

E. ABITBOL

PhD Volume 2 of 2

2012

HYDROPOLITICAL PEACEBUILDING

Volume 2 of 2

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PhD

2012

HYDROPOLITICAL PEACEBUILDING

**Israeli-Palestinian water relations and
the transformation of asymmetric conflict in the Middle East**

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**submitted for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

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2012

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CHAPTER 5:

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF ISRAELI TRANSBOUNDARY WATER/PEACE PRACTITIONERS – FOCUS ON OFFICIALLY-SANCTIONED PROCESSES

Introduction

Recognising that Israel has constructed and then intentionally pursued a relation of hydrohegemonic necessity with the Palestinians, it bears assessing if and if so, how Israeli transboundary water-domain practitioners have been constrained, contained by, even constitutively producing such a discourse in practice. Both the current and next chapters address this and related questions by telling the story of Israeli water-domain, and more specifically water/peace practitioners whose relational engagement stems back to the Madrid and then Oslo peace processes initiated in the early-1990s. It does so by telling and discursively analysing Israeli transboundary water-domain practices situated within and as peace processes within the context of, even against, a framework of Israel's hydrohegemony and narrative of necessity.

Conceptually, the current and next chapters recognise that systems of power are constructed, (re-) produced and perpetuated through ideations and practices that reflect a coerced and consensual acceptance of hegemonic, and more specifically hydrohegemonic relations and necessity. It cannot however be assumed that people in general, and Israeli transboundary water-domain practitioners more specifically are "cultural dopes" (Garfinkel, 1967 in Holstein and Gubrium, 2005: 486), merely reproducing hydrohegemonic discourse. Rather, they must be recognised as conflict actors that *engage* with relational

discourses (in this case, of Israel-Palestinian conflict and peace) when practicing transboundary water; the relational nexus of which is referred to herein as water/peace.

As conflict actors, Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners may of course be pursuing and (re-) producing hydrohegemonic relations, closely aligned with the dominant Israeli state's priorities. In such a case, it would be appropriate to say that these water/peace practitioners are subsumed to, contained by, even constitutively producing a discourse of Israeli hydrohegemony and necessity. Nonetheless, at least some of these transboundary water/peace practitioners may be critical of, and resistant to hydrohegemony. They may be reflexively working to transform the water domain and the broader conflict through alternative relational practices, essentially building and bringing into being the peaceful world in which they wish to live. The concept of hydropolitical peacebuilding has been developed to capture the potentially critical, resistant, desistant and alternative engagement of such Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners.

In epistemological recognition of the discursive terrain between the 'ideals' of hydrohegemony and hydropolitical peacebuilding, the concept of hydrohegemonic residues has been developed in this study. It is used to discuss the political substance, ambiguity and implications of practice located between intended peacebuilding and hegemony in the water domain. In such cases, we may speak of a discursive incongruity between hydropolitical intentionality and practice. Overall, the current and next chapters focus on

assessing hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues through a discursive assessment of Israeli transboundary water/peace practice drawing on the methodology of interpretive practice (Holstein and Gubrium, 2005).

As articulated throughout this study, transboundary water/peace practice is constitutive of the wider Israel-Arab and narrower, more specific Israel-Palestinian conflict milieu. As one important (final status) relational domain, water has seen the emergence and development of first an epistemic community of water practitioners, and then a community of practice comprising water/peace practitioners. The current chapter 5 provides thick description (Geertz, 1973 in Rosen, 2000: 48; Spradley, 1990 in Robson, 2002: 320) of the community of water and more specifically of water/peace practitioners. A foucauldian discourse analysis is pursued with respect to their practices and ideations. This chapter focuses on *officially-sanctioned* engagements and activities in the transboundary water domain, as pursued and practiced in the context of, and stemming directly from the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (MWGWR) of the Middle East peace process.

The subsequent chapter 6 thickly describes and discursively analyses *academic and civil society* activities and practices. It focuses on the seminal Joint Management of Shared Aquifers project, as well as several telling initiatives emanating from three transboundary organisations. Academic and civil society initiatives started around the same time as officially-sanctioned processes, and in some cases directly informed them. However, as shall be

explained, they both diversified and became increasingly discursively differentiated as evidence mounted that the official peace process was faltering. In both of these chapters, description is made about the origins, composition, organisations, institutions, events, funding sources and water-related practices of transboundary water/peace practitioners. In process, the discursive practice of these Israeli practitioners is analysed and visibly rendered.

Materials informing this and the next chapter are drawn from the academic and professional literature, from extended observation over several years, as well as through reflexive interviewing conducted with transboundary water/peace practitioners in 2010. These chapters provide a big picture view, and then hone in and discuss in detail a number of programs and initiatives situated at the nexus of water and peace. Doing so provides a critical perspective of how, what about, and why the discursive practices of transboundary water/peace practitioners are of significance to Israel-Palestinian peace more broadly.

To begin with, it is valuable to briefly situate and contextualise transboundary water/peace practices within a regional and historical frame, with particular reference to the development of an Israeli-Jordanian epistemic community of water practitioners. This Israeli-Jordanian community fundamentally enabled and facilitated the development of an Israeli-Palestinian transboundary community of water/peace practitioners.

Epistemic Origins of a Transboundary Water Community

Until the late-1980s and early-1990s, hydropolitical relations between Israel and the Arab world were undertaken principally through officially-sanctioned processes. These were by far most developed between Israel and Jordan, states that had cultivated mutually-constructive hydropolitical relations since the 1950s. Their relations were defining of Jordan River basin arrangements through the 1960s (noting Israel's occupation of the West Bank) and up to 1988 (with Jordan's relinquishment of claims and political authority over that territory, its resources and populations). Since then, these states continued to play a decisive even transformative role in terms of water management and development in the Middle East, while also accounting for a newly legitimated Palestinian self-determination movement with hydropolitical priorities of its own.

Until the 1991 Madrid Peace Process and also the 1994 Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace, hydropolitical relations and negotiations between Israel and Jordan generally took place far from the public eye in an effort to ensure implementation and maintain confidence between the parties (Ma'oz, 2006: 13). On the Arab street, negotiating and then coming to agreement with Israel were not all popular, and secrecy was understood to be paramount in terms of favouring agreement. Frequently, third-parties (e.g. global powers and/or an international organisation) played important facilitative roles in such Middle Eastern hydropolitical processes.

While hydropolitical negotiations were officially sanctioned by the states themselves, hydropolitical relations demanded the participation of technical

specialists, including natural scientists, engineers, as well as a broad spectrum of academics and civil society practitioners. The required technical cooperation set the stage for relationship-building among specialists, manifesting and bringing texture to a domain of transboundary water practice. It is in the context of hydropolitical relations between Israel and Jordan that intentional and constructive transboundary water-related practice emerged and developed at all. Thus, it is with respect to Israelis and Jordanians that a brief examination of transboundary epistemic water community must be made. Doing so recognises that the Israeli-Jordanian relationship would facilitate the development of an Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian and then Israeli-Palestinian community of water/peace practitioners.

Building on Israeli-Jordanian Hydropolitical Relations

In pursuing this study, it bears recalling that an epistemic community may be understood as (P. Haas, 1992: 3):

...a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area... [A]n epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds...

In this view, an epistemic community may be understood as a network of people, possessing domain-relevant knowledge, collectively sharing normative, causal, some epistemological and even political beliefs, and endeavouring to improve human welfare through their engagements⁹⁵. While practically

⁹⁵ P. Haas' work has been committed to investigating the nexus between epistemic community practices and policy-relevant knowledge development and up-take (P. Haas, 2004; P. Haas, 1992; P. Haas, 1990; P. Haas, 1989).

technical, this foundational view of epistemic communities recognises their socio-political context and relevance, stemming largely from the engagement of practitioners themselves.

In conflict environments like the Middle East, the development and maintenance of domain-specific epistemic community practitioner relations can and often does provide one avenue (often among others) for continued techno-political cooperation, discussion and negotiation between conflict parties themselves. A review of the historical record on the Israeli-Jordanian case supports this point, suggesting that over the longer term, such epistemically-based relations may contribute to wider peacemaking between actually or formerly conflictual parties in a variety of ways.

Reviewing the Historical Record

Early mediation efforts undertaken during the 1940s and 1950s between the newly-established State of Israel and its Arab neighbours were pivotal in laying the groundwork of a transboundary domain and then community of water (and eventually water/peace) practitioners. In particular, between 1949 and 1955, extensive dialogue on water-sharing was undertaken under the auspices of the MAC (Sosland, 2007: 33). This had notable and long-lasting implications for Israeli-Jordanian (as well as Israeli-Arab) relations.

The early period of cross-boundary relationship-building, associated with the 1953-55 Johnston Mission, formed the fertile grounding for transboundary epistemic water community development. It has come to light that US envoy

Eric Johnston intentionally sought to cultivate an epistemic community of water practitioners through transboundary technical cooperation (Sosland, 2007: 56-59). He and others in the US administration held the belief that cross-boundary epistemic water community development would catalyse rapprochement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. It would also insure against deteriorating bilateral and multilateral relations.

During the latter part of the 1950s and into the 1960s, relations cooled between Jordan and Israel. The assassination of the Jordanian King Abdullah in 1951 resulted in political uncertainty within the Kingdom, as Hussein bin Talal took over from his grandfather. The Suez War became a decisive moment in creating political distance between Israel and the Arabs. Nonetheless, low-grade hydropolitical relations based on implicit agreement with the Revised Unified Johnston Plan and principally mediated by the US were maintained between Israel and Jordan.

From the early 1960s, despite the hydropolitical build-up to the 1967 Six-Day War, and perhaps because of Jordan's ambiguous political stance vis-à-vis the more radical Arab factions, hydropolitical relations of interdependence would thicken between Jordan and Israel. Of political and symbolic relevance, in the post-1973 war period and as early as 1974, Jordanian Prince Hasan bin Talal sought Israeli water data through their mutual ally, the US. It was the first time that a Jordanian official sought Israeli hydrological data through the US, and it seemed a promising avenue through which to pursue political dialogue (Sosland, 2007: 110).

From the late-1970s to the early-1990s, Israeli and Jordanian water experts met secretly to adjust Yarmouk River sharing arrangements. They had to manage natural hydrological variations as well as Syria's upstream abstractions (Haddadin, 2001: 259 in Fischhendler, 2008b: 123). Such meetings were also conducted to ensure maintenance of the diversion intakes on the Yarmouk, notably during the 1980s. Through direct communication, innovative problem-solving and modest institution-building, they established lasting working relations grounded in mutual respect (Sosland, 2007: 118; Shamir, 2003 in Fischhendler, 2008a).

Between 1979 and 1994, an average of 3-8 such meetings secretly took place annually. Secrecy was ensured through cover of UN auspices or US sponsorship. The meetings took place either at an Israeli Allenby Bridge immigration shed or at Point 121 in what became known as the "picnic table conversations". Point 121 is the location at which the Yarmouk River branches off southward to the East Ghor Canal and westward to Israeli pumps. It was also the site over which hydropolitical conflict between Israel and Jordan was both escalated and de-escalated throughout the 1980s.

The conversations, or meetings, generally included a representative from the Jordan Valley Authority (Jordan's JVA), TAHAL (Israel's Water Planning Authority), Israel's Water Commissioner's Office, and the head of the Yarmouk Triangle Water Association (Sosland, 2007: 118). Additional water experts were invited to participate as circumstances warranted. Israeli and Jordanian military personnel were usually present, as was a representative or two from the

'mediating' organisation. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the Israeli Water Commissioner's Office, as well as the Jordanian Prime Minister's Office and the Royal Palace were kept readily informed about the meetings.

Participants of the picnic table conversations became increasingly comfortable with, and knowledgeable of one another personally. More importantly, they developed a sensitivity and responsiveness to each other's hydropolitical concerns and priorities over time. They undertook technical work together and agreed on arrangements that were collectively perceived to be technically-sound, mutually-acceptable and equitable. Given the intimate and detailed involvement of water technocrats and state elites in the water negotiation and management processes, here was the emergence of an epistemic community consciously and intentionally seeking to promote a workable, mutually-satisfactory, even equitable allocation of water resources. Such relations between Israeli and Jordanian water practitioners were pursued right through to the 1994 Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace and have continued for the most part actively since.

Enabling Israeli-Palestinian Hydropolitical Relations

While extensive hydropolitical relations were cultivated between Israel and Jordan, little contact of this kind was developed between Israelis and Palestinians prior to the 1991 Madrid peace process. In subsequent years, Israeli-Palestinian water-related experience would develop, mature and assume a catalytic agency for the better part of one, and arguably two decades.

As a component of the bilateral and multilateral processes that were initiated in the early 1990s, Israeli, Jordanian and now Palestinian scientists, engineers, social scientists and others in related fields were sanctioned to meet and discuss a whole range of possibilities for cooperatively managing shared water resources. Few Israelis and Palestinians had ever had any such meaningful contact and none of these people had ever previously met. Unsurprisingly, early meetings between these water experts were very tense, marked by personal and political distrust (Personal interview, PW3 2010).

From 1991 to the present time, a growing and engaged community of transboundary water and more specifically water/peace practitioners evolved, with its participants meeting countless times since. Some such meetings amounted to key practices of officially-sanctioned processes. Others were academic and civil society based, receiving support originating both from within the region and from around the world. For many of the people actively involved in the emerging transboundary water community, such engagement was perceived as cooperative problem-solving, partnership development and even peacebuilding (Personal interview, PW1 2010; Personal interview, PW3 2010; Personal interview, IF2; Personal interview, IX3 2010). It is from among these people and their multigenerational offspring that transboundary water/peace practitioner research participants have been identified and secured for the current study.

Given the massive international support invested in the cultivation of water as a domain of transboundary Israel-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian practice, it is

revealing to note that in 2001, US Secretary of State Colin Powell and the US State Department made clear that government's intended leveraging of "water where appropriate as a diplomatic tool to build trust and promote cooperation." (Sosland, 2007: 2) As reflected in this study, such an approach to hydro-politics stems back to the Johnston negotiations and arguably earlier, to the deliberations on the very contours of an eventual Palestine (e.g. with the AACI). It remains today a central dimension of the international community's practice, notably through financing mechanisms that interpret and frame transboundary water cooperation and development as peacemaking and peacebuilding (Personal interview, IE3 2010; Personal interview, PW8 2010). While sometimes accepted axiomatically, it bears questioning the kind, quality and overall discourse of peace that is produced and circulated through such water cooperation, in context rather than ideally or intentionally.

As articulated thus far, transboundary water in the Middle East is a complex, layered domain of technical and political practice within and constitutive of the Israel-Palestinian conflict milieu. It has been produced through decades of grounded attention, engagement and the broader investment of local actors, regional parties and the international community. Recognition, description, deconstruction and analysis of this water domain as undertaken in earlier chapters provides the context for appreciating the peacebuilding significance and limitations of transboundary water-related practices and ideations; i.e. hydro-hegemony, hydro-political peacebuilding, and hydro-hegemonic residues. Thus, in examining and analysing transboundary water as a domain of ideation and practice in historical and discursive context, this study is revealing of the

political fact that there is perhaps one transboundary epistemic water community, but there assuredly are several discursive communities of water/peace. Bringing such visibility to these 'communities of practice' both critically and/or appreciably can be expected to diversely inform the hydropolitical belief that transboundary water cooperation and development contribute to building positive peace in conflict environments.

A Transboundary Water Community

Anchored in a protracted history of Israeli-Jordanian cooperation, the now widely-recognised Israeli-Palestinian transboundary community of water practitioners finds its proximate origins in the bilateral and multilateral efforts of the Madrid and then Oslo processes, and in the first Israeli-Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water (1992). This transboundary community is constitutive of the wider Israel-Palestinian transboundary water domain, itself understood as a field of practice comprising individuals, communities, organisations, governmental actors and others engaged on the matter of transboundary water through events, projects, programs and other socio-political productivities (e.g. media, education, etc). This domain may be appreciated as a location for the transboundary deployment of hydropolitical power, spanning the gamut from hydrohegemony to hydropolitical peacebuilding. It is a field of contested practices, intentionalities and effects. This domain and its constitutive community of practitioners is also particularly dynamic, well-funded and increasingly diverse.

Capturing this expansive engagement, building on the work of Twite (2004) and others, a table of key hydropolitical moments, projects, practices and agreements has been constructed below (Table 5.1). It dates back to the late-1980s and carries through to early-2011, spanning more than 20 years. While obviously partial, the table provides a valuable hydropolitical snapshot of the Middle East. Some of the most significant events, projects and organisations incorporated into this table, including those which have seen the direct

involvement of many research participants in this study, are described and discursively analysed over the current and next chapters.

As a theoretical precursor to doing so, it is essential to appreciate that what has often been referred to as an epistemic community of water in the Middle East is herein also approached and critically interrogated as a community of practice, emphasising the *practice*. In one leading formulation, communities of practice may be characterised as (adapted from Adler, 2005: 15):

1. “[P]eople who are informally as well as contextually bound by a shared interest in learning and applying a common practice.”
2. Configuring a *domain of knowledge* and there is a sense of *joint enterprise*.
3. A *community of people* and therefore *relationships of mutual engagement*.
4. *Shared practice* is sustained by a *repertoire of communal resources* including “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, symbols, and discourse.”

Adler (2005: 15) succinctly and effectively articulates the political and discursive significance of such communities:

It is within communities of practice that collective meanings emerge, discourses become established, identities are fixed, learning takes place, new political agendas arise, and the institutions and practices of global governance grow.

Of particular interest in this study are the practices and ideations of Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in what is herein framed as an Israeli-Palestinian transboundary water/peace community of practice. Yet more specifically, the epistemological focus herein pursued is on the discursive content and peacebuilding significance of these practices and ideations in the particular context of an asymmetric Israel-Palestinian conflict. By looking at the

discursive practices of transboundary water/peace practitioners, it is possible to situate and discuss the discursive range and significance of water/peace practices and ideations in the region. Such a discussion begins in the current chapter with specific reference to the MWGWR, a creation of the Middle East peacemaking process.

1988	Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) founded
1991	Madrid Middle East Peace Process launched
1992	Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (MWGWR) of the Middle East Peace Process launched
	First Israeli-Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water
1993	Israel and the Palestinians agree to a water working group as part of their bilateral process
	Oslo Process is publicly launched – Declaration of Principles (Oslo I)
	Middle East Water Economies project launched
1994	EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME) founded
	Regional Water Databanks Project/EXACT launched
	Our Shared Environment conference (IPCRI)
	Joint Management of Shared Aquifers project launched
1995	The Oslo Accords (II) signed, Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) created, Joint Water Committee (JWC) created
	Institutional Frameworks for the Management of Transboundary Water Resources project launched
1996	Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector (EMWIS) launched
	Declaration of Principles on Cooperation on Water-Related Matters and New and Additional Water Resources
	Public Awareness & Conservation Project (PACP) launched
	Arava Institute for Environment Studies (AIES) founded
	WaterNet Project launched
	Middle East Desalination Research Center (MEDRC) launched
	Last official meeting of the MWGWR
1997	Environmental Management and Planning as a Tool for Promoting Sustainable Coexistence Between Israelis and Palestinians launched
1998	EcoPeace Middle East Environmental NGO Forum – One Basin, One Strategy: Symposium on Promoting an Integrated Sustainable Regional Development Plan for the Dead Sea Basin
1999	FOEME (Friends of the Earth Middle East) Regional campaign for Dead Sea to be listed as Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site (UNESCO)
	Global International Water Assessment (GIWA) project implemented
2000	Joint Environmental Mediation Service (JEMS/IPCRI) launched
2001	FOEME Good Water Neighbours Project launched
	GLOWA JR Project – Phase I / Effects of Climate and Global Change on Jordan River Basin project launched
	University of Oklahoma: Middle East Water Working Group (MEEWG)
2002	Culture of Water Program launched
	FOEME and global partners conferences (2) – The Dead Sea, Between Life and Death: Learning from Other Lakes
	Announcement of Red Sea-Dead Sea Conveyance (RSDSC) process at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa
	Middle East Environment Future (MEEF) initiative launched
2003	World Bank commitment to RSDSC process; Palestinian inclusion in process
	Geneva Initiative launched publicly
	FOEME meeting on the future of the Dead Sea
	Joint Israeli-Palestinian delegation to Stockholm Water Week,

	supported by IPCRI
	A Future for the Dead Sea project launched
2004	2nd Israeli-Palestinian-International Water for Life Conference in Turkey, organised by IPCRI
	Monitoring Transboundary Palestinian-Israeli Streams: Implications for Cooperative Management Strategies project launched
2005	Optimisation for Sustainable Water Management (OPTIMA) project launched
	GLOWA JR Project – Phase II
	CollectiveWater – From Conflict to Collective Action: Institutional Change and Management Options to Govern Transboundary Water Courses launched
2006	Sustainable Management of Available Water Resources with Innovative Technologies (SMART) project launched
	AIES/NATO Advanced Study Institute – Integrated Water Resource Management and Security in the Middle East
	Adaptive Visions of Water in the Middle East (AVOW) project launched
	Pro-Aquifer Project launched
2007	AIES/NATO Advanced Research Workshop – Water Resources and Infrastructure in Areas of Conflict and Extreme Conditions
	RSDSC Feasibility Process begins, including a stakeholder consultation process with diverse Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian and international water and peace actors, organisations and agencies
	Environmental Management and Planning as a Tool for Promoting Sustainable Coexistence Between Israelis and Palestinians project launched
	Water for Peace in the Middle East project launched
2008	Publication of <i>Draft Agreement on Water Cooperation</i> , Geneva Initiative
	Pro-Aquifer Project Final Regional Conference
2009	GLOWA JR Project – Phase III
2010	Understanding and Analyzing the current Israeli Wastewater Practices for Transboundary Wastewater Management from Palestinian Communities project launched
2010/2011	Conflict and Peace Effects Study (CPES) of the RSDSC initiative
2011	RSDSC Feasibility Study completed

Table 5.1: Transboundary Water Domain at a Glance (adapted from Twite, 2004 and expanded)

Introducing Officially-Sanctioned Transboundary Water Processes

The Middle East Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources

(MWGWR)

In the early-1990s, the Madrid peace process was designed along both bilateral and multilateral tracks. Through bilateral negotiations, it was believed that the various Middle East conflict parties could pursue agreement. Bilateral processes took place between Israel and each of Syria, Lebanon, and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Noting the challenges of coming to bilateral agreement, a multilateral process was constructed as a mechanism for supporting the bilaterals through confidence-building in the form of meaningful techno-political dialogue on key issues. This was intended as a means of creating dialogical, political opportunities through which to catalyse and galvanise innovative peacemaking. Multilateral processes were also meant to address transboundary, regional issues with major support from committed global powers.

The multilateral process was pursued through working groups, one of which was the MWGWR. There were five such working groups, with the others addressing the following issues: Environment, Refugees, Regional Economic Development, and Arms Control and Regional Security. The MWGWR was chaired by the US and co-chaired by Russia, while receiving the notable support of both Japan and the EU.

Between 1992 and 1996, the MWGWR officially met nine times, as follows.

- Round 1 – Moscow organising meeting, Russia; 28-29 January 1992
- Round 2 – Vienna, Austria; 14-15 May 1992
- Round 3 – Washington, DC; 16-17 September 1992
- Round 4 – Geneva, Switzerland; 27-29 April 1993
- Round 5 – Beijing, China; 26-28 October 1993
- Round 6 – Muscat, Oman; 17-19 April 1994
- Round 7 – Athens, Greece; 7-9 November 1994
- Round 8 – Amman, Jordan; 18-22 June 1995
- Round 9 – Hammamet, Tunisia; 16 May 1996

During that time, numerous gatherings, workshops, courses and trainings were held inter-sessionally, structuring the transboundary water domain and creating the context and specific opportunities for a transboundary community of practitioners to evolve. Since 1996, many members of the MWGWR have continued to meet unofficially, sometimes on a bi-annual basis. These meetings also enabled the development of many water-related civil society processes.

At Israel's insistence, the bilaterals were attended by a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to engage in negotiation with Israel. The multilateral working group process enabled a collective Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian, and increasingly an Israeli-Palestinian water expert dynamic. Through this, Israelis and Palestinians began developing a hydropolitical relationship that was not specifically and necessarily mediated through Jordan (though Jordan was pivotal in its evolution)⁹⁶.

⁹⁶ Overall, the Jordanians played a central enabling role. Jordan, of course, also benefited, given the eventual development of the Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace with its innovative water dimensions.

The MWGWR created a location of hydropolitical encounter, dialogue, shared reflection, collective imagining and mutual learning. It became a location for the expression of hydropolitical dispute and development among Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water practitioners. It also became a location of political insight and problem-solving, notably given the practice of consensus-based decision-making that was pursued. The significance of the MWGWR in structuring a transboundary water domain and enabling the evolution of a transboundary water community of Israeli and Palestinian practitioners is succinctly articulated as follows (Sosland, 2007: 191):

The multilateral track has played an important role in organizing a broader community of water experts who have created new ideas for solving old water problems and providing a forum for international donors and core states to work together, while developing the foundation for water-sharing institutions.

Prior to this and other working group processes, very few Israeli and Palestinian civil society expert practitioners were given the opportunity or even permitted to encounter the other with official sanction. Through this initiative and onwards, Israeli and Palestinian water practitioners began the journey of getting to know one another, working together, even imagining the future, as expert water practitioners, as Israelis and Palestinians, even as friends, on the premise of techno-political cooperation.

The multilaterals were not successful at transboundary water/peace community building on all fronts, of course. An important shortcoming was that Syria and Lebanon refused to participate in the water and other working groups until meaningful political progress was made on the bilateral front. It must also be

noted that with the second Palestinian Intifada, the informal activities of MWGWR participants declined in number and scope. For a few years, from 2000 until 2005, very little was taking place as an extension of the MWGWR, though meetings did continue among certain members of the group (Personal interview, PW1 2010)⁹⁷. Since then, informal meetings have continued on a peripatetic basis.

Recognising Discursive Cleavages

From the outset, the MWGWR process brought to light some of the fundamental cleavages between preferred Israeli and Palestinian discourses of water/peace, with implications into the present day. A central dimension of Israel's hydrohegemony in relation to the Palestinians has been its preferred discourse of *technically-based* approaches and solutions. This is meaningfully juxtaposed to the predominantly Palestinian *political* discourse for addressing water/peace issues. The earliest dialogues associated with the multilateral process brought to light these discursive cleavage. Notably, in 1992, after Round 2 of the multilaterals, Israel's Water Commissioner and head of Israel's water delegation, Dan Zaslavsky was quoted as saying: "[T]he Palestinians did not speak about water even once throughout the conference. They only spoke about politics." (Sosland, 2007: 194)

Despite and perhaps because of its hydropolitical history and gains, Israel endeavoured to reconstruct water into a purely technical domain while the

⁹⁷ It remains unclear what the role of the MWGWR will be in the post-Intifada period. It has variously been imagined as a deliberative, advisory and enabling body with the ability to both influence the making of government and intergovernmental water policy and to draw international resources for its implementation.

Palestinians sought to ensure its continued prominence as a political area for negotiation, meaning-making and material production. This technical/political rift between Israel and the Palestinians, and between predominantly Israeli and Palestinian discourses respectively has become fundamental to water relations between them. Finding its articulated origins in the MWGWR process, it persists to the present time, notably with respect to seawater desalination, but also more broadly. As the more powerful actor in the region and of this conflict, Israel continues to privilege the geopolitical and hydro-political status quo in favour of a needs-based, technical and supply-oriented approach to water management. As this disagreement over framing persists, it is unlikely that the Israel-Palestinian conflict will be resolved without a significant *politically-informed* approach and agreement on water resources, bolstered by the quantitative benefits of *technically-produced* water.

This is not saying anything particularly new, or about which both Israel and the Palestinians are not aware, as the historical record shows. Indeed, the multilateral negotiators recognised the political significance of water a couple of rounds into the MWGWR process. In 1993, Israeli and Palestinian water practitioners moved to incorporate water issues into their bilateral process, creating a bilateral water resources working group for this purpose. Water was afforded a political significance with respect to the wider peace process. It was clear to those involved that water issues could not be resolved simply through technical arrangements without addressing at least some of their political content and meaning. Thus, the newly-elected Labour-led government actually recognised Palestinian water rights (albeit in a limited way) and the value of

interdependent if not quite integrated, transboundary water resources management and development. The product of efforts underway in the bilateral water working group, this was recognised as an important success that enabled continued negotiations on other political issues.

The technical/political debate is far from resolved. With the Madrid and then Oslo processes, this debate and related others (e.g. governance of natural vs. desalinated water) were essentially put onto the table for resolution through final status talks. Indeed, this early, though pivotal, water-related transboundary work created the discursive context for Israeli water/peace practitioner engagements. In today's environment, to privilege a technical approach for resolving water issues with the Palestinians amounts to structuring Israel's growing hydrohegemony, essentially removing or severely restricting water-related political engagement at every turn. Bearing this in mind, several of the water/peace initiatives of the MWGWR are discussed below to reflect the construction of an Israeli discursive discipline of 'taking politics out of water'. As discussed, Israeli water/peace practitioners associated with the MWGWR are recognisable as having performed and (re-) produced Israel's hydrohegemony, as assessed in terms of equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability, and in terms of Israel's narrative of hydrohegemonic necessity.

Water/Peace Initiatives of the MWGWR

The MWGWR has been deemed amongst the most, if not the most active working group of the multilateral process, and with the longest-lasting implications. Becoming a dynamic institution of the Oslo process, this group supported the development of a series of multilateral water/peace initiatives and activities organised in terms of the following four issue-areas (adapted from the WaterCare PAWC Website; CtC Website; Sosland, 2007: 195; See Diagram 5.1 below):

- Enhancement of water data availability;
- Promotion of sustainable water management practices, including conservation;
- Enhancement of water supply; and
- Conceptual development on regional water management and cooperation.

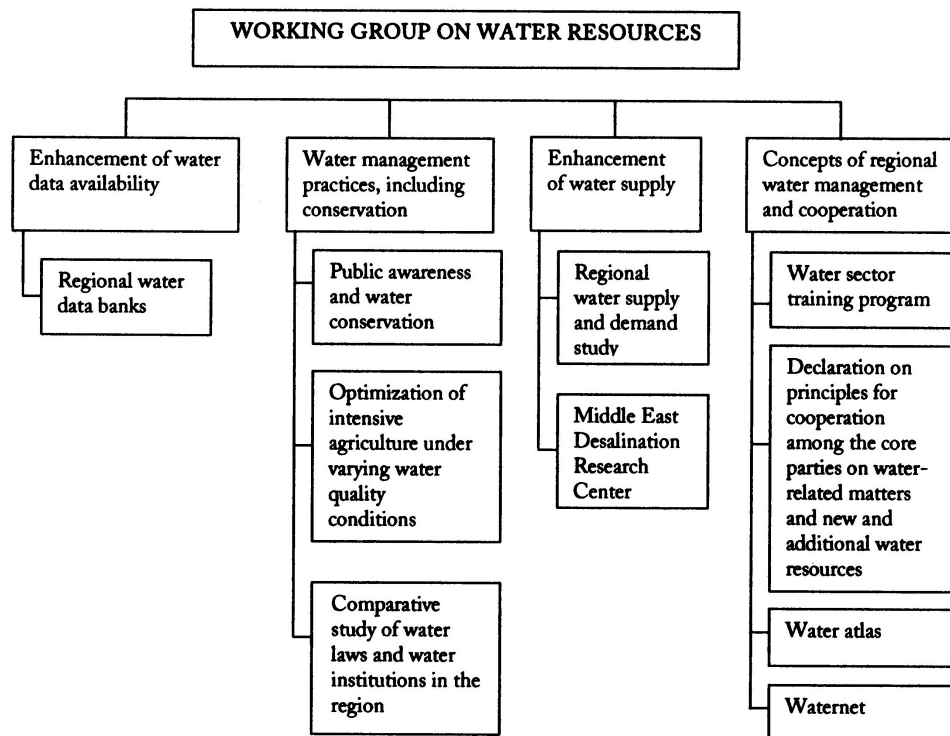


Diagram 5.1: The Project Portfolio of the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (Sosland, 2007: 196)

Without claiming to be comprehensive, a number of projects situated within each of the priority areas of the MWGWR are described and analysed below. Doing so provides insight into the discursive pursuit and operation of Israel's hydrohegemony and the circulation of its narrative of necessity through Foucauldian capillary circuits of power. In this vein, the focus of the current study is on the particular engagement, discursive practices, ideations, productions and knowledge-construction practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners in relation to their Palestinian colleagues.

Enhancement of Water Data Availability

Perhaps most significant of the initiatives branching forth from the MWGWR, the regional Water Databanks Project was approved in 1994. Launched the following year, it was premised on the need to construct a shared, standardised hydrological body of knowledge as the basis upon which to make national and regional decisions. The initiative was intended to advance a sustainable management of water resources in the region, to be pursued by Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan. Equally important, the initiative was meant to create the context and provide the hardware for information-sharing and experience-sharing among scientists, experts and knowledge-oriented practitioners from across the region.

The Water Databanks Project was produced by an Executive Action Team (EXACT) with members representing the US, the EC/EU, Canada, France, Norway, Australia and The Netherlands, in addition to the Core Parties (Israel, the PA and Jordan). Funding and technical support was forthcoming from the

non-Middle Eastern states and governing authorities. EXACT members met together, and with donor representatives, bi-annually throughout the period of the Oslo process. Since the start of the second Palestinian Intifada, additional meetings have been organised by core party members into recent years (Kramer 2008, 20; Personal interview, PW1 2010). Of note, subsequent to the HAMAS 2006 victory in Gaza Strip elections, the PWA was no longer directly invited to EXACT meetings. They were replaced by members of the Palestinian National Water Council (itself representing the PWA).

The Water Databanks Project has been an opportunity for the core parties, their knowledge-oriented water-domain actors and international partners to cooperate on constructing a forward-looking initiative together. Doing so was primarily undertaken through meetings, workshops, trainings, conferences and academic side projects that provided space for water-domain experts to work together and share experience directly with one another. While promising on multiple fronts, the databanks project was fraught with challenges and difficulties. It was also framed and pursued to reflect Israel's hydrohegemonic power.

From the outset and in terms of its framing and design, the Water Databanks Project reflected an ahistorical perspective on water availability, and this on multiple counts. It did not reflect a historically-contextualised assessment of hydropolitical violence committed by one party against another. It was not meant to ascertain responsibility, seek acknowledgement or demand compensation for the different hydropolitical circumstances and realities of

Israel and the Palestinians (or indeed, Jordan). The matter of equity was left off the table intentionally, favouring the construction of a limited hydrological instrument. Indeed, the project was pursued along a rigid technical framing that favoured Israel and the relatively far more scientifically-savvy Israeli practitioners.

The Water Databanks Project was ostensibly designed and pursued as an exercise in cooperative trust-building through sustained communication and the construction of a technical tool (Kramer, 2008: 21). Indeed, cross-border cooperation and relationship-building have been deemed important by participants of the Water Databanks Project. However, as they themselves frequently expressed during recent research interviewing (e.g. Personal interview, PW3 2010), such opportunities were regularly undermined by the unpredictable unwillingness of Israeli authorities to issue travel documents to Palestinians in a timely fashion (Kramer, 2008: 21; Personal interview, PW7 2010). Rather than supporting the development of a partnership between increasingly equal parties and actors, the Water Databanks Project became an important location for the Israeli hydrohegemonic construction and production of a subordinate Palestinian subject.

On a related point, for cooperation and communication implicit to shared project development and implementation to constitute confidence-building and trust-building, it is fundamental that 'shared' projects and activities are pursued cooperatively and transparently (as specifically relevant and appropriate). While the Water Databanks Project was meant as one such cooperative and

transparent initiative, this was only very partially the case in practice. A number of key project activities were pursued on a uninational basis, notably with respect to the scientific dimensions of their work (Kramer, 2008: 20). Israeli and Palestinian experts often worked separately, then providing some of their data and findings to a third party, which in this case was the US Geological Survey⁹⁸.

In the case of the Water Databanks Project, the unwillingness of parties to share information openly undermined confidence and damaged any trust that might have found root. Israel leveraged its sharing, hoarding and use of water-related knowledge, as well as its participation in knowledge generating institutions, to project and reinforce its political power over the Palestinians and in the region (Kramer, 2008; Personal interview, IG6 2010). Over time, it became evident that Israel was unwilling to openly share its comprehensive hydrological and hydropolitical knowledge with regional partners, creating an asymmetric field of operation. In this way, the data generated as a product of the Water Databanks Project was rendered relatively useless for the technical and political bodies in the region; first for the Palestinians and then eventually for everyone involved.

As such, trust between the parties was both pre-empted and undermined, as the Water Databanks Project was constituted into a location for the (re-) production and perpetuation of Israeli hydrohegemony as and through the engagement of Israeli water/peace practitioners. The Water Databanks Project

⁹⁸ This framework and approach to transboundary water-domain cooperation persists to the present day. In the context of the GLOWA Jordan River project, Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian participants work in national silos, submitting the results of their work to the German project manager. Some details about the GLOWA Jordan River project are shared in chapter 6.

is also revelatory of how a major cooperative water-domain project, situated within a wider peacemaking efforts, was undermined through the maintenance of a narrative of hegemonic necessity. In this case, the Israeli narrative of Palestinian threat was not actually and politically relinquished, despite the expressed willingness of Palestinians to accept the state of Israel's legitimacy (Personal interview, PW3 2010).

Sustainable Water Management and Conservation

In an effort to promote sustainable and efficient water management practices, the second major priority of the MWGWR, a number of projects were launched on a variety of different issue-specific areas. These included several projects funded by Luxemburg, Austria, Britain and the US intended to promote the efficient use of water resources in agriculture with consideration for the use of varying qualities of water. Another major project conducted a comparative study of water laws and institutions in the region, with support and funding provided by the Norwegian government through the non-governmental organisation, Center for Environmental Studies and Resources Management. Yet another focused on the promotion of public awareness and conservation of water resources in the water-stressed region. The current section provides details of this last initiative.

In 1996, the Public Awareness and Water Conservation Project (PACP) was designed to raise awareness and stimulate action on water conservation and quality issues in Israel, the PA and Jordan. Its phase one practices involved the compilation, sharing and promotion of best practices in water conservation

throughout the region. In this vein, the World Bank funded a study of water conservation projects in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, involving many of the region's countries. US Technical assistance was forthcoming to promote conservation practices through public awareness and education campaigns. These were implemented simultaneously in the three Core Countries and in Tunisia.

The project's second phase involved the creation of a video on water issues, developed and produced by regional participants, intent on circulating knowledge about water issues from a regional perspective. This video is geared to youth and classroom environments for screening and discussion. A second, intimately entwined initiative, is the WaterCare project. Its outputs include a teacher's guide, a website and a student handbook targeted at 12-15 year olds. The materials were jointly prepared by Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water/peace practitioners and educators (WaterCare Website).

The PACP's third initiative is known as Raincatcher. Bringing together Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian environmental educators, school administrators and government representatives, the initiative seeks to develop rainwater-harvesting and related experience in Core Country communities (Raincatcher Website)⁹⁹. These and other such efforts were developed to privilege a regional framing of issues addressed through localised practice. Funding and support for this initiative were provided by the US Department of State, as well as scientists

⁹⁹ Participating schools include: Al Ahliyyah College and Al Amari Girl's School from the Palestinian community; De LaSalle College and Guerea Um Al Mu'mineen School from the Jordanian community; and Ein Karem Agricultural School and Abu Gosh School from the Israeli community (MWGWR, 2005).

from the US Geological Survey, the Israeli Water Commission, the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, and the PWA.

From a discursive perspective, however well-intentioned, these initiatives (re-) produced and perpetuated Israel's hydrohegemony in relation to the Palestinians. The first overarching point is that they have specifically and effectively ensured the complete absence of Israel-Palestinian relational political issues (Personal interview, PW1 2010). Notably, the WaterCare materials which continue to be used today were designed to be acceptable to Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian authorities and communities. A Palestinian participant in the production of these materials explains (Personal interview, PW1 2010):

We did lots of things in public awareness. We did lots of things for children. We wrote a book together. We actually wrote a book ... about water, without mentioning politics, showing that we all shared the same water. It was good. It was aimed at late high school. Of course we didn't [discuss] politics... and it was circulated, and it was translated...

As water-related education materials, these are far from reproachable, providing important and factual materials about precious planetary water resources. However, in an effort to circulate knowledge about water, hydropolitical issues related to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and peace process were left out, thus perpetuating Israel's favoured hydrohegemonic framing. A reading of these ostensibly peace education materials reveals that they fail to either contextualise or articulate the concept of peace in relation to water through such concepts as power, occupation, responsibility and/or equity (WaterCare TB1 Website). Effectively, Palestinian conflict-related knowledge

was banished from these intergenerational water/peace materials. As such, the Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners engaged in this work may be understood as having been hydrohegemonically contained in their production.

Enhancement of Water Supply

In an effort to promote the enhancement of water supply, to literally increase the quantity of water available in the region, the MWGWR sought to forecast water needs over the long-term and to identify sources and institutional structures for meeting them. In the context of a German-sponsored Regional Water Supply and Demand Study, the MWGWR evaluated opportunities and initiatives for non-conventional water resource development. The intent was to support the joint development of water supply solutions, with varying degrees of interest and success. Some of these initiatives would eventually be piloted, like water imports from Turkey. Others like the so-called peace pipeline would be abandoned, at least for the time being. A few, like the RSDSC would be taken to the feasibility stage.

Among the most significant of these initiatives was the Middle East Desalination Research Centre (MEDRC). Based in Muscat, Oman, MEDRC was launched to promote the development of desalination technology and practice in support of Israel-Palestinian peace. Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians and others from across the Middle East and internationally used the centre as a place to meet and work together in pursuit of desalination research (Saidi, 2006). Some of the work undertaken at MEDRC, combined with both technological developments and a major drop in the costs of desalination, contributed to the massive

increase in produced desalinated water in the Middle East over the last 15 years.

The MEDRC received a great deal of financial and political support from the MWGWR, including major funding from the US, Oman, South Korea, Japan and the EC. As of June 2008, MEDRC accomplished the following (adapted from WaterWiki MEDRC Website; MEDRC Website):

- Assembled more than 200 global experts, working with MEDRC in a voluntary capacity;
- Awarded grants on 74 multinational research projects valued at more than US\$10 million, involving 137 institutional research partners in 34 countries;
- Coordinated and sponsored more than 32 desalination training programs in the PA, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Israel, Jordan, Egypt and members of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC);
- Awarded M.Sc. and Ph.D. scholarships for qualified regional nationals to study at universities outside of the MENA region;
- Published more than 300 research articles in academic and professional journals based on work performed in MEDRC-sponsored research projects; and
- Established a Center of Excellence in Desalination and Water Reuse technology, in cooperation with the PA.

The MEDRC has been one mechanism through which Arab governments and civil society moved towards the normalisation of relations with Israel in the water domain and elsewhere, on the premise that political change was soon to follow. However, since the second Intifada, Israeli participation in MEDRC has become rather limited. Nonetheless, all that took place with respect to MEDRC contributed to the development of a transboundary water domain and community of water/peace practitioners, with implications for the planning of water management as it effects Israelis and Palestinians. A discursive analysis of this work is warranted.

Israel's preferred and hydrohegemonic technical discourse is closely associated with the production of water, notably through both the desalination of seawater, and the recycling and reuse of wastewater. Work undertaken at the MEDRC has been pursued in support of this agenda and in cross-border cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians (among other parties). Insights stemming from the research undertaken on seawater desalination among transboundary water/peace practitioners have contributed to the formulation of an Israeli proposal for an extraterritorial desalination facility on the Mediterranean for the satisfaction of Palestinian water needs, dating to the late-1990s (Personal interview, IG6 2010). As explained in the previous chapter, this proposal was and continues to be rejected by the Palestinians so long as the issue of water rights, and therefore of equality, equity and self-determination, remains unresolved (Personal interview, PW5 2010; Personal interview, PW8 2010).

Israeli transboundary water practitioners meaningfully informed the development of this option. They contributed to formulating and practicing a discourse that is today referred to as 'taking water out of conflict' and that remains very popular among all but the most critically-minded Israeli water/peace practitioners (Personal interview, IF1 2010; Personal interview, IF2 2010; Personal interview, IX2 2010; Personal interview, IX3 2010; Personal interview, IX4 2010; Personal interview, IG6 2010; Personal interview, IW1 2010; Personal interview, IW2 2010). This discourse reflects a commitment to the value and necessity of 'taking politics out of water', as per Israel's interest, while ensuring that ever-increasing quantities of water are provided to Israeli,

Palestinian and other regional populations. From the 1990s, through the 2000s and into the 2010s, such discourse-in-practice fails to address the underlying political issues between Israel and the Palestinians. Indeed, leading Israeli water/peace practitioners perpetuate the dominant, Israeli, technically-oriented discourse in this way.

Developing Regional Cooperation

The fourth and final dimension of the MWGWR's efforts was the overt promotion of *regional* water management and cooperation, in framings and practical innovations and pursuits. The activities discussed below stem from and build upon the *Declaration of Principles on Cooperation on Water-Related Matters and New and Additional Water Resources* signed by the Core Parties in 1996 (DOPW Website; Kliot and Shmueli, 1998: 220). This declaration was understood as a commitment by the parties to pursue water cooperation, a coordination of water infrastructural projects and the shared development of new water resources (Sosland, 2007: 199-200). This Declaration has also informed the other issue-areas and activities of the MWGWR.

Several efforts were advanced for the promotion of regional water management and cooperation, with financial support emanating from the US, the EU, Canada, Japan, The Netherlands, Israel, Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Projects included the Water Sector Training Program, which provided training to some 275 water resource personnel on the effective management of regional water resources. A

modest Water Atlas Project was developed as a compilation of political, historical, economic, sociological and technical literature.

In support of innovative regional water cooperation and management, one such initiative, WaterNet was developed by the Core Parties and funded by the Norwegian government. The WaterNet initiative was conceived along local, regional and international tracks. It was designed as an interconnected electronic hydropolitical information resource, nationally-based at organisations in Israel, Jordan and the PA. It was constructed into a WaterNet Information System (WIS), with every country harbouring a local base.

In Israel, for instance, WaterNet-Local is based at the Technion's Stephen and Nancy Grand Water Research Institute (GWRI-BFIC; see GWRI-BFIC Website). A Regional WaterNet and Research Center was developed in Amman, Jordan with the purpose of encouraging and supporting regional cooperation on water issues. Additionally, a WaterNet Steering Group has been developed, bringing together representatives of the Core Parties and the Norwegian funder. Technical experts are consulted as required. This steering group is supplemented by a Local Steering Group and a Local Technical Group structure. The WaterNet Steering Group is responsible for initiating new shared and regional water projects, as per the 1996 Declaration referenced above.

The development of regional cooperation in the water sector was in these (and other related) ways primarily pursued along technical lines. This included technical trainings, technical institution building, and published information

sharing. These technically-oriented activities contain and privilege the Israeli assumption that 'final' political arrangements would eventually be reached, even emerge over time, without all the while working to build politics into the specific processes of technically cooperative activities. It was essentially putting the cart before the horse, so to speak, creating diverse functional arrangements in the water sector (and elsewhere) and assuming that satisfactory 'apolitical' solutions to a political conflict would ensue from such processes.

Reflections on Technical Cooperation

The ideas underpinning such processes undoubtedly stem from an illustrious intellectual pedigree, that of functionalism. Its founding theorist, David Mitrany (1943; 1948) argued that cooperative frameworks on technical matters elaborated in areas like natural resources management, energy provision, highway building, cultural and educational practice, even security matters would produce a form of integration among participating states and/or political authorities. War would become undesirable and eventually even unthinkable as the win-lose construct of realist engagement would be supplanted through processes of integration.

In this sense, an 'apolitical' and progressive institutional approach centred around common functions, enabled by developments in technology, would create a "normal community" of participating states and authorities (Mitrany, 1948: 358). In these and other ways, Mitrany located a kind of peaceably, almost invisibly transformative power at the nexus of socio-economic need, technological innovation and integrative practice (Mitrany, 1948). Pivotal actors

in processes replacing belligerent in favour of integrated relations were argued to be those elite, technical people that engaged across conflict lines, working, planning, imagining and creating cooperatively with once-enemy counterparts, in ever-expanding and growing community¹⁰⁰.

The conflict and peace literature branching forth from Mitrany's functionalism has offered the kind of promise that the Middle East peace process was looking for and fed off (though arguably with little direct peacebuilding benefit).

Specifically, Deutsch (1954; 1957) argued that cross-border cooperation could enable the development of security communities. Deutsch understood such communities to be comprised of integrated people, populations, states or other collectivities, ceasing to imagine engaging in war and other forms of political violence against one another. Integration, he understood as (Deutsch, 1957: 5 in Nathan, 2006: 275-276):

the attainment, within a territory, of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population.

Further, given the challenges and frequent instabilities inevitable to political change, "there is a real assurance that the members of that community will not

¹⁰⁰ Today, the EU is perhaps the principal, though not only, descendent of functional (Mitrany, 1948) and later neofunctional (E. Haas, 1990) theorising. The EU has been built upon cooperative economic and resource management arrangements formulated in the early 1950s by France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries, originating in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and later the European Economic Community (EEC). Having bitterly fought on opposite sides of two world wars, these countries identified socio-economic needs (for coal and steel, for employment, for rebuilding Europe); they pursued and leveraged technological developments (in communication, in transportation, in resource extraction and management); and they elaborated a transboundary, institutionally-based, integrative practice. From socio-economic origins, the ECSC was slowly and sometimes reticently transformed into a massive, complex, integrated community. War between EU member states has become all but unimaginable.

fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way.”

(Deutsch, 1957: 5 in Nathan, 2006: 275-276) In other words, security communities emerge through a process of integration that itself creates a collective assurance of non-belligerent practice and change.

Over time, by means of communication and transactional flows around shared concerns and through an awareness of their collective historical progression, it has been argued that members of security communities develop and produce shared and overlapping identities that further consolidate their mutual concern and consideration (Adler, 2005: 215-216). In Deutsch's work, the countries comprising NATO built a powerful security community¹⁰¹. In the Middle East, one cannot speak of an Israel-Palestinian security community, or a more specific hydropolitical security community, in the same way. The perpetuation of Israeli hydrohegemony pre-empts the possibility of Palestinian hydropolitical security. Perhaps ironically, officially-sanctioned transboundary cooperation at the nexus of water and peace in the context of the MWGWR has perpetuated such an asymmetric and violent relational order.

Failure (to-date) of the functionally-rooted and oriented theories, as practiced in the Middle East, stems largely from the apolitical, technically-oriented assumptions and approaches to relations and relationships between conflict

¹⁰¹ Such a community was based on a military alliance in the context of the Cold War, but also saw its members engaged in extensive complementary economic, cultural and other relations, given the global ideological conflict underway. Indeed, all fifteen 1957 NATO countries were among the original twenty signatories of the 1961 Convention for the creation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), reflecting the further consolidation of areas of mutual concern and overlap. Further, the original six signatory countries for the creation of the ECSC in 1951 all played an active role in NATO's creation. In other words, over time, cooperation in traditional and wider security matters has been shown to meaningfully contribute to the construction and production of political communities concerned with, and committed relationally to peace.

actors implicit to them. They simply do not adequately account for the highly politically-charged and asymmetric conflict environment on the ground.

Assuming the net value of this theoretical tradition, it might be said that the Middle Eastern context has been inappropriate for application of the functional theories. At the very least, functionalism presupposes the structural equality of the parties. This was perhaps the case in Europe where the theory was developed, but certainly not in the Middle East where it was being applied in the 1990s. In the Middle East, the functional theory has provided legitimating cover for the dominant, Israeli political party and oftentimes Israeli actors as well, to avoid engaging with issues of equity, equality, partnership and sustainability, all the while *doing* cooperation. In so doing, the theory and its widespread application have enabled the perpetuation of the relationally asymmetric and violent order of Israeli hydrohegemony.

Analysis of Officially-Sanctioned Practice

The MWGWR was perhaps the earliest, key pivotal factor in initiating, supporting and propelling the transboundary community of Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners in the 1990s. In the first years, these practitioners were largely embedded in the formal structures and objectives of peace negotiations. Such proximity has produced ideas and practices that are intimately tied to, aligned with, and constitutive of Israel's hydrohegemony. Indeed, the activities and practices of the MWGWR have been pivotal in constructing, implementing, (re-) producing and perpetuating this dominant discursive framework of water cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians.

The current section discusses these practices and ideations in terms of the key theoretical tenets of water/peace relationship and power used in this study, namely: equality, partnership, equity, and shared sustainability. This discussion also engages with the key elements of Israel's narrative of hegemonic necessity, identifying where and how the discursive practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners specifically construct and uphold it.

Equality

With the Madrid/Oslo peace process, as conflict parties, Israel and the Palestinians were not equal from the outset, as explained in the previous chapter and above. Stemming in part from this, Israeli and Palestinian water practitioners were in no way equal, and more importantly perhaps, nor were the discursive practices they pursued. At the outset, the Palestinians saw in this MWGWR of the peace process a location for political progress. Thus, they

privileged a political approach to water cooperation as well as resource management and development issues. This was perceived as another front through which to pursue equality between Israel and an eventual Palestinian state in terms of (hydropolitical) power.

In line with the dominant Israeli perspective, Israeli water/peace practitioners pursued a predominantly technical approach to water resources cooperation, management and development within the context of the MWGWR. They attempted to maintain a scientific approach to discussions over water resources, while privileging inter-personal relationship-building with Palestinian participants to the extent that they were permitted on security and other grounds.

The Palestinians gained only limited success in bringing their discursive preferences onto the table through this process, shifting the conflict asymmetry somewhat at best. Perhaps most significant of all, in the 1993 Declaration of Principles, Israel recognised the principle that Palestinians had rights to water of the Mountain Aquifer. This principle would then translate into something akin to actual (though limited) rights over specific water resources, as follows. In 1995, with the Interim Agreement and then in 1996, with the institutionalisation of the PWA, water from the Eastern Mountain Aquifer was placed under Palestinian jurisdiction pending final status talks. These agreements were pivotal to moving the peace process forward. Israeli water/peace practitioners played a significant role in validating the hydropolitical discourse of the

Palestinians, resituating and transforming the radical asymmetry between Israel and the Palestinians.

Careful not to overstate the case, the relatively modest and highly strategic Israeli concession on Palestinian water rights to the Eastern Mountain Aquifer made it possible for Israel to continue pursuing a technically-oriented, discourse of water production from 1996 onwards. For Israel, this was a narrow sacrifice for larger 'political' gain. Increasingly, the Israeli government let it be known that it was disinclined to discuss the matter of Palestinian water rights further, as these had been satisfied with the Interim Agreement. As per the narrative of necessity, both a national Israeli hydropolitical imperative and a strategic integration of water resources management and development was enabled through this concession. Eastern Mountain Aquifer water would be recognised as Palestinian, but even that would be subject to the JWC's asymmetrically shared institutional power.

Recognition of Palestinian water rights to the Eastern aquifer would also feed into Israel's narrative of benevolence in its treatment of Palestinians, since the latter in fact saw their (albeit limited) water rights recognised. Beyond that, Israeli water/peace practitioners became key producers of the Israeli trope that the Palestinians had to stop blaming Israel for its woes and begin actively doing the best it could with the gains secured and agreed to (Personal interview, IF2 2010; Personal interview, IX3 2010; Personal interview, IG6 2010; Personal interview, IW1 2010). Equality is indeed nowhere to be found in this discursive equation.

Partnership

One central approach to peacebuilding entails the building of partnerships among conflict actors intentionally engaged in transforming relations, through critical, resistant, desistant and/or alternative practice. Looking to the MWGWR, and to Israeli water/peace practitioners in particular, it cannot be said that such partnerships were developed during the early years of officially-sanctioned relations. Water/peace relations were deeply embedded in the Oslo process, such that very little critical reflexivity would inform such practice early on. Israeli water/peace practices of so-called partnership were fundamentally constitutive of Israel's hydrohegemony.

At first, this hydrohegemony was veiled, given that it was pursued in the form of a transboundary agenda. Such an agenda, and its concomitant framings and practices, was and remains important to the Palestinians who frequently argue that an Israeli unilateralism is to everyone's detriment (e.g. Personal interview, PW8 2010). A transboundary approach to water resources management and development is perceived to be essential given the transboundary hydrology of the Mountain Aquifer and the Jordan River, both highly contested bodies of water between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, the transboundary agenda and the practices of partnership pursued by Israeli water/peace practitioners proved violent by the terms of the current study.

Through the MWGWR, partnership was primarily done through the elaboration of techno-political frameworks for water resources governance, developed by Israeli and Palestinian water resources experts. It was believed that over time,

these frameworks would evolve to integrate the two societies, in the water and possibly, eventually other sectors. Communitarian expert relations would be reproduced elsewhere, spilling over into other domains of society and then at large (Personal interview, IX4 2010). It was also believed that the early technical orientation would shift meaningfully, translating into political gains.

In practice, Israeli water/peace practitioners participated in undermining such ideal partnership practice under the rubric of protecting national security. The Water Databanks Project failed largely and specifically because Israeli practitioners hoarded and shared information selectively, at the behest of and in collusion with the Israeli government. This resulted in their so-called partnerships being useless and fruitless, given that both the Palestinians and Israelis separately went on to build their own partial water resources databases. The practice of partnership-building remained infused with an Israeli unwillingness to trust in their Palestinian colleagues, reflecting Israel's narrative of distrust towards the Palestinians.

At another level, there was no real discursive diversity among Israeli water/peace practitioners involved in the MWGWR and informing the future of transboundary water management and development in the region. Partnership remained possible in the specific areas and so long as Israeli and Palestinian practitioners were aligned with Israel's priorities. Israelis and Palestinians engaged in technical research together, notably in areas of seawater desalination through MEDRC. They built shared information provision institutions through WaterNet. They jointly created education materials on water

issues in the Middle East. Throughout, Israel's technical discourse was unequivocally maintained and perpetuated by Israeli water/peace practitioners. In this way, the longstanding Israeli narrative of Jewish victimisation remained unblemished by Palestinian claims and related political matters, because Palestinian conflict knowledge was banished from the process and its many productions.

Equity

Political processes and agreements between conflict parties are known to be fragile where the perception of equity is low on fundamental matters between them. Conversely, the practice and promotion of material and perceptual equity are essential for political processes and agreements to have traction, meaning and lasting potential effects. Looking to the Middle East, Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in the MWGWR were reticent to raise and address matters of equity. As such, they were perpetuating Israel's hydrohegemonic relations with the Palestinians, as well as several components of its narrative of necessity.

Despite constant Palestinian urging, Israeli water practitioners were unwilling to pursue a discourse of Israeli responsibility for the inequities in water governance between Israel and the Palestinians. They were also unwilling to accept the Palestinian claim that Israel should compensate the Palestinians in both water and infrastructure for any water-related wrongs committed against the Palestinians. The following passage from a longstanding Israeli water/peace practitioner is telling (Personal interview, IX3 2010):

The Palestinians do not have money. And they claim that we pumped all the water from the Mountain Aquifer. So now we have to give them back the Mountain Aquifer, and 'don't ask us to pay the high price of desalinated water'?! That is what the Palestinians say. Everybody can say a lot. I have my story. I gave a lot of work to build the NWC, a lot of money, a lot of life ... in the 1960s, to dig... in the Mountain Aquifer. It is very costly and we did it. But now... we have to stick together and to start again?! Are we going to... be blamed? [We] should give it back?...

This practitioner continues:

I was born in Israel. We are a family that is growing. And this is the only home that we can build in our region. Israel will survive anyhow. But I think that if we [Israelis and Palestinians] want to succeed, the only way to look for success is to be together and not one against the other. To destroy things, is very easy. To build something, it is very difficult. And it takes years.

Israeli water/peace practitioners pursued a forward-oriented discursive practice focused on two priorities. The first was to increase the overall quantity of water available to Israeli and Palestinian populations, based on a human needs based and technically-oriented model of seawater desalination. The second was to promote efficiencies in waters already being used, promoting the recycling and reuse of wastewaters. It should be noted that the 1996 agreement on cooperation explicitly stated that existing uses of water would be unaffected by this agreement.

In other words, the Core Parties agreed to develop water regionally and cooperatively, while not reconsidering the past and its inequities. In these different ways, the fundamental principle of equity was largely abandoned by Israeli water/peace practitioners. This is akin to 'taking politics out of water' and privileging once again the dominant Israeli national discourse of water

governance. In pursuing a discourse that has sought to take politics out of water (itself a reformulation of the current Israeli discourse of 'taking water out of the conflict'), Israeli water/peace practitioners were largely practicing and performing Israeli hydrohegemony. Israel's continued willingness, even desire to provide the Palestinians with desalinated seawater also further informs its narrative of benevolence and hegemonic necessity towards the Palestinians.

Shared Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development emerged with the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report *Our Common Future*, building on extensive work undertaken by the Club of Rome, the North-South Commission and numerous other organisations, communities, theorists and practitioners in diverse sectors and around the world. It was further brought to the fore with the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was during this time that the Israel-Palestinian peace process was just getting underway and the activities of the MWGWR were being launched and pursued.

As the international community endeavoured to make sense of, and articulate commitments to sustainable development, the concept was also starting to be used to analyse and critically shift North-South relations the world over, including relations between Israel and the Palestinians. In this way, sustainable development and sustainability more specifically would become and remain core concepts through which to assess and shift inter-group relations as they relate to the environment and to the construction of political subjectivities

(Escobar, 1998; Escobar, 1995). While it is beyond the scope of the current study to engage in detailed theoretical discussion and development on matters of sustainable development and sustainability, a few words are warranted on the construction of sustainable subjecthood, with specific reference to the Israel-Palestinian conflict¹⁰².

The Foucauldian *subject* may be understood as the product of a relational order, and the agent of both its discursive perpetuation and transformation. In the context of this study, the *sustainable* subject is defined only partially by its particular practices of water. It is also constituted through its relational practices with the other on matters, and at the nexus of water, sustainability and peace. Thus and throughout the MWGWR and wider Oslo process, Israel and Israelis have been subjectively defined as sustainable subjects while the Palestinians have been constructed as unsustainable subjects. Indeed, this has become a fundamental narrative element for Israel, legitimating the perpetuation of its hydrohegemonic dominance as well as its sovereign, disciplinary and biopolitical interventions among Palestinians. Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in MWGWR process have discursively participated in the construction and perpetuation of such differentiated subjecthood, as well as in the projection and implementation of sanctioned remedies.

In basic terms, the whole MWGWR process sidesteps the issues of Israeli responsibility for the deterioration of shared water resources. Nowhere in all MWGWR literature is it found that Israel bears primary responsibility for

¹⁰² For insightful discussion of sustainable development and sustainability, see Kates et al., 2005; Princen, 2003.

damaging the integrity and replenishability of the Mountain Aquifer, for turning the Jordan River into a sewage canal, for deteriorating the Dead Sea. The WaterCare materials are a case in point. They are profoundly short on critique and analysis, but long on technical and cooperative solutions, with no specific allocation of Israeli responsibility. Israel is simply not an unsustainable subject in the cooperative sphere.

This is contrasted to Israel's internal, national sphere, as seen through the Israeli State Comptroller's 1990 Special Report on water resources, which scathingly depicts Israeli over-exploitation and mismanagement of West Bank water from the 1970s through to 1990 (Sosland, 2007: 153). Such Israeli unsustainability was largely left out of the MWGWR process and concomitant activities, despite legitimate Palestinian concerns and efforts to have them recognised and visibly addressed. Israeli water/peace practitioners were complicit participants in the construction of sustainable Israeli subjecthood, while also promoting the environmentally dubious practice of seawater desalination as the future of Palestinian and regional water supply.

Sustainable subjecthood is intimately bundled with peaceful subjecthood in the Middle Eastern context, stemming back to the Oslo peace process and the MWGWR. It might simply have been an accident of history that the UNCED and Madrid/Oslo processes were pursued meaningfully at the same time. Yet, even such an accident has had repercussions on the discursive production of Palestinian subjecthood and aspiration, as and through the interventions

enabled by the MWGWR process and the more specific discursive practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners.

Whether in terms of promoting seawater desalination, wastewater reuse and recycling, or ideal and sustainable institutional forms, Israeli water/peace practitioners have been involved intimately and cooperatively with Palestinians in their research, reflections and decisions. For example, as some of the world leaders on agriculture in arid environments, Israeli water/peace practitioners actively shared their experience of wastewater reuse and recycling with the technologically-deficient Palestinians through MWGWR processes. In another example, Israelis supported the Palestinians in adopting Israeli-style national institutions and laws for water governance. The MWGWR produced a basic Palestinian Water Law (1995) and a PWA (1996) that very closely resemble Israel's Water Law (1959) and the Israeli Water Commission (that would become the IWA). In both cases, water was nationalised, and its management was institutionally centralised. In the case of the PWA, this became threatening to the diversity of localised water management practices still maintained by many Palestinian families and clans throughout the West Bank (Trottier, 2007; Trottier, 1999).

In both of these (and in other) cases, Israeli water/peace practitioners actively endeavoured to work with Palestinians in an effort to support the latter's 'sustainability' and peacefulness through MWGWR processes and activities. On their own and decontextualised, these efforts are perhaps laudable as experience-sharing between people and communities in society, even solidarity

with one another. From another vantage point, as adopted herein, these amount to discursive practices of Israelis endeavouring to produce Palestine to resemble Israel, through the production of Palestinians that resemble Israelis, i.e. as peacefully and environmentally sustainable subjects (Personal interview, IF2 2010). The environment, and sustainability more specifically, have thus become and to this day remain technologies for constructing, managing and transforming the threatening Palestinian subject.

Concluding Thoughts

In the first decade of transboundary water/peace practice with respect to *officially-sanctioned* processes, it is nearly impossible to disaggregate the hydropolitical discourse of Israeli water/peace practitioners from that of the Israeli state. The vast majority of relational water/peace practices of Israeli transboundary practitioners is thus located hydrohegemonically. The activities and practices underway are situated within a dominant peacemaking process. The stated intention is for the production of relational peace between Israel and the Palestinians. However, the discourse being pursued by Israel and Israelis perpetuates asymmetric relations between the parties. Israeli transboundary water/peace practice in the context of the MWGWR cannot, in any way, be termed hydropolitical peacebuilding as framed in this study.

As made clear in this and the two prior chapters, the Israeli and Palestinian parties are in no way equal, nor are their discursive preferences equally and equitably informing officially-sanctioned water/peace processes. It cannot be said that a partnership among equals was pursued through water/peace practice, nor that equity was woven into the fabric of Madrid/Oslo peace processes and outcomes. Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in officially-sanctioned processes were operating within hydrohegemonic constraints that prevented them from working with Palestinians to promote water-related equity. The most that can reasonably be said is that these practitioners contributed to the Israeli state's recognition of Palestinian water rights over the Eastern Mountain Aquifer. This is water that both replenishes and is withdrawn inside the West Bank, and has thus come to be recognised by all involved as

Palestinian water; water over which Israel has nonetheless maintained its integrated involvement through the JWC.

The state of Israel has considered itself a leader in water-related sustainability, while depicting the Palestinians as environmentally unsustainable. The Madrid/Oslo peace process has created seeming partnership processes between Israelis and Palestinians largely intent on producing Palestinian sustainability, though not quite for practicing shared sustainability. This has largely been in the realm of wastewater recycling and reuse, and in terms of technical experience-sharing for increasing the productivity of available water resources. Any recognition of Israel's disproportionate responsibility for causing the deterioration of the Mountain Aquifer was neither articulated nor addressed, failing to create asymmetric obligations on Israel for remedying the situation.

Further, Israel pushed for promoting (unsustainable and energy consumptive) desalination as a solution to water stress and human needs in the region, with Israeli water/peace practitioners providing technical advice for making this possible. In these and other ways, Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners were constitutive of the Israeli state's hydrohegemonic relational prerogative with respect to the Palestinians. In this narrative, the Palestinian subject was targeted for sustainability as a component of peacemaking. All the while, Israeli practices were largely unproblematised, thereby also perpetuating Israeli and Palestinian inequality.

By the end of the Madrid/Oslo process, with the start of the second Palestinian Intifada, the official track of water cooperation largely became technically-defined. Israel and the Palestinians have since dealt with water-related permit granting processes within the context of specific and strictly adhered-to agreements (Personal interview, IW1 2010). These largely inequitable agreements continue to define official hydropolitical relations between Israel and the Palestinians. The Madrid/Oslo process, both formally and with respect to officially-sanctioned processes of Israeli water/peace practitioners, has constructed and discursively produced an Israeli hydrohegemony that is perpetuated today. Such Israeli hydrohegemony is denounced by much of the international community, including the World Bank (2009) and Amnesty International (2009a). It is the focus of diverse academic and popular critique (Zeitoun, 2009; Kramer, 2008; Frederiksen, 2007; El-Hindi, 2000; Elmusa, 1997). Israel has rejected such critique, on the grounds that it is both motivated by an anti-Zionist intentionality (Personal interview, IW1 2010; Personal interview, IG6 2010) and also unsupported by the facts, as officially perceived by the state of Israel (Nagar, 8 June 2010; Personal interview, IW2 2010).

Thus far, this study has advanced the discursively-informed argument that Israel is a hydrohegemonic state in its relations with the Palestinians. It also maintains that Israel's hydrohegemony has been constructed, (re-) produced, circulated and narratively inscribed by Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in officially-sanctioned water-related processes of the Madrid/Oslo peace process, as seen through an examination of the MWGWR. A fundamental, related question remains to be explored within this study. Are Israeli *academic*

and civil society practitioners, specifically those engaged in transboundary practices of water/peace with Palestinians, also discursively contained by and constitutive of Israel's hydrohegemony? The next chapter focuses on answering this very question.

CHAPTER 6:

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF ISRAELI TRANSBOUNDARY WATER/PEACE

PRACTITIONERS – FOCUS ON ACADEMIC AND CIVIL SOCIETY

PROCESSES

Introduction

The argument crafted in this study thus far has been that Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in officially-sanctioned processes of the Madrid/Oslo period have practiced, (re-) produced and perpetuated the dominant hydrohegemonic discourse of the Israeli state. Noting discursive variants and degrees, there has been no compelling evidence, as yet, of hydropolitical peacebuilding among these practitioners, as defined by the terms of this study.

The current chapter extends the study, intent on further informing the analysis of hydropolitics and peacebuilding in the Middle East. It identifies, examines and analyses the practice of Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in *academic and civil society* processes, drawing on the methodology of interpretive practice (Holstein and Gubrium, 2005). It critically narrates the history of such processes from the early 1990s onwards. It provides thick description of one seminal initiative, the Joint Management of Shared Aquifers project, contrasting it to selected practices of the region's three transboundary water/peace-oriented organisations and their affiliated Israeli practitioners. It also pursues a discursive analysis of their practices and ideations in terms of hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues.

This chapter is similarly theoretically anchored as the previous one. It assumes that Israeli water/peace practitioners are not cultural dopes (Garfinkel, 1967 in Holstein and Gubrium, 2005: 486). It is rooted in the belief that such practitioners cannot be assumed to merely blindly engage in the (re-) production of systems of power. These practitioners are held to be aware, reflective and even intentional actors in the socio-political milieu that is the Israel-Palestinian conflict. It is of course possible that Israeli academic and civil society water/peace practitioners are engaged in hydrohegemonic practice, or with hydrohegemonic residues. In making visible their discursive practices, this study also recognises the possibility that some may be building peace through water-related practice.

Analysis is informed by the four key concepts of hydropolitical relation and relationship of this overall study: equality, partnership, equity, and shared sustainability. This study is further informed by the elements comprising Israel's justificatory narrative. Finally, materials informing this chapter emanate from the academic and professional literature, from extended observation in the field over many years, and through interviewing with Israeli (and also Palestinian) water/peace practitioners in June, July and October 2010.

The current chapter is of particular importance to this research project, which was itself motivated by a desire to ascertain the peacebuilding significance of Israeli, transboundary water/peace practices. Thus far, analysis supports the circumscribed argument that Israeli, officially-sanctioned water/peace practices are hydrohegemonically-oriented and inscribed. Before concluding, one

analytical piece remains to be undertaken in this study. Thus, the current chapter leverages the theoretical framework of hydropolitical peacebuilding to assess the discursive practices of Israeli, academic and civil society water/peace practitioners in the region.

Academic and Civil Society Processes

The Madrid/Oslo peace processes ushered in an era of extensive Israeli-Palestinian activity on transboundary water management and peace-related matters. The previous chapter analysed the formal and officially-sanctioned water/peace processes of the MWGWR. The current one introduces and examines academic and civil society endeavours launched and pursued on their heels. Initiating such efforts was the First Israeli-Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water held in Zurich, Switzerland from 10-13 December 1992. In the twenty-year period since then, academic and civil society efforts have multiplied, numbering in the hundreds.

Most individual water/peace practitioners in the region, and also those based internationally but with a commitment to Middle East peace, have participated in at least a handful of these initiatives during this period. Participation has included practices of shared leadership, joint research and publishing, strategic advising and advocacy, multilateral and multi-sectoral relationship-building and the like. Such transboundary and relational practices have fundamentally constituted the Israeli and Palestinian transboundary community of water/peace practitioners identified and discussed in the previous chapter. Also, some of the practitioners engaged in officially-sanctioned processes have pursued academic and civil society practices.

Transboundary water/peace practice and community development has fundamentally been enabled by the international community's political and financial support (Personal interview, IE3 2010; Personal interview, PW8 2010).

Leading donors have included the EU, NATO, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Organisation (CIDA), the Swedish International Development Organisation (SIDA), the British government's Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and a host of others. Donor organisations are generally listed throughout this chapter in relation to the programmes and projects they support.

With hundreds of academic and civil society water/peace activities and processes constituting the transboundary domain, it is impossible to list and say something meaningful about them all¹⁰³. Rather than attempt to do so, the approach pursued herein has been intentionally selective. To begin with, the Joint Management of Shared Aquifers initiative, one of the earliest

¹⁰³ The following is a partial list of relevant initiatives:

- Institutional Frameworks for the Management of Transboundary Water Resources (Kliot and Shmueli, 1998)
- Middle East Environment Futures Project (MEEF) (Schoenfeld, 2005)
- A Future for the Dead Sea: Options for a More Sustainable Management (McCulloch, 2007)
- Sustainable Management of Available Water Resources with Innovative Technologies (SMART) (SMART Website; Kramer, 2008)
- Peres Center for Peace: Culture of Water (COW Website) and Water for Peace in the Middle East Research Project (Water for Peace Website; Kramer, 2008)
- Environmental Management and Planning as a Tool for Promoting Sustainable Coexistence Between Israelis and Palestinians
- Optimisation for Sustainable Water Management (OPTIMA) (Kramer, 2008)
- University of Oklahoma: Middle East Water Working Groups (Hambright et al., 2006; Ginat and Chumchal, 2006)
- Red Sea Dead Sea Conveyance Project (RSDSC) (Abitbol, 2009; Abitbol and Schoenfeld, 2009; Abitbol and Schoenfeld, February 2009; Lipchin et al., 2007; Abitbol, 2006; Lipchin, 2006; World Bank, 2005; Becker et al., 2004; Asmar, 2003; Bromberg et al., 2000; Katz et al., 1998)
- GLOWA Jordan River Basin Project
- Kidron Valley/Wadi Nar International Master Plan Project
- Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector (EMWIS Website)
- Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA Assessment, 2006)

Limitations of space prevent discussion of most of these initiatives, however valuable and insightful they may be to the current study.

transboundary academic and civil society projects, is examined. It reveals some of the discursive strengths and limitations of academic and civil society processes operating in affinity with, and in proximity to the dominant peace process. Subsequently, a detailed discursive analysis is undertaken of Israeli water/peace practices engaged in each of the region's following three transboundary organisations:

- Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI)
- Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)
- Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME)

Each of the organisations, projects and practices discussed in this chapter offers an insightful perspective into the discursive environment of water/peace as practiced by Israeli practitioners. This study allows for an appreciation of relationships on the ground between Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners, contextualised and assessed against a wider conflict relation of hydrohegemony.

Joint Management of Shared Aquifers

From the early-mid 1990s until the end of the decade, Israeli Professor Eran Feitelson and Palestinian Professor Marwan Haddad undertook a project to investigate the possibility and contours of a joint Israeli-Palestinian management of shared aquifers. They premised their research on the need to develop principles, frameworks and insights particular to the management of *groundwater*. Most of the work on transboundary water resources had until then focused on *surface water*. They believed there were particularities to

groundwater that needed specific attention in the context of Israel-Palestinian relations.

Much of the contested water between Israel and the Palestinians is found in the Mountain Aquifer, an underground and transboundary water resource. It was therefore critical to the peace process that greater clarity be brought to the recharge, discharge and flow of such groundwaters. In an effort to do so, and in the wake of the 1992 water conference, Feitelson and Haddad conducted joint research, organised workshops and experience-sharing opportunities, and jointly published their conclusions in academic and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) literature. Their cooperative work made an important contribution to the MWGWR as well.

Studying the Joint Management of Shared Aquifers project as a point of departure to this chapter is valuable on multiple fronts, not least because it reflects some of the leading political shortcomings of well-intentioned projects and practitioners, as examined through the lens of hydropolitical peacebuilding. This despite the continued praise that Feitelson and Haddad have received for their cooperative work (Tal and Rabbo, 2010; Abitbol and Schoenfeld, 2009; Schoenfeld et al., 2007; Feitelson and Haddad, 1998; Kliot and Shmueli, 1998).

Managed by the Israeli Professor Feitelson and the Palestinian Professor Haddad, the project was structured as a Palestinian-Israeli research team.

Members of the research team included Shaul Arlosoroff¹⁰⁴, Taher Nassereddin¹⁰⁵ and Ali Wihaidi¹⁰⁶. The project was conducted under the auspices of the Palestine Consultancy Group and the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Essentially, team members practiced an Israeli-Palestinian research partnership and sought to promote a hydropolitical partnership between Israel and the Palestinians¹⁰⁷.

Through the Joint Management project, Feitelson and Haddad's research team argued that West Bank groundwater needed to be managed jointly, cooperatively and in a coordinated manner by Israel and the Palestinians (Feitelson and Haddad, 1995). This was premised on the hydrological fact that the groundwater system of Israel and the Palestinians was a single functioning unit that constantly traversed the Green Line. It was believed that doing so would effectively ensure the protection of transboundary water resources, limit and contain crises if and when they occurred, and promote an efficient use of water resources among Israelis and Palestinians. Building a management system atop a hydrological reality would thereby construct and produce a hydropolitical nexus of technique and politics in the service of Israel-Palestinian peace.

¹⁰⁴ Formerly Deputy Water Commissioner of Israel and head of a committee responsible for examining Israel's national water policies.

¹⁰⁵ Director of the West Bank Water Department (WBWD).

¹⁰⁶ Director of the Gaza Water Department.

¹⁰⁷ Project funding was forthcoming from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada and the Charles R. Bronfman (CRB) Foundation. Supplemental funding in support of the initiative was provided through the Dialogue Fund of the Government of Canada and the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.

The proposals put forward by Feitelson and Haddad argued the merits of what they called a stepwise, flexible-sequential approach (Feitelson and Haddad, 1998: 232). Essentially, they proposed building a joint, flexible and integrative water management system in stages, moving from technical to political orientations through time. Strategically-minded, such an approach would ensure that relatively straightforward monitoring and other technical practices of cooperation could provide the basis for high level, complex and sensitive integration of water resources governance.

In conflict environments, threats to continued transboundary cooperation are generally recognised to be real. Attempting to account for this, the Joint Management initiative proposed a 'technical' approach as a point of departure. Project team members believed doing so would provide a buffer to political tension and conflict escalation (Feitelson and Haddad, 1998: 235). These transboundary water/peace practitioners perceived themselves to play an active role in cooperatively resisting regional tensions and political obstacles to Israeli-Palestinian joint activities. They did this by being engaged over time in multi-sectoral and multi-level contacts across borders, pursuing and practicing the shared values of transboundary cooperation (Feitelson and Haddad, 1998: 235). Their work is thus situated in the functionalist (P. Haas, 1992; P. Haas, 1990; Mitrany, 1943) and neo-functionalist traditions (E. Haas, 1990).

Side-Stepping Equity

The Joint Management initiative focused on the centrality of building a partnership between Israelis and Palestinians to ensure an ostensibly

sustainable management of the shared Mountain Aquifer. In so doing, this project specifically and intentionally recognised the importance of equity; and then intentionally side-stepped it in practice. Feitelson and Haddad argued that equity was very difficult to define, let alone programmatise and operationalise. Thus, they concluded that equity could and should be tackled in another context, by other people, at a later time (Feitelson and Haddad, 1998: 230). They chose to give preference to a rather narrow framing of sustainability that did not immediately address fundamental concerns of equity¹⁰⁸. In so doing, they downplayed the centrality of social and even economic dimensions of sustainability in favour of narrowly environmental ones.

Failure to actively engage with the concept and concerns of equity, being one of the fundamental pillars of hydropolitical peacebuilding, reflects a potent and destructive hydrohegemonic residue in the practice of these Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners. It particularly privileges a technical approach to the transboundary management of the Mountain Aquifer, as discursively preferred by Israel, at the expense of the predominantly Palestinian hydropolitical discourse seeking political change through relational engagement. While it can be understood that privileging a technical approach might be framed as a buffer to the uncertain politics in the region, doing so does not engage with the difficult issue of equitable water management in a real and timely way.

¹⁰⁸ On equity and sustainability, see the framework of Prugh and Assadourian, 2003, who argue that 'sustainability' is comprised of a) human survival, b) biodiversity, c) equity, and d) life quality, where the latter build on the former.

The concept of equity has been central to the discourse of water management for more than fifty years. *Equitable and reasonable utilisation* principles are contained in the 1966 Helsinki Rules on the Uses of Water on International Rivers, the 1997 UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Use of International Watercourses and then in the 2004 Berlin Rules. In the contemporary Middle Eastern context, the Joint Management project is one among many initiative to have side-stepped such equitable concerns. Such failure to engage with issues of relational equity between Israel and the Palestinians into the latter-1990s is appreciable as one of the discursive causes for the demise of the Madrid/Oslo process. As part of a wider relational order of Israeli-dominated hegemony, the failure to incorporate mutually-acceptable notions of equity into hydropolitical practice may also be appreciated as a contributing factor to the second Palestinian Intifada.

This important cooperative endeavour provides a cautionary tale. It tells of the well-intentioned efforts of several Israeli and Palestinian practitioners and organisations, intent on contributing to the dominant peace process and a more generalised peaceful outcome for Israelis and Palestinians. Its telling reveals how such a joint initiative could (re-) produce and perpetuate highly contested dominant relational formations. In this case, technical practice was prioritised over political practice. In so doing, equity was side-stepped as a priority and practice of the Israeli-Palestinian partnership.

In these (and perhaps other) ways, the Joint Management initiative (re-) produced a dominant Israeli discourse of hydrohegemony, thereby perpetuating

the asymmetric Israel-Palestinian conflict hydro-politically. Indeed, academic and civil society practices have been shown to also contain the possibility of (re-) producing and perpetuating violent relational formations. Bearing such insight in mind, the next few passages introduce three of the region's transboundary organisations engaged in practices at the nexus of water and peace. Subsequently, analysis will be undertaken of the discursive practices of their Israeli, transboundary water/peace practitioners.

Transboundary Civil Society Organisations

There are three leading, independent regional organisations engaged in creating opportunities and structuring transboundary water/peace practice among Israeli and Palestinian academic and civil society practitioners in the Middle East. They are IPCRI, the AIES and FOEME. While their efforts differ in notable respects, together they have supported and produced discursive practices that have galvanised the water/peace engagement of many thousands of people in the Middle East, regionally, and internationally¹⁰⁹.

These are not the only civil society organisations actively intervening in the transboundary water/peace domain and building the community of water/peace practitioners. Other organisations whose members were interviewed and whose activities were examined in the context of this study include the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG), the House of Water and Environment (HWE), the Center for Environmental Diplomacy (CED) and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. A number of other organisations that support and/or engage in

¹⁰⁹ For FOEME in particular, this work is overtly framed as a practice of *environmental peacebuilding*. See Harari and Roseman, 2008 on the work of FOEME and others.

transboundary hydropolitical practices include the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ, in the West Bank) and EcoConsult (in Jordan).

It would be impossible to say something about all of these organisations, hence the focus on IPCRI, the AIES and FOEME. These organisations have a clear mandate to cultivate and pursue transboundary water/peace practice.

Leadership within these organisations is to varying degrees transboundary. All pursue activities that bring together Israelis, Palestinians, as well as Jordanians and internationals. The following three sections of this study describe each of the three organisations and then analyse some of their practitioner water/peace practices, all within the larger framework of hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues. Subsequently, a comparative analysis of the hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues of these practitioners is undertaken.

Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI)

Perhaps the earliest of the transboundary organisations to emerge in the Israel-Palestinian conflict milieu, IPCRI has played a leading role in enabling transboundary water cooperation efforts in support of regional peacebuilding and peacemaking. Since 1988, they have done this through project development, publishing, conference hosting, network development, advocacy and international relationship-building and fundraising with donors (See Brauch, 2007: 128-130).

IPCRI is referred to as a transboundary organisation for two principal reasons. Its management structure is such that there are two co-directors, one Israeli and one Palestinian. During the period covered by the current research project, their co-directors were the Israeli Gershon Baskin and the Palestinian Hanna Siniora¹¹⁰. Both are outspoken supporters of a two-state solution premised on, and enabling extensive relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Working towards this objective, they and their staff have advocated in favour of a transboundary framing of conceptual and practical solutions to the final status issues, including water governance.

IPCRI's staff has always been skeletal but politically engaged. Organisational practice has been to generate important opportunities for Israeli, Palestinian, even Jordanian and international conflict actors and practitioners to work together and engage with one another on key issues in discursively-laden environments. The intent has been to meaningfully tackle difficult matters with

¹¹⁰ In 2012, Dan Goldenblatt replaced Gershon Baskin as the Israeli Director of IPCRI.

political relevance, whether on the environment or otherwise. The organisation's strengths and limitations reside in the fact of it being an enabling and lobbying organisation, building transboundary community, sustaining cooperative academic and civil society momentum, while advocating selectively for relational transformation. It is also an organisation that has demonstrated its sometimes controversial willingness to encourage conflict parties and actors to make strategic and pragmatic compromises together in the interest of peacebuilding and peacemaking.

The following discussion focuses primarily on IPCRI's environmentally-focused and water/peace-related programming and practices, under the headings of *public dialogue* and *political lobbying*. In so doing, it specifically privileges IPCRI's Israeli water/peace practitioner discourse for analysis.

Public Dialogue

The public dialogue component of IPCRI's work primarily involves enabling public, cooperative, peace-related processes. Such activities include conference hosting, environmental mediation, process facilitation and the like. Such processes have specifically been designed and facilitated to expose Israeli water/peace practitioners to Palestinian experiences and political interests. They also seek to promote relationship-building between similarly-intentioned Palestinians and Israelis, with a long view of history and peacebuilding. Their efforts are underpinned by the idea that resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict will likely be based on techno-political problem-

solving, rooted in creative compromise, at the nexus of technical and political discourses favoured by Israel and the Palestinians respectively.

In two significant hydropolitical public dialogue efforts, IPCRI hosted first the 1994, Our Shared Environment conference and then the October 2004, 2nd Israeli-Palestinian-International water and peace conference entitled, Water for Life in the Middle East. Out of the 1994 conference, a Middle Eastern Environment Caucus emerged, composed of Israelis, Jordanians, Palestinians and internationals. The Caucus has since sought to build initiatives and develop solutions on a wide range of ecopolitical and hydropolitical issues¹¹¹.

The second of these key events, the 2004 Water for Life in the Middle East Conference hosted by IPCRI in Antalya, Turkey gathered some 120 water/peace practitioners from the Middle East and internationally over five days¹¹². The broad goal of the conference was defined as (Shuval and Dweik, 2006: 7):

the promotion of fruitful dialog (sic), exchange of ideas, the development of mutual understanding and the desire to prepare the ground work (sic) for a better appreciation of shared problems and the development of approaches to resolving the water problems in the region.

¹¹¹ These include: Environmental technologies for cooperative sustainable development; Water supply, distribution and quality; Solid waste management (in particular the problem posed by the disposal of hazardous waste); Private sector's role in preserving the environment; Energy issues; Air pollution; Developments in recycling; Preservation of open space; Long term future of biodiversity; Confronting desertification; Climate change and drought; The future of the Dead Sea and the proposed Red Sea/Dead Sea Conduit; and Coastal management.

¹¹² This conference was sponsored and/or funded by several international organisations. These included USAID, UNESCO, the British Government, the International Water Resources Association (IWRA), the Heinrich Boell Foundation (Tel Aviv/Ramallah), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The conference remains a key moment in the development of the transboundary water domain and water/peace community, notably as it took place during the escalated conflict period of the second Palestinian Intifada. Of note, many of the participants in the current doctoral research project participated in this conference and related follow-up activities. The practices pursued by IPCRI at this conference were on the whole balanced between facilitating transboundary cooperation, techno-political experience-sharing and catalysing political engagement. Since 2004, IPCRI has continued to host dialogically-based events, pursuing projects on environment and more specifically water/peace issues.

Design and Facilitation

A fundamental point of departure to IPCRI's public dialogue (and other) work is an acknowledgement of the asymmetric Israel-Palestinian conflictual relation. Thus, in designing and implementing its public dialogue processes, IPCRI's practitioners have actively sought to counter-balance the asymmetric relationship shared by Israelis and Palestinians *in situ*. Israeli practitioner engagement through IPCRI is discursively situated to promote and practice the relational equality of Israelis and Palestinians.

In terms of dialogue process design, the hosting location of events is a means of enabling and practicing Israeli-Palestinian equality and partnership. In 1994, IPCRI deemed it important to host the Our Shared Environment conference in Jerusalem. This was a practice of recognising the legitimacy and equality of Palestinian concerns over the future of Jerusalem as constitutive of both

Palestine and Israel, after decades of being ignored, vilified and marginalised by Israel and Israelis. Alternatively, IPCRI hosted its 2004 conference ex-territorially in Antalya, Turkey in an effort to favour open, critical and creative discursive practice among participants by bringing them outside the direct asymmetric conflict environment. In other words, while the occupation persists, IPCRI's approach has been to favour its containment, to the extent possible, by hosting an important relational event outside the immediate sub-region.

In terms of implementation, facilitation has been a location, an instrument and a practice for pursuing and practicing relational equality. This is explained by an Israeli IPCRI facilitator of water/peace processes (Personal interview, IX1 2010):

When I facilitated meetings... between Israelis and Palestinians, I leaned towards the Palestinians. I made sure that if they did not speak – and sometimes they did not [as] the Israelis would go on and on and they would not say anything – that they spoke, that they felt themselves to be equal. And that is very important, I think. You can mitigate, but you cannot abolish the fact that Israel is the richest and most powerful country in the region. But you can mitigate it.

These examples and practices of process design and facilitation reveal a similar intentionality as the pro-active facilitation adopted by leaders at the celebrated Israeli/Jewish and Israeli/Arab/Palestinian community of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam (NS/WAS) within Israel. Practice at NS/WAS is situated to strengthen the Palestinians individually and collectively in their encounters with Israel and Israelis (Halabi et al., 2000: 67). Shifting this relational balance also creates the space for key issues and concerns of the different conflict parties and actors to be raised, framed and addressed

meaningfully (Halabi and Sonnenschein, 2000; Nadler, 2000: 25). This is recognisable as a discursive practice of equality, partnership and equity at NS/WAS, and likewise, of hydropolitical peacebuilding in IPCRI's case.

Political Lobbying

IPCRI's political lobbying work largely involves relationship-building and targeted advocacy in multilateral, government and civil society circles. Such political lobbying is technically-informed and politically-targeted, adapted to the context in which it is pursued, also frequently engaging with the region's water and national political authorities. IPCRI does so while drawing on, and in the context of, public dialogue processes and strategies described above.

IPCRI's political and diplomatic efforts are vast. It has lobbied the Israeli government to recognise the need for, and pursue consultation with the Palestinians on *all* Israeli water development planning and use. This refers not just to that which takes place geographically within the occupied West Bank, but wherever and however the Mountain Aquifer is implicated, including Israel 'proper'. IPCRI has advocated for the JWC to be transformed such that a neutral third party (e.g. from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) would participate in the institution directly. More fundamentally, it has advocated for a restructured JWC to be involved in policy-making, which is currently not the case. On the other side of the political balance, IPCRI has encouraged the PA and PWA to implement water developments for which the Palestinians have received permits through the JWC (as well as international

funding), instead of placing all the blame for its water woes on Israel (Personal interview, IX1 2010; Personal interview, IF2 2010).

In a more civil society orientation, IPCRI's *political* presence in the context of water/peace related projects is almost always tangible. It is one of the few organisations that actively seeks to put hydropolitical issues to the fore of all water-related discussions, while also encouraging Israelis to engage constructively with such historically-informed critical perspectives. This has been the case in the context of IPCRI's involvement in the GLOWA Jordan River initiative.

Hydropolitics at GLOWA JR

Funded by the German government¹¹³, the GLOWA JR initiative (2001-2011) was built on the assumption that climate change would impact Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians, if not equally (given environmental and socio-political factors) then to a large extent concurrently. Both in the Middle East and internationally, much concern has been expressed about the possibility that climate change might contribute to heightening stress, notably in the water domain, among actors already in unstable relations. It is assumed that collective initiatives could provide scientific and socio-political insights on how best to craft effective responses to the impending uncertainty in such environments. Thus, GLOWA JR has been motivated by a desire to construct scientific knowledge on climate change that is regionally-specific, rooted in

¹¹³ Germany is a major player in Jordanian water governance.

cooperative practices among a broad range of knowledge-based water/peace practitioners (Personal interview, IX3 2010).

In practice, knowledge-based cooperation pursued through this project was primarily structured in the form of national teams, with each of the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian teams working almost entirely on their own.

Conferences of project parties (COPs), every few years on average, presented opportunities for scientists and experts from the basin to meet, share results, and informally deliberate the scientific and political implications of their efforts.

Epistemologically, GLOWA JR saw the construction of different scenarios, including one that studied the implications of climate change and how best to respond given “regional peace”. A WEAP tool, a form of dynamic, shared regional database (with transparent Israeli participation; Personal interview, IG6 2010) was used in conjunction with storying methodologies that projected the unfolding of different scenarios (Hoff et al., 2011). In more overt ‘political’ terms, the initiative refrained from intentionally advancing an agenda of building peace through scientific cooperation, though an underlying desire and hope for peace has been integrated into the work.

Anchored in technical research and scenario building, GLOWA JR did not create an intentional forum for political discussion, framing and imagining with reference to the development of joint responses to climate change and water management. Such issues were sometimes mentioned in Steering Committee meetings, but quickly shut down by the majority of participants (personal

interview, PW7 2010; personal interview, PW8 2010). The donor, conveners and most Israeli and Jordanian participants accepted the sanctioned premise that GLOWA JR was advancing shared technical work but that political deliberation and decision-making would remain in the hands of national governments (Personal interview, IG6 2010). The Palestinians present were disciplined in following along with this premise but did not readily accept it (Personal interview, PW3 2010; Personal interview, PW7 2010; Personal interview, PW8 2010).

In the context of GLOWA JR, IPCRI's representative on the ground endeavoured through multiple strategies to infuse this project's technically-dominated approach with specifically hydropolitical discourse. The representative circulated a working paper arguing the merits of addressing relational water management issues and not just techno-scientific ones. This Israeli water/peace practitioner attempted to raise this issue, similarly intended, during the Steering Committee meetings. This practitioner supported a small contingent of other like-minded, hydropolitically-oriented Israeli, Palestinian and international water/peace practitioners to do so¹¹⁴. Their efforts were largely for naught hydropolitically, if assessed by immediate, project-specific outcome.

Nonetheless, the IPCRI practitioner was among a small number of Israeli participants to pursue a critical discourse that placed the Israel-Palestinian conflict front and centre of water/peace deliberations among Israelis,

¹¹⁴ For example, this emerged in the form of a poster presentation and conversation entitled 'Transboundary Water Development as a Practice of Peace: Shared, Cooperative, Equitable?' (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the poster used at the session). These activities made evident that the political dimensions of sustainability were kept at a minimum, if present at all.

Palestinians, Jordanians and internationals. This practitioner resisted the disciplinary power of the project's sanctioned techno-scientific discourse. In narrative terms, they sought to construct a discourse of Israeli-Palestinian political cooperation, beyond that of contemporary Palestinian threat to Israel. That they were shut down on multiple occasions is secondary to the discursive intent, ideations and practices of hydropolitical peacebuilding they pursued. What happened in the context of GLOWA JR reflects a wider practice pursued by IPCRI within the broader Israel-Palestinian relational context.

Analytic Reflection

Overall, IPCRI has strategised and implemented its practices and interventions to enable academic and civil society, hydropolitically-intentioned cooperative processes. It has lobbied Israeli (and to a lesser degree Palestinian) governments and civil society actors, intent on cultivating a real partnership among (progressively greater) equals. Its objectives also include the promotion of equity and shared sustainability among the parties, pursuing legislative change in Israel and political flexibility in the PA. Underpinning IPCRI's approach is the discursive practice of advocating for Israel to "give the Palestinians a fair deal" (Personal interview, IX1 2010) while creating dialogical opportunities for greater meaningful and political understanding about what that might mean for all parties involved. In these many ways, Israeli water/peace practitioners at IPCRI are engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding.

Yet, IPCRI's work and practice has not been without controversy, on both sides of the political fence, reflecting both a strategic and pragmatic approach.

Overall, IPCRI encourages and supports nearly all shade of hydropolitical cooperative practice between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israelis and Palestinians. For instance, IPCRI strongly supported the joint and official 2001 Israel-Palestinian statement for keeping water and water-related infrastructure out of the cycle of conflict during the second Palestinian Intifada. Rather than being an uncritical position that likely veils the effects of Israeli power and continued occupation (as suggested by Zeitoun, 2009: 88), this may be understood as a principled and strategic position. It is appreciable as one rooted in the belief that strategic, humane, economically-sound and environmentally-responsible cooperative practices among the parties likely contribute to building confidence and a shared responsibility for the future.

In another select case, IPCRI's water and environment practice has encouraged Palestinians and Israelis to cooperate on wastewater management issues, even where this might involve highly-selective, creative, indirect Palestinian cooperation with Israeli settlements. IPCRI has specifically and exceptionally called for this where highly detrimental impacts are being seen on the environment and on human health. For these Israeli water/peace practitioners, the environment and both Israeli and Palestinian human health are assumed to be on equal footing with Palestinian political principles of self-determination. This work reveals a discursive practice of promoting shared environmental sustainability, while promoting partnership on issues that include wastewater management, solid waste management, toxic waste disposal, urban zoning and planning, and the like.

Arguably, such IPCRI practices violate the basic Palestinian principle of not legitimating Israeli settlements or other institutions constitutive of the Israeli occupation. It also appears to betray the more hydrohegemonically-oriented Israeli water/peace practitioner inclination and practice of seeking to support the construction of Palestine *to resemble itself/Israel*, in this case environmentally, through cooperative practice (Personal interview, IF2 2010). They also reflect a technical orientation of building Palestinian well-being *in conjunction with* the political practice of promoting a relational equity and equality to benefit the Palestinians. Thus and arguably, these practices reflect a hydrohegemonically residual practice of water/peace.

The last point informing this analytic reflection is IPCRI's commitment to countering growing Israeli unilateralism, both of the state itself and of Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners. The very essence of its efforts, as explained by one Israeli practitioner at IPCRI, is as follows (Personal interview, IX1 2010):

If there is no activity of the kind of FOEME, IPCRI, and the other organisations which do this kind of thing, you could have a situation in five years when nobody knows anybody. And that was the situation up until 1990. When the people started talking in 1990, when the Israelis finally gave in to the pressure of the first Intifada, we had a meeting in 1993 or 1994, in Tantur. We pulled together environmentalists, and we had a speech by an Israeli about water and a speech by a Palestinian. And all the way along, they did not know one another. They had not set eyes on one another... You see, as we are going backwards [today], as people cannot meet anymore, as the logistic problems are growing, people are losing contact. And one of the things we have to do, is to maintain the contacts at a professional level, so that when things improve, there is something to build on. This is a very defensive way of thinking about it. I think this is what needs to be done... We do it because we believe that in the end, the people have to know one another, know their concerns, know how many children they have, know that there are human beings on the other side.

IPCRI is working to prevent the Israeli abandonment of the transboundary project, because this would likely result in Israel's continued dominance over the subjugated Palestinians. Continued cooperative practice challenges the constructed subjectivity of Palestinian threat. It favours relationship-building and confidence-building, with likely engaged possibilities for reflexive, internally-practiced change and transformation. It also creates the opportunity for Israelis to engage critically and alternatively in hydropolitical peacebuilding through their relationships with Palestinians, in spite of and in opposition to Israel's hydrohegemony. Echoing these sentiments, a Palestinian water/peace practitioner and leader of the anti-normalisation movement in the West Bank unconditionally welcomed the continued Israeli academic and civil society interest in, support and joint practices of joint water/peace, interpreting them as socio-politically meaningful (Personal interview, PW8 2010).

Analysing Israeli discursive practices associated with IPCRI, it can be said that they constitute hydropolitical peacebuilding, with some hydrohegemonic residue. Such practitioners have played a leadership role in cultivating a transboundary community of water/peace practitioners through partnership practices that endeavour to construct structural and relational equality between Israelis and Palestinians. They have pursued a hydropolitical, as compared to a strictly techno-scientific discourse in addressing water/peace issues of Israelis and Palestinians, with equitable intent. Such water/peace practice reflects unwavering commitment to continued cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians, and between Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners. In

some very particular cases, this appears to reflect support for the dominant hydrohegemonic discourse of Israel, if seemingly unintentionally.

On the whole, this study maintains that IPCRI and its Israeli water/peace practices are not actively pursuing the perpetuation of Israel's dominance over the Palestinians. However, the programmatic, politically-charged actions and risks taken may enable such a discourse in practice, if and until final status talks are indeed completed. Thus and in conclusion, IPCRI's Israeli water/peace practitioner discourse is largely understood as hydropolitical peacebuilding with hydrohegemonic residue.

Arava Institute for Environment Studies (AIES)

The second of the transboundary organisations to be examined in this study is the AIES. The organisation's leadership structure is predominantly Israeli (and Jewish). However, a few Israeli Arabs/Palestinians play key leadership roles as well, notably at AIES research centres and at programme level. With respect to research initiatives, Israelis and Palestinians often share leadership roles and responsibilities as equals.

As a transboundary organisation, the AIES¹¹⁵ has brought together Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians and internationals in the fields of environment, water, sustainability and peace since its inception in 1996. Modestly at first, the AIES has developed and pursued diverse programmes, projects, methodologies, tools and activities in an expanded capacity since 2000. These are predominantly focused on research, education, training, experience-sharing and networking undertaken through multiple AIES programme areas and research and action centres¹¹⁶.

Of particular interest, the AIES has pursued transboundary and cooperative water development and water/peace efforts among experts and practitioners, including transboundary community development at the nexus of environment, water and peacebuilding (Zohar, Schoenfeld and Alleson, 2010; Alleson and Schoenfeld, 2007). It has also maintained a Peace-building and Environmental Leadership Seminar (PELS) for undergraduate and graduate students in

¹¹⁵ The AIES is often referred to as the Arava Institute.

¹¹⁶ AIES centres are as follows: Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation, Center for Transboundary Water Management, Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research, Arava Center for Sustainable Development, Dead Sea and Arava Science Center (AIES Research 1 Website).

residence at the AIES, intentionally building an intergenerational transboundary community of environment, water and peacebuilding practitioners.

Thus, the gist of the current study of the AIES's work and of the discursive practices of its Israeli water/peace practitioners focuses on two things. It examines cooperative water development practice, as pursued through the AIES. It also analyses community development processes and practices of the transboundary water/peace community itself. In both these areas, a discursive analysis is conducted of Israeli water/peace practices, against a guiding framework of hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues.

Cooperative Water Development Practice

In the water domain, the AIES has been involved in many initiatives over the last fifteen years or so¹¹⁷. Many of these have either had a significant research

¹¹⁷ A partial list of these projects is provided as follows (adapted from the AIES Research 2 Website and expanded):

- Hebron/Besor and Nablus/Alexander Streams Project: The first-ever Israeli-Palestinian monitoring project of pollution sources in transboundary streams in the region. Over three years, it has been funded by the USAID Middle East Research and Cooperation Program (MERC);
- Red Sea Dead Sea Conveyance Project (RSDSC): A study on social and ecological impacts of the proposed Red Sea Dead Sea water conveyance system, on behalf of the World Bank;
- GLOWA Jordan River (GLOWA JR): An interdisciplinary, international research project providing scientific support for sustainable water management in the Jordan River with reference to climate-related uncertainties;
- Middle East Environment Futures Project (MEEF): A global network of eco-political and peace-oriented practitioners based at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies (from about 2002), engaged in Middle East environment/water/peace research and practice (See Schoenfeld, 2005); and
- A Future for the Dead Sea – Options for a More Sustainable Management: In the period 2003 to 2006, a consortium that included ARC Systems Research (Austria), the University of Newcastle (UK), the AEIS (Israel), the Applied Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ - Palestine) and EcoConsult (Jordan) secured major European Union funding to study and then advance a vision of water-wise management for the Dead Sea Basin (See McCulloch, 2007: 2079).

focus or have been defined by one. They have frequently included both a training component and a dialogical one. Limited space prevents an elaborate treatment of the AIES' many initiatives. Thus, a concise and telling discursive analysis is undertaken of Israeli water/peace practitioner engagements with specific respect to the Institute's Hebron/Besor and Nablus/Alexander Streams Project.

The Hebron/Besor and Nablus/Alexander Streams Project

In the Israel-Palestinian region, there are some 16 recognised transboundary streams. Many of these transboundary waterways have become conduits of raw or poorly treated sewage. This is highly problematic given their flow over precious Mountain Aquifer groundwater resources threatened with pollution. In many cases, environmental deterioration is acute in areas of immense cultural, religious or historic value. Precious fertile land areas are left uncultivated. Stream deterioration often causes damage downstream, to people, economies, landscapes and public health.

Addressing the causes and implications of transboundary streams is generally complicated enough, given the necessity of tackling wastewater treatment, surface water rehabilitation, groundwater pollution prevention, and end-user preferences (including residents, farmers, tourism sector actors, and others). This is rendered yet more difficult in the Middle East due to the political conflict, where the conflict parties and actors generally harbour little trust for one

The most recent projects in which the AIES is involved include (AIES Research 2 Website):

- Small Scale Solar Desalination: Technology and Training for Gaza;
- Jordan River & Dead Sea Forum; and
- Med-Dead Conduit feasibility assessment.

another. Within such a context, a growing number of cooperative projects has emerged over the last decade intent on researching, analysing and restoring transboundary streams¹¹⁸.

The Hebron/Besor and Nablus/Alexander Streams Project of the AIES and partners is one such cooperative transboundary initiative. From a hydrological perspective, the Hebron/Besor and the Nablus/Alexander streams flow across both Palestinian and Israeli territories (with the Hebron/Besor rising in the West Bank, flowing through Israel and then into the Gaza Strip). The Streams Project has monitored the water quality of these streams and identified specific pollution sites, intent on informing the development of joint strategies for their restoration.

In the Streams Project, a team of Israeli and Palestinian researcher-practitioners planned and implemented the studies. Project partners were the AIES, the Palestinian Water & Environmental Development Organisation (WEDO), the HWE, and research centres at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Tel Aviv University, both in Israel. At every stage, this transboundary project saw the shared and equal practice of Israelis and

¹¹⁸ A partial list of such initiatives include:

- Pro-Aquifer Project: 2006-2008 (Freimuth et al., 2008; Personal interview, IF3 2010; Personal interview, IF4 2010; Personal interview, PF1 2010; Personal interview, PF2 2010);
- CollectiveWater – From Conflict to Collective Action: Institutional Change and Management Options to Govern Transboundary Watercourses: 2007-2009 (Dombrowsky and Feitelson, 2008; CWW Website);
- Understanding and Analysing the Current Israeli Wastewater Practices for Transboundary Wastewater Management from Palestinian Communities: 2010-2011 (Personal interview, PW2 2010); and
- Kidron Valley/Wadi Nar International Master Plan Project (Laster, 2010a; Laster, 2010b; Personal interview, IX2 2010). Of note, Zeitoun (2009: 114-115) is highly critical of the Israeli practice of Master Planning, as a form of ideational power that favours asymmetry and hydrohegemony.

Palestinians in partnership with one another. They jointly planned and conducted research. Small teams of Israeli and Palestinian students undertook fieldwork together. Analysis was a joint exercise as was the sharing and dissemination of results with participants, implicated communities, governments and supportive international organisations (Personal interview, IE4 2010).

In these many respects, participants framed project practices as “meaningful environmental cooperation” (Tal et al., undated: 1). Rather than perceiving their project as exceptional or isolated, participants imagined their efforts to be constitutive of wider socio-political processes seeing the political parties and socio-political actors of the Israel-Palestinian conflict “muddle towards ultimate reconciliation.” (Tal et al., undated: 1) As compared to one-off or isolated *encounters* between Israelis and Palestinians (as per many people-to-people projects or even problem-solving workshops), initiatives like the Streams Project provide the basis for sustained relational negotiation and relationship-building between participants over multiple years, heightening their “acquaintance potential” (as per insights from the revised contact hypothesis; see Nadler 2000: 23-26). Further, given that such projects are themselves constitutive of a larger body of technical, social and political practices, they contribute to building momentum in terms of cooperative approaches to overall water management. Finally, they fundamentally contribute to the development of a domain-specific transboundary community of Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners.

The project's final report concludes with a stated desire to move from Israeli pragmatic approaches of river management to the development and implementation of a joint and "effective, long-term, hydrological strategy." (Tal et al., undated: 30) It concludes with the stated conviction that "the cooperation that a joint restoration strategy requires can also engender unanticipated benefits in terms of confidence building and reduction of tensions." (Tal et al., undated: 34) For this project's work on municipal level cooperation on stream restoration, it was awarded the international *Riverprize* (sic) in Brisbane, Australia¹¹⁹.

Project participants recognise and expressly indicate the importance of international funder support and involvement, notably of USAID/MERC. Specifically, they state that "international assistance is essential for evening the playing field between Israeli and Palestinian water managers." (Tal et al., undated: 35) In doing so, project participants reveal their concern for the power asymmetry between them, along the Israeli/Palestinian axis. While there are many ways to accommodate for such asymmetry, the parties leveraged the power of their international donor to shift the relational balance. This reflects a practice of partnership rooted in the intentional pursuit of relational equality between Israelis and Palestinians. This is also reflected ontologically in the project's premises, including the desire to promote stream restoration, to improve the health and quality of life of both Palestinians and Israelis, and to encourage partnerships in pursuit of environmentally-based cooperation.

¹¹⁹ The *Riverprize* is recognised to be among the most prestigious environmental awards given anywhere in the world. See *Riverprize* Website.

A dominant, Israeli hydrohegemonic justificatory narrative point identified in this study differentiated Israelis and Palestinians in terms of their environmental responsibility and sustainability. The Streams Project critically challenges such a narrative in practice, explicitly denouncing as unsustainable *both* Israeli and Palestinian water-related practices through water quality analysis at multiple points on either side of the Green Line. The study reveals that both Israeli and Palestinian communities, via their municipal, agricultural and industrial activities, are responsible for the significant deterioration of the Nablus/Alexander and the Hebron/Besor streams. Both communities have dumped raw or inadequately treated effluent, as well as their agricultural and industrial wastewaters, into the streams¹²⁰. This both challenges the Israeli narrative of environmental responsibility as compared to Palestinian irresponsibility, while also constructing and practicing a shared Israeli and Palestinian discourse of sustainability.

One Israeli water/peace practitioner who participated in this initiative, explained their quadruple motivation for engagement in such transboundary water/peace practice (Personal interview, IE4 2010):

¹²⁰ For example, the Palestinian and Israeli communities of Hebron and Kiryat Arba have contributed effluent and raw sewage to the Hebron/Besor watershed during the study period (Tal et al., undated: 11). Also, the Israeli communities of Beer Sheva, Ofakim, Rahat and Meitar have all dumped inadequately treated sewage into the tributary Beer Sheva Stream during this time. Regarding the Nablus/Alexander watershed, raw sewage and industrial effluents flowed from Palestinian communities in the West Bank into the Nablus Stream tributary during the study period (Tal et al., undated: 18). While much of this is treated on the Israeli side of the Green Line at the Yad Hanna wastewater treatment facility, the downstream Israeli city of Netanya then dumps sewage effluent into the watershed before it discharges into the Mediterranean (Tal et al., undated: 6). Indeed, “the study confirms that some 60% of the nonpoint source discharges in the Zomar/Alexander watershed are actually on the Western-side of the green line (sic) and can be associated with Israeli runoff.” (Tal et al., undated: 32)

1. Addressing an environmental issue
2. Meeting and working with Palestinians
3. Building shared memories
4. Being part of a growing constituency for peace

As a critical point of departure, they specifically recognise the responsibility of both Israel and the Palestinians for continued environmental damage that affects both peoples. They appreciate that working in a transboundary capacity is an effective way of addressing these transboundary environmental issues. They recognise the value of building shared memories and narratives grounded in sustainable water/peace practice. Finally and overall, working in this capacity is specifically understood as a practice of 'peace' that contributes to building a peace constituency engaged in alternative relational practices to hydrohegemony.

On this last point, peace constituencies are sometimes understood as counter-hegemonic forces in conflict environments. They are recognised as actively transforming violent discourses through their engagements where they (adapted from Mouly, 2008):

- Build and diversify support for peace with the other;
- Establish common norms around which to engage politically;
- Mobilise against oppression;
- Establish the bases for collective existence;
- Renegotiate relations across socio-political boundaries;
- Establish propositional platforms for peace;
- Construct alternative practices of relationship with the other;
- Diversify shared meanings and practices of relationship and 'peace' with the other;
- Broaden participation and ownership of peace processes;
- Sustain peace processes over time;
- Develop transboundary collective identities; and
- Replace dominant and specifically violent discourses.

The Streams Project and its Israeli water/peace practitioners are understood to discursively engage in hydropolitical peacebuilding, as framed in this study (and in the tradition of peace constituencies). They are practicing relational equality in true partnership with their Palestinian colleagues at every level of work. They are pursuing a discursive practice of shared sustainability, rooted in an appreciation of the need for equitable benefits-sharing for Israeli and Palestinian communities as effected by streams restoration. As Israeli project participants clearly state, their efforts are situated within a wider asymmetric Israel-Palestinian conflict that makes such cooperation challenging certainly, and perhaps of limited direct and immediate impact on the dominant peacemaking process (Personal interview, IE2 2010; Personal interview, IE3 2010; Personal interview, IE4 2010). Nonetheless, their discursive practices may be understood as building alternatives to asymmetric conflict discourses.

Such discursive practices, as evident in the Streams Project, challenge the dominant Israeli hydrohegemonic narrative of necessity. They specifically and meaningfully contribute to the development of a shared Israeli-Palestinian narrative (and identity formation). Rather than perpetuating separate narratives intent on vilifying or marginalising the other, or further justifying the perpetuation of asymmetric relational practice, the cultivation of a single shared narrative of joint practice as undertaken by the Streams Project contributes to the development of a critical and alternatives-building perspective on Israel-Palestinian relations. They also desist from perpetuating hydrohegemonic justificatory narrative elements at the nexus of continued Jewish victimisation

and sustainability, given that Israelis (and also Palestinians) are recognised as perpetrators of unsustainable environmental and violent relational practices.

Transboundary Water/Peace Community Development

Over many years, the AIES has engaged in transboundary water/peace network development and community building, drawing together Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Jordanians and internationals. Efforts of the AIES have specifically been designed to create opportunities for existing and active practitioners to share experience and where appropriate, develop and implement projects together. The AIES also pursues an intergenerational mandate, training younger people on environment, water and peacebuilding issues, while cultivating a transboundary community of graduates at the intersection of these fields.

Together, the existing practitioner and intergenerational foci reflect a transboundary practice of the AIES that amounts to environmental, and more specifically hydropolitical peacebuilding, though with an ever-present threatening hydrohegemonic residue. As a point of departure to this analysis, the next section describes and examines a set of AIES activities that promote engaged transboundary relations among existing practitioners.

Existing Practitioners

In 2006 and 2007, the AIES leveraged resources of the NATO – Science for Peace and Security Programme to host two water and cooperation workshops. Bringing together a broad range of academic-practitioners in the field, as well

as students from and working on regional water issues, these workshops focused on water, governance and security in the Middle East. The first conference was an Advanced Study Institute (ASI) on Integrated Water Resources Management and Security in the Middle East (Schoenfeld et al., 2007). The second was an Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) on Water Resources and Infrastructure in Areas of Conflict and Extreme Conditions (Abitbol and Schoenfeld, 2009). Both the ASI and ARW were held in Israel.

Together, the ASI and ARW brought together about 100 people from across the Middle East and internationally to reflexively share experience and examine opportunities for building a shared, secure and sustainable transboundary water regime, in consideration of the opportunities for peacebuilding and peacemaking thereby generated. ASI and ARW activities included plenary sessions, workshops, small group breakout activities, and large group experience-sharing. Field trips were organised that included visits to the Dead Sea and surrounding wadis and hills, as well as to scientific research centres in the Eilat region. A published edited book emerged from each of the events, compiling experience from among practitioners in the field of water governance and Israel-Palestinian (and other conflict) relations (Lipchin et al., 2009; Lipchin et al., 2007).

The discursive practice of Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners engaged in this AIES work may be situated at four principle levels. The first is in terms of building, sustaining and expanding the network and community. The second is appreciable in terms of the quality of relationships developed. The

third is with respect to the significance of donors. The fourth is with respect to the relational development of specific transformative ideas and practice of water/peace. Each of these is examined and analysed below.

Building, Sustaining and Expanding the Community

The Israeli-Palestinian transboundary water/peace community of practice is built, sustained and expanded through intentional encounters (e.g. ASI and ARW), project development, ideational practice and funding. It is perceived by Israeli practitioners as both immensely important and expanding. And it is increasingly receiving recognition as people, practitioners, donors and even the Israeli government come to invest their efforts and resources in the community's activities.

A core Israeli practitioner involved with the AIES working on transboundary water/peace issues shares their perspective on the community (Personal interview, IE2 2010):

[T]his is a network that other people are beginning to realise the value [of] and this has allowed the network to broaden, because now, people who want to work collaboratively, or people who think they want to work collaboratively, are coming to me and saying: OK, you know people, you have a relationship with these people. How do I get in? Assist me in developing my own relationships. And so the network just keeps growing and expanding. It is a lot of energy.

These efforts are premised on building ideational and practical partnerships among Israeli and Palestinian practitioners, drawing together both experts and up-and-coming practitioners. The partnerships are rooted in a cultivation of equality among Israeli and Palestinian participants, both of experts and of the

next generation of Israeli, Palestinian and other leaders. The work itself seeks to promote shared Israeli-Palestinian visions of sustainability, while creating spaces for discussions of partnership and equity, two factors of peacebuilding, to be pursued. The points introduced here are further developed in the context of the next sub-sections.

Cultivating the Quality of Relationships

For Israeli practitioners, participating in and establishing partnerships through this community has also meant allowing themselves to be known and transparent, in terms of their national identity, political opinions, and preferred professional practices. In the context of the wider Israel-Palestinian conflict, where conflict lines are frequently imposed hegemonically, explicitly and in alienating fashion, to be public and transparent with the other in sustained dialogue has been described in emancipatory terms by Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners. One practitioner interprets their own such engagement as follows (Personal interview, IE2 2010):

[W]hen I interact with these people, I don't in any way have to be pretending to be somebody that I am not. I never have to deny that I am an Israeli. I never have to deny that I am Jewish. My identity, my national identity and my ethnic identity... never need to be disguised... That lends itself to the integrity of the partnership. These people know who I am. They know what I stand for. They might not agree with it. It is their prerogative. But there is enough respect in the partnership that these are issues... [that] do not come at the expense of us being able to work together. In other words, the people I work with, I look at them, they are equals in every way. And just as they are equals, this does not mean that I need to agree with everything that they say. Actually, that is a test to how strong the partnership is... These are people that I feel I have a deep relationship with. I can pick up the phone, I can visit, I can interact with freely and openly and transparently. And what this also means, of course, is that things also really get done. We really do work together. We really have products to show on what we are doing.

Political, national and ideational transparency as practices of partnership contribute to the production of equality between Israeli and Palestinian practitioners. They also produce interpersonal trust that informs the development of ideas pursued in transboundary community. On another level, this allows transboundary water/peace practitioners to live an alternative relational reality together in contrast to one of Israeli hydrohegemonic relations. In so doing, they are creating a parallel relational world, a micro- and meso-level kind of peace between people and organisations despite the dominance and perpetuation of Israeli-Palestinian relational violence (Personal interview, IE2 2010). In this parallel relational world, Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners create and produce together, as made evident by wastewater treatment initiatives, the Streams Project discussed above, and others.

At the same time, whatever takes place in this so-called parallel relational world is intentionally and reflexively juxtaposed against, and integrated into the wider conflict context by Israeli water/peace practitioners. The issue of power in relation to partnership is specifically engaged with, so as to transform at least some of the power asymmetries between Israeli and Palestinian participants.

As explained by one Israeli practitioner (Personal interview, IE2 2010):

[P]artnerships is a better word for what I am describing than coexistence or even collaboration... [P]artners also means that there is a level playing field. It does not mean a hierarchy, by any means... What I have seen in many instances where there is so-called, let us say, Israeli-Palestinian collaboration, there is clearly by intent or otherwise, a hierarchy. Israelis always have the upper hand. Not because they insist on that, but it is just the nature of it. Why do I say that? If you are looking at a collaborative endeavour, Israelis have better capacity. Israelis have more money. They are clearly at an advantage over Palestinians and Jordanians and it is very clear. And this hierarchy might not be very obvious to the Israelis but it is very clear to the Palestinians and the

Jordanians. When I work in partnership with a person or an organisation, I do my best to remove that hierarchy as much as I can.

In this sense, removing hierarchy has entailed first reflexively recognising and engaging with power, and then making every effort not to leverage it against and over the other. It has entailed sharing resources and decision-making with partners rather than imposing pre-determined outcomes on the other. Overall, it has entailed being aware of the power differential, and intentionally addressing it ideationally and in practice.

The Significance of Donors

The presence of international donors has been of relational significance to the transboundary work of Israeli practitioners at the AIES, both quantitatively and qualitatively. On the first point, two things need to be recognised. There is no doubt that there are many more transboundary water/peace activities because donors like NATO, USAID and the EU are interested in supporting them. This point is effectively made by one Israeli practitioner at the AIES (Personal interview, IE3 2010).

The community is fed by money. Money is what creates the community... We are able to create conferences, workshops, research projects, because money is available to do that. That is how we make a living. I do not think that is so terrible. I think that humans... are economic creatures. We respond to motivation. That is a motivating factor for us. If we can get a grant by getting and doing cross-border or cross-boundary research or work, then we will go for it. And, Palestinians and Jordanians will do it as well... [T]he accessibility of funds for doing research, for funding activities, that is what grows the community.

Indeed, grant monies are important factors in limiting and promoting transboundary water/peace practice. The availability of these resources is also

sensitive to the escalation and de-escalation of violent conflict dynamics, with corollary implications for transboundary community practice. As one practitioner put it, “[w]hen the politics in the region heats up, sometimes the [transboundary] community can be very small” (Personal interview, IE3 2010).

The donor community also impacts the quality of Israeli-Palestinian relationships. Indeed, there is clear recognition among Israeli AIES practitioners of the value international donors bring as outsider third parties to political processes of relationship and development (Personal interview, IE2 2010).

[T]here is great value in having a third party operating in the region as a neutral, non-partisan actor. It certainly helps, especially when you try to create any kind of collaborative partnership. You need that third party... to make sure that each side behaves themselves... There is no question that the level of trust that I might have at an individual level does not yet permeate beyond that. And so because you do not have that, you need that third party, you need that international actor to be engaged.

As third parties, the funders at best prevent or at the very least limit bullying, lying, and other confidence-reducing and violent practices. They are essential in encouraging the different parties to acknowledge each other’s claims (Personal interview, IE2 2010).

On a point of concern, the AIES is increasingly receiving a greater proportion of funds from the Israeli government (especially the Ministry for Regional Cooperation) in comparison to international donors. This comes as a welcome boost in recognition and support of transboundary AIES activities (Personal interview, IE2 2010). It also raises the question of whether this will impact the quality of its relational practices, a matter identified here for future study. This

shift raises the spectre of a possible hydrohegemonic residue in future practice, stemming from funding patterns at the AIES.

Relational Discursive Development

The AIES is an organisation that facilitates transboundary dialogue and innovative relational practice. At its core, it is an 'environmental' organisation, seeking to address issues in both Israel and in the region. Much of its activities are transboundary, implicating Palestinian (and also Jordanian) people, territories and resources. Thus, the organisation and its practitioners are compelled to engage in discourses of peace. The following passages will examine the ideational components of Israeli practitioner discursive practices within the context of Israeli-dominated hydrohegemony.

At the AIES, the environment and sustainability discourses are appropriated as opportunities and epistemologies of equality, partnership and equity. One leading water/peace practitioner at the AIES explains (Personal interview, IE2 2010):

I work in trying to... address environmental issues as they pertain to the region, and to develop collaborative research projects that better inform on the nature of these problems and bring to the fore solutions that we feel are the most appropriate from an environmental perspective... In other words, we might propose solutions that might not be directly implementable by any one government but yet we feel are the most appropriate from the perspective of the environment.... So, what brings me to dealing with collaboration and one step beyond collaboration, in some ways supporting or moving to some kind of peace settlement, is that it is really all about the environment.

In other words, Israeli practitioners at the AIES are not necessarily setting out to 'build peace' but perceive themselves as building a relational peace through

cooperation and collaborative project development on the management of transboundary environmental (including water) issues. The environment, and transboundary water more specifically are domains of relational practice for building and cultivating equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability.

Israeli water/peace practitioner engagements speak directly to both Israeli and Palestinian societies within their respective political contexts. With respect to the Israeli side, partnership-based work is framed as a challenge to the agenda and narrative of those within Israel who seek to promote an Israeli isolationist politics vis à vis the Palestinians, the Arab World and the international community (Personal interview, IE3 2010). With respect to the Palestinian side, it is also situated in regional and global debates about how the Palestinians and the Arab world more broadly might deal with Israel, considering Israel as part of the Middle Eastern region as opposed to being its own entity separate from the rest of the Middle East¹²¹. Israeli practitioners at the AIES in partnership with Palestinian colleagues discursively challenge the two sides of this isolationism and rejectionism (Personal interview, IE3 2010).

Just as Israeli practices of partnership pursued through the AIES challenge this dual isolationism, they also create the context for innovative discursive

¹²¹ Several notable examples of excluding Israel to varying degrees include Rotary International and the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). In the first case, Israel and the Palestinian Territories are considered separate “districts” in different “zones” by Rotary international, a service and peace-oriented organisation (Rotary Zones Website). As such, this creates a barrier to direct relationship between Israelis (District 2490, Zone 19) and Palestinians (District 2450, Zone 20) directly in the region. In the second case, there is no Israeli organisation participating as part of the CGIAR Consortium of Centers. Israel, a world leader on dry-land agriculture has been excluded from participating directly (Personal interview, IE3 2010). The CGIAR is funded by the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation among others (CGIAR Donors Website), providing yet another example of how the international multilateral and donor community reinforces cleavages between Israel and the Arab World.

development about the very pursuit of such partnership. Looking to the ASI and ARW, the Israeli AIES conveners specifically created opportunities for Israeli and Palestinian (as well as Jordanian and international) practitioners to engage with one another on core conflict issues. Issues directly related to Israeli-Palestinian relations that were tackled through presentations, dialogue processes, academic writing and informal exchange include:

- Power asymmetry
- Palestinian water rights and self-determination
- Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinians
- Israeli security and water management
- Zionist ideology and Israeli policy
- Commodification and the development of a regional water market
- Transboundary stream restoration
- The Dead Sea as a transboundary resource
- Stakeholder participation and regional water governance
- Imagining equitable futures

In this sense, the AIES has been an enabler of critical transboundary dialogue and innovative ideation. Such critical, dialogical ideation has encouraged human, political and “analytic” empathy (Rothman, 1992: 74; Borradori, 2003: 17-18) among participants of the ASI and ARW for the perspectives of the other. They also allowed for the dominant Israeli narrative of Palestinian threat to be deconstructed and challenged, allowing for emancipatory Palestinian subjectivities to be dialogically and relationally cultivated and supported. In other words, such events and activities are not solely focused on technical issues, but engage discursively, appreciably and meaningfully on issues of Palestinian representation, priorities and power.

Overall, Israeli water practitioners engaged in transboundary water/peace practice perceive themselves to be ideologically-motivated (e.g. Personal

interview, IE2 2010; Personal interview, IE3 2010; Personal interview, IF2 2010; Personal interview, IX1 2010). They engage in transboundary partnership-based work because it is personally and politically meaningful and important to do so for them, by order of importance, as political practices of (Personal interview, IE2 2010; Personal interview, IE3 2010; Personal interview, IE4 2010):

- Resolving environmental issues practically;
- Providing alternatives to unilateral, patronising and/or asymmetric water development planning;
- Redressing water-related inequities;
- Promoting 'true' normalisation and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians;
- Promoting Israeli security;
- Legitimising Israel and Israelis' presence in the Middle East; and
- Critiquing Israeli practices of occupation.

Yet, on the key point of independent Palestinian statehood, there is near-unanimous agreement among Israeli water/peace practitioners at the AIES that their efforts are not specifically targeted at cultivating an independent Palestinian state, for lack of power to do so. At the same time, they recognise the importance of their work to Israel-Palestinian relations in the eventuality of successful Palestinian statehood (Personal interview, IE2 2010; Personal interview, IE3 2010). In this sense, these practitioners desist from specifically framing their work as *peacemaking* (Personal interview, IE2 2010).

I cannot make peace... Peace requires a government. Peace requires governmental agreements. There is no way of getting around that... [I]t means that there is resolution of the overall conflict. Again, does that mean to say that everything is perfect afterwards? No, of course not.... [P]eace is very subjective. For Israelis, peace could simply mean no more terror. That is peace, that is a kind of peace. What is peace for Palestinians? A state. So, it is very subjective. Personally, it is not very helpful for what I do. For me, I certainly am for peace, and I certainly hope that what I do contributes to peace, but I do not look at what I am

doing per se as making peace. I may be supporting a peace process by what I am doing, or helping to foster openness, collaboration and mutual understanding. But I am not making peace.

While not *peacemaking*, this work is framed as working to favour and create the conditions to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinians, on the one hand, and to promote Israeli security on the other. Related activities are rooted in practices that bring such contextual meaning to the concept of peacebuilding (Personal interview, IE3 2010).

In other words, such Israeli transboundary practitioners are no longer waiting for politicians to *make peace* in the form of a peace agreement, as was the case throughout the 1990s. This is a community of people engaged in working to build the future, constructing the world in which they wish to live. They are working together to improve Palestinian capacity, infrastructure and the like. They are decrying the Israeli occupation as well as Palestinian violence. They are preparing a time when the occupation will have been terminated. Ultimately, they are creating an alternative to the dominant construct of asymmetric relationship with the Palestinians, and to the concomitant narrative of hydrohegemonic necessity (Personal interview, IE3 2010). In these many ways, they are practicing hydropolitical peacebuilding.

Practicing Intergenerationality

In addition to the work pursued through the AIES with existing transboundary water/peace practitioners, the AIES is also mandated to teach and train younger leaders in building a shared and peaceful regional future through joint environmental governance. Towards this end, the AIES has welcomed Israeli,

Jordanian, Palestinian and international students to engage in applied study at the Kibbutz Ketura-based Institute. It has offered training in environmentalism, leadership development, trust-building and conflict resolution, within a multi-generational transboundary perspective to socio-political change in the Middle East (Personal interview, IE1 2010).

The AIES offers multiple and diverse educational and training programs in regional environmental governance, with considerable attention to peacebuilding. Its Year/Semester Program offers university-accredited courses to those studying ecopolitics and related issues. The Masters Program is jointly offered through the AIES and Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, allowing students to engage in study and research opportunities specific to Desert Studies and to the Middle East. Also, the AIES offers a Summer Program in association with US-based Dickinson College to students interested in learning about human settlement in the WAAV (See AIES Academics Website).

Focused on the regional environment, issues addressed through each of these different educational and training programmes are transboundary in nature. The academic staff delivering the programmes also reflect the region's diversity, though asymmetrically so. While largely Israeli (and Jewish), there are also Israeli Arab/Palestinian, Jordanian and international faculty members involved in these initiatives. Finally, the impressive body of participating students continues to be transboundary in origin and nationality, including Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians and internationals from all over the world. Recognising

the challenges of a transboundary education in the conflictual Middle East, the AIES offers students training in conflict resolution.

It is nearly impossible to ignore the Israel-Palestinian conflict when engaging in environmental studies in the Middle East. Much of the ecology is transboundary and conflictually parceled. The bilateral and regional political context is volatile. Participants emanate from different places, with often vastly different narratives of the region. Thus, rather than ignore the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the AIES has developed a PELS programme. PELS programming is offered as a requirement to all students attending the AIES. Efforts are also made to incorporate PELS programming into different projects and activities pursued by students. It has assumed the form of dialogue among students on issues of land and identity. It is incorporated into shared activities like hiking and rafting where different students are paired or grouped together intentionally.

Occasionally, unnational groups are encouraged to assemble for the purposes of deconstructing particular issues or experiences away from the gaze of the other (as per the methodology pursued at NS/WAS; see Sonnenschein and Hijazi, 2000: 159). Students are also exposed to, and trained in conflict resolution tools and leadership through PELS at the AIES.

PELS practice is epistemologically based in front-lining the Israel-Palestinian conflict rather than sublimating it. It is rooted in the assumption that students benefit from learning how to respond to the conflict and its many narratives and dynamics together with and sometimes separately from the other. Very much in tune with the rest of the AIES, PELS teaches transboundary partnership

through processes and practices of engagement (Personal interview, IE1 2010). It is based on the notion that all participants and participant narratives are equal. As part of this, PELS is methodologically rooted in a “compassionate listening model” of dialogue, where students are encouraged to speak and listen from a place of compassion and empathy with regards to their interlocutor (Personal interview, IE1 2010)¹²².

At the nexus of equity and sustainability, PELS presumes that both Israel and the Palestinians are responsible for pursuing unsustainable environmental practices and that transboundary endeavours must intentionally pursue “environmental justice” (Personal interview, IE1 2010; Stoett, 2012). This work also trains students in multi-sectorality, to understand and work with people from different sectors and at different levels of society. It is based in a sophisticated model of personal change and political transformation through shared practice (Personal interview, IE1 2010).

The PELS offering of the AIES has proven essential to the success of the AIES’ education and training programme. PELS development emerged in response to political tensions among students participating in environmental governance programming at the AIES during its early years. Once recognised, this need was filled appropriately and dynamically with PELS, which created the relational context for students to engage effectively and meaningfully in transboundary practice. One leader at AIES explained the importance of PELS programming.

¹²² Compassionate listening underpins dialogue group processes all over the world (e.g. Montreal Dialogue Group) and has been used in the context of German-Jewish reconciliation in the wake of the Holocaust.

They contrast it to attempts made to ignore or sublimate the Israel-Palestinian conflict for the purposes of narrowly focusing on environment issues. They said, “our program would implode if we did that.” (Personal interview, IE1 2010) An example of one such experience is telling.

As part of its offerings, the AIES has organised field trips for the purposes of giving students the opportunity to learn about the region’s waterways firsthand. On one such trip, group leaders failed to incorporate a PELS element to help students process the different narratives and perspectives on land ownership and water rights, on issues of identity and nationalism, and the like. When PELS is intentionally incorporated therein, these trips are generally motivational, empathetic and relationship-building exercises among diverse groups of students. On this particular trip, participating students returned deflated, confused and frustrated (Personal interview, IE1 2010). Failure to intentionally incorporate PELS into programme offerings stems in part from the fact that not all AIES programme leaders appreciate the significance of, or are adequately trained in peacebuilding. This also reflects the fact that Israeli-Palestinian conflict issues are ever present and constitutive of regional environmental governance issues. This lesson has not fallen on deaf ears at the AIES, though at the time the current study was undertaken, it was the subject of intense deliberation among staff.

Ushering Transboundary Futures

As noted earlier, the AIES has cultivated and continues to support a community of some 600 graduates, some of whom are today involved in environmental

governance issues, underpinned by peacebuilding training, in their respective Middle Eastern countries. There is evidence to suggest that AIES graduates practice a transboundary discourse in their professional and academic engagements outside the AIES. One of the organisation's leaders provides the following analytic example of this point (Personal interview, IE3 2010):

We are working in peacebuilding and environment... Environment is all about the long-term and so is peacebuilding. Maybe it will take a generation... [Th]e critical mass of alumni from the Arava Institute has been in the past ten years... so most of them are just at the beginning of their careers back home and reaching levels of influence. And I think that they will have an impact, but it will take a number of years, of more and more people working and creating trust and becoming involved in their home communities and creating their own non-profit organisations and becoming involved in government and getting to the role where they can actually be part of the policy-making process. So I think you have to have patience... just let things slow down a bit, and build trust and create partnerships and things that make sense for people. We have an alumni who studied here from Jordan, just graduated and he is going back to Jordan. He set up a company in Jordan that is partnered with a company from here, at the Kibbutz, that is doing renewable energy. And they have now set up a branch in Palestine. So you know, that kind of stuff, that really solves people's problems. It does not bring peace. It does not end the occupation, but it provides people with economic welfare and gives them empowerment and deals with creating a more sustainable Middle East.

In these real senses, the transboundary water community has become the location of multi-generationality, in terms of participation, dynamics and effects. As noted, youth are pursuing transboundary water practices professionally, and this with political intentionality. Transboundary community building prepares the terrain for the future, as young people set the stage for their increased political involvement as decision-makers of the future.

In addition to the perpetuation of environmentally-motivated, transboundary professional partnerships among young leaders who appreciate one another as

equals, it is equally relevant to consider effects that can be associated with AIES practices. One Israeli AIES practitioner explains (Personal interview, IE3 2010):

[E]ntities like the Arava Institute are adding more people to that community every year. We have got over 600 graduates of the programme. About two-thirds of them are from the Middle East. One of the interesting things that we are starting to see, is that we are starting to see a critical mass of alumni from the Institute who are becoming more visible as an entity, as a force... People are starting to be willing to stand up and be seen (Personal interview, IE3 2010).

This point reiterates an earlier one brought up in the context of expert transboundary practices. Transparent political engagement and practice is an important peacebuilding factor in an environment marred by personal and political distrust. Further, there is a sense that ensuing conversations and political processes filter into the wider realm of participant experience, into the future (Personal interview, IE1 2010).

I do think there is that ripple effect that goes into their home life, ... aside from the fact that students grow up and become colleagues... That is definitely happening and it is inspiring... A multi-generational thing is happening.

AIES practices are intended to create and sustain a transboundary conversation and narrative, again challenging the supremacy of national narratives in the region. Practitioners at the AIES speak of an *us feeling* that develops among participants, as their identities are further textured and layered in environmental and transboundary relationships that inform relations with, and often challenge preconceived notions about the other (Personal interview, IE1

2010). Rather than supplanting national identities, they add layers of experience and identity both upon them, and in dialogue with them¹²³.

Analytic Reflection

With a dynamic and globally networked organisation like the AIES, it is obviously possible to say a great deal. This study has had to content itself with analysing a limited number of programmes and practices, assessing the discursive practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners. Having done so, this study concludes that such discursive practices are appreciable as hydropolitical peacebuilding, with some ever-threatening hydrohegemonic residues. A few words to support this conclusion are justified.

Israeli practitioners have based their work on the development of transboundary partnerships with Palestinian counterparts. These partnership are practiced for the simultaneous pursuit of sustainable environmental governance and person-to-person trust building among 'equals'. The inverted commas placed around 'equals' suggest that Israeli water/peace practitioners recognise the existence and operation of power asymmetry. They also suggest that practitioners operate on the assumption that working in a person-to-person capacity limits the wider operation of asymmetric power. In other words, asymmetry can be dampened, though never completely 'neutralised', in micro- and meso-level contexts. To further counter asymmetry, Israeli water/peace practitioners recognise the value and power of international donor involvement that is mindful of both Israeli and Palestinian concerns and relational dynamics. It must

¹²³ This is a theme that re-emerges with the work of FOEME below.

also be noted that Israeli practices of partnership are also exacting of a recognised legitimacy for Israel and Israelis in the Middle East.

The notion of equity is reflected in the Israeli practitioner discourses of “ending occupation” and of promoting “environmental justice”. At its core, these contain the recognition that there can be little equity between Israelis and Palestinians so long as Israel’s occupation of Palestinian people, land and resources is perpetuated. Israeli practitioners at the AIES strategically focus on demonstrating the value of ending the occupation to Israelis. They also cultivate an alternative and parallel relational practice that emulates and embodies a post-occupation reality. In so doing, they promote micro- and meso-level processual and relational equity, mindful of their inability to practice or ensure macro-level Israel-Palestinian equity. One way in which this is done is through a discursive practice of ‘environmental justice’, in education and training processes and in programmatic work.

The work of the AIES is premised on the promotion of sustainability through environmental governance. In this sense, there is clear acknowledgement in the practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners of the environmental ir/responsibility of both Israel and the Palestinians. Here, the environment does not serve as a narrative or discursive instrument for the perpetuation of Israel’s hydrohegemony or Israeli dominance over the Palestinians. Indeed, the significant degree of reflexivity and transparency exhibited by Israeli water/peace practitioners allows them to reveal Israeli weaknesses rather than simply focus on identifying Palestinian limitations to be addressed through

dominant Israeli interventions and practices. In partnership, Israeli and Palestinian water/peace practitioners engage in practicing sustainability, understood in both environmental and socio-political terms.

While the above conclusions reveal a discursive practice of hydropolitical peacebuilding among Israeli water/peace practitioners through the AIES, the current analysis also suggests the presence of a hydrohegemonic residue, though more as looming threat than current reality in practice. This is especially true with respect to PELS programming and funding patterns. During the period of doctoral research, the AIES was undergoing an organisational deliberation about the extent to which PELS programming needed to be integrated into the diversity of organisational activities. While some institutional learning had clearly taken place as a product of these discussions, it was not clear by the time of writing if widespread and integrated PELS programming had been assured and secured. The spectre of possibly failing to do so reveals the threat of hydrohegemonic residue.

In a similar vein, transboundary environment and water practice has historically been funded by the international community. As a proportion of overall transboundary programme funding of the AIES, the Israeli government contribution is increasing. Several leading Israeli water/peace practitioners at the AIES welcome this shift. While it does reflect the Israeli government's recent and growing appreciation for AIES experience in transboundary practice, it also raises the threat that international donors (individually and as a pool) will decrease in relevance and then perhaps cease to moderate and temper the

asymmetric power of Israel/Israelis and Palestinians. That this was not overtly recognised as problematic by Israeli water/peace practitioners at the AIES (during the research phase of the current dissertation) reflects a threatening hydrohegemonic residue.

Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME)

Launched in 1994, FOEME has worked on environment and peace issues over nearly two decades. Originally advocating for the incorporation of environment and sustainability concerns into the Madrid/Oslo peace process, it went on to intentionally transform itself into an *environmental peacebuilding* organisation around 2001 (Personal interview, IF3 2010). Such a change was initiated as it became increasingly clear that the dominant peace process was failing; a change that was then consolidated as the second Palestinian Intifada took shape.

FOEME's transformation was premised on the belief that the environment was a domain of shared concern. As such, it could be constituted into one among several socio-political, relational platforms for equitably-oriented relationship-building through transboundary programming and project development. This belief and ensuing work draws inspiration from the praxis of Lederach (1997) on relationship-building and peacebuilding. In a related vein, Lederach (2005: 47) developed the concept of platforms for peace, defined as:

[O]ngoing social and relational spaces, in other words, people in relationship who generate responsive initiatives for constructive change... capable of generating adaptive change processes that address both the episodic expression of the conflict and the epicenter of the conflictive relational context.

The current section thus examines and analyses the work of FOEME, focusing on the environment and more specifically water, through the lens of hydropolitical peacebuilding as a dimension of environmental peacebuilding more broadly.

To begin with, FOEME is a transboundary organisation on multiple fronts. It is the only organisation in the water/peace domain that is jointly directed by an Israeli, a Palestinian and a Jordanian national. Its three head offices are each in Tel Aviv, Beit Jala/Bethlehem and Amman. The totality of FOEME's activities are framed and implemented with transboundary and regional purpose, and practiced in transboundary partnership (Personal interview, IF4 2010). On occasion, this has meant that FOEME activities are strategically differentiated and situated to allow for nationally-specific or internationalised objectives and practices to be pursued.

As a longstanding organisation, it has an extensive track record of transboundary initiatives and activities¹²⁴. Rather than attempt to say something meaningful about each of them, the focus herein will be on selected aspects of FOEME's Good Water Neighbours (GWN) and Jordan River (JR) rehabilitation projects. Through these initiatives, this study will specifically focus on analysing Israeli water/peace practitioner involvement in what the organisation refers to as 'people-to-people environmental peacebuilding'.

¹²⁴ These programmes and projects include (See FOEME Projects Website):

- Good Water Neighbours (GWN)
- Jordan River (JR) rehabilitation project
- FOEME EcoParks
- Jordan River Peace Park
- Save the Dead Sea (Becker et al., 2004; Hermon, 2004; Abu Taleb et al., 2003; Bromberg et al., 2000; Katz et al., 1998)
- Red Sea Dead Sea Conduit (RSDSC)
- Climate Change
- Mountain Aquifer
- Water, Peace & Environment
- Sustainable Development Strategies

It must also be recognised that most FOEME projects operate along multiple tracks, often advancing several priorities strategically and simultaneously. As has been done throughout the current chapter, this study will both describe FOEME activities and discursively analyse the practices of Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged therein. A specific note must be appended to this last point on discourse analysis. Because FOEME is the most transboundary of the three organisations discussed here, it is in fact epistemologically challenging to disaggregate the discourse of Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians within the organisation. Their discourse has assumed a profoundly integrated and intentional transboundary quality that will be made evident in the discussion below¹²⁵. Nonetheless, the discourse of Israeli water/peace practitioners at FOEME is identified and analysed in this chapter.

People-to-People Environmental Peacebuilding

The vast majority of FOEME projects includes three conceptual elements that define this very section: people-to-people relationship-building; sustainable environmental objectives and foci; and an intentional practice of peacebuilding. To discuss each of these issues, study is undertaken of FOEME's Good Water Neighbours (GWN) and Jordan River (JR) rehabilitation projects.

Good Water Neighbours

Perhaps FOEME's most renowned and effective initiative, the GWN was launched in 2001. It is based on establishing partnerships between at least two

¹²⁵ This foreword is based on an analysis of both Palestinian and Israeli interviews conducted for the current study. It is also based on analysis conducted of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian interviews undertaken by this researcher for a different study on water and peace issues in the Middle East in 2010 and 2011. Finally, it stems from analysis of the literature by and about FOEME and its activities.

communities from Israel, the Palestinian West Bank, and/or Jordan sharing a common water resource. It implements multi-layered programming through such transboundary partnerships, while pursuing environmental sustainability and equitable water use as practices of peacebuilding, with an emphasis on relationship-building rooted in shared visioning and action.

At the time of writing, twenty-eight communities were participating in the GWN initiative, up from an initial eleven during the 2001-2005 period and seventeen during the 2005-2008 period. The initiative is managed by three project coordinators; one Israeli, one Palestinian, and one Jordanian. Project management is also comprised of some twenty-five people in the field, six expert advisors, and one Project Director that receives the support of an international advisory group. The project is itself underpinned by a jointly developed vision document, as with all FOEME initiatives. The practice of developing and implementing GWN is based in the project equality and partnership of Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians, resisting, desisting from, and engaging in alternative relational formations to hydrohegemony.

Moving from project leadership to multisectoral community beneficiaries, GWN project participants include young people, adult community members, professionals who work on water and environment issues, people involved in the private sector, as well as mayors and other municipal leaders. Overall, project participants and beneficiaries from the different national communities build relationships with one another on environmental and more specifically water issues, pursuing people-to-people environmental peacebuilding through a

vast array of activities. By participant group, specific activities include the following (adapted from Kramer, 2008: 24):

- Geared at youth: Building an ecological garden, implementing rainwater harvesting systems, carrying out studies and surveys, managing river clean-ups, conducting awareness-raising campaigns;
- Geared at adults: Participating in workshops, regional visioning and environmental problem-solving;
- Geared at the private sector: Developing sustainable tourism projects, developing heritage projects;
- Geared at mayors and municipal leaders: Training, political support, transboundary partnering of municipalities, relationship-building; and
- Geared to all: Participating in regional events organised by GWN and FOEME staff, situated from the grassroots through to regional level, environmental education in the form of lectures, field trips and hands-on activities.

These and the rest of FOEME activities are rooted in appreciation of the ontological equality of the narratives shared by the various Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian communities, in transboundary partnership with one another. Doing so is a practice of building the subjective equality of all and between them, rooted in fundamental critique of the hierarchical premise underpinning Israeli hydrohegemony and its necessity. Indeed, the GWN is built in resistance to the Israeli narrative elements of Palestinian environmental unsustainability and socio-political threat.

Sharing Water Realities

Methodologically, the GWN initiative is based in narrative and reflexive experience-sharing of “water realities” (Personal interview, IF3 2010).

Participating communities and their endogenous leadership from among each of the sectors listed above have engaged in facilitated processes to identify,

articulate, compare and contrast their own 'water realities' with those of a partner community across the Green Line or across the Jordan River.

Water realities may be understood as narratives comprised of the following:

- Hard facts about water resources and wastewater management;
- Personal stories about how water is used within a community, a school, etc;
- Discussion of joint dependence on water resources and on hydropolitical relations;
- Discussion about the causes of water shortages and how people both live and address them;
- Awareness-raising processes about differences in the 'water realities' of communities across the borders;
- Reflexive processes about the causes and transformation of such different 'water realities'; and
- How efforts are pursued to create jointly sustainable and equitable 'water realities' for these partnered communities.

There are multiple methodologies through which these water realities are shared, discussed, deconstructed and addressed. This is done among and between partner communities directly, through facilitated unination and transboundary encounters between young people, community residents, entrepreneurs, municipal leaders and other stakeholders. It is also done with national tourists in their own country (and to a lesser extent international tourists), through the Neighbours Path programme. This allows participants to reflect on their own national water realities as well as those of communities across the border sharing a transboundary resource¹²⁶. Every "path" both begins and ends with a border.

¹²⁶ The Neighbours Path eco-touristic peacebuilding initiative has seen the participation of tens of thousands of Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians to date along 25 paths. For more information, see FOEME NP Website.

The stories people tell are discursively-laden tellings of self, of community, of responsibility and of actual and potential transformation underway. For example, Israeli practitioners engaged in implementing and facilitating such processes within participating Israeli communities specifically and intentionally bring to light Israel's responsibility for the water realities of Palestinian communities that are inequitable by comparison (Personal interview, IF3 2010). They have also worked with communities to address their own unsustainable water practices, improving the efficiency of water use across the board (and borders). The dominant Israeli narrative of Palestinian unsustainability is thus critically challenged through the GWN initiative, bringing clarity to the relational context within which different water realities have evolved. The water reality approach also sheds light on the environmental and hydropolitical effects of the Jewish redemption of Biblical Zion, both for Jews and for Palestinians in relationship with one another, thus texturing this narrative element.

Working in Schools Across Borders

A powerful example of GWN practice and effect comes from the activities pursued in schools across the borders of the Jordan River region. In these schools, young people have assumed leadership as volunteer "water trustees". These young people have played a leadership role in turning their schools into more sustainable water environments, in partnership with schools across the borders. To date, more than 2,500 youth water trustees from partnered communities have received regular environmental education and training through GWN, more than 170 youth have engaged in building initiatives and/or campaigns to address transboundary water issues, and participated in the

development of Environmental Education Centers throughout the region. As explained by FOEME in a project review of its successes since inception

(FOEME GWN Website):

These activities have resulted in the empowerment of Water Trustees to carry out actions that promote water sustainability in their communities. Empowerment, once experienced, allows the youth to take on new challenges and be more active in their community with a more positive outlook for a common future with their neighbor.

The future is thus imagined, practiced and produced in transboundary partnerships rooted in equality, building shared sustainability and equity, and incrementally developing zones of environmental and hydropolitical peacebuilding. The significance of doing so is reflected in the concept of peace zones, understood as sectioned off territories and human communities within wider armed conflict areas that have disallowed the pursuit or even means of violence in their midst. According to the Coalition for Peace, *Peace Zone Primer*

(Garcia, 1993: 39):

A peace zone area is a geographical territory varying in size from place to place where the citizens declare that no form of armed conflict may occur, and whose peacebuilding program seeks to address the roots of a problem. It is declared and sustained by an aggrupation of citizens coming from the community who do not believe in violence but in peaceful means of resolving their differences. For its program, it requires its citizens to look into forms of violence manifested in their community so as to guide the direction of their initiatives, and to harness their creativity in developing indigenous methods of responding to crisis.

In the Philippines, during the late-1980s and early-1990s, government soldiers were asked to leave their weapons at the door when entering peace zones if they wished to negotiate with local communities and their leaders. In this sense, peace zones are *social spaces* (Garcia, 1993: 43), delimited territories,

communities of people, and declarations of intentionality and willingness to dialogue and negotiate, despite the risks inherent in their formation in the face of powerful and threatening forces¹²⁷. GWN communities are thus understood to be zones of hydropolitical peacebuilding, creating an alternative relational context and discursive practice in a milieu of asymmetric and violent conflict.

Hydropolitical Subpolitics

Another location of meaningful hydropolitical discursive practice is at the transnationalised, subnational level. Beck (1997) has argued the growing political significance of transnationalised “subpolitics”, denoting political relations pursued below the national level and across national political boundaries. Epistemologically-oriented by his argument, the current study also examines GWN’s relationship-building work with mayors from Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian communities. As with youth and other members of participating communities, GWN has sought to facilitate the building of relationships and partnerships of equality between mayors. What started out modestly, has become a focal area of extensive relationship-building as practices of joint sustainability and equitable development.

In this respect, Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian FOEME offices and field staff have enabled the development of a “mayor’s network”, bringing together mayors from across the region. Their original and continued collective engagement has reflected a shared concern for the deteriorating state of the

¹²⁷ Some theorist-practitioners and organisations refer to children as zones of peace, arguing that children should be protected and shielded from armed conflicts. See UNICEF Peace Zone Website; Machel, 1996.

Jordan River and the Dead Sea, and a desire to collectively respond. Since then, the mayor's network has played a central role in several FOEME/partner community campaigns and successes. Their contribution has been essential to the following (a partial list of successes, compiled from a diversity of sources):

- Continued collective expressions of concern over the poor state of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, also informing the multilateral process of the RSDSC Feasibility Study;
- Addressing Lower Jordan River (LJR) water quality issues, promoting its rehabilitation, including the promotion and/or building of WWTPs in GWN communities;
- Development of a joint Master Plan for the Tsur Hadassah (Israeli) and Wadi Fukin (Palestine) communities, for the sustainable management of shared water and wastewater resources;
- Directly impacting JWC planning for the favourable treatment of Baka Sharkia (Palestinian) wastewater in Baka Gharbia (Israel);
- Enabling continued cooperation on wastewater management and transboundary stream restoration between Emek Hefer (Israel) and Tulkarem (Palestine), between Eshkol RC (Israel) and Yatta (Palestine), and between Gilboa RC (Israel) and Jenin (Palestine) communities;
- Freezing construction of the Israeli Separation Barrier across the Green Line, preventing grief to Palestinian communities with specific reference to their water resource practices;
- Pursuing frequent meetings between mayors, residents, entrepreneurs and potential investors, leveraging a total of US\$240 million for potential GWN communities' infrastructure and development initiatives;
- Promoting the development of a Jordan River Peace Park in the Naharayim/Bakoura area; and
- Collectively solving the problem of sandflies and promoting joint responses to that of houseflies in the Dead Sea area.

The success of these initiatives, and the overall work of FOEME, is rooted in the transboundary cooperative and partnership practices of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water/peace (and environment) practitioners. These practices are rooted in equality, and meaningfully informed by dialogically-framed ideations of equity and sustainability. They also ensure the building, sustaining and expanding of a transboundary community of multi-sectoral and intergenerational water/peace practitioners. While some core activities are

undertaken by water-issue experts, others are clearly undertaken by a much broader contingent of engaged people. In this respect, FOEME has hosted a major event nearly every year since its inception, having attracted thousands of participants that remain active in the transboundary water domain and community.

As with other FOEME activities, the GWN is intent on layering a transboundary collective identity atop regional national identities, in an effort to “blur the tribal aspect of this region” (Personal interview, IF3 2010). Doing so creates the space for “reconciliation” to take place at multiple levels, rather than encouraging the perpetuation of tribally-defined and conflictual identities and narratives (Lederach, 1997). Doing so is rooted in the pursuit of practices that create shared experience, sensibilities and political engagement around shared bodies of water and the environment more broadly. As explained by one Israeli water/peace practitioner at FOEME (Personal interview, IF3 2010):

Rather than I being a member of the Jewish tribe and my Palestinian counterpart being a member of the Palestinian tribe or the Jordanian tribe or the Christian tribe or the Muslim tribe, because this is a very tribal region, we are trying to introduce the concept that we are part of a shared water body, so that we are residents of the Jordan Valley... We are residents of the Mountain Aquifer. We are residents around the Dead Sea. And not that that replaces our identity as Jewish-Israelis or Palestinians or Jordanians, but it tries to broaden, to deepen, our identities to beyond just our national or religious associations. And through that, to find common ground and common interest. I think that goes to the very heart, whether it is at the community level... It is very much focused on all the residents. That is from the bottom-up.

And from the top-down perspective, also, very much trying to promote these commissions (a Jordan River commission, a Dead Sea commission, a Mountain Aquifer commission), so that the institutional structures will be much more detailed than just a Joint Water Committee. The devil is in the detail. In order to truly have impact, you need to go down into those details. You need to change the mindsets and that is

what we are trying to do. We are trying to change the mindset of being neighbours that share a common water resource, of being residents of a shared water basin, that clearly has peaceful relations, an understanding of common interests, at its heart.

As was suggested above, GWN practices and successes have been central to the development and implementation of other transboundary FOEME initiatives. Space restrictions prevent a detailed discussion of such initiatives, however there is much to be gained from looking briefly at one, the Jordan River (JR) rehabilitation project.

Jordan River Rehabilitation

Building in part on GWN's momentum, FOEME's JR rehabilitation project has worked to restore a natural historic flow to the devastated Jordan River. Today, this culturally, ecologically and hydrologically important river flows, in its lower portion, at approximately 5-8 percent its historic pre-1964 flow (before the water infrastructure developments were constructed in Israel, Jordan and Syria). Today, most of this flow amounts to little more than sewage water.

The JR project has sought to transform the Jordan River and its surrounding region from an ecologically devastated and "sacrificed" zone (Schoenfeld et al., 2007) to one of peacebuilding and prosperity, for the benefit of the region's inhabitants and the large number of tourists arriving every year. It has sought the return of one-third of the historic flow of the LJR, amounting to some 400MCM (and progressively towards 600MCM), in order to ensure that the river "function as a healthy ecosystem." (Gafny et al., 2010: 14). Shared sustainability is at the heart of this initiative, while rooted in an

acknowledgement of differentiated responsibility. In this equation and of the three parties, the Palestinians have literally no responsibility for the devastation of the LJR.

The Project is comprised of numerous elements which can be succinctly described as campaign-building, awareness-raising, research and experience-sharing, political advocacy and strategic development. Among other things, FOEME practitioners conducted a study of economic benefits stemming from a conceived rehabilitation of the LJR (Personal interview, IF1 2010; Becker et al., 2004; See LJR Studies Website). It has held conferences and stakeholder meetings to share-experience about doing so. The region's water/peace practitioners have pursued advocacy with their national governments, and also with the European Parliament and the US Senate. Of specific interest, Israeli water/peace practitioners and their counterparts engaged through FOEME have accomplished the following (among others):

- Secured regional government support for FOEME efforts on the Jordan River, including the Israeli Government's commitment to rehabilitate the Jordan River. Notably, on 27 July 2011, commitment was received from Gilad Erdan, Israel's Minister of Environment, that Israel would both decrease sewage discharge to the River and increase the natural flow in its lower section (FOEME Knesset LJR Website);
- Secured a Resolution of the EU Parliament on 9 September 2010 calling on the region's leaders to cooperate in rehabilitating the Jordan River (EU JR Resolution Website); and
- Secured US Senate Resolution 387 of 20 November 2007 encouraging Israel, Jordan and the PA to cooperate in addressing the degradation of the Jordan River and Dead Sea (FOEME USSR 387 Website).

These successes would likely not have been possible without the collective, transboundary practice of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water/peace

practitioners, working together to address a sustainability and equity issue of major and globalised importance.

Towards accomplishing its work, the JR rehabilitation project has established National and Regional Advisory Committees. Bringing together civil society and government experts from Israel, Palestine and Jordan (Personal interview, IF4 2010), these committees have become a context for broader hydropolitical experience-sharing, discussion and strategising (Gafny et al., 2010: 17).

FoEME's Regional Advisory Committee is today the only forum focused on the Lower Jordan River (LJR) which brings Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian representatives together and as such serves as an important medium for the region's experts to exchange information and discuss scenarios for the river's rehabilitation.

While initially established to give feedback on research undertaken by FoEME and proposals for the LJR's rehabilitation, the forum quickly expanded to an important meeting for the region's ministries to present and discuss cross border proposals related to rehabilitation and development initiatives in the Jordan River Valley.

In stark contrast to hydrohegemonic approaches, the creation and continued facilitation of this committee is a practice of bridging technical and political approaches to water management and development. Such efforts allow for continued problem-solving of hydropolitical matters (Personal interview, IF3 2010). Again, Israel's narrative of Zionist redemption is deeply challenged through this committee's and others' juxtaposition of the LJR's acute deterioration, the fact that Palestinians have no hand in its causes, and the Palestinians' direct involvement in building scenarios and approaches for responding with shared sustainability. Indeed, practices associated with the LJR initiative contribute to producing shared as well as Palestinian agency and

legitimacy with respect to their claim of riparian status to the Jordan River, a matter which was not explicitly addressed in the Oslo water agreements.

Before closing this section, it merits noting a few things. Some of the Israeli FOEME water/peace practitioners engaged with the initiatives discussed above are also involved in other transboundary FOEME-oriented and related independent practices. The organisation itself is a member of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum (PIPNGO Website), with one FOEME staff person sitting on its Israeli board. Another is a board member of the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP), an organisation promoting people-to-people peacebuilding (ALLMEP Website). Both IPCRI and AIES are also member organisations of ALLMEP¹²⁸.

For Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged through FOEME, perhaps most of all, followed by IPCRI affiliates and then those with AIES, hydropolitical peacebuilding is deeply inscribed in the wider effort to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians, “creating constituents of peace” at multiple levels (Personal interview, IF4 2010). As noted in an earlier section of the current chapter, practitioners involved in AIES efforts imagine themselves also to be

¹²⁸ As with the two other transboundary organisations discussed in this study (IPCRI and AIES), international funding has played a key role in perpetuating FOEME’s hydropolitical and environmental peacebuilding work. Key funders for FOEME include EU’s SMAP Program and its Partnerships for Peace Program, the US Government’s Wye River Program, the British Government’s Global Opportunities Fund, and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. In more recent years, funding has come from USAID’s Conflict Management and Mitigation program, SIDA, as well as Belgium’s Peace Building Desk (Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation) among others. FOEME is poignantly aware that their funding comes from the *peacebuilding* stream and not the *transboundary water resources* stream because “donors agencies are very much focused in the water sector on their partner country... but it is sad” (Personal interview, IF3 2010). Still, there is concrete evidence that donors reward Palestinian communities that practice transboundary partnership-based cooperation with Israeli ones (Personal interview, IF3 2010).

involved in a growing transboundary peace constituency. On the Israeli and FOEME side of things, participating in such constituencies has involved perhaps more immediate giving than gaining; e.g. giving the Palestinians discursive and material recognition of inequities and water rights as compared to securing Israeli legitimacy and peace in the region. There is a deep recognition among Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged with FOEME that as the stronger party and actors in asymmetric conflict, it bears on Israel and Israelis to relinquish perhaps more in the short-term, for longer-term shared, equitable and mutually-gained benefits (Personal interview, IF1 2010; Personal interview IF2 2010; Personal interview, IF3 2010; Personal interview, IF4 2010).

Analytic Reflection

Overall, FOEME's projects and activities have endeavoured to cultivate a transboundary culture and community, based on the transboundary framing of issues and the development of transboundary relationships. It is a culture and community practicing partnerships among equals rooted in sustainability and equitable development. It is an organisation whose Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian practitioners are engaged in hydro-political and environmental peacebuilding in the terms defined by this study.

FOEME projects and practitioners engage in discursive practices that recognises a kind of ontological equality of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian narratives, while supporting their transboundary production and circulation. Notably, the GWN initiative is premised on relational practices anchored in reflexive experience-sharing around different water realities. Doing so has

produced relations of equality and partnership, supporting the sharing of discourses intent on producing shared sustainability and equity rather than perpetuating hydrohegemonic relations and subjectivities.

The water realities methodology also produces a discourse of responsibility. Facilitation is pursued in ways that encourage participants to recognise the multiple causes of water-related inequities. As theorised earlier in this study, a critical recognition of power asymmetry and the causes of conflictual relations is an important premise for the transformation of such relations. Similarly, water realities practices are rooted in a wider intentionality of creating the conditions for addressing and rectifying water and related injustices. The study has made it evident that the GWN project as a whole has supported the development of related equity and sustainability processes, as in the case of the scaled-up Jordan River rehabilitation project.

Practices of sustainability of Israeli and other regional water/peace practitioners here are pursued jointly and with agreed, collective, transboundary intention. This is reflected in the practice of youth trustees endeavouring to improve the efficiency of water use in each and all of their communities. It is also reflected in the development of shared wastewater treatment facilities, transboundary stream restoration and LJR rehabilitation efforts of practitioners. Indeed, sustainability is jointly pursued and used as a practice of equitable partnership rather than as a discursive device for the (re-) production of asymmetric and hydrohegemonic power relations favouring Israel and Israelis. In these multiple ways, Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged through FOEME can be said to

be engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding, without contemporary evidence or threat of hydrohegemonic residue.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has examined and discursively analysed the practices of Israeli transboundary water/peace practitioners who are variously engaged in one seminal academic and civil society initiative as well as several initiatives of three transboundary water, environment and peace organisations. The first Joint Management of Shared Aquifers initiative was launched during the years of the Madrid/Oslo peace process and came to term at the end of the 1990s. The other three weathered the storm of the second Palestinian Intifada and adapted to the post-peace process realities, in some shared and some particular ways.

Several of the shortcomings of the Madrid/Oslo process are themselves embodied in the Joint Management initiative. Well-intentioned Israeli as well as Palestinian water/peace practitioners worked in partnership with one another to address a major issue of contention, i.e. transboundary water. Their partnership practices sought to produce equality, but in important discursive ways failed to do so. Nowhere is this more evident than in their *intentional* side-stepping of equity as an objective and practice of partnership. These practitioners put-off this difficult concern, to be addressed at a later time, by different people, in another context.

This is perhaps not so eerily reminiscent of the construction of final status issues, themselves put off to be addressed at a later time, in another context, possibly by other people. Essentially, the technical work was pursued, while the hydropolitical work was deferred. Such practice reflects Israeli hydrohegemony

throughout the Madrid/Oslo process. It is important to learn from such a failure, recognising that 'peace' processes demand and produce acknowledgement of discursive equality for and of conflict actors and priorities. It is not enough that conflict parties or actors cooperate or collaborate together. As evident from the Madrid/Oslo process and related academic and civil society practices, such partnerships and cooperative efforts may indeed be detrimental to peacemaking and peacebuilding.

This chapter has also examined and analysed the Israeli practices of three transboundary organisations, namely IPCRI, AIES and FOEME. They have been grouped together for analytical purposes. They resemble one another in important ways. For example, all are interested in building, sustaining and expanding a transboundary water/peace community of practice. Their practices, both in relation to expert practitioners and in an intergenerational frame, have made important contributions in this respect. Upon closer examination, these organisations are also quite different in several respects, as noted throughout this study and reiterated succinctly below. Overall, these organisations are often referred to together in studies on civil society, generally laudably though also critically. However, they are rarely if ever compared to one another discursively. Among other things, the current study modestly fills this gap in the literature.

As similar organisations, they work in a transboundary manner. Their initiatives are geared to address transboundary issues related to cross-border relations, notably in terms of the environment and specifically water. To do so, these

organisations bring together Israelis and cross-border Palestinian, Jordanian and/or international partners. Their efforts specifically target peace issues, with similarities and differences in the discursive practices of their Israeli practitioners. Yet there are important discursive differences of note in some of their practices. Thus, a concluding examination of their Israeli water/peace practices informs this study's overall discussion of hydropolitical peacebuilding.

IPCRI is the longest standing of the three organisations, with an institutional leadership structure comprised of Israelis and Palestinians. It has been a central enabler of transboundary cooperation, creating opportunities for a broad range of water/peace discourses to critically confront one another. Its Israeli practitioners, in coalescence with its Palestinian practitioners, have engaged in ways that endeavour to tip the asymmetric balance in favour of the Palestinians in production of greater discursive symmetry. IPCRI has done this over much of its 20-plus years, reflecting a discursive practice of hydropolitical peacebuilding as defined in this study. IPCRI's Israeli practitioners practice and enable transboundary cooperative partnerships. They seek to promote the equality of Israeli and Palestinian discourses, while notably advocating for Israel to give the Palestinians "a fair deal". Without such fairness, or equity, there can be no prospect for peace.

IPCRI's Israeli practitioners engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding also betray a discrete hydrohegemonic residue. IPCRI's water/peace practice involves dialoguing with Palestinians about the merits of making compromises in pursuing solutions that advance their human needs, for water, sanitation and

other vital environmental services, though they may not advance Palestinian human rights. Such practice is sometimes discouraged, even denounced as violent and counter-productive by perpetuating Israel's dominance and producing greater Palestinian dependency on Israel. Even without going so far, the critique of hydrohegemonic residue suggests in this case that IPCRI's Israeli water/peace practice may not reflect an appreciation of the extent to which the Palestinian hydropolitical self-determination movement may be unwilling to make Faustian bargains with Israel and Israelis for the short-term welfare of Palestinian communities, for better or worse.

The second of the three transboundary organisations, the AIES, differs from the others in that its Director is Israeli and its leadership structure is asymmetrically Israeli and Jewish. At a project level, there is greater symmetry evident, which is also the case in AIES practices. Israeli practitioners at AIES engaged in hydropolitical work are also recognised as engaging in hydropolitical peacebuilding practice as per the terms of this study, though with the threat of hydrohegemonic residue.

Israeli AIES water/peace practitioners engage in partnership with both Palestinians and Jordanians. They cultivate relational equality and create meaningful opportunities for transboundary practitioner collaboration and intergenerationality. They enable a range of discursive practices to come into contact and negotiation with one another. They also endeavour to leverage the participation of external actors to contribute to the production of project-based equality, cognisant of the structural and relational asymmetric context. These

practitioners also engage in the production of transboundary and environmental peacebuilding through programming such as PELS.

While considered as practicing hydropolitical peacebuilding, there is in the case of the AIES a threatening hydrohegemonic residue of note. The predominant threat identified in this study resides within the funding trend at the AIES.

Transboundary water cooperation has historically been funded by international donors. Increasingly, the Israeli government has demonstrated interest in AIES transboundary practices. This is reflected in growing funding and support it has offered to the AIES, welcomed by the organisation and its Israeli leadership.

Such a trend may become a threat to the integrity and perpetuation of hydropolitical peacebuilding practices of Israeli practitioners at the AIES, should Israeli water/peace practitioner discourse *become dominated* by technical considerations, in response to a possible eventual growing unwillingness to critique an important donor.

Of all three transboundary organisations discussed in this study, FOEME is practicing hydropolitical peacebuilding with the least hydrohegemonic residue, if nearly at all, as reflected in its Israeli water/peace practitioner discourse. There are clear and specific reasons for this conclusion, re-iterated in the final pages of this chapter. FOEME's leadership structure and practice is completely transboundary, bringing together Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians. Israeli water/peace practitioners at FOEME *do* everything in intimate transboundary cooperation with Palestinian and Jordanian partners. Equality among partners is evident and produced at all levels and in all practices; though it is impossible

for them to fully and completely escape the overall structural context of Israel's occupation.

FOEME water/peace practitioners engage in practices that bring together the dominant technical discourse privileged by Israel and the political discourse pursued counter-hegemonically by Palestinians. They engage directly with issues of equity and responsibility, through transboundary knowledge production, e.g. water realities. They engage in the material production of initiatives that respond to such concerns for equity, creating longer-term commitments in project communities and throughout the region. The discourse of sustainability pursued by Israelis at FOEME is such that it is leveraged for the production of equitable development and eco-systemic health on the ground. Sustainability practices are intentionally situated to construct relational equality and material benefits. Even some of the most critical Palestinian leaders (e.g. those associated with HAMAS) have chosen to reserve their critique of FOEME practices, if not provide support for their activities outright (Personal interview, IF3 2010; Personal interview, PF1 2010).

In so many ways, Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged through FOEME pursue practices that are critical and contestatory, as well as associational, bringing together two important strands of civil society practice (Kaldor, 2003). They intentionally identify and reject the hydrohegemonic relational model while practicing an alternative model of partnership rooted in transboundary equality, equity and shared sustainability. Such practices are understood as building a relational culture that is desirable to all partners, given the existing and

historical political and relational hydropolitical context. Of course, this may change in response to changing political circumstance (Jabri, 2007a: 172-173). Interestingly, such a political change did in fact take place for FOEME, when it was confronted with the end of the Madrid/Oslo process and the emergence of the second Palestinian Intifada. Far from being detrimentally perceived, this reveals FOEME's adaptive practice as a transboundary hydropolitical peacebuilding organisation, dynamically engaged in, responding to and shaping the politics of peace in the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In recent years, the *discursive* significance of cooperation between people and organisations across conflict lines has become a central question in the field of Peace Studies (Jabri, 2007a; Ramsbotham et al., 2005). The current study has contributed to a few contemporary debates in this field, with specific reference to the protracted, asymmetric and violent Israel-Palestinian conflict. In doing so, it has specifically examined and discursively analysed the cooperative practices of Israeli (and also Palestinian) transboundary water/peace practitioners.

The purpose and methodology of this work has been to assess whether, and if so, how, Israeli practitioners are constrained in their practice by a discourse of Israeli hydrohegemony; whether, and if so, how they are practicing hydropolitical peacebuilding; whether, and if so, how their ostensibly peaceable practice is marred by hydropolitical residues. With the conclusion of this study, there is an opportunity to share a few closing remarks about transboundary practice and peacebuilding in the conflictual Middle East, and in other conflict environments.

This conclusion is structured in four substantive parts. The first will revisit the transboundary community of water/peace practitioners. Drawing on the analysis pursued throughout this work, it will restate that while there is generally considered to be *one* transboundary community of water/peace practitioners, there are at least *three* identifiable discourses in practice. Thus, it may be said

that there are three discursive communities *in practice*. These reflect the broad critical framework used in this study, comprising hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding, and hydrohegemonic residues.

The second concluding section reflects upon the relevance of transboundary environmental and natural resources, and water more specifically, as a location of peacebuilding, both with respect to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and elsewhere. This study concludes that cooperation over environment, natural resources, and water more specifically, does not inevitably and invariably contribute to 'peace' or constitute 'peacebuilding' practice in conflict environments. For this to be the case, however, such cooperation will likely pursue and engage in *critique, resistance, desistance, and alternative relational formations* in practice, with a clear analysis of contextualised power relations.

In the third section, reflections are shared about hydrohegemony and the Israel-Palestinian conflict specifically. This study was initiated and pursued from a place of concern for the violence of relations between Israel and the Palestinians, certainly since 1967, even throughout the peace process of the 1990s and into the 2000s. There are many longstanding and proximate causes to this violence, stemming from both Israeli and Palestinian actions and aspirations. Indeed, both bear some agency and responsibility for this violence. There are also multiple reasons for its perpetuation and the failure of peace processes, again stemming from both Israeli and Palestinian actions and practices. What this study has made evident, and it is by no means exhaustive, is that intentional dominance/hegemony, in this case hydrohegemony, generally

does not and likely even cannot manifest as a practice of positive peace. In this respect, it bears upon Israel and Israelis to transform ideations and practices of hydro/hegemony, if indeed positive peace is, or will ever be the primary intention and pursuit of Israel in its relations with the Palestinians.

A final concluding section will articulate some of the research implications stemming from this study. These will be framed in terms of (a) hydropolitical peacebuilding both within and outside the Middle East, (b) the significance of produced water to conflict relations, (c) the peacebuilding significance of cooperation related to environmental resources other than water, (d) the significance of academic and civil society practice to peacebuilding, and (e) the use of interpretive practice as a methodology for conflict and peace research.

Discursive Communities in Practice

This study set out to examine and assess the discursive practice of Israeli water/peace practitioners engaged in transboundary cooperation with Palestinians (and also Jordanians and internationals). Building on the work of several earlier studies, these practitioners are understood to participate in a transboundary community of practitioners engaged in the production of water/peace. What this study has concluded is that there may be one overarching community of practitioners, but there are at least three discursive water/peace communities *in practice*. These discursive communities may be framed meaningfully and respectively as engaged in practices of hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding, and hydrohegemonic residue. These are certainly not neat categorisations of people and organisations, as there is some overlap between them. However, for analytic and heuristic purposes, it is insightful to construct such communities in practice and to associate discursive practices with each.

At the highest level, this study has found that Israeli water/peace practitioners are discursively differentiated between government-aligned practitioners on the one hand and civil society practitioners on the other. Among civil society practitioners, there are those that are technically-oriented and those that are politically-oriented. A few words will be shared about each, while specifically highlighting the hydropolitical peacebuilding of *Israeli, civil society, politically-oriented practitioners*. This last discursive community *of*, and more specifically *in practice* is referred to as the *transformative group*, for perhaps obvious

reasons. Let us however begin with government-aligned water/peace practitioners and practices.

Israeli Government-Aligned Practice

All water/peace practitioners interviewed for this study who worked for or advised the Israeli government were closely aligned with a dominant Israeli perspective, engaging in hydrohegemonic practice. Such alignment has manifested in different ways, and this despite the fact that all were rooted in a desire to promote peace with the Palestinians through cooperative practice. Their hydrohegemony is visible through a primary desire to perpetuate Israel's dominance in its relations with the Palestinians. As one practitioner explained, making the link between water resources and peace processes (Personal interview, IG5 2010):

We are short of water. But what was very clever of our water negotiators at the time, the Late Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister, he is very clever and strategic... We give them water, we please them, and we hold them. Always we can close [the tap]. They get water from [the] Sea of Galilee and we can stop it. So it is strategic... Even if we have the peace, and everything will be smooth, I do not advise the Israeli government to close the air force or the tanks division. You still should have it, in case things will happen in this area. Always we should be strong. But if you [are] strong from the peace agreement, you are much stronger.

This hydrohegemony is also visible in these practitioners' commitment to technical as opposed to political solutions, thereby rejecting the expansion of Palestinian water rights in favour of Palestinian water needs delivered by Israel. In this sense, hydrohegemony entails the perpetuation of an Israeli provider-Palestinian client/consumer relationship. It reflects an Israeli unwillingness to accept responsibility and then pursue compensation for any injustices caused

by Israel's occupation and its continued infrastructural development of West Bank, transboundary water resources.

This hydrohegemony is also deeply rooted in a narrative of necessity, as outlined in this study. The following passage from an Israeli government water/peace practitioner poignantly reiterates several elements of this narrative (Personal interview, IW1 2010):

They do not have a problem to lie... We are already becoming tired because they are not telling the truth. Now, not to us. With us they speak the truth. We know the truth. They know the truth. They cannot lie. But when they are in different places, they say things that are not true... This is the Palestinians. One of their objectives is to delegitimize Israel.

This passage reflects the immense chasm of distrust that exists between Israel and the Palestinians. For Israeli government (and government-aligned) water/peace practitioners, hydrohegemony is understood to be a necessity, one that can even accompany a stated desire for bilateral, albeit negative peace.

At the next level, this study has distinguished between government and civil society water/peace practitioners. Simply put, the former have been found to engage in hydrohegemonic practice. The latter are a diverse group, with practitioners distinguishable between those that are engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding and those that have been referred to as principally hydrohegemonically residual in their practice. For the purposes of clarity through contrast, the next passage will focus on hydropolitical peacebuilding discursive practices. Subsequently, a few words will be said about those where hydrohegemonic residues are in evidence.

Transformative Civil Society Practice

In sharp contrast to Israeli government-aligned practitioners engaged in hydrohegemonic practice, a *transformative group* of Israeli, civil society, politically-oriented practitioners has been discursively identified through the current study. This is a numerically small group of people who actively and intentionally engage in relational practices that are characterisable as hydropolitical peacebuilding. Their practices are grounded in equality, partnership, equity and the pursuit of shared sustainability. They also intentionally challenge the pillars of Israel's justificatory narrative underpinning its hydrohegemony.

Transformative group practitioners, identifiable in this study as Israeli practitioners engaged in three transboundary civil society organisations, largely though with some variability recognise the legitimacy and pursue the equality of both their Palestinian counterparts and political discourses. They work in partnerships among equals, in developing a shared sustainability. The practice they pursue is strongly anchored in a sense that equity is a fundamental pillar of peace in the region, and that it must be structured into transboundary partnership practices. Further, as Israelis, they reject the inevitability and necessity of relating to Palestinians as threatening subjects. As stated by one Israeli practitioner (Personal interview, IE2 2010 in abridged form):

[P]artners also means that there is a level playing field. It does not mean a hierarchy, by any means... When I work in partnership with a person or an organisation, I do my best to remove that hierarchy as much as I can.

Hydropolitical peacebuilding practice reflects a deep understanding that water and the environment more broadly are not simply technical issues that can be resolved with the development of greater strategic infrastructure. Indeed, they strike a balance between technical and political orientations, much more so than any other water/peace practitioners in the region. They bring to the surface issues of responsibility and equity, contributing to the transformation of Israeli-Palestinian relations just as they respond to environmental issues on the ground. Indeed, sustainable water and environmental management and cooperation are understood to be implicitly connected to peaceable transboundary relations, rooted in equality, partnership and equity. It is for this very reason that their discursive practice is understood in terms of hydropolitical peacebuilding.

Hydrohegemonically Residual Practice

A third community in discourse has been found to comprise civil society water/peace practitioners who practice and circulate some, but neither all nor necessarily most of the theorised dimensions of hydrohegemony. Between hydrohegemony and hydropolitical peacebuilding, their discursive practices are primarily recognisable as being infused with, and marred by hydrohegemonic residues. The current section begins with a discussion of the pre-eminence of such hydrohegemonic residues among technically-oriented civil society practitioners engaged in transboundary water cooperation. It concludes with a reflection on the power of ever-threatening hydrohegemonic residues.

Among civil society water/peace practitioners, there are those with a strong technical orientation to their work. These practitioners operate in transboundary contexts, building strong transboundary affinities and friendships, sharing projects together and the like. They do not however show evidence of intentionally and reflexively engaging in the political dimensions or implications of their work with transformative intent. It may be said that their practices perpetuate dimensions, or *echoes* of hydrohegemony without necessarily actively supporting it. Of course, this is a murky line indeed. As one such technically-oriented civil society practitioner explained (Personal interview, IG2 2010):

I think that the people who have been involved in the [GLOWA] project have become aware of the problems and issues that our colleagues from Jordan and Palestine face.... I must say regretfully that the political divisions overshadow whatever the awareness of your neighbours' problems and concerns spilling over into your own work. Very little of that. We are aware of it. But if your question is whether this has found explicit expression in what we are doing, the question is, most of the time, "no".

In other words, technically-oriented civil society practitioners have largely chosen or resigned themselves to the belief that their practice has little to no political or transformative significance. In so doing, their water/peace practice does nothing to critique, arrest or transform hydrohegemony as discussed in this study.

Their practice is situated in the liminal space of knowing the Palestinian other as a colleague, very much other than the Palestinian narratively constituted into a threatening subject (as per the Israeli justificatory narrative). Yet this practice manifests gingerly, even apologetically, ever reticent to engage critically and

transformatively with Israel's narratively justified hydrohegemony. By comparison, the discursive practice of hydropolitical peacebuilding variously and fundamentally critiques, resists, desists and engages in alternative relational formations as compared to hydrohegemonic practice.

This study has also discussed hydrohegemonic residues as threats, notably where there is solid evidence that water/peace practitioners are pre-eminently engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding. In asymmetric conflicts like the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the discursive pressure to conform generated and imposed by the over-arching hegemony on civil society practitioners is powerful indeed. In such conflicts, conformity is understood as hegemonically-oriented alignment in practice and ideation.

What this study has found is that those Israeli civil society practitioners engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding are operating in an overall hydrohegemonic context from which they cannot fully escape (in Foucauldian parlance). Among other things, they are confronted with hydrohegemonically threatening opportunities (e.g. new sources of funding from Israel). Also, they frequently take calculated risks under the banner of peacebuilding (e.g. in transboundary wastewater management programming). In these and many other cases discussed in this work, such practitioners are constantly making choices about how to pursue their hydropolitical work. In this study, their discursive practices have primarily been framed as hydropolitical peacebuilding, yet ever cognisant of the hydrohegemonic residues that threaten to undermine

the very aspirations and hopes invested in their programmes, projects and initiatives.

Environmental Cooperation

Transformative group discursive practices offer valuable insights to the study of hydro-politics and eco-politics in conflict regions more widely. An important research concern in the field of Peace Studies is about the peacebuilding significance of cooperation on environment and natural resources (including but not limited to water). This particular study has found that environmental cooperation does not inevitably or invariably contribute to peace or promote peacebuilding in conflict environments. However, there are specific practices associated with such cooperation that more than likely need to be pursued *for*, and *as* peacebuilding. Reiterating a few points made in the previous section and throughout this study, to promote peace and practice peacebuilding, such cooperation will likely engage in *critique*, *resistance*, *desistance*, and *alternative relational formations* with a clear analysis of contextualised power relations.

Beginning with the last point, it is essential that any such study make visible the power relations of parties within a specific context. In this study, such visibility was pursued through a critical, historical study of Israel's relations with the Palestinians. Bringing nuance and depth to this analysis, the study highlights specific time periods during which these relations were significantly impacted or changed. The study joins that of others (e.g. Zeitoun, 2009; Elmusa, 1997; Lowi, 1993) in demonstrating the progressive construction of an Israeli hydrohegemonic relation with the Palestinians.

Against this framework, and drawing on the methodology of interpretive practice, this study then examined and assessed the discursive practices of

Israeli, transboundary, water/peace practitioners. In so doing, it became clear that hydropolitical peacebuilding is recognisable where practices of critique, resistance, desistance, and alternative relational formation are being pursued. A few words will be said about each of these, with reference to transformative group practice in the context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The transformative group as a community in discourse was found to be critical of Israel's hydrohegemonic relations with the Palestinians, unwilling to (re-) produce such relations. In practice, they desist from (re-) producing Israel's larger hegemony as domain-specific hydrohegemony, pursuing relational equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability. They further resist the Israeli regime of truth, discussed here in terms of a hydrohegemonic justificatory narrative. A few points are worth highlighting about their practice in this respect:

- They work as though Israel is no longer a victim, such that Israeli practitioners must grapple with the fact of their being asymmetrically more powerful actors than Palestinians;
- Their practice interprets the West Bank occupation as violence and not redemption, despite the Jewish religious affinities of many practitioners;
- They operate on the assumption that Jewish biblical and historical rights are limited, and that they must equitably confront the Palestinian claim of water rights;
- They recognise and engage with the mutual facts of Israeli and Palestinian un/sustainability, and of the environmental and socio-political unsustainability of the Jewish redemption of Biblical Zion, rather than leverage a discourse of sustainability to perpetuate Israeli dominance;
- They recognise that Israel's claimed water-related 'benevolence' towards the Palestinians is self-deceptive, even violent, and does not justify or legitimate a continued provider-client relation; and
- They draw political distinctions between Palestinian practices rather than lumping all Palestinians together into a totalising threat.

The transformative group also practices alternative relational formations with Palestinians, intently producing equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability. These relations are not all the same but are produced with a diversity that befits critical, resistant, desistant and alternatives-oriented practitioners. Drawing on insights from this study, transboundary environmental cooperation benefits from being examined (both objectively and reflexively) through such a discursive lens, in context. Environmental and water-domain cooperation more specifically does not inevitably contribute to peace or produce peacebuilding. To be anything of the sort, such cooperation must intentionally engage with the violence of its particular relational context.

On Peace with the Palestinians

The current section is seen as an opportunity to say a few words about hydrohegemony and Israel-Palestinian peace in broader terms. Much word-space was used in this study to examine Israel-Palestinian peace processes, including and in particular the Madrid/Oslo processes. One of the perspectives developed focused on Israel's intentional dominance in relations with the subjugated Palestinians. This Israeli hegemony was discussed in broad terms while focusing on the water domain (in terms of hydrohegemony). As such, hydrohegemony was examined as constitutive of Israel's peacemaking practice.

This study has not focused principally on *peacemaking* processes, strategies or tactics, but on *peacebuilding*. It is not therefore in its purview to draw extensive theoretically-informed conclusions about peacemaking. Nonetheless, the methodology of interpretive practice has made it essential to examine discourses in practice and discursive practices, having them *speak* to one another. In addition to exacting a deep reading of the relational literature on the Israel-Palestinian conflict, this methodological choice has entailed extensive interviewing with Israeli, but also Palestinian, water/peace practitioners. Having discursively analysed the practices of Israeli practitioners, much of the remaining space will draw on Palestinian water/peace practitioner interviews to say a few words about hydrohegemony and peace, with relevance to peacemaking as well as peacebuilding.

Palestinian discourses of water rights, partnership, equity and sustainability can all be understood to share one central political message (among others, of

course). In the simplest terms, the Palestinians aspire to self-determination, and endeavour towards its realisation. This is largely understood to mean formal statehood, as made evident by the recent Palestinian bid for full UN recognition.

As explained by one Palestinian participant (Personal interview, PW7 2010):

I believe I have [the] right to have a nation, to have my sovereignty over my natural resources, without harming, with an appreciation for the international law and principles. Very simple.

It is also and perhaps more profoundly understood to mean independence, notably in terms of Palestinian relations with Israel, as explained by another Palestinian participant (Personal interview, PW2 2010).

We believe in [a] two-state solution. We believe in peace and I believe also that peace cannot happen unless there is a solid backing ground for peace to take place. That means that Israelis have to respect our water rights whether in indigenous water resources or transboundary water resources. If that does not happen, the peace will be fragile...

The Palestinian water/peace practitioners interviewed for this study reveal a willingness, even a desire to continue being engaged relationally with Israelis, as equal but not subjugated partners (Personal interview, PW5 2010).

[W]e have to establish a fair relationship and not coexistence between slaves or people under occupations and occupier. So occupation has to be changed. Even in the water issue.

This point is shared widely by all Palestinians interviewed. In a related vein, Palestinians also draw parallels between transboundary water/peace practice among practitioners and cooperation at bi-national level, as reflected in the following passage (Personal interview, PW2 2010).

To add to this, all the time the Israelis act as an upper hand. They come and they give orders. We do this and then the Palestinians do what they order. Nobody accepts that anymore. We need to develop peace, to defuse this upper hand attitude... This has to disappear and to be replaced by cooperation. Cooperation, you need to develop things and projects so people can cooperate on an equal basis... [C]ooperation is the key for peace, but this, the peace, has to recognise our water rights in full. We have to have absolute sovereignty over our water. There is no meaning if we have a state and Israel is still controlling our water resources, that means... you have an independent state and Israel controls the tap of our country.

In process, Palestinians interviewed for this study call on Israel to make real material progress with the Palestinians, to build and not undermine the sometimes fragile confidence already developed among transboundary water/peace practitioners. As explained by one Palestinian research participant (Personal interview, PW6 2010):

It is hard for me to feel I am doing some peace projects while I cannot dig into my land to find some water. And I know there is water there but you cannot dig because you have limitations [on] the depth you can dig for. And if you start digging, you will find [Israeli] IDF forces coming to your land and sometimes they will take the digger, or they will kick them out or they will stop them. It is your land. How would you feel if you were digging for water and someone comes and prevents you from digging for water? You need it for planting trees. You need it for drinking... Until you stop feeling these issues, feeling threatened about not finding some water, opening the tap, and finding no water, maybe you feel better, but we have our own problems to deal with. What peace? What water? I cannot see the water.

Still, the Palestinians interviewed in this study continue to cooperate with Israelis, to work together, organising conferences together, attending joint workshops, developing joint projects, publishing articles, disseminating results and building the future, both unilaterally and cooperatively. Such cooperation is undertaken within power-laden relational contexts, such that cooperation is itself a power-laden relation constituted by power-laden capillary relationships.

As discussed throughout this study, such cooperation is largely hydrohegemonic, or at best hydrohegemonically residual.

Within this wider hydro/hegemony, this study found that a small, narrow group of transboundary water/peace practitioners are engaged in transformative practice, framed herein as hydropolitical peacebuilding. In various ways and perhaps to different degrees, these Israeli practitioners have grown to appreciate the fundamental lesson contained in the very simple yet powerful statement of one long-standing Palestinian water/peace practitioner: “People in control do not have peace in mind...” (Personal interview, PW1 2010) The transformative practice of Israeli, transboundary water/peace practitioners engaged in hydropolitical peacebuilding is fundamentally informed by the values contained in this simple yet poignant message. Israel and its leaders would do well to learn from these practitioners, as they imagine, construct and practice the next stage of peacemaking with Palestinians.

Research Implications

This final concluding section affords an opportunity to concisely express the research implications stemming from the study. There are specifically five areas for study that are highlighted. These are discussed in terms of (a) hydropolitical peacebuilding both within and outside the Middle East, (b) the significance of produced water to conflict relations, (c) the peacebuilding significance of cooperation related to environmental resources other than water, (d) the significance of academic and civil society practice to peacebuilding, and (e) the use of interpretive practice as a methodology for conflict and peace research.

Hydropolitical Peacebuilding Both Within and Outside the Middle East

On the first point, the current study is one among many that assesses the significance of water to Israel-Palestinian conflict and peace. However, it makes an original contribution in analysing the discursive practices of Israeli academic and civil society water/peace practitioners within the explicitly articulated context of Israel's hydrohegemony and its related justificatory narrative. This study is of course not the final word on the subject. There are numerous other programmes, projects and practices of the three transboundary organisations that may be studied in this way. There are also other organisations engaged in transboundary water/peace whose activities and practice could be analysed in terms of hydropolitical peacebuilding.

Further afield, water-domain practices in asymmetric conflict environments other than the Israel-Palestinian milieu might also be studied through the theoretical framework herein developed. Of particular interest are hydropolitical

relational practices between Turkey and the Kurds, between China and the Tibetans, between newly-established South Sudan and its Nile Basin neighbours, and between the powerfully-differentiated states above the Guarani Aquifer in South America.

Significance of Produced Water to Conflict Relations

This study has brought to light discursive cleavages between technical and political approaches to water cooperation, management and development in the context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. In so doing, it speaks critically to the idea that increasing quantities of water available to conflict parties neutralises and prevents water-related conflict between them. This study concludes that this is not necessarily the case, notably in the conflictual Middle East, given that water has been a material, symbolic, relational and political resource. While it is essential for the basic human need for water to be satisfied, it does indeed matter how this is done, sensitive to the power relations thereby constructed, (re-) produced and perpetuated within historical context. In the Israel-Palestinian context, increasing quantities of non-conventional water currently produced and supplied by Israel have enabled the perpetuation of Israel's hydrohegemony rather than contributing to the peaceable transformation of the relational order.

It is said that the global hydrological future is found in produced water. In this vein, seawater desalination is being pursued aggressively across the planet (and is indeed expanding). This includes areas of potential and escalated protracted, asymmetric and violent conflict, notably in the Middle East, North

Africa and Australia. There is significant research potential in analysing the peacebuilding significance of non-conventional, and specifically desalinated waters to relations between conflict parties in these regions and elsewhere.

Peacebuilding Significance of Cooperation on Environmental Resources

Other than Water

As a theoretical guide, hydropolitical peacebuilding is rooted in principles of equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability. It is articulated in the form of critical, resistant and desistant practices, as well as the active pursuit of alternative relational formations between conflict actors, cognisant of the dominant relational context. In many ways, hydropolitical peacebuilding and environmental peacebuilding are mutually-constitutive bodies of thought, with the former theoretically stemming from the latter. In this sense, the theoretical choices made to construct what is referred to herein as hydropolitical peacebuilding can indeed be applicable elsewhere, with reference to environmental resources other than water.

In the Middle East, a hydropolitical peacebuilding analysis may be leveraged to look at Israeli-Palestinian cooperation and management on the matter of hazardous waste, a significant transboundary area of concern and practice. It may be used to further assess the peacebuilding significance of both shared and separate efforts of Israeli and Palestinian ecopolitical practitioners to protect the region's biodiversity and open spaces. In the Israel-Palestinian region, it is often said that *nature knows no boundaries*. Yet, the spaces of the Israel-Palestinian conflict are nothing if not fragmented, bordered, securitised

and contested. Outside the Middle East, the analysis of hydropolitical peacebuilding could meaningfully be leveraged to study relations between indigenous and non-indigenous communities on matters of resource governance. In Canada, the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) would be an insightful place to start, given the asymmetric relational context underpinning this agreement (penned by environmental NGOs and forestry sector corporations), and its inclusions/exclusions of aboriginal knowledge.

Significance of Academic and Civil Society Practice to Peacebuilding

Most of the research and analysis on water, conflict and peace in terms of Israel-Palestinian relations has focused on inter-governmental and/or sanctioned processes. In the current study, this is also done, but as a critical (if fundamental) discursively contextualising exercise rather than as the primary purpose of study. Further, the current study has analytically focused on the relational practices of academic and civil society water/peace practitioners. Drawing on the Foucauldian notion that power is expressed, (re-) produced and circulated through extensive capillary circuits, this study has privileged socio-political capillary practices found in academic and civil society-based relations and relationships. In so doing, this study has made visible the expression and operation of hydrohegemony, hydropolitical peacebuilding and hydrohegemonic residues among and between Israelis and Palestinians, by comparison and in contrast to Israel and the Palestinians.

Such an approach to the study of power and peacebuilding may prove valuable to the analysis of other conflict areas, both in terms of water and more broadly,

wherever there is evidence of transboundary communities of practice. For instance, relations between recognised and controversial riparians of the Tigris-Euphrates system may be studied through inter-state relations (notably including Kurdish representation). It may also be studied through an ethnomethodological and discursive analysis of the academic-practitioner Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC). In this and other cases, doing so would also enable an analysis of relational subjecthood formations, drawing on the hydropolitical peacebuilding factors of equality, partnership, equity and shared sustainability. Doing so would also allow for a contextualised appreciation of the hydrohegemonic residues of practitioners seeking to promote and practice peacebuilding.

Use of Interpretive Practice as a Methodology for Conflict and Peace Research

The current study has been anchored in a methodology of interpretive practice, itself making visible discourse-in-practice and discursive practices. This methodology relies on methods that include ethnography and foucauldian discourse analysis, to which was supplemented narrative construction and analysis in this study. As a methodology of conflict and peace research, interpretive practice has been valuable in enabling the unfolding story of civil society relational practices to be told while juxtaposing and comparing it to the dominant relational context.

Such a methodological approach to the study of conflict and peace is valuable given that the politics of peace and peacebuilding, as well as relational

practices on the ground are altogether ever changing. Interpretive practice provides a methodological basis for studying these changing socio-political practices, and ideational and meaningful formations. As a way to assess the peacebuilding significance of specific programmes, projects and activities on the ground in conflict environments, interpretive practice provides a way for theorists to explicitly articulate the context within which political relevance may be gauged. It allows researchers and theorist-practitioners to gain an ethnographically rich and discursively-laden appreciation of multi-sectoral and multi-level conflict relations and relational practices. Such knowledge is valuable for those who engage in reflexive action with respect to the peacebuilding significance of practices on the ground. As such, the methodology of interpretive practice itself paves the way for a critical, reflexive and appreciative research practice in the field of peace studies.

Concluding Thoughts

This doctoral research project has framed and discussed Israel's hydrohegemony as a relation of protracted and asymmetric violence in the Israel-Palestinian context. Hydrohegemony has filtered into the relational discourse, ideationally and practically, of a majority of Israelis. It is produced through different relational domains, including transboundary water resource management and cooperation. And it is justified and reproduced through an Israeli justificatory narrative that poignantly contains and limits relational possibilities for the future. The relational order thereby produced is principally of Israeli dominance and Palestinian subjugation, of Israel as provider and the Palestinians as clients, of independent Israeli statehood and of Palestinians under occupation.

Within this asymmetric relational context, a small contingent of Israeli (and Palestinian) water/peace practitioners has taken meaningful risks. These practitioners have critiqued Israel's hydrohegemony, they have both resisted and desisted from participating in its (re-) production, and they have continued to imagine and practice alternative relational formations. Their discursive practices of hydropolitical peacebuilding, their ways of seeing and doing, their real efforts on the ground, make it clear that this powerful hegemonic, relational system is not totalistic if totalising. There are people, in this case water/peace practitioners, who both imagine and meaningfully build diverse Israeli-Palestinian relations as compared to the one dominantly prescribed.

It is obviously not clear from the current research if such hydropolitical peacebuilding is likely to bring an end the Israel-Palestinian conflict, this being neither this study's purpose nor methodology. What can be said, in conclusion, is that the dominant relational formation of hydrohegemony (and hegemony more broadly) has thus far powerfully perpetuated violence. That some Israelis are imagining and practicing something profoundly and relationally other, rooted in recognition of Palestinian equality, in transboundary partnership, motivated by a deep human need for shared equity and sustainability, provides a powerful glimpse into a perhaps more peaceful alternative relational world.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Poster from GLOWA session entitled 'Peace and the Transboundary Hydro-Communitarian Imaginaire', hosted on 11 July 2010

APPENDIX 2

List of personal publications related to water and peacebuilding in the Middle East and more generally

APPENDIX 3

List of personal presentations related to the water/peace domain with reference to the Israel-Palestinian conflict

APPENDIX 4

Email request to participate in the research project, including preliminary acknowledgement of informed consent

APPENDIX 5

List of research participants

APPENDIX 1

Poster from GLOWA session entitled 'Peace and the Transboundary Hydro-Communitarian Imaginaire', hosted on 11 July 2010.

Transboundary Water Development as a Practice of Peace: *Shared, Cooperative, Equitable?*

Eric Abitbol, PhD Researcher (ABD)
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Premise

Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians and International water practitioners claim 'peace' as motivation and effect of transboundary water development practices.

Guiding Questions

How do you practice transboundary water development in the Jordan Basin?

How do you understand this is a practice of peace?



Research Questions

Your practices: What do you do as a water practitioner? What are your transboundary water practices?

Your future: What is the vision of a national and collective future that you project?

Your conflict: What is the violence of 'your' Israel/Palestinian conflict?

Your peace: How does your water-related engagement advance your vision of peace?

Your community: How are you 'in community' with other water and peace practitioners?

Your analysis: What are supports, constraints and opportunities you recognise in advancing peace through water-related practice?

Your politics: How and why have your practices and your engagement changed through time?

Your alternatives: Given contemporary circumstances and context, what are you considering doing differently?

Your vision: How do you imagine practically translating your vision of peace into transboundary water management and development?

Your motivation: Why do you do what you do?



APPENDIX 2

List of personal publications related to water and peacebuilding in the Middle East and more generally

Articles – Peer-reviewed

Abitbol, Eric (2009) “Developing Water and Marginalising Israel/Palestinian Peace: A Critical Examination of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Feasibility Study Process”, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 5.1: 35-49.

Abitbol, Eric (2006) “Giving the Dead Sea a New Life: Have All Options Been Responsibly Considered?”, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 3.1: 94-99.

Working Papers

Abitbol, Eric and Schoenfeld, Stuart (February 2009) ‘Adaptive Visions of Water in the Middle East: Lessons from a Regional Water Planning Initiative’, York Centre for International and Security Studies (YCISS) Working Paper No.50, Toronto: York University. Available at: <http://www.yorku.ca/yciss/publish/documents/WP50-AbitbolandSchoenfeld.pdf> Accessed 23 June 2011.

Book Chapters

Abitbol, Eric (2012) On Adaptive Water Governance: Producing an Equitable and Reflexive Hydro-politics of Security and Peace. In Tom Rippon and Graham Kemp (eds) *Governance and Security as a Unitary Concept* Victoria, BC: Agio Publishing House, 131-144.

Abitbol, Eric and Stuart Schoenfeld (2009) Constructing an Adaptive Regional Vision of Water Development in the Jordan River Basin. In Clive Lipchin, Deborah Sandler and Emily Cushman (eds) *The Jordan River and Dead Sea Basin: Cooperation Amid Conflict – Proceedings of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Water Resources and Infrastructure in Areas of Conflict and Extreme Conditions* Berlin: Springer, 297-316.

Schoenfeld, Stuart, Eric Abitbol and Francesca De Châtel (2007) Retelling the Story of Water in the Middle East: Reflections On and About a Conversation at the Dead Sea. In Clive Lipchin, Eric Pallant, Danielle Saranga and Allyson Amster (eds) *Integrated Water Resources Management and Security in the Middle East* Dordrecht: Springer, in Cooperation with NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 1-29.

Training Materials

Abitbol, Eric (2004) ‘Drinking Together For Life: Challenges of Managing Freshwater Resources’, Training Materials for September 2004 Meeting of Scholars – ‘Think Again 2004’, Ottawa: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Reports

World Bank (Unpublished) 'Conflict and Peace Effects Study of the Red Sea Dead Sea Water Conveyance Project', study undertaken by Peacemedia-paixmédia, submitted to the Red Sea Dead Conveyance Feasibility Study Team, Amman: ERM and the World Bank.

Abitbol, Eric (Unpublished) 'Water-wise Tourism in the Dead Sea Basin', Research report submitted as a component of the *A Future for the Dead Sea: Options for a More Sustainable Management* project, Newcastle: University of Newcastle and ARC Systems Research.

APPENDIX 3

List of personal presentations related to the water/peace domain with reference to the Israel-Palestinian conflict

Academic Conference Presentations

Environmental Cooperation and Israel-Palestinian Relations, Speakers' Series – Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Toronto, Canada; 15 March 2012

Hydropolitics in Israel-Palestine: Does taking water out of conflict contribute to peacemaking? Conference Paper Presentation, 20th Annual Symposium on Conflict Resolution, Joint Initiative of Saint Paul University, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada; 4 February 2011

Producing the Hydro-Communitarian Imaginaire as Peace Praxis, Conference Paper Presentation, Canadian Peace Research Association/ Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences 2010, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; 3 June 2010

Of Bounded Exclusion and Transboundary Movement: Considering the Hegemony of Violence and Transhegemonic Production of Israeli/Palestinian Peace, Conference Paper Presentation, Association for Israel Studies, University of Toronto, Canada; 10-12 May 2010

Water Wisdom and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Dead Sea and the Politics of Wisdom, Conference Paper Presentation, International Peace Research Association, University of Leuven, Belgium; 18 July 2008

Water Wisdom and the Jordan River Basin, Seminar Presentation, Bradford Water Research Group, University of Bradford, Bradford, United Kingdom; 11 June 2008

A Case Study in Hydropolitics: The Proposed Red Sea-Dead Sea 'Water Conveyance' and Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian Relations, Research Symposium: Israel at 60, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada; 3 April 2008

Promoting Sustainable Water Governance Through Concerted Research: Alternative Visions of Water at the Dead Sea, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Lisbon Technical Institute, Lisbon, Portugal; 27 February 2007

Alternative Vision of Water: The Red Sea/Dead Sea Canal – Resistance Through Concerted Research, with Prof. Stuart Schoenfeld, at York University – Colloquium on the Global South, Toronto, Canada; 24 January 2007

NGO/Non-Academic Conferences

Approaches to Middle East Peace: The Significance of Human Rights, Panel Presentation, Amnesty International (francophone section) Conference 'Gaza... Goldstone and After?', Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Montreal, Canada; 29 April 2010

Israel and Palestine: The Next Step, Panel Presentation, McGill Debating Union and Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR-McGill), McGill University, Montreal, Canada; 10 November 2009

idTalk: A Panel Discussion on Clean Water Provision – How do we best provide clean water to developing communities?, Moderator, Engineers Without Borders and the Sustainability Action Fund, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; 5 November 2008

The Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal: A Proposed Multi-billion Dollar Jordanian, Israeli, World Bank Project with Prof. Stuart Schoenfeld, at the Jewish Environmental Conference, Toronto, Canada; 9-11 March 2007

Workshop Developer, Facilitator and/or Trainer

Campus Strife, Community Struggles: Experiences of the Globalised Israel-Palestinian Conflict – Storytelling, Dialogue and Collaborative Learning, LeMood 2011 Festival of Unexpected Jewish Learning, Montreal, Canada; 5 June 2011

A Public Dialogue with Micha Kurz: Grassroots Jerusalem and Breaking the Silence, public seminar hosted and facilitated by Eric Abitbol (Peacemedia-paixmédia), Department of Political Science at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; 8 November 2010

Stories 'In Community' Practice, Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) Workshop, 'Creating Community – Realizing Peace', Talitha Kumi, Israel/Palestine; 22 October 2010

Samoan Circle Dialogue, (Jewish-Arab) Montreal Dialogue Group, Montreal, Canada; 14 April 2010

Samoan Circle Dialogue, (Jewish-Arab) Montreal Dialogue Group, Montreal, Canada; 17 March 2008

APPENDIX 4

Email request to participate in the research project, including preliminary acknowledgement of informed consent

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A WATER COMMUNITY AND PEACE RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear (potential research participant),

I wish to invite you, as a water and peace practitioner, to participate in a research project designed to appreciate the significance of 'transboundary water community' engagements with respect to Middle East peace efforts. The interview process is designed as an opportunity for you to reflect on what you do, claim and imagine in terms of water (management, development and projection) and peace, given the wider Israel/Palestinian conflict.

My overall research question is as follows: How do you, a water community member, imagine your transboundary water efforts with reference to the claim of contributing to peace in the Middle East?

The commitment you make in participating at this stage entails a 2-hour, semi-structured interview that I would conduct with you (with possible follow-up for clarification purposes). This interview is a component of my PhD research in the field of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. I would be most grateful for your participation.

I shall be in the Israel from July 2 to 9 and again from July 14 to 22. I will be pleased to meet at a location that is convenient to you. Please propose two alternative times and a location where this might take place.

In agreeing to the interview, you are giving informed consent, indicating that you are participating freely, and that you have been assured of confidentiality (except where you have chosen to waive it). It is entirely within your right to terminate an interview and withdraw from the research project at any time. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have about the research project at this or any later stage.

Thank you for your time and considered response.
I hope to have the pleasure of meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,
Eric Abitbol
PhD (ABD) Researcher

Who I am: Eric Abitbol BA (McGill), MSc (LSE)

A Peace and Sustainability researcher and practitioner, currently undertaking PhD studies at the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford (UK), I have studied and engaged in water and peacebuilding processes over 18 years, notably in the Middle East and on the African continent. At several Canadian universities (Concordia, St-Paul, York), I continue to teach peace studies, ecopolitics, global governance and sustainable development. I am an Associate Fellow at York's Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS) and an International Advisory Committee member of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (American University, DC).

APPENDIX 5

List of research participants

The following listing reflects the self-perception of research participants as practitioners diversely situated at the nexus of water and peace in the Middle East. While some have waived their right to confidentiality, the identity of all participants has been concealed to reflect this researcher's choice, in acknowledgement of considerations stemming from the Israel-Palestinian conflict environment. The organisational and/or professional affiliation of participants has been selectively included, reflecting also their requests and waivers of confidentiality.

Israeli Participants: Government-Aligned

- IG4 Nature Conservation Expert, Israel Nature and Parks Authority
- IG5 Agricultural Consultant
- IG6 Water Specialist, formerly with the Israel-Palestinian Joint Technical Committee
- IW1 Transboundary Water Governance Specialist, Israel-Palestinian Joint Water Committee
- IW2 Engineer, Israel Water Authority
- IX3 Chemist, formerly with Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Israel
- IX4 Engineer, Water Resources Management Specialist, formerly with Mekorot National Water Company

Israeli Participants: Academic and Civil Society

- IA1 Water and Peace Researcher, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- IE1 Environment and Peace Educator, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)
- IE2 Transboundary Water and Peace Practitioner, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)
- IE3 Economist, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)
- IE4 "Masters student doing my thesis on transboundary stream restoration, a joint project with Israelis and Palestinians."
- IE5 Transboundary Water and Peace Researcher and Practitioner, Dead Sea and Arava Science Center
- IE6 Sustainable Environment and Peace Researcher, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute
- IF1 Natural Resource Economist
- IF2 Natural Resource Economist; Mining Geologist; Energy and Water Policy Analyst
- IF3 Advocate of Sustainable Water and Peace Issues, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME)
- IF4 Transboundary Water and Peace Practitioner, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME)
- IG1 Climate and Climate Change Researcher, Tel Aviv University
- IG2 Transboundary Natural Resource and Environment Researcher
- IG3 Climate and Climate Change Researcher

- IX1 Environment and Peace Practitioner, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI)
- IX2 Environmental Lawyer

Palestinian Participants: Government-Aligned

- PW1 Hydrologist, Regional Peace Practitioner, Palestinian Water Authority
- PW4 Civil Engineer, Water and Environment Specialist, Palestinian Water Authority
- PW5 Engineer, Regional Water Specialist, Palestinian Water Authority

Palestinian Participants: Academic and Civil Society

- PF1 Transboundary Water and Peace Practitioner
- PF2 Engineer, Transboundary Environment and Peacebuilding Practitioner, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME)
- PW2 Civil Engineer, House of Water and Environment (HWE)
- PW3 Environmental Chemist, Transboundary Water and Peace Practitioner
- PW6 Water Practitioner
- PW7 Engineer, An-Najah National University
- PW8 “Water Expert Concerned about Peace”, Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG)