SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS: THE WEST BANK

By

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Abstract

The concept of human security has undergone some major changes in the past decades and is still characterised by a number of debates that relate closely to development issues. Protracted refugee situations resonate with several of them and thus become useful cases to analyse. In my thesis, I choose the West Bank as my case study and ask how certain structural conditions affect the way sustainable development projects are implemented in the region. After having interviewed professionals from three organisations implementing such projects in Palestine, I find out that although these conditions comprise highly inconvenient obstacles for – but do not completely change agendas of – these organisations, it is the same conditions that keep development at a much slower pace than the region could experience. Not only does the political nature of this phenomenon call for an environmental justice approach to be utilised in such cases, but it also bridges the conceptual divide between human security scholars and supports the claim that protracted refugee situations should not be approached as other humanitarian crises.

Keywords: human security, protracted refugee situation, forced migration, Palestine, sustainable development

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Introduction

The concept of security has undergone significant changes in the immediate post-Cold War period. What was once considered as responsibility of the state to protect its citizens from military threats and keep its national interests was now expanded to encompass a great deal of other factors. In the 'New World Order', there has been deepening and widening of the concept of security which now included economic, social, and political threats. Also, the questions were asked whose security we were talking about exactly and who was in charge of ensuring it. Individual was placed at the centre, and the exclusive power that nation-states have to provide security to their citizens has been becoming less and less exclusive: "<…> implied in concepts such as 'human security', 'human development', 'humanitarian emergency' and 'humanitarian intervention' was the idea of *transnational* responsibility [emphasis added] for human welfare: the responsibility to protect" (Hettne, 2010, p. 44).

The more the concept of human security expands, the clearer its nexus to development becomes. As the UNDP states, we have to move "from security through armaments to security through sustainable human development" (UNDP, 1994, p.24). Scholars, too, see the interwoven nature of the two concepts: "human security should take care of promoting conflict prevention, development being the most effective prevention strategy" (Cirdei, Ispas & Negoescu, 2011, p. 15). Human security strategies become proactive and stress conflict prevention and peace-building rather than humanitarian response (Harvard School of Public Heath, 2004). Hence, in addition to its intrinsic value, sustainable development is now seen as a human security strategy.

Among various unfortunate phenomena, forced migration remains one that poses enormous human security challenges to this day. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2010 the number of refugees has reached 10.55 million globally, which does not even include asylum seekers, Internally Displaced People (IDPs), and stateless persons (UNHCR, 2011, p. 6). The same most recent database indicates that approximately 7.2 million refugees are currently living in what the UNHCR calls protracted refugee situations (PRSs): that is, refugee populations of 25,000 people or more living in exile for five or more years in developing countries (UNHCR, 2004, p. 2). The UN describes a PRS as "one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile" (*ibid*). Exile, in these cases, is more than twenty host countries like Pakistan, Jordan, Chad, Thailand, and Kenya.

The living conditions in Protracted Refugee Situations present their host countries as well the global community with a combination of physical, social, economic, and political challenges:

> [M]any refugees caught up in them live in remote and insecure areas, with limited opportunities to move around, or to have access to land, the labour market, and educational opportunities. It is unsurprising that, as one result, protracted refugee situations are often characterized by high levels of personal trauma, social tension, sexual violence, and negative survival strategies. (UNHCR, 2008, p. 3)

Ideally, the very structural solution to any of the insecurities that refugees face is voluntary repatriation or, as a satisficing option, permanent resettlement. Realistically, however, both of these solutions are seldom plausible, otherwise the number of people caught in PRSs would show some rapid decrease. Thus, the nexus between development and human security becomes rather obvious here: "<…> for refugees, human security strategies must not only

protect the displaced from violence or physical harm but also create the conditions for refugees to maintain and develop their social relationships as well as further their political and economic emancipation" (Harvard School of Public Health, 2004). Clearly, there is a slow shift from categorising forced migration as merely a humanitarian issue to an all-encompassing human security problem. To sum up, due to a diverse nature of insecurities, a variety of actors involved, and due to the sheer size of the phenomenon, PRSs fit very well into the human security discourse.

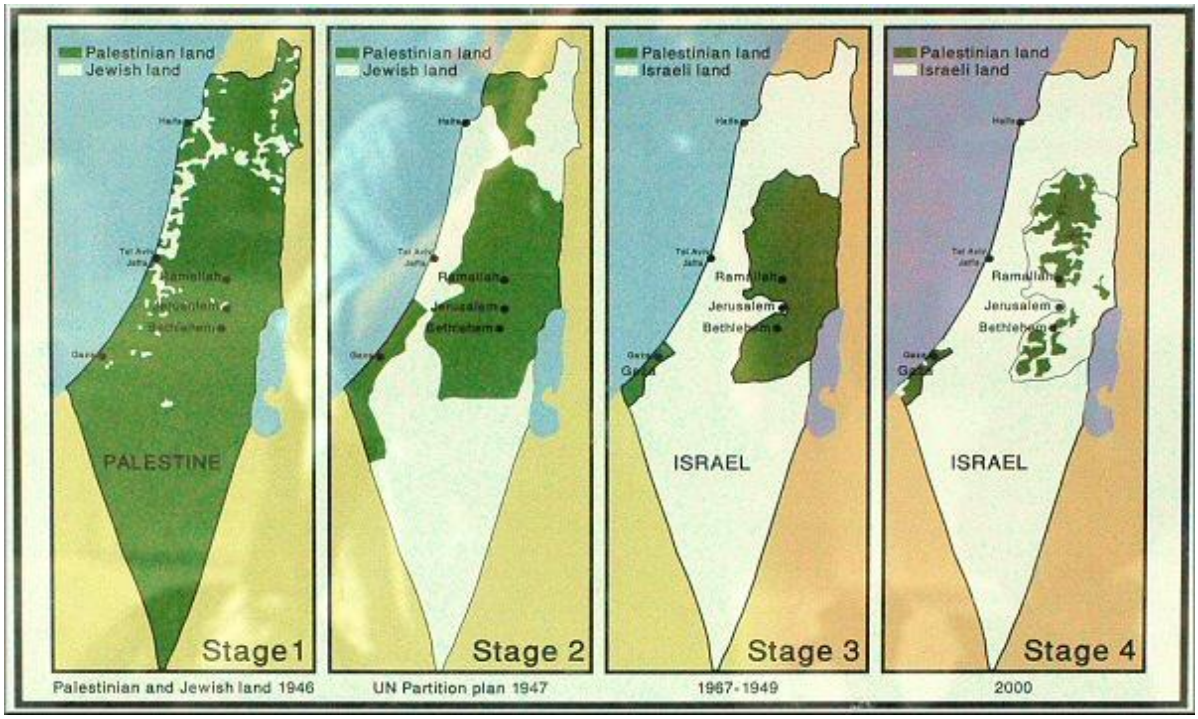

Figure 1

(Retrieved from: http://www.hopeflowersschool.org/images/pal-map_10264b.jpg)

Out of all the protracted refugee situations, there is one group of people that have been living in such conditions for as long as six decades. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, conflicts that followed and the shrinking of available land (see Figure 1), millions of Palestinians have fled their homes and many more were born in exile (more on this in upcoming sections). Lebanon, Syria, Jordan – among others, these countries have taken up in

total around 3 million of Palestinians (UNRWA, 2012 January). At the same time, Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPTs), or simply Palestine, presently comprised of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, constitute a very interesting case: some people being refugees in their own land, without the right to return to where they are originally from.

In my research, I have chosen to look into the West Bank as a case of PRSs and ask how certain conditions affect the way sustainable development projects are implemented in the region. Diverse nature of insecurities that the refugees experience, the time (that is, decades) people have been living in such a situation, and the transnational nature of the actors involved in improving the lives of Palestinians all make the West Bank an extremely interesting case of PRSs to explore. Its uniqueness and the way it resembles other PRSs will be discussed in upcoming chapters of this thesis.

Organisations working to implement various sustainable development projects to improve human security levels in Palestine have to deal with a number of factors. In my research, I have chosen to explore several conditions that can either facilitate or hinder the work of such organisations. I have named these 'structural conditions' and would like to specify this term now. Basically, these are factors that no organisation operating in the West Bank can escape. For the sake of convenience, I have grouped them into (1) power-sharing mechanisms between the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli Government, (2) the administrative divisions (Areas) controlled by different bodies, and (3) a system of obstacles to freedom of movement in the West Bank. In other words, these structural conditions comprise the basic fabric – both bureaucratic and physical – onto which any project gets implemented in the West Bank.

The sustainable development practices are defined as projects that aim to improve the infrastructure in the West Bank, facilitating long-term development and ensuring better food and water security. That is, these projects aim to alleviate certain insecurities and promote development in the long term. Such practices in this study are intentionally juxtaposed to humanitarian relief initiatives. It is understandable that in certain cases there may not be one single clear dividing line between the two, and that such relief projects are very much needed in the area. At the same time, sustainable development projects regarding food and water security are chosen due to the presumed complexity of their implementation – for example, they usually require permits from certain authorities, may involve construction work, etc. – although, naturally, the omitted projects are by no means considered to be less important for the overall development of the region.

Thus, I have travelled to the West Bank and interviewed specialists from three organisations working in the area – MA'AN Development Centre, the Palestinian Hydrology Group, and Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED). All of them work to implement projects that have long-term development goals and so I talked to them about several of their sustainable development projects and how the three categories of structural conditions affected their work. Furthermore, I asked them to indicate any significant external factors that helped them in their work or have obstructed it in some respects. For instance, maybe it was unrealistic conditionalities of donor agencies or poor acceptance of their project proposals by local governments, and so forth. That is to say, in addition to institutional arrangements, it is critical to specify other factors that could be seen as both independent and intervening variables that have impacted the very emergence of some sustainable development projects in the West Bank.

Out of all the potential ways to approach this topic, I have chosen to conduct interviews for several reasons. One, talking to people who work in the field can produce a new body of knowledge that goes beyond educated guesses or even official statements on how NGOs operate in the West Bank. Two, organisations themselves can indicate what other factors that perhaps would not cross one's mind in fact significantly – in a good way or in a bad way – impact their work. It is precisely the interviews themselves that reveal (1) the extent to which such obstacles to implementation of various projects can be overcome by the organisations themselves, and, interestingly, (2) the very *nature* of these obstacles and how they relate to the general development in Palestine.

Therefore, the findings of this research contribute to the broader discourse of human security and development as a human security strategy. Not only does the West Bank serve to illustrate the hindrances to improving the state of human security in a PRS, it also shows how those hindrances are not necessarily environment-induced, and that what is often seen as a humanitarian crisis can be in fact very different. If development is indeed the key to improved human security, the findings of this paper make us wonder how development is actually affected by the same factors that at first sight do not seem to hinder it that much

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The structure of this paper is as follows. First, PRSs are situated within human security debates. Then, structural conditions are described in greater detail. Later the levels of water- and food security in the West Bank are briefly described as well as the refugee situation there. After the methodology is introduced and the organisations interviewed presented, the interview part with its findings comes, followed by conclusions.

1. Protracted Refugee Situations and Human Security Debates

As stated in the introduction, the post-Cold War era has seen the concept of security change significantly. The security paradigm started shifting slowly from placing military (physical) threats at its core and nation-states as the dominant actor in the arena to something very different. In other words, both the nature of security threats as well as actors in charge of protection changed.

To begin with, the list of security concerns has been expanded to include non-military threats. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1994 is to this day seen as a benchmark of the literature and discourse surrounding what is now called human security. In its report, the UNDP calls for expanding the concept of security that has been interpreted too narrowly for too long: it was seen as a matter of nation-states and not individuals and would only concern threats of external aggression and protection of national interests (UNDP, 1994, p. 22). Instead, the UN specified seven areas or components of human security. These are (1) economic security, (2) food security, (3) health security, (4) environmental security, (5) personal security, (6) community security, and (7) political security. Without even going into details of any of these components, it is rather clear how this categorisation – with an emphasis on the interdependence of all of them, surely – departs from the traditional Realist-Westphalian notion of security. "It is now time to make a transition from the narrow concept of national security to the all-encompassing concept of human security", the report states (UNDP, 1994, p. 24). As Peter Hough puts it in a summarising way, security should be seen as a human condition (Hough, 2004, p. 9)

Naturally, there have been multiple scholars advocating expanding the notion of security even before the UNDP report. In the 1980s, it was what is now called the Copenhagen School that introduced the idea of widening the concept of security yet still acknowledging the state's role in providing protection from whatever subject gets securitised: authors like Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde would claim that it is strong states that can ensure security of individuals. The same Barry Buzan had even categorised factors that affect human security in a way very similar to that of the UNDP: (1) military, (2) political, (3) economic, (4) societal, and (5) environmental (Buzan, 1991).

Another significant change in the definition of human security was moving from statecentrism to placing individual at the very centre. As it is understood that the security of governments does not equate with the security of people they are meant to represent (Hough, 2004, p. 17), individual becomes the referent of security. One of the major characteristics of human security, according to the same UNDP report, is that it should be people-centred – as opposed to looking at states as units of analysis (UNDP, 1994, p.23). The notion of security could not explain the insecurities caused or facilitated by states themselves (Chenoy & Tadjbakhsh, 2007, p. 77), and so what the new approached implied was "<…> focus on 'human' as part of the paradigm shift, giving rise to a post-national logic" (Hettne, 2010, p. 34). Thus, security has become more individual-centred than referring to territorial security.

Surely, broadening the notion of human security has received some weighted criticism. In addition to Realist critiques and criticism from positivist camps, authors like Roland Paris look at the widening and deepening of the concept of human security with a rather healthy dose of scepticism. His concern is that if this concept is all-compassing, it becomes difficult

to say what is *not* a part of human security then (Paris, 2001). According to Paris, this concept has become highly expansive and vague, leaving the policy makers confused over prioritising concerns. It is this very lack of precision, Paris claims, that helps actors to shift attention from traditional security issues to the ones that could be seen as development problems otherwise. Such actors, due to the broadness of this concept, comprise a large coalition and thus can preserve that broadness (*ibid*). Admittedly, the interconnectedness of various human security threats does make it a complicated issue: it becomes challenging and at times impossible to point out clear causal relations between factors and tell which ones should be tackled first.

If there is one global phenomenon that illustrates and fits perfectly the expanding notion of human security, it is without a doubt forced migration. Not only do refugees and IDPs represent some of the gravest humanitarian crises that are presently in place, but also fit the new definition of human security in its three characteristics: it is (1) individuals and their well-being and not states whose security is concerned, (2) the nature of interconnected threats is diverse, and (3) it is not by default states that can provide protection from these insecurities.

Unlike decades ago, now it is not merely a legal asylum process that is a concern here. The securitisation of issues of forced migration and a call for change of how migration is viewed is eloquently stated in the *UNHCR Strategy Towards 2000* report back in 1998:

> On one hand, States have been prompted for reasons of national and regional security to tackle the problem of human displacement in a more preventive manner, addressing the conditions which force people to abandon their homes. Established notions of security and sovereignty are being reconsidered, placing humanitarian

> issues higher on the international agenda and creating new opportunities for multilateral. At the rhetorical level at least, states are acknowledging the issues such as the maintenance action, need for an integrated approach to global or restoration of peace, the protection of human rights, the promotion of sustainable development as well as the management and resolution of forced displacements and migratory movements. (UNHCR, 1998)

In addition to this holistic approach, the same UNHCR document indicates and warns about the negative spill-over effects that refugees and IDPs exert on their new places of residence: "Population displacements are more than ever perceived as a threat to economic, social and environmental stability, as well as political security" (UNHCR, 1998). That is, the interconnectedness of forced migration and human security is very clearly stated.

The literature on protracted refugee situations in the context of human security debates emphasises how these phenomena relate to rather general puzzles in security studies. PRSs are being seen as indicative "<…> of broader challenges regarding civil war and peace-building" (Loescher, Milner, Newman & Troeller, 2008, p. 4) and "<…> of the complex nature of contemporary conflict, which defies conventional state-centric modelling" (*ibid*, p. 5). Therefore, PRSs must be placed at the centre of "a broadening security discourse that embraces a range of actors and challenges, including social, economic and human rights issues" (*ibid*, p. 6).

Instead of being seen as a mere consequence – or human cost – of military confrontations, PRSs are more often considered as comprising a part of a truly vicious circle of various insecurities. Not only are displaced people called both products and victims of insecurity (Howard, 2001), but also "<…> there is ample evidence that protracted refugee situations are

a source – as well as a consequence – of instability and conflict. Many regional conflicts demonstrate that protracted refugee situations are a driving force of on-going grievances, instability and insurgency" (Loescher, Milner, Newman & Troeller, 2008, p. 5). Essentially, PRSs are *fuelled* by certain types of threats to human security, people in PRSs *live* in highly insecure conditions, and, lastly, they *result in* great deal of instability in the regions they have moved to.

Nonetheless, even with the changing concept of human security, PRSs are often approached as a humanitarian challenge stemming from the (allegedly key) problem, that is, armed conflict. Some scholars do indicate the problematic nature of this approach:

> International security scholars, for the most part, are also blind to the significance of refugees for their study of conflict and conflict management. When they notice refugees at all, they usually see them as a symptom of large-scale violence and do not ascribe to them any independent causal agency, for instance starting civil wars or contributing to their duration or intensity, much less the possibility that solution of the refugees might contribute to the lessening of violence. (Morris & Stedner, 2008, p. 70)

Ironically, just like the people living in PRSs, this phenomenon itself is seemingly stuck in a scholarly limbo. On one side, prolonged forced migration is seen as a consequence of a "traditional" security threat – that is, conflict. On the other side, it is considered not just a result of various insecurities but a phenomenon that also *causes* even more insecurities in the regions it takes place. Having in mind millions of people in PRSs happen to reside in rather weak and politically unstable states (for example, Chad, Pakistan, Nepal), it is not that difficult to see how the population of refugees could contribute to that instability directly or indirectly.

There are several important theoretical implications of this thesis that relate to the debates described. Basically, looking into development as a human security strategy in the West Bank does not only tell what limitations it faces. It is the very *nature* of these limitations that leads to more general assumptions. This case (1) sheds more light on the possibility to bridge the conceptual divide that is still present in security studies and (2) illustrates how a PRS constitute not just a humanitarian issue but a complex phenomenon not induced by natural factors but sustained by political means. Therefore, this research also shows how a PRS can indeed stand as a human security issue on its own yet not without external – in this case, political – factors.

2. Structural Conditions

As stated in the introduction, there are certain arrangements in the West Bank that not only constitute the everyday reality for its citizens, but also unavoidably affect the work various organisations do in the region. Although the list of such structural conditions could be hardly exhausted, there are three things no organisation can escape from dealing with: the authorities, the administrative divisions, and all the obstacles to freedom of movement that are in place in the West Bank. Here is a brief description at all of them.

2.1 Power-sharing Mechanisms: PNA and the Israeli Government

The official origins of the Palestinian National Authority go back to what is referred to as the Oslo Accords, a series of negotiations and bilateral agreements that took place between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the 90s. Oslo Accord I – *Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements* or *Declaration of Principles* – was signed on September 13, 1993 between the then-Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Perez and Mahmoud Abbas, representative of the PLO (Council on Foreign Relations, 2013).

Basically, the *Declaration of Principles* introduced several crucial developments. The PLO recognised Israel's right to exist while the Palestinian Authority (PA) was officially recognised by Israel as the governing institution of the Palestinian people and was granted sovereignty in some parts of the West Bank and Gaza. As Article Six states, "<…> authority

will be transferred to the Palestinians on the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993). Article Seven calls for the PA Council to "establish, among other things, a Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other Authorities agreed upon <…>" (*ibid*).

In addition, the Accord called for the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from these territories. Originally, PA was supposed to be a five-year interim body to govern the Occupied Palestinian Territories and it was left for further negotiations to determine the status of PA as well as the status of Palestine itself. Extremely relevant issues like border protection and Israeli settlements were left out of the Accord on purpose, to be resolved in future negotiations.

Oslo Accord II, *Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* or the *Interim Agreement*, was signed on September 28, 1995. It divided the Occupied Palestinian Territories into Areas A, B, and C (explained in greater detail in the upcoming section), called for Israeli military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and, among other things, drew the structure of the PA Council (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1995). The Palestinian Authority and its Council were granted military and civilian control over Area A and civilian control over Area B. Israeli forces were responsible for military control in Area B and full control over Area C.

Throughout later negotiations, the powers the PA has have not expanded significantly. Israel is to this day in charge of external security of the West Bank and has developed a complicated network of "security checks" within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (which will be explained later). Even after an upgrade in the UN from 'Permanent Observer Mission Of Palestine' to 'Non-member Observer State' in November 2012 (UN General Assembly, 2012), what has gained the name of *State* of Palestine is still a political entity whose independence – one of the crucial elements of any state – is highly limited by the military occupation. Some important and interesting peculiarities of this power-sharing arrangement will be indicated by the interviewees themselves later in this thesis.

2.2 Administrative Divisions: Areas

As mentioned before, as a part of the Oslo Accords, the West Bank got divided into three administrative areas: Area A, Area B, and Area C. The Palestinian National Authority was supposed to have control over civilian and military aspects in Area A (mostly Palestinian cities) that takes approximately seventeen per cent of the West Bank territory, Area B (around twenty-four per cent) was supposed to be controlled in terms of civilian matters by the PNA and in terms of security by the Israeli government while the rest of the territories, Area C, was supposed to be fall under Israeli control. Area C is the largest one – some fifty-nine per cent of the West Bank – and includes the Jordan Valley (one of the poorest areas in the region), roads between Palestinian towns and villages, as well as the Israeli settlements (Foundation for the Middle East Peace, 2013). Figure 2 shows how much of the West Bank falls under Israeli and how much – under Palestinian control.

Figure 2

(Retrieved from: http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/images/stories/large/2009/08/12/ismap.jpg)

Interestingly, approximately eighteen per cent of the West Bank territory has been designated as a closed military zone for training, or the so-called "firing zone", which is approximately of the same size as Area A (UN OCHA, 2012, August). Officially, a Palestinian presence is

prohibited in this zone unless permission is granted from the Israeli authorities, which is a rather rare occurrence. A recent UN report depicts the situation of approximately 5,000 Palestinians living in this zone as extremely vulnerable:

> Most residents have limited or difficult access to services (such as education and health) and no service infrastructure (including water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure). <…> Residents of firing zones face a range of other difficulties including the confiscation of property, settler violence, harassment by soldiers, access and movement restrictions and/or water scarcity. Combined, these conditions contribute to a coercive environment that creates pressure on Palestinian communities to leave these areas. (UN OCHA, 2012, August)

Area C with its already vulnerable farming and herding communities is the territory where most demolitions (ninety per cent) and displacement (ninety-two per cent) occurred in the West Bank (UN OCHA, 2012, January). In 2011, more than sixty per cent of the Palestinian-owned structures demolished were situated in areas allocated to illegal settlements that Israel does not seem to intent to stop in any time in the near future (UN OCHA, 2012, January). According to the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, there were more than 320,000 settlers living in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) situated in 121 government-sanctioned settlements (B'Tselem, 2013). The settlements, which often resemble towns and could be confused with Palestinian cities, are illegal under the international law: they violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the occupying power from transferring its civilian population into occupied territory.

In addition to settlement expansion in Area C, the UN concludes that restrictive zoning and planning, settler violence, restrictions on movement and access and other Israeli practices have resulted in fragmentation of land and shrinking space for Palestinians (UN OCHA, 2012, January). The administrative divisions and especially constructions of settlements in

Area C have also produced another set of objects that increase the fragmentation of the region: more than 500 internal checkpoints and other physical obstacles exist in the West Bank primarily to protect settlers and facilitate their movement, including to and from Israel (UN OCHA, 2012, December). These directly relate to administrative divisions and comprise the third set of structural conditions in this paper.

2.3 The West Bank Barrier and Other Obstacles to Freedom of Movement

One set of undoubtedly important conditions under which any organisation in the West Bank operates is the West Bank Barrier (which will be referred to as the Barrier) and an extensive system of checkpoints and various other objects that highly restrict the freedom of movement in the region. Provided below is a brief summary what these obstacles are and how they affect local communities.

Essentially, a comprehensive system of restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians began to be implemented by the Israeli authorities after the Second Intifada began in September of 2000. This system is comprised of both physical obstacles like checkpoints, roadblocks, the Barrier, etc., and administrative restrictions, such as prohibited roads, permit requirements, age restrictions, and so forth (UN OCHA, 2012, September). The construction of the West Bank Barrier itself started in 2002 after an array of suicide bombings in Israel by West Bank Palestinians. The UN defines the Barrier as consisting of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone (UN OCHA, 2012, July).

Figure 3

(Retrieved from: http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/files/IsPal%20Images/thewall5.jpg)

The Barrier deviates from the so-called Green Line – the Armistice Line of 1949 and the line agreed after the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and its neighbours. When the Barrier is completed, approximately eighty-five per cent of the route will run inside the West Bank instead of running along the Green Line (see Figure 3 and notice how in the previous map, provided by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the West Bank border is the Green Line and not the line of the Barrier) and will isolate some 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (UN OCHA, 2012, July). As of July 2012, the Barrier's total length (constructed

and projected) was approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the Green Line. Approximately 62.1 per cent of the Barrier was complete, 8 per cent was under construction and 29.9 per cent was planned but not yet constructed (UN OCHA, 2012, July).

The UN also states how the Barrier impacts some of the local communities:

> The agricultural livelihoods of approximately 150 communities have been severely undermined due to the permit and gate regime, which restrict their access to farmland behind the Barrier. The majority of permit applications are regularly rejected on grounds that the farmer failed to prove his 'connection to the land' to the satisfaction of the Israeli authorities. The limited opening of the 'agricultural gates' has forced permit-holders to stop cultivation or to shift from labour-intensive to rain-fed and low-value crops. (UN OCHA, 2012, July)

In addition to the Barrier itself, there is a comprehensive network of obstacles to freedom of movement in the West Bank. In its closure survey of June 2012, the UN OCHA documented and mapped 542 obstacles in total blocking Palestinian movement within the West Bank: "These include sixty-one permanently staffed checkpoints (excluding checkpoints on the Green Line), twenty-five partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad-hoc basis) and 436 unstaffed physical obstacles, including roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road gates, road barriers, and trenches" (UN OCHA, 2012, September).

What the Barrier and all these obstacles do is isolate Palestinian communities and their farming land as well as increase the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. One of the most recent reports of the UN OCHA finds that sixty Palestinian communities that make up a population of approximately 190,000 are forced to use detours that can be up to five times longer than the direct route to the city and thus their access to livelihoods and basic

services, like education, health, and water supply, continue to be obstructed (UN OCHA, 2012, September).

The summary of the findings of the International Court of Justice serves well as a conclusion here. The ICJ states:

> <…> it is not convinced that the specific course Israel has chosen for the wall was necessary to attain its security objectives. The wall, along the route chosen, and its associated régime gravely infringe a number of rights of Palestinians residing in the territory occupied by Israel, and the infringements resulting from that route cannot be justified by military exigencies or by the requirements of national security or public order (ICJ, 2004).

The extent to which freedom of movement of the Palestinian people is obstructed daily is certainly concerning. For some kids, crossing a checkpoint on their way to school is an everyday occurrence and for some farmers to see that the road to the market has been closed for the day may not be that surprising. With some appalling statistics of more than 540 obstacles and the Barrier itself, it would be absolutely unreasonable not to take such a structural condition into this analysis.

To sum up, the importance of taking these factors into consideration when analysing how sustainable development projects get implemented in the West Bank cannot be overstated. All of these structural conditions are as inescapable as they are interconnected, which will be only reassured by the interviewees themselves in a later section of this thesis.

3. Water and Food Security in the Region

The situation with food and especially water security in the region is rather gloomy. What the Palestinian refugees and, essentially, all Palestinians living in the West Bank are facing is not a problem of lack of water *per se* but instead it is an issue of ownership of and access to water. The International Committee of the Red Cross reports:

> In the West Bank, many communities suffer from the lack of water which is particularly severe in the hot summer months. The World Health Organization recommends a minimal daily consumption of 100 litres per person. The average water consumption by Palestinians in the West Bank is seventy-three litres per person, less than 1/3 of 242 litres consumed daily per person in Israel. (ICRC, 2011)

The question of access turns into a question of even and just distribution in the region. As of year 2012, Israel uses eighty-six per cent of the water extracted from the Mountain Aquifer, a trans-boundary resource that must be shared between both sides in both equitable and reasonable manner (UN OCHA, 2012, March). The biggest area of the West Bank, Area C, is highly troubled in terms of water security and equal access to water, as a recent report by the UN OCHA summarises its situation:

> Over seventy per cent of communities located entirely or mostly in Area C are not connected to the water network and rely on tankered water at vastly increased cost; water consumption in some of these communities is as low as twenty litres per capita per day, one-fifth of the WHO's recommendation. Twenty-four per cent of the Palestinian population in Area C are food insecure compared to seventeen per cent in the remainder of the West Bank. (UN OCHA, 2013, January)

The encroachment on Palestinian land for the purpose of settlement expansion – which is what is happening in Area C – is a key cause of humanitarian vulnerability of the Palestinian population, the same report states.

According to Amnesty International, the Palestinians are forced to buy water from Israel to make up for supplies that are increasingly insufficient due to population growth; the supplies that they should be able to extract for themselves. The amount bought is usually not an adequate match to population increases and, on top of that, "supplies are often reduced by Israel to the Palestinians (but not to the Israeli settlers in the OPT) during the hot season, when needs are greater" (Amnesty International, 2009, p. 12).

The degree of food security in the West Bank is also in a bad shape and does not seem to be showing signs of long-term improvement. Naturally, the situation of water security relates to food security heavily as farming becomes more difficult as well as maintaining any kind of livestock. In its report of August 2009, the findings of the UN OCHA show that twenty-five percent of the assessed West Bank population is food insecure, eleven percent is vulnerable to food insecurity, twenty-nine percent is marginally food secure and thirty-five percent is food secure (UN OCHA, 2009, August, p. 7). OCHA's most recent annual report, of May 2012, indicates that in the West Bank in 2011, twenty percent of refugees were food insecure versus seventeen percent of non-refugees. Among refugees, twenty-nine percent of the population inside camps versus seventeen percent outside camps are food insecure (UN OCHA, 2012, May). The same report finds that

> <…> [T]he main food security challenge faced by Palestinian households - including in Gaza during the most strict enforcement of the blockade – remains economic access to, rather than availability of, food in local markets, with a majority of food-insecure households spending over half of their income on food. <…> Ongoing limitations on access to land in Area C –and to the Seam Zone created by the Barrier in particular –and in Gaza's Access Restricted Areas (ARAs) severely constrain farming, herding and fishing. High operating costs, including water for irrigation and fodder, are placing additional pressure on agricultural livelihoods. <…> In addition, livelihoods are also eroded by the damage caused by Israeli military operations to agricultural property, both as a result of demolitions of structures built without permits in the Area C and East Jerusalem, and the levelling of land in the Gaza ARAs. (OCHA, 2012, May, p. 56.)

To sum up, there are grave issues with food and water security in the West Bank, faced by both refugee and non-refugee populations. It is not a surprise that the need for sustainable development projects is still high in the region and, unfortunately, does not seem to be diminishing any time soon. This once again points to the intrinsic importance of such sustainable development practices in protracted refugee situations and the West Bank itself.

4. The Refugees

The case of Palestinian refugees is definitely one of the most complicated in the world as well as one of the most long-lasting. The aforementioned statistics that the UNHCR provides does not include Palestinian refugees since, given the complexity of their situation, they receive special attention by the UN. Instead of comprising a part of the UNHCR jurisdiction, 4.8 million of Palestinian refugees fall under the mandate of a different body, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as people whose place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who lost their homes and means of livelihood because of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. As for now, several generations of Palestinians, albeit excluded from the UNHCR statistics, fall into the PRSs category. They are essentially displaced in the regions that are covered by the UNRWA: Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank itself. On top of the existing PRS in this particular region, the displacement continues due to constant demolition of houses in the Occupied Territories. Based on information gathered from the Israeli Ministry of Interior, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other groups, approximately 25,000 Palestinian structures have been demolished in the Occupied Territories since 1967 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2011, March).

The West Bank, with a population of 2.3 million and around 260,000 people living in East Jerusalem, had 741,409 registered refugees as of December 2012 (UNRWA, 2012). It has nineteen registered refugee camps that are found in rural and urban surroundings. Interestingly, some of the refugee camps are integrated into Palestinian towns and are hardly distinguishable from the rest of the buildings in the area. Am'ari refugee camp in the town of

Ramallah can serve as an example here. The common challenges that the camps face, according to the UNRWA, are high unemployment, often more than twenty per cent, heavily overcrowded schools, and poor building infrastructure.

Without a doubt, in the context of protracted refugee situations, the case of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank is rather unique. To being with, some Palestinians can be categorised as a third generation of refugees, making it one the longest-lasting PRS in the world. Also, especially due to on-going demolitions, thousands of displaced people have become refugees in their own land. Furthermore, the very fact that people were forced to move to a territory that is to this day under a military occupation gives the West Bank even more of exceptionality. Lastly, one can argue that the West Bank receives more international attention, perhaps due to its status as a militarily occupied territory, than other PRSs. For instance, The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been involved in building water pipelines together with Palestinian Water Authority in Aqraba, West Bank, as well as developing its Anapta Water Supply Project, both of which are obvious examples of effort to improve water security in the region (ICRC, 2011). While visiting the West Bank, one can see the presence of actors like the already-mentioned ICRC, the World Bank, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, CARE, the UNRWA itself, and others. There is also a vibrant Palestinian NGOs' presence, and the work that these international and domestic organisations do in the West Bank vary from sanitation improvement projects to agricultural initiatives to gender equality campaigns.

On the other hand, there are several respects in which the West Bank does seem like an exemplary case of a PRS. First, the very longevity of the situation, one could argue, makes

the West Bank the perfect case to study the dynamics of development and human security in a PRS. Time, by default, allows for more data, more sustainable development projects to be implemented and actors to get involved. This leads to the second important point of commonality with other PRSs, that is international involvement. It is highly extensive in terms of IGOs, NGOs, and other types of organisations already mentioned. *Precisely* due to such involvement it is possible to actually monitor development practices in the area as well as analyse how these organisations operate.

Lastly, there is definitely a parallel between military occupation and the political situation in which other refugees living in PRSs find themselves. As refugees are not likely to hold passports of their host countries and can seldom vote, the level of their political representation is more than limited. How much of a say someone has in any state does depend on the person's legal status, which places millions of people in a highly vulnerable position. In the West Bank, there is indeed the Palestinian National Authority, there are parties formed, elections held, and in some obvious ways the residents of the West Bank do have their say in how the territory governs itself. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Palestine is not currently an *independent* state (independence, naturally, being one of the key characteristics of any state), there are a number of matters in which the PNA does not have a say and that are imposed by another country's government. That in itself places the West Bank in a similar situation to other PRSs, where the political representation of people is stifled in addition to potential violation of Human Rights by the host government. Hence, there are ways in which this case does resemble other PRSs quite well.

5. Methodology

Methodology of a single-case study used in this research seems to fit its goal: that is, to situate the West Bank in the broader context of PRSs and human security discourse in general. Singe-case studies can support or point to some flaws in a theory or in a certain approach, and, as it will be stated in the conclusion chapter of this thesis, the West Bank brings some confusion to the conceptual divide regarding security as well as illustrates the political complexity of insecurities associated with PRSs. Therefore, looking more in depth in a single region can indeed contribute to developing much more universal claims.

Furthermore, conducting a field research is of extreme importance for this specific topic and topics alike. Surely, organisations working in the field tend to produce reports on their own projects and the overall situation regarding human security in Palestine. Also, reports exist on how NGOs, as a part of civil society, interact with the authorities in terms of various laws and regulations. However, it is undoubtedly beneficial to talk to the professionals working in the development field and get the details that were not registered in any reports and, also, to ask them about the discrepancies between theory and practice. For instance, one of the interviewees, by mentioning a project that took around a decade to finally get the necessary approvals for, provides an extreme example that in a way draws a spectrum of how long the approval process for major projects can be. Thus, the interviews both illustrate and expand the realm of any educated guess on how sustainable development projects are being implemented in the West Bank.

In this thesis, I have chosen to interview several organisations that work in the West Bank and that are physically based there. In addition to having visited a couple of refugee camps as well as travelled to Area A, B, and C, I have conducted my interviews in April 2013 in their offices in Ramallah, one of the major cities and cultural centres of Palestine. The aim was to choose organisations that are united in their mission but otherwise do not belong to the same umbrella organisation or other body. This decision was an intentional one, so that I could see how the same set of conditions affect the way sustainable development projects are implemented by organisations that would not be considered as intervening variables in each other's work when looking at the way all of them function. That is to say, organisations were chosen to be highly independent of each other and yet they all operate in the sustainable development field.

Certainly, there are numerous ways in which the topic of sustainable development practices in the West Bank could be approached. To start with, it did not necessarily have to have an interview part at the centre. For instance, an extensive list of sustainable development projects could have been provided with brief evaluations of their impact in the Palestinian communities and how they have been impacted by them and how that improves the human security situation in the region in general, putting together data from various reports of organisations like UNRWA, ICRC, IRC, and others. Or, keeping the interview part, only one single organisation could have been chosen and an in-depth analysis of its impact in Palestine could have been assessed. Moreover, it could have been people living in one of the nineteen official refugee camps in the West Bank interviewed and not organisations themselves. Different choices, naturally, produce different body of knowledge and different findings.

Naturally, this choice of methodology has its limitations. One, due to the sheer number of NGOs and other types of organisations that work in the West Bank, three is definitely a small sample. Two, it must be acknowledged that some experiences of the selected organisations may indeed be unique occurrences instead of representing common practices in the region. Lastly, given a rather political unstable nature of the region, it must be stated that the findings of the research could have been very different given a different time period (for instance, the Second Intifada, the shelling of Gaza of 2009, etc.). Yet before dwelling into the interviews and the findings stemming from them, let us take a quick look at the organisations themselves.

6. Organisations

MA'AN Development Centre, established in 1989, is an independent Palestinian development and training institution with its main office located in Ramallah and its branch offices in four other towns including Gaza. As the organisation describes itself, its "work is informed by the necessity of creating independent, self-reliant initiatives that lead to the development of human resources for sustainable development, which incorporate values of self-sufficiency and self-empowerment" (MA'AN, 2013). The organisation identifies its major goals as follows: (1) to improve food security situation in the region, (2) to facilitate the development and capacities of the Palestinian NGOs, CBOs and grassroots organizations for them to fulfil their missions and goals, (3) to enhance community development and decrease poverty in the most disadvantaged areas, (4) to develop and protect the Palestinian environment in terms of policy development, applied research and public awareness, and (5) to advocate for and with the Palestinian community on their national rights at the local, national, and international level. MA'AN works to achieve those goals through its five programmes: agricultural and food security programme, community development programme, women development programme, youth and adolescent development programme, and environment protection programme.

There is no doubt about the substantial ways in which MA'AN Development Centre contributes to improving sustainable development in the West Bank. As the organisation itself claims,

> MA'AN works with rural communities to enhance food security using practical measures. These will include the reclamation and rehabilitation of land, the construction of agricultural roads, home gardens, greenhouses, cisterns, irrigation pipes and systems, water storage facilities, stone terraces and fences, the distribution

> of trees, seedlings and animals, producing and marketing organic extra virgin olive oil, and providing animal husbandry units. (MA'AN Development Centre, 2013)

Another organisation interviewed is the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG). PHG was established in 1987 as "an independent specialized institution dedicated to develop and protect the water and environmental resources, to insure more public accessibility to adequate water supply sources and sanitary conditions, and to develop a proper information systems and technologies" (Palestinian Hydrology Group, 2013). It currently has six offices in Occupied Palestinian Territories including Gaza and is the largest Palestinian NGO working to improve access to water and sanitation services as well as to monitor pollution and climate change in Palestine. The organisations' activities are divided into eight major areas: (1) advocacy, (2) agriculture and food security, (3) awareness and capacity building, (4) rainwater harvesting, (5) research, (6) sanitation, (7) water resource development, and (8) water systems.

Water security is the obvious specialisation of PHG which has since its establishment rehabilitated ninety-four wells and sixty-one springs, has implemented projects on ecological sanitation, wastewater reuse, water reservoirs and pumping stations, and so forth. The organisation has a rather impressive list of projects that all undoubtedly contribute to sustainable development in Palestine.

The third organisation, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) is an independent non-governmental organization founded in 1993 with headquarters in Paris. Its mission, as the organisation states, is to support vulnerable populations affected by wars,

natural disasters and/or economic and social crises (ACTED, 2013a). Its first projects were implemented in Kabul and, after an impressive expansion of ACTED's activities, it presently operates in 35 countries of intervention scattered in Central America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

To fight humanitarian and development crises, ACTED carries out several categories of projects: emergency relief, food security, health promotion, education and training, economic development, microfinance, advocacy and institutional support, and cultural promotion. In the West Bank, there are several projects that ACTED is currently working on: emergency support to households at risk of displacement, emergency support to other vulnerable households in the West Bank, including the governorate of Jerusalem, and strengthening rural cooperatives in the governorates (administrative units) of Salfit and Qalqilya that both are heavily surrounded by the Barrier.

The objectives of the latter project are to reinforce the capacities of 19 agricultural cooperatives selected in terms of management, finance and marketing, to reinforce their internal structure, to allow for the establishment of income generating activities and so allow these cooperatives to better adjust their production to the needs of the market (ACTED, 2013b). To develop the independence of the cooperatives chosen would lead to a more stable income pattern and improved food security, which leaves no doubt the sustainable development implication of this practice.

To sum up, MA'AN Development Centre, the Palestinian Hydrology Group, and ACTED all work in the field of development and vary in their size, programmes, and scope of work. PHG specialises in water security projects, MA'AN encompasses a number of areas, and ACTED is the largest of the three and, in addition to its emergency relief projects, has its development programme in the West Bank. As they are different in various respects, it is interesting to see how they are affected by the same structural conditions.

7. Data Collection and Analysis

In April 2013, I have travelled to the West Bank and interviewed four professionals from the aforementioned organisations: MA'AN Development Centre, the Palestinian Hydrology Group, and ACTED. The following sections summarise what they have told me, followed by findings of this research.

7.1 Power-sharing Mechanisms

I asked my interviewees about the way various power-sharing mechanisms in the West Bank facilitate or obstruct their work and in what ways that happens exactly. As a rather general question, I also inquired about where they are required to obtain approvals for their projects from, and whether there are usually obstacles for getting various permits. Although my interviewees mentioned different bodies they have to work with, there are also some obvious similarities in the effects such cooperation has on the implementation of their projects.

Starting with something positive, when asked whether they collaborate and are helped by some government agencies or other NGOs, María Hernández, project manager at MA'AN Development Centre, indicated the role the Palestinian Water Authority plays in MA'AN's projects:

> When we have a water-related project we call the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) because they do have the expertise, they can really help you, and they help you for free. Now, for instance, we have a project in the Jordan Valley <…>, and we are setting up a demonstration site to show people how they can effectively use the salt water for the crops. <…> Soon I am taking one of the officials of the PWA to the site to take a water sample from one of the springs, check the salinity level, pH, and other indicators. (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

Palestinian Water Authority, established as a part of the Oslo Accords, is the regulatory body for Palestinian water resource management and development. It is a central and autonomous authority that operates under the direct responsibility of the President of the Palestinian National Authority with its main goal being to ensure the equitable utilization and sustainable management and development of Palestinian water resources (Ghbn). Hence, according to María, her organisation is able to use the services of PWA professionals for free, which saves a great deal of funds: "They have the expertise and they help for free which otherwise would be really expensive" (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

At the same time, another interviewee, one of the founders of the Palestinian Hydrology Group and its present executive director, Dr Ayman Rabi, sheds some light on the Joint Water Committee, another body created by the Oslo Accords. He tells me that if, for instance, his organisation wants to rehabilitate a groundwater well, then the village council needs to apply for a permit from the Palestinian Local Authority (that is, municipality). Dr Rabi continues:

> Palestinian Local Authority, depending on the area, needs to apply to what is called Joint Water Committee that comes from Oslo [Accords], and when they get the approval the process can move ahead, you can import the materials, etc. <…> So, example, if you want to replace a water pump for the well, but you do not have the permit for rehabilitation, you are not allowed to import the pump. You cannot buy the pump even from an Israeli market. <…> If [the project] is in Area A then it is easier. So, if it is a small project regarding some pipe, for example, and it is in Area A it can go very smoothly, but if it is bigger and in other areas then it can have complications. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

When asked if this is the only body which the Palestinian Hydrology Group needs to get permits from, Dr Rabi continues and states that for projects in Area C approvals from the Israeli Civil Administration – the Israeli governing body in the West Bank – are needed:

> In some other areas, when you talk about larger projects, even if you get the permit from the [Joint Water] [C]ommittee, you need to get an approval from the Israeli Civil Administration. Within the civil administration there is…I forgot the exact number…there are thirteen committees that need to check and approve the project. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

Then, Mr Rabi gives an example of a wastewater treatment plant project in Nablus that took, due to delays in approvals, around ten years to finish. He makes it clear that this is not a common occurrence and exemplifies an extreme case.

When talking about institutional obstacles to the work that ACTED does, Maram Zatara, programme manager, indicates another general obstacle to implementation of their projects that stems from the very demographics they target: "You say your projects are for children – it is OK, you say they are for women – it is still fine, but you say they are for youth and they think you are breeding a generation for some revolution" (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013). Hence, it is, apparently, not just the technical complexity of the project itself that may delay its implementation, but social factors, too. In fact, as it will be clearer in upcoming sections, all of the interviewees mentioned that often receiving a permit from certain authorities becomes extremely personalized, that is, could literally depend on the mood of the officer that day.

In the context of various agencies which decide whether certain projects receive approvals, there is one interesting aspect that both Maram and María mentioned. They both pointed out the lack of a common law that would guide the way NGOs operate in the West Bank. "Basically, <…> there is no [single] policy. There is no regulation and coordination between Palestinian institutions and NGOs, how they should cooperate" says María (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013). Maram, too, is concerned about the fact that "<…>

we have projects in the West Bank and we work with Jordanian government, and in the West Bank the laws come from the Egyptian rule, so it would be great to [harmonise the laws]" (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

7.2 Administrative Divisions

The questions I have asked my interviewees on how administrative divisions, that is, Areas, affect their organisations' work directly relate to the power-sharing mechanisms already indicated. Nevertheless, the answers I was given provide an even deeper insight into what difference such mechanisms have and in what areas.

I asked Chris Whitman, advocacy coordinator at MA'AN, if permits from both governments are needed if the project planned is in Area B. "It depends where what kind of project it is, where in Area B. If it is a civic issue (like a youth centre, etc.) then you do not need the permission from Israel. But if you want to build water projects, sewage, waste removal, anything bigger related to infrastructure, then you need the Israeli's approval", said Chris (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013). María, his colleague, added that "<…> essentially, you only need the permit from the Israeli authority if the project is in Area C, but if it is a water project and a big infrastructure project then you need a permit for Area B" (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

According to Chris and María, Area C – the one that is highly food- and water-insecure – is problematic indeed. The Israeli authorities require permits for anything that is built using

what is called “permanent materials”, like cement or steel, and would fly planes over Area C in order to contrast the scenery with older maps to make sure no new constructions have appeared. “What if they see something new?” I inquire. “They can demolish it”, says Chris. He continues and gives an example:

> There has been a case where another organization installed solar panels in Area C and yet, because they contained cement, even if only this much, they receive a demolition order. You can use different solar panels, but the ones that do not require cement to build on are more difficult to find at a lower price. Solar panels in general are expensive. (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

Chris gives another example of and tells a story of a farmer from Area C. The farmer planted more than a hundred olive trees six years ago and used the special irrigation system (a system of small hoses) for his harvest. “He was following the right regulations; he did not seek a permission because he did not do anything that required a permission*”,* Chris emphasises (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013). Recently, he was shown aerial pictures by the Israeli authorities, which depicted how his trees were getting, “too close to the settlements”. Thus, all the trees were removed.

Prohibition to use permanent materials without a permit in Area C can obstruct any organisation’s work. Ironically, as it has been stated and illustrated in previous sections of this paper, this area is the one that is in an urgent need of sustainable development practices. Without permission from the Israeli authorities, Palestinian residents of Area C are not allowed to use permanent materials not even for their homes: as Chris pointed out, “<…> the community we are talking about is in Area C, many people live in tents” (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013). Non-permanent shelters, needless to say, do not constitute any kind of safe environment for the Palestinian communities in Area C. Even

when people make their houses of mud bricks, according to María, even then they may not be allowed to have it: "It depends. You may have it, you may not have it. It is a lottery" (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

When asked about the divisions, Dr Rabi, too, indicated that Area C is a complicated one. He mentioned, using Israeli terminology, the so-called "sensitive areas" or firing zones (introduced in previous parts of this thesis), that now see communities – like Bedouin communities – getting evacuated. I asked him whether it makes a difference for donors in which area the proposed project would be carried out. This is what Dr Rabi told me:

> Recently, most of the donors said they would work in Area C to help the Palestinians, but for us, the local NGOs, we would never differentiate between Area A, or B, or C. Our mandate is to serve our people wherever they are <…>. For this season we were just implementing activities wherever they are <…>. The difficulty – of course [it is there], but this is what we are, this is what we have to do. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

Hence, it makes a difference for organisations in which area the sustainable development project will be implemented. It may not be the ultimate obstacle not to have it there in the first place, nonetheless, the amount of difficulty differs according to geography, which will be explained and exemplified in greater detail in the next section.

7.3 Obstacles to Freedom of Movement

The set of questions I have asked my respondents regarding the obstacles to freedom of movement (that is, different kinds of checkpoints, permanent and irregular road blocks, the Barrier itself, and so forth) in a way encompasses the previous sets of inquiries: without

power-sharing arrangements and administrative divisions, there would be no network of such obstacles in the first place. This bundle of structural conditions, it seems, impedes the work ACTED, MA'AN, and the PHG do to a high extent.

First, I ask the interviewees how the Barrier itself impacts their projects. Perhaps it alters the potential location where certain projects would be otherwise carried out or, something pretty extreme, maybe it simply makes the organisations discard some ideas completely. Chris explains that the biggest problem regarding the wall is that some of the agricultural land where the project is based is on the West side of the wall while people in need live on the East side, and so transporting materials becomes problematic. In addition, it is difficult to get permits for people to even get to the other side. Chris further explains:

> And when they cross it they are only allowed to bring things they can carry, so they can only bring a shovel. Some checkpoints you can cross with a tractor, but that checkpoint will not be necessarily the closest to your land, and that is expensive because petrol is very expensive and tractors use a lot of it. So that is a huge problem. Also, there is the thing that permits change all the time. (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

When asked whether they ever had to change the location of a project they had in mind due to potential inconveniences that the Barrier would have caused, María says: "For instance, in my project in the Jordan Valley, we try to use materials from the region to prevent restrictions of movement of goods, but normally there are always ways out" (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013). Chris, too, does not depict the situation as completely gloomy: "Yes, you have to take longer routes, use more cars, or use a truck but I know about the Jordan Valley, there are many ways if you want to get around" (C. Whitman,

personal communication, April 18, 2013). It is more of a significant inconvenience than an obstacle that could not be overcome.

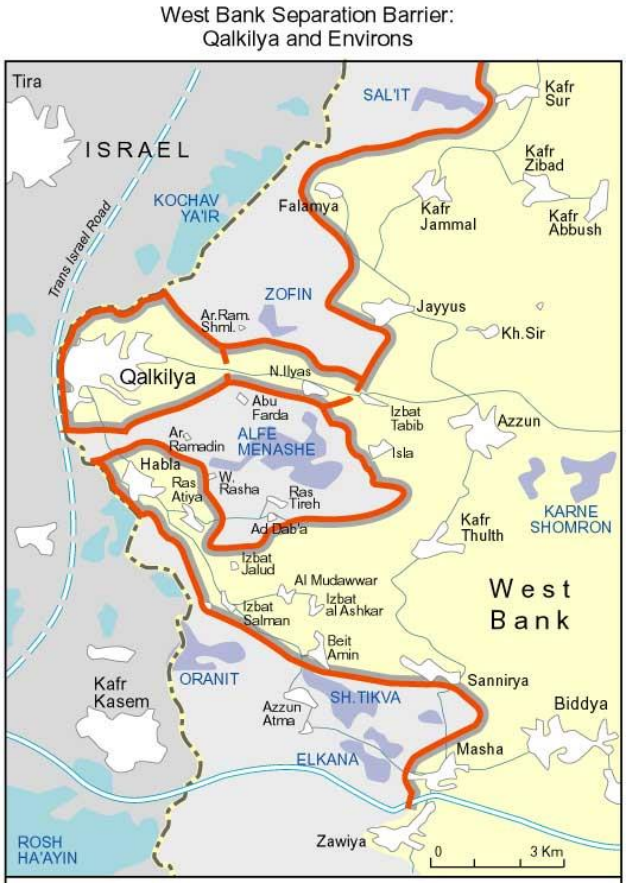

Figure 4

(Retrieved from: http://www.ampalestine.org/Resources/Qalqilyamapapartheid.jpg)

For ACTED and its cooperatives project, the role of the West Bank Barrier creates more than an inconvenience. Qalqilya, which is the centre of the governorate of the same title, is surrounded by the Wall and constitutes an enclave of the West Bank (see Figure 4). Despite the fact that this project concentrates of managerial support as well as institutional strengthening and does not involve transportation of materials to the site, the farmers themselves often have problems transporting their produce to other places in Palestine. Maram explains and expands on the question:

> It is very difficult to get there, and some villagers from the cooperatives <…> are surrounded by from four sides by the settlements and they have one gate there which is open for them during [certain] hours [only] <…>. Sometimes people do not have cash but they feel they are rich because they have olives. So, in Qalqilya, they have very limited access to their land where they can harvest the trees. Sometimes they cannot reach the land; sometimes [the Israeli authorities] cut the trees. <…> Qalqilya is one the places we have selected for our projects [precisely] because it is challenging and we feel it needs our help. (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013)

In addition to the projects themselves and the Palestinian communities that are already impacted by the network of checkpoints and the like, employees of MA'AN, ACTED, and the PHG are unavoidably affected by it, too. As María puts it very generally, "With checkpoints, it is difficult. Some checkpoints are just for diplomats and the UN workers, some are just for Palestinians; some do not allow Palestinians to cross so, generally, it is not easy" (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013). When asked whether all of the PHG's staff can travel in the West Bank more or less equally freely, Dr Rabi responded:

> Not freely. Some checkpoints you cannot cross at all, some you can; it depends on the area and the area you are from. <…> Sometimes, you might get [the permit] just for one day to cross but sometimes you get it for a very limited period. <…> You cannot really spend a week to get a permit for one day. For example, if you implement projects behind the wall – and there are many Palestinians living behind the wall – you need to get a special permit to cross to the other side. Of course, it affects not only our workers but also if you want to send materials. If you have to buy them and send them on the other side of the wall, it is not that easy. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

Maram from ACTED describes the situation in a very similar way. "It depends", she says, and explains further:

> Some people can travel more easily – for example, through settlements – because they are from Jerusalem; some cannot go to Jerusalem; our staff in Gaza are…stuck, and, well, you need a permit to go to Gaza. <…> We do not usually have problems with ACTED to get permits from the Israelis, but in a case of our several employees, some we asked for permits but never got a response, we do not know what the issue is, and others could get them after

> having applied several times. But for someone who is active in [his/her] community, <…> or was involved in protesting issues, it was problematic. (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Maram continues and says how, especially in Gaza, she herself does not have the permit to look at how exactly the projects of ACTED are being carried out: "We get information of what is needed from CBOs. I talk to the manager of our partner organization, and they are not there, not in Gaza." Coming back to the topic of the West Bank, Maram summarises: "You always have to move through checkpoints. For me, even I have to move through them when I have to go for anything in Jerusalem to see another project related to cooperatives. It is difficult, you know" (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013).

It is not surprising that, throughout all the interviews, the words "it is difficult", "it is challenging", and "it is not easy" are repeated several times. Together with administrative obstacles, objects that inhibit freedom of movement are simply impossible to escape for any of the organisations working in Palestine. Next section indicates more of such obstacles as well as provides concluding remarks and general findings of this research.

7.4 External Factors and Findings

After I have asked Chris, María, Mr Rabi, and Maram about the structural conditions, I also inquired whether there were any other significant factors that generally can exert influence on the way their organisations operate in the West Bank. Two major ones identified were media and the nature of conditional funding.

My guess about the media was that with more of its attention more donors could be attracted to the region and thus more projects carried out. However, Chris explains how the media can shape the way organisations operate that is very different to what I have assumed:

> The way the media attention works is that it helps in some ways but does not help in others. So, I have been working here for two years. Everybody has been talking how the Jordan Valley is the new Gaza, in terms of advocacy, how we are going to put projects and money in there <…>. María and I both know that it is not turning into projects; that is just a thing people like to talk about now: Area C and the Jordan Valley. Before, it was the area of the wall, before it was Jerusalem. The hot spots. But the thing is, you have the hot spots, you have the media attention, <…> but not that many of the actual projects. (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

I ask Chris whether he thinks that media attention can in a way confuse organisations so that they would think that this area is covered by someone else already. He tells me that "[C]onsidering the way many of the international NGOs are here, I would assume that what their approach is 'everybody is putting money in the Jordan Valley, let us not put money in there.'" Then he tells me that many organisations do not have people on the ground, which only facilitates the kind of mind-set identified. The results, as Chris describes them, are that "<…> [T]here is no [real] increase in projects. It is exactly the same thing as it was six years ago" (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

In addition to this paradoxical effect of the media, Mr Rabi, when asked to identify any general aspect that affects the way his organisation works, quickly thought of a major one. He indicated that some countries required a certain kind of document to be signed:

> [S]omething like 'Act against Terrorism' <…>. [I]t is a document that some organisations require to sign, and it is not a problem to sign, but the interesting thing is that when you look at the content, you will find that almost every Palestinian is classified as a terrorist. And all Palestinian organisations that are listed in the annex of this document, they are serving the Palestinians, so how can we guarantee that

> anyone of those people are in this group or in another group? It is impossible. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

When asked if many organisations require this act to be signed Dr Rabi said that only some do, and added some general comments on conditional funding:

> Any conditional funding… How to put this… if you are here, you are coming to assist the Palestinian people, or to speed up development, the objective is clear – that this money will go for development, for whatever it is. My goal is clear, my commitment is clear, I will give you all the monitoring, all the time and access to information that you need to make sure that your money is going to exactly what I am saying. (A. Rabi, personal communication, April 21, 2013)

The act Mr Rabi refers to is the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, a document enacted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on December 31st, 2002, and that, generally speaking, Palestinian NGOs did not greet with enthusiasm (Stahl, 2003). The document wants the organisations to certify that they

> <…> did not provide, within the previous ten years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts, as that term is defined in [further paragraphs]. (USAID, 2012, p. 5) (see the full definition in USAID, 2012)

The media, conditional funding, and the structural conditions themselves all illustrate – although, understandably, cannot provide a complete picture – the fabric onto which these and other organisations operate and what measures they need to take make sure their projects benefit the communities in need. Before presenting the general findings, I would like to summarise several points that my respondents made and that can serve as rather general conclusions.

Chris, while talking about other organisations funding projects the West Bank, said that it is very easy for them to get disappointed with their projects. According to him, some NGOs hope that their projects would bring Palestine closer to statehood and higher levels of human development quickly." But then they realize it is a *political* issue, it is not a humanitarian issue" and can get very frustrated and even leave:

> And when they do that one project, they are angry about why it did not do what they thought it would do. The thing is they do not want to tackle the political issue, because it is so big and so tough. But it is the only thing that would help. It is the only thing. (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

María, too, stresses the political nature of problems of human security in the West Bank:

> For example, if you want to help the Sub-Saharan Africa, the problem there is the lack of infrastructure. You know that you need to bring water to the areas that are in need, or certain other materials, you know what the problem is and you know how to tackle it. The thing here [in Palestine] is the occupation. If it was not here, foreign investment would be present here, which you cannot achieve with NGOs. (M. Hernández, personal communication, April 18, 2013)

Essentially, Maram agrees with what has been said and, before adding more to it, also identifies something that could be called a side effect of the admittedly great work that the international bodies do in the region. "You see that anyone who wants to come to Palestine – *everyone* wants to come to Palestine – it is a place for funding but according to *their* agenda, not necessarily to the agenda of the Palestinians. " In the end, Maram says, planning and implementation of development projects is according to someone else's strategy, "<…> because we are under occupation". This is when her words resonate nicely to what Chris and María have said before:

> Palestine is still under occupation. And it is really hard to have development under any kind of occupation because occupation puts more obstacles, other than the obstacles any country already has even without it. <…> It is not the real impact of

> development that you would have in any other country. I am a hundred per cent certain that if you had the same cooperatives project in some other country you would still have obstacles, I am sure, but the impact it has would have would be much stronger. [Occupation is] everything [that] surrounds you. (M. Zatara, personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Maram, once again, summarises how certain restrictions imposed by a foreign power do indeed seem inescapable and how not dealing with them would mean simply not having such long-term development projects at all and how these structural conditions limit the potential impact of development-oriented practices. These remarks transit smoothly into the findings of this research.

The new material, that is, the interviews themselves, placed in the context of other descriptive chapters of this research, constitute general findings that reveal a great deal about (1) the structural conditions themselves and the appropriateness and relevance of my choice to distinguish them into three broad categories, about (2) the extent to which they hinder the implementation of sustainable development projects in the West Bank, and, speaking in highly general terms, about (3) the interplay of politics and what is being framed as humanitarian or environmental issues.

To start with, I have stated at the beginning of this paper that the list of structural conditions – and the working definition I have chosen for them in this research – could have been different. The list of factors that the NGOs have to keep in mind and deal with while working in Palestine is undoubtedly hardly exhaustible. However, from what my respondents told me, it is clear now how truly structural the factors chosen are in their field of work. All of them – the power-sharing arrangements, the way the administrative units are set up, the network of

hindrances to freedom of movement – have an effect the way MA'AN, the PHG, and ACTED carry out their projects. Certainly, any organisation in any country has to deal with its authorities, but it would be incorrect to say that the level of complexity of various approval systems in the West Bank is similar to what other NGOs experience in other regions. Having distinguished these conditions into three categories, it seems so now, did produce some thematic overlap: different authorities have different powers in different areas and so, naturally, all of these conditions are inter-related. It is important to emphasise, however, that nowhere in this paper it is stated that these three categories are independent of each other. This distinction did help to structure the very flow of the interviews and provided the opportunity to segment this research in a way it would not be too dense. Hence, I do stick to my choice of structural conditions and the way I have divided them in my research.

When we do put all the answers into one large body, it is easy to see the extent to which these conditions matter. While analysing sustainable development projects and the overall situation of raising the level of human security in the West Bank, one simply has to take into consideration both physical and administrative obstacles. Chris does say that usually all the permits, checkpoints, and other factors should be seen as inconveniences rather than factors determining whether a certain project will be taken up by his centre. However, even with all the projects that do get implemented, a large problem remains, that could even be called the *key* issue here. Maram eloquently puts it while talking to me when she says that even when the projects are on the ground, they result in *limited* development. This is definitely the key finding of this research that is supported both by the interviewees and the statistics presented in previous chapters. And it definitely deserves further clarification.

Basically, the main question of this research is how these sustainable projects get implemented in the West Bank. In other words, certain intertwined factors – which I like to call the fabric onto which projects are based – were deconstructed in order to see whether they facilitate or obstruct, and to what extent, the implementation of such projects. What becomes clear now are two things. The first one is that this fabric does create a great deal of hindrances and yet projects – at least the ones the organisations chosen are working on – still get carried out. The second one is much gloomier. Even with sustainable development projects present in the West Bank, even if their number and the number of organisations involved in the region increase, it is this very fabric that also limits the effects on development in Palestine. The general umbrella of these conditions, naturally, is occupation. Without the Israeli occupation, all of the structural conditions would be different, and the already vulnerable communities would not be threatened with demotion orders and even more displacement.

These findings may not be that surprising: it would be pretty uncommon to assume that any kind of occupation has no effect on the development of the occupied land. Nonetheless, this research shows how it is (1) important to see under which conditions human security and human development practices are being carried out in a refugee setting, and, in addition to inquire *whether* they *can* be implemented (because the answer in this case is affirmative), to also see (2) how those structural conditions, albeit allowing such projects, become structural limitations for development. Thus, it would not be conclusive to claim the NGOs tend to overcome various obstacles and with that extra effort that is required, they manage to have their sustainable development practices implemented. It would be *one* part of the findings, but it would also be definitely too optimistic to finish the research on this note.

Instead, all of these findings lead us to an even more general point. What the West Bank exemplifies as a PRS and an occupied territory, is how certain issues seem or are often framed as humanitarian crises (and some, like severe droughts, actually are) while they are indeed cases of environmental injustice and, instead of falling under the umbrella of humanitarian relief issues, should be placed under the umbrella of political ecology issues. As all of the interviewees said, some more directly than others, development in the West Bank is hindered not so much by natural causes but by political ones. Chris, when referring to the West Bank, makes it very explicit in this remark: "<…> by world standards, it is not poor. I have been backpacking through Syria, I saw worse. I have been backpacking through China and saw some of the poorest areas I have seen in my life. And I come here and it is political. It is absolutely political" (C. Whitman, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

In the chapter on water and food security in the region, some statistics was provided on the unequal distribution of water among the Palestinians and the Israelis. There is another similar piece that serves as an even more convincing proof supporting the claim that human security levels in the West Bank depend largely on politics and not the natural resources themselves. It is the UNDP Human Development Index report that supports this sad claim: in 2012, Israel's HDI score was 0.900, placing it in the 16th position globally (UNDP, 2013, p. 16). Meanwhile, Palestine – the Gaza Strip and the West Bank evaluated together –received a score of 0.670 and was 110th globally (*ibid*, p. 17). Occupation – or a lack of sovereignty that other PRSs also face – is one huge factor that in itself is a structural condition that precedes the rest. This is, albeit phrased differently, what all of my interviewees told me and exemplified in many ways.

Conclusions

As the findings of this research can only prove, the deeper one goes into the Palestinian refugee topic, the more unique – in some unfortunate ways – this case may appear. It is surely not just a matter of appearance: the West Bank is one of the few territories that are under illegal occupation in the 21st century. The unique aspects of this land have been stated and reiterated several times in this paper. However, the West Bank can still be situated in the context of other protracted refugee situations as well as contribute to broader human security debates in several ways.

One, this case brings some confusion in to the debate whether the concept of security should be more encompassing or if it should refer to mainly military threats. On one hand, it could be used by Realists to claim that the very lack of its own military might is the reason why Palestine is in such a situation in the first place. With its independence it would be able to create its own military and then assure higher levels of human security – even in its more liberal and all-encompassing definition. Military might could be equated by Realists to the power states possess to ensure development within their borders and thus prescribed to Palestine.

On the other hand, if it is the ultimate duty of the state, and not some other actor, to protect its people, then Realists would have a hard time explaining who exactly takes care of the Palestinian refugees and non-refugees in the region. While talking about Palestine, scholars and supporters of both sides – the ones that accept and promote the changing paradigm of security studies and the ones that advocate the traditional approach to security as a field of

study – must also see how their seemingly mutually exclusive views become compatible here. That is, we have a case where various subtypes of human security (stable source of income, political rights, water security, etc.) are all hindered by a political-military system. What we have is a mix of "conventional" security threats affecting "broader and deeper" concept of human security in the West Bank. Perhaps the key suggestion here is to see "conventional" security apparatus not as something assured by a militarised state but seeing security as first of all stemming from an *independent* state, which, even without having its military, would be in control of its own territory.

Two, it shows how incorrect it would be to approach PRSs as a merely humanitarian issue when there may be, as it is in the case of the West Bank and Palestine in general, political forces behind that insecurity. Interestingly, the point not to be missed here is that it is not only that political forces are usually *behind* the migration itself (like conflicts, political oppression and the like) but also that they, and not the physical environmental itself, can keep the people highly insecure and, needless to say, extremely vulnerable to any kind of fluctuation of livelihoods. So, the Palestinian case calls attention to the need of using environmental justice approach as a tool when looking into protracted refugee situations.

Finally, the Palestinian case raises some questions in the security-development debate, too. If development is seen as one of the human security strategies, can it be powerful enough of a tool to bring about political change that would set that development at a pace that it could have been at without the political obstacles? What if sustainable development simply cannot be assured without a set of political prerequisites? Does that weaken the argument behind the strategy or simply indicate that this strategy is still efficient yet simply cannot stand on its

own? Having in mind that people living in PRSs do depend on their host governments, these are extremely important questions to answer.

In conclusion, despite the fact that protracted refugee situations might not be the first thought that comes to mind when broader human security debates are in place and although Palestine could seem like an exceptional case of a PRS at first sight, this research contributes to bridging security studies and development studies. It demonstrates how some regions are not suffering from humanitarian crises but from certain political factors that can systematically obstruct development which, if seen as a human security strategy, may as well need to be utilised in combination with other conceptual tools.

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