Hydro-hegemony in shared Israeli, Palestinian groundwater resources

What price cooperation?

Clemens Messerschmid
"To derive benefits from rivers and lakes ... it makes sense to promote and support cooperation of any sort, no matter how slight."

(UNDP, Human Development Report, 2006)
Opportunity costs...

... of water conflicts ↔ cooperation

- Could “some sort” of cooperation be worse than no cooperation?
- What qualifies cooperation?
- Which lessons to learn?
- How to address the problem?
CONTENTS

- Part A: Qualifying Cooperation
- Part B: 3 forms of power
Qualifying cooperation

THE NATURE OF THE EXISTING COOPERATION

1. Inclusivity postponed
2. Data Quality and Transparency very poor
3. Flexibility none
4. Equitable Utilization stark inequality
5. Environmental Sustainability inherently low

### 2. Data Quality and Transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EAB</th>
<th>NEAB</th>
<th>WAB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISR wells</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISR springs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL wells</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL springs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated potential</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REMAINING</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>zero</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- → **very poor quality**
- → **no transparency**

Source: Oslo-II, Art. 40, Schedule 10
2. Data Quality and Transparency

WAB - Average Israeli use from year [xy] till Oslo

Source: HSI, 2003
4. Equitable Utilization

- Especially in the main aquifer (WAB) Israel has >93% control over well pumpage

Source: HSI 2003, PWA open files
6. Implementation and Enforcement

- 3 levels of Israeli veto
- JWC has no say in Israel
- Inherent blackmailing
- Bureaucratic
- Recipe for blockage
- “joint mismanagement”

→

- Strongly asymmetrical enforcement
Part B: 3 forms of power

B:
Three forms of power that constitute “hydro-hegemony”
Three forms of power

1. hard power
2. bargaining power
3. ideational power
1. HARD POWER

Overt occupation 1967 – 1995

- 3 examples of hard power effects
  - Active de-development
  - Palestinian wells – settler wells
  - Creating dependency on purchase
Active “de-development”

Mekorot Unit-rolls used in Palestinian supply lines

Joint water reservoir for Palestinians and settlers

cooperation with a joint reservoir, West Bank
New wells – Settler wells

New Palestinian wells ('67-'95)

New domesic wells (12mcm/yr)

Israeli / settler wells in the West Bank

Productive new wells (under Oslo-II)
Pumped & purchased water for JWU

Ein Samia wells production

JWU water supply sources

produced (JWU wells)
purchased (Mekorot)
Overt occupation 1967-1995

- Israel, as an occupying force...
  - ruled by Military orders (ongoing)
  - used WBWD as interface (ongoing)
  - kept 40% w/o network (ongoing)
  - affected w.l. by overpumping (ongoing)
  - “shared” the water - 82% vs. 18% (ongoing)
2. BARGAINING POWER

- The Oslo – II accords; essentials
- Oslo in numbers
- Changes since Oslo
Palestinian Water Rights are mentioned (but not specified or applied in the agreement)

The established use and potential of the aquifers was agreed upon (and thus sanctioned)

Additional water for additional and immediate Palestinians needs was promised (Israeli needs were not defined)

A mechanism of cooperation and joint monitoring was set out (perpetuating the old pattern of domination and coercion)
Tab. 1: Control over wells and springs from the West Bank Mountain aquifers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basin</th>
<th>Oslo-II aquifer &quot;potential&quot;</th>
<th>Discharge</th>
<th>Wells</th>
<th>Springs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli &amp; Palestinian</td>
<td>Israeli &amp; Palestinian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>in WB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAB</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>204.8</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEAB</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>184.1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAB</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>571.6</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>1009.9</td>
<td>725.3</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SUSMAQ (2001); Well data refer to the year 1998/99, spring data to a 20 yr average 1988-99
Changes since Oslo

SUMMARY:
- 12.3 mcm/yr from New domestic wells
- Dropping per capita production
- Growing dependency on purchase

- Israel no more “responsible”
- Palestinian “consent”
“Israel abused the PLO’s weakness in the Oslo Agreement in order to achieve an unfair “agreement”, just like it did in all economy matters. (...) which meant imposing Israel’s (...) regulations on the PA.”

G. Eshet, (24.6.07) Yediot Aharonot
3. IDEATIONAL POWER

- THE POWER OF DISCOURSE:
  - The Israeli water tale
  - Shift of discourse
  - Self-censorship
  - Challenging Hydro-hegemony
The Israeli water tale

- Israel is a dry country
- Israel’s water sector suffers from constant drought and dryness
- Israel is a responsible and advanced state-of-the-art water manager
- Israel made the desert bloom
- Palestinians do not exist
The Israeli water tale

- Israel is a dry country
  WB Mt. rain > Berlin
- Israel’s water sector suffers from constant drought and dryness
  waste in agr & dom
- Israel is a responsible and advanced state-of-the-art water manager
  Knnesset inquiry (02)
- Israel made the desert bloom always farm land
- Palestinians do not exist
“Palestinians do not exist”

Israel’s self-image & worldwide:

- Israel’s water achievements as independent from Palestinian dispossession
Shift of discourse

- Political discourse
  - National water rights
  - Water as a human right
  - Equitable supply
- Technical discourse
  - Technical cooperation
  - Win-win scenarios
  - Creative solutions
  - Desalination (Med. Sea or Red-Dead Sea)
Self-censorship

- Projects become accomplice
  - Projects & donors don’t challenge
  - Humanitarian & emergency aid
  - Shift from water resource based projects
  - Waste of resources; lost time
- Silence on the Palestinian side
  - Double discourse; no public debate
  - Coerced consent in JWC
  - Playing by the “rules” (of Israel & the donors)
Counter-hegemony

Cornerstones for Counter-hegemony

- Strengthening the hard power
- Strengthening the bargaining power
- Strengthening the ideational power
Strengthening the hard power

- Re-address the water agenda,
- Re-organize the domestic water sector and
- Secure regional and wider alliances
Strengthening the bargaining power

- **Prioritise** works in the sector
- **Coherent strategy** (where & how to challenge the hegemonic sanctioned discourse)
- Implement this strategy (avoid **double discourse**)
- Set & re-assess the **priorities & red-lines** (explore room for manoeuvre & compromise)
- Prepare the inside & the outside for negotiations (publicly **discuss & decide upon the red-lines**)
Promote a new and public **domestic debate**

Engage the **4th power** – the media on the domestic & international level (Palestinians have a huge, yet underdeveloped potential of support for their cause)

Thus promote & shape the **international water discourse** on the conflict to regain the moral high ground
Strengthening the ideational power

- **Involve the public** in setting up and shaping the counter-discourse (the weaker side depends on public support)

- Create a popular **domestic discourse** (2 elements):
  - **popularize** the discourse (produce & incessantly repeat some powerful metaphors or "water essentials") and
  - **educate** & prepare for a more sophisticated discourse

- Back-stop, **listen to the public**, seriously take their **immediate & long term needs** into account (to ensure durable support & to obtain an important corrective)
Thank you