two different time zones cohabited in the same geographical area for a period of one month (field notes, September 28, 2013). See also <http://972mag.com/the-worlds-only-ethnic-time-zone/81006/>.

<sup>100</sup> A specific study on military urbanism in Hebron would be interesting so as to better understand how decisions are taken and especially when. Indeed, the lack of transparency as to the reasons or processes behind certain changes makes them appear very sudden and arbitrary.

stronger checkpoint was installed, with a concrete wall, a garrot and a fenced corridor to access it, as well as a watch-tower (see pictures 16 and 17).



Figure 16: Checkpoint 56, main connection between Bab al-Zawiye and Shuhada Street, seen from H1. Picture taken on August 13, 2011.



Figure 17: the same checkpoint in February 2015. The checkpoint was reinforced since it was burned by a firebomb in August 2014. Picture by Ahmad Al-Bazz/ ActiveStills, published on the Electronic Intifada, "The Month in Picture", March 6, 2015, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/month-pictures-february-2015/14324>.

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. Indeed, it must once again be underlined that the conception of space – its design, production and administration - by the authorities, and in this latter case, the spatial measures taken by the Israeli army, are politically and ideologically motivated; moreover, they rely on a legal system that create the conditions to sustain them, allowing and legitimising the policies applied. It appears that the real tool of occupation and control, of course complemented by physical and material coercion, is the State's legal system.

From this perspective, and as a conclusion to this part, 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.

#### **1.4. Entering the institutional frame to counter the institutions?**

The contestation of the authorities planning choices and projects is a fundamental dimension of the resistance in all three sites of contention. Indeed, the modification of space is an integral part of the occupation strategies, allowing the State to impose or strengthen its control over the territory. The repertoire adopted encompasses various practices as shown above. The cases of al-Bustan and the Negev show that the protestors can employ the same tools employed by the State itself, by resorting to 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). However, the decision and implementation of the plans remain ultimately the privilege of the authorities.

The use of planning and architecture to set out the residents' claims can thus be connected to another strategy: employing institutional channels to contest the decisions taken by the authorities. This represents at the same time both a classical strategy of the repertoire of contention and a

paradox. Firstly, because the Palestinians in Israel (the citizens, 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 elections<sup>101</sup>. Secondly, this is the case because the actors usually express a strong defiance towards the authorities, underlining the ethnic bias that crosses over the legal system, making decisions favourable to their positions very rare.

However, this inclusion in political life raises different questions, whether constrained or not, and whether it is participative or simply a presentation. First, it raises 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.

The possibilities to challenge the authorities' decisions through administrative or legal procedures are inherent to democratic functioning. In al-Bustan, for example, the municipality itself provided an opportunity to act and protest; 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 decision appear more democratic. A particular study would be necessary to scrutinize 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, the politics applied by the municipality towards the Palestinian residents in the city, and the situation in al-Bustan in particular, all seemingly indicate that in reality the decision was never revised or even called into question, and the residents' position was not considered. Wendy Pullan, scrutinizing the frontier urbanism in contested cities, assesses that in Jerusalem "*segregationist planning policies (...) have dominated the city since 1967*" (Pullan, 2011: 31). This suggests that the opportunity 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, turning the opportunity into a "*constraint*".

In the Negev, the inhabitants and NGOs often go through official channels to have their claims recognized. The most famous case of a Bedouin struggle through the courts is that of Nuri al-Okbi, whose family lived and owned land in the area of al-Araqib and was expelled in 1951 [A6]; this has

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<sup>101</sup> The national elections held in 2015 represented an exception in this respect, with a much higher turnout of the Arab voters than usual.

been ongoing for years, first in the district court and then in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court indeed represents the main possibility of appeal for the Palestinians, both from Israel and the West Bank, and is considered as being more likely to render fair decisions. The court cases in which the residents participate however often stem not from an action against the State's positions, but from the authorities against the residents: for throwing stones, trespassing on the State's land, for assaulting a police officer and so forth. In each of the three cases, there are numerous court cases, which often follow an arrest; as such, we will not detail them here. It is worth noting however that the court thus appears as an instrument in the general system of coercion and repression.

The Bedouins and the Palestinians of Jerusalem use the resources available to them via the Israeli administrative and legal system due to their citizenship or their being under Israeli rule, notwithstanding that they might not necessarily believe in the possibility of a positive result. The action of going to court and trying to participate in the decision-making process means the possibility exists. Indeed, if the opportunities to protest using the administrative and legal systems are provided for by the structure of the democratic/ethnocratic regime, the threats and constraints are also inherent to the Israeli regime; the authorities can indeed rely on a legal system that represents the basic resource permitting the State to counter, limit or neutralize the pleas. This is not to say that every legal process contesting the State is bound to fail; it is however important to acknowledge the bias underlying the laws, the way it can be exploited, and the impact it has in concrete cases.

The question of the actors involved in these strategies also arises. Indeed, the grassroots activists are often not directly involved in the drafting of the alternative plans, even though they might have been involved in meeting and their opinions might have been heard. In both cases, in al-Araqib and more generally in the unrecognized Bedouin villages, as is the case in Silwan, 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 (also called 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, the protest may also rely on the committees or organizations representing them. In Silwan, inhabitants have one committee for each neighbourhood and a common one, the High Committee, for the whole village [S4, B7, B12]. The committees discuss practical matters, including local issues like parking [S12]. 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. Salim and Jawad Siyam have insisted: *“everything here is political”* [S7, B12]; 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. Their role was not studied in-depth in the frame of this research, as these participants never appeared specifically as crucial actors for the struggle.

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, for example, 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 [A5].

In the H2 part of Hebron, there are neither organized local groups nor possibilities given by the administrative structures to engage with the authorities' decisions. The main way in which the problems encountered can be handled remains via the Hebron municipality, which is active in H1 and which continues to have a minimal role in H2: it supplies water and electricity freely to the inhabitants of the occupied area (field notes 24/03/ 2013) – *“100 kw free electricity and 10 meter cube of water free per house”* according to Jamal Maraga [H11]). The case of Hebron therefore differs from the two other cases in that it is not a subject of “civil” planning and urbanism policies but of a military architecture that aims at strengthening and maintaining the occupation.

However, while the planning and producing of space seems more strict and unilateral in Hebron, it has to be acknowledged that it is realized in the same way as in the two other sites; the appeals and pressures have not led to dialogue or modifications of the plans. As we have seen above, the opportunities apparently granted by the Israeli regime did not prove successful, or even sufficient;

the plans prepared for the Negev for example could not be opposed through legal means, and the opportunity to present an alternative plan in al-Bustan aimed more at calming the criticisms than at taking into account the claims of the inhabitants. Notwithstanding that the laws used to take the decisions often block administrative channels, they do allow the protest to take a public and organized dimension.

## **2. Challenging the “urbicide”: building, renovating and expanding houses**

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. In the many spatial metaphors and neologisms used to describe Israeli politics as applied to space, some authors refer to the Israeli approach as an “urbicide” (S. Graham, 2004; Meade, 2011): for demographic and strategic reasons, the Palestinian construction – often “spontaneous” due to the difficulties met when applying for building permission – is considered as a threat, or even as a weapon. 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 described the construction of Palestinian housing in Israel and the West Bank as a “cancerous tumour” threatening the Israeli State (Graham, 2004; 204). The policy applied towards the building of the Palestinians is a consequence of this approach; we will see that it is applied in various ways but with similar responses in the three sites. Indeed, the material, built environment, and especially the house as a primary space of life, holds a particular importance in everyday life (see also, chapter 5). Thus, despite the lack of authorization to build houses and the orders constraining movement and presence in certain space, people continue to modify the space of life in order to adapt it to their needs.

## 2.1. Demolitions and illegal building in Silwan

Beyond planning, and the design of space for human practice and the social norm, the actual fact of building, and translating these plans into concrete terms, is problematic. In fact, East Jerusalem is faced with a general policy of planning that has a direct impact on everyday life. Across all of East Jerusalem, it is almost impossible to obtain the authorization to expand one's house or to build a new one.

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"*. Indeed, there is a demographic policy applied in Jerusalem, which has been made explicit several times by Jerusalem mayors (see Margalit, 2001, and point 2.1. in chapter 3), and was explained in 1993 by City Engineer Elinoar Barzaki:

*"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 ration is through the housing potential"* (B'Tselem, 1995: 57).

The ratio has since varied, first to 70/30, and recently it was announced that it realistically had to change for a goal balance of 60% Jews and 40% Arabs (Chiodelli, 2012; Irène Salenson, 2005; Shragai, 2010). This importance of controlling the demography is linked to a necessary control of the urban expansion.

This "demographic architecture" 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). In addition to these planning strategies, the Jerusalem residency status is also used to put pressure on the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem; their presence in the city depends on the documents granted to them by the Israeli administration while their status as residents can be easily revoked. The inhabitants of Silwan consider these policies as an attempt of "silent transfer" [S11]. 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 Qaraeen also explained: *"they put on our lives pressures by 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” [S2]. Omar Yousef, a Palestinian architect who grew up in Silwan and studied the impact of planning on Palestinian life in Jerusalem, explained:

*“In order to control space and limit the growth of the Palestinians inside the municipality, there is an orchestration of many institutions. It is not only the municipality: the municipality limits building, the ministry of interior checks where you live, the authority for the protection of nature for example in Silwan works with Elad and the settlers ... so all those work together for controlling the space and introducing, even penetrating Palestinian neighbourhoods with Jewish settlers”* [S5].

In Silwan, demolition orders and actual demolitions take place both in Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan. The houses of al-Bustan have been threatened by demolition orders for a number of years as seen above, but few demolitions have actually been carried out: two houses were demolished in 2008. In Wadi Hilwe, the “cultural centre”, two rooms built as a meeting point for children, was destroyed in 2012. Having been constructed only a few weeks before; this centre, like many of the new buildings in East Jerusalem, was built without permission. 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).

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 *“In Silwan, since 1965 until now just 73 permits to build were granted”* [S4]), and as a result, all construction is considered to be illegal.

The resistance to this policy takes mostly one form: to keep on building, without permission, despite the risk of fines or demolition. This illegal building raises the question of the repertoire: is it only a question of necessity, or can it indeed be considered as an act of defiance, thought of and realized in this way? Omar Yousef evoked “patterns of passive resistance”, whereby this kind of resistance has often, according to him, only the aim of *“satisfying [one’s] bare necessities, [one’s] basic needs, which are not provided by the city”* [S5]. He explained: *“due to very acute housing crisis, due to 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”*. Wa’ed Aesh also 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!” [A6].*

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 implies 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 this does not directly aim to be an act of resistance, it is nevertheless a voluntary and conscious infraction of the law, and thus a defiance of the Israeli authority. It is also 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 5 on sumud). 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 [S7, 4].

## **2.2. Rebuilding al-Araqib**

In the Bedouin villages, the situation is very similar: as the villages are “off the map”, 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 and, in general, the policies adopted by the State *“have created a situation whereby tens of thousands of Bedouin citizens in the Negev have little or no alternative but to live in ramshackle villages and build illegally in order to meet their most basic shelter needs”* (Human Rights Watch, 2008: 1).

As a consequence, many of the houses and other structures built in the area are subject 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 to 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 marks a stark rise in the number of demolitions carried out by the Bedouins themselves. It has to be noted though that the demolitions, contrary to the past, were largely carried out in recognized villages in townships, with 46% (399 structures) demolished in the non-recognized villages (ibid.: 13).

Al-Araqib alone has been demolished more than seventy times since 2010. The village is indeed known for those recurrent demolitions, but also for its relentless rebuilding effort. 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. 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.

Building is a necessity, especially, as noted above, when the family grows, due to a new birth or marriage. Indeed in the Palestinian society the sons who marry traditionally live next to their parents. Moreover, the traditional repartition of land in the Bedouin villages is made according to families, each cluster being dedicated to an extended family inside the larger space dedicated to the common tribe.

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; although they are the only Israeli citizens in the three cases studied, for them ensuring that they can stay and that everyday life can continue is a matter of ensuring 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 which are inscribed into a wider repertoire, known as *sumud* (see chapter 5) 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 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

(see figure 18). Additional building and works are always considered with fear as a possible detail that could trigger the demolition (field notes, October 10, 2013).



*Figure 18: Salim and his sons add wooden walls to their house for the winter in al-Araqib. Picture taken on October 10, 2013.*

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 tents and minibuses used as rooms for the children. The space was reorganized around these ephemeral structures, which nevertheless recreated a home.

The rebuilding in al-Araqib is indeed necessary to ensure 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 5). Showing the existence of a village and giving a sense of this village as a lived place is also fundamental. Building illegally is also 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, asserts the rights of the residents to the space.

### 2.3. The HRC and the renovation of Hebron's old city

In Hebron, the main activity linked to the active modification of material space, and 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 concerned with the construction of demolition but with evictions, the taking over of the buildings by the settlers – a problem also present in Silwan – or merely even the departure of the Palestinian residents in the face of the tension and the difficult living conditions.

The main strategy adopted in H2, beside the practice of *sumud* or “steadfast presence” (see chapter 5) 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 to possibly instigate them to come back, and to limit the Israeli expansion in the old city [H5]. 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.

*“There are two different levels. If the house is empty we tell the family ‘we want to renovate your house for you, for free, are you willing to come back to stay in your house’. If they say yes we sign a contract for five years, at least they want to stay in their house. (...) We offer them free housing, free maintenance, free water, free electrical consumption (...). If not, they rent the house to us as a committee and we re-rent it again to someone who applied for a house and who knows about our committee”* [H5].

The HRC claims they have renovated over 1000 apartments in the old city, which are occupied by around 6000 Palestinians (78% of whom are tenants and 22% owners), and over 160 shops, which have since reopened their doors<sup>102</sup>. According to W. Abu-Halawa *“Today there are 6500 people living in the old city of Hebron. When we started, there were only 500 Palestinians living in the same space”* [H4]. 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

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<sup>102</sup> 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>.

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 centre actually liveable and inhabited. As W. Abu-Halawa explained, *“The idea is not to renovate just for renovation, we want life back. We are resisting by inhabiting”* [H4].

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 on military order but were abandoned over time as the customers deserted the area and redirected their shopping habits to the “new city”, more accessible and placed under Palestinian authority.

The HRC thus serves resistance 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* - a Palestinian equivalent for “steadfastness” - the will of the inhabitant to remain, and a challenge to the hardships imposed on H2.

Youth Against Settlements (YAS) also tries to help people who remain in H2 in a more crafty way, getting by as best they can: concentrating especially on the area of Tal Rumeida, a group of volunteers regularly helps residents who need it to fix the electricity, the plumbing, the walls and so on. In April 2013, for example, a house that had been abandoned for fifteen years was cleaned of all of the garbage covering the garden, while the house itself was emptied, in order to create a kindergarten for the inhabitants of Tal Rumeida. Issa Amro presented this campaign as the “*Samidun* project” (see chapter 5), aiming at strengthening their *sumud*: *“no plumber and electricians will come here as it is very restricted and the HRC don’t do small project”* [H7]. It is important to show the people that they are *“not alone, not isolated, as the main idea of the occupation and the quiet transfer policy is to isolate the people from H1”* [H7].

Planning, architecture and ‘do-it-yourself’ work are thus used as tools to allow people to stay, which is seen as the basis of resistance, of “*sumud*” in the face of hardship. 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 stay 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" [H5].*

Walid 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 houses of Palestinian residents within the settlements. He evoked internal practices of resistance from the organization to bypass the constraints imposed by the Israeli army: the ban on motorised vehicles in H2 made the use of horse-drawn carriages necessary; the workers sometimes have to smuggle building materials in the middle of the night [H5]. One of the stories he loves to tell to the 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 constantly repeated during the tours, and a poster showing the horse has even been made (field notes March 18, 2013). Anecdotes like this also 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 of the inhabitants 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, from example, the activists of YAS, concerns this bureaucratic aspect, and the fact that the HRC is close to the authorities and depends on it, that is, depends on its 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 are 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.

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 HCR 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.

Faced with Israeli hegemony, translated in space, the actors of all three sites of contention often try to bypass this control rather than challenge it upfront. By proceeding with building, ignoring and disobeying the authorities' claims over the area, building to show that their control is not absolute, and exploiting the small loopholes that are left, they can exercise means of opposing control, concentrating on the domestic space.

The control of public space was largely exposed through this chapter, as a central part of the planning process. In the next part I will tackle how contention uses the public space, especially through demonstrations and violent clashes, and how instances of contention call into question and directly oppose the control of space.

### **3. Demonstrations and repression: power in the public space**

In this chapter, which deals with conceived space, the space of the authorities and the way it is challenged by inhabitants and their supporters will be explored; having considered planning and building, we will also tackle the question of the public space. Indeed, public space is central in everyday life, and is also central when it comes to spatial control and constraints. In its occidental acceptance, *“the public space is usually considered as 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 consequences can't be appropriated in an exclusive, durable or excessively personal manner by an individual or a particular group”* (Dessouroux, 2003: 23).

Even if this is a typically European way of considering and defining public space, which certainly cannot be applied as such in the Israeli context or in the Palestinian society, it nevertheless sets out several important features, namely access, mobility and co-presence of the citizens. Public spaces are moreover, “*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. It is, in this sense, an essential dimension of demonstrations.

I will consider the way in which demonstrations are organized, under different shapes, in the three sites of contention; I will concentrate more specifically on the weekly prayer organized in al-Bustan, and the regular violent clashes and bigger demonstrations in Hebron. We will see that Wadi Hilwe, lacking open public space, is the area where the fewest number of demonstrations are organised. On the contrary, in Hebron, the power play that is engaged between activists and authorities take on different forms, challenging the surveillance imposed by the Israeli army, for example, by mimicking war-like behaviours.

### **3.1. Protesting in Silwan, protesting for East Jerusalem?**

In Silwan, organized demonstrations are quite rare, probably in part because of the urban fabric of the neighbourhood: as a steep-sided, densely populated enclave, the topography is not very adapted for mass gatherings and public demonstrations. Indeed, the neighbourhood has no large public open space; the main collective event, the Friday prayer which takes place in the al-Bustan tent, requires half of the participants to stay in the street. The social structure of the village, the strong 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 (field notes, December 16, 2012). Another problem, in addition to the actual lack of physical openings that would represent public space, is that the public space in Silwan is not considered to be “public” or accessible by the Palestinians. The outside space is considered to be dangerous and threatening; it is 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; in this case, however, if the finish line is in Wadi Hilwe, most of the race takes place outside of the neighbourhood<sup>103</sup>.

The localization of the al-Bustan protest tent, in the centre of Silwan valley, is not a passing area and is not frequented by Israelis. The visibility of the event is thus mostly local. The repression and visibility of the police has been reduced over the years; when the tent was first established and the initiatives of holding Friday prayers there first launched, the place was raided several times by the police. A discreet police presence is nevertheless always maintained on the summit of the southern hills: the gathering is known, and its political message – as well as the risks it potentially presents – is monitored.

The Friday prayer in the al-Bustan tent started in May 2010 after the municipality announced that the demolitions in the neighbourhood could start as early as June (see figure 19). Imad Khatib, the imam who said the prayer on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2010, stated at the time: *“the tent demonstrates the intention of al-Bustan residents to stay in their homes”*<sup>104</sup>. Amani Odeh explained the initiative of holding collective Friday prayers saying: *“The idea is to show we are always here, we will be here and nothing will change if you destroy the neighbourhood”* [S16]. The religious gathering was thus turned into a political symbol and an expression of sumud. The prayer is made of three different parts: the first part is always a strictly religious speech and the third is a common prayer. The second part, the Khutbah (sermon), is usually a very political speech in al-Bustan, concerning the situation of the neighbourhood and Palestinian politics. Praying in the neighbourhood is indeed a choice seen as having political implications: *“people would prefer to go to al-Aqsa”* according to Jawad Siyam [S7]. Al-Aqsa, the third most holy place of Islam, towers above Silwan and determines a significant part of the neighbourhoods’ identity (and pride) (see chapter 6); staying in the neighbourhood for the prayer is therefore considered as a proof of one’s attachment to the place.

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<sup>103</sup> 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/>.

<sup>104</sup> “Al Bustan protest tent holds fifth consecutive Friday prayer; representatives from Sheikh Jarrah attend”, WHICH, May 28, 2010, <http://silwanic.net/?p=3281>.



*Figure 19: Friday prayer in front of the al-Bustan tent. Pictures taken on January 16, 2013.*

In Silwan, the protest takes often 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.

It should also be noted that 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. These events are often inter-neighbourhoods events, with activists from different neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem participating (including Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, Anata); 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. They show the need for the Palestinians of Jerusalem to relate to the situation of the West Bank and connect to the wider Palestinian context. Indeed, the Palestinians of East Jerusalem feel isolated; considered to be enemies by Israel and traitors by the rest of the Palestinians, for their living under Israeli rule and thus having “advantages”, they also feel abandoned by the Palestinian Authority who they consider do not insist enough on the importance of East Jerusalem in the peace negotiations. A large number of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem thus insist on their Palestinian identity, their non-recognition of the Israeli authority and on their loyalty to the Palestinian cause, and, according to the political sensibility or party organizing the protests, their loyalty to the PA. These demonstrations are usually static, taking place in front of the Damascus Gate, they always occur under heavy police surveillance and often turn into violent confrontations.

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.

The question of public space and its use in Silwan is marked by several considerations. Firstly, as evoked above, the very organization of the urban fabric is not favourable to any kind of public meeting; some of the open spaces of Wadi-Hilwe have been, for example, integrated into the City of David, or will be in the future, because of the way in which the neighbourhood is built. It is very isolated, which undermines the principle of a protest which demands visibility in order to ensure its claims, and its mobilization, are known and noticed. The anarchical way in which the neighbourhoods developed, that is, through illegal buildings as opposed to through approved plans, further undermines the balance of the urban fabric and the potential of public space.

What comes out of this is also the lack of a Palestinian political landmark in Jerusalem: the Damascus Gate, where numerous demonstrations organized by Palestinians of East Jerusalem take place, is central and ensures a maximum visibility for a large range of the public, including tourists, Palestinians and Israelis. Yet even if it is a strategic location, it is not a symbolic one. The only universal place of gathering and protest which retains meaning for the Palestinians, and where protests are organized – but which do not allow for visibility – is al-Aqsa, the centre of religious life for Palestinian Muslims, where Friday prayer regularly gives way to clashes.

### **3.2. Demonstrating in and for the Negev**

Life in al-Araqib finds its rhythm in demonstrations. Punctual protests are organized on days of demolition, or when demolitions are anticipated. Those who gather first aim to maintain a presence in the village to demonstrate solidarity with the residents but also show the interest of external actors in the fate of the village; it also allows for the quick organization of a protest in case the police and bulldozers arrive. The repertoire employed in al-Araqib is strictly non-violent; clashes between Bedouins and the police erupted in the Negev on certain occasions (for example, during the “day of rage” organized against the Prawer Plan on November 30 2013). In al-Araqib, violent episodes had already occurred during periods of major destruction, but most confrontations always

remained of a 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 The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011: 4). The show of force mobilized during the demolitions depends on the particular period; it might include police in riot gear, mounted police, or even soldiers from the IDF, the Green patrols as well as mechanisms like water cannons.

Every Sunday, the inhabitants of the village, joined by members of their families who live in Rahat and by some Israeli Jewish activists, gather at 4:00 p.m. at the Lehavim junction, on Highway 40 which connects Beer-Sheva to the centre and the north of the country. While Beer-Sheva, the largest regional city, is only a few kilometres away, the choice to manifest at these intersections is strategic: it is done firstly *"to make it more visible, so that people who come from different directions we can see"* explains Haqma Abu-Madighem [A1]. This choice of location is also made given its proximity to the village, thus signalling its existence, ignored by much of the Israeli population (see figure 20). 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"* [A1]. 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"* [A12]. Numerous demonstrations are also organized by the inhabitants before the district court in Beer-Sheva or outside of the police station in Rahat where inhabitants are put on trial or arrested. In 2013, a "protest tent" was erected in Rahat while the Sheikh of al-Araqib was detained.



Figure 20: Sunday demonstration of al-Araqib inhabitants at the Lehavim junction. Picture taken on October 4, 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 A'id, as well as family celebrations such as weddings, for example, provide occasions to gather in the village. Monthly demonstrations are also organized in Rahat, where the extended family of the villagers live, to try to generate support from the community.

However, as underlined by Haia Noach, these demonstrations, both in Rahat and at the Lehavim junction, are usually very limited in number: *"50, 60 people, maybe 100 when somebody is coming from the north with a group..."* [A5]. The inhabitants, as well as the NGOs supporting them, thus face a real difficulty in mobilizing the civil society.

Common demonstrations with other unrecognized villages are nevertheless organized, for example, at the occasion of Land day on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 [A5].

The Bedouin society, in addition to being very scattered in space also suffers from the same problems faced by the Palestinian society of 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. 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 we stopped near al-Araqib, making criticisms ranging from those that expressed doubt as to the villagers' goals - *"they just want money, they didn't even live here a few years ago"* - to those that unveiled 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).

While often local, demonstrations also take place in the two major centres 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). Some demonstrations are common to several villages, but as al-Araqib is particularly active and mobilized, it also often protests by itself, notwithstanding the issues tackled in court or in the legislative committees. The inhabitants of al-Araqib, for example, demonstrated in Tel Aviv on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 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<sup>th</sup>, 2013, (to protest the Praver Plan which was at the time being discussed inside, see figure 21).



Figure 21: demonstration in front of the JNF in Jerusalem. Picture taken on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

The protests in al-Araqib (and in the Negev in general) are usually non-violent. In al-Araqib, the inhabitants clearly inscribe themselves 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. Aziz Abu Madighem, a resident of al-Araqib, asserted: “*we are holders of Israeli citizenship, so we ask the State to give us our rights by law*” [A8], 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*” [A1]. Ismail had a similar position, with a slight difference:

*"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've been here before the Israeli state. 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 it to me. Why do you destroy my house? Why do you stop us from expanding like normal, why don't you care about our future?" [A12].*

The Bedouins of al-Araqib are very active in terms of organized protests and collective action, although they are often mobilizing alone, meaning with other residents, close family members and the few Jewish Israeli activists who form the core of the network that supports them. All these strategies use the 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 to it can be blocked (for example, as occurred on April 7, 2012; the police allowed people to pass after Taleb al-Sana, a Bedouin member of Knesset at the time, living in the township of Laqiya, intervened).

The space of the village is the epicentre of the mobilization, the central place where the inhabitants protest and express their claim; it also reflects the object of those claims. The inhabitants of al-Araqib also invest in the public space to protest, mostly in places deemed symbolic because they are linked with the authorities; demonstrations nevertheless tackle local issues even when they take place where body responsible for taking the decision has its seat of power. For example, the demonstrations against the Praver Plan that took place next to the Knesset on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 was thus an "al-Araqib" demonstration, engaging only people from the village and their families; it was not one aimed at defending the unrecognized villages as a whole. This broader intention did of course exist behind the protest and opposition to the plan, but the main message of the protest largely concerned this one specific village.

We will see in the next section that the situation in Hebron is very different, with regular violent confrontations occurring; these also reflect a challenge to the very control of the authorities over public space.

### **3.3. Clashes and demonstration of power in Hebron**

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 on the Open Shuhada Street, but also events on the national stage, such as those that took place during the Operation Pillar of Defence, following 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 the *shabab* (young men<sup>105</sup>) and the Israeli forces. I will firstly scrutinize the strategy behind those clashes and the way they use the space. In a second section, I will examine the 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 the status of public space in Israel is a complicated one, which is even more the case in Hebron. 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. The streets of H2 in Hebron, which are theoretically public spaces, have been turned into exclusive areas, access to which is available only to a particular segment of the population. The occupation and control of space operate to limit or prevent altogether the access and use of these spaces.

#### ***Non-violent protests and violent clashes***

The regular confrontations between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli army usually take place at Bab al-Zawiya, a junction of four major arteries that converges into a small square and which marks the limit of the H2 area. One checkpoint (checkpoint 56, see pictures 16 and 17 above) is situated there; it leads to the closed Shuhada Street and is where the clashes are concentrated. The

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<sup>105</sup> The Palestinian participants in the clashes – and often also in the demonstrations - are exclusively men.

constant presence of the army at the checkpoint and the physical obstacle represented by the checkpoint polarize the clashes there, as the square represents the border between H1, the area under Palestinian authority and the area under Israeli control. It symbolically represents the front line of the conflict, and the opposition to the city being divided and torn between the two authorities.

The clashes that regularly take place at Bab al-Zawiya are ultimately very “codified”: on one hand, the Israeli soldiers defend the checkpoint and the access to H2 and Shuhada Street; they fire regularly (teargas, rubber bullets, sound grenades) to prevent the *shabab* from approaching. On the other hand, the *shabab*, hidden some 100 meters away behind a building, masked with hoods and the traditional *kuffieh*, throw stones, either with their bare hands or using slings, and Molotov cocktails. Often, though, the active *shabab* are 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 cheering the protestors.

Sometimes the clashes take on a more guerrilla-like character: groups of youths enter into the neighbouring buildings and throw the furniture into the street, burn tyres, or erect a barricade; other protesters might come around through transversal streets to approach the soldiers or to prepare ambushes against those progressing on the sidewalks (see figure 22, 23 and 24). On their part, the soldiers usually try to approach from the roofs or enter into buildings to secure high points of observation. Of course, even if “codified” in such a way, these clashes are real and involve direct violence on both sides. Clashes can develop into bigger confrontations that spread from Bab al-Zawiya, inside the narrow streets of the old city, towards the Cave of Patriarchs; this is an area which is already within H2, even if there is no physical separation from H1.



Figure 22: Soldiers "defend" checkpoint 56 and the entrance to Shuhada Street. Picture taken on February 13, 2013.



Figure 23: During the Open Shuhada Street demonstration. Protesters put flags on the fence blocking the access to Shuhada Street from the market (left) and the Palestinian police dispersing the clashes after the demonstration (right). Pictures taken on February 22, 2013.



Figure 24: Clashes in Bab al-Zawiye, with the erection of a barricade. Picture taken on March 4, 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 and, according to them, bring about no change. *“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) are just a few of the comments that I have collected about the clashes, from bystanders, shopkeepers and youths staying in the “audience”; these illustrate the internal disagreements as to which strategies to adopt, the suspicion running within the Palestinian society, as well as the discouragement and fatalism that are attached to segments of the population.

Only a few organized demonstrations take place between H1 and H2. The demonstration of Open Shuhada Street, which has been organized by YAS since 2010 around the anniversary of the Baruch Goldstein massacre (February 25<sup>th</sup>), is the main event of collective action organized in Hebron. 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 (see figure 23 above). During the February 2013 demonstration, the clashes between Palestinians and the IDF, which erupted at the end of the march, were spread throughout the old city. However the means of “crowd control” engaged by the Israeli army allowed for the

quick containment of the action: the “skunk” (a truck equipped with a cannon that fires a foul-smelling liquid) and the truck equipped with a “Long Range Acoustic Device” (see chapter 3, footnote 22), as well as the large number of soldiers stationed in H2, all constituted efficient means of deterrence that made the protesters retreat.

The *shabab* clashing with the army do not try to access or to regain control - even for a short period of time – over forbidden areas, but merely aim to actively oppose the presence of the Israeli army. The Open Shuhada Street demonstrations always advance in the direction of the checkpoint, challenging frontally the military control of space. Issa Amro, coordinator of YAS, claimed that the goal of demonstration is 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”* [S7]. He explains 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 pointed out that the risk was too high *“I saw settlers with their M-16 outside, so I was afraid for the safety of the demonstrators”* [S7]. The access represents a real risk, relying on a very unbalanced confrontation; demonstrators usually cannot access the closed part of H2 and in reality do not physically try to pass, but rather confront the soldiers from a distance. Zliha Muhtaseb, who lives in the market area, which is within H2 but before the checkpoint preventing access to the mosque, 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-Zawiye”* [S2].

Very few demonstrations take place in H2, 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 20th, 2013. Very few people participated in the demonstration, as it had been kept a secret, even within YAS: the protestors included a few activists from YAS (as many did not know about it) 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 where they were stopped and arrested. The activists from ISM were arrested and deported the following day.

The staircase that the activists used to reach Shuhada Street marks the limit of the area accessible to Palestinians; while the area beyond the imaginary line drawn by the staircase marks the border, no material sign indicates the forbidden area. In a paradoxical way, the control actually makes the transgression possible and visible: as crossing a line marks the illegality, the step makes more sense. Zliha Muhtaseb, for example, explained that she had already illustrated to sceptical groups of foreigners the prohibition to walk in Shuhada Street by stepping past the line and getting arrested [H2].

The transgression is nevertheless calculated, due to the imbalance between forces; the possibility of intervention are indeed very limited due to the Israeli presence and control, for example, in Shuhada Street. 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, which overlooks a big part of Shuhada Street, or from the road that runs along the cemetery and arrives directly at Shuhada Street. The access there is quite easy and direct, with no closed checkpoints. However, precisely due to the space being more open – but still monitored from watchtowers near the IDF military base in Shuhada Street and from above the Avraham Avinu settlement – the risk is higher. According to Avner Gvoryahu *“they know there’s a chance they will get shot”* [H13].

In Hebron, directly challenging the control of space and thus using “public” space during demonstrations, either by accessing or occupying it, is difficult and risky. The mere attempt to do so is however a clear illustration of the way in which Palestinians are treated, reflective of the occupation and the constraints that govern their lives. Attempting the transgression and triggering the repression that ensues is in itself a goal, as it will generate images and events illustrating the political situation in Hebron.

The public space used for the demonstrations and clashes in Hebron is actually mostly that which falls under the authority of the PA, located in H1. The clashes take place at the seam of both areas of the city, using the relative freedom granted on one side to provoke the rule and presence imposed on the other. The Palestinian public space in H1 is nevertheless seen as being submitted to the Israeli authority, through the PA police, which since the Oslo agreement has been accused of becoming the “subcontractor” of the Israeli army and is often charged with containing the protests. At the end of the 2013 Open Shuhada Street demonstration, for example, the crowd was

scattered by various units of the Palestinian police and army, which were attacked in turn with a rain of stones for intervening against the Palestinians “for” the Israeli soldiers. The demonstrations often seek media attention through symbolic actions and via images of massive mobilization and repression, whereas the *shabab* generally seek direct confrontation in a more spontaneous way. In both cases, facing the army is a primary goal, either to illustrate the constraints, occupation and control imposed by the army, or to express frustration at the situation.

### ***Surveillance and pressure***

The challenge to 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. A group called “Hebron Defenders” was created in 2011, made up, more or less, of the same members as YAS. Issa Amro explains that it aimed at defending the families of Tal Rumeida from the settlers. 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, we visited many families, 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 it 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 to all the other families, 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, big shouting, yelling at them, filming them, and making troubles to them, so settlers escaped. So 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 we caught the settlers stealing olives. It is about that, giving the indications to the settlers that the Palestinians are not easy target anymore. There are Palestinians who are ready to defend and to be in front and to sacrifice themselves”*  
[H7].

The image given is that of a kind of vigilante, an image reinforced by the video “Hebron Defender” (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUu1HkEHZu8>). Produced by Amer Abdeen from the

Palmedia news agency as a piece of reportage for al-Jazeera, according to Issa Amro, it presents some of the YAS activists in their nocturnal activities, with a war-like commando atmosphere.

These initiatives, their goal, the way they are presented, and even staged, either through discourse or the video evoked above, all show a claim of authority; inhabitants and activists who reclaim the 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.

The fresco realized by an Italian activist on the back wall of the YAS centre, in front of the Admot Yishai/ Tel Rumeida settlement, also testifies as to the will of power over the space; it represents a hand, the hand of YAS activists, one could suppose, erasing (materially, with a rubber) all of the Israeli settlements in the old city of Hebron. It illustrates how space, and the liberation from the Israeli control, is not only a goal stemming from the actions carried out but also a means of resistance. Indeed, the rubber is labelled “non-violent resistance, and we will see in the next chapter the importance of sumud in the Palestinian resistance in general, but also for YAS, as a non-violent practice which relies on the presence in space (see figures 25 and 26).



Figure 25: The original design for the fresco (source: Issa Amro)



*Figure 26: The fresco realized on the back wall of YAS, after being damaged by the settlers. Picture taken on October 20, 2014 by Issa Amro.*

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". This is the only house in which Palestinians still live within the settlement of Admot Yishai, and which is regularly attacked by the settlers. The family has installed a surveillance camera outside of the house, and wire netting covering its façade (see figure 27). As is the case with the cameras used by the activists to document the clashes and arrests (see chapter 7), this kind of additional surveillance is a way of protecting the family against certain accusations, allowing them to bring proof to court, but also, in this precise case, allowing them to keep an eye on the surrounding threats. Similarly, after a fire threatened the centre of YAS, Issa Amro also set out the plan to install CCTV cameras above the front door of the centre, as well as an armoured door.



Figure 27: The "cage house" in the Admot Yishai settlement, with a CCTV camera on the outside. Picture taken on March 22, 2013.

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, settlers, or foreigners suspected of being journalists or Israelis pass by, pretending to stop a stone being thrown. 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 settlers, 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.

The ISM activist who was interviewed – and who wished to remain anonymous – presented the location of the ISM flat as one that was chosen for strategic reasons, reflecting the same logic: overlooking the entrance of the Tal Rumeida settlement and the military sentry box: "*the soldiers know we are watching them at all time*" [H4]. Once again, presence and domination over space 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. This is not to say that the actions carried out are fake, but only that it is essential to acknowledge that the resistance also relies on communication strategies. Images of the repression, of the army, and accounts of the groups’ actions and victories have to be considered in the frame of such strategies. Moreover, power struggles also oppose people within the protest movements; in Hebron, for example, some leaders or figures involved in the resistance fight over issues of prestige and audience in 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-Zawiyia and the Ibrahimi checkpoint, where the clashes usually happen, challenging this internal border and what it stands for. The Israeli soldiers, whose authority normally applies only to H2, also intervene in H1 and Bab al-Zawiyia; the protests mostly take place in H1, but aim at contesting the separation and the control imposed on H2, physically and symbolically.

The use and impact of those various strategies of resistance should be studied more in-depth to understand how they shake the balance of power, a topic that falls outwith the scope of this research. We can advance the hypothesis that the clashes and demonstrations that are faced with an important level of repression generate particular repercussions in the international sphere, chiefly due to their media coverage and the images they provide.

#### **4. The opportunities and constraints for spatial resistance**

We have considered three topics where the conception of space on the part of Israeli authorities is particularly important and meets resistance in the three sites of contention. The planning, the policy around house-building and renovating, and the control of presence, access and movement in public space, have been considered separately for practical and analytical purposes in this chapter, but they are all interrelated dimensions of a same process: the planning projects have a direct impact on the existence and configuration of housing units and public space and the public space is often presented as the reverse side of the domestic sphere, opposed to the house, which

it complements. Similarly, the policies of control evoked in one section often have an impact on the other dimension: for example, the military urbanism directly influences the use of public 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. Two main topics emerge when confronting the system of control and the strategies of contention in these two sites: the role played by the Israeli legal system, and the constitution of the public sphere. Both interrogate the declared democratic founding principles of the State and the political opportunities and constraints met by the protesters

#### **4.1. The implications of a biased legal system**

The planning process and the material production of space appear to be strictly regulated by the authorities, however some opportunities for participation and consultation can emerge, as do legal ways of challenging the decisions. However, as those decisions on planning, building, and the use and control of public space concern the actual occupation of space and the way in which it will finally be used, these determinations touch at the very core of Israeli politics; as such, they are strictly supervised and directed by legal system.

Both the inhabitants and the NGOs underline 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-Israelis, while discriminating, in more or less subtle ways, against the other groups present in the country, and in particular, the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Bedouins.

Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, talking about the court decision on the spraying of herbicide on the Bedouin fields, in respect of which no compensation was provided to the plaintiffs, complained: *“You see this shows the real face of the Israeli courts, who speak about justice and democracy, but where is justice? (...) The conclusion is we looked for justice in the court but we didn’t find it there unfortunately”* [A2]. Haia Noach, from the NCF, pointed out that in Israel there are *“people who don’t have rights as this is the case in the Negev and people who have extra-rights”* [A5]. Nuri el-Okbi assessed: *“It is a collective problem, not individual. It’s a conflict between the Arab minority in*

*Israel and the State, the Jewish State. I want the State to be a democratic one, for all its citizens”* [A6]. Even Taleb al-Sana, a Bedouin member of Knesset between 1992 and 2013 who resides in the township of Lakiye, underlined: *“no water, no schools, what kind of a citizenship is it? (...) ‘The only democracy of the Middle-East’... This democracy is a big lie though...”* [A4].

Amani Odeh, who lives in al-Bustan, explained: *“You know it’s a peaceful resistance, here we can’t make war against the government, we live in Jerusalem and Jerusalem is under Israeli government. This is a reality”* [S16]. 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 years to the municipality... They always refused, and never wanted us to build anything’. And I asked him ‘where is the justice?’(...) He said “we, the court, go with the law, not with the justice”* [S4].

This kind of story, whether true or not, is commonly told to illustrate the helplessness of the Palestinian population who has to face the Israeli legal system. It expresses a strong defiance and feeling of injustice in the face of the way in which cases are handled and in respect of how legal and administrative decisions are taken. Similarly, in Silwan, Ahmad Qaraeen said ironically: *“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.”* [S2].

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. Thabet Abu-Ras, responsible for the Adalah office in Beer-Sheva, explained, for example:

*“We don’t 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 give them their own claims” [A10].*

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 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, as expressed by Thabet Abu-Ras above.

#### **4.2. From the public space to the public sphere: the ideological politics of space**

The most classical forms of collective action (demonstrations, sits-in and so on) generally rely on the presence of demonstrators in public space, and the occupation and appropriation of such space, as a symbol of contestation against the State. The various strategies of control implemented in all three case studies, described throughout this chapter and chapter 3, 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 very risky in the occupied West Bank, collective actions do take place as we have seen above.

The strategies evoked in this chapter all imply a participation or visibility of the protestors in public life. As such, they raise questions about the status and place granted to various groups or

communities by the authorities, both in Israel and the West Bank; they highlight the tight link existing between the public space and the public sphere. The public space, in its material dimension, has often been presented as the space of political discourse, compared to the Greek “agora”. A difficult concept to define, it can be explained as follows:

*“The individual’s activities acquire the status of being “public” according to the principle of publicity, meaning the capacity of the individual to use his reason in public and without obstacles, to confront it to the public opinion, to institute a debate, to increase visibility and acknowledgment. Thus, public space is simultaneously the place where problems appear, take shape, take on a public dimension, and the place from where solutions emerge” (Berdoulay, Da Costa Gomes, & Lolive, 2004: 4)*

The public space thus ties together social life, as it requires a co-presence or cohabitation, politics, through speech and participation, and spatiality. The public space is however also where the rules and norms of a society are expressed, where the “undesirables” (a term often employed to designate homeless people, drug addicts, prostitutes, but also groups of youths) are excluded from the common social space (Bernd, 2003, 2012; D. Mitchell, 1995). Two conceptions of public space often confront each other: the public space as “universal”, an understanding that postulates that the public space must be open to all and allow everyone to circulate freely, and the notion of the public space attached to the policing and the regulation of the presence according to a body of social norms and the politics of “law and order”, as Belina Bernd has expressed (2003: 58).

The public space – and the related public sphere - are thus directly linked to issues of democracy and citizenship, which indicates why their administration necessarily represents a problematic point in a country marked by ethnocracy and colonialist logic (Berdoulay et al., 2004; D. Mitchell, 2013). The Palestinians of East Jerusalem, who are not citizens of the State but who live on its territory and under its rules, have this 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 this sense, the position of the Bedouins is very similar, even though they are citizens of Israel; as Israeli citizens, they do indeed have access to the public space as well as to the spaces of public expression and participation, represented by courts and consultation committees, which advocate both for their inclusion in the society and in the space. The presence in space and the place in the society can thus be considered as responding to each

other. Theoretically recognized and included, people from East Jerusalem and Bedouins from the Negev are in both the public space and public sphere restricted to positions of second-class citizens.

As a first conclusion of this chapter, it can be said that when it comes to materially challenging the Israeli control of 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). This concept is similar to that of “*urbicide*” used by Graham and quoted in point 2: the space in general is indeed the primary object of the Israeli politics, which aims at controlling it, whether through property, the design and production of the urban fabric or the hindering of movements in the place.

The Palestinian inhabitants and activists, in Silwan and the Negev, supported and helped by NGOs as well as by technicians (planners, lawyers and so on), do try to use various channels to stop or at least to slow down the process of Israeli control and the adverse production of space. This control is firstly expressed through the conception and designing of space, translated into disciplines like planning, urbanism and architecture, which are all realized with a political goal. In the three cases studied here, the inhabitants have resorted to two strategies to counter this State hegemony; firstly, via consultation and participation, in order to try to integrate or to create debates and dialogue with the authorities, and secondly, by taking legal action, either locally or by reaching out to the Supreme Court. 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. As we saw throughout the chapter, Hebron is apart from the point of view of the conception of space and the possibilities to challenge it, for the particular situation that the occupation imposes: there are no claims as to the occupation being democratic, while the legal system used in the West Bank is different from that in Israel.

These strategies, which could in themselves constitute merely a form of civic action, represent a form of resistance considering the protestors address an authority that they starkly and otherwise actively oppose. They are completed by direct interventions on the materiality of space, which is made mostly in an illegal form. In all three cases, it is mainly made through a limited material

production, via building or renovating houses; this in turn is also a resistance practice as it is deemed to be 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 Bedouin villages, which are under Israeli jurisdiction (contrary to the H2 area in Hebron which, being occupied, is under the civil administration's authority), 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.

In Hebron, the material production of space that takes place in the old city nevertheless has a more visible and long-lasting impact; the renovation made by the HCR reinvigorates the local life but also changes the appearance of the old city landscape, with new façades, creating a sign of an inhabited area despite the surrounding closed shop and forbidden area. The old city has been deeply modified, both for the people living there and for the visitors who see the buildings from the outside; the modification of the material environment generates visibility to the presence of the Palestinian people, and to their intention to stay. However, the political meaning of such an intervention on the urban fabric and the influence on political process, are limited. Indeed, this rehabilitation work has an impact firstly 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 Patriarchs.

The act of building houses without permission could 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.

However, the Israeli authorities can use legal strategies to appropriate the spaces and limit and condemn this material production of space; where the Palestinians (including the Bedouins) have to resort to appeals, the Israeli system includes repressive measures such as fines, demolition orders and so forth. The construction is thus possible, but the follow-through falls mainly into the hands of power, and little can be done to stop it, except to appeal the decisions. Then, the decision is always in the hands of a biased judiciary system, which has mostly tended to neutralize the claims.

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 inhabitants 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 space remaining threatening and risky for the authorities.

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).

We will see in the next chapter that if the modification of the physical environment is difficult, other strategies are deployed, relying largely on the place and the meaning given to it. We can indeed notice that throughout this first empirical chapter, what comes to light is the importance of the place as a fundamental scale where practices of resistance are elaborated and deployed. Counter-planning, building, and surveillance are indeed all applied at the local level and are directly linked to life in the neighbourhood. We will see in the next chapter that place is indeed a central spatiality for the Palestinian resistance, expressed chiefly through the concept of "sumud".

# CHAPTER 5

## THE RIGHT TO PLACE

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After analysing the Israeli conception (and control) of space and the spatial strategies involved in its contestation in all three sites of contention, we will move on to consider the centrality of place in the Palestinian resistance, a feature that emerged throughout the preceding chapter. The mere human presence, that is, the physical occupation of a space, creates a place; it delimitates a particular, inhabited space which is given meaning by this very action and the claims attached to it. It is the human experience and subjectivity that turn the space, or location, into place, places being “*meaningful sites*”, which are used and lived (Cresswell, 2009: 1-2).

As our focus is on sites of contention, implying a local scale, it seems only natural that place would be of considerable importance in the contention. However we will see that it is central not only because of the scale at which the conflict is considered, but also, and especially, because the characteristics of the place are used as a resource and a tool to reinforce and support the resistance. It represents the basis for one of the most prominent manifestations in the Palestinian repertoire of contention: namely, “*sumud*”, which is intrinsically attached to both place and protest. It is also very representative of the strategies and aims of the struggle. Indeed, I contend that beyond the national struggle for self-determination and for the recognition of a Palestinian State and a sovereign territory, what Palestinians suffer from and regret at the local level – apart from the human rights abuses - is the loss of places of life, of memories, and the impossibility of making new lasting and safe ones. This is expressed for example in the commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba (the expulsion of the Palestinians by armed Jewish factions during the war of 1948) when the presence of Palestinians in the land newly conquered by Israel was categorically denied, resulting in the fleeing of thousands and the destruction of a huge number of villages. This event, traumatic for the Palestinian population and commemorated every year, alongside the various laws that have been passed since the creation of Israel, are seen as the key elements that have operated to dispossess the Palestinians of their land, resulting in the loss of their presence in and connection to place.

Besides the obvious claims around human and political rights and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I will show that the contention at the local level concentrates especially on the local life, encouraging it through the practice of *sumud* but also through a whole set of discourses and representations; these aim not only at claiming and publicizing a particular local identity but also at rooting it in Palestinian history and culture (see chapter 6).

We will see, firstly, that the place emerges through presence, affirmed through the visibility of everything that might constitute a sign of human life: the physical occupation of space, human and also material, is used as a strategy of resistance to display and publicize one's occupation of space. The visibility is essential to this strategy, as the presence must be acknowledged in order to gain legitimacy. To ensure this visibility and complement the physical presence, the marking of space is a fundamental strategy: this is done materially, through signs, but also immaterially, for example, by highlighting the importance of the place's name, which affirms its existence and challenges the official narrative on space (see chapter 3 and 4).

Drawing on this affirmation of the existence of place, in the second part of this chapter, I will define the concept of "*sumud*", building on the actors' definition, but also on a wider reflection about the implications of the term. Largely used by the Palestinians, both in the West Bank and the Negev, it is often defined simply as "steadfastness"; I will show that it has a richer and deeper meaning and is directly related to human presence, as well as to place and resistance; as such, it is particularly interesting in the frame of this research. After discussing the meaning of *sumud*, I will consider more specifically what it implies in terms of practices in the three sites of contention. We will see that it has two main scales of application, namely the house and the neighbourhood; practices aim to maintain not only a constant presence in place, but also a local life and a feeling of belonging and identity.

In the third part, I will tackle more general questions linked to what *sumud* says about the struggle. Firstly, I will consider the way in which *sumud* relates to the repertoire of contention. I will set out the internal contradiction existing within Palestinian society as to how to label and consider *sumud*. Indeed, some Palestinian actors distinguish between resistance and *sumud*, arguing that *sumud* relies more on passivity than on action and cannot, as a result, be considered as "resistance". In the second sub-section, I will tackle the broader frame under which I contend we can study *sumud* and the situation in those sites of contention, namely, that of spatial justice. Indeed, the various points

already considered – the legal system, as well as planning and building policies, etc. – underline how place is a target of the mechanisms of control. Indeed, *“place is the arena where social structure and social relations intersect, giving rise to relations of power, domination and resistance”* (Routledge, 1993: 27). As such, in line with the existing scholarship on the right to the city or to the village, I contend that the Palestinian resistance in the three case studies would benefit from being considered as struggles for place, or for a “right to place”.

## **1. Turning space into place**

We have seen that in all three cases studied, the property and control of space are central issues contested at the local level. The contention relies on place at several levels: it is firstly the location of the protest, but is also an object of claims and the base of many practices of resistance. We will see indeed how place is used to support the resistance, but is also, in a way, “created”. Indeed, residents and activists in all three sites of contention concentrate on making the place emerge, imposing and defending its existence both materially and politically. We will concentrate in this section on the practices of resistance that intend to have such an effect, focusing on the occupation of space through physical presence and marking. Both aim at showing people’s presence, and making the best of this visibility to express one’s claim.

Physical presence constitutes a stake as it implies or demonstrates a kind of power: occupying an area is one 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 presence is thus a real stake for the Israeli authorities, as well as for the contention, as it constitutes a way of contending power, materially and symbolically.

The first way to display presence and the occupation of space, as well as its constancy, and to thus claim attachment to a place, is to mark human presence physically through signs, and more specifically, for example, through signs indicating a name. 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 go against the official position. It is thus an interesting element to take into account when studying the spatial dimension of resistance practices.

### 1.1. Physical presence: between legal status and individual practice

Physical presence is a sign, or a message: it displays a form of appropriation, and implies possession or property over a space and thus generates a form of legitimacy. In his seminal work on *Zionism and territory*, Baruch Kimmerling defines:

*“The concept of presence can include a number of phenomena, the common factor in all being existence within a given territory. Presence here represents either (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).

Presence implies an appropriation of space, even if ephemeral or superficial. The presence is thus equivalent to a kind of “possession” of space, not necessarily corresponding to a formal or long-term claim of property; the protesters appropriate space for their struggle, use it as a base from which they can organize, an illustration of their claims and even a means of mediation in order to make their claims heard.

However, presence can also be a key element taken into account in the case of a dispute over the property of a piece of land. The physical presence, beyond the immediate meaning of appropriation, can also have legal implications for determining property rights. This effect of presence is essential in the Israeli Palestinian conflict insofar as the control of the territory is the central issue opposing the two sides, with the property of the land as a crucial point. The successive Israeli governments have consistently and predominantly concentrated on applying these two associated strategies: the creation of a legal apparatus allowing and justifying land seizure, and the subsequent massive acquisition of land using the toolkit thus created. The absence of landowners was one of the main arguments used by the State of Israel to seize large amounts of Palestinian land after the 1948 war; the Absentees’ property law (1950) for example, formulates that an ‘absentee’ was “*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*”<sup>106</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> See “Absentee Property Law”, Israel Law Resource Centre, <http://www.israellawresourcecentre.org/israellaws/fulltext/absenteepropertylaw.htm>.

Beyond the legal and administrative implications that physical presence can have, it also plays a crucial role in all three cases in the field, having a strong meaning and a direct impact in terms of control: in Hebron, the presence of Jewish settlers in H2 is the reason the city was divided in the first place. The massive presence of Israeli soldiers is also a sign and a condition of the occupation, and the main means to impose Israeli authority in the area. In Silwan, the presence of settlers in Wadi-Hilwe, but also of the infrastructure of the City of David, which dictates that tourists, who are significant, are necessarily present, both ensure a control on the space and the expansion of this control. In the case of the Negev, the authority of the State, which has been imposed on the area since its creation, through the establishment of centres of population, farms and numerous military bases, generates this effect.

Considering these three situations, it becomes clear that physical presence represents 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 implications.

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 not leaving the village empty when, for example, a demonstration is organized: leaving the village empty would allow for an easy takeover on the part of the authorities and could allow them to prevent anyone returning inside the area of the cemetery, thus practically bringing to an end any possibility of resistance. Indeed, presence is the basic condition for resistance in al-Araqib: it is not only a defence, but it also represents the attachment to the land, the determination of the residents and a proof of the seriousness of their claims. The presence is thus associated with the continuity, which is also used as an argument to demonstrate the legitimacy of the residents' claims on the land.

In al-Araqib, the residents do not like to evoke the period in which they were away from the land, and often fail to mention or skip that period in any account of their personal history; they insist on the expulsion of 1951-53, but often present their presence and contact with the area as continuous. This narrative is also part of a resistance strategy which involves avoiding the mention of elements

that could be used as an argument delegitimizing their fight. The importance of presence for the resistance 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 [A2, 5, 6, 8] (See also Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2011 and the NCF newsletters). The importance of presence is also illustrated through the imaginary strategies evoked by the inhabitants to show their determination: during the fieldwork, Haqma Abu-Madighem daydreamed about living on a tractor in order to enter and leave the cemetery at will, or even living underground so that the State could not expel her or say that she was occupying State land; in this case she could maintain her presence and live in al-Araqib. After the destruction of June 2014, her husband, Salim, mentioned the possibility of buying trucks in which to sleep. The Sheikh 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 seen to be important: Sundus 'Azza, whose family live right under the settlement of Tal Rumeida, explains: *"Women stay at home because if they are not in their house the settlers will attack or they will take the houses. So resistance of women is to be in their houses"* [H3]. Jawad Siyam underlines that in Silwan *"We have to be awoken 24 hours [on 24], with open eyes, we can't leave the house, 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 you know!"* [S7]. On the same note, Fakhre Abu Diab explained: *"We don't like to travel outside of Palestine for one or two weeks, we're afraid if 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"* [S4].

Of course, physical presence is a relatively weak means of resistance as the State can not only resort to coercion but can also rely on its laws, which provide the legal grounds to establish property rights and thus bypass the claims that this presence intends to establish. The presence is thus used as an immediate display of power over a space, which is nevertheless submitted to higher forces. In the case of expulsion or demolition, physical presence at least allows for physical opposition and a direct protest.

Presence is thus one element allowing for legal claims to be made in respect of a property, or to officiously assert an attachment to the land through the appropriation of space. In this sense, the

human presence in a specific area also represents one way to define or “create” a place, as it materializes a location in space, establishing the “where”. It has to be noted that the human presence does not necessarily have to be physical in order to make a place exist in this way: 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).

Presence still represents a crucial dimension 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 imposes representations and values that give sense to the area, transform it and make it a part of the inhabitants’ identity. As Yi-Fu Tuan puts it:

*“What begins as undifferentiated space becomes places as we get to know it better and endow it with values (...) furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place”* (Tuan, 1977: 6).

This metaphorical definition of place has to be adopted with caution; indeed, the “pause” of place does not mean that it is a static and bounded unit. It is on the contrary a dynamic scale of action, which is integrated into a complex set of relations. The notion of presence from this perspective largely designates the presence of the inhabitants, thus defining a place of life. However, the presence can also be temporary, creating ephemeral places (for example, during demonstrations, see chapter 5), or downright impossible, as in H2. As we saw in the previous chapter, presence in the public space is a similar challenge to the authorities, and the attempt to be, even if for a very short period, present within a forbidden area, can represent a goal of the contentious movements.

Another means of creating or claiming the existence and particularity of a place, and the attachment to it, can also be expressed through markings indicating its name or its existence and location. Naming indeed highlights the will to make the place exist and to have it recognized. It designates the place as one that deserves to be known and distinguished, for its past or present history, natural peculiarities or human layout and construction.

## 1.2. Naming and marking a place, claiming its existence

If the physical presence can be understood as a condition to produce a 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). As an essential element of this material and symbolic investment in place and as another basic way of appropriating and claiming an area, the naming of places is an important strategy that complements the physical presence by affirming the singularity and existence of the place. According to Cresswell, naming is one of the ways to express the attachment to a “portion of space”, which turns it into a place (2004: 10). Indeed *“the act of naming is often a demonstration of authority that entails the notion of appropriation”* (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001: 181). As such, it also shows an opposition to the authority of the State on various levels, inscribing relationships of power, and in this case an open challenge, in space (Myers 1996: 237).

The study of the politics and impact of place-naming is usually closely associated with the concepts of place and landscape (Alderman, 2008; Azaryahu & Golan, 2001; Cohen & Kliot, 2013; Jett, 1997; Kearns & Berg, 2002; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010) and concentrates largely on issues of memory and heritage (Azaryahu & Kellerman, 1999; Azaryahu & Kook, 2002). Herein, we will adopt a broader approach and show that the naming of a place can also amount to a very contemporary stake directly linked to present political issues. I argue that the naming process should be considered in more detail. There is of course a fundamental symbolic dimension in the process of naming, but the attribution of a name is complemented by two other elements that need to be taken into account as they also represent political stakes: the marking of space, which publicizes the name with material indications, and the way in which the name is accepted by a wider public: does it remain contested? Is it accepted or modified?

We will see that naming and marking are strategies that conform to similar logics and objectives, and are often employed together. Indeed, the marking of space, both symbolic and material, also claims a presence and *“manifests the appropriation of a space, or at least the claim of such an appropriation”* (Veschambre, 2004: 73). According to Djemila Zeneidi, the marking of space has a performative dimension, allowing the actors to test their identity *“when they participate in the marking of the urban space, by decoding it or by being themselves its direct authors”* (2006: 201).

However, they take on different shapes according to the site considered. The contested or claimed names can indeed be that of the neighbourhood or village, but also of a street or a building. The marking can mimic the official signs, but also be more informal, made as graffiti for example.

The naming of places has been extensively studied when it comes to Israel, particularly since the creation of the State in 1948. The erasure of Palestinian names followed the destruction of Arab villages during what was termed the “Nakba” (the catastrophe) by Palestinians – undertaken in a systematic policy of “hebraicization of the map” (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001: 178), combining closely Zionist nation-building and language revival. Concentrating on the territories conquered after the 1967 war, Cohen and Kliot have tackled the modification of names as an expression of Israeli nationalism and underline that it is one of the *“most common expressions of the manipulation of political landscape to achieve desired ideological objectives”* (1992: 654). In the case of Israel, place-naming, or often renaming, often involving a change in language, has been used in line with clear political views, in order to reinforce the Jewish collective identity and affirm its link with the land.

However, notwithstanding that the stress in these studies is usually put on strategies of domination involved in changes of name, Myers notes that not only the naming but also through the defining of the boundaries of the place, which *“are strategies exercised both by those having a great deal of social power and by those [who] comparatively lack it ”* (ibid.: 244). The geographical location, but also the language used to attribute a name, can represent a contestation of the dominant group and those holding power by affirming and inscribing in space an alternative identity. In this perspective, it is interesting to concentrate on the naming process as a spatial strategy of resistance in all three cases studied.

Alderman uses two conceptual frameworks to study further 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 *“naming can also be appropriated by marginalized stakeholders who wish to have a greater voice in determining what vision of the past is inscribed into the landscape”* (ibid.: 197), thus highlighting the great potential that this practice retains in terms of power and conflict.

Place-names are usually studied in relation to localities, mostly village and neighbourhoods (Cohen & Kliot, 2013; Taylor, Gottfredson, & Brower, 1984) and the names given to the streets (Alderman,

2002, 2003; Azaryahu, 1997; Bar-Gal, 1989; Pinchevski & Torgovnik, 2002; Shoval, 2013). We will see here that the situations vary between the various cases, but also that the focus on naming and marking reveals a considerable amount about the political dynamics at play on each site of contention. In all three cases, it is not so much the fact of naming the places that is an issue, but more the permanency and the implication of having the name recognized.

In the Negev, the aim is to have the names of the unrecognized villages recognized at an official level, in a language which is not the dominant one in Israel, and to have it appear in the public space or landscape, symbolizing the acceptance of their presence, existence, and ultimately, the integration of their inhabitants into society.

In al-Araqib, the name of the village constitutes a real stake for the residents, as their very existence is not recognized by the State. Indeed, it is more than this; their existence is actually denied. The State actively acts against their existence: strategies are applied to make them leave, but also to erase their presence. This was the case, for example, with the removal of the material that remained after the destruction of a forest area, or the creation of one by the JNF. Their appearance on the map, which would thus make their existence known to the wider public, is an essential objective of their struggle.

It is evident that the most common practice in the non-recognized Bedouin villages associates the acts of naming and materially marking the space: the installation of a sign indicating the name of the village on the nearest road or placed at the entrance to a village is indeed common practice (see figures 28, 29, 30): in the villages of al-Araqib, Hashem Zene and al-Sira for example, signs which indicate the presence or the direction of the village, have been installed over a number of years. One sign used in al-Araqib (figure 28), like the one placed at the entrance of al-Sira (figure 30), had 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 make a claim as to their desire for recognition and permanent acceptance. The indication of the name in three languages – or three different alphabets, Arabic, Latin and Hebrew – shows the breadth of recognition desired: it seeks to integrate the villages into the landscape of the State, using both official languages and a “universal” one, thus also addressing foreign visitors. In al-Sira, the sign added underneath the name of the village, which sarcastically indicates “attention demolitions”, adds an element of

defiance, aimed at the authorities and their way of handling the claims of the inhabitants. In al-Araqib, as in al-Sira, the signs were removed very shortly after being installed.

The inhabitants have also written the name of the village on the side of Highway 40, passing within the vicinity of the village. From that main road, a smaller road leads to the village: no official sign indicates the direction or existence of the village on either of the roads, which are not built in a way that allows the access. This sign, made of coloured pebbles, 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 (figure 29).



*Figure 28: Aziz Abu-Madighem holds a sign indicating the village of al-Araqib in three languages  
(Picture Aziz Abu-Madighem, n.d.)*



Figure 29: the writing "al-Araqib" on the side of the highway passing near the village (picture Aziz Abu-Madighem, n.d.)



Figure 30: the signs at the entrance of al-Sira, picture taken on March 14, 2012.

Another element regarding the importance of naming in al-Araqib, which links the village to its inhabitants and aims at publicly declaring the attachment to the place, is embodied by the name of the last-born child of Aziz Abu-Madighem: his daughter, Araqib. Her mother, Sabbah, explained:

*"We had thought about it since before the birth, but then she was born on the day they were destroying al-Araqib for the 62th times, 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 in displaying it, and affirming it publicly so that attachment cannot be denied.

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, evoked above (see chapter 4, section 2.2.), is to rebuild the destroyed structures. Indeed, for four years, they have tirelessly rebuilt the shieq (the tent where meet men and where guests are welcomed) and two or three shelters on the land where the village was located. This is done in order to establish their presence, and thus their resistance, to generate greater visibility, to illustrate their obstinacy, and also to maintain a material indication of the destroyed village. Maryam, a villager, said: *"These tents are symbols, we watch them and we remember that this is our land"* (field notes, April 8, 2012). The new presence of lights in the cemetery is explained in the same way; visible from the street, they *"indicate the presence of al-Araqib, they show that people live here."* (field notes, October 13, 2013).

In the case of Silwan, the name is officially recognized and is indicated at the beginning of Wadi-Hilwe Street. However, a similar sign opposite the street indicates the name "City of David" (see figure 31), 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 that the inhabitants insist on the importance of the neighbourhood's name and their fear that the name is being replaced. In Silwan, the fight is rather aimed at preserving the name and the Arab identity of the area.



Figure 31: the official signs "Silwan" and "City of David". Picture taken on September 30, 2012.

Silwan suffers from a multiplication of denominations due to its particular place, size and status: it is considered as a town, a village and a neighbourhood, and is composed of multiple areas with very defined identities (like al-Bustan or Ras al-Amud). Silwan is one of the main neighbourhoods of which East Jerusalem is composed but it is also a main point of Jewish settlement: as a result, the inhabitants of Wadi-Hilwe and al-Bustan combine the three scales of identity, Jerusalem, Silwan and the specific neighbourhood in which they live.

In Wadi Hilwe, the name of the neighbourhood is important in order for inhabitants to locate themselves in the bigger frame 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 the identity at risk. As Ahmad Qaraeen put it: *"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"* [S2].

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 similar process is at work here, even if it is not indicated through material marking in the neighbourhood. Indeed, an overview of the Israeli newspapers indicate that some of them designate al-Bustan under the name of “Gan HaMelech”, the King’s Park, undermining the existence of the Palestinian neighbourhood before the park is even built; this legitimizes the plan and implicitly condemns the presence of the residents, as the area seems already destined to another use<sup>107</sup>.

In those two cases, the name constitutes a symbolic stake in the situation, and represents a real issue of power: indeed, the language used changes the perspective on the use and population of the place, and thus on the legitimacy of the authorities’ policies as well as the residents’ resistance. The name is used as a political slogan, expressing the issues at hand and the claims advanced by the actors of contention. It is used as an expression of pride, encapsulating the meaning and the reasons why the residents are staying and fighting.

In Hebron, the name of the city 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-Khaleel, is not as well-known, the English version is accepted as a general common name. Yet the Arabic name is quoted with pride, given its meaning: that is, al-Khaleel, the friend, named after Abraham, the “friend of God” (Qur’an, 4:125), whose cenotaph, along with those of the other Patriarchs and Matriarchs are displayed in the Ibrahimi mosque, the core of the old city. This name and its meaning are invoked as proof of the historical link between the Arab Muslim population and the place. It is sometimes used as a political argument, allegedly indicating what is understood to be the general state of mind of the inhabitants towards others and their “predisposition” for peace.

In Hebron, the conflict over place names is part of the everyday life of the H2 area, which proceeds at the rhythm of a strict dual system (see chapter 4, section 1.3.), based on the separation between H1 and H2 but also that based on citizenship, ethnicity and religion, between Palestinian Muslims and Jewish Israelis. Palestinians use one set of Arabic references, while the settlers and the army use another.

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<sup>107</sup> 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>.

Issa Amro, the coordinator of Youth Against Settlements has, 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-Ikhwān al-Muslimin [Muslim Brotherhood Street]”* [H7]. Similarly, the houses taken over by the settlers respond to different names: the “Rajabi building”, next to the settlement of Kiriyaṭ Arba, is called “Bet HaShalom” by the settlers. This conflict between names is not apparent in the space, as there are no signs indicating them. However, the names and language employed are the signs of ongoing battles over the meaning given to the place, indicating the development of specific narratives on both sides, which insist either on the Arab or Jewish identity of the old city. The real conflict revolves around the use of those spaces, and especially of Shuhada Street, which is completely closed to Palestinians.

The politics of Israel applied in H2 and more particularly on Shuhada Street rendered them symbols of the Israeli occupation, and a destination for political tourism: it is the “thing to see” for groups or individuals who come to witness the reality on the ground; indeed, it is considered as representing *“a micro-sample of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict”* with *“settlers, soldiers, discrimination, apartheid...”* [H7]. The yearly Open Shuhada Street campaign, launched by YAS on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and organized mainly around a demonstration in the centre of the town, made the street an icon of injustice, and a result, turned the name of the street into a symbol which has been adopted internationally (see chapter 7).

An action organized by YAS took place in August 15, 2011 in front of Checkpoint 56 aimed at symbolically renaming the street “Apartheid Street” (see figure 32). 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, insisted it was a temporary renaming, as the name of the street – meaning “Martyrs’ Street” – was a legacy from the past; he considered that the memory of those martyrs had to be respected<sup>108</sup>. The action revolved around the symbolic construction of a sign which read “welcome to Apartheid Street” in several languages, with the Arabic stating: “you are in Palestine, welcome to Apartheid Street”. This 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

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<sup>108</sup> “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>.

“welcome to Apartheid Street”, “this is apartheid” along with “Zionism is racism” and “fight ghost town” remained clearly visible (see figure 33). These informal forms of marking, such as the graffiti, 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.



Figure 32: renaming Shuhada Street in "Apartheid Street". Pictures taken on August 15, 2011.



Figure 33: Activists spraying "Welcome to Apartheid Street" on a cement blocks. On the left, the same blocks few weeks later. On the left, picture taken on August 15, 2011. On the right, picture taken on February 11, 2013.

The processes of naming and marking might therefore also be reflected in more informal strategies, like 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, as opposed to those made by the authorities, 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 pictures 34 and 35).



Figure 34: graffiti in Wadi Hilwe Street "Here is Silwan". Picture taken on October 19, 2012.



Figure 35: two young men write "Hebron" and "Palestine" on a wall during the Open Shuhada Street demonstration. Picture taken on February 23, 2013.

The graffiti is a typically urban mode of action. Thus, Al-Araqib, being a rural and even isolated context, is less concerned with this kind of appropriation. 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 of “my villeg al-Arakib” made by one of the children on the door of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem’s house (see figure 36); it has since been destroyed.



*Figure 36: the writing "my villeg al-Arakeb" on the door of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem's house. Pictures taken on October 12, 2013.*

In the cases of Silwan and Hebron, the possibility to challenge Israeli control through marking and naming is very limited in the central areas of the “site of contention”; these are represented by the most contested zones, the areas around the City of David and the H2 “sanctuary”, the closed-off part of the old city. The control is enhanced in both of these areas, making it difficult to challenge the Israeli politic of renaming and the symbolic marking deployed by the authorities.

Countering the Israeli marking of space is, for example, impossible in the area of Shuhada Street: signs, frescoes and graffiti can indeed be found along the street, but are mainly realized by the different military units serving there or by the settlers, all imposing a very ideological and univocal reading of history and space. A series of frescoes located next to the military base 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 strictly controlled and next to impossible – Palestinians entering the forbidden area are automatically arrested – the authorities dominate the meaning and interpretation of the space and the struggle over the meaning of space is fought at a distance.

The Jewish community of Hebron has also installed official signs targeted at the passing tourists. They present a very partial view of the situation and aim at justifying the closure of Shuhada Street (see figure 37 underneath, and figure 46 in chapter 7). Removing or tagging them, or putting alternative explanations, would require having access to this area, which is impossible for Palestinians. However, these signs were put after Zliha Muhtaseb and YAS hung signs that read “this is apartheid” and “Arabs are prohibited, this is apartheid” on the wire netting protecting her windows, signs that can be seen from the street. The private space, namely the house, once again represents a resource of resistance, as a “safer place”, or more precisely, a place with more liberty; indeed, notwithstanding that the army often enters into the houses, the individual prerogatives are not necessarily abolished. Here, for example, the signs have not been touched. These little enclaves of liberty are enough to make an act of resistance possible. Considering the chronology of the marking, the reaction of the Jewish community of Hebron appears to reflect their own defence against the attacks that those signs represented, which also embody the mounting international criticism surrounding the situation in Hebron and the increasing interest around the issue of Shuhada Street.



*Figure 37: the signs "Arabs are prohibited, this is apartheid" and "Welcome to Aartheid Street" on Zliha Muhtaeb's balcony, above Shuhada Street. Pictures taken on August 23, 2011 and March 26 2012.*

In Wadi Hilwe, the streets around the City of David present a similar profile, and reflect a stark contrast with their direct environment. Indeed, they 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. Again, this kind of official and very meticulous staging of space seems very difficult to challenge considering the level of control that surrounds it: that is, armed guards as well as surveillance cameras deployed to control the area (figure 38).



Figure 38: renaming the houses in Silwan and designing the urban landscape. Pictures taken on September 30, 2012.

Following Zeneidi, we can argue that *“the symbolic of the name is the expression of a conquest in the city”* (2006: 197). The marking is the material demonstration of this conquest. In fact, another way to claim a ‘right’ over a place or to claim its appropriation is to name or re-name it in order to contest its official name, thus challenging the authority and the official writing of history (Langlais, 2005). Zeneidi takes the example of the squats in Europe as being *“named as conquered land, removed from the anonymity of the other buildings”* (ibid: 197). 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.

Here, names of places which are ignored or re-named by the power, and are thus imbued with the intent of controlling and remodelling the space, are re-affirmed and used as a political slogan, representing the situation and claims of the local contention. The marking and naming strategies impose a reality in space: they allow for the place to emerge and claim its existence, and provide for a specific identity. Imposing the place means recognizing the people who live there and give it its identity. 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 6).

We will see in the next part that 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; this is the strategy of “*sumud*”. *Sumud* is indeed considered as 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 maintenance as a lived space.

## 2. *Sumud*: Inhabiting space

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*” (صمود, *ṣumūd*<sup>109</sup>). *Sumud* is a rich, multi-layered term: generally translated simply as “steadfastness”, it designates a stubborn presence and an unwavering commitment to the land in the Palestinian context. In his book “The third way,” often quoted for its description of *sumud*, Raja Shehadeh describes it as being an attitude “*between mute submission and blind hate*” (1982). Anne Latendresse underlines it is a strategy that aims at “*providing help and support to enable the Palestinian population in the West Bank Gaza to remain on their land*” (Latendresse, 1995). I will argue that it puts together the lived space and the representations of space, the practices in place and the “sense of place”. We will firstly concentrate on the definitions gathered from the interviews then scrutinize the term and what it tells us about the Palestinian resistance in relation to space and in terms of practice.

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<sup>109</sup> The transliteration has been simplified in the text to make the reading easier; the Arabic and the translation – based on the system proposed by the review *Arabica* – are indicated between brackets for the main terms.

## 2.1. Defining sumud

In respect of the three case studies considered here, *sumud* constitutes a fundamental term whenever resistance and struggle are evoked. Based on the various interviews and conversations conducted on the field, it appears that *sumud* relies chiefly on two components that are common to all three cases studied: a certain spirit of resistance, and the importance of presence in the space, intended predominantly as the place of life.

The booklet produced by the Arab Educational Bookshop entitled “*Sumud: soul of the Palestinian people*”, is organized into nine different sections, corresponding to the nine dimensions of the term: namely, land and community, action/will, values, aesthetics and joy, passage of time, labour, demography, struggle, communication and solidarity. The synthesis of these different aspects deem that *sumud* can be defined as:

*“resistance as part of a personal lifestyle; the integration of one’s family’s needs, labor, values, networks and interests into the community’s struggle; the ‘pessoptimist’ mentality that is found in oppressed societies everywhere; the ability to find joy and beauty even in occasions of suffering and struggle; and communicating the local and the homely within the national struggle”* (VanTeeffelen, Biggs & Sumud Story House in Bethlehem, 2011: 56).

This definition shows the multiple meanings that can be embedded within this term, and also reflects its highly ideological use as an essentially positive notion illustrating the nobility of the Palestinian struggle. This view of *sumud* as “existence” or “lifestyle” has to be made explicit. It insists heavily on the connection with the land (from which all the other features actually ensue), the “*local and the homely*”, which are linked here to the space of the nation, a connection we will further explore in chapter 6.

The local space is indeed always presented as the basis for *sumud*. In al-Araqib, “*sumud*” is the central word used to describe the struggle of the village. 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, we can’t... 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*” [A1]. 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 (...) Steadfastness means protecting your presence in a place" [A8]. During an informal conversation with a friend, chanting under a tree, he also declared: "you see, they cannot take my smile. If I am in my house, without a house, under a tree, on a tree, I am still in my land. They would love to see us cry crouching in the dark!" (field notes, November 5, 2013). For Ismail: "Steadfastness is success. As long as I am steadfast in my land I am successful." [A12]. The slogans used during the weekly Sunday demonstration show the importance of the term; these include, for example:

صايهون صايهون... نخل الزعر ول زيتون

Steadfast steadfast, like the thyme and the olive

يا عراقيب صومود صومود... من ارضك طمع الاسود

Al-Araqib is steadfast, the lands of lions

كف بيكف وبي يبيد... عن ارضينا ملين يبيد

Hand on hand, Palm on palm, from our land we are not leaving<sup>110</sup>

In Silwan, the term is also used to account for the narratives and practices of resistance employed. Dr Omar Yousef defined it as "more than steadfastness, it's to stay with a spirit of resistance" [S5]. Fade Maragha, a resident of the central neighbourhood of Silwan, explained it as follows: "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" [S3], whereas Adnan Gaith, secretary of the Fatah party in Silwan and who lives in al-Bustan, explains:

"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" [S13].

For Sahar al-Abassi, sumud means that "we stay in our homes, we stay in our village, in our town. Just staying here is a kind of resistance, because really they don't make it easy at all..." [S11]. Amani Odeh, from al-Bustan, insists: "we are not leaving" [S15]. Wa'ed 'Aeshe defined the term explained:

"First of all to resist is to stay here, in our home and in our land, that's the first step that everyone must take. Because every day they come to arrest people, children, and give

<sup>110</sup> From the list of slogans used during the demonstrations by the girls of the village, retrieved on November 10, 2013.

*demolition orders, and you can't be silent, and not talk and let them take your house and take your children, you must do something against them to stop this situation. We are here, we are working here, we want to stay here. This is the simple things we can do. Sumud. This is a kind of resistance" [S6].*

As for Hebron, people refer to the same type of definition. Zliha Muhataseb, whose house is deep in the market of the old city, surrounded by numerous closed shops, explained for example:

*"Resistance, for me, is living in my house (...) We are samidin<sup>111</sup> in our house. Just living in these conditions, with a lot of tension around us, the fact that soldiers enter in our house, they bother us, they stop us when we come back from the market, yes, living in these conditions is a big sumud" [H2].*

Abed al-Ra'af, a shopkeeper of Hebron's old city stated: *"I'm weak, I just have patience... To sit down, to stay in my house, this is resistance" [H6]*, and Sundus Azza, a girl who participates in YAS activities, underlines: *"to live in the area we live in - we live near the settlement - this is resistance. To stay. Our resistance is also to be patient, because we suffer a lot from them [the settlers]" [H3]*. Hani Abu-Halawah, who lives close-by, at the entrance of the settlement of Admot Yishai, explained: *"Sumud: stay in your land, stay, you have to. It's not a choice, you have to. (...) To face your enemy, to face your condition, bad conditions, and stay" [H9]*. The "cage house", situated in the core of the Tal Rumeida settlement, is often evoked as the best example of the spirit of *sumud*: it is the only house inhabited by Palestinians in the middle of one of the most radical and settlements of the West Bank<sup>112</sup>. Three generations of a same family live in this house whose frontage is covered with metal grating to protect the external staircase and the inhabitants from the settlers, who are prone to throwing various things. The oldest inhabitant of the cage house has nevertheless explained that *"to suffer here in my home is better than to become a refugee" [H10]*.

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<sup>111</sup> Those practicing *sumud*. The singular form is "*samid*".

<sup>112</sup> The settlement of Tal Rumeida/Admot Yishai is indeed home to Baruch Marzel, a former member of the Kach party and 'right arm' of its founder, Meir Kahane, who inspired extreme right Jewish splinter groups such as the Jewish Defence League, considered as a terrorist group by the FBI (see <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terror/terrorism-2000-2001#ln%20Focus>). The Kach party was excluded from the Knesset in 1988 for incitement to racial hatred, and was completely banned in 1994, classified as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States, Canada and the European Union (see Conclusions of the Israeli Commission of Inquiry, presented to the Committee on the elimination of racial discrimination, <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/d6631f0eaea188fe8025675a005570fa>).

Notwithstanding that the general meaning of *sumud* is shared by all Palestinians, its application and understanding is subject to differences. According to the place, the focus can indeed be put on different dimensions of the concept: in Silwan, it is placed on the defiance shown to the imposition of the Israeli authority, to the annexation of Jerusalem and what is perceived as a tentative of Judeaization of the Eastern part of the city. The Hebronite *sumud*, like the Silwanese, is understood as holding onto the place, as not giving up in the face of the intimidation, and as not abandoning the houses that could be taken over by settlers and thus allow the Israelis to expand their hold on the place. Oren Yiftachel, a geographer specialist of the Negev Bedouins specifies: *“In the Bedouin case, sumud has meant holding on to their ancestral land and rebuilding their communities after numerous rounds of evictions and dispossessions”* (2008: 11). Bedouins also resist the Jewish Israeli expansion within Israel, a movement termed “internal colonialism” by O. Yiftachel. In all three cases, *sumud* is also the permanence in the face of the forced movement, 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.

However it is not only presence which is important. As expressed in the interviews quoted above, *sumud* means to stay, but also to live – and to keep on living in a place despite the hardships. Jawad Siyam explained, taking the example of switching on the lights at home to show that there is someone in the house, that *“every small thing you do here is resistance (...) Our existence here is resistance, not to leave the village, not to leave the city, it’s resistance”* [S7]. Staying, and continuing one’s daily life, is thus considered as the basic form of resistance, and one of the only things that is left to do.

This points to the essential role played by space in the definition of *sumud*. First, *sumud* is linked with the land, thought of as the land of Palestine. As Adnan Gaith, secretary of the Fatah party in Silwan, has explained: *“Sumud is a national and moral duty to resist and hold against these Israeli attacks”* [S13]. The place is only a precise point in space, linked to a wider frame of reference, where the characteristics of the land can be observed, and where resistance is realized (see chapter 6). The tight relation between *sumud* and the land has been expressed by various interviewees. Haqma Abu-Madighem, from al-Araqib, has explained for example: *“it means that we resist and we will remain on this land. We will resist as long as thyme and olives [will]”* [A1]. In Wadi-Hilwe, Fade Maragha asked: *“You know what it means? Steadfastness. Because the people, the rocks, the houses are standing against the most awful soldiers in the world”* [S3]. These emotional statements express

how space is at the same time a stake of the resistance, as one of its objectives (remaining), its objects or claims (property or right to place) as well as a means of conducting such struggle (the continued presence). The basic principle of *sumud* lies in the physical presence, a principle of resistance developed above: the bodies of the inhabitants are conceived as protectors of the land, a kind of last rampart against total appropriation or eviction. The presence also gives a material dimension to the claim of connection to the land and also makes it visible.

*Sumud* is not only about the defence of the land; presence itself also implies an action on a more limited scale, the place. The testimonies quoted above show that, more specifically, it supposes the inhabitation of the place, making the place exist and keeping its existence real. 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.

The practice of everyday life, the individual and collective routines, is therefore as important as the presence, and complements it as a central feature of *sumud*. As Walid Abu Halawa, in charge of public relations for the HRC, puts it in the following way: "*We are resisting by inhabiting*" [H5]. Collins has also underlined the centrality of "habitational resistance" in Palestine (Collins, 2011: 18).

The presence, the fact of inhabiting and living in a specific place, but also the practices and routines composing daily life, are thus three components that define the *sumud*, one of the basic means of resistance advanced by the Palestinians. This term refers to a central, national repertoire for the Palestinian struggle, but is based on an individual practice. It is a "*third course 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). It allows for easy identification and participation, as it represents a low-risk type of commitment [S16, S7], which basically supposes the maintenance of one's presence in a specific area, to stay where one lives and to go on with one's life.

*Sumud* is significantly linked to the local space and its identity, and thus to place. The fundamental spatial dimension attached to the term is thus very local: it is attached to the house and the

neighbourhood. We will see in the two next sections how *sumud* is concretely enacted in the three sites of contention at these two scales, laying out the strategies employed by the actors of contention in order to hold on to the place. We will firstly scrutinize the importance of the domestic space, and the meaning and practices deployed around the house, thus underlining the deep sense of place that also underlies *sumud*. This will lead us to focus on the role of women and the gendered dimension of protest. In a second section, we will develop how *sumud* is used at the level of the neighbourhood, notably with a variety of practices aiming at developing the place identity.

## 2.2. The house, the lived space and the gendering of protest

As an individual practice (or “lifestyle” according to VanTeeffelen et al. (2011: 56)), depending on presence in a certain area, scrutinizing the meaning and implications of *sumud* requires the study of the inhabitant’s strategies at the local level. The local scale comprises various spheres, or dimensions: the first one, closest to the individual and presented as essential by the interviewees is the house, or the domestic space.

The “security reasoning” of the Israeli apparatus, with what it implies in terms of control, surveillance and coercion, applies not only to the public space but often also invades the domestic one, including the homes (Hammami & Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Kuttab, 2001; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2005).

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 and actual demolitions, restrictions on building permits, invasion of the property (for example, during night raids, common in Hebron and Silwan) or through attempts to buy or occupy them. Demolitions can be used against families of terrorists, as a punishment – a measure largely undertaken during the second intifada –, or implemented for security reasons, for example, in order to construct the “security barrier” and develop a buffer zone, or, as we have seen, to destroy “illegal” structures built without permits.

Symbolically, the house represents the privileged seat of private life, family and intimacy; inhabited, the material form of the house becomes the home, a lived micro-space, and delimited place where the daily, private life takes place. The domestic space is indeed the “fundamental territory” of the human being and its primary form (Staszak, 2001: 347); it carries the social identity of the individual and his family. The organization of the Palestinian house of course gives a powerful insight into the organisation of society. It includes a gendered and separated space, a living room dedicated to receiving guests and it also displays elements indicative of the inhabitants’ identity: pictures of jailed or dead parents, political parties’ flags, religious inscriptions, etc. The position, tastes, ideology and social position 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: *“Home may act as a particular kind of safe place where (some) people are relatively free to forge their own identities”* (Cresswell, 2004: 26).

The presence is, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter, important to the creation of a place and the assertion of some claims over an area; it is also important at this micro level, as a continuous presence in the house is seen as a deterrent against Israeli takeovers of the area as well as, in the long run, a defence of the land by ensuring the place is not emptied and left by the inhabitants under the pressure and constraints that they have to face daily.

The house is one condition allowing for the maintenance of presence in place and thus the primary scale of *sumud*. It is also one of the objects of the *sumud*; the houses must be protected as the seat of everyday life, the material structure permitting the physical presence in a place as well, symbolically, as constituting the place where culture is transmitted. The understandings quoted above underline this aspect of the term: residents, for example, have insisted *“first of all, to resist is to stay here, in our home and in our land”* [S6]; *“Resistance, for me, is living in my house”* [H2]; *“To sit down, to stay in my house, this is resistance”* [H6]. Mona, an old woman living on the hill of Wadi Hilwe, explained: *“If they want to take my house, I want to resist! Through sumud of course; if they want to assault my house and take the land, how can I stay silent?”* [S15]. 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 presented as the real “samadin” – the ones doing *sumud* – as they are the “guardians of the house”. 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. She has asserted that *“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).

Amani Odeh, an inhabitant of al-Bustan and active in the neighbourhood’s community centre, has insisted on the evolution of the role of women in the family but also in the resistance: *“it is not like in the past, when everything was made by men. And I think that is because many men are arrested so they are not there to protect or face the government. They always have this fear that their kids will be arrested”* [S16]. Zliha Muhtaseb has developed the same idea:

*“Women in Hebron like in any other city in Palestine play a big role in resistance because first 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. Mostly men are at work and it’s the women who are sitting in the house”* [H2].

Sundus ‘Azza, a twenty year-old who participates in YAS also considers that: *“The resistance for women, here in this area [Tel Rumeida], is to protect or to stay in their home, because they are in an area with settlers and soldiers”* [H2].

When considering the role of women in the domestic space, the cultural organization and meaning of this space has to be taken into consideration. If the house is a realm that is quite universally attributed to women, 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. In al-Araqib, the movements of Bedouin women outside of the village are controlled by their husbands or fathers: their participation in demonstrations in other cities for example is subject to their agreement.

The Sunday demonstration, which is of restricted size and which takes place near the village, in an empty area, with only members of the extended family along with well-known activists, does not constitute a problem, and women tend to participate. It is usually the girls of the village who have the microphone and are in charge of chanting the slogans (see figure 39). 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 (see picture 40).



*Figure 39: the girls of the village and of the village who moved to Rahat animate the Sunday demonstration chanting slogans. Picture taken on November 10, 2013.*



*Figure 40: women of the village participate in a demonstration in front of the Knesset. Picture taken on October 7, 2013.*

In al-Araqib, women are in charge of making and keeping the “house” as a “home”; this is done in a context of constant destruction or threat of destruction, marked by the temporary character of any installation; in this context, the sense of being at home is not only seen as particularly important for the children, but is also deemed to cultivate an attachment to the place. Sabbah, ‘Aliye and

Haqma, the three women living in the village, are particularly active in the local resistance, always participating in the demonstrations and voicing their determination.

Haqma Abu Madighem 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, the spokespersons for the village are always the Sheikh, his son and other former inhabitants of the village; that is, they are always males. 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; moreover, those delegations are always mixed, making the presence of women or teenage girls problematic, as is the welcoming of men external to the family in the house. 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 veiled and covered.

In Silwan, women are generally not very active in the resistance, to the extent that the "active" resistance (participation in demonstrations, in political activities and so forth) is understood as being a man's matter. Sahar al-Abassi has underlined that women do not participate much in public gatherings such as demonstrations. The women interviewed in Silwan [S8, S9, S16] and in Hebron [H2, H3], or those who I met in informal contexts, also 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, like Umm Aiman [S9], are very involved politically, and actively take part in the demonstrations that are organized in Jerusalem on a wide range of topics linked to the occupation and the Palestinian struggle. However, the activities organized by the Maada community centre for the women of Silwan is very revealing of the role attributed to them in the resistance, *sumud*, and in daily life. Wa'ed Aeshe, an occupational therapist at the centre, has explained:

*"We did many workshops about the 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" [S6].*

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 role in the neighbourhood.

In Hebron, Sundus 'Azza explained that she does not participate in the demonstrations because her father is afraid something will happen to her [H3]. In the various political initiatives, including demonstrations and sit-ins, organized in Hebron, the participation of women is indeed inexistent, and they are totally absent from the public space in these events: the Open Shuhada Street demonstration is an all-male event, and the few women who are present are journalists or foreigners. The clashes that regularly take place in Bab al-Zawiyye are also exclusively carried out by men, old and young; women are totally absent. There are two main reasons that explain this. On the one hand, Hebron is one of the most traditional cities of Palestine when it comes to religion, adopting a rigid interpretation of Islam; as such, the separation between the sexes is often implemented in a similarly rigid way. Secondly, the city is a place of high confrontation due to the occupation; most of the protest events result in violent clashes. As such, many inhabitants avoid the old city in the days of heightened tension, and it is considered an unfit environment for women.

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, it has to be acknowledged that it also represents a strategic claim on the part of the activists, intended to present the foreign visitors with something they want to hear: that women are respected, and that despite the gender segregation, they are integrated and play an active role in society.

This narrative nevertheless relies on the social configuration of the Palestinian society, in which the women are responsible for the domestic space and the balance of the household; yet in some occurrences, they do play a particular role in, or become particular figures of, the resistance.

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. We will see that this dimension is completed by the importance attached to the neighbourhood (or village); it is indeed considered as another scale essential to the practice of *sumud*, centred on the creation or reinforcement of a local identity.

### 2.3. The neighbourhood as the scale of *sumud*

If *sumud* requires staying and living in one's house, it also relies on the importance of the space surrounding the domestic space, one 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. This means that beyond the presence and permanence in the domestic sphere, the protesters 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 conditions of life to help people in their daily life and to encourage them to stay.

It is indeed a declared goal of some activist groups to actively work in the neighbourhood; this might be done to improve the quality of life or to develop the inter-personal bonds at the local level in order to strengthen the community, or it might also be done to support and make the *sumud* more efficient and more bearable. The practice of *sumud* thus makes the local homogeneity or solidarity a more pressing matter. Issa Amro, from YAS, for example, has underlined the importance of "encouraging *sumud*" [H7], and Walid Abu-Halawah, from the Rehabilitation committee, has insisted on the significance of "making people come back" [H5].

As seen above, *sumud* is not only about presence but it is also about inhabiting a space, which implies a production of space, even if minimal<sup>113</sup>. Here, the production of space is specifically local and related to the strengthening of the social fabric by making daily life possible, or even more "normal". The practices deployed by the activists focus on community building and in particular on neighbourhood activities, targeting mainly the children.

During my fieldwork I observed numerous initiatives of community building, aiming more at strengthening the bonds inside the local community than at the development of a political agenda with external actors. This strategy was especially developed in Silwan. In Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan inhabitants have created a centre to relieve the problems arising from the lack of infrastructure in the village and in particular, the lack of free or recreational space. Both centres primarily aim to consolidate relevant social ties, having the objective of taking care of the children and the women.

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<sup>113</sup> See for example the *Cahier Internationaux de sociologie*, 1982, entitled « Habiter, produire l'espace ».

Amani Odeh, having underlined the powerlessness of the inhabitants of al-Bustan, has pointed out: *“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”* [S16].

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 centre 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 women (including embroidery and mosaics, but also a course on first-aid and so on) and children (including music, traditional dance, theatre, summer camps and so forth) [S6, S7, S10]. Maada also has a psycho-social department, which mainly aims to take care of children who have been arrested<sup>114</sup>; it also offers help to children with learning difficulties or problems with motor skills [S6]. Officially separated – but in practice closely connected – is the Wadi Hilwe information centre, which has three strands of activities. First, it is a material place where individuals and groups seeking information about Silwan are received. Established on a veranda alongside the Maada centre, near the city of David, it offers a presentation of the neighbourhood and the problems it faces, concentrating not only on the questions of archaeology and the impact of the City of David, but also on the hardships faced by the Silwanese children in their everyday life. The second component of the centre’s activity is its website (<http://silwanic.net/>), which is used to diffuse information about the neighbourhood via the Internet: this information includes photos and translated articles. Finally, the WHIC also offers legal advice, for example, in case of an arrest or the receipt of a demolition order (see chapter 7).

In al-Bustan, a tent represents the physical “centre” of the neighbourhood and polarizes the cultural and political activities of the inhabitants. An actual centre, which organizes different activities for children, including music, football, poems, and face painting [S16], was established in 2012. It also

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<sup>114</sup> Children arrests are very common in Silwan, see for example, the report by B’tselem *“Caution: children ahead”* (2010).

uses the space of the tent for its activity as Silwan suffers from a chronic lack of free space; the urban fabric is indeed very dense, especially in al-Bustan where the intricate paths are often the only free space between one wall and another, creating a maze of concrete. 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, "we called samed, we are here and not leaving" [S16]. It featured children of the neighbourhood engaged in theatre or reading poetry about Palestine (see figure 41). In this case, the use of the tent for the organization of activities also illustrates the tight link between political activities and social work, and especially with the initiatives that bring the local community together.



Figure 41: the "sumud festival" in al-Bustan tent. Picture taken on February 26, 2013.

These two centres focus mainly on grassroots work [S7] and are concerned firstly with local life and the cohesion and solidarity within the community. From this perspective, their activities are aimed chiefly at women and children. In Wadi Hilwe, the Maada Center organizes activities for the women of the neighbourhood: these include traditional embroidery, excursions to other Palestinian cities and meetings with other communities (Palestinian Christian women, for example), first-aid training, film-screenings and so on. 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. This allows for news and jokes to be exchanged over coffee and fruit. These activities 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 [S8, S9, S10]. Wa'ed 'Aeshe explained: *"Before the center the women were in their home and they didn't go out, the center makes the neighborhood here more active"* [S6], a fact confirmed by the women themselves.

As we have seen in the section above, the role of women and their practices of resistance are mainly focused on the domestic space and the continuity of daily life. However, women also have to handle their share of confrontation and coercion in the neighbourhood: in Silwan, the high rate of arrests amongst children, at home or in the streets, can also put women on the frontline of resistance. The stories of women standing up to soldiers who came to arrest their children at home or in their neighbourhood are common and underline their importance, as well as their strength and spirit of resistance. Amani Odeh for example, invoked the example of Mona, her mother-in-law:

*"Imm 'Atef is one of the strongest women I have ever seen, she is a tough woman and if there are problems in the street and she sees a soldier who wants to arrest someone she always starts crying "ooh my son, my son!" even if it is not her son. You know in Silwan everyone suspects everyone, so if you say this is my son you have to be brave, to say I will bring you to my house even if I don't know anything about you and then you'll leave, and I don't know if you are Palestinian you know!!"* [S16].

Thus, while the role and presence of women in public space is limited, or even sometimes invisible, this anecdote shows how micro-practices of resistance can be used in the frame of *sumud* and how some women who are not involved in politics and are afraid of joining public demonstration, can also intervene outside of their house.

Sahar Abassi, who works as the woman and child coordinator in the psycho-social department of Maada, elaborates on the challenge represented by women's participation in local activities in the following way:

*"Women in Silwan... Well we are working on it. In the last marathon ["Run for Silwan"] we organized, fifteen women joined. They didn't join the whole marathon, they just walked at the end, but it is good, it's an improvement! Especially here in Silwan women don't participate so much. They are the one running their own family, their own house, so we are working at empowering women here in Silwan"* [S10].

When it comes to children, two main goals can be identified as underpinning the establishment of such centres: namely, fun and safety. Amani Odeh, who volunteers with the children of al-Bustan, explains:

*“It’s an idea from one young man. After he finished school he thought ‘I was raised in Silwan but there is no space to have fun, there are always problems, always arrest...’ So he came up with this idea to have a centre made mainly from volunteers and to have activities that encourage kids to have fun” [S16].*

The other major goal that these centres try to achieve – one which is especially key to Maada as it has a real physical space in which to organize its activities, separate from the street, as well as greater financial means – is the safety of the children, both physical and psychological:

*“[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%... (...) No place is safe, even your own house is not a safe place. In Palestine, not only in Silwan... But it was a safer place for them to learn to socialize, to be creative” [S10].*

*“The goal is to keep the children safe, because before we established the centre the children were all the time in the street, they didn’t have a playground, they didn’t have services because the Israeli municipality doesn’t allow us to build anything...” [S6]*

The centre thus tries to provide protection to the children: protection from the soldiers and from arrest, but also from the general atmosphere in which they live and in which they sometimes become trapped. It has been said: *“Sometimes it’s the only thing they talk about, soldier, settlers, stones, we try to let them go out from these things” [S10].* The activities try to provide a means by which the children can disconnect from a violent and pressurised environment and for a moment get back to simply being children.

*“When you keep a child away from the street, you will also keep him away from being arrested. When you make a place for children to play, you will keep them safe from the settlers... We try to keep them safe. We can’t... But somehow... Yes, so this is political” [S6]*

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 6).

In Hebron, the same concern about children has led to similar initiatives, mixing a deep social concern with a political commitment. Hani Abu Heikel explained, for example, that on this basis he has organized “restorative circles” with the Hebron defence committee:

*“First of all I focus on the kids who are detained, tortured or arrested. (...). I start to talk about my experience in arrest, how they treat us, how they put us in the court, how they put handcuffs, bring the dogs, I have a full experience with that, I spent more than four years and a half in Israeli jails. So imagine when they hear about my experience, and I don’t feel shame, I’m not scared, so that gives them a motive to talk. They start to talk. If they talk about what happened to them it will be very helpful” [H9].*

The activists from YAS also try to work for the neighbourhood. As Issa Amro has explained:

*“We try to do anything possible to increase the awareness and to strengthen the community here. We do a lot of activities here in the center: English courses, Hebrew courses for the women, video training, targeting the kids for entertainment, summer camp” [H7].*

The centre indeed organizes some events for the children: for example, “day of fun” are organized on Saturdays for the children of Tal Rumeida. These afternoons involve games as well as engagement in political activities: these include chanting political slogans (“1, 2, 3, 4, occupation no more” for example) or writing letters, as was done, for example, on the occasion of President Obama’s visit to Israel and Palestine, to ask the end of occupation (see figure 42). However the activities of this group are much less structured than those of Maada, for example; YAS is much more informal in its functioning and operates with less resources; as a result, many of the activities developed by the activists for the neighbourhood, like the language courses, are not organised on a concrete, or at least, on a regular, basis.

Other initiatives directed at helping the neighbourhood is the organization of a “volunteer day”, generally held on Fridays, when the youth of the group gather to clean up or to renovate a place. Issa Amro, the coordinator of YAS, explained that it is called the “*samidun* project”, named after “those who practice *sumud*” as it aims at “*strengthening the sumud, the steadfastness*” [H7]. The activists help families of the area to fix their houses by painting, or renewing electrical and plumbing installations. Individual initiatives also have a similar objective and aim to make life in the neighbourhood easier and nicer. Zliha Muhtaseb, for example, has created a kindergarten above

her house for the children of the old city: *“There are no safe places but we try to create safe places, at least for children. Like the kindergarten. It serves as a community centre in the afternoon”* [H2].



*Figure 42: "day of fun" for the children of Tal-Rumeida, at the YAS centre. Pictures taken on February 14, 2013.*

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. The house renovated by the YAS activists in Tal Rumeida was therefore changes from being a garbage dump to a kindergarten for children of Tal Rumeida, painted with figures from cartoons and equipped with an artificial lawn. The actions of renovation carried out by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee in H2, the activities of which have ben developed in chapter 4, provide another good example of a politic that aims at sustaining the *sumud* and the presence of inhabitants by developing the conditions of life, through modification to the urban fabric. The active production of space, and the transformation of its materiality, is made specifically to allow for the continuity of the social life and to support the resistance through *sumud*: *“this kind of thing is giving us more strength to stay into our home”* [H7].

For the Bedouins of al-Araqib, the village, or the area of the cemetery, that came to represent it, is the space of their everyday life: the presence on the ground is essential and is even the only dimension considered for the *sumud*. Indeed, strengthening the *sumud* is done predominantly through oral traditions, transmitting the attachment to the land and its tight links with the extended family. As the village had a very limited number of structures – nearly none remained at the time this thesis was written - and is located in an isolated area with very few inhabitants, the need for cohesion is not internal but external. Indeed, the families living on the site are already living in close cohesion. 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 of the cause of the villagers is also seen as essential, but is also directed towards the external environments, for example, with monthly demonstrations organised in Rahat. The village is frequented regularly by some of the former inhabitants. Events are also organized to allow for a more significant presence: thus at Friday prayer, as well as for all major religious festivities (weddings, Aid, but also for some Iftar, the dinners of Ramadan), the members of the family and the old inhabitants come back to al-Araqib to participate and to show their attachment to the place.

The neighbourhood appears as an essential scale for the resistance in general, and for *sumud* in particular. Notwithstanding that the presence supposed by *sumud* is practiced mainly by staying in one's house, thus protecting the property and the family's roots in the place, it also supposes the attachment to the place in which the house is installed. The local life that *sumud* supposes is thus realized and maintained at the level of the neighbourhood. In all three cases, the "meso" level of the neighbourhood or village indeed appears as the scale where people seek to intervene to allow this presence and local life to go on and to make the *sumud* possible. This 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" [S7], the normality of everyday life, or at least some elements of normality, can facilitate this continued existence; 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. If their presence is assured, the inhabitants and the activists can then concentrate on the second aspect of *sumud*: the notion of permanence, that is, of ensuring that the presence will be possible over time.

However this "normality" is different across the case studies: in Silwan, the sense of safety and of community has to be reinforced; the activities of the centres in al-Bustan and Wadi-Hilwe show the need to reinforce, protect and sometimes recreate, the cohesion of the group. They help to re-establish social ties which are damaged by strong tendencies of suspicion and by the constant pressure on the inhabitants. The work of these centres is directed towards the area in which they are implemented, supporting and strengthening the cohesion of the local society. Encouraging the

children to have fun and to engage in varied activities, trying to provide them with a safe place in which to do so, as well as encouraging the engagement and awareness of women, are all means of community-building.

In Hebron, the activities organized by some inhabitants and at the centre of YAS also have a similar aim, but with a lesser impact. We will see that it is often not their main strategy or objective; indeed, international advocacy and political tourism are the activities on which actors primarily concentrate (see chapter 7).

In al-Araqib, the cohesion and solidarity within the village is already very strong. The support from *sumud* is thus sought outside of the village, either with the former inhabitants or the Bedouin community as a whole. While external associations often organize activities for children, 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, foreign support and international advocacy also become an important part of the villagers' struggle (see chapter 7).

*Sumud* thus relies on place as the scale where resistance can be made through daily life, but it also reveals an important "sense of place", 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 thus to produce spatial narratives, not only for the purposes of the residents but also for the external observers and visitors (see chapters 6 and 7).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Israeli control of space makes any direct action risky and any actual change difficult to reach. *Sumud* is thus presented as the main available practice of resistance. The struggle on the part of the Palestinians thus takes the shape of practices of everyday life carried out at the local level. Even if there is no or little normality in life under occupation, or in life as a discriminated minority, as the case of the Bedouins illustrates, the recreation of a feeling or an appearance of normality is presented as an act of resistance in itself.

In the next section, I will uncover the various questions raised by this statement, and the definition of *sumud* as resistance; I will also study in more depth the central meaning of place in the struggle, as it represents not only a resource it but also a goal.

### **3. Place, spatial justice and the right to place**

In this concluding part, I will discuss two questions introduced by the definition and practice of *sumud* developed above. Firstly, I will tackle if, and how, *sumud* can be considered as resistance and as a full-fledged part of the repertoire of contention, to then turn to the question of how it puts place at the centre of the Palestinian resistance.

As the strategies adopted as part of *sumud*, or to help and support it, are based on everyday life and the appearance of normality, they appear for the most part to be basically survival tactics. Indeed, they rely on people concentrating on their daily lives and the micro-practices that allow them to go on despite the tense context; as such, they focus largely on individual situations. Where should the line between survival tactics and resistance strategies be drawn? Can those practices really be considered as part of a wider repertoire of contention? We will see that this very question is also present within the Palestinian society, but that these two dimensions, contention and survival, are not necessarily separate, as a practice that is adopted to allow for a certain normality of life can also be imbued with a strong political meaning.

In the second part of this section, we will see that *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”. Inscribing this reflection in line with the scholarship on social justice, and that concentrating on the “right to the city”, I will argue that the place now represents the central spatiality of the Palestinian resistance.

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

The main practice of resistance deployed by the Palestinians in all three cases studied here is *sumud*, which implies the maintenance of life in spite of the various hardships. The definition that is usually given for *sumud*, combining presence (“staying”) and steadfastness (“patience”), attributes a very passive dimension to this practice. Even if we have illustrated above that it also relies on the safeguarding of local life, which introduces a more dynamic and active aspect, the question remains: can it be considered as part of the repertoire of contention? It is presented as a fully-fledged repertoire by most of the Palestinians met and interviewed; some advance it as the strongest means at hand to continue the resistance, while others present it as a very weak choice, a repertoire adopted out of discouragement and the 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.

*Sumud* is usually presented as a reference common to all Palestinians, which even brings them together: “it represents everyone; we use something all Palestinians agree on, the leftists, the right-wing...” explained Issa Amro [H7] from YAS. Amani Odeh also asserted: “*sumud* is for all, for Muslims, for Jews, Christians, it is wider thinking” [S16]. Aziz Abu-Madighem also underlined the use of the term by Palestinians in general, including by the Bedouins of Israel: “*Sumud* became the general term that Palestinians use to describe their reality” [A8]. Salim Siyam, in Silwan, nevertheless presented it as having a “red” connotation, as being a tool used by the left-wing parties (PFLP and DFLP, of communist inspiration) (field notes, February 18, 2013). However this assessment can be understood in light of his own position, relying more on a religious standpoint, thus favouring concept of “*ribat*”, an equivalent of *sumud* with a more significant Islamic connotation (see chapter 6, section 2.1.).

While *sumud* represents a strategy to which all people can resort, which can be supported by collective action and intervention on the urban and social fabric of the neighbourhood, it depends predominantly on individual practice. It also requires a limited commitment, and can thus be totally invisible. As has been underlined several times during the interviews, it allows people who are afraid of reprisals to resist in their own way, and to contribute to the common struggle. The fact that one can claim to resist by just going on with his or her life, represents a problem for some Palestinians, who consider it a convenient way to hide one’s passivity and discourage more active mobilization

and commitment. In fact, *sumud* raises the question of engagement even inside the Palestinian society. It is presented as a real 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.

The debate around *sumud* usually revolves around two axes: that of passivity and that of normalization, both of which question implicitly its status as a repertoire or a mere survival tactic.

The words used in Arabic to designate the type of practices implemented by the actors in the local struggle are interesting for what they say about the categories used, especially those of “*sumud*” and “resistance”. It is also interesting to note that the meaning changes with the translation, making the equivalences uncertain, but also revealing thought-provoking aspects of the terminology used. The Arabic word usually translated by “resistance” in English is “*al-muqawame*” (المقاومة). However, the meaning and implications contained in both words are slightly different. The “*muqawame*” evokes an active, even armed resistance.

When asked about the possibilities or actual practices of resistance (translated by “*muqawame*”) in their area, many Palestinians answered sadly that there is no more “resistance”, that “resistance” was a term which should be reserved to the kind of struggle that took place during the first intifada; the second intifada is still seen as another kind of repertoire, closer to a war between organized groups, political parties, religious factions and the Israeli army. Thus, what now occurs in Palestine is often not considered to be “resistance” according to the Arabic terminology. A shopkeeper of Hebron, observing the ongoing clashes opposing the *shabab* 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).

From this perspective, according to the categories used by the actors, it can be seen to be problematic to include *sumud* under the label of resistance. The terms do not necessarily have opposed or contradictory meanings, but certainly have different ones for a lot of Palestinians. Aziz Abu-Madighem insists 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. The person who resists can use several ways available to*

*him/her to kill, cause damage or to control the opponent side; in our case it is the State. 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.” [A8]*

This definition is enlightening, as it clarifies the categories used by the actors; “muqawame” thus corresponds strictly to an active, even violent resistance. In this description, Aziz points out another difference that he considers to be crucial, namely, the spatiality upon which both strategies rely. As we saw previously, *sumud* is localized and rooted in a place, while resistance may involve movement, to adapt and counter the opponent’s reaction, in a guerrilla-type dynamic.

Salim Siyam introduced a nuance, indicating that *sumud* enters into the category of “*muqawame silmiye*” (المقاومة السلمية), or “peaceful resistance” [S11]. This nuance can be linked to the notion of passive or “static *sumud*” evoked by Meghdessian (1998), used initially after 1967, and subsequently transformed into a more active one; this latter understanding was based on community cohesion and corresponded to the type that we were able to observe in these years. Meghdessian indicates:

*“Sumud emerged in the seventies, well before the advent of the Intifada, as a means to protect the integrity of Palestinian society, which was in danger of deterioration. In the eighties, Sumud was transformed into “Sumud Muqawim” or Resistance Sumud. This was a more dynamic ideology and practice that spread self-help among the inhabitants” (ibid.: 41).*

Kimmerling and Migdal also indicate that the *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 fellah 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 “resistance”, it derives from and relies on the same foundations but is implemented differently. The second type relates more directly to the definition advanced by the majority of people (set out in section 2.1.), taking into account the initiatives

organized at the level of the neighbourhood to increase cohesion and solidarity, practically adding a relational dimension to the concept, extending and rooting its application in the place to a greater degree.

As expressed in the term “sumud muqawim”, this dynamic attitude, which prolongs and complements the “presence”, relies on an active opposition to the authorities. It has to be noted that the actions considered to be part of *sumud* are not only those that take place in the domestic sphere, with the aim of strengthening the social links. Some concrete initiatives, such as the constant rebuilding of al-Araqib, represent one of the basic practice required of the inhabitants by the spirit of *sumud*, both to materially allow them to stay, and also to show their disobedience and thus illustrate their claims.

Despite the internal debates and disagreements between the Palestinians, *sumud* is thus generally considered according to this understanding of “resistance *sumud*”; it is often thought of by many as an active practice. It was, for example, expressly defined this way in the interviews conducted in English: *sumud* was then presented as being fully part of the resistance strategies, having practical implications and results at the political as well as the social level.

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 no immediate possibility to counter the 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 *sumud* 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. These actions thus have a double status; they are meant to help others sustain *sumud*, but are also themselves considered to be part of the *sumud* that is deployed by the actors that implement them.

*Sumud* is thus presented and used as the core concept of the Palestinian non-violent resistance, in the three sites of contention, where many actors, make it key to their approach of resistance.

*Sumud* is indeed often used as the term that best describes, and even incarnates, the Palestinian “spirit of resistance” (see Routledge & Simons, 1995). It is usually linked to a second concept, also presented as central by many actors: that of non-violence. Non-violence is thus presented as one of the elements defining *sumud* in all three cases as well, more generally, as a founding principle of the struggle and a conscious choice of repertoire.

*Sumud*, which thus implies a non-violent but proactive struggle, falls under the definition of “resistance” detailed in chapter 1 (section 2.3.), that is, within the accepted understanding of the term used in social science, which broadly corresponds to its use in daily language and which engages a wide range of practices. James Scott defines resistance as:

*“any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by superordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those superordinate classes”* (1985: 290).

His account of everyday forms of peasants’ resistance highlights the “ordinary weapons” used by powerless groups who do not have the possibility to protest in an open and structured way (ibid.). *Sumud* can clearly enter into a similar category, that is, as an “ordinary weapon of the weak”, as a strategy that in its simplest form does not require organization or coordination, any economic means or even visibility. Thus, an obstinate presence in place, made with a political intent, already corresponds to one of the variations of *sumud*.

However, even if *sumud* fits, both in its “active” and “passive” form, in the framework of resistance as one practice within the broader repertoire of contention, it seems necessary to consider it also within the Middle Eastern context, which has been sketched in the first chapter of this thesis; the resistance practices indeed have to be considered outside of the classic, and often ethnocentric, frame of organized social movements. Considering how it relates to recent trends in literature can shed further light on the way *sumud* can be tackled and studied. In this perspective, the writings of Asef Bayat are essential, notably as he insists on the importance of everyday life and routine practices in Middle Eastern politics, which he terms the “art of presence”. He insists on the crucial role played by 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. For it is precisely in such spaces that alternative discourses, practices and politics are produced”* (Bayat, 2004: 5).

This definition encompasses the practices supposed by *sumud*, as it highlights a variety of actors (individuals, groups, and possibly citizens), who impose their presence “in space” to reclaim their rights. Although the space referred to here (the “social space”) is an abstraction, designating rather a sphere of communication and expression, A. Bayat highlights certain points that need to be explored: without concentrating on space or taking it as a target of his study, he continues to underline the importance of different spaces (the street, the backyard, the public space and so forth) not only for the resistance, but also for practices of everyday life and “non-movement” practices.

*Sumud* could thus be seen as the Palestinian “art of presence”, as one branch of a typology of action that also exists in other countries of the region<sup>115</sup>, trying to balance the need for struggle with the need to go on living. *Sumud* seems to be even more fitting in terms of 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.). Persistence and presence, having the aim of bringing about a political and social change, inscribes *sumud* into this type of repertoire.

The concept of “non-movement” can also shed an interesting light on *sumud* as its very name seems to designate the opposite of a movement and thus a static or passive attitude. The notion of “non-movement” refers to struggles that exist through routines and practices of everyday life (Bayat, 2010: 20), and is indeed so tightly mingled with the everyday life that the protest is expressed through the life of the people itself. Bayat notes that containing or suppressing non-movement would “require a spectacular surveillance with cameras, checkpoints, and everyday detentions” (ibid.: 21) as it is the very “flow of life” that would need to be controlled and interrupted. The measures enumerated seem to provide a precise description of the constraints imposed in the three sites of contention, and at various degrees, by Israel. Notwithstanding that no constant checkpoint has been installed in Silwan, the police blockades installed in the neighbourhood on a regular basis constitute a close equivalent. Cameras are largely used in Hebron and Silwan, and

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<sup>115</sup> This point should be further examined in future research.

detentions are also imposed frequently. From this point of view, the Bedouins to enjoy a wider space of freedom but are still not treated according to the democratic principles to which the State claims to adhere. As we have seen, the coercion and repression takes on other forms in the Negev, via demolitions enforced by bulldozers, for example. Even if the measures adopted by the Israeli authorities also answer to other sets of logic, they do also correspond to the strategies evoked by Bayat to counter the type of struggle led by “non-movement”, disrupting the life of the Palestinian population and fragmenting the territory. However, the “art of presence” also responds to this imposed explosion of the social and geographical dimensions of the Palestinian society, re-centring the resistance in spheres and scales that are more complicated to control.

*Sumud* thus represents a central practice in the Palestinian repertoire of contention, as a real “weapon of the weak” (Scott, 1990), based on ordinary and pervasive practices of everyday life carried out on a widespread basis - by “millions of people” according to the analysis of Bayat - by actors who remain fragmented (as they do not form a collective actor) and who act individually but in the same direction (ibid. 21). While the practices and impact of *sumud* are not as visible as those of demonstrations, *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 the personal state of mind and its application. Of course, the 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.

*Sumud* thus represents a national repertoire, a “Palestinian art of presence” that relies on individual positions and actions. It represents a strategic choice, drawing on practices that “belong to and represent a movement culture, and are therefore linked to the activists’ values” (Della Porta & Diani, 2005: 181). Indeed, *sumud* is often invoked to illustrate, and prove, the determination and the struggle of the Palestinians.

We will move on now to consider another important point that prolongs this reflection on the importance attributed to the place that is expressed through the practice of *sumud*, but that *sumud* also seeks to reinforce. It shows the many facets that the spatialities play in the Palestinian struggle: the place is indeed, as we have seen, the object, target, means and the resource of the protest. In consequence, I will argue that one of the fundamental claims expressed through *sumud* – and by

the Palestinian resistance in general – is that of the “right to place”. The place is of course the dimension in which everyday life takes place, with very practical aspects, but it is also a site imbued with meaning, emotions, values, history, and other dimensions on which the struggle relies (see also chapter 6).

### 3.2. Spatial justice and the right to place

We have seen that space itself, as well as territory and land can be defined as the main targets in the conflict; the importance of property, sovereignty and the declared aim of ensuring a territorial continuum, are all elements which are of crucial importance for Israel from a strategic point of view. However, we have seen in the preceding chapter that Israeli politics has also been defined as “*spacio-cidal*”, with *place* being its main target (Hanafi, 2006: 93). Indeed, Hanafi claims that Israeli policy “*targets land for the purpose of rendering inevitable the ‘voluntary’ transfer of the Palestinian population, primarily by targeting the space upon which the Palestinian people live*” (ibid.: 107). This policy is the result of a political project, as well as of a dynamic process that has seen Israeli apparatus interacting with the Palestinian resistance, both violent and non-violent, for years.

Transfer is often presented by the Palestinian population as the ultimate goal of the Israeli authorities; all the coercive and repressive measures taken are often considered to be just strategies to reach this objective. Issa Amro recognized a “quiet transfer policy” [H7]. Zliha Muhtaseb indicated: “*Everywhere the occupation is fighting people. It is trying to do a transfer to the people*” [H2]. Other interviewees pointed out: “*they want us to move, it is a transfer project*” [S2]; “*The Jews are very racist; they always talk about killing and transferring the Arabs*” [A12]; “*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*” [S11]. *Sumud* is considered as the fundamental strategy that can be implemented to oppose the 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*” [H9].

*Sumud* thus occupies a central role not only in the strategies but also in the objectives of the Palestinian struggle, aiming at ensuring a continuous presence and a control, even if minimum, over

the lived place. The fear of transfer is real among the Palestinian population, and often linked to the memory of the Nakba, which represents a real collective trauma, when, in 1948 during the war that followed the creation of Israel, many Palestinians were forced to leave or flee their houses and villages; many could not return afterwards for various reasons, due to many villages being destroyed, the borders being closed and the passage of various laws that changed the status of the property to that of “abandoned” property. *Sumud* is thus seen as a means of resistance against this kind of uprooting, which was allowed as a result of the absence, notwithstanding that it was temporary, of the residents, which resulted in the loss of place and place-related identity.

In each site of contention studied here, people fight to retain control over the place, the site in which they live, even if only under a minimum form through their physical presence or their daily practices. The Israeli strategies of control are indeed heavily implemented at the local level, through legal, material or psychological means, each of which use a spatial dimension. Spatial and social injustice appear to be tightly linked, one leading to and reinforcing the other in a continuous loop of causes and consequences (Landy & Moreau, 2015: 12). The opposing movement in the fight for power also associated both: the Palestinians challenge social and spatial injustice at the same time, claiming the protection of their human and social rights but also the possibility to access and control space, to use, model and appropriate it according to their needs, habits and claims.

In this sense, I want to introduce the “right to place” here, to account for the tight association existing between place, politics and contention in the Palestinian cases considered. I will inscribe this concept against the background of the rich scholarly literature existing on spatial justice and the right to the city.

The concept of the “right to the city”, evoked by Henri Lefebvre and then largely reused in sociology and geography, notably in the writings of David Harvey (1973) and Don Mitchell (2003, 2010), is attached to a very Marxist and urbano-centrist reading of society (see also Dikeç, 2002, 2009; Lopes De Souza, 2010; McCann, 2002; Purcell, 2002, 2009). The concept concentrates exclusively on cities as a privileged environment for inequalities, but also one where change can emerge. In his reflection on the term, published in 2003, David Harvey underlined the importance of the term in the fight against capitalism and neoliberalism. He also underlined one of the major issues with any research that draws on the idea of “justice”; it is a difficult term to define and can rely on various conceptions of justice that have been outlined across time (for example, egalitarian, utilitarian,

contractual or Hobbesian definitions of justice); he nevertheless presented the “right to the city” as an “inalienable right” (Harvey, 2003: 941) that should seek to create more inclusive cities.

I contend that those terms would gain from being more inclusive of the general dynamics of the social life in terms of justice and people’s rights. Indeed, while some aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are sometimes read in light of the fight between the capital and a force opposing neoliberalism, it is first of all a political fight between two parties for the control of a territory. I contend that the concepts of spatial justice and the right to the city are particularly relevant in this framework and should be applied in this context, even if only at a political level. Indeed, thinking about justice and rights means tackling the balance of power and the struggle between the domination and contention.

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 struggle of al-Araqib is literally a struggle for the right to a village: the existence of the village, physically as well as symbolically, is denied, as the houses are demolished and as the presence of the people is countered through force and actions in court. 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 thus its urban dimension is too specific a goal and does not account for the real aims of these movements: the protestors ask not just for an inclusion into the city as such, either as a call to be able to share equally the resources or as something which is need for participation and consideration, but also as a political request for a local equivalent of the national claim to sovereignty and independence. 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, and can include matters of property and land, as well as culture and identity. It seems that it would be more fruitful to evoke a general "right to place". Even though the concept seems very broad and possibly fuzzy, it allows for consideration of the main elements of the right to the city, and for similar dynamics that occur place 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*.

Concentrating on the similarities in the social dynamics rather than on the shape of the environment generates the possibility to observe regularities in the objects and types of struggle. 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.

All of the elements present in the contention take place in each of the three case studies. The first two are essential, as seen above, to build the places, but also to claim them and to construct the struggle. Purcell underlines that "*appropriation includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space*" and is thus directly linked to "*the right of people to be physically present in the space of the city*" (2002: 103). The right to place also supposes the possibility to produce space; the inhabitants must thus have "*full and complete usage*" of the place (Lefebvre, 1996: 179). Harvey insists on this aspect when defining the "right to the city", stating that it designates:

*"not merely a right of access to what the property speculators and state planners define, but an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire, and to re-make ourselves thereby in a different image"* (2003: 941).

This statement can be applied to the "right to place" as well, and designates the variety of goals implied, as it sums up the various dimensions we have already evoked; moreover, it highlights other aspects of the resistance that we will study in the next chapters. Firstly, Harvey designates the "conceived space" of Lefebvre as we have seen in chapter 4, that of "property speculators and state planners", the space designed and administered by the authorities and the technicians, who can

decide on or deny the “right to access” through the material development of space, with planning and urbanism, but also legal and administrative decisions. The right to the city, and by extension, the right to place, requires the opportunity to be active, and to “make space”. 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”. The right to place is indeed also linked to feelings and attachment, as well as to culture and memory, all invested in a particular site. Moreover, they are all dimensions of the resistance that will be further explored in the next chapter.

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.

In conclusion, we have seen in this chapter that the Palestinian resistance is predominantly 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 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 even sometimes 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.

This presence in place represents the main strategy used by the Palestinians in Hebron, Silwan and al-Araqib. Called “*sumud*”, it represents a real national repertoire of contention, which relies on a very passive foundation – to stay in one’s house and keep on living – but evolves through more active variations. As we have seen, it also leads the activists to organize a better solidarity and a tighter network at the local level, to try and better the conditions of life in order to encourage people to stay. The “*sumud*” is invoked as the central and sometimes only way to resist: a whole narrative is developed around it with many activities, centres or initiatives being named after this practice in order to affirm its importance but also, I contend, to impose it as an essential element of the local identity.

I have argued in the last section of this chapter that the strategies based on the importance of place, but also on the centrality of place itself in the Palestinian resistance and identity, are best studied under the generic concept of “right to place”. Indeed, this concept, based on the “right to the city”, highlights the struggle for power played out at the local level. Without referring necessarily to a Marxist point of view, it highlights the centrality of place in the political game, opposing a dominating force and a resisting one. It also expresses vividly that place is a goal of the resistance, with everything it supposes in terms of access, use, production and identity.

The importance of place in the Palestinians’ identity will be further explored in the next chapter. I will expose how the “sense of place”, already largely present in *sumud*, is used and integrated into the practices of resistance with references to culture, history, and memory. The importance of place appears as the basis of many of the residents’ claims in all three cases studied: we will see that beyond the claims to a presence and life in place, the contention also claims a right to an identity, to an anchoring in space. The right to place thus goes with the right to “a spatial narrative” (Adalah, 2010). We will see that the actors indeed seek to challenge the Israeli control and to produce space also by producing a discourse on space, by manipulating the meaning of the places that are important to them (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 162). In so doing, we will see that place, while it is central in the Palestinian resistance, does not represent an exclusive spatiality. Indeed, in the “spatial narratives” used to support the resistance, Palestinians closely associate place with territory and landscape.



## CHAPTER 6

# AROUND THE PLACE: A SACRED GEOGRAPHY

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In the cases studied here, it appears that the struggle relies chiefly on place. The place, the locality, identified with the neighbourhood or the village, represents 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 ideologically-driven “conception” of space, which contributes to further the fragmentation of the Palestinian territory and society by increasing the presence of settlers, the police or military presence or even the legal means that might be utilised. 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, protesters engage with other strategies?

As seen in chapter 5, the various actors engaged in resistance in the different case studies insist chiefly on *sumud* as a practice which challenges the authorities’ control of space. *Sumud*, which includes a myriad of micro-practices, such as marking and naming the space, as well as the illegal construction or renovation as outlined in chapter 4, aims at demonstrating an appropriation of the local space and at claiming that it exists as a place, that stands out by its identity. *Sumud* thus has a practical application, as a repertoire of contention relying on presence and everyday life in place, but it also depends on a strong sense of place. 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). Oslender defines it as “the way in which human experiences and imagination appropriates the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location” (2004: 961) while T. Cresswell as “the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place” (2004: 7). Indeed, in addition to occupying and appropriating the place, displaying presence and reinforcing the local cohesion, the

actors also respond to control and coercion in another way, namely, 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 terrain of resistance and each repertoire adopted, unique (Routledge & Simons, 1995: 491).

In this chapter, we will tackle more specifically what Lefebvre called the “space of representation”, which is lived through images and symbols; *“it is the dominated, subjected space, that the imagination tries to modify and appropriate. It covers the physical space by using symbolically its objects”* (Lefebvre, 1974: 49). We will thus concentrate on how symbols, as well as narratives and representations, draw on the “sense of place” to frame the struggle, and in so doing also impose or produce new spatialities. The actors thus appeal to strategic frames *“that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices”* (Barnes & Duncan, 1992: 8), in order to assess the attachment to the land, empower the community, increase cohesion and legitimize the struggle.

As set out above, the resistance in all three cases depends firstly on the place and the local, relying mainly on inhabitants and their occupation of the place. Different frames are used according to the place, the strategy and the claims of the struggle. Frame and repertoire are often closely related, as the example of *sumud*, developed above, clearly shows. While *sumud* is linked to a set of practices and represents a full-fledged repertoire, it also implies a discourse concerning the value and meaning of local space to its inhabitants, who claim and demonstrate their attachment to their house but also to their neighbourhood through their will to remain and live in this specific place notwithstanding the hardships they have to face.

Moreover, we will see that the meaning vested in space is central in terms of collective identity. Indeed, the framing of the resistance through spatial references shows the extent to which memory, traditions, cultures and emotions are embedded in space for the Palestinians, and how this meaning is imbued and concentrated in place, and is used to legitimize and reinforce the struggle. As Paul Routledge notes *“Frequently the conflicts that arise from contested space set the particularities of place (eg., culture, knowledge, history, identity, language) against the totalizing and homogenizing forces of development and domination”* (Routledge, 1993: 139). We will see that the particularities of Palestinian places are indeed used to oppose the Israeli takeover and to demonstrate an old rooting in space. However we will see that these particularities usually revert

back to a national imaginary, opposing a sacralised national territory to the deterritorialization imposed by Israeli politics; the sense of place is projected onto the territory but also onto the natural landscape that characterizes Palestine according to the actors of contention.

We will see that the resistance and place identity relies on certain landmarks, invoked as symbols of the Palestinian territory, and of the “unified”, lost Palestine. Some of those symbolic elements are turned into what the French cultural geography calls “hauts lieux” (literally “high places”), a concept that implies a combination of *“a place, an appropriation, a collective practice and forms of sacralization”* (Clerc, 2004). It designates places as being collectively invested with cultural meanings. J. Bonnemaïson proposed a similar concept, that of “geosymbol”, defined as *“a place, an itinerary, an area that, for religious, political or cultural reasons take on a symbolic dimension for some people or ethnic group, which reinforces them in their identity”* (1981: 256). No equivalent exists in the English literature, although the translation “geo-symbols”, is used in some articles, always linked to Bonnemaïson (see for example, Bedford, 1989; Ferrero et al., 2012; Mills, 2010).

In the first part of this chapter, I will analyse the significance of few specific landmarks including mosques, trees, water, and cemeteries. In all three cases studied, these elements have been attributed particular importance by the inhabitants, and have been designated as being fundamental for their local identity, referring to religion, nation and memory. We will see that by enhancing their importance, the inhabitants refer to a particular cultural landscape, the “ideal” landscape of Palestine, reconstituting it at the local level. This way, the place is invested with a “sacred” dimension, incarnating and representing the national – lost – territory.

In the second section, the focus falls to the ways in which place is framed and produced, drawing on local particularities but referring to a wider identity; the identity, and the local resistance, are indeed consciously inscribed in a wider frame, the local “sense of place” often implicitly referring to a national sense of place, the place being framed by referring to the Palestinian territory and landscape. We will then underline the efforts deployed at the local level to develop a local identity that is inscribed in the Palestinian culture and maintains its traditions; the contention indeed consciously inscribes the places in a wider cultural frame. In the final part of the chapter, we will show how the struggle is also ultimately turned into the identity of those places, making the neighbourhoods themselves “hauts lieux” (landmarks) of the Palestinian, projecting their situation onto the rest of the territory to reinforce the cultural references and the identification.

The second part will be dedicated more specifically to the references to a religious territory, that of the “Holy Land”, that is also incarnated in place and used to frame the struggle. We will firstly concentrate on one particular concept, the notion of “ribat”, a religious equivalent of *sumud*, which is referred to in Palestine as a whole 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 never mentioned in the existing literature. We will see that the 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 land. This will lead us to consider and confront in the second section the notions of *sumud* and ribat, which highlight two primary ways of framing the resistance; while one is nationalist and the other religious, they are nevertheless very closely related.

Finally, we will scrutinize the sacred geography sketched by the practices of resistance, considering how religion and nationalism are often merged into the ideal and authentic landscape of Palestine that we will tackle through the concept of “cultural landscape”. The cultural landscape is indeed a central object of the struggle and we will see that even if it is not evoked as such by the actors of contention, this research reveals that it also constitutes an essential object of contention at the local level. In the final section of this chapter, we will summarize the various dimensions of the “sacred geography” considered here; they are constituted and used by the actors of the resistance in order to increase the mobilization and the identity of the mobilized, but also to affirm publicly the legitimacy of the resistance and of the means employed. We will study what this attachment to the land says about the importance of territoriality. Confronted with the territorial control of the State and its various bodies, Palestinians focus on the place and the meaning of place as embodying the “spirit” of Palestine. The claimed territory is turned into an imagined territory and is thus in a way positioned outside of the possible sphere of Israeli control; it represents a reality that cannot be touched or altered<sup>116</sup>. 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. However a distinction has to be drawn here between the territory referred to by the Bedouins and the reference engaged by the Palestinians of Hebron and Silwan: while all of them refer to Palestine, the Bedouins rather concentrate on the Negev as an indigenous territory; on the other hand, the Palestinians refer to

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<sup>116</sup> Concerning this aspect, it would be interesting to introduce here whether the visions of Palestine that still exist, are transmitted or recreated in the Palestinian diaspora. The works of Mahmoud Darwish are also interesting from this perspective, in respect of the vision of Palestine that they convey and the reconstruction that they facilitate.

Palestine as the national territory, drawing an internal distinction between the mandate Palestine and the current separation between Gaza and the West Bank.

## **1. Framing the place within the national: incarnating Palestine**

We will see in this first part another dimension of the sense of place and the framing of place: in all three case studies, the place, and as a result the struggle itself, are framed with an appeal to certain symbolic landmarks. Having various degrees of importance for each case, a few elements, whether cultural or natural, are common to Hebron, Silwan and al-Araqib: these dimensions include the importance of trees, water points, mosques, and cemeteries. All of these elements are invoked as symbols of Palestinian culture: they are used to frame the place identity but also to insert it into a wider system of reference. As they relate to land, religion or memory, they are imbued with a meaning that is used in the struggle in order to legitimize it, to reinforce the place identity and the attachment to the land but also to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Palestinian claims. We will see how this local identity, with its culture and traditions, is also used in order to attribute to the resistance a national (and nationalist) dimension: it is indeed considered as an essential dimension of the struggle and has to be presented as an essential and unquestionable dimension of the local identity. The centrality of place expressed through the practice of *sumud*, and the sense of place that it puts forth, are indeed embedded in a wider strategy referring to the national scale and more specifically, to a national territory or landscape. Despite the focus on place and sense of place, the protestors insist on their being inscribed in a wider context of struggle and on the collective identity, “constructed by and experienced through shared symbols and representations” (Azaryahu & Kook, 2002: 198)

### **1.1. Traditional Palestinian landmarks rooted in the local landscape**

We will see in this first part that the way in which people represent and frame place in those three cases goes beyond the references to *sumud*, and relies on a common strategy: this includes the use of local symbols, and elements of the landscape that have meaning for the inhabitants. Oren Yiftachel, for example, has distinguished 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). The actors indeed mobilize symbols, but we will see that some of the most important ones are spatial landmarks that highlight the existence – but also the constitution – of collective “spatial imaginaries”, those “*cognitive frameworks, both collective and individual, constituted through the lived experiences, perceptions, and conceptions of space itself*” (Wolford, 2004: 409).

We will examine the landmarks as physical elements of the environment to which a symbolic charge is attributed. Mosques and cemeteries, but also trees and water points, are landmarks that draw on different aspects of the Palestinian culture and seek to highlight the importance of these dimensions in the place identity: memory, religion, and attachment to land. 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”, that is as “*individual elements of the landscape imbued with historical significance through myth and ritual*” (Santos-Granero, 1998: 128).

We will see that these landmarks “*play a dominant role in the construction of Palestinian identity substantiated in the land of Palestine despite the de-territorialization of the majority of Palestinian communities*” (Abufarha, 2008: 345). Those landmarks, materially rooted in place, refer symbolically to two other dimensions that integrate the importance of the land in different ways: namely, via the territory and the landscape.

### **Mosques**

The first set of landmarks, common to each of the case studies, is the mosques; each mosque has an internal hierarchy and is of varying importance. 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 categorised 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 of Jerusalem across the world, and that attracts tourists from all countries. It nevertheless assumes a significant meaning for all Palestinians as the third holiest site of Islam; we will see that the Silwanese have also adopted it as a key element of their local identity. Even though it is not located within Silwan, al-Aqsa is a presence that is perceived in the everyday life of the village; Silwan is indeed located in the Kedron valley, next to the walls of the old city, underneath al-Aqsa, and its dome is visible from the village. 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 section 2.1. in this chapter):

*“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’s not in the old city but it’s linked with the old city by the gates. There are many gates which open towards Silwan” [S13].*

The status of Jerusalem for the Palestinians who live outside of the city is also fundamental given its religious meaning<sup>117</sup>: the inhabitants of al-Araqib, for example, planned to take advantage of a trip to Jerusalem, in which they planned to demonstrate in front of the Knesset, to pay a visit to al-Aqsa (October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The impossibility of visiting Jerusalem is also lamented by the people of Hebron: the access to the Holy City is indeed limited, and depends on a permit given by the Civil Administration, granted on the basis of age and political profile. Even more than access to the city itself, it is also the impossibility to see and pray at al-Aqsa that people usually 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 “Ibrahimi mosque”, the mosque of Abraham, while Hebron in Arabic is known either as “al-Khalil” (the friend), “al-Khalil al-Rahman” (the friend of God), or “madinat Ibrahim” (the city of Abraham) [H2].

*“Abraham settled in the city and influenced its development, to the extent that the city was named after him at the beginning of the Islamic rule. (...) Hebron was chosen by Prophet Abraham as place of burial for himself and his children Isaac and Jacob and their wives. At the end of the first century B.C. their tombs were surrounded by a great towering wall which has resisted the effects of time, war and destruction and has been standing tall until this very day” (Al-Jubeh, 2009: 16)*

The material form, that is, the buildings of the mosque, represent the “spatial marker” (Clerc, 2004), while their spiritual meaning is also, if not as, important. As in Jerusalem, the representations of the city are indeed linked to a sense of uniqueness and holiness; the mosque is the epicenter of the city, impregnating it with religious meaning and value.

In al-Araqib, as in al-Bustan, the mosques all have a different symbolical value. Firstly, they are not monuments, in the sense of being a building of outstanding value, beauty or even simply a

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<sup>117</sup> 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.

dedicated building, but are places designated as mosques; for example, they might be found in a tent in al-Bustan or a tinfoil shack in al-Araqib. The material shape is in itself a symbol, not of beauty or history but of the local struggle. We have seen that in al-Bustan, the Friday prayer 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 symbol. Even if the visibility of the event is non-existent, maintaining a mosque and a collective prayer in the village has a political meaning as it gives importance to the entire place and ensures a bigger presence on Friday; moreover, it also generates visits and a better knowledge of the situation in the community.

The mosques are central points of 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. However, the religious importance, history and age of both al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron dictate that they are well-known at the global level and a touristic attraction for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The al-Aqsa mosque, as we will see later, 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. In al-Araqib, it is the moment of prayer that is more important than the mosque itself; 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 rather than in what should be the mosque.

### ***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 places; they thus reflect an emotional link to the land, the memory of this link and the presence that they want to preserve. As such, they are invoked as cultural elements but also as arguments in the struggle, in order to demonstrate the material rooting in place of the residents and support their claims to rights over the land.

In al-Araqib, the cemetery takes on a particular importance, as it became a place of life; it is 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:

*“In 1914, after we have bought the land, our fathers and grandfathers built here the Islamic cemetery (...) And still they 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. There were time when people were dying every day, there were times were dying monthly, sometimes one in two months, and this cemetery is the biggest proof that this was our land, that we were here” [A2].*

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:

*“I always say: I can’t sell you my dead people! In the centre 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 will not dare doing so” [A8]*

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 is thus presented as a double act of resistance; this resistance arises not only from staying on the land and opposing Israeli policies, but it also reflects a personal violence. Indeed, living within the limits of the cemetery represents an ethical and religious problem for the inhabitants. Sheikh Sayyah explained: *“In 2010, in Ramadan, when we were fasting (...) the judge ordered that we should move inside the cemetery. (...) In court it was decided that the dead people should protect the living” [A2].* 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 it represented a “sheltered place” for the inhabitants of al-Araqib, for the police did not dare to enter the area of the cemetery to destroy the houses. 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 scoop” [A5].* By engaging in this practice, 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, which stands ready to defend the holiness of the place. The demolition took place in June 2014, with no subsequent riot. This shows that the meaning attributed to the cemetery was also used strategically by the residents, who are well aware of the lack of interest in and the downright suspicion in the community surrounding their cause; it also affirmed that any attack would be perceived as an attack on the Bedouin culture as a whole and would trigger a severe backlash for the authorities, making “their” cemetery a widely shared cultural symbol. The authorities removed the fence that was marking the borders of the cemetery area, thus rendering it in continuum with the surrounding space, removing any feeling 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; the Sheikh has declared: *“if we have to, we will sleep in the cemetery, among the tombs”* (field notes, July 16, 2014).

The cemetery of al-Araqib is thus used as proof of the Bedouins’ ancient presence in the area, and as a strategic frame to counter the authorities’ claims that the Bedouins squatted on the land and tried to steal the State’s property; this use aims to root the presence in place and shows the legitimacy of *sumud*.

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 thus disconnected from the lived space, but has nevertheless been mentioned as an important place for the inhabitants and an element necessary to the identity of the neighbourhood [S11]. It has to be noted that it is referred to in such a way because it is seen as being threatened by Israeli planning policies in East Jerusalem; it is important to show that people do not forgo that space and are ready to defend it. 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. Jawad Siyam explained:

*“The Israeli 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 many people come 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" [S7]*

*"Our cemetery is 1400 years old. Every two or three months they [the Israelis] take 50 or 60 square meters. Now they reached 1800 square meters, they want to make a national park. It's our graves there, our parents" [S2].*

As in al-Araqib, the cemetery is used to demonstrate the old 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.

In Hebron, the cemetery located in the old city, along Shuhada Street, is the main and oldest Muslim cemetery of the city [H7]. The restriction 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 their cars, which have to be parked on the parking lot located on the other side. 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" [H2].*

The cemetery, she said, is indeed a "sacred place" that should not be used in this way. The Muslim cemetery is used as an example 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 neighboring 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, rooting it in place, and even more importantly, in the very center of the city.

The cemeteries are elements of the human landscape, with a material and a symbolic dimension. They are conceived as materializing the Palestinian memory in space, indicating a physical attachment and an emotional bond with the land, which symbolizes the continuity of the Palestinian presence in a specific place, forming a link with the past and with each individual's family history. A cemetery roots a community in a place, materializing the meaning given to it. In each case study, the cemeteries were invoked as elements considered in the struggle in a more or less central way. The importance of the cemetery is central in al-Araqib; it is a defining element of the struggle and the place of life for the residents. It is less essential in Silwan and Hebron, where more powerful landmarks are used to define the places' identity. However, it appears that threats (of demolition notably) directed against cemeteries operate to turn them into additional frames for the struggle, whereby they are used as symbols of both a local and national identity, with the people insisting on their value.

### ***Trees, land and agriculture***

The trees are another element often mentioned by Palestinians across the case studies as a symbol of the land and the Palestinian presence and 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). They 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 above, 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 Israelis that they were the ones to develop it and “make it bloom”.

In Hebron, the majestic olive trees of Tal Rumeida are a symbol of the area and are usually presented as being two thousand years old, planted by the Romans [H1]. 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 trees of Tal Rumeida are targets of the settlers who regularly try to destroy them – some have been destroyed by fire over the last years – and steal the olives. 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 to it as a clear sign of the poor conditions of life and of terrible planning on the part of the municipality [S4]. Al-Bustan still has many trees within its private courtyards, dictating that from the outside, it appears to be a very green area. People remember with nostalgia that al-Bustan was once an open orchard: *“Al-Bustan at that time 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”* [S10]. Omar Yousef remembered:

*“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”* [S5].

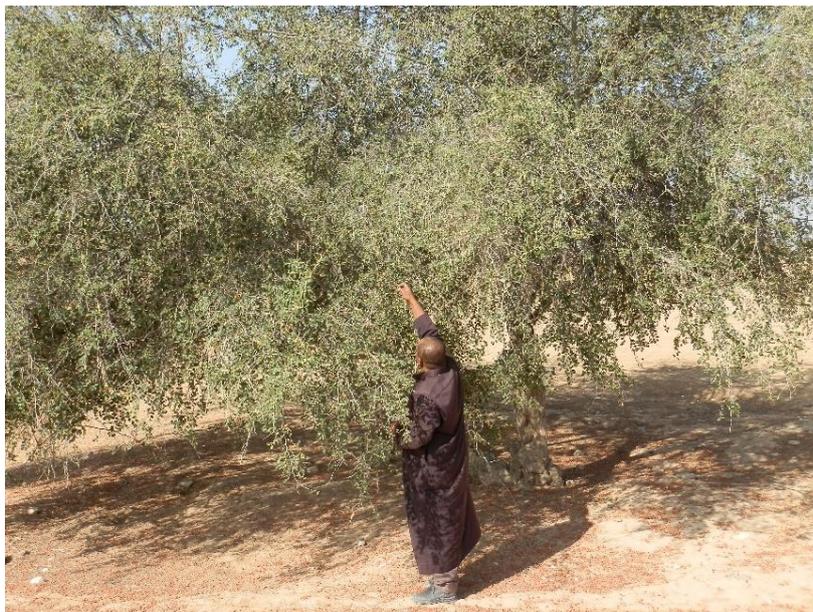
The presence of trees is evoked with nostalgia as a sign of freedom and of a better, more joyful life; the inhabitants of Silwan, who were interviewed, and who are more than 40 years-old often evoked the neighbourhood that existed during their childhood as a lost golden age. The presence of trees in al-Bustan is linked with the possibility of accessing the area where they were planted and enjoying the quietness, as is the case with the “Silwan pool” (see the section on “water” below).

In al-Araqib itself, the trees are nearly non-existent, and it is this absence that is underlined by the inhabitants. Few trees remain, and one stands isolated on the south side of the village; it is presented as a symbol of what existed before the Israelis came to destroy the area. It has been the subject of a video made by Alia, the 16-year old daughter of Haqma and Salim Abu-Madighem, which underlines the importance it has for the residents of the village and was filmed in the context of a photography workshop organized by the Negev Coexistence Forum<sup>118</sup>. This area is one of the few places the children have to play, with air chambers as swings as well as the tree that they can climb. This tree is one of the first elements of the landscape that they point out to visitors, some of whom they then take to illustrate its beauty and old age.

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<sup>118</sup> The video, “Yellow dream in the desert”, can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXLjevaw7cg>.

The uprooting of the village trees, especially the olive trees, that followed the destruction of the village in 2010, is presented as an especially traumatic loss; this loss has been intensified given that the policy of the JNF is to plant new trees on the land surrounding the villages, and in particular, trees which are not indigenous to the region and are unproductive, such as eucalyptus and rose-bay. The trees thus constitute symbols for several reasons. Firstly, they represent 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, as well, especially, as old cemeteries and the trees that still stand next to those places. Those trees were always illustrated 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 environment (see figure 43).



*Figure 43: Salim Abu-Madighem picks up fruits on a tree few kilometres away from the village, picture taken on November 13, 2013.*

Secondly, they represent the traditional Bedouin way of life, and their source of income, which relies on farming; as 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 an almost 4500 olive trees in the village, producing an almost 2 litres of olive oil per tree*

- most would usually be sold. Our fourth source of income was local-grown product. 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, as you know eggs and other organic products are important, and the demand is increasing" [A8].

Finally, on the site of the village, they are also presented symbols of resistance and *sumud* through the symbol of the roots but also their vigour to grow. The trees are used as a symbol of the struggle but also of 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 tries to visit the village every day explained: *"the day they destroyed my trees, they destroyed my heart at the same time"* (field notes, October 15, 2013). The inhabitants noticed that the olive trees that had been uprooted were starting to grow again 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 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 thus constitute a significant symbol, in respect of their material rooting in place, representing a direct relation (or connection) with the land; they are connected with such a strong emotional meaning throughout Palestine. 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<sup>119</sup> (see figure 44).

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<sup>119</sup> As a figure in Palestinian art and literature, the multiple meanings attributed to the olive tree 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).



Figure 44: two images (on the left a poster for the 2014 Shuhada Street demonstration in Hebron, on the right a modified picture of Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi that circulates on social media, n.d.) showing the importance of the tree as a symbol of rootedness and resistance.

The importance given to trees is linked to the importance more generally attributed to the land as a lived but also cultivated, productive, space. According to Stuart Elden, the “land” indicates a “resource over which there is competition”, implying questions of property, distribution, political and economic issues (2010: 804). It is also a term referring to deep emotional bonds, the land also being the terrain upon which a people live.

The land as a productive area can be connected to another element that often arose in the interviews or in informal conversations, namely, the notion of people presenting themselves, and the Palestinian people in general, as being “fellahin” (peasants), used to working the earth and making a living out of it; this implies knowing the land, and thus having special and strong bonds with the land [A2, A8, A12, H1, S4, S11]. 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 *kuffiyah*, 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 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’s 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. As evoked above (see chapter 5 section 3.1.) the figure of the fellah and its attachment to the land are linked directly to the idea of *sumud* and of a “passive hero” from the non-combattant people (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003: 243).

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 for emotional reasons but also for 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, declaring that 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*” (1990: 18):

*“Peasants seem to be particularly suitable for making claims about the distinctness of national identity. Their “closeness to the soil” can be used to “naturalize” a people’s historical links to a territory (...)”* (ibid.)

This closeness to the soil is also expressed through other symbols taken directly from agricultural production and from the significance of traditional Palestinian food: za’atar (a type of 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*” [S4], while Haqma Abu-Madighem said they would remain on the land “*as long as thyme and olive*” [A1]. The agriculture and the fact that they are used to live from what the earth produces, is presented as a sign of their living in harmony with the environment.

## **Water**

The water points – pools and other sources – are also part of the elements singled out from the landscape as a meaningful symbol of identity and culture. In Silwan – especially in the “small Silwan”, the central neighbourhoods of the village – the Silwan pool (or “pool of Siloah”, also designated locally as the “‘ein”, meaning “source”) which lies at the bottom of Wadi-Hilwe Street, is a place to which the inhabitants are very attached; it is presented as a symbol of the place, a symbol of its ancient history and its uniqueness. The area itself, the water, and the legends attached to it render it a central place for the neighbourhood. The fact that it was integrated as part of the park of the City of David resulted in its privatization; as such, entrance now requires payment. The nostalgia of a golden, lost past meets the regrets of having lost it to the occupiers.

*“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...” [S10]*

The pool is a local landmark, known by all, even though access to it has become complicated; it represents the specificity of place, and an element of the spatial identity of the Silwanese. The granddaughter of Mona [S15] who was around 5 years old at the time the interview was conducted, for example explained: *“we have the sea in Silwan! Yes, the sea! You go down, there are some steps, and there is the sea!”* (field notes, March 2, 2013).

In addition to this local value, the Silwan pool has a historical, religious and even mystical value. Initially, the first human presence in the area was established around it, and the pool is evoked in the Bible:

*“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” [S12].*

Moreover, the water flowing inside the Silwan pool is believed to arrive directly from Mecca. *“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” [S15].* A story often told by the inhabitants is that somebody who lost his money in Mecca happened to find it at home once back in Jerusalem, as it had flowed all the way via water [S11].

In Hebron, the presence of water is not as 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 linked 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 in the valley that surround the hill where the cemetery stands, are also presented to the visitors as one of the main resources and sources of wealth of the area; they illustrate the organization of the Bedouins and how the environment and space were actually transformed according to their needs and way of life before the Israeli authorities prevented them from living an agricultural life on their land. Other cisterns are scattered in the desert, always indicating an old place of life usually situated 200 or 300 meters from the ruins of an old stone house.

These four categories of landmarks have different degrees of importance and impact according to the place. For example, in Silwan, the mosque (al-Aqsa) and in a lesser way the pool, are central to the way in which the inhabitants define and build their identity; both affirm a particular status of the village with respect to Jerusalem. In al-Araqib, the natural elements, like the trees, as well as all of the elements linked to the agriculture, take on an important meaning, as they are related to the traditional lifestyle. The cemetery symbolizes both the memory and the struggle of the residents. None of the landmarks invoked in al-Araqib to represent the place and build the local identity are “geosymbols”: they are a collection of small elements related to the place and the culture of a precise group, but do not constitute a symbol that radiates through space for its beauty or importance. In Hebron, all the elements mentioned are evoked by the inhabitants as having an importance, but none of them, with the exception of the Ibrahimi mosque, represent a central element that defines the place identity; they are combined to form a meaningful landscape rather than a polarized space.

Like al-Aqsa, the mosque represents the central landmark in Hebron, geographically but also for its religious importance that extends beyond the place. We will see in the following parts of this chapter how some of these landmarks, especially al-Aqsa, represent “geosymbols” or “haut lieux” that are central to the framing of the place identity and sometimes even the Palestinian identity. Notwithstanding that the framing relies on recognized geosymbols which are invested with a strong

cultural meaning, we will see that the resistance also produces these *haut lieux*. Indeed, the sites of contention are themselves turned into geosymbols, symbolizing the Palestinian resistance.

These landmarks all show the importance of the place and how tightly the resistance and the narratives used in each place are connected to the land and the Palestinian identity. In fact, all of these elements point to the inclusion of place into wider scales that have to be taken into consideration. Here, the landmarks, as remarkable elements that not only polarize and organize the space but also attract attention, are more directly linked to the landscape and the territory.

The study of landmarks shows how memory is territorialized by the inhabitants, thus establishing a dialectical relation between space and time: space fixates the memory of certain events or aspects of identity by anchoring them in places (Piveteau, 1995). As B. Collignon shows in her article, « Les toponymes inuit, mémoire du territoire », drawing on the analysis of JL Piveteau, that the territory *“crystallizes itself in the toponyms, names given to the places to make them come out of their anonymity, singling them out and, this way, make them enter in the memory and in a History”* (2002: 46). Thus, the processes of marking and naming, highlighted in the previous chapter, 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.

These landmarks common to all cases, even if with varying importance, show how the representations of space and place are integrated, and used, in the narratives and discourses surrounding the struggle; they also show how the importance of place is connected to wider spatial frames. The territory and the landscape thus also represent central frames of reference. The landmarks set out above are elements that are invoked as characterizing the Palestinian space not only in Silwan, Hebron or the Negev, but also all around the West Bank as well as in numerous places within Israel. They all symbolically refer to these wider frames: the landmarks incarnate the national territory at the local level and the landscape considered “typical” of Palestine. The territory and landscape are re-created and imagined at the local level. *“Groups, ethnic groups and people exist by their reference to a territory, real or dreamt, inhabited or lost”* (Bonnemaison, 1981: 257); similarly, the actors of contention in the case studies all build their identity referring to a territory. We have seen the centrality of place expressed through *sumud*; the importance attributed to the

landmarks described above shows that the place is imbued with meanings, values and more generally, symbols that incarnate the Palestinian territory at the local level.

## 1.2. A nationalist sense of place

If the practices and discourses of the various actors involved in the resistance are principally focused on place, I contend that they usually implicitly refer to a wider frame which corresponds to the national level, where the “national” means Mandate Palestine, the lost 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 negotiations to form a future State of Palestine, namely the West Bank and Gaza. The landmarks evoked above all inscribe and relate the place to the territory, or to put it in another way, all link the local identity and the national, collective identity and culture.

The Palestinian struggle is traditionally marked by a staunch nationalism, its primary aim being to attain self-determination and the creation of a Palestinian State: here we will see that an important part of the nationalist narrative – and thus of the resistance - derives from the importance of the land and the idea of territory, but also relies on a smaller scale, being directly linked to the place and the sense of place. Indeed, the *“sense of place can be projected on to the region or a 'nation' and give rise to regionalism or nationalism”* (Agnew, 1993: 263).

Central in geography but also recently developed in the study of social movements (see for example, Bosi 2013; Ó Dochartaigh & Bosi 2010; Hayward & Ó Dochartaigh 2013), the concept of territory is a meaningful, though complex and often fuzzy, concept. It is often considered as the bounded space where a state exerts its sovereignty and authority but it is also, in a less institutional sense, a space infused with meaning, appropriated by the population, a space of life and memories, where the social network is created.

*“The constant discussion, sharing, and rearticulation of the territorial theme lead to its deep penetration into the narratives ordinary community members construct about themselves and the social relations through which people ‘place’ themselves in space and time”* (Voronkova 2013: 109).

As the Palestinian struggle is about territorial control and ultimately statehood and sovereignty, it has a strong nationalist character. I contend that the Palestinian “sense of place” is indeed projected onto the national scale; however, it is also a result of the 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 then integrated and reused in the local struggle, making the sense of place an element which constructs and reproduces Palestinian nationalism.

We will see how the struggle is framed referring to space, drawing both on the importance of place and of the national territory, referring to a common culture and collective identity. As we defined in the first chapter of this thesis, we consider frames as being “*specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behaviour and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action*” (Zald, 1996: 262). Considering the framing of the struggle means studying the narratives and discourses, the representations integrated and used in the struggle to create self-identity, foster mobilization and indicate preferred ways of action. Here we will concentrate more particularly on frames with a spatial dimension, or “place frames” (Martin, 2003, 2013; see also chapter 1, section 3.1.). We will see that 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).

We will thus scrutinize how the framing of the struggle and the sense of place refer to the national scale but also to a nationalist stance, by engaging the territory of Palestine, and reconstructing it as a lost and ideal territory for which people should remember and long, but also as a disputed – and stolen - political territory for which it is worth fighting.

### ***Silwan, concentrating on the local to build the national***

In Silwan, the affirmation of the place existence and the appropriation of the local space developed in the preceding chapter goes hand in hand with the re-appropriation and strengthening of a Silwanese identity. Beyond the existence of the place and the expression of attachment to the place through *sumud*, claiming a particular link between the place and the inhabitants is indeed a fundamental strategy of resistance in the face of dispossession and occupation: it is claimed, but also reproduced and strengthened.

The framing relies firstly on the expression and insistence on the attachment to a particular place and more specifically, to the neighbourhood, for the values and meaning it represents. The motto of the Ma'ada community centre in Wadi-Hilwe, written in mosaic at the entrance to the building, is "I love you Silwan". It is also written on the t-shirts that are distributed to the children for the summer camp and other activities; the children are also made to repeat it (see figure 45). The loyalty and affection to the neighbourhood are indeed presented as a duty to the place that needs to be acknowledged and developed. The race organized by Ma'ada 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 asking them to show their dedication and voice their love. 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!" [S7].*



*Figure 45: Inscriptions "I love you Silwan" on a mosaic made by children at the entrance of the Ma'ada centre. Picture taken on September 9, 2012.*

This strategy is of course part of *sumud*, similar to the practices evoked above that 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 occupation and physical presence must be complemented by an emotional attachment and a feeling of loyalty towards the place. This type of narrative is developed in activities with the children, both in Silwan and in Wadi-Hilwe; however, the residents also resort to those discourses, framing the neighbourhood as an important place to which they feel connected and for which they are ready to fight. In Silwan, it is common to see the words "Silwan" or "I love Silwan" sprayed on the walls.

The valorisation and transmission of Palestinian heritage is also a fundamental vector of the way the resistance is framed. Jawad Siyam insisted: *"We are doing stuff like music, art, things like that, but we connect everything with identity and awareness"* [S7]. He added:

*"When I teach children, teach them music, I teach them songs which are linked to our history to our tradition, connected to the life of Silwan and Palestine. We try to refresh or renew dead traditions. And even 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 define ourselves very clearly that we are Palestinians"* [S7].

*“Palestinian heritage, culture [is important]. Activities: dabke [traditional folkloric dance], 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” [S11]*

Teaching *dabke* (the traditional Palestinian dance), allows women to meet and organize between themselves, and keeping the tradition of *tatriz* (traditional embroidery) alive, are all seen as means of resistance; it engages culture and memory, that is to say, Palestinian identity, against occupation. In this way, the inhabitants establish a direct and strong link between the meaning given to space, as the local place or as the Palestinian territory, resistance, and identity: *“Serving the village, loving the village also means automatically loving Palestine” [S7].*

During an informal conversation, Jawad Siyam also insisted: *“we don’t say Israel here. We say ‘occupied Palestine”* (field notes, September 9, 2012), thus illustrating the importance given to the territory of pre-1948 Palestine, the “duty” to keep the memory alive and the political and cultural representations attached to it.

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) (see figure 46). *“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” [S4].* 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 (see below section 2.1.). The decoration of external walls indicates again the effort made to appropriate the neighbourhood and show it is inhabited and well-maintained.



Figure 46: examples of graffiti in al-Bustan, praising God and those who came back from pilgrimage. Pictures taken on September 30, 2012.

If the identity of Silwan is strongly linked to Jerusalem; people are very cautious to show and claim that their loyalty lies also with the Palestinian Authority, or at least with the people of the West Bank, and with the idea of a united State of Palestine, thus inscribing their struggle in a clear nationalist frame. Being cut off from its traditional hinterland, especially the cities of Abu Dis and Issawiya, which used to be only minutes away, a few kilometres away to the east, Silwan, like Jerusalem, is also surrounded by settlements (like Gilo and Har Homa, in the south of the city, situated between the Palestinians neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem and Bethlehem). Ramallah, considered, on the basis of numbers, to be the economic and administrative capital of Palestine, is also difficult to reach due to the presence of the wall and checkpoints, and as a result of the massive traffic jams that result from these hindrances.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem are often shunned by the inhabitants of the West Bank for being “normalizers” or “traitors” (or even “gays”, for the men), for living and working with the Israelis, or for having comfortable lives and good jobs. They are thus careful to frame their discourse in a way that shows that even if cut out of the West Bank, it is a constraint, and they, too, live under Israeli occupation and still feel part of the Palestinian people and connected to the part from which they are separated.

*“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” [S7].*

The narratives of resistance can indeed encompass messages, and displays of loyalty intended for the Palestinians of the West Bank. 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). It highlights the importance of Jerusalem and their pride in being attached to it, but also claims that Silwan is included in Palestine and at the same time, refuses the Israeli authorities and the settlers’ presence in the village. Similarly, it has to be noted that 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 this is an expression of resistance against the occupation of Jerusalem, it is also a way of showing the other supporters that people from Silwan are as Palestinian and as nationalist as they are. Finally, it is also a message directed at the Palestinian Authority, which is often accused of abandoning the people of Jerusalem to the Israelis. It is common in Silwan to hear people complaining about the way Jerusalem is treated in the peace negotiations: being a major point of disagreement between the parties, it is generally left to the end of the talks and is thus never really discussed. Some interviewees have expressed this as a common frustration:

*“So we try from the very beginning 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” [S7].*

*“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” [S16].*

The attachment to place is thus linked to an attachment to a larger territory and a common culture; in Silwan, the spatial identity is linked to a national identity and to the struggle for an independent and sovereign Palestine, a struggle that underlies the local problematics of the situation. 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 largely represented and re-invented through symbols 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 and thus to a territory of reference.

In a second sense, the territory referred to is that of the West Bank (and more indirectly, that of Gaza), the occupied Palestinian territory; this is a territory in which the Palestinian authority is slightly more concrete and that the international negotiations try 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 separate from Jerusalem and that the many obstacles, which make circulation between the two areas difficult, also contribute to its being a fragmented “archipelago” of differently administered areas, marked by significant internal oppositions, and especially, considerable repression on the part of the PA in respect of the members of the Hamas party.

People in Silwan, who concentrate chiefly on the importance of attachment to place and building a place identity, as well as an attachment to the neighbourhood, are still very careful to inscribe their resistance in the context of a nationalist struggle that connects them to the occupied territories. They also insist on the similarities existing between the situation in Silwan and that of the West Bank, underlining that they live in far from a privileged position.

### ***Hebron: a specific cultural identity***

In Hebron, this inscribing of the resistance and identity within the wider frame of the Palestinian identity and struggle does exist but is less present. The stencil graffiti that can be found in the old city often indicate “Free Palestine”, with variations, for example, on the YAS centre, where the graffiti reads “this is Palestine” or “welcome to Palestine”. The very logo of Youth Against Settlements features the map of pre-1948 Palestine covered with the Palestinian flag, indicating the nationalist and political scope of the organization, that goes beyond the situation of Hebron. However, in reality, the strategic framing of the protest does not insist to a great extent on this aspect. Zliha Muhataseb 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 the 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” [H2].*

Issa Amro also insisted on the particularity of Hebron, pointing out that Palestine is not “*as any other country*”. “*It is fragmented because of the occupation and because of the checkpoints. For me it’s very expensive to go to Ramallah for example. It is not easy. (...) This is why we focus on Hebron*” [H7]. 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.

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 the main element of the Hebronite identity.

In Hebron, the framing of the local identity is indeed quite different: the inhabitants draw of course on the religious identity of the city, linked to the presence of the Ibrahimi mosque, which represents as we have seen a central landmark. However the pride of the Hebronites is also linked to the reputation of the city as a centre of business and handicraft. The book edited by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee insists that “*its people are versed in trade and industry, and many trades are still being practiced today*” (Al-Jubeih, 2009: 21); one chapter is dedicated to arts and crafts in Hebron. Glassblowing is the most famous activity of the city, along with pottery and leather-tanning; it also known for its stone industry. Hebron is also a large economic centre of businesses in general and accounts for one-third of the West Bank GDP<sup>120</sup>. One story that the Hebronites love to tell is that “*in China, people think Hebron is a country because of the number of Hebronites they meet to make business*” (field notes, September 12, 2012). This framing insists on the importance

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<sup>120</sup> “About Hebron”, Temporary International Presence in Hebron, [http://www.tiph.org/en/About\\_Hebron/Hebron\\_today/](http://www.tiph.org/en/About_Hebron/Hebron_today/).

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 2013<sup>121</sup>), the city still retains power – even internationally – thanks to its dynamism. From this perspective, in addition to the closing of Shuhada street, the inhabitants usually also lament the closing of the shops in the centre, the area having lost activities central to the life of the city and to its identity: the central bus station and the various specialized markets (meat, chicken, vegetables, gold, carpets, etc.), which were located in various areas of the old city, are now all closed.

The references to a wider scale of struggle are less present in the representations of Hebron's interviewees. This does not mean that such references are absent or meaningless. The integration of the actors into national politics is important: parties are very active, and Hebron is well-known for being a stronghold of Hamas. Demonstrations for national causes were organized, for example, during the period of the fieldwork, to support the Palestinian prisoners in Israel or to condemn the Israeli bombings of Gaza. However, the reference to the national scale is not a central point of the framing; as noted above, it is probably because the integration of Hebron into the national struggle is obvious. Moreover, Hebron became a symbol in itself, both of the occupation and of the Palestinian resistance. As we will see in the next chapter, the local situation, the conditions that people have to face and the struggle itself, are indeed essential to the way that local identity is framed.

### ***Place framing in al-Araqib***

As Israeli citizens, the Bedouins of the Negev have a very contradictory identity, and as a result often adopt a more nuanced position. The territory can refer to four different conceptions, each attached to a facet of the Bedouins' identity: the territory of the State of Israel, of which they are citizens, the pre-1948 Palestine, which corresponds to the area under British authority during the mandate, that for which Palestinians used to struggle and which they still retain as their legitimate original claim; the occupied Palestinian territories – the West Bank and Gaza – and the indigenous territory of the Bedouins, that mostly covers the Negev but also previously transcended its current borders.

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<sup>121</sup> 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&wversion=Staging>.

These territories – Israeli, Palestinian and Bedouin – represent competing spatialities, which are linked to competing ideologies and identities. The Bedouins define themselves as Palestinians, with reference to pre-1948 Palestine; their ties with the West Bank and Gaza are now mainly economic (Parizot, 2004). For example, Hebron, located in the South of the West Bank, is the closest Palestinian city to the Negev; Bedouins of the Negev traditionally go to Hebron for shopping, a practice that now depends on the period, the political situation and the opening of the checkpoints. Some Bedouins from the Negev are married to women from the West Bank – often from the region of Hebron – and many have family in Gaza, who fled in 1948. A strong sense of solidarity is often expressed, and common markers of identity remain (see section 1.1. of this chapter). In al-Araqib, news from the West Bank is abundantly followed and commented.

However, when it comes to the sense of place in relation to territory or nationalism, the inhabitants of the village express a different position. They are very critical of the authorities, openly laying out their criticisms against the State or the government to people visiting the village. During his presentations to the visitors, Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi and his son Aziz often criticized various official decision-making figures such as Benyamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres. Both are indeed regularly cited. Shimon Peres is often denounced for having won the Nobel Peace Prize<sup>122</sup> and being internationally hailed as a “man of peace” while it was he who ordered the spraying of Bedouin villages with pesticides (field notes, April 7, 2012; October 20 2014); on the other hand, Benyamin 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 Arabic minority is another thing” [A2].*

The inhabitants of al-Araqib denounce the dissonance between the democratic principles claimed by the State and the way in which they are treated. Without giving up their Palestinian or Bedouin identity, they insist on their status as citizens of the State in order to claim their rights: Aziz Abu-

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<sup>122</sup> 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](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1994/press.html).

Madighem regrets *“We thought that there was such a thing 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?”* [A8]. 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 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 it to me”* [A12].

The Bedouins’ sense of place does not refer to a national territory, nor does it draw on a nationalist spirit. Indeed, from the data gathered on the field, we can affirm that generally the Bedouins do not contest their being inscribed within the Israeli system and territory. They still oppose the ethnocratic policies and decisions of the State, underlining the injustice and segregation that they have to face; rather than expressing a deep attachment to the State, they are far from expressing any nationalist sentiment. Few Bedouins met in the Negev did actually insist on their loyalty towards Israel; in al-Araqib, the residents underlined their will to struggle non-violently against the State, using their status as citizens to claim their rights.

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 and allowed for the Bedouins to retain their way of life, a lost territory that allowed freedom. They criticize Israel and point out the problems that emerged following its creation, but do not make a call to fight or for the replacement of the State: on the contrary, they usually call for a peaceful coexistence within Israel.

The Bedouins thus adopt a slightly different approach on territory, referring not to the territory of the nation but to a specific Bedouin territory, a territory which is now part of Israel. Moreover, as we will see later in this chapter, they engage territoriality linked to a traditional way of life. The sense of place is thus linked to the culture of a 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), is linked firstly to the land and a claimed indigenous identity. The importance of natural landmarks, such as trees, and cultural ones, like the cemeteries, are used to show how Bedouins were traditionally rooted in space and that it is the land which has value, as opposed to the national territory. For the inhabitants, Al-Araqib is an area much wider than the space of the cemetery and that around it; it includes all of the land that was owned and cultivated by the inhabitants before being confiscated. The place, al-Araqib in this case, is thought of as one form embodying those Bedouin values and traditions, which is prolonged by the landscape of the desert, a landscape invested with a fundamental cultural dimension (see part 3 in this chapter).

We have illustrated in this first part how people refer, in all three case studies, to similar types of landmarks in order to frame the struggle; the landmarks are used to characterize the place identity but also to inscribe the place in a wider territory. Whether natural or man-made, the landmarks – or geosymbols – materially mark the space but also invest it with additional meaning through their symbolic charge. They are all considered as representing in some ways the history, memory or culture of a group, whether Palestinian in general, Muslim or Bedouin. They incarnate those elements in the landscape, adding meaning and value to the space, the place being in this way, connected to a larger scale of representations and possibly of actions. The first dimension to which these landmarks point is that of the territory intended as a national territory. The “sense of place” is indeed linked to a strong “sense of territory” which is both a basis and an expression of Palestinian nationalism.

The nationalist dimension of the struggle is much more stated in Silwan than in the Negev or Hebron. However, it is used in a way that is very revealing of the contradictory position held by the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and of the strategies generally adopted. Indeed, Silwan activists and residents frame their identity as fundamentally Palestinian in order to reinforce the cohesion of the community and thus their sensibility to the cause; reinforcing feelings of nationalism and solidarity, and raising the youth in a political perspective, aims to give the people from the neighbourhood an awareness of the situation, of their past and of their culture, pushes them to acquire a political awareness and encourages them to mobilize. However, this nationalist framing is engaged to

support the place identity, which remains the first scale of resistance; both the national territory and the national culture represent an essential basis, which is used to strengthen the local identity. People must not forget their Palestinian identity and the national struggle, but it is understood that the struggle firstly goes through the presence in the neighbourhood. In Silwan, the sense of place 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”* (A. K. Martin, 1997).

While this factor is less significant in Hebron, it is not absent but rather informs to a lesser degree the way people frame the struggle and their immediate sense of place. People in Hebron indeed appear to concentrate more on the city’s problems, framed as representative of the reality of occupation, but taken to an extreme degree, and thus being unique. Being at the core of the struggle, they necessarily fight for the whole community; the nationalist dimension doesn’t have to be pointed out. They do connect to the national scale, especially for major events, but this link is negligible in the representations and framing of the struggle: as we will see in the next part and in the next chapter, the stress is really put on the identity of the city, the importance of developing the awareness about the situation in Hebron and working on the reputation of the old city to fight prejudice, develop solidarity and a common identity.

As for the Bedouins, they relate to the Negev and the desert as an environment, as a territory connected to their traditional way of life, even if they all have settled down. Their sense of place is not inserted into a “nationalist” pattern but into that of a minority; we will see that the territory to which they refer is the traditional Bedouin territory, corresponding to the area where Bedouins used to circulate and live, and more restrictively to the lands they directly owned. We will see in the next chapter that the main strategy adopted is their definition of themselves and their link to the land as one which is indigenous.

We will turn in the next part to another dimension of the territory indicated by the landmarks evoked above: they also refer to the territory from a religious point of view, Palestine being the “holy land” that requires a fight as a religious duty. We will see that the concept of “ribat” represents a religious equivalent of *sumud*, used to frame the local struggle - especially in Silwan – and connecting it to a wider scale.

## 2. “The Holy Land”: nationalism and religion as competing narratives?

In the first section of this chapter, I introduced some fundamental types of landmarks that are common to all case studies. I nevertheless underlined that they are not every landmark is equally important for each place and that they do not all have the same level of influence. Some of those landmarks are indeed “hauts-lieux” or “geosymbols”, with a universal importance for their meaning but also possibly well known for their history and beauty. The geosymbols are defined by Joël Bonnemaïson as sites “for religious, political or cultural reasons take on a symbolic dimension for some people or ethnic group” (Bonnemaïson, 1981: 256, see also Bonnemaïson, 1992). Two religious sites, Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and to a lesser extent the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, represent two such symbols, the meaning of both of which extends beyond the place and is even internationally recognized. Both indicate the importance of religion within the Palestinian society but also more widely underline the status of Palestine as a “Holy Land”; the territory is not only an object of nationalist claims but also of a religious sentiment. We will examine below how the religious hauts-lieux are used to frame both the local and national identity, and are also integrated into the framing of the Palestinian struggle at both levels.

### 2.1. Haut lieu and the religious framing of space: the example of *ribat*

As was shown in chapter 5, when they are asked about the means at their disposal in their struggle against the Israeli occupation – or in internal ethnocratic politics, in the case of the Bedouins – Palestinians usually refer to *sumud* as one of the only means of resistance that they have. Another term, which is perhaps less well known, is also evoked, namely, that of “*ribat*” (ribāt, رباط). Salim Siyam, a member of the neighbourhood committee of Silwan, has for example stated: “*we are in ribat until the judgment day*” [S11].

The term *ribat* has several meanings: in particular, it has been studied with reference to architecture and religion during medieval times. It has also emerged, more recently, in the literature treating radical Islam. The inclusion of *ribat* in the Palestinian narrative and repertoire appears to be quite recent, and to be directly linked to the Israeli occupation and the emergence of a Palestinian national identity.

The Palestinian understanding of the term deserves to be scrutinized in detail. Indeed, in the case of Palestine, the *ribat* is considered as being necessarily linked to Jerusalem. It is revealing that the reference to *ribat* has been engaged especially in Silwan, using the vicinity to al-Aqsa in order to justify the inhabitants' resistance. It is however striking to see that in the existing studies of *ribat*, Jerusalem is never mentioned as a particularly important place. While Palestine is sometimes designated as "*ard al-ribat*" (the land of *ribat*), a holy land that was occupied and must be taken back, due to the presence of Jerusalem and its status as the third holy place of Islam, Jerusalem or al-Aqsa are never mentioned directly as having a particular role to play. As a result I argue that the *ribat* seems to have been appropriated and reinvented for the purposes of the Palestinian context, and has been reformulated in the frame of the Palestinian struggle and nationalism, integrating the role of religion and enhancing the importance of place.

### ***The ribat in Muslim history and culture: architecture, spirituality and combat***

*Ribat* is a term with a rich semantic field; in his commentated bibliography on the topic, Franco Sanchez underlines the overlap existing between "*the form, the content and the spiritual precept*" (2004: 353) designated by the word. M. Bonner, in his book about the jihad, also insists on the confusion existing around the term: "*we know that the signification of ribat is complex, and varies according to the region and time*" (2005: 166).

Ribat refers in general to an architectural terminology. The literature that treats this dimension of the *ribat* is essentially Spanish and Catalan, as it concentrates on Al-Andalus<sup>123</sup> and the Maghreb. René and Henri Basset, Alexandre Lézine and George Marçais were the precursors of the research on the topic, studying the *ribats* in Tunisia (see for example Lézine, 1956a, 1956b; Marçais, 1956), defining them as "fortified convents" (Basset & Terrasse, 1927: 117).

This type of definition is the most common one. For the New Cambridge History of Islam, the term of *ribat* refers to "defensive structures" (Robinson, 2010: 319), "forts on the frontier" (ibid.: 279) or to "fortresses guarding the North African coast" (ibid.: 321). The *Dictionnaire historique de l'Islam* defines it as a "*term of a mostly technical character, that the military architecture in Islamic countries applied to high constructions in the Middle Ages, in threatened frontier areas, in order to shelter defences and garrisons*" (Sourdel & Sourdel, 1996: 709). Golvin, quoting sources from al-

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<sup>123</sup> Al-Andalus designates the Muslim-ruled territories of Spain and Portugal, between 711 and 1492 centuries. See for example Guichard, 2000; Kennedy, 1996.

Andalus, has affirmed that the term was at the time used more widely to designate “a very specific building, or a fortified neighbourhood, or even a city or a port” (1969: 99).

The Encyclopaedia of Islam proposes a very developed 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 a fact that proves interesting for our topic: *ribat* originally designated a gathering of cavalry in preparation for battle, but came subsequently to refer to “a fortified edifice”, thus mirroring a transformation in war strategies, that became more a “war of position”, with “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.).

The presence of volunteer “religious soldiers” is often presented as a defining element of the *ribat* introducing another functionality in respect of these places; this renders their definition even less clear: from army barracks, they become monasteries. Golvin underlines that in many ways, it was applied to “pious foundations” destined to “combatants of the faith”, or “warriors of the holy war” (1969: 101); this associates the notion of jihad to that of *ribat*, an element that is also interesting for the modern usage of the term. Jacqueline Chabbi however engages caution in treating the definition of *ribat* as a “Muslim military monastery”; for her, this use of the word *ribat* has been rewritten and reinvented for functional reasons over time (ibid.: 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 *ribat* is intimately related to the Islam and its functioning: as for the jihad, the *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 XII<sup>th</sup> 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 *morûbit'oun* or “guardians of the frontier” (Golvin, 1969: 97)<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> The term “morabitun” also gave its name to the Almoravide dynasty The Almoravides, whose name was transalted from the Spanish, were thus the “al-Morabitun”, “the people of ribat”, or “those who set about doing ribat”. It is worth noting that the precise origin of this name remains uncertain (see, for example, Sourdel & Sourdel, 1996: 75).

Outlining the different dimensions existing in the various definitions of the term is essential for our purpose here. Indeed, notwithstanding that it is based on an architectural basis that diverges from the perspective on which the Palestinians draw, those definitions indicate and put together numerous elements that can be found in the Palestinian approach of *ribat*, even if recomposed differently: for example, the importance of presence on a land, of persistence, and the dedication to a struggle, can be perceived as a sacred one.

This historical perspective must be completed by a contemporary consideration: today, the *ribat*, is usually mentioned in the geopolitical literature relating to radical Islamism, drawing on some elements of the medieval definitions. Mark Long attributes its apparition to Abdullah ‘Azzam, the Palestinian theologian and theoretician of the global jihad, who inspired al-Qaida. Nicknamed the “godfather of jihad” or the “imam of jihad” (Kepel & Milelli, 2008: 81), he presents the *ribat* as an obligation to “take up watch duty” (Long 2009: 37). 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]?*”<sup>125</sup>. In this approach to the term, *ribat* represents the first step leading to jihad and real combat, which is obligatory, according to the author, for all Muslims. It represents an essential tool in a tactic that aims at waging combat on a global scale, which starts with the reconquest and defence of Muslim territories. Ayman al-Zawahiri has also used the term in a similar way, and as ‘Azzam previously, designates Palestine as one of the “lands of *ribat*”.

The term is actually used rather rarely; this is clear from its absence in recent books treating connected topics such as the *Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Bowering, Crone, Kadi, Stewart, & Zaman, 2013), and the *Handbook of Islam and politics* (Esposito & Shahin, 2013).

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*, is seldom mentioned.

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<sup>125</sup> Abdulla ‘Azzam, 1988, *Join the caravan*, second part, “Oh Islam!”, on Religioscope, [http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam\\_caravan\\_4\\_part2.htm](http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_caravan_4_part2.htm)

### ***Defining the Palestinian understanding of ribat***

In Palestine, the term “*ribat*” is well-known and still in use. It has a specific meaning that re-used elements from the various understandings evoked above: it means staying and defending Jerusalem and the Palestinian land. Zliha Muhtaseb defined it as follows:

*“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 Palestinian and the Muslims”* [H2].

For the Palestinians, *ribat* is indeed associated to this well-known sentence, a call to the Palestinian Muslims to be “*in ribat until the judgment day*” (fil ribat hata yom il-Qiyama - في رباط حتى اليوم - القيامة)<sup>126</sup> [S7]. The origin of this sentence is uncertain: presented by some of the people interviewed as a quote from the Quran, it seems that it most probably comes from a hadith<sup>127</sup>.

For the Palestinians, the *ribat* is directly linked to the status of Jerusalem as the third holy place of Islam. Indeed, another phrase quoted alongside that above, as a continuation of the same hadith, specifies that this *ribat* must be performed “*in the Holy house and around the Holy house*” (“fi beit al-Maqdis w aknaf beit al-Maqdis” - (في بيت آل مقدس و أكناف بيت آل مقدس). This imparts an additional haziness to the term as the names used to designate the sites can themselves be interpreted in various ways. Indeed, “Beit al-Maqdis” literally translated as the “Holy house”, introduces an initial confusion. This expression refers to al-Aqsa as well as the entire complex of the “Temple Mount” (al-Aqsa, the Haram al-Sharif, including the esplanade and the buildings surrounding it). By extension, the expression is also used to refer to the city of Jerusalem: it is then translated as “the Holy city” (Khalidi, 1997: 29). In contemporary Arabic, Jerusalem is indeed called “al-Qods”, “the Holy”, directly taken from the word “maqdis”.

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<sup>126</sup> Or “yom al-Din”, في رباط حتى يوم الدين

<sup>127</sup> The author could not trace back the development of this quote to its precise origin. It seems that the hadith could have been written by al-Tabarani, one of the main authors of hadiths. It is also evoked in the writings of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent Sunni theologian. Only a few references to *ribat* can be found on Internet websites and forums, particularly, with references to hadith; the one quoted in Palestine is usually not listed. A thorough research into Arabic sources needs to be conducted on the topic. See for example:

<http://tawheedmovement.com/2012/09/29/an-alternative-to-achieve-the-benefits-of-ribat-for-those-who-wished-to-join-jihad-but-couldnt-do-so/>, <http://www.islamhadithsunna.com/le-merite-de-la-marche-vers-la-mosquee-a108655046?noajax&mobile=1>, <http://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=Fatwald&Id=7463>.

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 Burāq (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 [S12]. 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 "*Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs*"<sup>128</sup> (the emphasis is my own). 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 evokes 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 "surroundings" of al-Aqsa and Jerusalem evoked in the hadith are not delineated in space, adding further debate about its application: it can apply to the cities near Jerusalem or to Palestine as a whole. An overview of Internet forums and webpages suggests that this sentence is also used to designate the area known as "Bilad il-Sham", the "Great Syria", a historical area including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine.

While this possibility has been mentioned by some Palestinians during informal conversations in order to illustrate how vague the area designated by the hadith is, it is generally accepted that the "area surrounding al-Aqsa/ Jerusalem" refers to Palestine in its pre-1948 borders. Sheikh Iyad al-Abbasi indeed 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 ribat in Islam*

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<sup>128</sup> Quran, 17:1, <http://quran.com/17/1>.

*reflects the protection of threatened lands. This was and still is the case in Palestine, as it was occupied by the English, the Jews and before them there were the crusades. (...) The Muslim Palestinian people derive their steadfastness and resilience from the land of Palestine and Al-Aqsa mosque, in spite of the ferocity and strength of the enemy. This steadfastness of the Palestinian people stems from a religious approach that emphasizes that defending your land, your people and sanctities is a good deed and is resistance in the name of God. This can be taken as the basis for explaining the strange and admiring survival of the Palestinian people, because they surge into battle against the occupation from a religious approach that dictates steadfastness” [S12]<sup>129</sup>.*

If the *ribat* appears to be fundamental in the framing of the Silwanese identity (see below), it seems to be less so in the two other cases. Nevertheless, the term and meaning of *ribat* was also well known in al-Araqib and Hebron. 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”* [A1]. She also explained, once prompted: *“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 their struggle and identity.

In Hebron, the term is considered to be slightly more adapted to the context. Indeed, while al-Aqsa is the third Holy place of Islam, Hebron also has a religious status for Muslims. Zliha al-Muhtaseb for example pointed out that:

*“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.”* [H1]

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<sup>129</sup> Extracts from a written statement. After the interview conducted on April 21th, 2013 at the Sharia court, which was aiming at dealing with the religious references underlying the concept of *ribat* and its links with Jerusalem, Sheikh Iyad al-Abbasi asked if he could further develop his response in writing.

This makes the religious dimension even more important in the definition of the term, as it provides a geography of the holy sites, with a 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, *ribat* appears to be linked with land sacred for Islam.

It is interesting to note that in the book edited by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, entitled “Old Hebron”, a page is dedicated to “the Garrisons (*ribat*) and Hospice”, exposing that “*garrisons are military posts hosting city defenders. They can also be military outposts along borders*”(Al-Jubeih, 2009: 109). The description that follows introduces the architectural meaning of *ribat* mentioned above to 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.). No mention is made of the current understanding of the term, linked to the Palestinian resistance.

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 defence of Muslim lands and in the establishment of a presence in particular places in order to carry out this defence. The practice itself, the means used and the location, 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:

*“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, 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”* [H9].

This definition shows another link with two elements evoked in the old definitions of the term: this includes the “persistence in front of the hardship”, similar to *sumud*, as well as the notion of attachment, which was initially a practical one. That is to say, the root letters form the word *ribat*

in Arabic (r-b-t), meaning to attach, or to tie, which relates to the attachment to a place and figuratively, to the “strengthening of the heart” (Chabbi, 1995: 494).

The filiation of the Palestinian use of *ribat*, along with the medieval 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. Notwithstanding that *ribat* is considered to depend exclusively on al-Aqsa and as a result, is applied as a concept to Palestine as a holy and threatened Muslim land, from the interviews, it becomes clear that the term was used especially in Silwan, with particularities that add to the interest of the concept. Indeed, the term is fundamental in framing the struggle and the identity of the village; the very onomastic dimension of the place introduces new connections between the architectural-medieval and the Palestinian meanings of the term.

### ***Silwan as the core of the “ahl ribat”***

The case of Silwan is particularly interesting and revealing, as most of the Silwanese people interviewed quoted *ribat* instead of – or as a complement to – *sumud*. Ribat appears to be central to the Silwanese identity, or as a dimension that can be conceived as central through the narrative of resistance. In fact, it concentrates on two elements, of which the Silwanese are particularly proud: on the one hand, their geographical location, located directly on the outskirts of the old city and under the al-Aqsa mosque, and on the other, their spirit of resistance. *“It is like a tree: you have the roots... Silwan is the roots of the old city. Without Silwan there is no old city”* [S11].

*“In Islam, God says about us in Jerusalem “ribāt”, it means we are staying here whatever happens, until the judgment day. It is specifically about Jerusalem, people who live in Jerusalem”* [S3].

*“People who are living Jerusalem are considered as being [‘the people of ribat’ (‘ahl ribat’ - أهل رباط) 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’re 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 Mhamad that we will have heaven because we’re ‘ahl ribat’, the ones who stand in Jerusalem... It is something people know, and believe”* [S10].

The prayer conducted in al-Bustan on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 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 murabatin [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 Israelis laws, everything is against Jerusalem people”<sup>130</sup>.*

The onomastic analysis is also very interesting. In fact, the names given to Silwan corroborate the notion of an identity linked to resistance as well as to Jerusalem. Sahar al-Ababssi, 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*) [S10], and Jawad Siyam explained:

*“Silwan was called in Arabic ‘il-hamiye il-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’” [S7].*

What Jawad translated as “protection” (the word “hamiye”, *حماية*) also means “garrison” in English, which is also the word used to translate “*ribat*” in some dictionaries and one of the meanings attributed to the medieval *ribat* of Al-Andalus. Whether forts or garrisons, they were dispositions included in a line of defence linked to a particular territory. Adnan Gaith also pointed out that: “*Silwan is the closest village from the al-Aqsa mosque, throughout the history Silwan was considered as the protector of al-Aqsa from the south*” [S13].

The Palestinian – and especially the Silwanese – use of *ribat* is very interesting as it draws on numerous elements present in the medieval-architectural conceptualisation of the term; however it is clear that it has been appropriated, adapted and included in a particular repertoire. Drawing

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<sup>130</sup> Recorded on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

on a hadith, which is well known, but orally transmitted (and which thus has very vague origin), the Palestinians ensure *ribat* depends exclusively on Jerusalem, and thus on their presence and action: their resistance in consequence must be highly valued, as they fight not only for the land, but also for God. This notion draws us back to the idea that *ribat* is a greater form of prayer and commitment to God, which will be rewarded (Long, 2009; Maqdsi, 1993). A specific study on the topic would be necessary in order to understand how *ribat* became a repertoire in Palestine, and how the link with Jerusalem was established. Can the importance of *ribat* in the Palestinian struggle be a consequence of the emergence of radical Islamic groups at the global level, influenced by theoreticians such as Abdullah Azzam? Or did it re-appear through the sense of place and religious beliefs of the population?

It is not possible to answer those questions at this stage, but we can already establish that even if it is less used than *sumud*, the term of *ribat* points out to an essential dimension of the Palestinian struggle: the resort to a religious narrative to frame what is a territorial conflict. Indeed, the term also hints to a “sacred geography” of Palestine (Long, *ibid.*). Indeed, if Jerusalem is central to the struggle, the whole of Palestine is considered as “*ard al-ribat*”, the land of *ribat*, the “march” of Jerusalem.

So far, this chapter has set out the nationalist and religious dimensions of the struggle, both 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. As two major narratives translated in two practices – *sumud* and *ribat* – it seems interesting to confront them and scrutinize their implication in terms of repertoire: do they represent competing narratives? Or are they integrated in reality?

## **2.2. 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 fundamental for this study. Both are based on representations and narratives about the place and the importance of the territory in the Palestinian culture, thus re-using the latter in the context of the Palestinian resistance.

Both represent a complete “package” for contention, representing at the same time a central set of tactics within the Palestinian repertoire of contention but also providing tools to 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 Palestinian society and to the struggle; in this part, having scrutinized their meaning and implementation, we will then confront one with the other and concentrate on what this analysis tells us in terms of strategic choice.

As we have seen above, *sumud* and *ribat* correspond respectively to two distinct sensibilities: if *ribat* is clearly more religious, can *sumud* be defined as more exclusively nationalist? Are those two positions in competition? Do they account for different strategies?

As shown in the previous chapter, *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 refers to “*sumudism*”, a strategy that aims at the “*preservation of Palestinian culture and identity*” and 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). There is thus a deeply territorial logic in *sumud* directly linked to the Palestinian culture and tradition.

*Sumud* is considered as a national repertoire, one “*everybody agrees on, the leftists and the right-wing*” according to Issa Amro, who justified the fact that YAS does not use *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,*" [H7].

Indeed, *ribat* has a strong religious undertone and could thus be used exclusively by the religious parties or by devout believers. 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"*<sup>131</sup>. 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).

The concept of *ribāt* thus touches at the very core of the Palestinian and Muslim identity. It would appear that *ribat* constitutes a middle ground between *sumud* and jihad. While it is often associated with jihad in the literature on radical Islam, it seems that its acceptance in the Palestinian discourse implies a milder approach and is strictly separated from the notion of jihad. As Salim Siyam 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 isshahada [martyr]. 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"* [S12].

Of course, the consideration of Palestine as a holy land does not necessarily dictate an automatic reference to *ribat*. It nevertheless implies an attachment to the land, as expressed by Haqma Abu-Madighem: *"I think the land is happy that is there are Muslim people living on it. It is our home, our land"* (field notes, October 21, 2013).

Nationalism and religion are tightly linked in the Palestinian struggle. *Sumud* is also presented by some people as being linked to a religious commandment, relying on the Muslim virtue of "sabr", the patience and dedication asked by God in the Quran: *"Allah is with the patient"* (II, 153)<sup>132</sup>. One sentence of the Quran (III, 200), associates both the ideas of patience and continuous presence,

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<sup>131</sup> 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.

<sup>132</sup> See for example <http://quran.com/2/153>.

and implicitly refers to the ideas of both *sumud* and *ribat*. It is translated in various ways<sup>133</sup>, among which are included the following:

*“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 Muhsin 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. According to Mark Long:

*“Islam has unquestionably informed the political discourse of Palestinians, and “ribat” has seen increasing prominence over the last decade. Before his death in 2004, Yasir ‘Arafat came to favor the expression”* (2009: 40).

It is not clear at this point if the expression developed in the official or in the grassroots discourse first; however, if it remains linked to a religious position for the population, it seems that it was used also for political purposes by the Palestinian authorities. It is possible, for example, to find on the Internet the archived discourse advanced by Yasser Arafat quoting this hadith as follows:

*“Prophet Muhamad, 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’”*<sup>134</sup>.

We can indeed hypothesise that the PA and the PLO politicians included references to *ribat* in their narrative of struggle as proof of their – and the Palestinians’ - attachment to Palestine and commitment to Jerusalem, thus providing an additional basis for the claim that Jerusalem should

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<sup>133</sup> For different translations and those quoted here, see <http://quran.com/3/200> and <http://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=3&verse=188&to=200>.

<sup>134</sup> Translated by M. Nairoukh. See for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0JTaxDJECs> and <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.

be made their capital. Moreover, just as *sumud* was designed to encourage people to remain on their land, *ribat* offers the resources to reinforce and encourage the mobilization of Jerusalem's residents. This also illustrates that religion and nationalism are not exclusive but 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 for example indicates: *"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). In this case, the nationalist views yield to the religious ones.

The association and similar claims of the nationalist and religious position can be illustrated by a fresco painted at the entrance of al-Bustan calling the people to "prepare" (see figure 47). This word, written across the image of a unified Palestine and the depiction of a machine gun, is a quote referring to the first words of the Surat Al-'Anfal from the Quran (The Spoils of War, 8: 60), calling the Muslims to prepare to *"terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemies"*. This fresco clearly constitutes an internal call to the population to prepare to fight and retake Palestine<sup>135</sup>, implying that it can be considered as a struggle against enemies as commanded by God. The representation of Palestine as a unified territory, a country with defined border is both a representation of Mandate Palestine, the territory that was lost, and the territory for which a claim is still made on behalf of the future State by some component parts of the Palestinian political spectrum.

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<sup>135</sup> *"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged"*, translation Sahih International, see for example <http://quran.com/8/60>.



Figure 47: a graffiti in al-Bustan with the word “prepare” written across a map of a unified Palestine. Picture taken on January 29, 2013.

To complete this reflection on the links between the religious and nationalist positions and the related conception of territory adopted within the Palestinian political spectrum, it would be interesting to further investigate the discourse of some parties, where religion and nationalism are more clearly separated. Hizb ut-Tahrir for example, adopted a very peculiar position towards the conflict. A radical Islamic organization founded by a Palestinian, Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, at the beginning of the 1950s, which has since spread worldwide, it is sometimes described as an example of “non-violent extremism” (see for example, Karagiannis & McCauley, 2006; Ward, 2009). The main goal pursued by the organization is the creation of a caliphate that would encompass all Muslim States, turning them into one transnational, “greater Islamic State” (Whine, 2006). As a result, the position of its members in Palestine is to take a step back from the national struggle, considering that it is the army of the caliphate that will eventually combat the occupying army (field notes, February 2, 2013; March 27, 2013): the nationalist and religious dimensions are thus separated. Similarly, it would be interesting to scrutinize more specifically the discourse of the left wing of the Palestinian political scene, for example, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), both secular parties of Marxist-Leninist inspiration. We can assume that *ribat* is not part of the narrative they advance, while *sumud* probably is.

The nationalist and religious narratives, while relying on different ideological approaches, are often tightly linked; indeed, the religious position is often intrinsically nationalist, aiming at creating a Palestinian State, but submitting to the importance of having a Muslim regime and thus a Muslim authority over the land. On the contrary, the nationalist position, which is that of the PLO and the PA, is traditionally more secular, but is not devoid of religious reference. Indeed, the authorities did not reject the concept of *ribat*. On the contrary, it appears that they integrated it and made it part of the official discourse. As the Fatah party - from which the PLO and the PA were born - is reputedly a secular party, we can assume that this adoption was at least partly strategic, allowing the authorities to co-opt a “moderate” position that was similar to *sumud* and allowed them to reinforce the claim for Jerusalem and encourage the resistance across a broad spectrum of the population. The use of *ribat* in the Palestinian political sphere is an aspect that needs to be explored further in future research in order to better understand the position of the various political parties and the rhetorical choices they make when it comes to this religious/nationalist duality. The use of *ribat* and *sumud*, and the way in which they have been integrated or not in the official discourse of the different parties throughout recent history could indeed underline shifts in power relations and political strategies, as they are both linked to particular strategies and visions of the territory.

*Sumud* and *ribat* both show that the Palestinian repertoire is firstly a “*byproduct of everyday experience*” (Della Porta & Diani, 2005: 182), as it is rooted in the presence and continuation of everyday life and practices. 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 impact of constraints, if it is felt, cannot totally stop the flow of everyday life. It is disrupted, channelled or tightly controlled. However, as is illustrated in different ways in all three case studies, the fact of making resistance depends on physical presence and the life of people; this makes it a difficult strategy to counter.

*Sumud* and *ribat* intersect through the reference to land; indeed, they both reveal how the land, or the Palestinian territory as a whole, is framed in the Palestinian struggle, being sacralised at the local and national level for religious and nationalistic reasons. This sacralisation 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.

However, in addition to Palestine being the “Holy Land”, other types of “sacredness” also appear when one scrutinizes the representations and narratives used by the actors. As we have seen, the strong nationalist feeling that underlies the Palestinian struggle makes the territory of the nation, embodying what is left of the country and the hope of a future independent State, a kind of sacred space that needs to be defended. We will see that a third type of spatiality can be invoked here, linked with both religious and nationalist feeling and also linking the place to the national scale. The landscape, seen to incarnate the memory and culture of the people inhabiting the land, is also sacralised through symbolic elements such as those described in the first section of this chapter: the trees, cemeteries and water sources all materially mark the space, imbuing it with meaning drawing on natural, cultural, religious and political representations. While it is not used as such by the actors, the concept of “cultural landscape” must be introduced here to account for the strategies of framing and their relation to the territory adopted in the Palestinian struggle. Indeed, I will argue that the cultural landscape is one of the frames used by the protestors at the local level, representing another facet of the territory. Finally, I will discuss in a concluding section what the different elements set out in this chapter say not only about the importance of the Palestinian conception of territory but also its territoriality, as well as the structure of the protest, drawing obvious connections between the micro and macro scales, at least when it comes to the representations and framing of the struggle.

### **3. A nature imbued with culture**

The different elements considered above all underline the central importance of the land in defining the Palestinian identity. The land is indeed conceived of as a territory, a homogeneous and delimited unit imbued with meaning, defined in various ways: on the one hand, it might be defined religiously as a holy land, a conception that pervades the Palestinian society, in the case of both Muslims and Christians, and on the other, from a political point of view as the land of a nation, and a future State. I contend that the importance of the territory in building and framing the struggle is associated to another spatiality, that of the landscape and more precisely the cultural landscape.

Not mentioned as such by the actors, and contrary to the religious and nationalist position, I argue that it is nevertheless a central spatiality used to frame the resistance.

The main landmarks described in this chapter, which are spatial cultural markers, highlight the importance of the landscape; natural elements (water, trees, and agriculture) and material, human-built sites (remarkable buildings like mosques, or places like cemeteries) all refer to the Palestinian culture and a given meaning that singles them out from the environment and turns them into symbols, making the landscape a symbol of Palestine and a tool of the resistance.

The second section will be devoted to a conclusive reflection on the Palestinian territory and territoriality: will see how the territory is largely represented and even “imagined” in order to counter the physical and social fragmentation of Palestine, turned into a sacred territory that embodied the values considered to be fundamental for the Palestinian identity and struggle: these include attachment to the land, defence of a national memory, and cohesion of the community through a common culture.

Even if people concentrate chiefly on place to carry out the practices of resistance and the actions and representations of the struggle, this does not mean that the place represents an exclusive and separated dimension. On the contrary, it is directly connected to a wider dimension of the struggle, national for the Palestinian in general, and indigenous for the Bedouins.

### **3.1. Cultural landscape and Palestinian heritage**

The term “landscape” is often used to designate a rural scenery, and implies a relation between man and nature, an idea of human intervention on space but also of human perception (Bourassa, 1988: 241). The landscape indeed supposes the presence of men or their consciousness. It 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 way of perception and interpretation.

Here the concept of landscape is particularly interesting as it allows us to consider the importance of the human sight and consciousness; 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 that they carry (Whitridge, 2004: 219). 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 by mediating the image they want to give of themselves. In consequence, the landscape is often contested, representing an object of competing narratives and power struggles (Alderman, 2008: 198). We will see that the Palestinian landscape is indeed presented as an essential element of the Palestinian identity, directly threatened by the Israeli authorities, who denature it and transform its meaning. As such, it is integrated as an object of the struggle but it is also a resource, providing numerous elements that are then used to frame the struggle.

The Palestinians do not refer to the landscape as external, natural scenery but rather as an environment that has a particular meaning because it is attached to a particular group, along with its culture and its identity. As such, it seems more interesting to tackle it as a “cultural landscape”, so as to underline the pivotal role it plays in defining the community.

The concept of cultural landscape was initially introduced by Carl Sauer, who defined it as being *"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"* (1925: 343, in Mitchell, Rössler, & Tricaud, 2009: 15).

It summarizes well the different dimensions taken into account here: it alludes both to a specific framing, a way to consider the environment, and also takes into account the practices that modify it, the “cultural” elements which are inscribed in space and turn it into a particular space that is then turned into a territory. From this perspective, it can also intersect with the concept of place. In the definition of “cultural landscape”, the “culture” is generally very wide, alluding to human culture, that is, to any human intervention that changes the natural environment; it is considered to be a material product of human action, situated at the crossroad between nature and culture.

Matthews defines landscapes as “*documents of power*” (1995: 456). In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the evolution and modification of the landscapes have largely been studied from this point of view, as they are considered to reveal the opposition between the two parties, as well as how they have tried to save or impose their own system of values and meaning over the territory and to inscribe it materially and symbolically in the environment. These studies usually insist on the way the Zionist project has transformed the landscape to make it fit the ideology and the choices of the new Israeli State, through the Hebraicization of the names (Azaryahu & Golan, 2001), the destruction of the Palestinian cultural landscape (Falah, 1996; Pirinoli, 2005), and the production of a new natural setting through the planting of trees (Braverman, 2006). Raja Shehadeh, in his book *Palestinian Walks*, describes the changing environment of the West Bank as a “*vanishing landscape*” (2007).

The cultural landscapes can be also tackled here as “*ethnoscapes*” (Appadurai, 1996), those “*social and political constructions produced by – and that aim at producing – a national culture and identity*” (Pirinoli, 2005: 68). In this sense, they are closely related to place but also to territory, as both are central in terms of representations of identity and memory.

The various landmarks evoked above show that the landscape itself is considered as conveying and embodying the Palestinian culture and identity but also the struggle to safeguard them. The reference to the cultural landscape is indeed 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 spatialities used in the framing and communication strategies elaborated upon by the activists and the inhabitants, even if this is not necessarily done in a conscious way, resorting to this specific term. I contend that the data gathered on the ground, highlights that this concept accounts for the tactics employed, complementing the reference to a religious and nationalist territory. There are however internal variations between the cases that need to be considered and underlined, in order to provide for a detailed and precise account of how the cultural landscape is used as a framing strategy.

### 3.2. Cultural landscape in the three case studies

According to L. Leader-Elliott, *“cultural landscape and sense of place have many elements in common (...) especially when place representations give weight to intangible cultural elements that have meaning for local communities (2012: 207)*. As we have seen in this chapter, the strong sense of place felt in all three cases is connected to a larger scale of reference, to the national territory, Holy Land, or the cultural landscape.

The cultural landscape is evoked through symbols, natural or man-made elements identified as common spatial markers which incarnate the tight link existing between the people and their environment. The “universality” of these landmarks, which have the same meaning across the Palestinian territory for Bedouins, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and residents of the West Bank, connect the landscape to the place. These “intangible elements” traditionally highlight the attachment to place, and the religious meaning imbued in it, as well as the charge in terms of memory or national identity. As such, they are also appropriated and integrated into the protest.

It appears that the recourse to the cultural landscape is more present in Al-Araqib. Even if it is not evoked as such, the references to the landscape are constant; the inhabitants highlight especially 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. A good example, often evoked by the residents, is the campaign of the JNF to plant trees around the village: firstly, the trees planted are not natives, which means that they are considered as a waste as they usually cannot resist the heat and require a lot of water. It is perceived as a means of destruction of the environment and of the traditional landscape of the desert, changing materially the scenery, but also understood 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”* [A5]. 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 organisation 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).

We will see in the next chapter that the importance of the cultural landscape is directly connected to another strategy used by the Bedouins, which is to address the international community in order to be recognized as an indigenous people (see chapter 7, section 2.2.). The claim of indigeneity indeed relies on an ancient presence and a link with the land; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, has provided in a report that the Bedouins of Israel have a *“culturally-distinctive land tenure and way of life”* (UN Human Rights Council, 2011: 25). The Bedouins, even if they refer to Palestine as a territory, nevertheless engage mostly in an intermediate scale of reference: that of the indigenous territory, the Negev being presented as their *“ethnoscapes”*.

In the case of Hebron and Silwan, the cultural landscape is an urban one: it is made up of the traditional architecture of the city (the old stone houses and the souk) and the *“biblical”* elements such as the mosque and the centuries-old olive trees. The scenery that relates to the Palestinian culture but also to the history and memory of the place, seems to need to be defended and safeguarded. We will see in the next chapter that a proposal has indeed been advanced to have Hebron officially recognized as a *“cultural landscape”* by UNESCO; this seems to be a strategy that is on the rise in Palestine, as a means of protecting sites of values and of opposing the continued spatial conquest through institutional channels by the Israelis (see chapter 7, 2.2.).

Another layer is added to this basic cultural landscape, namely, the *“landscape of occupation”* (see chapter 4, 1.3.). Indeed, the fabric of the city has been so deeply modified by the occupation and the division of the city; as such, it is those spatial features that now dominate the landscape. The cultural landscape is thus suffocated under military urbanism. It is the deciphering of the spatial impact of occupation that has become a primary matter in order to make people understand the existence of a *“ghost town”* or to demonstrate the existence of apartheid. The landmarks remain important as testimonies of the past, illustrating the destruction of the traditional Palestinian and Hebronite culture. They are invoked to frame the struggle as one against the destruction of the city’s identity.

In Silwan, people insist much less on visual elements: apart from the Silwan pool and the City of David, which are visible, because they are visited and indicated, there are few features that can characterize Silwan. The quick expansion of the village and the density of the urban fabric that resulted from it render it an essentially mineral landscape with very few elements that visually relate it to the Palestinian culture. Thus the cultural landscape has to be considered more broadly: as seen above, the Silwanese define themselves chiefly in relation to Jerusalem and the vicinity of al-Aqsa. The cultural landscape in this case is external to the place; this is also the case with the old city of Jerusalem and its multiple landmarks: the overhanging al-Aqsa represents in itself a landscape that defines the whole neighbourhood. However, the concept of cultural landscape is not totally irrelevant here. Notwithstanding that it seems not to be the main framing tactic used, we can note that the four categories sketched above are present in the Silwanese narrative, even if they generally have a limited influence: the trees, the cemetery, the mosque, and the water, are all elements invoked to actually elaborate upon the cultural landscape at the local level even if it is not directly perceptible; in so doing, they affirm the relation between Silwan and the Palestinian cultural landscape.

The Palestinians present and defend – and thus continually produce and recreate – a cultural landscape, which 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. They use the reference to the cultural landscape, including it in their narrative, as a strategy of resistance supporting their claims to the rights over the land on a cultural, historical, memorial and emotional basis.

It can be noted however, considering the landmarks most commonly evoked, 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 indeed evokes the lifestyle that preceded the Nakba, with little rural communities that were free to use their land. It 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 reference to cultural landscape shows how the inhabitants sacralise the territory of Palestine, for more than religious or nationalist reasons, the landscape being erected as a symbol in itself. 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 references to the cultural landscape thus represents one of the main repertoires used by the activists and inhabitants as they provide resources to frame and encourage the struggle. Associated with similar strategies that draw on the meaning of territory and the sense of place, the actors of resistance elaborate a comprehensive narrative about space and place that relies on symbols and representations to support and legitimize the resistance, but also to oppose the representations imposed by the Israeli authorities bypassing the control over the material dimension of space.

We have illustrated in this chapter that if the place is the main scale at which the resistance takes place, but also one of the central resources when it comes to the framing of the protest through the reference to a strong “sense of place”, there is also an emotional attachment to the local space which is completed by reference to a larger scale, not so much of action, but of representations, namely, that of the territory. The attachment to the 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 indeed 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 identity and thus to the resistance. 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 sites of contention studied here 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 dimensions. 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 7, 2.2.); it also engaged 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 in each, 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 to different territorialities, showing that *“territory is always being made and remade through processes of de/reterritorialization”* (Routledge, 2015: 14).

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”*<sup>136</sup>, it is seen as important to fight on the same ground and re-appropriate the meaning of space.

The representations and narratives thus represent another tool allowing for the construction, internally, of the protest; they also provide a resource that is fully part of the repertoire of contention, as their use represents a practice corresponding 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 peoples’ identity and thus for

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<sup>136</sup> 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.

the framing of their struggle. Representations and symbols are thus 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 indeed 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.

The representations and narratives set out in this chapter show how the actors of contention elaborate upon their perception and conception of space to sketch a complex sacred geography of the region. 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 also presented as "*Al-Arḍ Al-Muqaddasah*", the Holy Land, but also as "our land", that is, 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.

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 ethnic group as an indigenous minority, and that establishes a basis for the contention.

The territory is not only the main issue around which the Israeli-Palestinian revolves, or a central object of the Palestinians' representations, but it also represents a reference for the actors of the struggle at the local level. The Palestinian reference to territory is indeed central to foster mobilization and to strengthen the position of those already mobilized by insisting on the identity, the aggressions and the threats advanced against the sacredness of the land and the duty to protect it that ensues.

The struggle in Silwan draws chiefly on the importance of Jerusalem, both locally and nationally to frame the local contention, but also on the identity of the place. The reference to the national scale represents a constant background, as is the case in Hebron, because of the occupation and the need to assert a clear political stance when it comes to the Israeli authorities. The actors of contention in Hebron draw on all of these representations, insisting on the centrality of the city from a religious point of view, but especially on its importance in the national struggle. Indeed, we will see in the next chapter that the main frame used when it comes to Hebron remains itself, meaning the uniqueness of the situation in the city, and the uniqueness of the resistance that is carried out there.

It is important to note that the Bedouins of the Negev, who are Israeli citizens and whose claims are thus slightly different from those of the Palestinians of Jerusalem or the West Bank, also identify as a part of the Palestinian people and of this historical Palestinian territory. As a result, they participate in this "national" repertoire, drawing on the same representations. The claims are nevertheless different, as they target the discrimination and exclusion internal to Israel rather than the occupation, even though the solidarity with the Palestinians of the West Bank or of Gaza is strongly felt. The territory of the Bedouins, in the Negev, is sacralised as the object of their struggle and the condition for the survival of their culture, but also because it is integrated into Palestine, seen as a Muslim Holy Land that needs to be defended.

We will see in the next chapter that the importance granted to place and territory are also central elements of another type of strategy – linked to other spatialities – namely, that of "globalizing" the protest. Indeed, relying on networking and scale shifting, the actors of contention seek to actively diffuse information about their struggle to raise awareness and increase the international pressure put on Israel. From this perspective, they create cyber networks but also insert themselves into transnational networks of activism. We will see that both types of networks are rooted in the

sites of contention, depending on place, but also have ramifications abroad, allowing for the exportation of information but also of the frames of the protest. We will also see that another important strategy employed in all three sites of contention, but especially by the representatives of the Bedouin community, is to address the international institutions in order to gather support, which includes support for their right to place and the recognition of a territory.



## CHAPTER 7

# GLOBALIZING PALESTINE

## Scale shift and transnational networking

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The Palestinian struggle is deeply rooted in place, both in terms of repertoire and framing. We have seen previously that the possibilities to oppose the hegemonic Israeli control through a material intervention in space are very limited due to the set of oppressive and repressive measures implemented by the State and its various branches (Alimi, 2009: 220) (see chapter 4). As such, micro-practices relying on people's presence and the continuation of everyday life, such as *sumud* or *ribat*, are often presented as the core of the repertoire employed. Other practices of contention, such as building and renovating or demonstrating are also deployed chiefly on the considered sites of contention. Representations and symbols consequently also become central, as they allow not only for opposition to the narratives imposed by the authorities but also for the framing of the struggle; moreover, this allows for an insistence on the particular identity of each place and the attachment to the land in order to assert the legitimacy of the struggle, and foster mobilization as well as loyalty to the cause (see chapter 5).

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that in each case study the place is inscribed in a complex network, a system of relations that makes it interdependent of other places, actors and scales: place are not bounded, hermetic areas, notwithstanding the existence of policies and sometimes material settings cutting them from their immediate environment and territory of reference. Indeed, as asserted by Bosco, place and scale are now defined as being "*open, porous, and networked, rather than as being fixed, essential, and hierarchical in nature*" (2001: 310). If this is true from a practical point of view, with the occurrence of human interactions and the development of a social network at the local scale, we will see that it is also the case with the establishment of transnational networks aiming at developing solidarity and advocacy.

Networks are defined as "*relations among actors*" who may or may not be located in the same geographical area; as such, they represent "*primarily circuits for the exchange of information*" (Olesen, 2005: 53). Networks are indeed "*apparatuses for the production of discourses and*

*practices that connect nodes in a discontinuous space*" (Escobar, 2001: 169) which play crucial role in recruitment and the formation of collective identities (Bosco, 2001: 307). 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 & McAdam, 2003 and Diani, 2013. As a result, I will refer to the literature on networks in this chapter concentrating on the aspects relevant to the focus of this research, namely the importance of communication and information, the importance of place in the constitution of the networks, and the transnational character of the advocacy and solidarity movements.

The concept of network will be associated to that of scale, and more precisely to a scalar strategy, scale shift, or "up-scaling" which represents the *"ability to broaden the scope of contention"* (Alimi & Norwich, 2011: 35). We will be focusing on the connections and the strategic "jump" linking the local and international levels, which relies on the cooperation of activists and NGOs with international actors and institutions and thus depends on the "scaling effect" inherent to networks (Escobar, 2001: 169). Indeed, a fact that emerged from the observations conducted on the field is that the protest in each case study is deeply rooted in place but also extends and develops towards the international level, through the establishment of a transnational network of solidarity and advocacy that make regular use of the international arena and of the tools offered by international institutions.

The studies of scale are usually concentrated on institutions, and especially centred on the State. Scale is often invoked to designate simply "different levels of analysis" ranging from the local to the global (Delaney & Leitner, 1997: 93). It is usually defined as being a *"nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as the local, regional, national and global"*, 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 that actors strategically engage with in order to legitimise or challenge existing power relations"*. The authors add that *"central to the politics of scale is the manipulation of relations of power and authority"* (2008: 157). The literature studying scale shift in social movements may not conceptualize the "scale" part for its spatial implication, as it is often taken for granted as an

abstract “degree”, a “level” of action; I contend however that the vertical process of scale shifting is best thought of as a relational process that connects sites in a dialectical way, rather than as a hierarchical one (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008: 159)

We will see that 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.

In the first part, we will concentrate on the importance of information and communication and the central role played by place in this type of networking. The actors of contention in each of the case studies indeed insist on the need develop connections with other actors and to disseminate knowledge about the local situation; for this purpose, they constitute and use various channels of diffusion, like the media, and especially social media, as well as local social networks and solidarity networks that are constituted around the Palestinian cause and around each site of contention. Existing or newly-created networks establish a connection with “distant allies” allowing for “*the flow of information, financing and political backing*” (Nicholls, 2009: 78). Part of these solidarity networks have a presence directly on site and define as part of their mission the transfer and diffusion of information to their own network abroad. Finally, we will see that political tourism is also understood as a direct way to make people realize the conditions of life in the sites of contention, and is consequently organized and supervised by the activists, hoping that the visitors will then become “ambassadors” for the cause with their credibility increased by their direct experience.

We will then move on to consider the actions carried out at the international level: firstly, through the existence of transnational strategies, relying on groups based abroad, who organize initiatives to support the local struggle, and secondly, through the mobility of the activists and advocacy, which targets international institutions, and resorts to tools provided by global governance. This process also has a top-down effect; actors at the local scale have to adapt to the requirement of the international arena, adopting elements of the language and tools linked to international laws and international institutions.

I will conclude with a final reflection on the meaning and implications of networking and scale shift for the struggle; at a more theoretical level, it further illustrates the co-implication of spatialities. While the preceding chapters have already illustrated it, setting out the links between the places and territory or landscape, public space and place, and the inclusion of scale in the representations used by the inhabitants, activists and NGOs, this chapter confirms that place is central for the contentions in each case, and that it is tightly linked to other, different, spatialities.

A recent book by John Collins affirms that Palestine is “globalised” and that the world is becoming “Palestinized” (Collins, 2011: x); we will see 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 narratives about place in order to influence the international position on Palestinian issues and raise awareness about the situation they face. 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 et al., 2008: 160), a process that has in return an impact on the definition, the practices and the framing of the local struggle itself.

## **1. Place-based networking: media and political tourism**

The various spatialities that have been evoked in the previous chapters – those linked to the conceived, lived and perceived dimensions of space – have to be completed by a fourth type of spatiality, transversal and relational; that is, the dimension created by social networks and the relationships between the different scales that the networks put into contact. Even if those concepts designate a very abstract and often virtual space, I contend that scales and network must be added to the spatialities that should be studied in relation to contention as they connect various sites and dimensions of actions, relying on a presence and an action 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 studies (see chapter 1, 1.2.) - they are indeed rooted in space and have as such a material dimension that needs to be acknowledged and scrutinized.

Networks and scales can indeed be defined according to their immaterial and relational characteristics. Networks 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 indeed 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.

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).

In each case study, the networking, the connections linking actors together, established at various scales, has 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. Indeed, the protest initiatives at the local level are completed and supported by an intensive effort of communication. 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 indeed 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 a strong transnational solidarity network. We will see that, from this point of view, there are major discrepancies between the cases; for example, the presence of international groups is far more important in Hebron than in the other sites of contention studied here.

In the second section, we will move on to another dimension of the networking, namely that based on human, face-to-face meetings on site, that we named “political tourism”. Foreign delegations and activists indeed regularly visit each site of contention, traveling to learn about 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 life 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 considered to shed light on the situation. Rooted in place, those practices represent “*multi-scale, network-oriented subaltern strategies of localization*” (Escobar, 2001: 139).

### **1.1. Media and information as tools of resistance: from the place to the world**

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 (see chapter 5 section 2.3. and chapter 6, 1.2.) and informing are considered to be essential aspects of the resistance, and largely take the form of “electronic advocacy”, with a fundamental role played by the media, and especially by social media.

Communicating, and especially writing, about local events is seen to be indispensable: articles, interviews, blogs, mailing lists, are all mechanisms that are extensively used to communicate within an established network, not only to pass on information but also sometimes to quickly mobilize. Photographing and video-recording have also come to represent a central tool of resistance, especially in Hebron where video cameras have been supplied by the Israeli NGO B’tselem as part of an established strategy; it has been theorised that the live recording of events constitutes a means of deterrence against the settlers and the army, as films provide a means of proof in judicial actions. Individual networks established on social media, and especially on Facebook, are also often used to inform about the local situation; moreover, the broad presence of smartphones, equipped

with good quality cameras with which one can also produce videos, allows for individual initiatives and for information to be disseminated at a smaller scale, i.e. among the residents' or activists' personal networks. The establishment of decentralized networks using new technologies indeed increases *"the speed, flexibility, and global reach of information flows, allowing for communication at a distance in real time"* (Juris, 2004: 347).

### ***Information, social network and electronic advocacy***

International pressure over Israel is considered to be essential to bring about a change in the region. From this perspective, the activists as well as the inhabitants underline the importance of the diffusion of information and the education of people as to the local situation. Communication campaigns are also organized to challenge the disinformation diffused by the Israeli media, considered as biased against the Palestinians, often reproducing the official 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. The actors of contention thus insist on proposing their own vision, testimony or analysis of events, creating *"their own 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).

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 90s, making an extensive use of internet, a strategy that was designated as a *"social netwar"* (Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, & Fuller, 1998; Ronfeldt & Arquilla, 1993, 2001) 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 is indeed seen as creating places where people network (Harasim, 1993: 15), a new *"social space"* that can *"empower individuals"* (Poster, 1997: 201).

In Hebron and Silwan, the communication relies mostly on two local groups, both of which enjoy major public exposition – primarily, because they are the groups that receive the majority of foreign visitors – namely Youth Against Settlements (YAS) and the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre (WHIC). Both insist that the communication aspect of their work is essential. In the case of al-Araqib, we will see that 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 Bedouins in the Negev, primary amongst which is the Negev Coexistence Forum.

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*”<sup>137</sup>.

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, not only allowing for advocacy through diffusion and information, but also allowing people to have proof of how the events unfolded, in the event of arrests or accusations made against them. The activists from YAS as well as those from ISM and EAPPI move into the city depending on the events, trying to ensure their presence in order 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 are moreover considered to “*provide a protective presence, contribute to deterrence and help to curtail violence*”<sup>138</sup>. The footage can indeed be used as a basis for complaints against the army or the police, or as proof in case of wrongful accusations made against the residents.

During clashes or arrests, soldiers often drive civilians – constituting the “public” of the clashes – away, but journalists are usually allowed to stay; although, it should be noted that this is not always the case. In consequence, the YAS activists who go to film or take pictures usually try to use the

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<sup>137</sup> Youth Against Settlements website: <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.

<sup>138</sup> B’tselem Camera Project, [http://www.btselem.org/video/cdp\\_background](http://www.btselem.org/video/cdp_background).

advantages that are attributed to journalists in order to remain. A set of strategies have been established to avoid their being driven away: members of YAS often wear a high-visibility jacket with the word “Press” written on the back, and use press cards showing their affiliation to a group called “Human Rights Press” when soldiers ask 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 that was 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 it online” [H7]. 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” [H7]. He indeed explained that those cards were made with the support of the Palestinian Journalist Union, which is ready to back the claims of their belonging to the “press”, “just in case”. The videos produced in Hebron are broadcast via the Internet, and particularly on the Youtube channel of YAS (on the account named Human1Rights1Press<sup>139</sup>) and the website of B’tselem<sup>140</sup>.

Youth Against Settlements also has a website<sup>141</sup>, which is not updated on a regular basis; it essentially uses Facebook to transmit information, through the page of the group<sup>142</sup>, or the online group called “Sumoud and challenge center” (621 members in May 2015). 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), 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, (that is to say, membership 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, which can vary greatly, depending on the context and the attention paid to the situation by the media, for example), this data nevertheless still 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 2212 members, and the Human Rights Defenders, born from YAS, had around 3202 “likes” and 4593 members on their two different pages; this seems to confirm the status of YAS as

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<sup>139</sup> “Human rights press” channel on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Human1Rights1Press>.

<sup>140</sup> See “Video Channel: Camera distribution project”, B’tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/english/Video/CDP\\_Index.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Video/CDP_Index.asp).

<sup>141</sup> On <http://hyas.ps/en/index.php/en/>, and previously on <http://www.youthagainstsettlements.org/>.

<sup>142</sup> Facebook page of Youth Against Settlements: <https://www.facebook.com/media.yas?fref=ts>.

a central actor and interlocutor of the Palestinian contention in Hebron. We could also hypothesize, although it would require a refined analysis of all contacts to be confirmed, that this audience also reflects the larger international aura of the group.

This points out implicitly to an important dimension of the protest and of the transnational networking, more specifically: the prestige brought by activism and by the presence of internationals. A real competition indeed opposes activist groups in Palestine, a dimension of the protest to which many visitors do not have access and which has repercussions on the relationships that the activists have with the visitors and on the way that 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, the result of various disagreements, existing between the leading figures of the groups active in the city and sometimes even within those groups. Accusations of corruption, lies, and harassment, represent the “behind the scenes” of the activism in Hebron, and appear to be particularly linked to the process of international networking, which represents, internally, a fight for power and prestige.

The “leaders” of these organizations, meaning the figures of the communities that have a public status, talk to the visitors and have contact with the media (Jawad Siyam in Silwan, Issa Amro in Hebron and Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi in al-Araqib) also represent the movements and officiate as their spokespersons, both on social media and in respect of the public in general. As Hebron is one of the most famous sites of resistance in Palestine, the visibility given by the struggle and by the media, necessarily constitutes a matter of competition.

In Silwan, the WHIC has a website<sup>143</sup>, with information in Arabic, Hebrew and English. It also has a Facebook page<sup>144</sup>, which had around 17 446 “likes” in August 2015, and a Youtube channel<sup>145</sup>. On both pages, local political news is 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”* [S7].

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<sup>143</sup> Website of the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre: <http://silwanic.net/>.

<sup>144</sup> Facebook page of the Wadi Hilwe Information Centre: <https://www.facebook.com/Silwanic?fref=ts>.

<sup>145</sup> Silwanic, <https://www.youtube.com/user/silwanicNET1>.

Al-Araqib, as a smaller reality with fewer residents, does not have internal groups or associations, and relies more on individuals: there is, for example, no dedicated information page on Facebook (only a public group called “Solidarity with al-Arakib”, which has around 220 members<sup>146</sup>). However, people from al-Araqib all publish 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 NCF, which is the main official portal of information concerning the village; its Facebook page had 2422 “likes” in August 2015. It also provides information on the unrecognized Bedouin villages. The NCF focuses particularly on the dissemination of information through its daily updates but also sends out monthly newsletters and numerous reports. The NCF has also launched a campaign, organizing every year a workshop to teach children how to film and photograph<sup>147</sup>. 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 for example 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”* [A5]. 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<sup>148</sup>.

The Internet, and social media in particular, allow the inhabitants and activists to reach outside of 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 organised and common interests to be developed. The logics and dynamics behind the use of social media and the networking that ensues would require a specific study, with more technical insights to be drawn. However, we can assume that in addition to the network of family and friends, the network established through social media relies primarily 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). One limit of this kind of networking is that it probably primarily generates contact between those people who already know each other, who gravitate in the same

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<sup>146</sup> Page “Solidarity with al-Arakib”: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/171815022864227/?fref=ts>.

<sup>147</sup> 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/>.

<sup>148</sup> NCF’s Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh-O9VOj5R9RBez0GIUw0g>.

circles, or who have already been sensitized to the issues and thus already have a minimum knowledge of the situation. As such, the role of political tourism and of the NGOs to enlarge the public reached is essential in the advocacy and information efforts (see section 1.2.)

The diffusion of news and information is a big part of the repertoire deployed by the actors of contention: social media, and especially Facebook, are used not only to diffuse videos of the various events, clashes or initiatives, but also to keep in touch with visitors and international organizations and thus to increase the impact of the information published and extend the networks existing around the sites of contention. While the electronic advocacy depends firstly on the organized groups, such as YAS or the WHIC, the role of the individual also has to be taken into account. Often relying more directly on their daily life and the situations they directly live, they take to the Internet to illustrate their conditions of life and the injustice they have to face. Together, the individual and collective strategies of communication have two related aims: on the one hand, to increase the awareness of the Israeli population by making it face the reality of the situation and on the other, to increase the pressure on the Israeli government, by making the international community more aware of the human rights violations, and demanding that they find solutions to ensure the rights of the Palestinians are respected.

This “electronic advocacy” relies on existing networks of information, and on virtual channels of communication. However, it also draws on networks established voluntarily by the actors with allies, part of which is present in the sites of contention to show solidarity with the inhabitants and sometimes participate in the struggle.

### ***Solidarity network***

While Palestinian movements are aware of each other and are sometimes in contact, the difficulties of circulation, as well as the concentration on the local issues tend to separate the existing movements and sites of contention. As a result, the networks established are mainly 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. Numerous NGOs are active in the West Bank and Jerusalem, providing “*health care, education and training, agriculture extension, housing assistance, human rights and legal aid, charity/welfare, technical assistance*” (Sullivan, 1996: 93). They depend on a great variety of actors, including churches, Islamic organizations, and independent volunteers.

In addition to numerous Palestinian NGOs, numerous international organizations are also implanted in the West Bank and sometimes Jerusalem. They usually aim to monitor the situation and Palestinians' rights under occupation and have their own network, with 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 also work in contact with the Palestinians and even in the occupied territories, having the aim of exposing the situation to Israeli society. We will see that in this respect the situation of Hebron is particular as it is where a large number of NGOs and activists are focused. The international NGOs often have a double role; they maintain a presence on the ground, observing and reporting on their own testimonies, and as a result, they also engage in electronic advocacy 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 operate to amplify their impact. Indeed, John Collins underlines that *"if the habitational resistance of Palestinians is finally beginning to come into the light, this is partly because of the presence of the international solidarity activists who have brought great energy and visibility to the struggles of ordinary Palestinians"* (2011: 126).

For the three cases in which we are interested, the repartition and the number of NGOs present in each of the areas is very revealing of the attention given to them and of the role that the international network can play in the conduct and definition of resistance. Indeed, while several NGOs are stationed permanently in Hebron, only a few monitor 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 reliance on a different "system", as it is administratively detached from the logic of occupation.

Three international NGOs have a constant presence in Hebron, 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 and role.

The first two organizations, EAPPI and CPT, primarily aim to provide testimony of the situation: they observe and report according to a neutral mandate, based on international law. Petter Gustavsson, 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.”* [H8]

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; it is considered as both theoretical and biblical, which *“must combine a strategic local presence with international pressure in order to be effective”*<sup>149</sup>.

While the EAPPI claims to maintain a “Principled Impartiality”, 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”*<sup>150</sup>. The CPT nevertheless has a very similar approach and mandate to that of the EAPPI. The people present with the ISM (International Solidarity Movement) present themselves more as activists than volunteers; indeed, the ISM was created with a view to accompany and support the Palestinians in their fight. The ISM’s line of work is based on the principle of direct action, with a more radical take on the conflict. One of the ISM activists present in Hebron during the fieldwork explained: *“ISM is more upfront in demonstrations, more in, shows presence”* [H4].

These NGOs all insist on the importance of monitoring everyday life; the preparation and diffusion of reports on the situation follows this monitoring process, and they also aim to try and protect the Palestinian residents, and to improve their quality of life. For the NGOs too, presence is essential and is considered as a strategy of resistance and solidarity: indeed, an international presence, and the availability of external testimony that accompanies this presence, is understood in a similar way to filming, that is, as a means to deter the soldiers in order to create a safer environment for the Palestinians. The ISM website states the importance of “personal witness and transmitting

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<sup>149</sup> “Our model”, EAPPI, <https://www.eappi.org/en/our-model>.

<sup>150</sup> “About CPT Palestine”, <http://www.cpt.org/work/palestine>.

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”*<sup>151</sup>.

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”* [H8].

The ISM has a more radical stance, and relatedly, the activists usually have a more openly anti-Zionist discourse; indeed, they frame the situation in more radical terms than the other NGOs. A consideration of the ISM website shows its use of a very connotative vocabulary, making reference to: ethnic cleansing, segregation, oppression, domination and apartheid. ISM activists are also encouraged to participate in non-violent demonstrations, *“creatively disrupting activity by the Israeli occupation forces”*, 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, two ISM activists were arrested and deported.

Each of these organizations has a principle of diffusing and communicating their members’ experiences and the situations to which they have been witness: the members usually make a commitment to report on what they see, either on the organizations’ website<sup>152</sup>, 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”*<sup>153</sup>. The EAPPI insists on the “theology of advocacy”<sup>154</sup>, 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*

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<sup>151</sup> “About ISM”, <http://palsolidarity.org/about/>.

<sup>152</sup> EAPPI website: <http://www.eappi.org/> and blog: <http://blog.eappi.org/>; ISM <http://palsolidarity.org/> and ISM France: <http://www.ism-france.org/>, CPT website: <http://www.cpt.org/>.

<sup>153</sup> ISM website: <http://palsolidarity.org/about/>.

<sup>154</sup> “Our Model is Accompaniment”, EAPPI website, <https://www.eappi.org/en/our-model>.

(...) *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 try to really have people from different backgrounds” [H8]<sup>155</sup>.*

In Silwan and al-Araqib too, NGOs are present and active on the ground. In Silwan, EAPPI volunteers based in Bethlehem sometimes pass through the village to monitor the situation; this might occur, for example, during the Friday prayer in al-Bustan. These kinds of association are arguably less present and less active in Jerusalem: they generally focus on the West Bank, which is more clearly occupied and which suffers from harsher restrictions. In Jerusalem and the Negev the NGOs that intervened are thus mostly Israelis, and none of them are permanently stationed in the village.

In Silwan, two other organizations which are active in the neighbourhoods are 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”*<sup>156</sup>, and Emek Shaveh, which focuses on the role of archaeology in Silwan<sup>157</sup>. Both organizations insist on the importance of informing the public, which is done via social media and their websites, which offer insights into their position and their work, as well as reports and documentations on the conflict. However, their main activity in Silwan is the organization of tours, which we will examine in greater detail in the next part (see section 1.2.). It is important to note that these organizations remain external to the neighbourhood’s life, even if they have links with the inhabitants and activists, for example, in Silwan, this is the case in particular with Maada and the tent of al-Bustan. They are accepted as contacts, but are not integrated; Jawad Siyam has explained that Israeli NGOs can come to the WHIC, which is open, but that no common activities are organized: *“We don’t do projects or partnerships with Israelis because we want to work for our society”* [S7]. The Israeli origin of these organizations does represent a particular problem in East Jerusalem, where – as we have seen above – people are preoccupied by the image that they have in Palestinian society and the position in which they find themselves, that is, between the *de facto* Israeli authority and the identity and aspirations of the Palestinians. The fear of “normalizing” the occupation is very strong in Jerusalem,

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<sup>155</sup> 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”*.

<sup>156</sup> Rabbis for Human Rights’ website: <http://rhr.org.il/eng/>.

<sup>157</sup> Emek Shaveh’s website: <http://alt-arch.org/en/>.

as the establishment of seemingly normal relations with the Israeli institutions is considered to be an acceptance of occupation and the end of the resistance, and could even be perceived as an act of treachery. Jeff Halper, one of the central figures of the Israeli Committee against House Demolition, traditionally active in East Jerusalem, underlined that this fear *“prevents many Palestinian organizations from cooperating with their Israeli counterparts, no matter how much the Israeli groups support the Palestinians’ national agenda”* (Halper, 2006: 48). Arik Ascherman, president of Rabbis for Human Rights, has recognized that it was very difficult to define a strategy to support people of East Jerusalem [A13].

In al-Araqib, the situation is similar as most of the NGOs supporting the Bedouin cause are Israelis; the inter-ethnic relations are however more pacified, even if the fear of collaborators remains present. There is no fear of “normalization” that hinders cooperation in this case. Adalah, the Forum for the Coexistence in the Negev, 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 have an implication for the entire Bedouin community and not only for al-Araqib; they also organize tours in the unrecognized villages and have a presence to support the inhabitants in case of demolition. The presence of NGOs in al-Araqib is can be very punctual, dictated by the events that occur. 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 activists come to demonstrate their solidarity with the village. Some leading figures such as Haia Noach, CEO of the Negev forum for coexistence, and Arik Ascherman, Director of Rabbis for Humans Rights, usually join the protests, with some Israeli activists from Beer-Sheva or Tel Aviv also participating.

This overview of the solidarity network 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 with NGOs present on site which also concentrate on electronic advocacy, distinctions emerge between the three cases. Hebron attracts a lot of attention as a symbol of occupation in the West Bank. Silwan, which suffers from its ambiguous status and is caught between the West Bank and Israel, concentrates on the local situation and thus cuts itself from possible support, while al-Araqib is tied

to Israel, and is included both in the network supporting equal rights for “Arab Israelis” and that supporting the Bedouins in particular.

Moreover, in all three cases we can observe that the virtual networks established for communication and information appear closely related to the social networks existing at the local level, directly linking the different actors together through co-presence and active cooperation. We will further develop this analysis by considering the importance of political tourism, a practice that is linked to several dimensions already considered in this research, as it is rooted in place and is directly linked to the centrality of diffusing information and raising awareness. It also provides a way to establish contacts with actors external to the site of contention and thus to extend and consolidate the transnational networks existing around each site more directly than through virtual media network.

## **1.2. Organizing political tourism, spreading the narratives**

The presence of NGOs as set out above is complemented by the presence of occasional visitors; all three places studied here fall outside of the classical tourist areas of the region, however as we will see they attract a certain type of “involved tourism”, either of activists or people who are interested in first-hand accounts of the situation and want to “see for themselves” what happens in Israel and Palestine. This political tourism represents a fundamental resource from a strategic point of view as it represents an additional way of sharing the place narrative (developed in chapter 5 and 6) and conveying information to the international public; it also facilitates the enlargement of the network existing around the sites of contention. The “political tourism” contributes to building 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. Moreover, the international presence and interest also contributes to reproducing and reinforcing this narrative and place identity.

We will see as a result that 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 very different groups, with solidarity protests and petitions taking place at the global level; 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. We will consider further 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 concentrated on an economic perspective, we 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 constituted as symbols of resistance and have succeeded in becoming iconic of one facet of the Palestinian resistance; Hebron stands out in particular in this respect.

To complete the analysis of the networking strategies, based mostly on the extension of support as well as on the necessity to inform the public, we will see that the public considered is not only international, even if it is considered to be the priority; the actors of contention, and especially the groups of activists and the NGOs, also turn towards the local community. The attitude of sectors of the population towards the struggles that are led in these sites is often indifferent or downright hostile. Educating the community is thus seen as necessary; it can be done through local initiatives carried on in the frame of *sumud*, as seen in chapter 5 and 6, and through the organization of local political tourism on the model of international tourism, bringing people to visit the sites of contention.

### ***“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 Israeli Jewish 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 tourists 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<sup>158</sup> and all three sites fall decisively outside of the main tourist circuits in the region, which often concentrate on archaeological and biblical sites (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<sup>159</sup>, which are considered to be important historically but especially, are

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<sup>158</sup> “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>

<sup>159</sup> 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](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/Rainbow/Documents/IN_VS_E_tab3_2009.htm)

considered to be safe places; indeed, the West Bank suffers from the image of being a dangerous area, which deters the majority 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<sup>160</sup>. The best example of this interest is illustrated by the wall in Bethlehem, which has become a destination for a kind of “political pilgrimage”. Indeed, some visitors are “*attracted to witnessing 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 signs 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 kind of tourism, which attributes particular attention to places of conflict, dubbed as either “politically-oriented tourism”, “political tourism”, “alternative tourism” (Chaitin, 2011; Clarke, 2000; Hazbun, 2004; Koensler & Papa, 2011) or even “dark tourism” (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012), already existed in the 1980s but has developed especially since the second Intifada (Koensler & Papa, 2011: 13). This approach is generally marked by a pro-Palestinian stance of the visitors, who are already sensitive to the problems of the area and are willing to support local communities as well as see for themselves the situation in order to be able to testify at a later date. Another type of tourism, defined as “conflict” or “war tourism” by W. Pitts, who develops the example of that in Chiapas (Mexico), has emerged in recent years, where visitors directly seek confrontation, and “*the thrill of political violence*” (Pitts, 1996). This fascination with and attraction to violent settings and action can be found often among the ISM volunteers; the volunteer who was interviewed, for example insisted strongly on the fact that they were the only one “in the action” [H4], and on the training they had before being sent on the field, which aimed to allow the volunteers to recognize the weapons used by the Israeli soldiers.

International volunteers often engage in “political tourism” too: 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 [H4, H8]. While it may allow them to have a better knowledge and

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<sup>160</sup> 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>

understanding of the local situations, and also represents an opportunity to help while bearing testimony to the reality, comparing the various places that one has visited, and their level of danger is also a kind of rite of passage for activists in Palestine. Some sites, such as Bil'in, as well as Hebron as we will see below, are essential to attest this experience of political violence, as they are constituted into "hauts lieux", not only of contention, but of the violence of the conflict in general, where one actually takes a risk by going there, and in so doing, proves his or her dedication to the cause.

While the "political tourists" are usually more conscious of the Palestinian issues, political tourism is not necessarily pro-Palestinian or even an act of activism in itself. 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). Moreover, "political tourism" has developed as part of a wider tendency for "*special interest tourism*" and more specifically "*ethical tourism*" (Clarke, 2000: 12), which recently became a real market in the sector. Various travel agencies now specialize in "alternative tours" which include visits to the West Bank; these agencies include Alternative Tourist Group<sup>161</sup>, Travel Palestine<sup>162</sup>, Visit Palestine<sup>163</sup>, and Medji Tours<sup>164</sup>. The latter offers tours based on 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 opening the situation up to a wider public, to those not necessarily linked to political or conflict tourism or to the Palestinian cause.

The three sites of contention that are studied here welcome a number of political tourists who correspond to the different nuances described in the preceding paragraphs: that is, volunteers, individuals and groups traveling with agencies around "alternative" routes and thematic, conflict tourism and political tourism. Two other types of visitors must be considered: firstly, the 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, and secondly, the political figures

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<sup>161</sup> Alternative Tourist Group: <http://atg.ps/>.

<sup>162</sup> Travel Palestine: <http://travelpalestine.ps/>.

<sup>163</sup> Visit Palestine: <http://www.visitpalestine.ps/>.

<sup>164</sup> Medji Tours: <http://www.mejditours.com/>.

(member of parliaments, ambassadors and people linked to governments, for example) who take the trips in order to gather information and knowledge about the reality in an area. Even if they cannot be considered as “tourists”, their programme and perspective in touring the 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 affected by the rise of political tourism: it is one of the destinations proposed by the travel agencies, usually together with a trip to Bethlehem as part of a one-day excursion. The city is one of the main points of interests for the political tourists, as it engages the biblical dimension, the Palestinian culture with the old city and the handicraft tradition, as well as a particular political situation. Moreover, people are afraid of travelling alone to Hebron as it is considered to be a dangerous city; as such, the possibility of going there as part of a group and within the framework of an organized tour, provides for a real opportunity for many interested people. The opportunity for group travel thus contributes to the increasing the number of visitors.

Hebron is a symbol of occupation, and is presented as *the* example and *the* place to see to have an idea of what happens in the West Bank. Groups often come with guides from outside the city, with tourist agencies such as those quoted above; however local organizations such as the Hebron-France Centre or the HCR, also regularly organize tours for foreigners. 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. The visits of Hebron usually follow a common pattern, combining a series of elements: the souk, the Cave of Patriarchs mosque, a visit to the Muslim part, some time dedicated to the Jewish part, as well as a stop in one of the three shops still open in front of the mosque.

Of course, these tours are always highly political; for example, the visit to the mosque provides an opportunity to tell of the massacre committed by Baruch Goldstein in 1994, showing for example the impact of bullets in the wall, but also sometimes to conveniently interpret facts in light of the political message that one wants to convey. Abraham, the “father of monotheism”, who is allegedly buried under the actual monument, is one reason why the place is so important for Jews and Muslims alike: Hebron is the place where he is said to have bought land to bury his wife Sarah (see Genesis 23:16), a deed considered by Jewish people as the first Jewish property in the region. This is one of the arguments invoked to legitimize the continued Jewish presence in the city. Abraham

is often engaged by the Palestinian guides and the residents as a wise symbolic figure who would oppose the wrongdoings of the Jewish people and the occupation, in particular. A guide leading a group in the mosque, for example, explained: *“Abraham bought his land, he didn’t confiscate it; he respected the land and the culture. Like that, there are no problems”* (field notes, March 18, 2013). The visit to the mosque also provides an opportunity to reassert the importance of Hebron in the Muslim religion, not only because Abraham is considered a prophet and is buried there, but also because his presence puts the city at the centre of a more complex cosmogony, directly linked to Mecca. The same guide also pointed out: *“Muslim people pronounce the name of Abraham every day in their prayers, not many people know it but many things are linked with Abraham. You are here at the place where he lived and is buried”* (field notes, March 18, 2013).

The visitors also usually take a walk, with or without the guide depending on his origin, in Shuhada Street. The variations in the tours are largely reflected in the meetings with Palestinians, 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; it allows the visitor to hear a first-hand account of the residents’ living conditions and to have a privileged contact with them. According to the local interlocutor, people insist on different aspects of the resistance and of life: for example, YAS insists on discussing the initiatives they organize and their vision of resistance, while the HRC presents its activity of renovation as a key consideration.

Some agencies also propose a meeting with a representative from the settlers’ community to ensure a balance in the presentations and to avoid accusations of partiality. Most of the guides do not take their groups to the area that stretches beyond the centre towards the settlement of Kiriath Arba or to the hill of Tal Rumeida; this is generally due to the absence of major monuments as well as their position slightly outside of the old city, which makes them more difficult to reach because of the various street closures and military checkpoints. Another important presence in Hebron is that of Breaking the Silence, an Israeli organisation which gathers the testimonies of Israeli soldiers relating to their time in the army. 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” [H13].

These tours provide a means of informing and of advocating for support from the international community; they also allow for the presentation of one’s vision – framing – of the conflict and of

the roles played by the different parties involved. The places to which that 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. Hani Abu Heikel, from the Hebron Defence Committee, calls his tours the “resistance tours” [H9]. Jamal Zuer Maragha, who owns a shop in the old city and often talks to tourists, showing 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 and 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 international 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” [H12].*

As Richard Clarke explains in his article about political tourism in Hebron, 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 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 37, and 45 above in chapter 5, and figure 48 below), do not enjoy the same visibility as the brand new signs put up by the Jewish community in Shuhada Street. However, it has to be noted that the latter signs were put up between the summer of 2011 and March of 2012. It is likely that they were not put up simply as a response to the signs installed on Zliha’s balcony – one is nevertheless located directly on her house – but rather as a means of tackling the criticism that might be formulated when the visitors discover Shuhada Street. As such, they clearly aim to reach out to the political tourists and those participating in the information tours. They target the tourists who pass through Shuhada Street, 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.



Figure 48: one of the signs put by the Jewish community of Hebron in Shuhada Street. Picture taken on March 26, 2012.

As we have seen, the activists and inhabitants indeed redesign the space of the old city through the use of symbols, discourse, 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 remind people of the reality of the occupation and of asserting their opposition. In so doing, they produce and propose a frame through which Hebron can be considered and understood, hoping these frames will be re-used.

As contradictory as it might seem, the constraints implemented in Hebron also make the resistance more visible and more efficient from the point of view of communication; strict control and heavy repression reinforces the impact of transgression and attracts more media attention. It can be

noted that despite Hebron being one of the main destinations for political tourism in Israel and Palestine, and clearly the one most frequently visited amongst the case studies, it is apparently the least visited of the case studies when it comes to the institutional actors, a fact that can be explained by the sensitivity of Hebron in respect of political concerns and security.

It has to be noted that while political tourism has started to extend 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 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 the Bedouin citizens of Israel should be submitted to a discriminatory treatment similar to that of the Palestinians from the West Bank; 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<sup>165</sup>. Thabet Abu-Ras, 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*” [A10].

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 49). Their discourse is often focused on their personal story taking a very emotional tone; it is often completed with more technical data by a member of the NGO that organized the tour, and presents the situation of the unrecognized villages as a whole and the State’s politics regarding the Bedouins, for example, by setting out the laws applicable to the Negev, maps of the region and statistics. The oral presentation is then usually followed by a tour of the village. Aziz shows the “material proofs” that a village was there even if it has been wiped out; this includes pipes, tiles, cables, and the relics of the houses. He “deciphers” the landscape for the visitors with reference to the organization of space and the meaning of the relics, explaining where the houses stood, where the cattle was kept, and where the water reserve and the trees were located (see figure 50). 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

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<sup>165</sup> See “*About Us*”, Tarabut Hithabrut: <http://www.tarabut.info/en/articles/article/about/>.

*sumud* and of the impossibility to uproot the Bedouins from their land. 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 from their environment, but also in harmony with it. To each group visiting al-Araqib, Aziz says: *“Be our ambassadors, tell people around you about us, tell your government to make Israel stop killing us!”* (field notes, November 9, 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 different way 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.



*Figure 49: Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi and Haia Noach present the situation of al-Araqib to different groups. Picture on the left taken on November 10, 2013, on the right on November 13, 2013.*



*Figure 50: Aziz shows the visitors the site of the village, with the remaining pipes and cables. Picture taken on November 13, 2013.*

Organised groups and delegations constitute the majority of the visitors coming to al-Araqib for political tourism. Adalah, for example, specifically 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 also 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<sup>166</sup>. 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 in March, 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, 14<sup>th</sup> edition, May 2011; 18<sup>th</sup> edition, January 2013).

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<sup>166</sup> 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%20forest%20in%20the%20negev%2028-dec-2005.aspx>.

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 groups during the “high season”. However, very few individuals visit, whether activists, volunteers or merely the curious. It must be noted that the situation in the Negev attracts a considerable amount of international attention, which has increased recently as a result of the discussion in the media of the Praver Plan’s main points.

In Silwan, regular tours of the neighbourhoods 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 little mosques are shown as historical spots taken over or threatened by the Israeli presence. Groups usually then stop at the WHIC, often to hear Jawad Siyam or Ahmad Qaraeen, 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 in the neighbourhood, 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 (see figure 51). These tours correspond to a political and strategic logic; they need to be as striking as possible. From this point of view, the situation in Silwan is maybe more difficult to present to an external outsider, and more difficult for them to grasp; the City of David and the presence of settlers are of course pointed out, but on the whole the landscape is not as telling or “exploitable” as the other cases to support the narratives. Indeed, the exercise of control is not as omnipresent as in Hebron and the setting is not as clearly destitute as in al-Araqib. In this context, the testimonies take on an additional importance to confirm the depiction made of the life conditions of the Palestinians.



Figure 51 : Jawad Siyam (on the right) presents Moslem Odeh, 14 years-old, who was arrested fourteen times at the time of the fieldwork. Picture taken on January 31, 2013.

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:

*“People who are doing PhD, 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”* [S1].

This confirms that the tourists visiting Silwan indeed come 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. The sign installed by the WHIC, next to the entrance of the City of David, however 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. Having a first-hand account and seeing the situation for themselves, is of course, a primary goal for this kind of visitor. This kind of tourism 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 about political situation are usually 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 thus 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 languages used to frame each situation (resorting to the notion of apartheid, for example) also have an important impact. Tourism thus represents *“one strategy among many used by peace and social justice activists”* which *“shows visitors locations of contention and the ways in which civil society addresses many aspects of the conflict (...) expose visitors to complexities of life on the ground and to convince visitors to advocate for and support peace and social justice efforts on returning home”* (Chaitin, 2011: 40).

The narratives used to present the situation in each place is linked to the elements we have scrutinized in the preceding chapters: the land is presented as sacred and the seat of a special relationship between the residents and the environment, representative of the Palestinians’ attachment to their territory. Another narrative developed about the place, to encourage local mobilization but especially to impose a particular image at the international level, is that which provides that each site of contention is a *“haut lieu”* of resistance. In each case, the struggle has indeed become part of the identity of the place, a fact reinforced by the media and the international attention that each receives.

### ***Framing resistance as the place identity***

The interactions with foreigners, volunteers, NGOs, and other groups, and the other practices that have been developed above, including the references to landmarks and to a sacred landscape and territory, are all elements that facilitate the framing of the sites of contention as *“hauts lieux”* of resistance. Indeed, the inhabitants and activists present the struggle as being an integral characteristic of the identity of each site. 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 ensure that the identity of the place relies precisely on the struggle; each place has however come to represent a particular aspect of the power relationships in the region, which in turn imply a different influence and audience. Hebron is a symbol of the fight against the occupation in general. Al-Araqib symbolizes the discrimination against the Palestinian citizens of Israel, 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. All three places actually frame each site of contention as being itself a “haut lieu” due to the practices and the spirit of resistance that permeate.

Hebron is framed as presenting a unique spatial pattern of oppression and resistance, tightly linked together; this represents the reality of occupation. Three central elements of language are essential to the framing of the place: the uniqueness of the situation, H2 being a “ghost town”, and the definition of the local reality as apartheid. The presentation of the city on the YAS website illustrates this way of framing: Hebron is presented as *“one of the areas hardest hit by the Israeli occupation”*, the settler violence in the centre 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”*<sup>167</sup>. 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). Even without going as far as to mention apartheid, the comments of 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”* [H2]. Jamal Zu’er Maraga, who owns a souvenir shop in the old city, has 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”* [H11].

The characterization of the situation as apartheid or as one of segregation represents the core of this effort to share and diffuse a narrative. As we have seen in chapter 4 (see point 1.3.) the argument of apartheid is very controversial in the Israeli-Palestinian context; it is not even universally accepted among the Palestinian activists. Some activists in Hebron use it as their main argument, making an illustrating with the example of Shuhada street, going so far as to be arrested

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<sup>167</sup> Youth Against Settlement website: <http://www.youthagainsettlements.org/>.

on purpose under the eyes of visitors to prove their point [H2]. 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, and consider it should be reserved to the South African case. Merely out of diplomacy concerns or communication strategy, many Israelis or pro-Israelis consider it to be defamatory and a sign of an extreme “leftist” position.

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, 1.3.). The uniqueness of the pattern of control makes the place a symbol of occupation, which implies 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. As we have seen above, the political tourism that develops in Hebron is indeed due in part to the climate of violence and instability that characterizes the city; people usually want to see and experience for themselves the hardships of the occupation and how they translate in reality, while minimizing the risks they take personally. It is part of the tours to meet activists and inhabitants who tell stories of discrimination, soldiers and settler violence. The discourses about resistance often 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 centre (“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, 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” [A3]. 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 Awwad, 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” [A4].*

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. 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 Palestinians citizens. The inhabitants refer to *sumud* as being a part of their identity and a characteristic defining the place (see figure 52).

As we have seen, 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 or additional interests in it. 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 considerable infrastructure. 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. Even more so than in Hebron, it represents the reason why people visit the village, and thus determines the identity of the place.

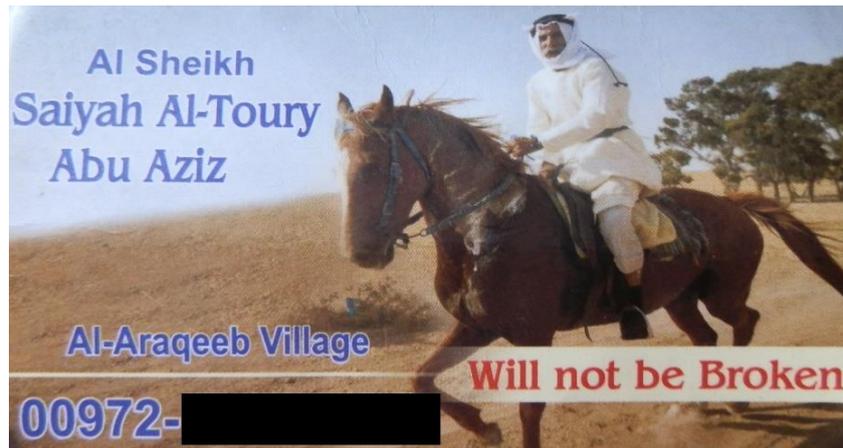


Figure 52: The visiting card of Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, indicating "Al-Araqeeb Village Will not be Broken".

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, the real "centre" polarizing the area was thus, 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. Moreover, 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 represented a symbol for the inhabitants and their families, and 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. Thereafter, it was necessary to transfer the meeting place inside the cemetery, which reflected a loss of much of its direct symbolic power but was framed as representing an additional constraint.

In Silwan too, the inhabitants have adopted the resistance as a characteristic of the place's identity, although it is less famous internationally than Hebron. 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<sup>168</sup>. 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 El-Ad 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, which was the center of media attention, representing the situation of East Jerusalem and the fight of the residents, a place defined by the particular pattern of Israeli presence but also by the resistance advanced by 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, and the concluding paragraph of point 2.3.).

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, and does not attract the same publicity that the Friday prayer generates for al-Bustan. For some inhabitants, like the group of women participating in the activities organized by the centre, 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 arrives from 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 mostly empty, and the

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<sup>168</sup> 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.justilm.org/> and the various articles published on the topic on +972 <http://972mag.com/sheikh-jarrah/>.

committee does not have a physical place to represent it. The Maada/WHIC centre thus represents a political landmark both at the local and 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”* [S16]. These two places represent new landmarks linked to the ongoing history of contention of the place, changing the local meaning of space.

In all three cases, the sites of contention became *“haut 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.

This status of *“haut lieu”* 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, we can affirm that 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, we will see that the development of this awareness is also increasingly considered to be necessary in the local community. In each of the cases, 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 political tourism?***

The inhabitants of these sites of contention all underline the paradox therein. On the 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 as we have illustrated, attracting international visitors, with the main actors of struggle 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 areas. The need to inform the members of their own communities is thus often presented as a priority for future actions; some of the actors try to develop this communication at a local level, and try to organize “local 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 the city. The presence of the army and of radical settlers of course 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 ever 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 [H2, H5, H7, H9]. The drug and robbery issues are often attributed to the permissiveness of the Israeli authorities and even presented as a conscious strategy to limit the Palestinian presence and activism in the area by fostering fear. In Hebron, inhabitants of the old city accuse the soldiers of turning a blind eye or even facilitating robbery and drug dealing to keep the people outside of the area. *“They [the soldiers, the Israeli authorities] give them easiest way to steal. Imagine that: a house in the old city gets stolen in front of the soldiers! Who is the one stealing? Of course he is a spy or he is dealing with the Israelis”* [H5]. Zliha Muhtaseb also pointed out that the thieves cooperate with the civil administration, and that this contributes to pushing shopkeepers outside of the old city [H2].

Many young Hebronites who were born after the second Intifada have only known the city as a separated and occupied area, and do not come to the center. A 20 year-old girl, who I met in H1 for example, explained that she used to come to the market when she was small but had never returned during the last six or seven years (field notes, March 4, 2013). Some have never set foot in H2: in March 2013, a group of around fifty 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). This dimension of the resistance was presented by both Issa Amro for YAS, and Walid Abu-Halawa for the HCR, as something important that needed to be specifically developed.

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 surrounding al-Araqib, many have expressed fear or suspicion in respect of the reasons of the residents' struggle. A taxi driver, for example, clearly expressed his despise, explaining in particular that he considered they 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 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 [A3, A5]. On one occasion on which 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).

The inhabitants of al-Araqib go, once a month, to Rahat for a demonstration, in order to expose their claims and their situation and to try to gather support outside of the group composed of their close family and people who used to live in al-Araqib. They attempt, this way, to extend the solidarity network existing around the village in Rahat in order to increase the scope for mobilization; however, Haia Noach has underlined that, even in respect of issues regarding the Bedouin community as a whole, it is very difficult to mobilize people [A5].

As is the case with the old city of Hebron, Silwan is seen by Palestinian Jerusalemites as a dangerous violent place, plagued by drugs, which are both consumed and sold. Similarly, the authorities are also accused of fostering drug dealing in the area; this is only directed at the Palestinians, either in order to make them easier to control or to turn them into delinquents. On the contrary, the authorities adopt a severe approach to the problem as soon as drugs are sold to Jews (field notes, February 8, 2013). Ahamd Qara'een for example asserted: "*the municipality and the authorities*

*they 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 better life. They want them to be stupid people"* [S2]. However, in Silwan, unlike in Hebron and al-Araqib, the need to inform the wider Palestinian community is not considered as a priority; 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 the local community is especially felt in Hebron; both YAS and the HRC have underlined that they started to work in this sense and need to develop and insist on this aspect of their work in diffusing information.

It appears that processes of developing networks of information and international solidarity is seen as essential for the success of the struggle, especially in order 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.

As Hebron has become a symbol of the occupation and become known for its harsh and violent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli army, the media coverage is deemed to be more crucial, diffused very quickly through the solidarity networks established but also via the mass media. Considerably greater attention is paid to the people of al-Araqib than the rest of the Bedouins' villages; indeed, we have seen that it is the most well-known and the most frequently visited among them. The activist network surrounding it is nevertheless more limited as the issues it deals with fall outside of the occupied West Bank; the media attention has however increased over recent years as the Praver Plan emerged and the protests surrounding it grew bigger. While Silwan receives international attention, it also seems less integrated in the international network of

solidarity and political tourism. As we have seen above, the strategies adopted concentrate mainly on the community; the neighbourhood once again appears to suffer from its “in-between” position. It is not positioned in the West Bank, and thus it does not attract nor is it a focus of media attention like the neighbouring Sheikh Jarrah.

Although we have concentrated here on relations and processes originating at the local scale, I contend that they participate in the creation or the reinforcement of the transnational character of the network that are constituted around the sites of contention, highlighting the other scale in which the contention takes place, as well as the influence that the exchanges with different actors and different sites can have on its identity and orientation (Featherstone, 2008). We will now move on to scrutinize the exchanges between different sites, concentrating on the way the actors from the three sites of contention exploit the resources offered by the international arena to advance their agenda. 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).

## **2. Entering and using the international arena**

The Palestinian struggle has reached a moment at which the local struggle 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 in terms of impact, and thus conditions in part the repertoire employed. We have seen that the tourists who come to visit these sites are understood 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 bound 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.

In this part concerning the international area, we will thus concentrate firstly on the transnational character of the struggle, which associates – through a process of brokerage – the local actors of contention to other similar groups abroad, thus forming a tight and active transnational network based on solidarity and advocacy. We will then focus more particularly on the scalar strategy that sees the activists shift the level of activity to address the international institutions. 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. We will see that the contacts established locally with international activists and groups are complemented or extended by an intensive advocacy and lobbying work.

Thereafter, we will consider 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. We will see that this applies especially to the Bedouin case; the Bedouin people adopted the term indigeneity, which implies a particular link with the land. Thereafter, we will briefly consider the apparition in the Palestinian struggle of the concept – defined by UNESCO – of cultural landscape.

### **2.1. 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 case studies, the activists work at 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 “*are bound together by shared values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information and services*” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 2). Such networks also allows for some activists to become “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 activist groups eventually aim at changing Israeli policies, especially to put an end to the occupation of Palestine, they often target their own domestic sphere 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, as we will see below) 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 participate 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 90s. 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). All three appear engaged in the process considered here, namely the inscription of the local actors of contention in transnational networks. The “coordination” indicates the *“joint planning of collective action and the creation of instances for cross-spatial collaboration”* (Tarrow, 2005: 122), while the “brokerage” designates the *“information transfers that depend on the linking of two or more previously unconnected sites”* (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005:

141) and the “theorization” relies on the sharing of a “core causal idea” elaborated into a “*general frame that can be applied to other realities*” (Tarrow, *ibid.*). Other types of intermediary mechanisms (individualization, segmentation, resource restriction, exclusion, co-optation, defection and internalization/ externalization) have also been identified in a study of scale shift in protests carried on by the Arab minority in Israel on the occasion of Land Day (E. Y. Alimi & Norwich, 2011).

In all three cases studied here, the activists that operate in the three sites of contention have contacts with groups abroad who seek to organize initiatives to protest, inform, or express solidarity with Palestine in general or with the definite sites of contention; they sometimes coordinate from a distance or even participate in the initiatives. 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. We will see however that 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; this includes local leaders, who enjoy a certain media fame and are recognized as referent for a determined site of contention, as well as the NGOs – such as the NCF in the Negev, Breaking the Silence in Hebron and Emek Shaveh in Silwan - and often exterior figures, activists who have been implicated in the struggle for a long time.

These transnational contacts translate through the organization of solidarity events, but also even 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 Israeli and foreign activists taking part in the main demonstration, and has requested that people from their network show their support by organizing an event or by taking part in the protest in another way. The ways in which such support might be expressed have been set out on its website; these are very varied:

*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!!<sup>169</sup>*

This list shows the intention to coordinate actions, but also underlines how the “theorization” is shared, and consequently how the protests organized abroad are expected to be framed in a way similar to the local ones, to follow a same model of interpretation. Indeed, this 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 framed 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 (2005: 122), 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 the diffusion of information and the pressure put on the Israeli government.

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<sup>169</sup> Youth Against Settlement website: <http://www.youthagainsettlements.org/>.

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. 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*”<sup>170</sup>. 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 essentially around YAS. A greater visibility abroad is seen to reflect a wider awareness about the situation on the ground, and an increased scope for pressure on governments around the world. On Facebook, the page of the 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<sup>171</sup>. The pictures of the transnational protests organized around the world have been posted online, showing the support that it enjoys.

Several of the activists of YAS have already travelled on behalf of the organization, mostly to Italy and Germany [H3, H7, H12]. Issa Amro, considered as one of the key figures of the local resistance and especially of non-violent resistance in Palestine, is one member who is especially solicited and who travels to meet pro-Palestinian activists. He explained: “*We go to associations, we go to speak in public and we go for trainings too sometimes*” [H7]. He is also the main interlocutor of the international institutions, which represent another arena in which the organization intervenes.

In Silwan, the networking is also more limited in its international dimension; exchanges and tours are less common as we have seen above (see 1.2.), 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<sup>th</sup> 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, place of fixation of the blockages”<sup>172</sup>. 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 AFPS

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<sup>170</sup> “Open Shuhada Street South Africa”, <https://www.facebook.com/OpenShuhadaStreetSouthAfrica?ref=ts&fref=ts>.

<sup>171</sup> “Global day for reopening Shuhada Street”, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/251984863283/?fref=ts>

<sup>172</sup> See for example <https://www.facebook.com/events/524928077570077/> and <http://collectif69palestine.free.fr/spip.php?article588>.

and Amnesty International<sup>173</sup>. We will see however that the international dimension of the Bedouin struggle develops especially in the institutional arena, which also implies a shift in the actors involved. The advocacy work and the networking activities are predominantly undertaken by the NCF and Adalah. While villagers are included as much as possible, the international level raises some issues, as Haia Noach has recognized:

*“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” [A5].*

This dimension of the struggle shows how crucial the impact of international media interest can be; Hebron was indeed made into a symbol not only of the West Bank but also of the reality of occupation in general, and has thus acquired an international status with both 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 et al., 2007). They also organize initiatives at a much more local scale, with which it is difficult to coordinate.

However, we will see in the next part that the advocacy engaged with and by 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 – 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.

To conclude on the topic of transnational networking, it has to be noted that while the target of the claims may change with the scale shift, with foreign activists for example asking their own

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<sup>173</sup> « Lutttes des Bédouins du Néguev : Exposition-Photos en Novembre 2011 », *Le Post*, October 21, 2011, [http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/article/2011/10/21/2619747\\_lutttes-des-bedouins-du-neguev-exposition-photos-en-novembre-2011.html](http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/article/2011/10/21/2619747_lutttes-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>.

governments or constituents to put pressure on Israel, the goal of the contention remains the same; thus, the scale 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.*). The shift is not necessarily radical; indeed, the examples considered here show that the *“coordination”* and *“theorization”* are completed by a *“transposition of frames, networks and forms of collective action to the international level without a corresponding liquidation of the conflicts and claims that gave rise to them in their arenas of origin”* (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: 123). We can assume that, beyond a transposition, in some cases there is even an alignment between the sites of contention and their transnational allies.

### ***International advocacy***

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 transnational 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 over 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”* [S4].

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 thesis, the requests made and the official decisions rendered by various institutions can be understood to 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.

The “exportation” of international advocacy to institutional spheres does not seem to be a prominent strategy in Silwan, which further confirms that the central strategy adopted is one that concentrates on the resources of the place and reinforces 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. Furthermore, we can assume that 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.

The case of Hebron is mentioned regularly in the frame of the international institutions; occasionally, the concerned actors make direct interventions. In June 2013, Issa Amro participated in a side event held during the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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”<sup>174</sup>.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, some “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”<sup>175</sup>. The members of the commission all expressed their concern about the situation in Hebron and in Palestine in general. Richard Falk, the

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<sup>174</sup> “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>.

<sup>175</sup> 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.

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”.*

On March 6<sup>th</sup> 2014, M. Amro again presented a statement to the Human Rights Council, insisting 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”*<sup>176</sup>. On May 28<sup>th</sup> 2014, another communication concerning the situation of Issa was sent to the Israeli government by the commission, regretting that no reply had been rendered in respect of the previous notification<sup>177</sup>.

These successive exchanges show how international advocacy aims at obtaining international resolutions or decisions that can put pressure on Israel: moreover, it aims at making the policy-makers aware of specific situations, through personal situations. They illustrate how this type of intervention also seeks to impose a narrative of the conflict, or, according to the language attached to scale shift, a “transposition of the frames” 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 respect of the international sphere, through the claims of indigeneity. They represent a case separated from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is always very sensitive at the international level, and which relies on another strategy, corresponding to another narrative and thus to specific international forums. Indeed, 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. Moreover, their traditional lifestyle and claims on the land presents the possibility for them to inscribe themselves in the institutional process of the recognition of the indigenous people; consequently, they ask to be protected as such.

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<sup>176</sup> Video of the intervention: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ7ZpiTo9VM>.

<sup>177</sup> 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)

As we have seen 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. It also concentrates particularly on international lobbying. In the words of its executive director, Haia Noach: *“we cannot influence much from within, so we try the international arena”* [A5]. 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, 17<sup>th</sup> edition, July 2012: 4).

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 in the Negev. In this perspective, I consider that 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 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 Beer Sheva organization in order to advance its claims: firstly, the engagement of advocacy with various committees of the United Nations, and secondly, 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 (4<sup>th</sup> 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.

In December 2011, after meeting with Khalil Alamour, a 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 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was presented in February 2006 with a report drafted by several Israeli NGOs (amongst which the NCF was included); this was 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”* (NCF newsletter, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, September 2007).

The committee published its conclusions following the report submitted by the State of Israel in March 2012 and took 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, he 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<sup>178</sup>.

In addition to the numerous positions adopted by the various UN bodies supporting the Bedouins' rights, following the intervention of the NCF, the best illustration of a successful campaign that has been carried out at the international level is the approval by the Economic and Social Council on August 1, 2013, of the proposition made by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); the NCF was appointed as a consultant NGO to the UN<sup>179</sup>. 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 request 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, 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Bedouin problem 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. However, the decisions and recommendations have had a largely symbolic dimension, as they are usually not implemented, or even accepted, by Israel.

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 policy through the awareness and pressure of the international community. However, it is not used consistently

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<sup>178</sup> 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>.

<sup>179</sup> 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/heb/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NCF\\_UN-Consultative-Status.pdf](http://www.dukium.org/heb/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NCF_UN-Consultative-Status.pdf).

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” introduces the idea that the different spheres are separated from one another, and exclusive. However, it appears that the connection between the different levels is relational and dynamic. Indeed the local and the international are connected through numerous and various channels: the movement of actors, activists, volunteers, and politicians between both levels, the rooting in place of transnational networks and international advocacy, and the place-based information diffused at the international level are some of the links connecting the two dimensions. It appears indeed that *“social identity and the capacity for solidarity building are still heavily dependent in the first instance upon place-based processes of social production and reproduction”* (Andrew Cumbers & Routledge, 2004: 820), which nevertheless represent a basis and a resource for wider and complementary connections at the international level.

We will focus in the next part on another strategy that depends on the multi-scalar character of the protests. In addition to being used as a place of expression, the international sphere also provides frames that are then re-used and adapted at the local level. We will concentrate here on two of them, namely the reference to indigeneity and to the cultural landscape.

## **2.2. A top-down influence: adopting the international frames**

Of course, the international institutions, as well as the international sphere in general, also work autonomously from the Palestinian movements: initiatives are organised at the local level by groups existing abroad, without necessarily coordinating with the Palestinian organizations or even without being in contact with them. Similarly, international institutions also take decisions without any intervention on the part of the Palestinian 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.

In this part, 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 resistance, concentrating on the concept 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 is not to say that these concepts were not used or claimed beforehand, but rather to stress the fact 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.

### *The example of the Indigenous territory*

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 is also interesting because it represents a tool used by the Bedouins specifically 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 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 residents, it covers their claims; its use probably reflects a kind of top-down influence. 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 changes in the scale of governance which is interesting here and which 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 we have seen above (section 2.1), representatives of the Bedouin community have participated in various forums and conferences organized by UN bodies. Irène Bellier, a specialist in the anthropology of institutions and the politics of indigeneity, highlights 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. An interesting change of status has occurred in these forums, where the indigenous delegates have gone from being *"the 'victims' on the local scenes to 'actors' on the international stage"* (2012: 63), thus participating in the making of new international norms (ibid.: 61). She also underlines how the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People 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 peoples<sup>180</sup> and the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights (UN General Assembly, A/RES/61/295, 2007) provide 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 characterised the Bedouin 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-*

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<sup>180</sup> "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).

*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 was clear: *“The State of Israel does not accept the classification of its Bedouin citizens as an indigenous people” (ibid.: 28);* it also provided 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 are often adapted to 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 the international context has become more favourable, with Indigenous rights’ being progressively recognized in New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and *“even in the United States” [A5].* Thabet Abu Ras, 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” [A10].*

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. However, we can note that if the Palestinians also claim this ancient presence, the discourse of indigeneity is not used in their case. While the claim of indigeneity is often implicit, it is also sometimes expressed through indirect means. The parallel 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 a 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” [A2].* Khalil al-Amour, a resident of the village of al-Sira and a member of the NCF, who participated 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!” [A3].*

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, talking about the Praver Plan, also explains that if the Israeli government advances with its plan to uproot the Bedouins and to concentrate them in the cities *“If you come after 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” [A3].*

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; indeed, the participation of scholars in the struggles, as both experts and activists, is also 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.

### ***“Heritage” as a tool for resistance***

When considering the appropriation of international language and concepts and their adaptation or recycling by Palestinians movements, we can underline the recent increase in the use of the notion of “heritage”. The UNESCO classification of sites of “outstanding value” that ought to be protected indeed appears as a new tool to challenge the Israeli authority. Two examples are interesting here: firstly, that of Battir, a Palestinian village located close to Bethlehem, registered on the World Heritage List for its “cultural landscape”, which sets out a successful example, and

secondly, the inscription of Hebron in the “tentative list”, where State Parties indicate the sites considered for nomination to try and follow in Battir’s steps.

We have seen in the previous chapter (see chapter 6, 3.1.) that references to the landscape occupy a central place in the struggle, and that references to identity and culture imbued in the landscape dictate that it is better considered as a cultural landscape. However, it should be noted that the notion of “cultural landscape” also has an official and more fixed definition, used by the international institutions, which has come to represent an instrument of resistance for Palestinian movements.

In contrast to the inclusive definition of the social sciences, the definition of UNESCO distinguishes between the elements of culture considered and selected: the UNESCO definition thus not only underlines the presence of “*tangible and intangible cultural values in the landscape*” (ibid.: 22) but also insists on a necessary “*outstanding universal value*” (ibid.: 8).

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in 1972 by the General Conference of UNESCO represented a first step to identify and protect sites for their universal value. The World Heritage Convention followed in 1992 and was designed specifically as a legal tool to identify and protect cultural landscapes (Mitchell et al., 2009: 19). The cultural landscape was defined as reflecting “*specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature*” (ibid.).

The reference to cultural landscape is even more interesting considering that it seems to represent a new strategy of the Palestinian policy to oppose the Israeli control over space. The concept was used firstly as a conscious political strategy to protect the landscape of Battir, a village situated near Bethlehem, which retains its traditional system of irrigation and terraced agriculture. The pastoral landscape, traditional of rural Palestine, was threatened by the construction of the “security fence” in the valley, an area already occupied by the train tracks connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The erection of the security fence would mean that a 60-meter wide buffer zone would have to be established around it, implying the destruction of the agricultural area, as well as a good part of the village on the side of the hill (field notes, July 9, 2014). Having been identified as a special project in the documents of UNESCO since 2005 (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2005a: 1), it was

registered in the tentative list of UNESCO in May 2012 under the name “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir”<sup>181</sup>. The case of Battir was proposed under a procedure of emergency nomination because:

- “- The landscape has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations that may bring irreversible damage to its authenticity and integrity;*
- A plan to start the construction of a separation Wall could cut off farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries”* (Advisory Body Evaluation, 2014: 7).

The decision 38 COM 8B.4 inscribed Battir on the World Heritage List (June 20, 2014) considering that it was “*unquestionably of outstanding universal value*” and needed safeguarding<sup>182</sup>, notably for its dry-stone architecture, traditional system of irrigated terraces and traditional land-use, representative of “*thousands of years of culture and human interaction with the environment*” (ibid.).

This decision shows once more how relevant the concept of landscape is in order to tackle the struggle; in particular, it also highlights the way that space and resistance are closely – even inseparably – linked in Palestine. Indeed the endeavour to obtain the UNESCO-recognized status for Battir draws on its intrinsic cultural value, and also clearly aimed at countering the threat represented by the occupation and Israeli policy for the Palestinian space and culture. That is to say, the construction of the security fence in Battir threatened not only the tradition of terraced agriculture and the physical presence of those terraces but also the economic activity carried on in this type of landscape. The landscape is indeed one site where the relations of power are exposed, bearing witness of the struggle and the claims, with different and even opposed ideologies being inscribed therein.

In 2002, a fund was created by the World Heritage Committee to support the establishment of an inventory of Palestinian cultural and national heritage. A first draft was presented in 2004, and a mission was sent to Nablus and Hebron in the same year after various requests underlined the damage resulting from war and the occupation that existed in those cities (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2005a: 3). In June and September 2005, the World Heritage Committee published a

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<sup>181</sup> World Heritage Site Nomination document for Battir: <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1492.pdf>.

<sup>182</sup> Decision 38 COM 8B.4, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6089>.

decision, insisting on the importance of the initial inventory of Palestinian cultural and natural heritage, and responded to the appeals about the two cities of the West Bank stating:

*“The World Heritage Committee (...) regrets the damage inflicted to the Palestinian cultural heritage, notably Nablus and Hebron, as well as the new building constructed above the archaeological remains of Tell Rumeida”* (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2005b: 155, emphasis in original).

In parallel, Hebron has been inscribed on Palestine’s “tentative list” since April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, along with El-Bariyah<sup>183</sup> and the Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetlands<sup>184</sup>. The old city of Hebron has been proposed as a site of outstanding universal value on the basis of three criteria: its cultural heritage, and the fact that the city displays the *“evolution of a complex urban fabric as a result of continuous transformations and adaptations to the landscape”*, its architecture, which dates from the Mamluk-Ottoman period, and finally, the fact that it is *“tangibly associated with events and living traditions, and especially with ideas and beliefs, relating to outstanding universal values”*, which refers more particularly to Hebron as the place of burial of Abraham as well as other patriarchs and matriarchs<sup>185</sup>.

These two examples show how the categories used by the international institutions can become tools of the resistance. The cultural landscape of Battir and the traditional urban fabric of the old city of Hebron are thus considered to represent sites that have an intrinsic patrimonial value, justifying the concern for the safeguarding of their Palestinian heritage. This does not undermine the fact that these international classifications also can be adopted in parallel as strategies of resistance as they represent an opportunity to advance additional obstacles to Israeli control, and to increase the international attention towards these sites, making their modification and appropriation by the Israelis more difficult. The request made by the Palestinian Authority for the recognition of the old city of Hebron as a site of world heritage is also intended as a display of power and sovereignty over an area, namely H2, which falls under Israeli administration. While the case of Hebron has not been accepted as a World Heritage site so far, the fact that it has been proposed illustrates the insistence of the “outstanding” value given to the city in the Palestinian context. It

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<sup>183</sup> See “El-Bariyah: Wilderness with Monasteries”, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5708/>.

<sup>184</sup> See “Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetlands”, <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/listesindicatives/5722/>.

<sup>185</sup> “Old town of Hebron al-Khalil & its environs”, tentative list, UNESCO, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5705/>.

also shows once more how the place, the landscape and the Palestinian culture intersect and together are used as a basis for the resistance. The meaning of a place and its material configuration can therefore actually become a way of protecting it.

This kind of international protection also points to broader questions on the processes of “patrimonialization” of space that would need to be specifically developed in further research; is the turning of specific places into sites of “heritage”, which must in consequence be protected, becoming a conscious strategy among the Palestinian actors of contention? Can we speak about a “sanctuarization” of space in Palestine, where space being frozen and fixed through an institutional label becomes a better alternative than the Israeli intervention?

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, from the transnational level to the local; this eventually contributes to the framing of the place identity and the value of space. Indeed, the transnational advocacy networks may also have an impact at the local scale, 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, introduce 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 occupations or ethnocracy, 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 actions 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, 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 shifting modifies the structure and the dynamic of the protest, but also affects the framing: *“Scale-shifting strategies strongly affect 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 the international. 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 especially 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 a various range of these strategies, the political tourism and solidarity network is much more active and extended around Hebron, while the international advocacy is more developed and

efficient in the case of the Bedouins. The networks established with activists, which represent “political flows”, also represent an interesting link between places, imbued with relations of power as they are inscribed in wider networks of solidarity. The network developed by the NCF around al-Araqib has generated considerable visibility in respect of the village; the international advocacy undertaken by the NGO, which amounts to real diplomatic work, given the regular participation of the NGO in the global arenas of governance and the development of contacts with the representatives of foreign countries, has also led to the development of the international interest in the situation of the Negev and to important decisions regarding the rights of the Bedouins. The recent decision to appoint the NCF as a consultant NGO shows the extent to which the networks established have a significant meaning in terms of power.

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: *“globalisation is a dialectic process that creates both space and place. The connection between location and globalisation 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.

A more in depth study of the new geography that these strategies create would be interesting; this would involve mapping the networks and its various nodes, from the locality to the places of institutional power abroad such as Geneva, as well as to countries or specific places to which the Palestinian activists and NGOs travel. The opposite movement, concentrating on place, with the mapping of the origin of political tourists and the visitors from the political world, would allow for a better overview and understanding of the phenomenon. The making of the network, the chronology of meetings and trips, and also of interviews conducted at the international level, could allow for a better understanding of the lobbying process and of the effectiveness of the relevant social media campaigns.

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 the protest

(Featherstone, 2005; Routledge, 2003). They underline the *“importance of dynamic trans-local networks, connecting individuals, institutions and activists in different places, for 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.

# CONCLUSION

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This study has weaved together a geographical approach and a sociological analysis focused on the study of contention. A choice has been made to concentrate on Israel and Palestine, and to develop the reflection and analysis drawing on the data gathered during the various periods of fieldwork, which has been conducted in the region at different times over more than two years. These different aspects, put together, make this research a very original one, with interesting results both on the theoretical and empirical levels.

The national struggles of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and the central importance of the land in the conflict that opposes them – defined as an “ethno-territorial” conflict (Rabinowitz, 2001; Yiftachel, 1997, 2002) – has contributed to making the region a relevant topic for sociology and geography. Following a recent trend in the study of contentious politics (see for example Aminzade et al., 2001; Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008; Miller, 2000; Routledge, 1993, 2015, and also chapter 1, section 1.1.), this research shows that combining both disciplines is indeed extremely fruitful not only from a scientific point of view, but also particularly relevant when it comes to studying this region. This transdisciplinary approach indeed contributes to better expose the relational dimension of the social world generally and of contention and space specifically. It shows indeed how different practices, discourses, spatialities or identities usually tackled through different disciplines and with the help of separate concepts, are related, complementary or even interwoven. Associating these two fields of study, the thesis laid out the various spatialities underlying the different practices of resistance employed, showing how they are co-implicated, and eventually highlighting how relationships of power are negotiated and reconfigured through space.

The adoption of a comparative approach – with the analysis relying on data gathered in three “sites of contention”, namely the two central neighbourhoods of Silwan (Wadi Hilwe and al-Bustan), the old city of Hebron (H2) and the Bedouin village of al-Araqib (Negev) – represents an additional interesting dimension of the thesis, as it allows for the analysis to transcend the theoretical interrogation, rooting the research in the reality of the region, and allowing for a better understanding of the situation. The comparison between the three cases has indeed presented

numerous advantages from a scientific point of view, as it has allowed the researcher to confront various situations and dynamics, thus enriching and strengthening the analysis. It has also introduced specific difficulties in respect of the conduct of the research: these issues have included, for example, the time allotted to each case, the language used during the fieldwork and the suspicion often encountered while in the field (see chapter 3).

This thesis begins with a chapter, which has aimed to set out via the presentation of the literature and the definition of concepts, the different conceptual and theoretical tools that are used in this thesis in order to carry out the analysis. The second chapter is dedicated to the methodology used to gather and elaborate upon the data, concentrating principally on the organization of the time spent on the field, the various challenges implied by this method of research and the impact it has had on the research itself. In the third chapter, I have set out a presentation of the three case studies used throughout the thesis, namely al-Araqib, Silwan and Hebron, concentrating on the legal, political and historic data that provide some background on the situation of each site and have helped to contextualize this research.

The core of this thesis is represented by the four empirical chapters that follow, which concentrate via an inductive approach on the various spatialities used by the actors of contention in each case study. The reflection is based on the material gathered during the various periods of fieldwork, allowing for the construction of an analysis grounded in the reality of the region, which sheds light on the strategies of protest and the various logics and choices underlying them. To better set out the existing relations of power, the analysis of the resistance practices were regularly associated with a presentation of the mechanisms of domination and control deployed in each site.

The first empirical chapter, chapter 4, has tackled the struggle over the “conceived space”, meaning the process of designing, planning and developing space - whether the space of the neighbourhood, the public space or even the individual houses - by the authorities. Chapter 5 has been dedicated to the politics of place, with the place (and the related concept of sense of place) appearing as the primary dimension of the Palestinian resistance in all three case studies. This fact is clearly illustrated by the centrality attributed to the concept of *sumud*, which relies on the practice of everyday life, and expresses, I argue, a claim of a “right to place”. The following chapter has concentrated on the representations and narratives surrounding space, that are invoked by the actors of contention, thus highlighting the framing strategies deployed in each case and showing

that if they are tightly related to place and sense of place, they also integrate references to a wider scale from a geographical and political point of view, namely that of territory and nation. Finally, the last empirical chapter, chapter 7, has concentrated on the concepts of network and scales, tackling the strategies used in order to “globalize” the struggle, and in so doing, to raise awareness and to increase the international pressure put on Israel. It shows that the reverse mechanism is also at work, as some sites become themselves “globalized”.

The contribution of this thesis can be summed up along two main lines, which are theoretical and empirical. Firstly, the analysis 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 of 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”. This notion has to be associated to the reflection on the use but also the production of space, inspired by Lefebvre’s work (see chapter 1, 1.3.); space indeed appears as being a resource but also an outcome of contention.

Secondly, the contribution brought in by the empirical dimension and the comparative aspect of the analysis has to be acknowledged: as an ethnographic research, this study increases the knowledge about the region, and by putting different cases in parallel it allows us to set out similarities and differences between the three sites, to identify elements crucial to each case and thus explain the profiles that emerge. The empirical analysis puts the stress on how the actors of contention actually deploy this spatial repertoire, and how they manage to produce space, materially or symbolically. The analysis associates the practices of resistance employed to various characteristics of the context that appear as being the main constraints and opportunities impacting those practices. All three profiles point to an intensive process of territorialisation and re-territorialisation in the face of the firm control of space and policies of repression and exclusion that all correspond to the Israeli effort of territorialisation and result in the fragmentation of the West Bank and the progressive disappearance of a Palestinian territory.

## **A reflection on the integration of space to the study of contention**

While the main focus of this thesis is empirical, the transdisciplinary approach adopted throughout and the association of two different sets of conceptual references borrowed from social movements' theory and geography, makes it necessary to draw conclusions on the implication and results of this association. This research inscribes itself in the wake of an extensive set of literature that insists on the need to develop this transdisciplinary approach and to tackle the various spatialities of contention as being related and complementary instead of mutually exclusive. This research thus seeks to take a further step in this type of analysis by considering a wide range of spatialities and the way they relate to each other, to dynamics of contention and to social life in general, while considering at the same time elements of the context brought in by an empirical research.

### ***Co-implicated and relational spatialities***

This research emphasizes the relevance of integrating more systematically a spatial perspective in the study of contention. Indeed, the spatiality of the various practices deployed must be taken into account not only in the frame of interdisciplinary studies integrating an interest for geography, but it 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 theatre 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 human spatiality are engaged to carry out, support or develop the protest, to mobilize or express claims.

In this thesis, each empirical chapter has distinguished different types of strategies that correspond to different dimensions and uses of space. Established on the basis of the three dimensions of space defined by Henri Lefebvre - perceived, conceived and lived (see first chapter) - these categories have been reconfigured and refined according to the empirical findings, following a set of

geographical concepts relevant to the observed reality, namely material space, public space, place, territory, landscape, network and scale.

These various spatialities, invoked and used by the actors of contention in the three cases, have first been presented as separate analytical categories in order to rely on clear working definitions and to better set out their relevance in the different sites of contention. Nevertheless, their being tightly interwoven appears clearly throughout the chapters. Indeed, the inductive approach adopted here introduces the complexity of “*real-world processes*” (Miller, 2000: 172) in the analysis: the categories are eventually 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 for example as the domestic sphere or the neighbourhood, the networks organized locally to organise the protests, and also appeals to scaling strategies for example when considering the legal and administrative powers involved, between local, regional or national institutions. This first empirical chapter, which concentrates specifically on one dimension of space to lay out the various practices of resistance but also of repression involved, shows that most of the concepts invoked are transversal and intricately related.

Through the consideration of the conceived place appeared also the “perceived space”, the space of everyday life where people move, live and work. Indeed, the practices around the modification of the material space indicate the place as a central scale of action. *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 6 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 to 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 of the actors of contention – also appeared to be inherently related to place. Both networking and scale-jumping strategies are indeed deeply rooted in place, where they initiate. 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 for example 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 territorial 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. 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 a notion 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 encompass all those dimensions, while also putting the stress on relations of power, both on the side of constraints and protest. Indeed, *“relational spatialities play distinctive yet interlocking roles in shaping the structures, strategies, dynamics and power of social movement”* (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013: 3).

The importance of space in the conduct of contention can be developed in different spatialities, used by the actors of contention according to various strategic choices and particular goals, depending on the audience they intend to reach or the relevant type of action. The analysis has also shown, in addition to their being co-implicated, that the spatialities involved can represent an actual resource for the contention, forming a set of concepts that could be termed a “spatial repertoire”.

### ***Unfolding the spatial repertoire***

All of these geographical strategies (Nicholls et al., 2013a) sketch an initial typology of the spatial strategies implemented by the actors of contention, whether they are activists, residents or NGOs, which together form what I term the “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 assesses 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.

Four general areas of attention emerge through this study, that can be put in parallel with the categories proposed by J. Auyero for *“geographically contextualized interpretations and explanations of contentious politics contextualise the movements”* (2006)<sup>186</sup>. The three first categories, broadly correspond to Lefebvre’s “triad”, and all can encompass multiple geographical concepts: the role

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<sup>186</sup> The categories being the following: *“1. Space as a repository of social relations; 2. Built environment as facilitator and obstacle in contentious politics; 3. Mutual imbrication between spatially-embedded daily life and protest; 4. Spaces as meaningful arenas, i.e. space as place”*.

of the material and built environment; the place and spatial routines of daily life; the meaning of space – with the correlated “spatial framing”-; and finally, the role of connections across space, which is probably the most difficult category to handle geographically due to its abstract nature.

If those categories above have been largely developed, it seems necessary to come back to the inclusion of the “spatial framing” in this proposed approach. Beyond everyday practices and collective actions, it has indeed appeared that space also represents an essential recourse for the framing of the struggle, through symbols, narratives and discourse. The study of framing usually aims to facilitate the understanding of the *“generation, diffusion, and functionality of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meaning”* (Benford & Snow, 2000: 612; see chapter 1, 3.1.). The existence and importance of spatial frames have already been mentioned in the social movements literature: for example, D. Martin scrutinizes, the significance of “place-framing” in order to understand *“how place informs activism at a variety of spatial scales”* (Martin, 2003: 730). Based on the empirical material collected and the analysis undertaken above, a further step is proposed: it appears from this research that framing does not only “inform” activism, but should be considered here as an integral part of the repertoire, as it represents a fully-fledged strategy of protest, a *“set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice”*, which are *“learned cultural creations”* (Tilly, 1993: 264).

Repertoire and framing are usually studied as two separate topics, highlighting different mechanisms in the functioning of social movements. They have nevertheless also appeared in this research to be closely co-implicated and interrelated. In fact, in all three case studies, discourses and narratives are central to the mobilization and thus have a direct impact on the action. This research has included spatial framing in the spatial repertoire, as the framing of the protest represents a real “tactic” of contention, and is directly linked to a set of actions. The communication, information and diffusion of the narrative are indeed fundamental tactics and primary goals of the movements. Action and framing are thus closely intertwined.

The variety of concepts that can be used within the scope of this “spatial repertoire” certainly doesn’t make this task an easy one, and this effort should be further refined in the future. Moreover, integrating an attention to spatial strategies in the analysis doesn’t imply that those strategies are successful: space can enable but also constrain contention, as clearly illustrated by the case of Palestine. The “spatial repertoire” represents a tool-kit for a more thorough analysis of

contention, allowing scholars to unfold more systematically mechanisms of resistance and oppression.

The theoretical and conceptual dimension of this research has thus revolved around a reflection on the association and even integration of two different fields of research. This transdisciplinary perspective has represented the analytical grid to tackle the empirical data. It shows how considering the importance of space as the site and/ or object of contention and an attention to the geographic structuring of protest from a relational point of view can unveil but also connect together different dynamics and thus represent an advance both from the theoretical and empirical points of view.

### **Spatialities of resistance in Israel and Palestine**

The empirical research realized in Israel and Palestine represented the basis for the identification of the relevant geographical concepts and the elaboration of a fitting theoretical framework that was then applied to analyse the spatialities of contention in the three cases considered. This inductive and comparative approach concentrated on the way space is used and produced through resistance, thus being a resource and an outcome of contention. It sheds 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. However, when one considers the practices at the micro level, different profiles emerge, with Silwan being more self-reliant, whereas the residents of al-Araqib resort to the concept of indigeneity to complement the presence and local struggle. Finally, activists and residents in the H2 area of Hebron use extensively the image and notoriety of the city to diffuse a narrative fitting with their experience and objectives. Despite these discrepancies and different profiles, what emerges from the various elements considered is the importance given to the territorialisation (or re-territorialisation) of the resistance and more generally of the Palestinian identity in the face of the Israeli occupation – or, in the case of the Bedouins, ethnocratic rule.

### ***A comparative perspective on spatial repertoires: similarities and differences between the case studies***

When considering specifically the way space is used as a resource in the three case studies, three different profiles emerge, corresponding to three different strategies, but also depending on different elements of the context such as the structure of the social relations or the level of repression. The inhabitants of al-Araqib for example rely chiefly on *sumud* and a stubborn presence in place in order to oppose the Israeli attempt to transfer them to the nearest town. 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. Finally, the contention in Silwan appears to be essentially centred on the neighbourhood itself, in terms of mobilization and framing.

The resistance in al-Araqib is indeed strongly place-based, as the inhabitants defend above all their right to stay and live in this specific place. The residents include themselves in the larger struggle for the rights of the Bedouins as a minority within Israel, for the recognition of their titles of property and the defence of a specific territoriality linked with their traditional lifestyle. They act especially at the local level, by staying on their land and tirelessly reconstructing the village when destroyed, thus appealing to the practice of *sumud*. The Bedouins are supported by various Israeli NGOs, which help them to use the official channels to challenge the State's decisions and also to act on their behalf at the international level. Even if these strategies do not represent al-Araqib specifically, the villagers nevertheless are still directly linked to this case, which is often used as an example in the documentation. Moreover, even if not responsible for the implementation of the strategy, residents are in direct contact with international institutional actors, and do rely on a discourse claiming their indigeneity, through references to a particular lifestyle, traditions and culture.

Very different strategies intersect in the case of al-Araqib; these include local rooting, territorial representation, challenges at the national level, and international advocacy. As a result, on the whole, the Bedouins of al-Araqib fight for their right to place and also 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 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 struggle and of the Palestinian Israelis.

The contention in Hebron relies on diversified modes of action, referring to various spatialities; however, it appears that 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 at the international level.

It appears that the harsh conditions of the Israeli occupation in Hebron contribute to giving more resonance and visibility to the resistance; 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 that ensue. These have turned the city into the infamous epicentre of the occupation, where its impact is more visible and the resistance, especially non-violent, is thus seen as more legitimate.

The media and international community’s interest in Hebron gives the Palestinians of Hebron a larger range of possibilities for their resistance. This might be relevant, not necessarily to the material production of space, which is tightly locked and controlled, but to the production and diffusion of powerful spatial frames, such as the “ghost town”. Similarly, 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. It is in this way exploited and counter posed to the representations of the Palestinians that pervade the media and foreign imaginary as fighters or terrorists. Sumud is indeed easily pictured as the “good resistance”, in contrast to the “bad”, violent one.

This strategy relies on the major attention paid by the international community to the situation within the occupied territories in general, and to Hebron in particular. Hebron is indeed considered as a symbol of the occupation and of the struggle that opposes it, and enjoys a certain global fame due to this status, partly because of the violence that often characterizes the situation.

The media resonance and political tourism thus appear to be the key strategies in which the inhabitants and activists predominantly invest. It is thus partly the threats and constraints attached to the occupation that actually represent an opportunity for resistance. Spatial constraints become the very means that allow for challenges to be advanced, by being inscribed space, and which provide an immediate way to transgress. This follows the approach of Goldstone on the way 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. Although it represents a very severe constraint for the inhabitants of Hebron, it is also exploited as an opportunity to illustrate the regime imposed on the Palestinians.

The struggle in Silwan is mostly organised 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; they have the objective of 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, existing within the borders of Israel, 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 in parallel on the attachment to the place, and the local identity. It appears indeed as a crucial strategy of resistance 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 thus incarnates the homeland, the national territory of the nation that was doubly lost, first as the pre-1948 Palestine and then as the West Bank, separated from Jerusalem by the “security barrier”. The defence of al-Aqsa is similarly related to the defence of Palestine; the use of *ribat*, particularly important in Silwan, is very revealing in this respect.

In Silwan, networking and scaling through political tourism and international advocacy are not totally absent, but their presence is less developed than in the two other cases. The presence and support of NGOs is very revealing in respect of the difficult position in which the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, and Silwan in particular, find themselves. Silwan indeed illustrates the particular situation of East Jerusalem and underlines the difficulty and tension of resisting within this context of “in-between”; as indicated in the thesis, 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 already is situated in a political and geographical limbo. It suffers its difficult geographical position, enclaved in the Kidron valley, with a very dense urban fabric. Israeli politics also strengthen this position: Silwan is now totally cut off from its hinterland by the “security barrier”.

Moreover, even if occupation is clearly “readable” in space in Hebron, and while the intervention of the authorities is clearly visible in al-Araqib, illustrated by regular instances of destruction, the Israeli intervention in Silwan, beyond the limits of the City of David, is much less visible. One of the main interventions on space about which the residents complain, is the digging of tunnels underneath the neighbourhood, 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 forces, the struggle concentrates first and foremost on the place through community building, the assertion and rebuilding of the residents’ links to the place and the importance of mobilizing to defend the neighbourhood.

Considering this synthesis of the various elements considered and the profiles that emerge, we can identify four main elements that explain the differences between the cases despite their similar features: the repression met and opposed, the 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 processes described above. 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 technology of occupation or in Silwan with numerous and constant arrests. The repression and the control of space it implies indeed 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.

Secondly, 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 that can result in the worst case in delaying the implementation of contested decisions. 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 a population made of Israeli settlers and soldiers and Palestinians largely hostile to this presence and thus treated as enemies; as a result, the area is administered according to military rules with a politics of separation and confinement that aims at enforcing the occupation and maintain the security of the Israeli 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 of course also come into consideration that can 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 list of the Unesco protecting World Heritage<sup>187</sup>.

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 generalization 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<sup>188</sup>. 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 Na'am or al-Sira, would highlight the diversity of positions existing within the Bedouin

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<sup>187</sup> "Old town of Hebron al-Khalil and its environs", see <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/listesindicatives/5705/>.

<sup>188</sup> 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/>.

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 regime. Finally, the case of Sheikh Jarrah could be an interesting test case, 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 for example 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.

### ***(Re-)Territorialising Palestine through the place***

Space can indeed be exploited as a resource by the resistance, it is also modified and produced through the actions and representations of each struggle despite this context of harsh control and discrimination. The “production of space” firstly gives rise to the idea of a material intervention on space. However, the empirical data shows that the reconfiguration of the built environment is hindered by the law and by the general constraints imposed on the Palestinian population. In this context, the production is realized through a physical, but also largely emotional and mental inscription in space.

This thesis shows that various processes of territorialisation and reterritorialization are at work and ultimately the goal of the practices of resistance. Indeed, in all three cases, the actors 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 in space and the representations of space – or spatial imaginary (Wolford, 2004) - are central to this strategy of territorialisation, as is the tactical framing of resistance and the acceptance or adoption of those same frames by foreign activists and institutions.

Reterritorialization is indeed effected through the affirmation of the place identity and its explicit connection to a shared Palestinian identity. The place is construed 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 Palestinian culture. The place has to be defended as an incarnation of the Palestinian territory at a smaller scale. This reaffirmation of

the legitimacy and importance of Palestinian culture at the local level 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.

Focusing on the defence of local issues and local identity, people refer to a territory, which is largely “imagined” with reference to symbol and memories, and can appeal to people’s values, whether they are nationalistic, cultural or religious. The Bedouins refer to a territory directly linked to their traditional lifestyle, and which represents a condition that allows for it; this indigenous territory is included in the context of historical Palestine, and it specifically represents their claim. The Palestinians from the West Bank and Jerusalem refer to Palestine in two ways: the “lost” territory corresponding to Mandate Palestine and the West Bank as part of a potential new State. The territorialisation appeals to classical symbols linked to the historical territory; the reality of this territory no longer exists but it maintains its power as a mobilizing reference. The land is reasserted as forming the core of the Palestinian identity; however, its evocative power seems now to be rooted in place. National symbols are re-elaborated to integrate the local narrative and the local identity, thus creating bridges between places that are now separated and often don’t even depend on the same authority anymore; this way, while concentrating on the resistance in place, tackling the more urgent problems of everyday life under occupation, or of life submitted to repeated destructions and discrimination in the case of the Bedouins, the actors still refer to the territory.

Two processes can be identified in this territorializing strategy; first, the “incarnation”, exposed above, whereby the place is constructed as a fragment of the national territory, through shared representations and symbols. Elements common to all, such as the olive tree or the stone house, scattered over the territory and considered as characterizing it, take on a deep political meaning, incarnating the idea of territory, and, besides, that of nation. The second process that produces territory could be named “projection”. Also rooted in place, as we established that place became the starting point and the main scale of resistance, it draws on the spatial imaginaries to project on the territory a cohesion that is, in reality, more and more illusory. The territory is in this way appropriated and maintained as a familiar entity, even if out of reach, separated or impossible to access, such as Jerusalem for many Hebronites. The place appears as always interconnected to the wider frame of reference that is the territory, represented – or re-presented – through elements that connect the place to the imagined territory, like pictures of al-Aqsa, the kuffiah or the Palestinian flag. This projection relies on cultural and identity elements but in being actualized, it

also produces the territory. The diffusion of spatial frames through the transnational networks participate from this strategy of projection: they claim – and in so doing – produce a territory, Bedouin or Palestinian.

This study shows that place and territories, contrarily to the way they are traditionally defined, are not sealed, bounded areas; they have to be considered according to their interactions with other places, their inscription in various networks and reference to larger territories. As the case of Hebron illustrated particularly well, 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 need 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 signifies a refusal or selection of these interactions, which means acknowledging their existence and still acting according to them – even if to ward it 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 others actors.

As underlined by J. Collins in his book “Global Palestine” “*the struggle has literally returned to its roots*”, with the stress placed on symbolic elements such as the trees, rocks and stone houses (Collins, 2011: 114) and the concentration on *sumud*, place and “habitational resistance” (ibid: 18). However, if the concentration on place represents a tactical retreat, a strategy adopted under the constraints wrought by the deterritorialization imposed through colonisation and various politics of control, 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.

The study undertaken here has thus allowed, through empirical data and a comparative approach that has allowed us to cross-reference and confront the various strategies observed, the discourses employed and the logics invoked, to make the similarities and disparities appear more clearly. The research sketched three profiles of contention relying on the way actors use spatialities. All revolve around the crucial importance attributed to the place and thus to *sumud* as a fundamental strategy of resistance. Another strategy that appears to be central in all three cases, even if it relies on

different elements and is then developed in different ways, is the framing of the place's identity, which aims to affirm an attachment to a territory and to reinforce and display this attachment.

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 account for the strategies employed; 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.

## Future research

This research identifies numerous tracks that might be followed in future research. Each chapter can represent the starting point of a more in-depth body of research, which weaves social movement research and geography. Once the various strategies constituting the spatial repertoire have been identified, it would indeed be necessary to scrutinize more precisely the mechanisms of the adoption and implementation of each strategy, while also differentiating the role of the different actors, including, in particular, inhabitants, activists and NGOs within the movements. The political scene should also be studied more specifically: these strands of research include the intervention of the PA and the role of parties in the struggle, their role in local life and at the national level, the identification of the narratives they favour and those that they do not use (with regards to *ribat* and *sumud*, for example). The differences of discourse on the *ribat* and territory between religious and secular parties could, for example, be linked to their members' action at the local place.

Focusing specifically on the concept of *ribat* would also be an interesting starting point for a future body of research, as the particularity of the concept in the Palestinian context has never been extensively studied. Indeed, concentrating on *ribat* would allow for a transversal study, spanning the role played by religion, nationalism, political parties and grassroots resistance.

The networking and scaling are two aspects that also need to be further explored as they represent an important development of local strategies. In particular, the dynamics of political tourism would need to be studied more specifically, in order to determine their concrete impact on the places visited. Firstly, at the local level, this would be relevant to determining how the contacts are established and how the tours are organized. Moreover, it relates to considerations that arise after the visit, once the groups are back home, in relation to the follow-up of the tours and to their impact: these considerations include the organisation of initiatives of support, processes of networking with other groups, and the advocacy and maintenance of links with the local groups. The international arena should also be studied in more depth, particularly in the case of the Bedouins, following the studies in anthropology of the institutions and the role of the indigenous representatives of Irène Bellier (Bellier, 1999, 2006, 2011, 2012), or by studying how concepts and decisions made by international institution, such as that of classifying a place as “World Heritage” or “cultural landscape”, are used to protect the Palestinian cultural patrimony and can as such represent strategies of resistance against the occupation.

Applying this framework to other cases would also be particularly interesting. First, it would dissolve the spectre of exceptionalism that often accompanies the studies on Israel and Palestine, but it could also determine which elements can be considered as generalizable, which are particular to the region, and which may have an equivalent – a question that proves particularly interesting when one think about the importance of *sumud* and *ribat* in the Palestinian case. The cases traditionally compared to Israel and Palestine feature an ethno-territorial conflict, like Cyprus or Ireland, or a settler-colonial type of regime, like Australia, the United-States or Canada. Two recent cases of conflict could be added; that of Crimea, the southernmost peninsula of Ukraine, invaded and annexed by Russia in 2014, and that of Ethiopia, with the internal conflict that developed during the winter 2015-2016.

The conflict in Crimea opposes two sovereign powers, Ukraine and Russia. The reaction to the annexation appeared very mixed, with little resistance apparently opposing the Russian annexation. The story of the region, that has previously been part of the Russian territory, and its location, attached to Russia, certainly plays a role in this lack of mobilization. A more thorough investigation on the ground would be necessary to ascertain the dynamics of contention at play. The case of the Crimean Tatars however represents interesting similarities to that of Palestinians. A Muslim and indigenous minority, they were massively deported by the USSR authorities in 1944, and they now

represent the spearhead of the resistance against the Russian takeover<sup>189</sup>. It can be noted that they voted, in March 2014, to demand the recognition of “*ethnic and territorial autonomy of the Crimean Tatars of their historic territory of Crimea*”, insisting on “*their right to live on the land they consider home*”<sup>190</sup>. This strategy shows the territorialisation of the protest, and the importance given to the land and to a continuous presence on the land, made even more urgent by the way Tatars were treated in the past by the successive central power which controlled Crimea. It resonates in multiple ways with the Palestinian strategies; however, a better knowledge of the field would be necessary to determine which practices of resistance are adopted in the everyday life and at the individual level; do Crimean Tatars conceptualize their presence in space as a fundamental practice of resistance, adopting a similar attitude to *sumud*? Or even, being a Sunni minority, which also provided fighters to al-Qaeda and recently to the fight in Syria, some of whom return to Crimea, do they articulate their struggle in terms of *ribat*, of a last line of defence linked to the Muslim territory?<sup>191</sup>

The Ethiopian case, even if more circumscribed and much less mediatized than Crimea, also presents very interesting features, linked to territorial expansion on the part of the State and a division along ethnicity lines. The conflict grew around the “Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan” that would expand the borders of the Addis Ababa municipality on the Oromo territory, within which it is included, encroaching upon the land of the regional state of Oromia<sup>192</sup>. This land grab, detrimental to the main ethnic group in the country, is considered as a direct threat to the Oromo’s culture and very presence. Massive demonstrations that were met with a harsh repression were organized in November and December 2015; according to al-Jazeera, people use “*roadblocks, sit-ins, lunch boycotts and striking hand gestures and other symbols of civil disobedience*” to oppose the central power<sup>193</sup>. This example puts together an internal territorial

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<sup>189</sup> See for example “Ukraine crisis: Crimean Tatars uneasy under Russia rule”, *BBC*, August 25, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34042938>, “Behind the Headlines, Who Are the Crimean Tatars?”, National Geographic, March 15, 2014, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/03/140314-crimea-tatars-referendum-russia-muslim-ethnic-history-culture/>.

<sup>190</sup> See “Crimean Tatars' want autonomy after Russia's seizure of peninsula”, *Reuters*, March 29, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-crimea-tatars-idUSBREA2S09320140329>; “Putin Warns Crimean Tatars Not To Seek Special Status”, *Radio Free Europe*, August 25, 2015, <http://www.rferl.org/content/putin-warns-crimean-tatars-not-seek-special-status/27194567.html>.

<sup>191</sup> See for example “Crimean Tatars Try to Keep Resistance to Russia Peaceful”, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303795904579431290464167718>.

<sup>192</sup> Ethiopia is indeed defined by its Constitution as a “Federal Democratic Republic”.

<sup>193</sup> See “Protesters in Ethiopia reject authoritarian model”, *Al Jazeera*, December 19, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/12/protesters-in-ethiopia-reject-authoritarian-development-model.html>. See also “What is behind the Oromo rebellion in Ethiopia”, *The World Post*, December 21, 2015,

struggle for the land, collective action, resistance and repression, as well as the ethnic divide between groups and regions; as in the case of Israel and Palestine, it raises the question of the role played by the State and the status granted to the land and the citizens<sup>194</sup>. The existence of discriminated ethnic groups, but also the definition of the land as belonging to the State and the conflicts that ensue as related to the rights of the residents or the farmers and the possibilities to transfer the population without their consent all make the conflict in Ethiopia an interesting case to consider. The land being the central stake of the conflict here, but not for a dispute over sovereignty and statehood but for the value attributed to the land itself, one can wonder if a strategy similar to *sumud* can develop, if it is conceptualized in the same way and if it is resorted to as a survival technique, as a last recourse in case the other strategies fail or as a fully-fledged strategy.

One aspect that those two examples highlight is the territorial investment central to this type of struggle; the Oromos and the Tatars oppose an oppressive or occupying power which threatens to transfer or expropriate them. They affirm their right to stay, insisting on their attachment to the territory and in so doing redefining their territorial identity. An extensive study of the practices of resistance, of the repression met, but also of the spatial imaginaries and narratives would be necessary to determine how much they have in common with the Israeli-Palestinian case, and what this parallel can teach us about all of them, and further advance the association between geography and contentious politics.

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<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/yohannes-woldemariam/what-is-behind-the-oromo-b-8849776.html>;  
“Dispatches: Yet Again, a Bloody Crackdown on Protesters in Ethiopia”, Human Rights Watch, December 5, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/05/dispatches-yet-again-bloody-crackdown-protesters-ethiopia>; “Ethiopia: Lethal Force Against Protesters”, Human Rights Watch, December 18, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/18/ethiopia-lethal-force-against-protesters>; « Ethiopie : forte tension dans la région des Oromos », RFI, December 12, 2015, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20151212-ethiopie-oromo-manifestations-universites>.

<sup>194</sup> On the status of the land and the land issues, see for example “Oromo protests set to continue in Ethiopia”, *Mereja.com*, December 23, 2015, <http://mereja.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=108547>; Ambaye, 2012; Labzaé, 2014.

# ANNEXES

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ANNEX I: Map of the West Bank

ANNEX II: Map of the restrictions in Hebron

ANNEX III: Map of Silwan

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ANNEX V: List of the different periods of fieldwork

ANNEX VI: List of the semi-directed interviews realized

ANNEX VII: List and descriptions of the main NGOs and organizations cited in the text and their acronyms

# ANNEX I

## Map of the West Bank

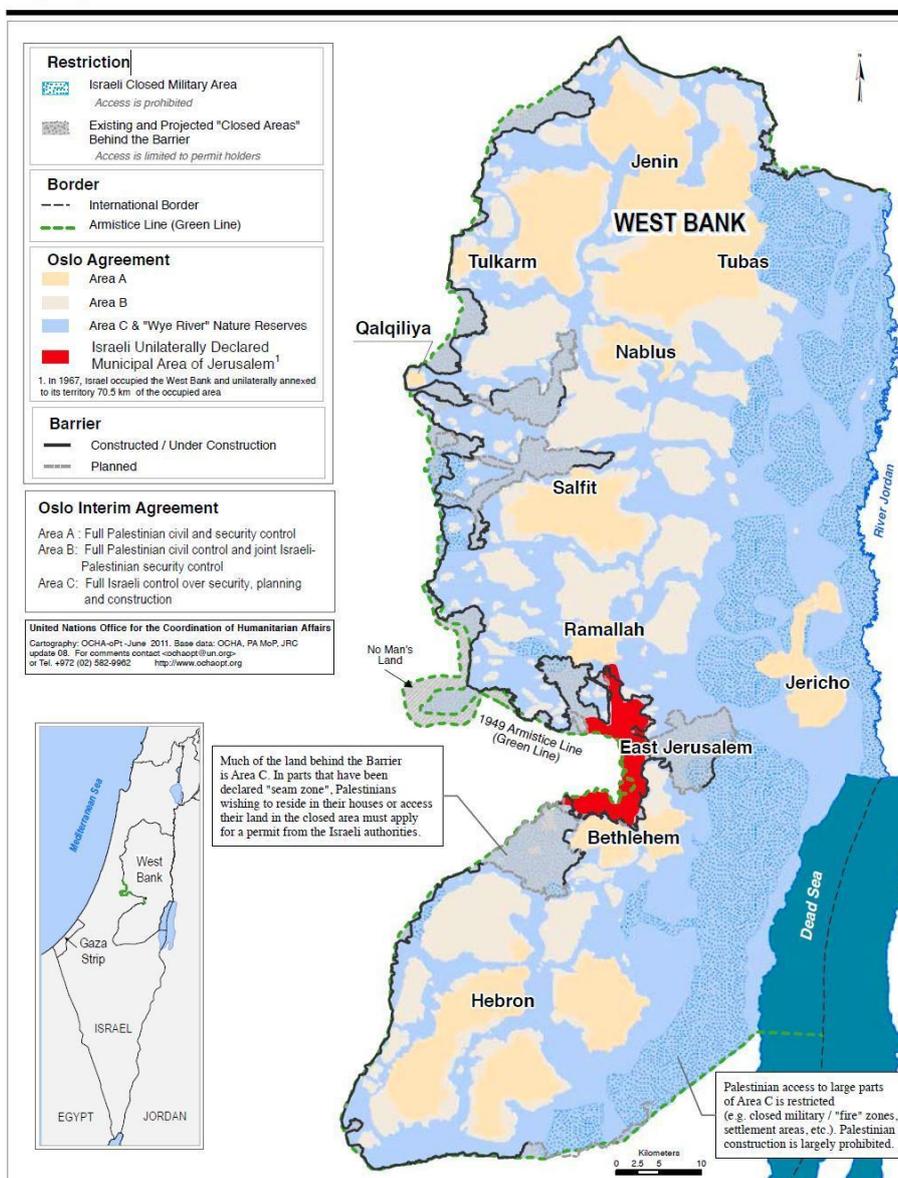


**UNITED NATIONS**

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory

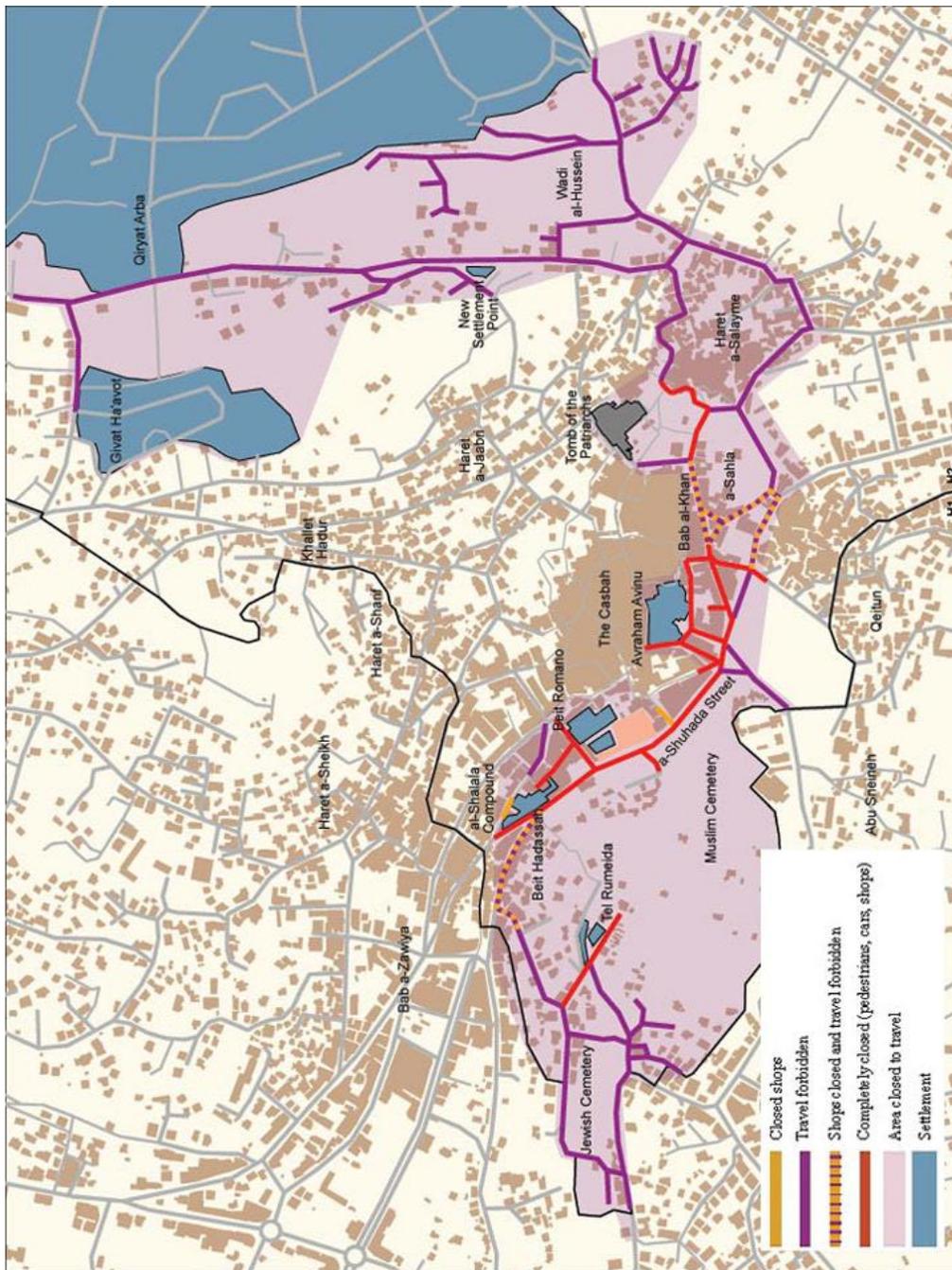
### Restrictions on Palestinian Access in the West Bank

July 2011



“Restrictions on Palestinian access in the West Bank”, July 2011, United Nations, Office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs, occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA-oPt), [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_map\\_restrictions\\_on\\_palestinian\\_access\\_west\\_bank\\_july\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_map_restrictions_on_palestinian_access_west_bank_july_2011.pdf). See also “West Bank access restrictions”, 2014, OCHA-oPt, [https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/westbank\\_2014\\_final.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/westbank_2014_final.pdf).

ANNEX II  
Map of the restrictions in Hebron<sup>195</sup>



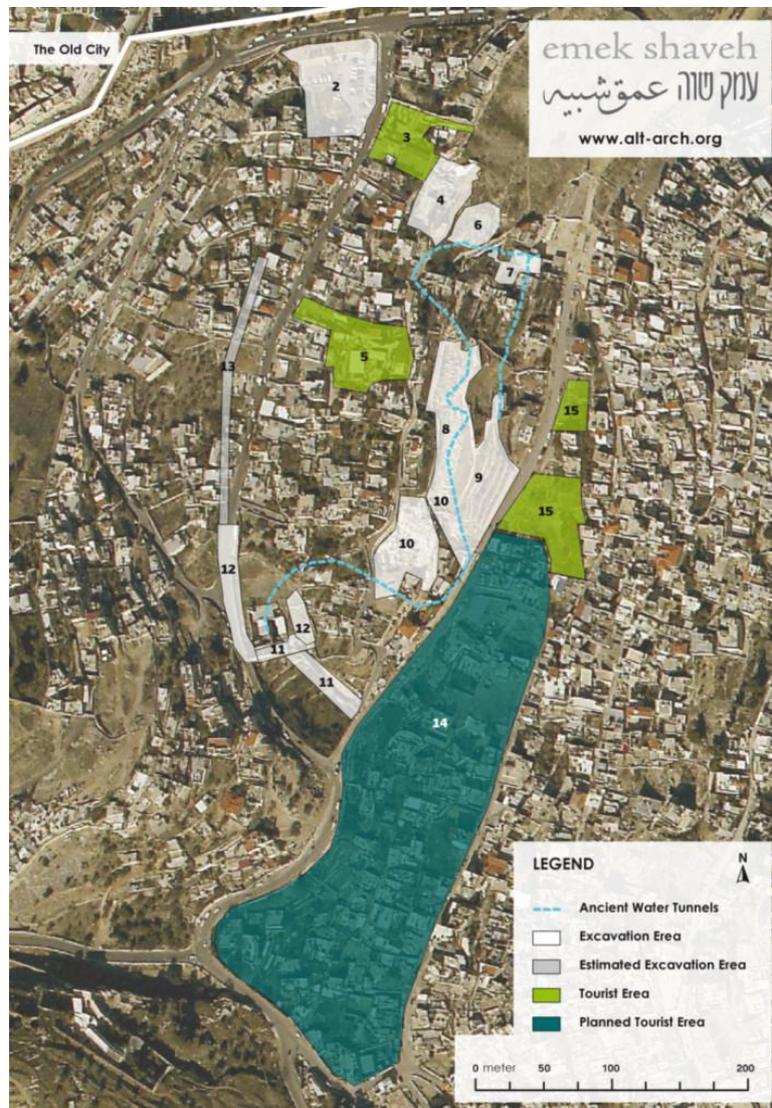
“Map of the restrictions on Palestinian Movement in Hebron, August 2011”, B’tselem,  
[http://www.btselem.org/download/200705\\_hebron\\_center\\_map\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/download/200705_hebron_center_map_eng.pdf).

<sup>195</sup> See also “The centre of Hebron and the closures and restrictions in 2011”, author: [Wickey-nl/OCHAoPt](mailto:Wickey-nl/OCHAoPt),  
[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_humanitarian\\_atlas\\_dec\\_2011\\_full\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_humanitarian_atlas_dec_2011_full_resolution.pdf).

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**ANNEX III**  
**Map of Silwan<sup>196</sup>**

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Source: Emek Shaveh, [http://alt-arch.org/en/booklet\\_online/](http://alt-arch.org/en/booklet_online/).

LEGEND (as indicated on the original document):

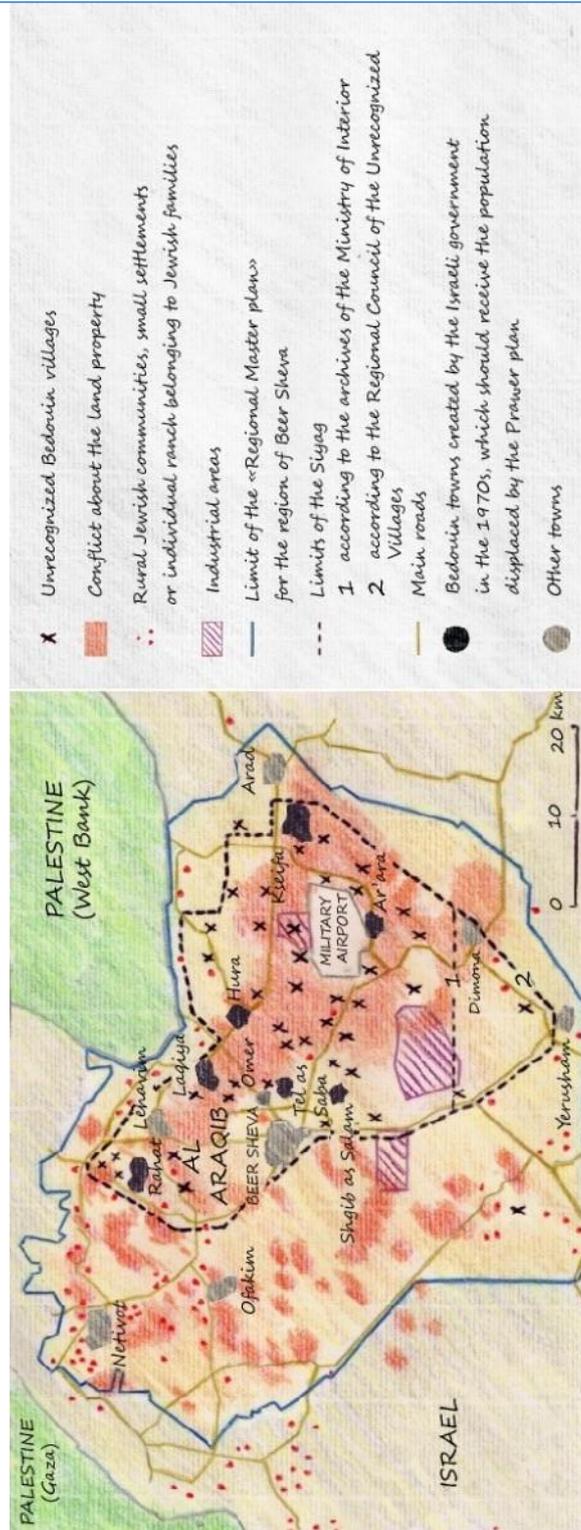
2. The Givati Parking lot; 3. The City of David Visitors' Center; 4. to 10. Various areas of excavations; 11. Silwan pool; 12. Tunnel near the Shiloah pool; 13. A tunnel currently being dug in Wadi Hilweh Street; 14. The El Bustan neighbourhood; 15. 5. The parking lots.

(Number 2, 3, 4, 5, with the area that stretches between them, covers Wadi Hilweh, while number 14 covers the area of al-Bustan).

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<sup>196</sup> See also "Mass demolitions pending in al-Bustan area of Silwan", East Jerusalem, Key Humanitarian Concerns, UN OCHA-oPt, 2011, p. 35.

ANNEX IV  
Map of the Negev



Map by Philippe Rekacewicz, reproduced with the kind permission of the author.

Translated from French by the M. Lecoquierre.

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**ANNEX V**  
*List of the different periods of fieldwork*

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<b>July-September 2011</b>	Exploratory fieldwork in Israel and Palestine:
<b>March-May 2012</b>	Fieldwork in the unrecognized Bedouin villages of the Negev (Israel)
<b>September - December 2012</b>	Fieldwork in Silwan (East Jerusalem)
<b>February-April 2013</b>	Fieldwork in Silwan (East Jerusalem) and Hebron (West Bank). Invitation provided by the Hebrew University (Jerusalem)
<b>September- November 2013</b>	Fieldwork in al-Araqib (Israel)
<b>July 2014</b>	Fieldwork in Jerusalem and al-Araqib (Israel)

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**ANNEX VI**  
***List of the semi-directed interviews realized***<sup>197</sup>

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To facilitate the reading and the reference to the interviews, they are referenced in the text with the code indicated underneath, A standing for al-Araqib, S for Silwan and H for Hebron. [A1] for example refers to the interview realized in al-Araqib with Haqma Abu-Madighem.

**A. AL-ARAQIB**

1. Haqma Abu-Madighem, resident of al-Araqib, April 8, 2012 (Arabic)
2. Sheikh Sayyah al-Turi, resident of al-Araqib, April 9, 2012 (Arabic, translated by Bogumilla Hall)
3. Khalil al-Amour, resident of al-Sira, employed at the Forum for Jewish-Arab coexistence (NCF), April 13, 2012 (English)
4. Sheikh Labad Abu-Afash, resident of Wadi al-Na'am, April 17, 2012 (Arabic, translated by Bogumilla Hall)
5. Haia Noach, director of the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF), April 17, 2012 and November 3, 2013 (English)
6. Nuri Elokbi, former resident of al-Araqib, April 21, 2012 (Arabic, translated by Bogumilla Hall)
7. Najib Abu-Bnieh, resident of Wadi al-Na'am, May 4 and May 14, 2012 (English and Arabic)
8. Aziz Abu-Madighem, resident of al-Araqib, May 14, 2012 (Arabic)
9. Ibrahim al-Waliki, RCUV chairman, May 21, 2012 (Arabic)
10. Thabet Abu-Ras, responsible of the office of Adalah in the Negev, May 22, 2012 (English)
11. Taleb al-Sana, member of the Knesset, May 24, 2012 (English and Arabic)

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<sup>197</sup> It has to be noted that each site of contention considered often has among the local population very extended families, with names being very common, such as Siyam or Abbassi in Silwan, which doesn't mean they are necessarily from the same nuclear family. The inhabitants of al-Araqib are all from the Abu-Madighem family, and the al-Turi clan.

12. Ismail Abu Madighem, resident of al-Araqib, November 13, 2013 (Arabic, translated by Mahmoud Muna)
13. Arik Ascherman, chairman of Rabbis for Human Rights, November 20, 2013 (English)

## **S. SILWAN**

1. Yonatan Mizrachi, founder of Emek Shaveh, October 21, 2012 (English)
2. Ahmad Qara'een, resident of Wadi Hilwe and director of the Ma'ada community Center, October 28, 2012 (English)
3. Fadeh Maragah, resident of Silwan, October 31, 2012 (English)
4. Fakhre Abu Diab, resident of al-Bustan, member of the al-Bustan committee, November 5, 2012 (English)
5. Dr Omar Yousef Qara'een, architect, former resident of Silwan, November 6, 2012 (English)
6. Wa'ed 'Aeashe, resident of Wadi Hilwe, occupational therapist for the children at the Ma'ada community center, November 26, 2012 (English)
7. Jawad Siyam, resident of Wadi Hilwe, former director of the Ma'ada community center, director of the Wadi Hilwe Information Center, November 27, 2012 (English and Arabic)
8. Hala Sirhan, resident of Wadi Hilwe, December 16, 2012 (Arabic)
9. Umm Aiman, former resident of Wadi Hilwe, December 20, 2012 (Arabic)
10. Sahar al-Abassi, resident of Wadi Hilwe, Woman and children coordinator at the Ma'ada community center, February 11, 2013 (English)
11. Salim Siyam, resident of Wadi Hilwe, member of the Wadi Hilwe Comittee, February 18, 2013 (English)
12. Sheikh Iyad al-Abassi, judge at the Jerusalem Shari'a Court, April 21, 2013 (Arabic)
13. Adnan Gaith, secretary of Fatah in Silwan, February 27, 2013 (Arabic, translated by Muhannad Nairoukh)
14. Ibrahim Odeh, resident of al-Bustan, February 28, 2013. (Arabic)
15. Mona (Imm Atef), resident of Wadi Hilwe, March 2, 2013 (Arabic)
16. Amani Odeh, resident of al-Bustan, March 2, 1013 (English)

## H. HEBRON

1. Idriss Zahdeh, resident of Tal Rumeida (H2), September 12, 2012 (English)
2. Zliha Muhtaseb, resident of the old city (H2), March 15, 2013 (English)
3. Sundus Azza, resident of Tal Rumeida, activist in Youth against settlements, April 2, 2013 (English)
4. XXX (anonymous), International Solidarity Movement activist, April 2, 2013 (English)
5. Walid Abu-Halawah, Director of Public Relations for the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, April 3, 2013 (English)
6. Abed and Mhamed al-Ra'af, shopkeepers and residents of the old city (H2), April 4, 2013 (English)
7. Issa Amro, coordinator of Youth against settlements, April 5, 2013 (English)
8. Petter Gustavsson, EAPPI volunteer, April 8 and 9, 2013 (English)
9. Hani Abu Heikel, Hebron Defense Committee, resident of Tal Rumeida (edge of the settlement of Admot Yishai), April 8 and 16 2013 (English)
10. Abu Aeshe family, residents of Tal Rumeida, ("Cage house", within the settlement of Admot Yishai), February 22, 2013 (Arabic)
11. Jamal Zu'er Maraga, shopkeeper in the old city (H2), April 4, 2013 (English)
12. Tamer al-Atrash, activist of Youth against settlements, April 15, 2013 (English)
13. Avner Gvaryahu, Breaking the Silence, November 19, 2013 (English)

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## ANNEX VII

### *List and description of the main NGOs and organizations cited in the text and their acronyms<sup>198</sup>*

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**Association of Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI):** an Israeli NGO dealing with issues around human rights in Israel and the occupied territories. See <http://www.acri.org.il/en/>.

**Adalah:** an Israeli-based human rights organization which concentrates on legal issues, defending the rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and sometimes working in the West Bank. See <http://www.adalah.org/>.

**B'tselem:** designates itself as “The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories”. The organization concentrates on documenting human rights abuses in the Occupied Territories and diffusing the data collected to raise awareness. See <http://www.btselem.org/>.

**Bimkom;** see **Planners for Human Rights**

**Breaking the Silence (BTS):** an Israeli organization of veteran combatants who served in the Israeli army since the Second Intifada and give testimony about the reality of the occupation in the Occupied Territories. See <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/>.

**Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT):** CPT is an organization acting in different countries through volunteers supporting non-violent actions. See <http://www.cpt.org/>.

**Dukium:** see [Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality](#)

**Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** is a programme coordinated by the [World Council of Churches, sending volunteers to Israel and Palestine to “accompany” people in their daily life but also to observe and report human rights abuse.](#) See <https://www.eappi.org/en>.

**Emek Shaveh:** an Israeli organization which focuses on the role of archaeology in the conflict and especially in the Israeli narratives; it is particularly active in Silwan organizing tours of the City of David. See <http://alt-arch.org/en/>.

**Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC):** the HCR is a Palestinian organization that aims at renovating the urban fabric and improving life conditions in the old city of Hebron. See <http://www.hebronrc.ps/index.php/en/>.

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<sup>198</sup> In alphabetical order.

**Ir Amim:** an Israeli NGO, Ir Amim concentrates on the situation in Jerusalem, considered in the frame of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it aims at creating a “more equitable and sustainable city” for the two people who share it. See <http://www.ir-amim.org.il/en>.

**International Solidarity Movement (ISM):** aims at actively supporting the resistance in Palestine. See <http://palsolidarity.org/>.

**Planners for Human Rights (Bimkom):** Bimkom is an Israeli NGO concentrating on democracy and human rights in the process of planning. See <http://bimkom.org/eng/>.

**Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (RCUV):** the RCUV is a body representing the Bedouins of the unrecognized villages of the Negev, based in Beer Sheva.

**Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF, also called Dukium):** the NCF is made up of Bedouins and Israeli activists acting to support the Bedouin community of the Negev, concentrating especially on the issue of the unrecognized villages. See <http://www.dukium.org/>.

**Wadi Hilwe Information Center (WHIC):** the Wadi Hilwe Information Center is located near the City of David, at the entrance of the neighbourhood, on the site of the Old City, and aims at informing the people about the situation in the area and in Jerusalem in general. See <http://silwanic.net/>.

**Youth Against Settlements (YAS):** Youth Against Settlements is a non-violent group based in Hebron which opposes the occupation of the city. See <http://www.youthagainsettlements.org/>.



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