



Universiteit Leiden

**An ecofeminist approach to the population growth – environment
relationship: analysing water security discourse during the Second
Palestinian Intifada**

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29-08-2019

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Abstract

Concerns about environmental security appear to have become a global trend in the past decades. In the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), which are characterized by the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing political instability accompanying it, an increase in such concerns has similarly been experienced, especially with regard to the topic of water security. Simultaneously, the oPt are characterized by a population growth rate that exceeds to a significant extent that of most other nations with a similar developmental status. This striking population growth rate can arguably be linked to the Palestinian nationalist movement and its surrounding discourse, which encourages high birth rates in order to win what is sometimes referred to as a ‘demographic battle’ between Israelis and Palestinians. The seemingly contradictory discourses, one regarding population growth and the other regarding environmental, specifically water security form the basis for the research topic of this thesis; the thesis conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis into water security discourse amongst Palestinian NGOs during the Second Intifada, a nationalist uprising taking place at the start of this century.

Keywords: oPt, environmental discourse, population growth, fertility, water security, ecofeminism.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Aim, method and research questions.....	5
1.2 Relevancy	6
1.3 Thesis outline	6
2. Ecofeminist framework	7
2.1 History.....	7
2.2 Interpretations.....	7
2.3 ‘Othering’	9
2.4 Ecofeminism in the Palestinian context	9
2.5 Relevancy and applicability to the research.....	10
3. Literature review	11
3.1 The national security dimension	11
3.1.1. <i>Limited fixations of security</i>	12
3.2 The Gendered dimension	12
3.2.1. <i>Motherhood narratives and reinforcing patriarchy</i>	13
3.2.2. <i>The demographic puzzle</i>	14
3.2.3. <i>Security and the ‘demographic battle’</i>	16
3.3 The environmental dimension.....	17
3.3.1. <i>Environmental discourse in a nationalist context</i>	18
3.3.2. <i>Romanticizing the environment</i>	19
3.3.3. <i>Population growth, environmental degradation and resource scarcity</i>	20
3.3.4. <i>Environmental justice</i>	21
4. Problem formulation	22
5. Methodology.....	22
5.1 Research method	22
5.1.1. <i>Discourse and power</i>	23
5.1.2. <i>Positioning of the research</i>	23
5.2 Research strategy.....	24
5.2.1. <i>The reflection of the ‘national security’ aspect in PCS discourse</i>	25
5.2.2. <i>The reflection of the ‘ecofeminist’ aspect in PCS discourse</i>	25
5.3 Data collection and introduction	25
5.3.1. <i>Discourse strand and discourse sector</i>	26
5.4 Structuring of the analysis.....	26
5.5 Limitations of the research.....	27

6. Water security discourse: a critical analysis	28
6.1 Water security in the oPt	28
6.1.1. <i>The role of Israel</i>	29
6.1.2. <i>Agency on the Palestinian side</i>	30
6.1.3. <i>Palestinian water discourse</i>	31
6.2 Structure analysis	31
6.3 Fine analysis.....	35
6.3.1. <i>Nomination strategies</i>	35
6.3.2. <i>Predication strategies</i>	37
6.3.3. <i>Argumentation strategies</i>	40
6.4 Concluding analysis	41
7. Discussion and conclusions	43
Bibliography	45

1. Introduction

“The womb of the Arab woman is my greatest weapon”; this sentence was supposedly uttered by Yasser Arafat in the days when the famous Palestinian nationalist leader led the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian people in the struggle against the Israeli occupation (Hirschberg 2003). This statement was not alone in its kind: Palestinian nationalist discourse encouraged women to bear children for the motherland, so that these could go on to become the next generation of Palestinian nationalist fighters. Such pronatalist discourse is likely to have led, at least in part, to strikingly high population growth and fertility rates in the oPt in the past decades. However, environmental security concerns have been simultaneously gaining importance; the Gaza Strip for instance, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, has been experiencing rapid environmental deterioration (Baalousha 2009). In the whole of the oPt, one of the most pressing environmental security issues is related to water, both in terms of quantity and quality (Feitelson, Tamimi and Rosenthal 2012). Instinctively, one may link the phenomenon of rapid population growth to declining per capita availability of water and deteriorating water quality, especially for an area located in a semi-arid region such as Palestine (Tippman and Baroni 2017). However, since both population growth and environmental security are, in essence, matters strongly connected to the nationalist movement, environmentalist discourse within the oPt may feel restricted in criticizing the pronatalist aspect of Palestinian nationalist discourse.

1.1 Aim, method and research questions

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to find out whether a ‘missing discursive link’ exists in Palestinian environmentalist discourse in the form of an avoidance of discussing rapid population growth as a negative factor with regard to water security concerns. In doing so, the thesis takes an ecofeminist stance, a framework which uses a feminist perspective in explaining how environmental issues are treated by humans; this framework was chosen specifically to hopefully allow for a critical discussion of Palestinian societal discourse.

Because the research will look at environmental discourse, a method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be used. Specifically, this method will be used to critically analyse whether environmental discourse as used by Palestinian civil society (PCS) discussed high fertility and birth rates as a problem towards water security, or whether it avoided this topic and instead focused fully on the Israeli occupation. The timeframe this thesis considers in its research is that of the Second Intifada, the large-scale nationalist uprising that took

place in the oPt from 2000 until 2005 after a (largely) failed peace process with Israel that had characterized the mid- and late 1990s (Roy 2007). The Second Intifada saw high fertility rates in combination with increasing experiences of water shortages and general water concerns, making this particular period of intensified nationalist struggle interesting to investigate (Haddad and Bakir 1998).

The main research question this thesis will seek to answer is the following: *'How can an ecofeminist perspective help analyse whether there was a 'missing link' between national security and environmental security discourse in the oPt in the period 2000-2005?'* In order to answer this question, the research was divided into the following two sub-questions:

- *'How is the national security aspect reflected in environmental PCS discourse?'*
- *'How is the ecofeminist aspect reflected in environmental PCS discourse?'*

The answers to these two sub-questions will aim to answer the main research question through comparing the two different discourses and concluding whether a 'missing link' exists between the two, leading to the avoidance of the discussion of rapid population growth as a problem towards water security in Palestine.

1.2 Relevancy

Although the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a unique political case that cannot simply be compared to other conflicts, the environmental/feminist aspect of the thesis subject may lead to interesting insights regarding nationalist movements and their use of discourse surrounding topics concerning women and/or the environment. Currently, the Western world appears to be experiencing a rise in nationalist movements that make use of discourse surrounding environmental issues and gender ('How right-wing nationalism fuels climate denial' 2018). Although political situations in these countries are not comparable to that of Palestine, similarities in the phrasing and framing of nationalists may exist. Therefore, an additional aim of this thesis is to lead to greater insights into the 'eco-gendered' framing of nationalist movements, in addition to aiming to provide insights connecting gender and environmentalism in the particular Palestinian case. Above all, this thesis should be read as a case study.

1.3 Thesis outline

The outline of the thesis will be as following: first, the ecofeminist framework of the thesis is explained in order to paint a picture of how and why such a framework may prove relevant and suitable for the topic and research at hand. Secondly, the relevant literature used

for the thesis is discussed in the literature review, after which the problem formulation is briefly discussed. The following chapter will explain the methodological approach used for conducting the research, which exists of a combination of steps of both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its sub-method of Discourse-Historical Analysis methodologies. After this discussion, the thesis will move to the research in which four selected discursive publications representative of dominant Palestinian water security discourse are critically analysed. Lastly, the concluding chapter will discuss the main findings and give a discussion of the implications and opportunities for possible further research.

2. Ecofeminist framework

To suit the topic of this thesis, an ecofeminist perspective was chosen. A highly critical social theory, it is hoped that such an ecofeminist stance will allow for a critical and non-traditional perspective on an issue that has oftentimes been viewed through the more traditional nationality-focused lens.

2.1 History

Ecofeminism is both a theory and a social movement, making use of a feminist outlook as a way to understand how humans have considered and acted towards the environment. The term was coined in the 1970s, however the movement gained popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, uncoincidentally simultaneous with a general increase in environmental concerns and activity (Allison 2010; Salleh 2014). As Mies and Shiva (2014) argue, the increase of (luxury) consumerism in the increasingly capitalist character of modern global society has encouraged resource grabs and pollution, causing a large-scale destruction of the earth. The effects of the second feminist wave, allowing women in some places to be active and educated members of society more than ever before, led to women being increasingly aware of the negative environmental effects of such consumerism (Salleh 2014).

2.2 Interpretations

As its name suggests, ecofeminism explains and takes the perspective of an assumed interconnectedness between ecological and women's concerns. In doing so, a number of different interpretations have come into existence. The interpretations mentioned above of Salleh (2014) and Mies and Shiva (2014), for example, imply that women, more than men, feel some sort of interconnectedness with nature, leading them to be better suited than men to

defend ecological concerns and become environmental activists. This sense of interconnectedness with nature, in such a view, would come from the sense that just like nature, women have been oppressed and controlled by men. Such a view is a progression from the more essentialist view so-called 'nature feminists' held; they emphasized an almost spiritual bond supposedly present between women and nature, largely due to women's ability to give birth and therefore being closer to the natural world than men could ever be (Buckingham 2001). This connectedness meant, again, that women were in this view more likely to care for and protect nature (Kruse 1995; Salleh 2014). Others (Jackson 1993; MacGregor 2004) have rejected this view, arguing that looking upon this 'link' from such a biologically fixed viewpoint was counterproductive to a larger feminist argument which warns for reducing women to this type of essentialized creatures, defined in opposition to men. Many agreed with this criticism, but remained intrigued with the idea of ecofeminism and changed its interpretation. They adopted the view that the link that should be emphasized is that between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature (Gaard 1997; Allison 2010). In addition, some argue that due to their societally constructed roles, for example as caretakers of children, women are likely to notice environmental issues before men do, and therefore may be more likely to become environmentally active. For instance, women tend to be the first to notice children's health issues or shortages in resources such as water and food, as they are expected to provide meals and care for the family especially in traditional societies (Jacoby 2005; Salleh 2014).

Another additional modern interpretation of ecofeminism is that similarly to how women have been viewed as inferior to men and have been devalued in patriarchal societies, so has the environment been viewed as inferior to cultural development and economic growth (MacGregor 2004; Jacoby 2005). This link between women and environment is set up in a way that allows for a feminist understanding of why the environment is oftentimes treated as something that is there to be exploited and used for the sake of economic and/or cultural development. Symbolically, in this interpretation, men have over time become linked to development, civilization and progress, while women became linked to nature, perceived as disorderly and irrational (Gorney 2007; Goldsmith 2015). These latter conceptions of ecofeminism are socially constructivist rather than biologically essentialist in nature, and therefore such a framework is well equipped to lay the basis for an understanding of the discursive aspect this thesis seeks to investigate.

2.3 ‘Othering’

Not unique to ecofeminist theory, but nonetheless clearly connected, is the concept of the ‘Other’ (Said 2003). Ecofeminists make use of the concept of Othering when explaining the ways in which they view the current world order. Similarly to other feminists, they argue that patriarchy has constructed an order in which the heterosexual (and in neo-colonial contexts white) man holds the ‘norm’ within society; this group of men is regarded as dominant, superior and above nature (Jacoby 2005; Goldsmith 2015). Those falling outside of this norm are regarded as an ‘Other’; in the ecofeminist context this group consists mainly women who are seen as naturally oppositional to men, although modern-day ecofeminism has started to include other marginalised groups that do not abide by this norm, resulting in a renewed view that “patriarchy seeks to construct women, people of colour, queer people and others as non-normative, inferior, or closer to nature, animalizing them in such a way as to prevent them from having a culture, intellect, or even a physical embodiment.” (Goldsmith 2015, p. 18) With this broad interpretation, similarities can be drawn with postcolonialism, a way of thinking which has criticized the way in which mainly Western, (neo-)colonial societies attempted to make sense of the world by dividing it into simplified dualisms, in which one concept is prioritised and constructed as dominant over the other, while neither can be understood without the other. Taking an example such as ‘development’ versus ‘nature’, it can easily be seen how this is linked to not only ecofeminism but also to (neo-)colonialism (Goldsmith 2015; Gaard 1997; Jacoby 2005). Once a system of superior-inferior dualisms has been created, discrimination, exploitation and domination are more easily justified.

2.4 Ecofeminism in the Palestinian context

The above-mentioned similarities between ecofeminism and postcolonialism illustrate all the more ecofeminism’s applicability to the Palestinian case: not only are the Palestinian people overtly oppressed under a decades-long occupation, the Zionist movement has over the last century found more subtle and creative ways to portray Palestinians either as underdeveloped ‘savages’, close to nature and thus ‘feminine’, or as virtually non-existent¹ (Goldsmith 2015; Gorney 2007; Pappé 2010). Although this perspective is beyond the scope of this thesis, mentioning the ecofeminist perspective on such power relations is important because it quite clearly illustrates the patronizing effects of ‘Othering’ in the Israeli-

¹ In the early 1920s, Zionists spoke of Palestine as “a land without people for a people without a land.” (Gorney 2007, p. 466)

Palestinian context. In addition, the narrative and treatment of the Palestinian as feminine and inferior likely have led to frustrations amongst Palestinian men who, consequentially, felt the need to assert power where they could, resulting in the reinforcement of a patriarchal system² (Sharoni 1995; Weagel 2009). This is a mechanism typical of colonialism, often leading to the double-sided oppression of women (Weagel 2009).

2.5 Relevancy and applicability to the research

This thesis takes the ecofeminist perspective that reads the treatment and narration surrounding environmental issues along the same lines of the treatment of women in a patriarchal society; the domination and/or exploitation of both environment and women are justified as long as they fit into a larger political, economic or nationalist perspective. Specifically, the thesis views the encouragement of high fertility in the oPt as a value that fits into the dominant ‘national security’ discourse, while this same phenomenon devalues the inferior ‘environmental security’ discourse. As the national security discourse is expected to be the superior discourse, the general expectation is that environmental security discourse does not discuss population growth and high fertility as significant factors contributing to water security. Rather, all the focus of environmental discourse towards the water security topic is expected to be on the Israeli occupation and Israeli policies towards water allocation for the Palestinians.

High fertility rates and consequential population growth, from the ecofeminist perspective taken, serve as a concrete materialization of both the status of women in Palestinian society and as a concrete negative factor impacting water security. How high fertility is connected to both of these factors is elaborated on in the literature review. Additionally, related to the broader ecofeminist theme, the perspective that elevating the societal status of women may lead to better environmental protection and policies is also taken. For instance, in the Palestinian case women make up some 67 percent of those working in the plant-based agricultural sector, albeit generally as an unpaid labour force (Hodali 2018). Too often, the experience-based knowledge of this significant group goes ignored due to the low societal status of especially rural women in Palestine (Kurzom 2001). As the agricultural sector is largely water-dependent, raising awareness amongst this large group of women, as well as taking their agricultural roles and experiences seriously, is likely

² In order to further illustrate how this circle repeats itself, one should take in mind that Jewish men had been ‘feminized’ and looked down upon in Europe, and therefore there was an urge to establish themselves as masculine and powerful once the state of Israel was created (Gorney 2007).

to prove valuable to the creation of new solutions and initiatives concerning water-related issues. This is in addition to the ecofeminist argument that women are generally the first to notice the effects of environmental degradation and resource scarcity, since they are generally the primary caretakers of the family; examples of this are that mothers may be the first to notice diseases in their children, or to discover resource scarcities in the form of lacking water and/or food to cook with. Elevating the status of women would be two-fold: on the one hand, it would lead to an increasing rejection of the view that the role of women encompasses mainly childbearing, while on the other hand it would increasingly open up space for political and other non-traditional roles for women.

3. Literature review

Taking in mind how an ecofeminist frame has revealed the way in which Palestinians have oftentimes been portrayed as ‘underdeveloped’, the acknowledgement should be made that one should watch for criticizing Palestinian fertility rates in the context of environmental wellbeing, since this is something the ‘developed’ West oftentimes criticizes the developing world of (Halfon 1997). The challenge engrained in the specific topic this thesis focuses on, then, is using an ecofeminist framework to *avoid* such a patronizing tone, rather than falling into the neo-colonial, ill-advised trap that eco-feminism criticizes. The population growth-environmental degradation topic is a controversial one, and this thesis will not pretend otherwise. In order to avoid the neo-colonial undertone, gendered power relations in the context of national security should be closely analysed, to then be linked to the environmental aspect. The following review will therefore discuss the existing literature that has focused on three separate but interrelated dimensions indicated to be of importance to the thesis topic: the national security dimension, the gendered dimension and the environmental dimension.

3.1 The national security dimension

Benedict Anderson (2006) argued that the nation is “imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always a deep, horizontal comradeship.” (p. 7) National identities rely on Othering, thereby strengthening this sense of comradeship. Palestinian nationalism, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, may be one of the clearest modern-day examples. Authors discussing Palestinian nationalism have often focussed on the ethnic dimension of the

conflict, where one can see that the Arab identity is emphasized in contrast to the Jewish 'Other' (Ghanem 2013; Hage 2003). This ethnic Palestinian consciousness began to come into visible existence in the early decades of the 20th century, when Jewish immigration began to increase and Arab inhabitants became increasingly aware of Zionists' intentions in Palestine (Ghanem 2013). With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the large-scale Palestinian diaspora that followed, Palestinians found themselves powerless within the new situation and in need of a powerful national identity narrative (Katz 2003; Ghanem 2013).

3.1.1. Limited fixations of security

The ethnic/national division between 'us' and 'them' persisted during decades of political and violent conflict that have led to fixed and stubborn understandings of the concept of security in the minds of Palestinians and Israelis alike (Sharoni 1995). The perceived meaning and understanding of the term security is dependent primarily on how a society or a nation defines itself; the term does not encompass a definition that holds true on a global scale (Sharoni 1995). Recent history filled with existential anxiety has made Israelis come to understand security as protection from unexpected terror attacks, while Palestinians view security as being free from the dangers and restrictions that come from living under occupation and the subsequent lack of sovereignty that their semi-official government faces (Bromberg and Qumsieh 2005). Neither side has felt they have come close to reaching this security. In fact, the militarised character of this type of security contains a paradox, as the pursuit of security for one side results in insecurity of the other (Bromberg and Qumsieh 2005). Still, this traditional notion of national security has been what policy-makers have tended to refer to, so as to avoid not being taken seriously (Sharoni 1995). As the Palestinian nationalist movement needed to distance itself from both the oppositional Israeli narrative, and from the leftovers of colonial identities, the movement created a strong connection between the Palestinian identity and the land itself (Massad 1995). This is how the beginnings of the creation of an eco-gendered dimension to the nationalist conflict can be witnessed.

3.2 The Gendered dimension

Although the aforementioned ethnic dimension of Palestinian nationalism is of great importance to understanding the basis of the movement, hidden behind the ethnic façade more subtle identity relations are at play. Authors such as Yuval-Davis (2003), Sharoni (1995), Massad (1995) and Katz (2003) emphasize the importance of gendered identities and narratives that tend to become engrained in nationalist movements. 'Othering' does not only

happen in nationalist discourse towards the out-group, it also happens *within* nationalist movements through the creation of strongly gendered relations that pose the male and female gender in opposition to one another. When reading the Palestinian nationalist movement through a gendered lens, one discovers the significant emphasis that was put on gender relations, particularly the masculine *versus* the feminine, in an attempt to construct a nationalist narrative that could be seen as powerful in times of oppression. Here, the dominant male voices construct narratives around the woman as the mother, or reproducer, of the nation, while the national identity itself is narrated in a masculine form (Massad 1995; Sharoni 1995). A conflation of women and land is typical of nationalist movements, leading to women being portrayed not only as mothers but as the objectified embodiment of the nation (Yuval-Davis 2003; Katz 2003). Such gendered dimensions to nationalist discourse are fairly typical and yet, as Yuval-Davis points out, political theories on the subject of nationalism have tended to leave out this key component in their discussions, even when the reproduction of the nation is concerned. In reality, gendered discourses are convenient for nationalist leaders who are concerned with controlling the nation's reproduction.

According to King (2002), attempts to control reproduction are (almost) always done with underlying nationalist intentions. With leaders wanting to increase their own populations as a part of nation-building efforts, the creation of discourses, practices and policies that (attempt to) control women's bodies becomes an effective tool (Yuval-Davis 2003; Klausen 2015). This has the effect of undermining women's reproductive rights (Jacoby 2005). While stripping them from their agency in political areas, women's bodies are effectively transformed into political instruments for male leaders (Jacoby 2005; MacGregor 2004).

The created interconnectedness between women and motherhood reflects and shapes the overall status of women in a particular society, making it not as much a natural phenomenon as a social construction. Rich (1976) explains that "Institutionalized motherhood demands of women maternal 'instinct' rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of self." (p. 42) In order to attain this, bearing and raising children is generally narrated to be a function that is essential to any woman's biological makeup and therefore also to her happiness (Portuguese 1998).

3.2.1. Motherhood narratives and reinforcing patriarchy

Such a politicized version of motherhood becomes problematic for women's societal status when they portray the woman as having a only one set role, the traditional child-

bearing and -rearing role (Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis 2003). In this scenario, women are only congratulated on their contributions to the national struggle when these contributions are directly linked to the 'feminine' side of the narrative rather than to the 'masculine' political side, leading to the reinforcement of an understanding of womanhood in fixed and limited terms (Sharoni 1995; Hasso 1998; Katz 2003; Jacoby 2005).

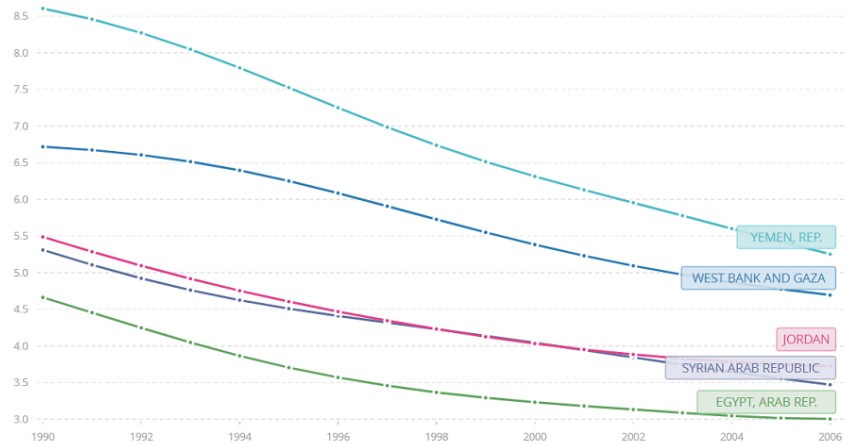
Practically all strands of feminism agree that such social and/or legal control over reproduction is a main contributor to the oppression of women, and that this cannot be seen in separation from systems of patriarchy (Portuguese 1998). Patriarchy is "generally seen as manifested in social relations that enable men to dominate women, relations which are expressed in a stratification system, supported by social, economic and political institutions that give men advantages and constrain women." (Giacaman 1997) While patriarchal systems assert social control of reproduction, the 'cost' of reproduction in terms of time and care is assigned to women, reinforcing women's financial dependence on men (Giacaman 1997). Additionally, because patriarchy allows more men than women in decision-making positions, the traditional stereotype of women belonging at home is easily reinforced, along with the binary system that devalues the feminine in contrast to the masculine (Abdo 1999; Jacoby 2005).

The question may arise why women willingly become part of such gendered nationalist movements. Sharoni (1995) explains that with nationalism created around the perception of the non-gendered 'Other', women tend to feel drawn to such movements because they are included in the discourse of the larger 'imagined community' despite its highly gendered dimensions. Nationalist discourse moreover tends to emphasize the need to protect its women against the dangerous Other, a narrative drawing women in further the more endangered they perceive themselves to be (Holt 2003).

3.2.2. The demographic puzzle

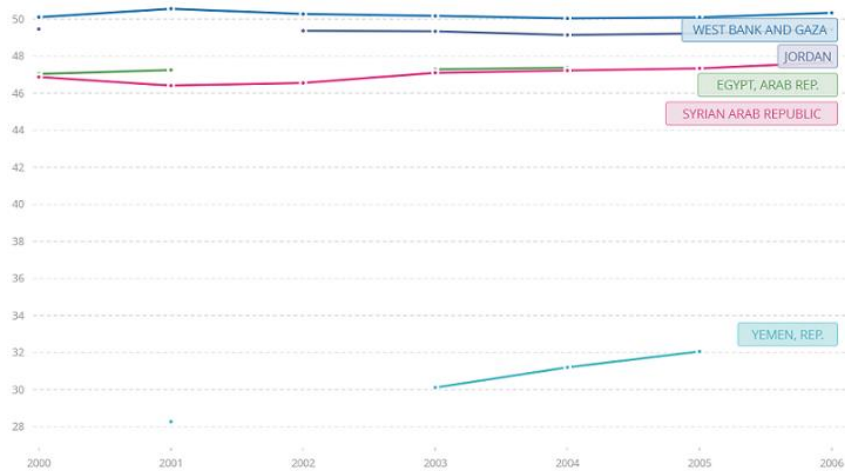
Palestinian society has for decades been characterized by above-average population growth and fertility rates, a phenomenon which has been called a 'demographic puzzle' (Khawaja 2000; Fargues 2000). From 1995 until 2005 the population of the West Bank and Gaza increased from ca. 2.5 million to over 3.3 million, with one of the highest growth rates in the world ('West Bank and Gaza'). Many different, but interrelated explanations exist attempting to offer an understanding of Palestine's remarkably high fertility rates. With its relatively high female education levels in combination with low infant mortality rates and its

urbanized character, Palestine’s above regional-average fertility rates is a phenomenon that defies the predictions of classic Demographic Transition Theory (DTT)³ (Giacaman 1997; Courbage 1999).



Graph 1: Average number of children per woman 1990 – 2006⁴ (Source: World Bank)

It should be noted that graph 1 does not distinguish between fertility in the West Bank and Gaza, while a significant difference exists between the two separate territories. In 2004, the total fertility per woman in the West Bank was 4.1, while in Gaza this was 5.8 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2006).



Graph 2: % of women with secondary education 2000 – 2006 (Source: World Bank)

³ DTT predicts that modernizing societies with increasing education levels and standards of living experience a decline in mortality rates, and then move on to experience gradual declines in fertility rates as well (Giacaman 1997; Courbage 1999).

⁴ Graph 1 illustrates that although there has been a gradually falling trend since 1990, Palestinian fertility rates are above-average when compared to the surrounding Arab region. Yemen is the only country with fertility rates higher than those of the oPt, however when taking into consideration female education levels, Palestine scores significantly better than Yemen.

In their explanations of the ‘demographic puzzle’, many insist that the political uniqueness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is bound to be an important factor maintaining high fertility rates (Tamari and Scott 1991; Fargues 2000; Morland 2014; Courbage 1999). In such an explanation, the status of women is generally connected to the nationalist aspect of the conflict, albeit in differing ways. Some point to women’s limited access to the workplace due to political and economic instability, keeping them at home, enforcing stereotypical gender relations rather than opening up self-development space for individuals (Kartin and Schnell 2007). Others focus on the implicitly present pronatalist discourse which attempts to convince women that their greatest contribution to the national struggle is child-bearing (Fargues 2000; Kanaaneh 2002; Morland 2014), or emphasize that in times of violent conflict people may start regarding having many children as an ‘investment’ towards one’s own social security (Khawaja 2003; Giacaman 1997).

Most literature discusses a combination of these and additional factors related to patriarchal systems; practically all of these factors have in common that they point to a low status of women in society being a main cause of high fertility (Tamari and Scott 1991; Courbage 1999; Giacaman 1997; Fargues 2000; Portuguese 1998; Kartin and Schnell 2007). With the extensive patriarchal systems supporting the nationalist cause in mind, an explanation to the demographic puzzle that focuses on pronatalist discourse as a contributing factor alone is too simplistic. However, since the research of this thesis will focus on discourses, this thesis adopts the idea of discourse as a significant sculptor of power and a mechanism through which social control can efficiently be asserted (Fairclough 1989). Pronatalist discourse on its own should not be understood to account for Palestine’s high fertility rate, however it may serve as a reflection and simultaneous reinforcement of women’s traditional role in society.

3.2.3. Security and the ‘demographic battle’

In the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both sides have historically viewed achieving population dominance as a security measure (Jacoby 2005; Rabinowitz 2005). This has led to a phenomenon sometimes branded the ‘demographic battle’ (Jacoby 2005). Pronatalist behaviour, where high birth rates are actively encouraged, is likely to happen in societies or amongst subgroups which perceive their group identity to be under threat. This perception leads to the sense that there is a need for a continuing replacements of its own members (Khawaja and Randall 2006; Morland 2014). In the face of Israeli attempts to erase the memory and basic rights of Palestinians while also claiming increasing areas of

Palestinian land through the building of settlements, it is quite easily understood how this mechanism of a perceived survival attempt through child-bearing applies to the Palestinians within the oPt. Morland (2014) speaks of a case of demographic engineering, where the main goal is to change the existing demographic balance between conflicting groups in order to intimidate the other. In order for this to work, women are again given the primary role of producing and raising future generations of nationalist militants (Katz 2003). In addition, attempts to outnumber the other side in the Israeli-Palestinian context can be understood as an attempt to settle territorial borders as favourably as possible (Jacoby 2005).

In the oPt, the issue of fertility indeed became politicized to the point where it was regarded as a nationalist weapon rather than a women's reproductive health, or simply a human rights issue (Courbage 1999; Bosmans et al. 2008). Coming back to Arafat's proclamation that "*The womb of the Arab woman is my strongest weapon*", this single sentence captures the politicization of fertility for the sake of the national security project. In 1993, even the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which amongst other services is listed as a family planning organization, is quoted as having described high fertility as "*something positive, as a reassurance of the continued existence of the nation.*" (qtd. in Fargues 2000, p. 469)

In general, pronatalist discourse captured mainly the patriotic sentiments behind high birth rates, or framed child-bearing in a way that would increase the amount of fighters that would defend Palestine, particularly if sons were born (Kanaanah 2002). Bosmans et al. (2008) found that the perception amongst women that it was their duty to bear children and raise them to become fighters for the nationalist cause was widespread. This perception was strongly linked to the experience of having to witness increasing numbers of settlers taking over Palestinian land (Bosmans et al. 2008). Thus, discourse surrounding fertility was linked to dominant security discourse, making the phenomenon desired and strongly politicized (Fargues 2000).

3.3 The environmental dimension

The discussion above may lead to the question of how exactly the gendered dimension to Palestinian nationalist discourse and the politicization of fertility are connected to the environmental security aspect of this thesis. First of all, it should be noted that the perspective taken in this thesis will not be ultimately neo-Malthusian; this would mean that the assumption is that population growth necessarily leads to resource scarcity, an idea which

has largely been debunked by modern scientific research and developments in the field of research management and agricultural practices (Desrochers and Hoffbauer 2009; Togman 2019). Nonetheless, this thesis takes the more moderate perspective that, in the case of population growth as rapid as has been experienced in the oPt, the seemingly positive reinforcement of high fertility levels simultaneous with increasing water scarcity concerns signals some sort of paradox between pronatalist discourse and environmental security discourse in the context of the nationalist struggle. Whilst taking this perspective, the attempt is not to deny Israel's role in creating water scarcity in the oPt through a system of discriminatory water allocation and domination (Lowi 1993; Selby 2003). In fact, this side of the issue will be taken in mind throughout the thesis. The thesis also recognizes the hindrance Palestinians experience in attempting to develop water systems that would allow them to be less dependent on Israel for the provision of water. Still, this does not essentially change the aforementioned paradox between the two discourses.

3.3.1. Environmental discourse in a nationalist context

In this view, the thesis has been inspired by a number of works. Orenstein (2004) has observed a 'missing link' between environmental security and national security discourse in the context of Israeli society. From the 1950s onwards, the Israeli government has produced a strong and openly pronatalist discourse that was essentially meant to keep a Jewish majority within Israel's borders (Sharoni 1995; Orenstein 2004). Despite growing insights into the country's boundaries with regard to providing natural resources, Israeli environmentalists tended not to discuss their society's pronatalist tendencies as a negative factor in this regard. Orenstein explains this through arguing that the nationalist movement and its connected discourse do not allow for such criticisms. The relationship between population and environment is only discussed within the accepted boundaries of nationalist discourse, which leads environmentalists to continue focussing on addressing the symptoms rather than a possible important root cause of environmental degradation (Orenstein 2004). While Orenstein makes an interesting observation, it should be noted that the Israeli and Palestinian cases are quite different when it comes to environmental security, due to the Palestinians' dependence on Israel and their lack of sovereign decision-making with regard to water and other environmental matters.

Alatout (2006) and Greenspan (2005) place an emphasis on differences between Israeli and Palestinian environmental narratives, arguing that these have largely come forth out of differing nationalist priorities and unequal power relations. Where Palestinian

narratives tend to be highly politicized and focus on questions of sovereignty and property rights, Israeli narratives generally focus more on quality of life and transboundary environmental issues and interpret the environment and politics as separate matters (Alatout 2006). Alatout criticizes both narratives, arguing that focussing solely on either one will lead to missed opportunities for efficient solutions to environmental issues. Cohen (2011) connects Alatout's view with that of Orenstein by arguing that in both Israeli and Palestinian societies, environmentalism only exists to the extent where it can support nationalist narratives. The environment is seldomly prioritised once environmental and national discourses contradict, making the author question the extent to which 'real' environmentalism exists at all in these societies, as "notions of intrinsic environmental value seem to be an unaffordable luxury to all concerned. (Cohen 2011, p. 247). Isaac et al. (2005) and Schoenfeld (2005) similarly maintain the idea that environmental narratives in this area are mostly expressions of the two opposing nationalisms, with the latter adding that this has led to both narratives largely excluding environmentally-related issues that the Israeli/Palestinian environment has in common with the global one, most importantly including topics of population, women's status in society and urbanization⁵ (Schoenfeld 2005).

3.3.2. Romanticizing the environment

Still, an outright disregard for the environment is not in the culture of either Palestinians or Israelis. For Palestinians, love for the land has become a nationalist value, mainly due to the loss of it that was experienced in the 20th century (Cohen 2011; Newman 2004; Schoenfeld 2005). Nationalist narratives make use of 'romantic environmentalism' which celebrates a traditional life where people live in harmony with nature. However, when it comes to policy-making economic development is (almost) always prioritized, generally leading to the exploitation of land and resources (Schoenfeld 2005). Newman (2004) terms this 'environmental schizophrenia', arguing that the apparent refusal of environmentalists to discuss population growth in a constructive way is a clear example of the paradox. This phenomenon may be explained by the tendency of Israelis and Palestinians to still think of security in terms of military conflict only (Newman 2004).

⁵ These issues are not fully ignored, however the international community visibly emphasizes these issues in environmental narratives where Israeli and Palestinian narratives have a tendency to leave them out, according to Schoenfeld (2005).

3.3.3. *Population growth, environmental degradation and resource scarcity*

International population growth discourse started to include environmental concerns during the 1950s and 1960s (Halfon 1997). However, the extent to which such concerns were partially rightful claims or rather neo-colonial in tone is unclear and this unclarity has made the topic highly controversial (Sherbinin et al. 2007). In the past decades, anti-natalist (or *overpopulation*) discourse propagated by Western nations and international institutions such as the UN has projected power relations between the Western and developing worlds (Halfon 1997; Togman 2019).

The discourse led to international efforts attempting to stop overpopulation in developing nations by focussing on the provision of family planning services and abortion. However this has slowly started to change from the mid-1990s onwards, when the focus shifted towards enhancing the status and opportunities for women in societies overall, thereby attempting to tackle gendered power relations rather than the effects of them (Giacaman 1997; Bosmans et al. 2008). This method has been advocated by feminists from the developing world, who stress that rather than being a consequence of economic growth and reduced fertility, gender equality and reproductive rights are the main cause of the former (Giacaman 1997). This argument advocated by non-Western feminists illustrates why the (eco)feminist framework was deemed suitable for this thesis' discussion of the controversial population growth/environment relationship without falling into the neo-colonial trap.

In the Israeli-Palestinian context, viewing demographics and fertility from a political and territorial perspective connects it to the topic of environmental security. Population growth and/or overpopulation are generally understood as important contributors to environmental stresses, including water-related issues such as scarcity and pollution (Kelly and Homer-Dixon 1995; Sherbinin et al. 2007). While population growth tends to negatively affects environmental quality and resource availability, the extent of these negative effects is dependent on the rate of economic growth of the state experiencing population growth (Cropper and Griffiths 1994). A wealthy state has the financial means to develop mechanisms to limit environmental degradation and to conduct elaborate research on sustainable development. Simultaneously, consumption patterns contribute to scarcity and degradation, with Western living standards such as seen in Israel and its settlements being the least sustainable (Newman 2004; Rabinowitz 2005). The size and geographic location of the area as well as the natural presence of vital resources also play significant roles (Cropper and Griffiths 1994; Orenstein 2004). Moreover, global climate change will impact different areas

in different ways; in Israel/Palestine effects will likely become the most noticeable in the forms of increased droughts, rising sea levels and increased occurrence of extreme weather (Mason, Zeitoun and Mimi 2012). Such impacts have more extensive effects in Palestine than in Israel, for example because Palestinian agriculture is largely rainfed (Feitelson et al. 2012). The effects of population growth are most impactful when combined with an unequal division of resources, such as is the case for the oPt, and climate change (Homer-Dixon 1994). Water can be indicated as the most direct environmental issue that Palestinians and Israelis alike have come to think of as a security issue (Feitelson et al. 2012).

3.3.4. Environmental justice

Everyone is not impacted equally by environmental degradation and resource scarcity, which may be why building peace or unifying identity subgroups over shared environmental concerns might sound more feasible than it has often proved to be (Dawson 2000). Since the 1990s, it has become increasingly clear that environmental issues have the ability to divide groups possibly more than to unify them due to the phenomenon of environmental justice. Here, for example, people living in poorer countries or areas tend to be more affected by climate change and environmental issues than those in wealthy areas (Dawson 2000). Living in areas affected by political conflict also exacerbates the impact of environmental degradation, and conflict itself can greatly exacerbate environmental degradation (Mason et al. 2012). In Israel/Palestine, unequal power relations leading to the portrayal of Palestinians as ‘underdeveloped’ have led to an international discourse that focuses on helping or funding Palestinian environmental management, while turning a half-blind eye to the extensive effects of the occupation, thereby missing the chance to tackle the problem at its roots (Mason et al. 2012). Ecofeminists have similarly pointed out that women tend to be affected more than men by environmental factors, just as women tend to experience the impacts of conflict before men (Brittain 2003; Weigel 2009; Elia 2017). When discussing environmental security in Palestine, then, one should watch to blame Palestinian mismanagement of environmental resources fully, without taking in mind the extensive environmental effects of the occupation. At the same time, however, the gendered aspect illustrates that one should also watch to blame the occupation for environmental degradation and scarcity in the oPt, without taking in mind society’s low status of women and its projection of women’s roles as mere procreators of the nation. A balanced view, which takes into account the double-oppression of women and environment should be held in line with ecofeminist thinking.

4. Problem formulation

Having discussed the literature, it appears that while both feminism and environmentalism in the context of nationalism have been extensively discussed, the connection between the two in this context has hardly been touched upon. However, Schoenfeld (2005), Jacoby (2005) and Alatout (2006) have made some references to the connection between women's status and environmental status as 'inferior' to the nationalist cause within environmental discourse that need some further addressing. Encouraging rapid population growth during the Second Intifada appears problematic, or at least paradoxical, in the face of increasing concerns over water scarcity in the oPt. This thesis therefore aims to address the gap in the literature, by connecting the status of women to the status of water security. It asks whether there was indeed a 'missing link' between the two, focussing in its research on environmental discourse during the Second Intifada. The research is divided into two sub-questions, the first of which aims to analyse how a national security focussed discourse was reflected within environmental discourse. The second sub-question aims to analyse how and to what extent the ecofeminist aspect was reflected: the combination of these findings is expected to lead to a general idea of whether such a 'missing link' was indeed present and some implications of the findings.

5. Methodology

The following chapter will give an introduction to the research that will be conducted in order to find an answer to the second sub-question. Having opted for a method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), whereby additional use will be made of its sub-method of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), this chapter will elaborate on the overall research method and the aims of the subsequent research strategy. It will furthermore provide a brief introduction to the main corpus selected for analysis, along with a brief explanation as to how and why these specific texts and the specific discourse sector were selected. Lastly, the chapter will explain the details of the structuring of the research, which is based on CDA technique drafted by Jäger (2001) and additional DHA steps as set out by Reisigl and Wodak (2017).

5.1 Research method

Critical Discourse Analysis may be described as a cross-discipline that combines a number of disciplines including sociology, linguistics, anthropology and cognitive

psychology (Fairclough 1989), concerning itself with the interconnectedness of language and power (Wodak 2001; Jäger 2001). Discourses are “societal flows of knowledge through time”, which constitute social realities as much as they reflect them (Jäger 2001, p. 46). This is why CDA is expected to make a valuable and suitable addition to the ecofeminist perspective of this thesis, which is similarly occupied with the mechanisms of socially constructed power relations and realities.

In order to understand the roots of this type of societal ‘knowledge’, the political and historical background of a discourse should be taken into account. Wodak (2001) lays out the foundations of the more context focused Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), committed to CDA. An important part of this approach is its use of triangulation, in the form of providing historical and political contexts to the discourse under analysis. Such triangulation is done for the purpose of avoiding bias where possible (Wodak 2001). It should be emphasized that in both CDA and DHA, discourse is not only understood to shape social and political realities or actions, it is also shaped by and embedded in its social and situational settings (Wodak 2001; Fairclough 1989). Social context, then, is of great importance to not only illustrate that a certain discourse was dominant, but to explain how and why it was able to be widely accepted.

5.1.1. Discourse and power

Discourses create power relations not necessarily through language only, but because they affect the actions of the individuals subjected to them. Thus, even when individuals or groups challenge a discourse, this is still done in the context of said discourse (Jäger 2001). A critical analysis of a dominant discourse, then, is an important step to changing, or at least challenging power relations. Here, it is not only the discourse and its possible inherent contradictions that are analysed, but also the scope of what is allowed to be said within this discourse. Moreover, a discourse analysis aims to reveal the mechanisms through which ‘temporarily valid truths’ become widely accepted (Jäger 2001). These truths are, through the reinforcement of power relations and domination, presented as ‘common sense’ within a dominant discourse, being rational, natural and beyond doubt (Fairclough 1989).

5.1.2. Positioning of the research

Using CDA as a research method, it is important that the researcher acknowledges that their own critiques or even the choice of analysed topic are similarly part of a process formed by discourse, instead of by an objective truth (Jäger 2001; Meyer 2001). This is

certainly significant when dealing with an issue as controversial as the relationship between population growth and resource scarcity, especially in a complicated context such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A critical strand of social science, CDA focuses on social issues experienced by certain groups of people, in order to lay the basis for possible change. This, however, illustrates a bias of the researcher towards who is seen as experiencing problems and why this needs challenging. As a basic rule, therefore, CDA positions itself on the side of the 'losers' within the discursive context; this allows CDA to possibly open up space for change in discursive power relations (Fairclough 2001). When it comes to the water aspect in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is the Palestinians who are on this 'losing' side (Selby 2003). However, because this thesis is more interested in within-Palestinian society, the research will position itself on the side of both Palestinian women and the environment itself. According to (eco)feminist theory, this side is oppressed both by occupation *and* an internal patriarchal society, and therefore it can be argued that this is the real 'losing' side.

5.2 Research strategy

Through the chosen combined method of CDA and DHA, this research will analyse to what extent there is a missing discursive link within environmental discourse by conducting a critical discourse analysis in the frame of the two separate sub-questions. The research serves as a qualitative and explanatory within-case study approach, aiming to analyse and explain the how and why of a possible paradox between dominant nationalist discourse (which glorifies population growth) and environmental security discourse (concerned with water security) (Bhattacharjee 2012; Yin 1981). The strength of case study as a research strategy is the ability to explain both a contemporary phenomenon and its context (Yin 1981). Because of the uniqueness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in international politics, the main aim is not to draw global, or even regional conclusions or lessons from the research; on the contrary, the research aims to pinpoint the role of the unique nationalist side of the conflict with regard to the phenomenon under analysis.

In the broader range of IR theory, the analysis of discourse as a construction in a historical and political context is constructivist in nature, as constructivism perceives matters such as identity, power and the general world order around us as socially constructed rather than as an objective reality (Checkel 2004). Language fits into such a view because it is created from the interaction of 'physical' humans with the world, making it an interpretation of the world and reflecting the physical position of (different groups of) humans in it (Bo 2015). Bo calls these 'bodies' because the body, rather than the mind, can interact with the

external world. This leads to language being constructed from the perspective of the human body and its location within the world. Gender, class, race and other factors may influence one's interaction with the world, which is why a dominant discourse may be challenged if framed from any of such specific viewpoints (Bo 2015; Alatout 2006).

5.2.1. The reflection of the 'national security' aspect in PCS discourse

In order to find an answer to the first sub-question, the national security aspect of environmental security discourse will be taken into account by critically looking into the extent to which PCS points to a 'lack of sovereignty' narrative and related occupational factors as the main cause of water shortage and quality problems in the oPt. Triangulation by means of providing a brief historical background to Israeli-Palestinian hydro-politics is used here to explain the extent of Israel's role in causing water scarcity for Palestinians.

5.2.2. The reflection of the 'ecofeminist' aspect in PCS discourse

The second sub-question will view the discourse from an ecofeminist stance, first and foremost analysing what role Palestine's rapid population growth plays in the environmental security discourse; this is a phenomenon that cannot be framed in a 'lack of sovereignty' frame. From thereon, the link with the broader status of women in Palestinian society will be made, as the literature illustrated how high fertility rates and consequential population growth in the Palestinian context are inevitably linked to this status.

5.3 Data collection and introduction

For the purpose of conducting a discourse analysis, primary discursive sources were selected through a method of purposive sampling, a technique which suits the qualitative character of the research as it purposefully selects data deemed to contain information relevant to the research (Etikan et al. 2015). Because the chosen timeframe of the research requires data from the Second Intifada years, online databases containing NGO publications written during that time were consulted. One of the selected reports was published in 2006, one year after the ending of the Intifada, however the choice was made to include this report because a large part of its content discussed research conducted during the Intifada. The specific time frame was chosen as the Second Intifada was characterized by high birth rates, water insecurity and intensified nationalist struggle; the combination of these factors makes it an interesting time frame to research how the environmental issue of water insecurity was framed in this politicized context. The choice was made to select four texts⁶ published by

⁶ The following publications were selected for the research:

different NGOs active in the oPt. This number was deemed capable of providing a small representative sample while also fitting within the limitations of the thesis' body. It should be noted that texts and discourse are not the same, however texts can be described as 'discourse fragments', and can therefore be quite representative of a larger present discourse (Jäger 2001).

5.3.1. *Discourse strand and discourse sector*

The data selection should be representative of the 'water security' discourse strand within Palestinian civil society (PCS) during the Second Intifada, which is why all the sources are in the form of NGO reports and pamphlets discussing the topic of water (in)security, either as an issue of concern on its own or in a larger environmental context. This particular strand was chosen as a main area of focus as water insecurity is the main environmental issue facing the oPt, and is widely discussed as an environmental topic of concern (Feitelson et al. 2012).

Different discourse strands exist within so-called 'discourse sectors'; such sectors are communities, fields or other types of groups where a discourse takes place. For this research, the choice was made to focus on the PCS as a discourse sector as this is an environment where the effects of the dominant national discourse are assumed to be visible, while civil society is also expected to be somewhat critical of existing norms. As the selected texts were in English, they are assumed to be representative of the discursive image the PCS willingly conveyed to its donors and the international community, as well as of the general environmental discourse that was dominant in Palestine, which was narrated in the region's socio-political context (Greenspan 2005).

5.4 Structuring of the analysis

Although no single technique for conducting CDA exists, some scholars who discuss the approach provide suggestions for structuring one's research. This thesis will follow the three steps of the CDA technique as suggested by Jäger (2001): first, a *structure analysis* will qualitatively evaluate the chosen primary sources with regard to the specific discourse strand to be analysed, thereby focussing on content rather than linguistic framing. General themes are appointed to the texts here. Moreover, the presentation and frequency of themes relating

Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 2005: 'A *Critical Analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian Water Relations*'.
Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, (PASSIA) 2002: 'Water: the Blue Gold of the Middle East'.

Palestinian Hydrology Group, 2003: 'Water and Sanitation, Hygiene (WaSH)'.

Al-Mezan, 2003: 'On the Brink of Disaster: the Beit Lahia Treatment Plant and Human Rights'.

to ‘occupation’ on the one hand and ‘population growth’ on the other are considered in this part.

Secondly, a more detailed and language-oriented *fine analysis* serves to analyse how and why the analysed aspect is framed the way it is. In order to do so, the suggested DHA guidelines are followed that Reisigl and Wodak (2017) have put forth in the form of the following three questions:

- How are actors, events, processes etc. referred to linguistically?
- What are characteristics, stereotypes and features (positively or negatively) attributed to actors, events or processes?
- What arguments or solutions does the specific discourse strand employ?

More formally, these questions signal the three discursive strategies that will be up for investigation; the first question will henceforth be referred to as the *nomination strategy*, the second question is referred to as the *predication strategy*, and the third question is the *argumentation strategy* (Wodak 2001).

The third step of the CDA is the *concluding analysis*. This last part will reflect upon the acquired results of the two sub-questions and compare findings in order to arrive at a conclusion as to whether one might speak of a ‘missing discursive link’ within Palestinian water security discourse from an ecofeminist perspective. According to ecofeminist theory, the environment is generally treated by humans in a way which devalues it in comparison to political, cultural and/or economic factors: the concluding analysis will combine the findings in order to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the findings of the CDA support this view with an eye on the exact framing of the issue of water security as was done by the PCS.

5.5 Limitations of the research

This thesis does not claim that four environmental NGO reports are necessarily representative of the Palestinian environmental sector. The research should be seen as a small-scale study. Moreover, it should be noted that the research overall does not differentiate between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, although it mentions differences between these two areas when deemed necessary. For more in-depth research, a differentiation between the two main Palestinian areas would be necessary, as they differ quite substantially in both fertility rates and population growth on the one hand, and issues with water shortage and quality on the other. Due to the absence of sufficient data and primary sources that would allow the thesis to focus on just one of the two areas, the choice was made to discuss both and

combine the findings of all sources and data. In general, both the West Bank and Gaza suffer from water insecurity, and both areas had fertility rates above the regional average in the chosen time frame, which is why general conclusions will be drawn for the oPt as a whole.

6. Water security discourse: a critical analysis

The following chapter will keep in mind the previously discussed eco-feminist perspective in its discussion of environmental discourse in Palestinian civil society through a method of CDA. The aim of this chapter is to critically analyse the four selected NGO reports with a focus on their framing of water-related issues in the oPt. It will do so along the lines of the two different sub-questions of the research, the first sub-question focussing on the reflection of the ‘national security’ aspect and the second sub-question focussing on the ‘ecofeminist’ aspect. The specific topic of rapid population growth is taken here as an eco-feminist issue, as the literature review has not only explained how population growth can impact the environment and its natural resources, it is also an issue with far-reaching impacts on women. This two-fold impact makes it a concrete topic to focus on in the CDA.

The choice was made to investigate the two sub-questions concerning the PCS discourse under the same headings, mainly in the fine analysis. This means that the research is divided up into the analytical steps of the CDA and the DHA, however it is not strictly divided into different sections along the lines of the two sub-questions. This was done first of all to avoid repetition, as both sub-questions analyse the same discursive sources. In addition, this choice was made in order to allow for the two aspects to be discussed together or to be compared if necessary.

6.1 Water security in the oPt

Water has long been the most pressing environmental issue facing the oPt, and particularly Gaza (Feitelson et al. 2012; Weinthal et al. 2005). It is one of the most basic human needs; a sufficient availability of water, both in quality and quantity forms a main determinant to people’s health and livelihoods (Bellisari 1994). The oPt is located in what is characterized as the semi-arid Mediterranean region with hot and dry summers, and rainy winters (Tippman and Baroni 2017). This means that water scarcity in the oPt should not necessarily be understood as a natural occurrence; the West Bank, mainly, is home to a number of natural water sources that could provide sufficient water to its inhabitants, while the Gaza Strip’s climate experiences less precipitation and is more water scarce (Tippman

and Baroni 2017). The state of water security is by far the worst in the Gaza Strip, where, next to quantitative scarcity, quality of drinking water is extremely poor and deteriorating. The water scarcity can be characterized as severe and quality is under acceptable standards as settled by the World Health Organization; water is a significant cause of different diseases spreading across the population, especially in children (Baalousha 2009). The mutually reinforcing effects of climate change and occupation have devastating effects of water security in this area (Mason et al. 2012; Tippman and Baroni 2017).

6.1.1. The role of Israel

Generally, water shortage in the oPt is man-made; the main cause of scarcity for Palestinians is the Israeli occupation and its unequal water allocation policies (Mair, Kamat and Liu 2003). Israel occupied the oPt in 1967, which led to its control over 82 percent of available water sources in the territories (Trottier 2000; Ide and Fröhlich 2015). Mainly the West Bank contains natural water sources that Israel deems crucial for the survival and wellbeing of its people (Lowi 1993). As a part of the Oslo peace process of 1993, negotiations on the water issues allowed the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), established as part of the Oslo process, full control over two areas with downstream⁷, non-abundant and saline natural sources, around Jericho and all of the Gaza Strip. For managing development over most of the West Bank's upstream, abundant water resources, an Israeli-Palestinian joint water committee (JWC) was established (Selby 2003).

Any new initiatives for water developments and/or infrastructures now needed consent from the JWC, with both parties within the committee having the right to veto new developments. With Palestinians in much greater need than Israelis of such developments, this system had a far greater negative impact on them (Selby 2003). In addition, all new water developments the PA proposes need the approval of the Water Officer of the Civil Administration, a military order stemming from the pre-Oslo period. This has meant that whenever the Palestinians see an opportunity to develop new infrastructures on their land, the Israeli military can veto such plans if they see the particular land fit to build another settlement or a bypass road (Selby 2003). The settlements already in existence receive significant advantages regarding water; due to subsidies, settlers pay much less for water than Palestinians, and while the latter are subjected to frequent cut-offs, the former receive flowing water constantly (Selby 2003). The building of the Separation Wall in 2002 further

⁷ This meant that Israel, controlling the upstream side, was the supplier of such water sources (Selby 2003).

increased Israeli control over areas with significant water resources or opportunities for water-extraction developments (Al-Haq 2013). A combination of these inequalities and more have led to the aforementioned man-made water shortage in the oPt; it is impossible to know what the environmental situation in the area would be like had it not been for the occupation, however due to the extensive effects of conflict and occupation it is quite certain that environmental issues would not be so pressing.

6.1.2. Agency on the Palestinian side

Nevertheless, as anywhere else, the local population and its government have some part in contributing to environmental degradation as well. In the oPt, the PWA's water management has not been as efficient as it could have; for example, the water sources the PWA controlled in the West Bank after the peace negotiations were not optimally used, and better management might have led to some relief for communities of West Bank Palestinians in the late 1990s (Trottier 2000). Thus, while Israel has played a key part in creating Palestinians' water concerns, Palestinian internal water management has not been fully up to standard, largely stemming from the fact that the PA had been established only in 1994, after the ending of the First Intifada. A young organization formed in the midst of one of the world's most difficult to solve political conflicts, the decision-making power of the PA remained limited and since has functioned as a quasi-state at most (Abdo 1999; Hasso 1998). Under its leader Arafat, the PA became increasingly authoritarian with the help of international funding throughout the 1990s (Abdo 1999; Roy 2007).

In addition to the PA's ineffectiveness and increased authoritarian character, local Palestinian communities have had some part in contributing to water pollution. Extensive use of pesticides and herbicides by farmers in the agricultural sector has had detrimental effects on the quality of water in some areas (Bellisari 1994; Baalousha 2009). Moreover, on the topic of population, densely populated areas, especially in the Gaza Strip, have caused significant strains on water sources and the environment as a whole (Baalousha 2009). As the literature review made clear, however, Arafat and the PA encouraged population growth rather than addressing it as problematic in the face of the oPt's already vulnerable environment. This is, for instance, shown by the fact that the PA did not address family planning in its official Development Plan published in 1999 (Kartin and Schnell 2007).

6.1.3. *Palestinian water discourse*

Israel's control over most of the water resources is seen as a security threat to Palestinian society and individuals' wellbeing and has therefore found its place in the larger Palestinian security discourse (Ide and Fröhlich 2015). It has become increasingly clear in the last three decades that environmental degradation certainly affects people's livelihoods negatively and, additionally, may also have further negative impacts on political conflict situations, which in turn makes the issue directly related to other security issues (Barnett and Adger 2007). Because dominant environmental/water security discourse in the oPt has been developed in the context of the wider conflict and water asymmetries, discourses that challenge Palestine's the dominant discourse are few (Ide and Fröhlich 2015; Alatout 2006). In such rare cases, criticisms focus on the PA's lack of proper management, inefficient use of financial resources and polluting of water sources (Ide and Fröhlich 2015). Still, environmental discourse generally focuses on Israel as the cause of degradation and resource shortage, making dominant environmental discourse is highly political. Therefore, any environmental issues that are deemed not related to the nationalist conflict tend to become devalued in their importance, strengthening power relations on the within-societal level. This is how dominant Palestinian discourse may miss the reinforcing role that extra-territorial factors, such as repressive gendered politics, have towards the maintaining of current territorial power relations (Alatout 2006; Ide and Fröhlich 2015). According to Cronon (1992), a "narrative succeeds to the extent that it hides the discontinuities, ellipses, and contradictory experiences that would undermine the intended meaning of its story... it inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others." (p. 1350). The CDA approach that follows will analyse whether water security discourse during the Second Intifada indeed avoided discussing the issues related to Palestinian high fertility rates and population growth, and opted to focus on a framing purely along the lines of nationalist conflict in which essentially only Israel is pointed to as the culprit.

6.2 Structure analysis

As explained in the previous chapter, the following structure analysis aims to introduce the primary sources chosen for the research and explain how each of the reports have integrated the topic of water security. It will moreover take into account the frequencies, as well as the possible striking absences, of selected topics.

The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem is one of the oPt's main and most active environmental NGOs. Its 2005 report "*A critical analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian water*

relations” (henceforth: ‘ARIJ 2005’) discusses Palestinian water insecurity from a highly political stance, pointing to Israeli water discrimination policies and the inefficiency of the Joint Water Committee as causing water shortage. This report emphasizes strongly the traditional national security perspective; it does not voice criticism towards the PA and its water management. This report follows the hard-line nationalist-environmental discourse that Alatout (2006) and Ide and Fröhlich (2015) describe.

A similar highly politicized discourse pattern is followed by ‘PASSIA 2002’. As the report’s title “*Water: Blue Gold of the Middle East*” (henceforth: ‘PASSIA 2002’) suggests, the hydro-political aspect of the conflict is underlined here. PASSIA is formally listed as an educational NGO rather than an environmental one, and this special bulletin follows such an educational purpose; it provides facts and international laws concerning the water situation in the oPt, criticizing the Israeli policies throughout. Similarly to ‘ARIJ 2005’, Palestinians are portrayed to suffer widely from the Israeli-made shortages, however criticisms towards the PA are not voiced. The negative outcomes of the Oslo peace process is emphasized: similar to Selby’s (2003) findings, the creation of the JWC is described as a mere institutionalization of unequal power between Israel and Palestinians, under a cloak of collaboration. The nationalist tone of the bulletin, in which the Palestinians are a unified people against the Israelis, again, follows the traditional national security discourse.

The 2006 report by the Palestinian Hydrology Group, “*Water for Life*” (henceforth: ‘PHG 2006’) similarly follows mainly the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse in discussing the water issue; the extensive report focuses on the effects of the occupation, the increased violence of the Intifada and the combination of these factors with the worsening economic situation in the oPt. Its essential stance is summarized when it is noted that “*The deteriorating water resources are a result of numerous, often unregulated and neglected water sources due to the inability of the PNA to assert its authority under occupation.*” (p. 13) ‘PHG 2006’ lays a strong emphasis on shortage of clean and affordable water that affects Palestinians in most communities and is relatively technical in tone, more so than any of the other reports. This suits the technical character of the Palestinian Hydrology Group, which, as the NGOs name suggests, is an NGO dealing with water-related issues only.

Quite different in its approach is the report published by Al-Mezan (2003). Al-Mezan is one of Palestine’s main human rights-focussed NGOs; this different focus might explain the report’s less technical and more personal tone. The NGO’s 2003 publication “*On the*

brink of disaster” (henceforth: ‘Al-Mezan 2003’) can be viewed as a case study of Palestinian water security, focussing on problems facing the inhabitants of the area surrounding the Beit Lahia sewage water treatment plant, located in a highly impoverished area in Northern Gaza. Water in the area is highly polluted, with water quality among the worst in all of the oPt (‘Al-Mezan 2003’). Although the water security discourse strand is strongly present, a clear focus on human rights can be detected in the sense that ‘Al-Mezan 2003’ appears less focused on creating an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy towards Israel, and is more critical of *any* problematic factors causing hardship and human rights violations for the inhabitants of this area. The detailed report reflects the interconnectedness between the occupation and mismanagement or lack of effective action of the PA; although critical of both, the Israeli unwillingness to permit efficient action against further environmental degradation and for betterment of living conditions is emphasized most. Similar to the previous reports, this reflects Alatout’s (2006) observation that Palestinian environmental discourse generally focuses on the lack of Palestinian sovereignty.

As far as striking absences go, all of the reports *mention* population growth, to differing degrees, as a factor contributing to water quantity and quality issues. However, while all reports take a politicized stance when it comes to Israel’s role in these issues, all four reports fail to mention the politicized character of population growth and fertility in both Israel and the oPt. ‘ARIJ 2005’ mentions the phenomenon of population growth once, for the sake of the argument that Palestinians have the right to more water; considering the highly unequal water allocation between Israelis and Palestinians, this is a valid request, however it stands out that the authors fail to connect this particular phenomenon to politics and human, or rather women’s rights. The same can be concluded for ‘PASSIA 2002’, which mentions the term population growth three times. One of these, however, is connected to the growing population of Palestine and Israel, including the Israeli settlements. The other mentions are, again, remarkable un-politicized and only loosely connected to the deteriorating status of water.

‘PHG 2006’, interestingly, makes a mention in its introduction of one of its main goals being to “*promote the role of women... in managing local water and its related environmental resources*” (p. 9). In the 70 page report, however, the word ‘women’ is mentioned only twice, with both mentions in sentences stating the PHG’s goals. If such an emphasis is laid on the interest in elevating women’s knowledge on water management, one may expect the report to at least explain how or why it aims to execute this goal. The fact that

PHG makes such a statement without actually addressing the topic itself might, to some extent, be a reflection of the PHG's efforts to adhere to a 'checklist' of topics which secures international funding for the NGO (Jad 2007). In addition, the phenomenon of the growing population is mentioned once, again in the same uncritical manner as the previous reports. From an ecofeminist view, this is a missed opportunity, as increasing the inclusion of women in public activities and awareness may lead to a challenging of traditional, non-political roles for women. In turn this would likely, in the longer-term, lead to a decrease in fertility (Bader 2014). As most environmentalists would argue, this again would relieve water stresses (Orenstein 2004). Had 'PHG 2006' made a mention of rapid population growth as a problematic factor, or had it explained how it planned to execute its goal of women's empowerment, this would likely have made the stated goal more convincing.

When it came to 'Al-Mezan 2003', this report reflected a more concerned tone towards Gaza's rapid population growth than the previous reports did. The phenomenon is mentioned twice as an important contributor towards future water scarcity in Gaza. Since this NGO is Gaza-based and this particular area is where its focus lies, it is likely that it views population density as that much more pressing than NGOs active in the whole of the oPt do. One should take in mind that Gaza in this particular time period was already one of the most densely populated areas in the world, and fertility here stood at an average rate of 6.6 children per woman in 2004 (Palestinian Demographic and Health Survey 2004). Al-Mezan's two mentions of population growth as problematic illustrate this NGOs awareness of the environmental effects Gaza's population density has. Still, 'Al-Mezan 2003' does not frame population growth in the frame of women's status or reflect much criticism towards the actual politicized character of fertility; one might expect a human rights NGO to be more critical of the low status of fifty percent of its population, especially when this status leads to the high fertility rates in Gaza, a phenomenon which in turn has had extensive effects on water quality and quantity. Thus, while the human rights focus is strongly present, a link between environmental problems and specifically *women's rights* is not addressed. All in all, an image is sketched of Gaza's water situation that is in line with what the literature has described: a dire situation where water quantity is not only a problem, but so is its quality, posing extensive risks to both people's health and agriculture (Mason et al. 2012; Baalousha 2009; Bellisari 1994).

6.3 Fine analysis

The following analysis will analyse the selected reports from a more language-focussed approach, following the DHA steps of analysis as discussed in the previous chapter; the analysis will first discuss some striking nomination strategies used, after which it will move on to the discussion of predication strategies, and lastly of argumentation strategies.

6.3.1. Nomination strategies

The introduction of ‘ARIJ 2005’ states in its second sentence that “*The water crisis in the oPt is not due to scarcity of supplies but due to uneven and inequitable distribution of this scarce resource between Israelis and Palestinians*” (p. 1), immediately clarifying its political position which it maintains throughout the report. The PWA is doing its ‘utmost’ to enhance hydro-management but is continuously hindered by Israel as well as vetoes by the JWC (‘ARIJ 2005’). Unequal water allocation is referred to as ‘*aggressive water policy*’ or ‘*supply induced scarcity*’, with especially the latter term strongly reflecting a national security strand within water discourse by making visible the argument that Israel is actively withholding existing supplies (p. 12). However, the one mention of Palestine’s population growth is framed un-politically as “*a growing Palestinian population who are subjected to suppressed water demand.*” (p. 1) This sentence draws the attention towards the more politicized issue of unmet water demand.

‘PASSIA 2002’ refers to water as the ‘*blue gold*’ of the region, thereby framing the resource as a scarcity of great value. This framing allocates a political undertone to the issue of water, a tone which is maintained throughout the report. Due to the overall significantly political tone of this report, it stands out how casually and un-politicized the term ‘population growth’ is used: “*The increase in the water demand with time is a consequence of many factors including natural population growth*” (p. 6). This mention of the phenomenon population growth is made under a sub-section that discusses regional water demand projections for the next 20 years, making the phenomenon something that should simply be accommodated.

From a linguistic perspective, ‘PHG 2006’ uses less suggestive language and appears to stay relatively neutral in tone. Rather than forming the reader’s opinion through creating an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy, ‘PHG 2006’ mainly appears focussed on providing extensive facts and data on differing water issues. The report’s framing of the topic of population growth is perhaps the most interesting to analyse; as discussed, population growth as a

phenomenon is mentioned once in the whole of the report, in a sentence un-politicizing the phenomenon itself while, again, reflecting the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse strand: *“Due to the Israeli occupation, the growing Palestinian population has not only little control over its national water resources, but also a lack of access.”* (PHG 2006, p. 13) Casually mentioned as it is here, this sentence illustrates that the Palestinian population grows rapidly enough for it to be worth a mention, however similarly to ‘ARIJ 2005’, the mention is used rather to strengthen the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse. Additionally, the high population density of Gaza is mentioned as following: *“With the highest population density in the world it is difficult to locate safe disposal locations [for solid waste] and maintain them in the presence of the numerous Israeli incursions which happen each year.”* (PHG 2006, p. 43) It appears that matters related to Palestine’s large- and growing- population are only mentioned when Israeli wrongdoings can be mentioned in the same breath.

The choice of words used by ‘Al-Mezan 2003’ is, overall, significantly less political than that of the previously discussed reports. Here, it is emphasized in the introductory phrases that the Gaza Strip is a *‘water-scarce region’*, a problem which is further *‘exacerbated’* by overpumping of its main aquifer, the extensive use of different types of pesticides and, lastly, the region’s high population growth. Stating all these factors, ‘Al-Mezan 2003’ actively maintains some responsibility for water management in the hands of the Gazans, thereby adhering to the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse to a much lesser extent than its predecessors. Nevertheless, Al-Mezan (2003) uses a critical tone towards Israel which be noticed after this introduction, for example when Israel’s water policy is referred to as *‘water theft’*, and the settlements described as dumping *‘manure, untreated sewage and wastewater into the valleys’* (p. 5).

Al-Mezan’s two mentions of Gaza’s rapid population growth are used not merely in a matter-of-factual tone such as in the previous reports, but are used in a way that connects the phenomenon to the problematic water situation; for example, when discussing water pollution due to toxicants and herbicides use by farmers, it is stated that *“Considering the high population growth rate in the Palestinian Territories, the situation is expected to become even worse in the future.”* (p. 4) Contrary to the other reports, this sentence does not mention Israel in the same breath, nor does it mention population growth as a factor mostly unrelated to Palestine’s water issues. The second mention is similar, stating that wastewater is expected to increase fourfold in the next twenty years to come, *“mostly due to population growth.”* (p. 6) While not addressing ways to possibly target Gaza’s fertility rates framed in a women’s

rights issue, Al-Mezan certainly does not attempt to avoid discussing population growth as an environmental issue.

6.3.2. Predication strategies

When it came to predication strategies, again, ‘ARIJ 2005’ and ‘PASSIA 2002’ were similar. Their use of these strategies was focussed on depicting Israel not only as the aggressor when it comes to water policy, but generally as a country in self-destruct mode through its Western-style greed. ‘ARIJ 2005’ does this by briefly making use of a discursive style reflecting the ‘romanticized environmentalism’ which was touched upon in the literature review. Here, the report criticizes Israeli efforts to transform the desert into a green landscape, while depleting the Jordan river and other natural supplies to do so: “*A hard lesson for the world has been to live in harmony with nature*” (p. 10). This somewhat condescending tone is interesting, since it has oftentimes been the side of Israel depicting Palestinians in a similar tone, accusing them of being unable to live alongside nature in a ‘civilized’ manner (Goldsmith 2015).

Where ARIJ makes brief use of this narrative, ‘PASSIA 2002’ maintains a depiction of Israeli greed throughout. Again, where Zionism has tended to depict Palestinians as incapable of caring for the land due to underdevelopment, ‘PASSIA 2002’ uses an opposite image; Israel’s Western-inspired greediness has caused irreparable environmental harm. Such greed is illustrated clearly when PASSIA states that “*Israel drilled deeper wells than those existing... in order to tap more than one aquifer at a time.*” (p. 7) Moreover, while Israeli settlers have enough waters to fill their swimming pools, the daily water consumption of Palestinians is far below the recommended minimum of 100 litres by the World Health Organization (PASSIA 2002; B’Tselem 2001). There is no denying that a Western style of living has far more negative effects on the environment than a more modest lifestyle does (Newman 2004). It is certainly understandable that outrage exists when Israeli settlements enjoy lavish lifestyles while Palestinian per capita water use can be as low as 19 litres a day (PASSIA 2002). Nonetheless, the black-and-white tone of ‘PASSIA 2002’, by focussing on a strong ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy, misses the chance to discuss internal differences amongst Palestinians themselves and appears bent on helping the reader form an opinion on the topic along the lines of nationalist conflict only. The fact that ‘PASSIA 2002’ is a relatively short informational bulletin may account for its black-and-white tone, as it is likely meant to distribute information to the international community as well as people with limited knowledge on the subject (Greenspan 2005).

In general, it stands out how unaccusatory ‘ARIJ 2005’ and ‘PASSIA 2002’ are towards the PA itself; more than in any of the other sources, Palestinians are depicted purely as victims of the agreements made under Oslo and the Israeli aggression and greed. Again, this depiction emphasizes the willingness to depict the matter in a tone where Palestinians are the ‘good guys’ in opposition to the Israelis as the ‘bad guys’. Realistically, internal Palestinian criticisms towards Arafat’s government were widespread at this time (Hasso 1998; Roy 2007). Proving a case in point, ‘PASSIA 2002’ mentions overuse of the Gaza aquifer and its dangers shortly, but no mention is made as to who is the culprit here. ‘Al-Mezan 2003’ however, illustrates clearly that these actions are in fact taken by the PA, albeit due to having little to no other options due to Israeli limitations regarding the development of the water sector in Gaza.

‘ARIJ 2005’ emphasizes the growing fears amongst Palestinians that Israel is not serious about lasting peace aspirations. The report argues that this is shown through their water policies, which keep Palestinians worried about this basic necessity, only serving to keep Israel in a powerful position during negotiations about other political issues (ARIJ 2005). With Palestinians oftentimes framed by Israel and Western countries as dangerous terrorists, this depiction is again refreshing. The argument is certainly believable in the face of the realities of Israel’s water allocation policies. Simultaneously, it reflects again the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy which drafts an image of the dangerous ‘Other’ (Hage 2003; Bromberg and Qumsieh 2005).

Predication strategies used in the report ‘PHG 2006’ were less clearly present, due to the technical tone in comparison to the other reports. Noticeable was the report’s continuous emphasis on the availability of sufficient water resources as a fundamental human right. Several times, the UN is quoted to strengthen this conception. This pervasive strategy appears focus mainly on convincing international readers in the form of donors and international organizations of the importance of pressuring the Israelis to meet Palestine’s water needs. While ‘PHG 2006’ is critical towards Israel, its tone generally remains relatively factual even towards this actor. Certainly, this report is friendly towards the PA; the organization is mentioned 23 times, with every single mention either addressing its well-meant intentions towards the Palestinians and its intentions to alleviate the water-related hardships, or addressing *why* the PA is powerless in helping its population in certain area. In the cases of the latter, this is consistently explained by withdrawals of international funding leaving the PA powerless, or by its general powerlessness due to the occupation. As ‘PHG 2006’ states in

its opening pages that its research was assisted by both the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) and UNICEF, one may conclude that the report was written much more dependent on external actors than the other three reports. Its stated collaboration with the PWA is likely enough to explain the friendly and uncritical tone towards the PA, as the former is essentially a sub-organization of the latter. This is interesting mainly because it shows the extensive effects such a collaboration can have on the freedom of discourse of an NGO (Jad 2007).

On the contrary, as previous sections have shown, 'Al-Mezan 2003' is, out of the four reports, the most critical towards the PA itself. This may in part be explained by the focus of Al-Mezan as an organization: while clearly critical of the occupation, this NGO also seeks to "press towards good governance that respects human rights." ('Goals') Based in a Gazan refugee camp, the NGO's critique towards Palestinian governance indeed appears to lay the focus less on portraying Israel as the *sole* culprit of suffering in Gaza, and takes into account human rights violations of the PA as well. An example of this is the section addressing "*the forced displacement of the Bedouin village people*" by the Palestinian Ministry of housing as a clear human rights violation with extensive consequences (Al-Mezan 2003, p. 21).

On the topic of Gaza's high fertility rates, these are reflected in the report when describing the personal stories of Gazans who experienced hardship from the water security issue the report deals with. The two personal stories contain one family with six, and another with seven children. The interviewed families lived in one of the poorest areas of Gaza, and therefore the phenomenon that families may opt for many children as an 'investment' is likely to play a role (Khawaja and Randall 2006). As the structure analysis already illustrated, despite Al-Mezan's human rights focus it does not address the link between women's rights, high fertility/population growth and water quality or quantity issues. If anything, the examples of the two families may be viewed as a representative sample of families living in this area, considering the family sizes are similar to the general fertility rates in Gaza. The absence of any mention of the large family sizes may also simply reflect the normalization of such large families. It has to be admitted that analysing the absence of an aspect within a discourse may be more difficult than analysing the presence of an aspect. As became clear earlier, none of the reports make the ecofeminist link between enhancing women's rights in order to address population growth, and only Al-Mezan actually depicts population growth as an issue. This complete absence perhaps allows for some conclusions about a 'missing link' to be made, but leaves little to be said about predication strategies concerning this aspect.

6.3.3. Argumentation strategies

The main arguments and the proposed solutions of all reports focussed mainly on the principles of equitable water allocation, environmental justice and International Law. Generally, the NGO reports that focus fully on the ‘lack of sovereignty’ narrative propose solutions based on a change of Israeli behaviour. This is logical, as these narratives focus fully on Israel’s responsibilities on causing water issues for Palestinians, and therefore the Israeli government is the only actor who could improve the situation. ‘ARIJ 2005’, for instance, proposes a single general solution to most water-related issues in the oPt: that all actors follow the International Law-based ‘equity and equitable principles’. This solution is vague and would require an immense help of the international community to actually pressure Israel into adhering to this.

Here, an interesting finding from a report written a decade earlier by the same NGO should be cited: ARIJ’s report “*Environmental Protection & Sustainable Development in Palestine*” published in 1994 not only mentions population growth as a significant environmental problem, it also recommends the targeting of fertility by means of elevating women’s status, family planning and eliminating poverty (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem 1994). What this illustrates is that such an ecofeminist way of thinking had been present within environmental PCS discourse. The fact that ‘ARIJ 2005’ does not point to population growth within the oPt as even slightly problematic environmentally, or mentions the importance of elevating the status of women even once, appears to unify it all the more its stance with that of dominant national discourse.

‘PASSIA 2002’ similarly argues that the official Israeli position on the water issue “*objects to equitable and reasonable utilization of shared water sources*” while the Palestinian position realises “*that the only resolution of the water issue is through the application of International Law and related UN resolutions whose principles they have vowed to respect.*” (p. 9-10) Again, this clearly reflects the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse strand, by painting an image of the PA as an organization that would act reasonably, but simply cannot due to an almost juvenile Israeli stubbornness. The bulletin ends by stating different hydro-political ways in which Israel is violating international law, adding to the political and legal tone. The only recommendation offered is that both parties should adhere to international law. With its last sentence arguing that “*Neither Israel nor Palestine can afford the consequences of the continuing conflict over water as it is a major threat to peace*”, the eventual consequences of current water management is emphasized as dangerous

not only for Palestinians, but for Israelis themselves (PASSIA 2002, p. 12). This sentence adds to the depiction of Israelis as too greedy for their own good.

‘PHG 2006’, while being much more detailed due to the size of the report and the organization’s professional water focus, concludes with solutions and arguments based largely along the same lines of equity and justice. However, more than holding Israel accountable, the PHG also recommends that international donors focus their efforts on funding water and wastewater operations, increasing control towards water pollution and awareness raising campaigns. Although these recommendations are relatively vague and leave the Palestinian population dependent on the international community, such recommendations are perhaps more realistic than demanding that Israel holds itself to international law.

‘Al-Mezan 2003’, too, strongly focuses on international law to defend its arguments. This is where the human rights focus of the report is strongly reflected; the article mentions different laws that are violated in the Northern Gazan area affecting the population living there. Again, however, Al-Mezan is more critical of the PA as well as Israeli actions, noting that both should stop violating human rights laws. Similarly to PHG, Al-Mezan calls on the international community to help strengthen the PA’s water management. On a more local level, it calls for increasing environmental awareness amongst the Gazan population. This last recommendation comes closest to the ecofeminist frame which would propose elevating women’s societal status and raising environmental awareness amongst women in order to lower fertility rates and provide more women with opportunities in the environmental field. Nevertheless, as has become increasingly clear throughout this analysis, this perspective was not actually included in any of the discussed reports, leaving little to draw analytical conclusions from, except for perhaps from the mere aspect of this absence itself.

6.4 Concluding analysis

The findings of the CDA regarding the first sub-question have shown that there was some internal differentiation in environmental PCS discourse in its framing of the extent to which it is fully the lack of Palestinian sovereignty that is causing water shortage and pollution. Two NGOs, the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem and PASSIA focussed in their framing almost solely on this political dichotomy, thereby avoiding any mention of possible local responsibilities and only proposing solutions related to Israel changing its water allocation policies and violations. Lastly, the Palestinian Hydrology Group was the

most technical in tone, as well as the most extensive. Linguistically, this report did not appear bent on emphasizing a discursive dichotomy, but rather was focussed on revealing the technicalities of water-related issues in the oPt. In doing so, however, its focus was on effects of Israeli actions, and therefore the report still reflected mainly to the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse.

One NGO, Al-Mezan, framed water security in a way that did not dismiss the extensive impacts of the Israeli occupation, but showed an inclusion of more local responsibilities in its framing, thereby not fully focussing on the ‘lack of sovereignty’ discourse strand that emphasizes an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy towards the Israelis. The Al-Mezan critically discussed the PA’s management of Gazan water facilities; while critical, this particular report nonetheless found that the PA was ultimately powerless due to Israeli vetoes, thereby eventually adhering to a discourse that focuses on Palestinian lack of sovereignty.

The second sub-question of this thesis shifted its analytical frame to an ecofeminist one that attempted to analyse whether population growth was addressed as an issue at all in environmental PCS discourse, and if so, in what political tone this was done. In this frame, addressing population growth or high fertility rates through elevating the status of women was viewed as a possible means to improve the state of water security within the oPt. The expectation based on the literature review, here, was that environmental PCS would not address high fertility and rapid population growth as a water security issue at all, as during the Second Intifada fertility was a highly politicized issue which was generally seen as a nationalist matter and should therefore not be criticized. The CDA conducted found that indeed, none of the selected NGO reports addressed rapid population growth, and the related encouragement of high fertility levels, as problematic within the water security frame. This stands out, as in global environmental discourse, the topic of population growth is generally addressed as contributing to environmental degradation, resource scarcity and resource pollution (Orenstein 2004; Sherbinin et al. 2007). In the Palestinian PCS, the topic was framed as neither political nor particularly problematic, but merely as a factor which would need further accommodating in the future. However, the report published by Al-Mezan was again the most critical in this regard. Although not addressing the ecofeminist link, Gaza’s rapid population growth was pointed to as a factor causing a further deterioration of the state of water security in that area. One may conclude that by and large, Alatout (2006) made a valid observation when he suggested that in Palestinian environmental discourse, the strong

focus on political-territorial matters support the overlooking of the role that the repressive gendered dimension plays in reinforcing these environmental matters.

This is in line as well with Orenstein's observation that environmentalists, at least during the Intifada, discussed population growth in a non-critical way as to not go against dominant national security discourse and the pronatalist ideal connected to it. Although one may argue that discussing population growth in the context of women's rights advancements is not the field of environmental experts, the ARIJ report written in 1994 proved that the awareness that women's rights advancements would likely be environmentally beneficial was in fact present within PCS. The CDA appears to show that in the particular chosen time period, however, PCS chose to stand more in line with dominant nationalist discourse which did not frame rapid population growth and pronatalism as something with possible negative impacts.

7. Discussion and conclusions

This thesis has aimed to illustrate whether a missing link was present in Palestinian environmental discourse through an assessment of environmental NGO reports discussing the topic of widespread water-related issues in the oPt during the Second Intifada. As a concrete materialization of this which suited the thesis' eco-feminist framework, rapid population growth and high fertility rates that characterize Palestinian society have exemplified the impact of women's inferior status on the environment and environmental security;

By analysing how the selected NGO reports discuss the topic of population growth in contrast to the occupation in their effects on water insecurity, it was found that indeed none of the reports *focused* in their arguments, discourse and solutions on rapid population growth as problematic towards water security, although most of the reports mentioned it as a warning factor that would need accommodating in the future. Despite this, differences within the extent to which Israel was framed as solely to blame for water shortages and environmental degradation were found, with the report by Al-Mezan addressing the responsibility of the PA and Palestinians themselves towards environmental matters in a more critical manner. This has illustrated that despite a lack of framing population growth in a negative environmental way, PCS was slightly divided in its criticism towards internal Palestinian environmental management.

Palestinians have long suffered at the hands of the Israeli occupation in environmental terms. Marginalized groups, amongst whom particularly women and children, are impacted by such environmental difficulties the most extensively. Whilst understandable that attempting to find solutions to environmental issues for Palestinians is generally done within the frame of traditional national security, the thesis explored shifting the environmental discourse frame to one that emphasizes the link between women and environment rather than one that emphasizes the traditional national security frame only. Maintaining the national security frame has been shown to not only prioritize nationalist tendencies over women's and environmental rights, this de-prioritizing of women's status in society also leads, in the longer term, to further environmental degradation and has not led to any feasible or peaceful solutions with regard to environmental issues. The national security frame maintains power relations that not only negatively affect women, but also continues the suspicious view in the form of an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy in which Israelis and Palestinians regard one another.

While one should not deny Israel's role in creating extensive issues regarding water security for all Palestinians living in the occupied territories, the low status of women in society reflects that from an ecofeminist perspective, environmental gains for Palestinians may be made if women's political and societal activism would be taken more seriously, as an extension of women's perceived role during the Second Intifada which was mainly portrayed as a child-bearing and -rearing role. In this view, where environmental discourse is highly critical of the occupation, it misses the chance to be critical of societal the status of women. This may in part be explained by the fact that times of intensified nationalist struggle call for a unified stance against the enemy, although this is something that would need further addressing in order to draw valid conclusions. The Second Intifada was, moreover, generally characterized by the prioritizing of the nationalist struggle over even the most basic of human rights, which is why it is not necessarily surprising that water security issues were not framed in a women's rights perspective. Despite these findings, some exceptions were found as well. Al-Mezan, an NGO with a human rights focus, appeared more concerned about the extensive effects of population growth that the other three reports did, suggesting that a human rights perspective is the first step towards framing water security issues in a more constructive way. Another interesting finding was that in 1994, ARIJ wrote a report containing an ecofeminist argument, arguing for addressing women's low societal status in order to limit rapid population growth and better tackle environmental degradation. These findings have shown

that critical voices were present within Palestinian environmental circles. This thesis, however, has not addressed the exact extent and specific ways in which the advancement of women in society can help the Palestinian environment; in this, the focus was mainly on a possible limiting of population growth through lowering fertility, which would lead to less environmental degradation. To address how women may help addressing other specific Palestinian environmental factors, further research would be necessary.

All in all, one might argue that the masculinization of the nationalist struggle, with its devaluating of women, brings with it the devaluating of environmental struggle; environmentalist concerns, similar to women's concerns, are only deemed important when they fit into the national security discourse, for example when environmental degradation and resource scarcity are caused by Israel. From an eco-feminist perspective, here lies an opportunity for a better and more effective addressment of environmental issues for the sake of the environmental security of all Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories.

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