



RURAL CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

THE CASE OF DEIR ALLA – THE RISE AND DEMISE OF SOCIAL GROUPS

MOHAMED F. TARAWNEH

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Dedicated to the memory of Al-Haj Faris Joudeh

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Preface

The Deir Alla area has been the focus of a diverse range of scholarly explorations, including archaeology, geomorphology, meteorology, hydrology, and plant ecology. The research described by Tarawneh in this book adds anthropology and more specifically rural peasant economics to this list. This research is not only important in its own right, but also holds important information for the disciplines mentioned. The historical dimension of the research, both the reconstruction of the pre-modern agricultural system and its development into the present-day situation as well as the evaluation of the research a decade later, adds a valuable component to this study.

The original field research has been conducted as early as the summer of 1986. Supplemented with bibliographic and statistical data a first report was presented in 1989, which remained unpublished. The rapid developments that occurred in the social and economic situation of the Jordan Valley during the following decade made a period of additional fieldwork during the autumn of 1997 necessary. This research has been documented as a separate chapter in this book. Originally, an earlier version of the present book was meant to appear in the early 2000's, but a series of setbacks unfortunately prevented publication. Luckily, a second opportunity presented itself in the form of the project '*Settling the Steppe. The archaeology of changing societies in Syro-Palestinian drylands during the Bronze and Iron Ages*', funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University, that financially supports this publication.

In all, we are very glad that we are finally able to present this research to a wider audience as we consider it to contain valuable information not only for the study of the Deir Alla area or the Jordan Valley, but for peasant economics and social anthropology worldwide.

Leiden/Roosendaal, December 2013

Eva Kaptijn

Gerrit van der Kooij

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

Existing economic data about Jordan, including the Jordan Valley, comprise little more than quantitative information and commentary on production, prices, investment, etc., without any theoretical or empirical investigation of the social relations of production. This research is an attempt to fill this gap.

There have been two main theoretical approaches as to the penetration of capitalism in Third World agriculture: Liquidation and Survival. The liquidation approach argues that capitalism plays a progressive role in Third World agriculture, destroying pre-capitalist relations and creating new capitalist ones, and turning peasants into proletarians. The survival approach, in contrast, argues that pre-capitalist relations are still active and are continued alongside the development of capitalism in Third World agriculture. These two approaches, however, fail to offer an adequate explanation for the variety of forms of labour-use and relations that can be found to exist.

My study in the Deir Alla area in the summer of 1986 and the autumn of 1997 suggests a much more complex agrarian structure than that suggested by the liquidation and survival approaches; involving a variety of production relations enmeshed in various forms of labour, such as wage labour, family labour, and regional and international migrant labour.

The significance of this diversity of labour forms in the functioning of the rural economy of Deir Alla and of the Jordan Valley is one of the main issues addressed in this study.

Another major concern is to show the genesis of these labour forms. The evolution of such organizations of production is an historical process. Therefore the historical analysis of relations of production and of land ownership patterns is given due importance. The period examined is that from 1858 until the time of fieldwork (1986 and 1997). The selection of 1858 is due to the fact that the Ottoman Land Law of 1858 was in force from 1858 until 1936 when the Jordanian State (established in 1921) first introduced private ownership of land in the Deir Alla area. Thus until the 1940s agrarian relations were more or less unchanged, since the ownership of the main means of production, land and water, remained the same.

The selection of two periods to the field work is due to the fact that dramatic changes have taken place after the first field work; these changes will be presented in the final chapter.

1.2 Some Theoretical Considerations

Anthropology is one of the disciplines within the social sciences which are concerned with the “peasant question”. Peasant studies in anthropology are carried out in the form of small community studies. The problem with these anthropological studies is that they tend to consider the peasantry as a homogenous category or as a common evolutionary type present at a certain historical epoch, between primitive tribes and the inhabitants of towns or cities. A methodological problem with such studies is that they base their generalizations on the studies of small peasant communities without adequately dealing with the social, political and economic context in which they exist.

In anthropology, Malinowski (1961: 6) formulated a new research methodology, now called participant observation. The functionalist school was the first to use this research strategy, and began to study tribal communities, because this research strategy is only practicable in the study of small communities. In their studies of the life of small isolated communities, anthropologists used concepts such as culture and social structure, borrowed from Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown respectively. At first, studies of the peasantry were restricted to studies of village communities. For instance, Redfield and Wolf studied the nature of the village from a cultural perspective. They treated the peasantry as a common human type, placing it between primitive tribes and town or city-dwellers (Redfield 1956; Wolf 1966). Their definitions of the peasantry were similar. Wolf accepted Redfield’s definition, that peasants are agricultural producers who control their land and produce for their subsistence (Redfield 1956: 4; Wolf 1966: 3). But in considering the nature of the peasantry Redfield saw the process of cultivation practiced in peasant communities as part of the community’s way of life, whereas Wolf argued that such peasant communities were an outcome of colonialism. Wolf characterized peasant communities in terms of the amount of agricultural surplus expropriated from them by outsider forces (Wolf 1966: 3). This disagreement arose because Wolf’s ideas are based on his studies of Latin American peasantries and their relations to Spanish colonization. Redfield on the other hand, although he used concepts including rural-urban continuum and little and great tradition, represented peasantries as closed communities without discussing the complexity of their relations with the wider socio-economic structure.

Wolf was concerned with the way in which the peasantry integrated into the larger whole. He therefore established a typology of peasant communities that depended on the structure of such communities, as well as on the amount of surplus expropriated from them by an external power. This typology ranges from the community that uses most of its production for local consumption, to the type in which most of production is oriented towards an external market. Certainly Wolf’s attempt is a step forward from Redfield’s approach in contextualizing peasant communities. However, despite his concern with the larger contexts within which peasant societies exist, Wolf does not escape evolutionary assumptions when he places such societies somewhere between primitive tribes and industrial society in his book *Peasants* (1966). Here, peasants are considered to be a universal human

type. An obvious shortcoming of this definition is that it assumes that all the rural people of underdeveloped countries fall into a homogenous category.

Many anthropological writers have attempted to formulate a general definition of the peasantry, which would be applicable to many societies and at various times in history. For instance in what could be called a Redfieldian approach, peasants are characterized firstly by certain cultural elements such as attitudes, values etc., secondly, by their life in community-like organizations, or villages and thirdly by the degree of their traditionalism as opposed to modernism (Aydin 1986).

Shanin's definition of the peasantry, for example, specifies four basic elements that constitute a general type (Shanin 1971: 14-15):

1. The peasant family-farm as the basic unit of a multidimensional social category,
2. Land husbandry as the main means of livelihood directly providing the major part of the consumption needs,
3. Specific traditional culture related to the way of life of small communities,
4. The underdog position: the domination of the peasantry by outsiders.

Such attempts to produce a general definition of the peasantry fail to be useful as analytical tools for the understanding of contemporary rural structure. Firstly, they are too general to be applied to rural producers in different parts of the world at different periods in history. Secondly, they fail to show the structural relationships between the peasants themselves and between the peasants and non-peasant groups in rural and urban areas. This is because they treat peasants as a homogenous group, and they aim at presenting a descriptive account of the life style of peasant communities. Thirdly, they base their studies on small, marginal and isolated communities ignoring the wider contexts within which such peasant communities exist.

Contrary to the cultural approach, Chayanov treats the peasantry as a specific type of economy comparable to feudalism, capitalism and socialism (Chayanov 1966). His approach has become very fashionable, especially amongst the international agencies which prescribe policies based on small peasant production.

Chayanov presents three basic elements on which his theory of the peasantry rests (Chayanov 1966: 41). Firstly, peasants work as a family, organizing their work within family-labour farm. Secondly, they have only one single labour income. Thirdly, the principle that governs the work of this social organization is the labour-consumer balance. In this economy the family-labour farm is the production unit of the peasantry. He treats the peasant economy as a natural economy, that is, one in which production is not for the market (Chayanov 1966: 21). According to Chayanov, price, capital, wage, and interest are inseparable economic categories related to capitalism. In other words, the peasant's income constitutes a single totality and categories of the capitalist economy cannot be applied. On the bases of these three elements, Chayanov argues that there is a specific peasant economy in which the only differentiation is on a demographic and not a class

basis (Chayanov 1966: 67). The peasant family's wealth increases and decreases in parallel with the size of the family and with the ratio of its working to its non-working members.

In recent years writers such as Harrison (1977), influenced by Chayanov's work, have treated the peasantry as a mode of production. For Bernstein (1979) however, the family-labour farm cannot constitute a mode of production. The relations of production described by the advocates of the peasant mode of production are internal relations of the production unit and cannot meet the conditions of a mode of production. Bernstein argued that the social relations of production are the most important element in the conceptualization of a mode of production. Social relations of production are related to the relations of production, appropriation, distribution and utilization of the social product; they include relations between different units of production and relations of social reproduction. Bernstein insists that such relations are external to the dynamics of peasant household. Therefore, relation internal to the peasant household cannot constitute a mode of production (Bernstein 1979: 422).

Another approach treats contemporary peasants as simple commodity producers. But there is a theoretical difficulty here, because the penetration of capitalism into rural areas has taken many shapes: in some cases earlier forms of production have been completely destroyed, in others, they have been preserved. Although commodities might be produced for a market, various completely different forms of labour organization may have produced them. Therefore, it would be misleading to lump together many and variegated labour forms under the blanket definition of simple commodity production. What has to be done is to concentrate on concrete conditions and try to explain why there exist many forms of labour use. Liquidation theories like that of Kautsky have used the concept of petty commodity production to refer to heterogeneous groups living in rural areas. Even though such studies are of an empirical nature, they make generalizations about the penetration of capitalism in rural areas of the Third World. Liquidation theories do not study peasants *per se*, but rather the conditions of existence of simple commodity production in an increasingly capitalist economy. Kautsky found that even though capital penetrates and dominates agriculture, small peasant production units still operate and survive. The reason for this is the self-exploitation of family under the conditions forced on them by the penetration of capitalism in agriculture (Ennew et al. 1977: 303). Generally speaking, although liquidation theories provide certain insights into rural dynamism, their predictions that capitalism will destroy all pre-capitalist forms of production and establish capital-wage labour relations have not been fulfilled. On the contrary, capitalism has penetrated Third World agriculture in various complicated ways. A major concern of this thesis is to investigate these ways in relation to the area of study. But this does not mean that we cannot make use of certain insights provided by liquidation theories. For example, Kautsky's concept of self-exploitation by peasantry is a useful analytical tool for the understanding of agrarian transformation in the Third World.

Contrary to what liquidation theories suggest, another approach argues that the penetration of capitalism into Third World agriculture will **not** destroy the pre-capitalist relation of production (such as the peasantry) but sustain and reproduce it. Meillassoux is one of the best examples of those who have formulated such an argument.

In his work *Maiden, Meal and Money*, Meillassoux developed the concept of domestic mode of production. In this mode of production the lineage and household are the basic units of production and reproduction (Meillassoux 1981). This domestic commodity is self-sustaining (Meillassoux 1981: 37). The social relations of production can be understood through the control over the means of human reproduction rather than the control over the means of production (Meillassoux 1981: 51). In this domestic mode of production private ownership does not exist; one of the main reasons for this is that the domestic community is a stateless society. But when this type of economy becomes subordinated to the capitalist mode of production through the articulation of the two modes, its reproduction becomes distorted. Unlike Marx and Lenin, who argued that capitalism would completely destroy pre-capitalist relations of production, Meillassoux argues that capitalism will preserve and sustain the relation of production of the domestic community for its own benefit. The essential role of the domestic community for capitalism will be the production of cheap labour-power and commodities (Meillassoux 1981: 95). Therefore, for Meillassoux the process of primitive accumulation still continues today and is an essential element of the process of articulation between capitalism and pre-capitalist modes of production. This is completely opposite to what Marx said about the process of primitive accumulation. Marx argued that primitive accumulation established the historical conditions of capitalist commodity production by monetization of all the factors of production and dispossession of the direct producers from their means of production (Chevalier 1983: 161).

On the basis of his studies in Africa, Meillassoux argues that the persistence and reproduction of the pre-capitalist peasantry within the capitalist world system is due to the continuity of the process of primitive accumulation, which is inherent in the law of capitalism (Meillassoux 1981: 107).

Bernstein's criticism of the peasant mode of production model could be applied to Meillassoux's mode of production in the sense that social relations of production are not internal to the domestic community but external to it. Meillassoux's concept of the domestic mode of production is based on a methodological assumption, namely the necessity to place pre-capitalist relations in a certain mode of production, so that relations of subordination and domination between these pre-capitalist relations and capitalism can be explored. But it is possible to examine relations of subordination and domination without imposing the framework of a mode of production on the society under study. Another problem emerges from the concept of reproduction of the domestic community in articulation with capitalism in Meillassoux's work. The concept of reproduction and maintenance of the existing forms is inherently static (Bernstein 1976: 8). Another criticism,

which is also applicable to most anthropological and sociological studies, is that Meillassoux studied only a small community but made generalizations about all so-called non-capitalist societies. Meillassoux explained everything in terms of the logic of capitalism. What needs to be done is to show the complexity of the relations in rural areas by trying to show the dynamics stemming from the specificity of concrete cases, although without completely ignoring the impact of capitalism on such situations.

Theoretically and empirically most of the preceding theories and attempts to analyze peasants and capitalism and Third World agriculture remain too general. They give certain clues however, such as the underdog position, self-exploitation, family-labour farm and simple commodity production which might be useful in studying the rural transformation of Third World agriculture.

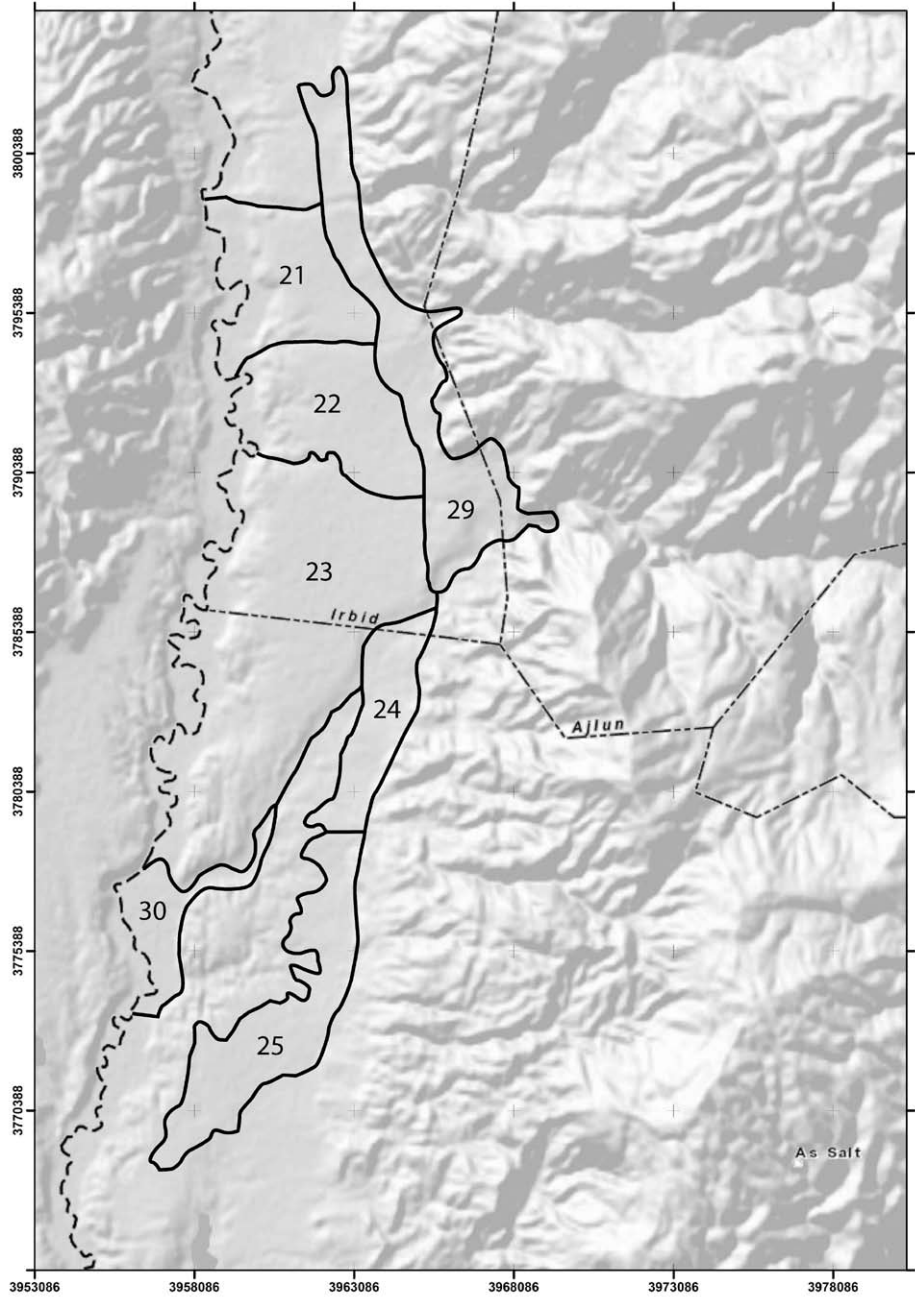
Today, in the majority of Third World countries family-based production units predominate in rural areas, a fact which will also be shown in this work. We have argued that neither the liquidation nor the persistence or reproduction theses have been able to explain this phenomenon satisfactorily. One should not be misled by the formal appearance of family-labour farms, because the relations of production in which the family is engaged might have changed completely, implying that the family farm in the feudal era differs from the family farm in capitalism. Therefore, the problematic area has to be shifted from the concept of reproduction of pre-capitalist forms. I can argue tentatively that the problem should be posed in terms of adaptations of family farms to changing external structures, and this adaptation can take many forms depending on concrete cases. Therefore it is necessary for anthropologists to try to analyze the complexity of concrete cases within the changing larger structures.

1.3 The Study Location

I selected the Deir Alla area for my case study because of the existence of various forms of land ownership, various crop patterns, various forms of labour use, different social production units, different social and ethnic groups (besides the local people, there are Egyptians and Pakistanis) These factors make it an area that represents the complicated nature of relations at different levels. The conclusions to be drawn from a study of the area are also extended to the Jordan Valley as a whole, as the area represents major scattered elements in different parts of the Valley.

As for the unit of study, it was considered inadvisable to select simply a settlement (village or town), because settlements do not always reflect the complexity of the agrarian structure of the area. In the area of Deir Alla a large portion of the farmers are living on their farms. They are sharecroppers, owner family-labour farmers or local managers of the big *Bayarah* (citrus production organization). Therefore, in order to fill this gap, I chose the developmental criteria of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA). These criteria are used to divide the whole irrigated area of the Valley into different basins. The Deir Alla area consists of several basins

(as shown on map 1); the numbers of these basins are 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29 and 30. From these I selected no. 23, the largest basin in the whole Valley. It consists of 700 agricultural units, with an area of approximately 28,000 dunum (2,800 hectares).



Map 1 Deir Alla area with basin numbers as referred to in the text.

1.3.1 Geographical and Ecological Setting

The Deir Alla area is located in the middle of the Jordan Valley. The ecological and geographical features of the area are representative of that of the Valley as a whole. The Jordan Valley is situated in the western part of Jordan. It extends from Lake Tiberias, which lies 200 meters below sea level, to the Dead Sea, which, as the lowest point on earth, is about 400 meters below sea level. The width of the Valley ranges from 4 to 16 km. The climate of the Valley is unique: it is hot in summer (average temperature 32° C), and moderate in winter (average temperature 15-18° C), affected by the humidity of the Mediterranean wind and by the dry Eastern winds. It is this hot to moderate climate all year round which together with the available water supply makes the Jordan Valley ideal for agriculture.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

As I have stated earlier, two crucial questions are addressed: first, what was the specificity of the old agrarian structure of the area (which I will call the *Harrath* economy) in the functioning and maintenance of rural structures prior to the 1950s? Secondly, how have recent social organizations of production evolved from earlier forms, and what factors have been influential in their development and how are these new forms integrated within the larger whole?

In pursuing these problems the relations of distribution, exchange and consumption are explored. Such relations cannot be understood without studying and determining recent relations of production, but because of the complexity of the social structure of the area it is very difficult to determine the above relations without referring to their history. Therefore, the study is a historically informed empirical research attempt.

In chapter 2, land ownership is discussed. The historical evolution of existing land ownership patterns and of different land laws is taken into consideration. Firstly, the latest Ottoman land law that was in operation (that of 1858) is examined. Secondly, the land registration of 1936 with which private property of land was introduced is also studied. Finally, the land reform programme of the 1960s and its role in the current land ownership pattern is analyzed.

Chapter 3 discusses the old social relations of production of the *Harrath* economy, which was functioning in the Deir Alla region prior to the 1950s. There is also an attempt to generalize the *Harrath* economy for Jordan as a whole.

The old irrigation system that was in operation prior to the 1950s is explored in this chapter as well, while the present irrigation system is discussed throughout the work. The old system was controlled by the sheikhs of the different clans that lived in the Deir Alla area. An attempt is made to show how water was distributed and how this affected production and its social relations in the area of study.

In chapter 4, the evolution of credit and credit institutions and mechanism will be discussed. Market oriented commercial farming (be it on family farms or highly mechanized farms) has increasingly become dependent on credits. However, producers in the Jordan Valley have differential and unequal access to credits offered through formal and informal channels. One of the hypotheses of

the research will be that this unequal access is related to unequal distribution of land and in turn increases inequality amongst rural producers.

The Palestinian migration to the Jordan Valley in the beginning of the 1950s played an important role in the rural development of the Deir Alla area and in the Jordan Valley as a whole. This is brought into consideration both in the second and fourth chapters.

The state took rural development on its shoulders early in the 1950s. State policies on rural development had differential effects on various segments of the rural society. This chapter will concentrate on certain state policies to illuminate the ways in which they have been influential in the emergence of various farming systems in the Valley. The state is represented in the area of study through the JVA and the Ministry of Agriculture as far as agriculture is concerned.

Since the state has been involved in developing the infrastructure in rural areas, introducing new crop varieties and new technology with the help and cooperation of international agencies like the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the extent of the involvement of various international agencies in the valley is evaluated. Also an attempt will be made to see whether or not these agencies have been influential in the determination of the current farming system. However, I realize that I may not be able to formulate satisfactory explanations for the role and impact of the state and international agencies in the current rural production systems in the area. But if I can develop certain hypotheses and raise some questions I believe this part of my research will have succeeded in its aim.

In chapter 5 the present agrarian structure of the Deir Alla area is taken into consideration. Here the social organization of production is discussed in depth to find out how the different organizations function and also to define the specific relations between various groups of people in different production units. In order to show the adaptation process and the farming practices of the different organizations I have made cost/benefit analyses of the latter, apart from the social groups of different organizations of production. Merchants as a social group are brought into the analysis. Also throughout this chapter the structure of market relations is taken into consideration.

Chapter 6 will show the result of rural transformation until the mid of 1980s. In this chapter there is an attempt to predict certain changes concerning specific social relations of production.

Chapter 7 presents the outcome of the research conducted in 1997 to examine specifically the predictions that have been written almost ten years before, and generally to update the information about certain crucial transformations, especially in the era of so-called globalization.

1.5 Historical Background

In order to evaluate the direction and nature of the modern changes, it is necessary to look at the previous structures. The following is an account of the historical processes that have played an important role in determining the recent structure of the Deir Alla area and of the Jordan Valley as a whole. A detailed survey of the literature will offer a better understanding of this process.

Until the 1940s the Deir Alla area was almost a tropical forest, consisting of huge cedar trees and of long dense bushes called *Botom*. The presence of water courses and the high temperature made the area a suitable breeding ground for insects such as mosquito; malaria was therefore endemic. These conditions helped to determine the demography of the area. Unfortunately there are no statistics on population for the area, but one can infer from the situation in the Jordan Valley as a whole. According to American reports there were only about 8,000 people in the whole Jordan Valley (Boeker 1988: 5). This figure, however, might not reflect the demographic reality, because most of the people in the Jordan Valley were living in tents, and not in mud-brick houses, until the 1940s. Therefore this figure probably applies to the people in settled villages, while in the case of the Deir Alla area (according to most informants) all people were living in tents. Generally speaking, the ecological conditions limited population increase in the area and in the Jordan Valley.

The agrarian structure in Deir Alla showed a more or less static character between 1858 and the 1930s. Land and water were under the control of clan leaders (*Sheikhs*) who had specific social relations with the direct producers, the *Harratheen* (ploughmen). The latter were either members of other clans (in the case of *Hurr* clans) or members of the same clan (in the case of *Ghawarneh* clans). The land in the Deir Alla region was divided among various clans while households of the landless labourers, the *Harratheen*, had usufructuary rights to the clan lands. The relationship between the *Sheikh* and the *Harrath* was exploitative: the *Sheikh* appropriated three quarters of the *Harrath's* production as rent; the remainder was left for consumption by the *Harrath's* household.

The main crops were cereals, including wheat and barley, white maize and sesame. A major part of the appropriated amount was exchanged by the *Sheikhs* in different markets, mainly in Salt in the eastern highlands and in Nablus in Palestine. In this type of economy the *Harrath's* household and the clan constituted the basic social units. Animal husbandry (mainly goats and cows) was the secondary source of subsistence for the *Harrath* household, while donkeys and camels were used as working animals.

During the Ottoman period and the first fifteen years of the Mandate period, the state appropriated part of the surplus in kind from the *Sheikhs* of the clans. In 1933 private land ownership was introduced to the area, and money taxes became the main form of surplus appropriation from the farmers until 1962 when the state implemented a land reform policy. The land of big land owners was divided and distributed among different people, including local people, whether they were *Ghawarneh*, *'beed* or *Hurr*, migrant Palestinians and other people from outside of the Deir Alla area and even from outside the Jordan Valley. The latter group

soon controlled most of the land plots. This group was mainly living in Amman as absentee landlords.

Coupled with the privatization of the land, the land reform policy gradually paved the way for the development of capitalist relations in the Jordanian countryside, particularly in the Jordan Valley. At first the introduction of private ownership of land in 1933 did not change the existing social relations of production, simply because with privatization of the land the *de facto* controllers of the land and water resources became *de jure* owners overnight. But productive forces did not develop at a similar pace, i.e., the technological level remained the same before and after 1933, therefore the *Harrath* economy continued to operate until the end of the 1940s. New elements began to appear and operate in the area in the beginning of the 1950s. Firstly, population density increased dramatically as a result of the Palestinian exodus after 1948 war and the creation of Israel; this in turn increased the demand for land. Secondly, Jordan's incorporation into the world system was intensified through the operation of international agencies in the area. An international agriculture research station was established in Deir Alla in 1952, which introduced new crop patterns, mainly vegetables with the use of machines, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

In 1957 the state destroyed the old irrigation system and established a new one. The new system is known as the East Ghor Canal. The control of water resources and the irrigation system was kept in the hands of the state instead of being left to individuals. The irrigation scheme was financed with the help of USAID. The latter maintained a very strong influence on the state's agricultural policies. For instance, along with USAID, the state implemented a land reform in 1962 dividing all the land of the valley irrigated by the East Ghor Canal into small plots ranging from 28-40 dunums and distributing them to needy farmers. As a consequence of state policies, cereal production declined dramatically and rapidly, whereas vegetables were introduced as new cash crop. Farmers began to use machines, chemical fertilizers and pesticides; therefore productivity was increased.

In the 50s and 60s, sharecropping became the dominant feature of agrarian relations in the Deir Alla area. Since the production of new crops had different labour requirements, wage labour also established itself as one of the basic labour forms in the area. And in the 1970s Egyptian migrant labourers met the needs of this new crop production for wage labour. Tenancy appears in this last period as a result of this cheap migrant labour form. In the late 1970s the use of greenhouses rapidly expanded in the area. Citrus orchards also expanded in this period. In the 1980s Pakistani farmers began to appear as sharecroppers and in the 1990s began to form their own community. In this last period Egyptian labourers began to establish small informal cooperatives among themselves renting one or two plots as tenants.

An important element common throughout the Jordan Valley is that the state, represented by the JVA, is the real owner of the land and water supplies, while individuals are the legal possessors. The buying and selling of land has to be carried out through the JVA. That means, if an individual owner wants to

sell his plot of land, the JVA buys it from him at the old price for which he bought the land, and sells it to another individual at the current price. This price is determined according to land market forces as decided by the JVA. Thus interpersonal land transfers are not allowed and the JVA monopolizes the land market. The state, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, also determines the type, amount and quality of production through applying the *Namat al-Zeray* policy (agricultural patterning: the provisions of which farmers are obliged to follow, or face penalization).

Credit institutions, whether personal, private or governmental were established throughout the Jordan Valley from the beginning of the 1960s. Such institutions give credits to the farmers unequally. This inequality of credits is related to the inequality of land holding, an issue which will be discussed in chapter four.

Because of the credit system and the domination of market relations by merchants, the small farmers soon fell in the debt trap to the extent that more than 80% could not repay the original amount of the loan nor the amount of the interest of the loan. The credit institutions, especially the formal ones, also fell in the debt trap since they cannot get their money back and because they could not take the land from the individual as mentioned earlier. During the late 1980s, the government worked on new arrangements to liberalize the land market, so that the credit institutions can expropriate the land from the farmers.

This brief account of the historical process gives a clear indication of the complexity of the agrarian structure in the area and how it is in a continuous process of change. This complexity is difficult to match with the major theoretical approaches of liquidation and survival, as mentioned earlier, in terms of the proletarianization of the farmers or of their survival within an increasingly commercialized agriculture.

1.6 Fieldwork

My residence during field work was in Deir Alla village at the Deir Alla Station for Archaeological Studies.

Early during the field research I met an old person (the guard of the station); we became close friends and he became my key informant during my time in the area, which consisted of about ten days survey and three months field research. In the second period of field study in 1997 I spent almost one month.

During fieldwork and with the aid of my key informant I was able to classify the 700 units into several types of production organization, such as small capitalist farms, owner-family farms, sharecropping based farms, tenancy based farms and citrus fruit organizations (*Bayara*). Such organizations involved various labour forms such as family labour, regional migrant wage labour (seasonal, irregular and daily labour), local female wage labour (there is no local male wage labour), and international labour in the form of sharecropping and tenancy. These different types of organization produce different types of crops such as vegetables, citrus fruits and cereals.

I chose one unit as example representing a type of organization or a type of labour form. My key informant introduced me to the farmers under study, because he was well known in the area and I was lucky to gain their confidence. Within a relatively short period, I became familiar with them, partially sharing some of their daily activities in the field and at night listening to their old and more recent stories.

1.6.1 Research Methods

Participant observation is the main strategy I used in collecting field information. It is not a one single method but a collection of methods, such as observing without asking but through sharing activities, or observing through asking, or formal and informal interviews, etc. That is why it is a research strategy (Bernard 1988: 150).

This strategy necessitated living among the farmers of basin no.23, observing their daily activities, attitudes and recording their observations and opinions concerning the outer world. Naturally observing through participation is only fruitful in the exploration and study of the contemporary agrarian structure of Deir Alla; it cannot reveal much about the historical evolution of this structure nor about regional systems that farmers are engaged in. This difficulty imposed by the limitations of participant observation taken as a method is alleviated by using another method, namely recording oral history of the people in the area of study. The long-term presence of people in their own locality is quite valuable in exploring the previous life of the area. In addition to oral histories collected from the old people, a number of detailed in-depth interviews was carried out, also outside the area of study, mainly in Irbid, Karak and Madaba. This was done in order to gain comparative insights into social relations, which would put part of my material from the valley into a wider context.

An additional library study of documentary sources was used to collect material that cannot be obtained through the above mentioned research methods. Work on the written material aimed to cover publications of institutions including:

1. Ministry of Labour: data concerning labour use, labour migration etc.,
2. Jordan Valley Authority: data concerning the activities of the Authority and material concerning land laws of the Jordan Valley,
3. Jordan Agriculture Corporation, the Agricultural Credit Bank, and the Agricultural Credit Establishment: material on their functioning, aims, members, internal laws and activities,
4. Department of Statistics and Ministry of Agriculture: statistical data on agricultural production and prices,
5. A few national and local newspapers were surveyed for relevant information.

Patterns of Land Ownership in the Jordan Valley

2.1 Introduction

The classification of the attempts to exert control over land in the Jordan Valley and in the Deir Alla area in terms of land laws or as a result of changes in the social relations of production is a theoretical dilemma, because the argument tends to become circular. What results from what, the law from the agrarian relations or vice versa?

It is important to mention that, for example, Ottoman land laws changed according to the state's economic needs, which means that laws became a superstructural reflection. One has to argue that changes in law cannot explain change in the social relations of production, but is an indication of it. To make myself clear, there were for example two different land laws of two different regimes imposed on the area of study: the Ottoman land law of 1858 and the land settlement of 1936 during the British Mandate period, where ownership change from the state to private individuals but the social relations of production did not change. Therefore, the change in land laws does not reflect change in the social structure on which the laws were imposed. In the land reform of the 1960s, however, the social relations of production entirely changed, but not because of the land reform. Agrarian production relations began to change, as we will see later, by the late 1940s, and by the 1960s the whole agrarian structure has been transformed. The land reform was a result of the new state's needs that in turn were due mainly to the Palestinian exodus, and of international needs of incorporating the area into the world economy through production for both the internal and external markets. That is, social relations of land ownership in the area are strongly related to the state. Controllers of the land in the Deir Alla area and in the whole Jordan Valley were always possessors, not owners, except for a short time between the mid-1930s and mid-1960s. This means that land laws became superstructural reflections.

Therefore it is important to examine certain land laws, such as the last Ottoman land law which was influential on the present land ownership pattern in Jordan (namely that of 1858), the land settlement process begun in 1933 and the land reform programme of the 1960s. The examination of such laws will take place in the light of the agrarian relations and of the state's political power.

2.2 Trans-Jordan under Ottoman Rule

The area covered by present day Jordan was under Ottoman rule for approximately four centuries, during which time the socio-economic structure remained backward relative to other Arab lands. This backwardness was a result of the nature of the Ottoman state. The Ottoman bureaucracy squandered the available surplus on unproductive activities, particularly on military expansion (Islamoglu and Keder 1977: 50). The state was not interested in developing the area; its role was confined to tax collection, on taking out the available surplus.

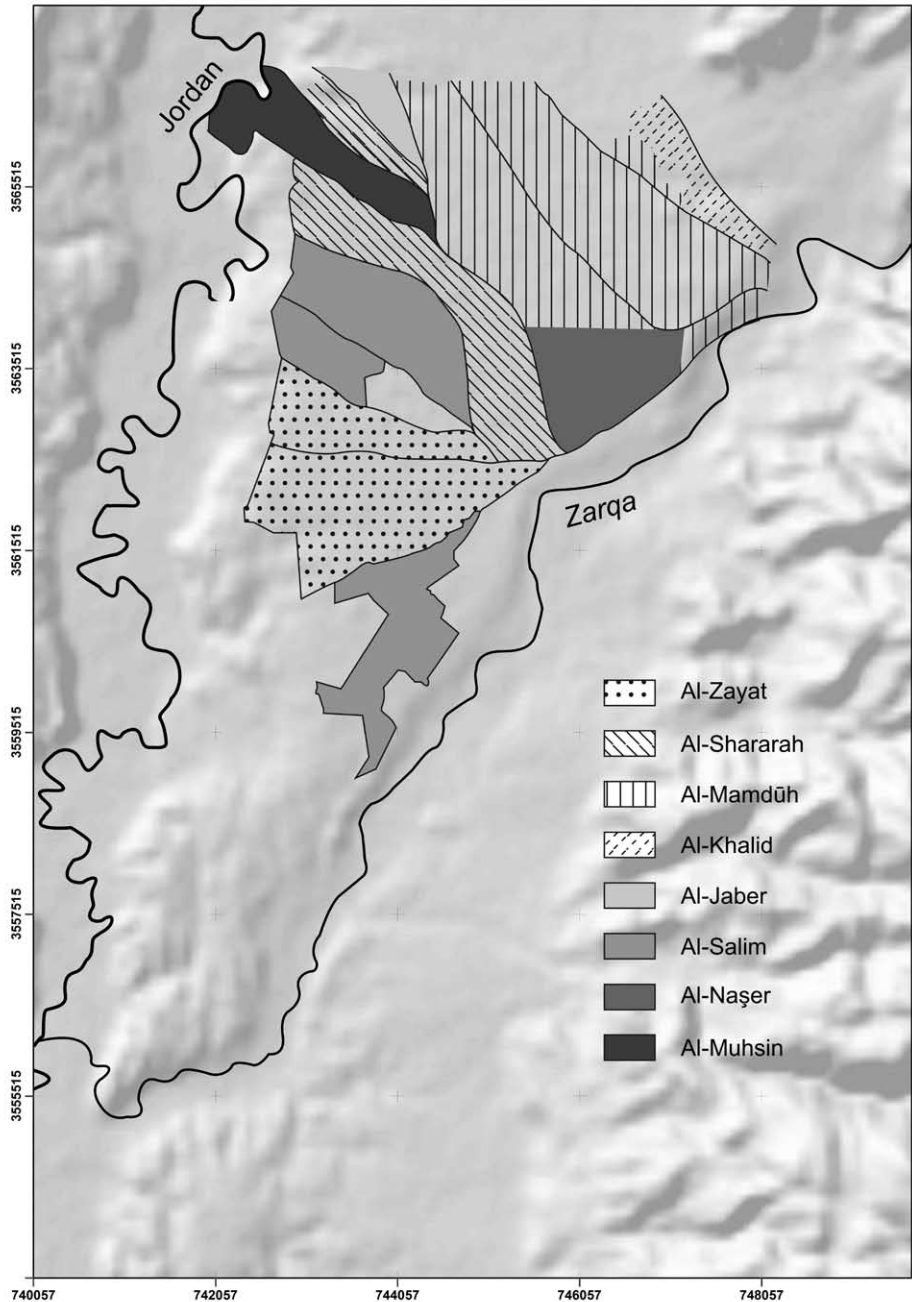
As a result, the area covered by present day Jordan remained the most backward area in the Arab World (Hourani 1978: 14). Besides the political factor, ecology also contributed to this backwardness. A large portion of Jordan is desert and large segments of the population were bedouin practising camel herding. Since this type of herding as an economic activity was not able to produce sufficient surplus, the Bedouin raided the caravans and villages to maintain reproduction, a situation that caused the Ottoman state on the one hand to deploy from time to time large number of its troops in the area, and on the other hand to pay off the bedouin for not attacking caravans. As a result, villages and agricultural communities were not only at the mercy of the Bedouin, but also at that of the state's military apparatus. Another issue affecting the development of agriculture in the area was the taxes. The tithe (10%) was the legal tax paid to the Ottoman officials, but in reality the rate of tax exceeded 22%. These conditions forced the direct producers in many agricultural communities to leave their land. This instability resulted in the backwardness of the agricultural productive forces.

From the above argument one notices that both the nature of the state and bedouin aggressiveness were linked economically, which linkage contributed to the retardation of the agrarian structure in Jordan. During the Ottoman period the economic structure of Jordan was characterized by two main economic systems: nomadic pastoralism and agriculture combined with pastoralism. Our main concern will be the second type. During the long period of Ottoman rule, different land laws were implemented and imposed affecting the agricultural communities, the most important of which was that of 1858.

2.2.1 Land Distribution

Comprehensive data on the distribution of land ownership for the whole of Jordan, the Jordan Valley and the area of Deir Alla during the nineteenth century are not available. However, one can derive a general idea of the distribution from a number of scattered sources.

The Ottoman land law of 1858 divided land into various legal categories; the most important which is relevant to our study is the category of *Miri* Land. *Miri* was state land and the property of the community (*musha'*) (Tarawneh 1995: 35), but possession was in the hands of direct producers. The land belonged officially to the state; it was only by custom that cultivation passed from fathers to son, but the son did not have the right to inherit the land their father had cultivated (Baer 1981: 599). *Miri* land was divided into two sub-categories: a) *Mablul* land, namely land that is left uncultivated by the holder for three successive years and



Map 2 Patterns of landownership: clan territories prior to the 1940s.

is therefore taken over by the state (Mulqi 1988: 1-2); b) *Mudawara* land, which is land that is subsequently transferred to become the Sultan's property; after the 1908 revolution this became the property of the Turkish government (Aruri 1972: 52).

The Sheikhs, as heads of the clans living in the community, acted in economic matters as owners of their clan land. As head of the clan the Sheikh was responsible for land distribution among the direct producers and appropriated the surplus from the latter. In Deir Alla most of the direct producers did not own land. It was either the state or the heads of the communities who controlled the land, while the direct producers had only usufructuary rights. The land law of 1858 permitted the appropriation and expropriation of land by the heads of the communities, by stating that land that was not cultivated for three successive years was taken away by the state. The Sheikhs (who were engaged in the system of *Iltizam* -tax collection-, acting as *Multazims*¹) used this situation to dominate the land and exploit the *Harratheen*.

In the Deir Alla area, during the Ottoman period until the 1940s the clan² was the dominant socio-economic and political unit. In Jordan all agricultural, semi-agricultural or desert land were divided and controlled on a clan basis; each clan had its own territory (Hourani 1978: 17; also see map 2).

Land ownership was communal within the agricultural communities. In most of Jordan the distribution of *Musha'* land was strongly influenced by the power of the clan or clan alliance. The territory was divided more or less equally between the allied clans. In each part of the territory of any one clan the land was divided equally among the married males who were members of the clan (Hamarneh 1985: 76).

In the Deir Alla area there were separate territories; different clans controlling different sized territories. The distribution of land within the clan territory was not absolutely egalitarian, depending mainly on the distance of the plot (called *fadan*) from the main canal.

Every two years (at least), the head of the clan allocated one *fadan* to each household head. This allocation depended on two factors: firstly, if the *fadan* of the last distribution was near the canal, the *Harrath* would get a new *fadan* far away from the canal. Secondly, a *fadan* is given only to the *Harrath* household of unmarried members; if there was a married male he could not share the cultivation of the *fadan* of his father, but he can ask for a *fadan* to cultivate himself. We will examine this process in the section on *Harratheen*.

In this type of economy the direct producers called *Harratheen* were subject to severe exploitation by the head of the clan, who played a crucial role in the extraction of surplus from them.

Since the Jordan Valley was not separated from the Eastern parts of Jordan, powerful bedouin, such as *al-Edwan*, continued to raid settled communities in the Jordan Valley (the middle and southern Ghor) until the beginning of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century the bedouin of Ajlun and its environs were raiding the Deir Alla area. To stop such raids the people of these areas of the

1 The Ottoman state established a tax collection system after the land law of 1858 called *Iltizam*. Those who are appointed by the state to collect taxes from the farmers are called *Multazims* (Baer 1981: 599).

2 Anthropologists have used various terms (such as lineage, clan, tribe, etc.) to indicate *Hamoula*, *Asheera*, *Qabyala*. I will use the term clan throughout.

Jordan Valley transferred their land to the Sultan's property in the second half of the nineteenth century. It became *miri-mudawara* land (Hamada 1939: 103). This meant that the land was under the protection of the Ottoman army.

Mudawara land was very fertile³ and direct producers on such land remained working as *Harrath* after 1908 (the year when all the Sultan's property became that of the new Turkish government) paying a tithe and a rental tithe, a total of approximately 22.5% of the total yield (Hamarnah 1985: 171). This *mudawara* land in the Jordan Valley amounted to about 232,440 dunums (Amiri 1974: 68). This transfer put the cultivators under triple exploitation, by the state (a tithe and a rental tithe) and by the *Sheikhs*.

2.2.2 Land Concentration in the Period 1858-1930s in Deir Alla

In the Deir Alla area land concentration took various forms: either through *Multazim* or through money lenders.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had become weak, which gave the *Multazim* a greater opportunity to exploit the direct producers and to increase their land holdings. The *Iltizam* system put the taxpayer entirely at the mercy of the tax collectors (Sluglett 1984: 411). Therefore, the emergence of large holdings, especially in the Jordan Valley, was a direct result of the extension of government control through the *Iltizam* system and the imposition of taxation in addition to the growth of money-lending and trade (Hamarnah 1985: 83). Islamoglu and Keder (1977: 51) argued that this system created new relationships in the agrarian structure, namely usury relations, although not in the Deir Alla area where the *Iltizam* system helped in the formation of a society based on clan stratification. The reason behind this situation was that the *multazims* of the area were not outsiders as was the case elsewhere; they were, to the contrary, clan leaders from the area.

As we will see later in the section on *Harrath* economy, the area of Deir Alla was divided into different territories according to different stratified clans, such as the *Hurr*, *'beed*, and *Ghawarneh* clans. That is, the clan superstructure also functioned as part of the social relation system of production by regulating access to land, water, etc. The *Hurr* clan leaders were the *Multazims* in the area. As a result, they are also called *al-bab al-Ali* clans, a term that represents the Ottoman administration in Istanbul. Through this position they appropriated a large portion of land in the area.

Moneylenders became an important factor in the early 1930s. Only at that time did merchant capital begin to influence the area. In the case of Deir Alla, merchants were themselves the moneylenders. For instance, the most powerful merchant, called *Elias*, who came from Salt in the 1920s, used to lend (according to informants) money, mainly to clan leaders, because the latter dominated a large

3 Previously, I said that according to my informants the land was a kind of tropical forest; according to the written history, it is a very fertile. There is no contradiction between the two sources, the explanation is that the area was abandoned for a long time. The Jordan Valley was famous in the cultivation of sugar cane for centuries.

area, but also to the landless direct producers and the sheikhs. The relationship between the *Harrath* and *Elias* was maintained through the need of basic foodstuff such as wheat. Informants claimed that whenever the *Harrath* could not pay back in kind, the merchant either would force the *Harrath* to work for him in the coming year, or (more commonly) the *Harrath* would sign a contract stipulating the indebtedness. This means that there were two main types of usury practiced in Deir Alla: *rahm* and *sanad*. As a result informants claimed, *Elias* who initially came to Deir Alla without a single dunum, became a big landowner.

These mechanisms of usury capital (*rahm* and *sanad*) were common in most parts of Jordan. Hamarneh (1985) set out how such mechanisms worked in practice. Firstly, pledge (*rahm*) lenders (who were merchants from nearby towns and cities) held specific plots of land as guarantees so that the small owner became a sharecropper working on his own land.⁴ In most cases the land was appropriated by the moneylenders. Secondly, the moneylender who was usually a merchant would lend money in return for a contract (*sanad*) for repayment of the loan with interest, which sometimes reached 30% annually (Hamarneh 1985: 88).

2.3 The Dissolution of the *musha'* System: The Emergence of Private Property

Agricultural transformation went through various stages along with the political changes in the area. Following the end of the Ottoman period after World War I, the area came under the British Mandate. During the Mandate period no significant structural agrarian changes took place, because of the British colonial policy of blocking any development in its colonies.⁵

The first change during the Mandate period was the dissolution of the *musha'* system, but as I argued earlier in this chapter, changes in law do not mean changes in the social relations of production.

The Detachment Law of 1923 was based on the argument that the backwardness of Jordanian agriculture was a result of the *musha'* system, and the only way to develop agriculture was by detachment of the *musha'* lands (Mulqi 1988: 4).

2.3.1 The Land Settlement of 1933

It was only through the 1933 land settlement that the *musha'* system finally broke down and private land ownership was introduced. In 1933 about 243,000 dunums were registered as private property throughout Jordan (Konikoff 1946: 35). In 1930 the British Mandate government made a survey of land ownership in the area of Palestine and Jordan. As a result it was estimated that the amount of land necessary to support a family was 130 dunums in rain-fed areas, and 40 dunums in irrigated areas (Amiri 1974: 60).

4 It is interesting to note that similar mechanisms were at work in other parts of the former Ottoman lands. For southeastern Turkey see Aydin 1986.

5 For more information see (Hamarneh 1985; Hourani 1978: 71-79).

In the irrigated areas of the Jordan Valley the number of owners who owned more than forty dunums in 1955 was 1,331 holding an area of 384,543 dunums, while, for the same year, the number of owners with less than forty dunums was 3,315 holding an area of 49,844 dunums (Hazleton 1974: 26). These figures changed in the 1960s when the number of owners whose holdings were in excess of forty dunums rose to 1,491 owning a total area of 170,640 dunums. For the same year the number of owners holding less than forty dunums was 1,850 owning 37,299 dunums (Hazleton 1974: 28). In Deir Alla the *Mamdub*, a powerful *Hurr* clan, owned approximately 20,000 dunums.

The only change was that the *de facto* controllers of the means of production became *de jure* owners. In other words, Miri land became private land, and the term owner rather than right holder was used in official documents (IBRD 1957: 127). Since there were no changes in the technological level and in the productive forces, *Harrath* as a social relation of production continued to exist until the beginning of the 1950s. The process of transition from a *Harrath* economy to a more developed commercialized agricultural system will be discussed in another chapter.

In the 1930s, the general policy of the government was not the introduction of technological improvements and agricultural development, but rather the collection of revenue. Therefore the introduction of private ownership did not change the existing social relations of production, which were represented by the *Harrath* form of labour.

2.4 The Transition Period: The Land Reform Programme of the 1960s

After World War II Jordan became independent. In this period international interests became influential especially through the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and USAID.⁶ These agencies together with the state played an important role in changing the local agrarian structure.

The first priority of the international agencies was the development of agriculture, by which they meant the commercialization of agriculture, especially in the Jordan Valley. Generally speaking their major innovations were the construction of the East Ghor Canal and the land reform programme of the 1960s (see the outline in table I in the appendix). The most important element emerging from the adoption of these reforms was the return of the land and water to the direct control of the state.

As a result of the land reform programme of the 1960s the state's representative, the JVA, controls the lands of the Valley,⁷ which are irrigated by the East Ghor Canal, and the water resources. According to this situation the JVA has certain

6 For the establishment, structural organization and function of IRBID and USAID see Hayter and Watson 1985 and Salim, M. 1984.

7 Most of the discussion of contemporary land ownership in the Jordan valley is based on Land Law No. 19 of the JVA; the law is called "The Jordan Valley Development Law" of 1988. I have used this law even though it was issued after the time of the field work. All JVA's land laws were an extension of the basic land laws of the land reform of the 1960s.

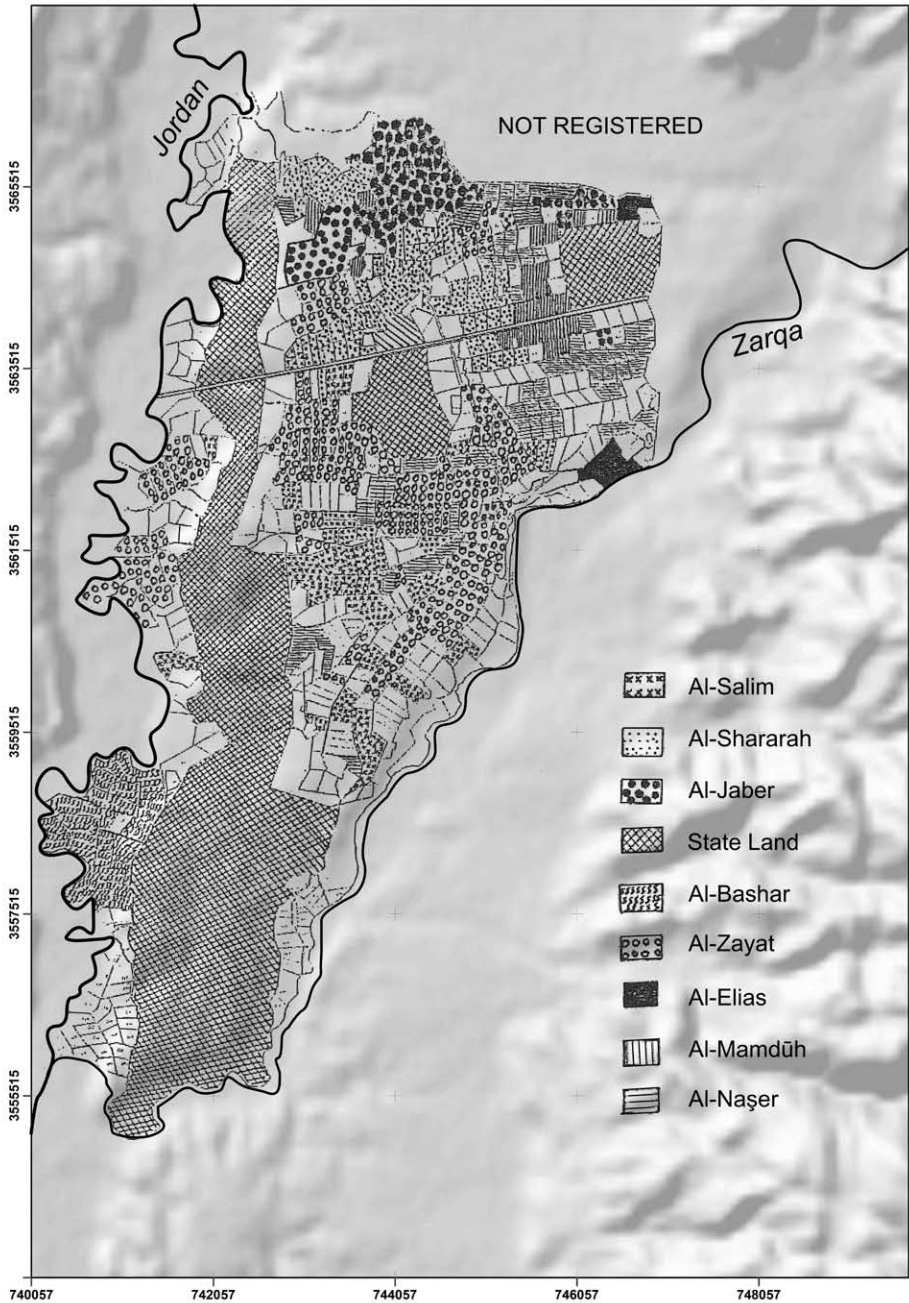
rights to the land of the Valley, rights which, in effect, make the state the owner of land and water there with individuals becoming right holders. The situation is complex and terms used seem ambiguous. It is stated clearly in the land laws concerning the land of the Jordan Valley that those persons who have official deeds are *mutasarif* (holders). This *Haq al-tasaruf* (right of possession) is subject to various constraints. Holders do not have the right to buy or sell the land individually; the JVA is the organization through which the buying and selling of land is performed. The JVA determines the selling and buying price. If two individuals agreed between themselves to buy and sell, the operation is performed through the supervision and under the conditions of the JVA. The JVA permits the transfer of land to the buyer under what could be called lease holding; the new holder has the right to possess the land for a certain period which is normally 33 years but which could be renewed. Also the agricultural unit should not be left uncultivated or it will be taken away from the holder. And if the latter exploits the unit in a way different from that stipulated by the JVA, the Authority will cut off the water. Finally if the agricultural unit is inherited it cannot be divided among the heirs. Therefore the term freehold does not apply. If we compare these constraints with those of the Ottoman land law of 1858 one would find that the present condition of landholding in the Valley is actually a form of Miri. Therefore it was only in the 1930s that people were freeholders.

Thus, land ownership patterns in the Jordan Valley have shifted: during the Ottoman period the state was the owner of the land, during the British Mandate period absolute private ownership was introduced, whereas the post-land reform situation is a return to traditional forms of ownership.

In the application of the land laws of the reform programme one could find that the priority order of landowners,⁸ according to these laws, changed along with changes in the land laws. For example, absentee landowners were given second, and then according to the 1962 Land Law, fifth priority (Hazleton 1974: 21). But it is important to note that a relegation (amendment) took place after changing the definition of holder.⁹ The Authority (JVA), according to this change, as seen in the land laws of 1960 and 1962, had the legal right to change the definition of the holder from being title holder to family holder. The state had to make adjustments to conciliate the new rising large land holders who were supporting it, although they were generally neither farmers nor residents of the area, and the aims of the IBRD also contradicted with the internal structural situation (the new rising landowners' class in rural areas, mainly in the Jordan Valley). The state found it suitable to change the definition of holder and then to assign landowner priority according to the IBRD's regulation. The IBRD intended to establish a system of small farms that would be owner-operated. But the kinship concept

8 I use here the term ownership literally.

9 "Holder" was defined as the person(s) in whose name(s) the 'land or water or both is/are registered in accordance with a registration deed (Hazleton 1974: 22). Then the concept of holder became redefined as: "separate allotments of agricultural units to individual members of a single family" (ibid:22). This change meant that a title was registered by the head of the family and then changed to include all members of the family. That is the reason one would find a large area registered by one family.



Map 3 Patterns of landownership: ownership structure in 1986.

and its relation to control over land, which was supported by the state itself as we have seen before, i.e. changing the definition of holder, gave the opportunity to different families to own a large number of agricultural units, through using family members (males, females, children and sometimes cousins) as registered

holders. People living outside the Jordan Valley became large holders, which led to the creation of absentee landlordism.

The fact that organizations such as the IBRD did not take much notice of the fact that Third World countries including Jordan do not obey their stipulation (the establishment of a small farm system with owner-operated farms) illustrated that their published aims remained primarily rhetorical.

In the Deir Alla area some of the old big land owners (mainly of mercantile origin) benefited. For example four *Elias* brothers and their household members own 3,000 dunums in the form of separate plots, each one ranging between 30 and 40 dunums. Most of their land was in basin no. 22 with a few plots in basin no. 23. However, some other old big landowners such as the *Mamdub* lost most of their lands.

In basin no. 23 of Deir Alla, the general pattern of land ownership remained as it had been before the introduction of the land reform programme of the 1960s. Looking at map 3 we find that approximately 1/5 of the titles were given to new holders from outside the area of Deir Alla (such as the *Bashar* and 100 unknown holders), the remaining 4/5 were given to original residents of the area, mainly from the *Ghawarneh* clans such as the *Muhsin*, the *Zayat*, the *Jaber*, and the *Naser* who together own the largest part of the basin. This means that the land is still concentrated within the family; it is still divided into territories as it was prior to the land reform. The formal appearance of ownership in the basin confirms the view of those like Dajani, who argue that the land reform created only 500 new titles in the whole Jordan Valley (Dajani 1980). But looking carefully at the structure of the ownership titles, one finds that before the 1960s the territories mainly of the *Hurr* and of the merchants were owned by a single person or by a very limited number of persons, but now it is only through many members of the family that they can keep the territory.

Another important issue emerges from a comparison of maps 2 and 3, which reveals that a large territory was given to the *Ghawarneh*. The reason behind this is that such clans used to have many *fellaheen* (see chapter 3) in their territories. The *fellah* was kin (usually a cousin) to the sheikh of such clans, therefore they had the right to own a plot of land during the land settlement of 1933-1936. This meant that there were many holders for the territory, a situation that helped the members of the clans to each own a few plots according to the terms of the land reform programme of the 1960s. Other clans such as the *Hurr* ended up with less titles than the *Ghawarneh* clans (see map 3), even though the former previously dominated a large territory of approximately 20,000 dunums (in the case of the *Mamdub* clan). Since such clans were few in membership, and have no power in the present government, they lost a large part of their land. The land taken from them was either distributed to the people settled in the area (mainly migrant Palestinians) or given to outsiders (mainly people living in the cities). The government took approximately 1,200 dunums from the land of the *Mamdub* and about 400 dunums from others in the Deir Alla area (the 1,200 dunums is the site of the Deir Alla Agricultural Station). These new allotments established what could be called small absentee land ownership in the basin. The size of this

small absentee landlordism is estimated at approximately 15.4% (see table 2); a percentage derived from the fact that tenancy in the basin is approximately 15.4%. There are no local landowners who give land in tenancy to others. But big landlordism is also prevalent, as we have argued before. For example, there are 3,000 dunums divided among only four brothers and their households (but most of their land is in basin no. 22 in the area of Deir Alla). If we exclude the fact that for vegetable production in basin 23 big absentee landlordism does not exist, it is true that absentee landlordism exists in citrus fruit production, namely those who own a *Bayarah* type of organization, not only in the basin but in the whole of the Deir Alla region.

At the level of the Deir Alla region, one could conclude that the land reform has failed to create owner-operated farms. Generally speaking it created smaller holdings than before. Since it permitted outsiders to be holders it helped the establishment of absentee landlordism. It also helped to establish tenancy in the area because it permitted the legal possessors to lease their agricultural units for three to ten years (Land Law No. 19 of the JVA). The fact that direct person to person sale of land is not possible is a further contributing factor in the development of tenancy.

The “*Harrath*” Economy – A Subsistence Economy

3.1 Introduction

While there is a large number of studies¹ about the bedouins in Jordan, there are only few that discuss the peasantry. I shall concentrate on the study of the Jordanian agrarian relations in an attempt to reconstruct the socio-economic history of the peasantry, which is still incomplete and unclear. In this part of the study I shall explore the socio-economic structure prior to 1950 in order to understand the evolution of the present structure. I chose the 1950s because the early fifties mark the beginning of major changes.

The few existing studies of rural society in Jordan are mostly of two types: on the one hand, there are purely descriptive accounts by nineteenth century travellers;² on the other there are those writers who have a preconceived theoretical frame that they try to impose on the data. Of the second type some studies have explained the old agrarian relations in terms of the Asiatic mode of production (Mahadeen 1981), while others argued that feudalism was the dominant mode of production in the Jordanian countryside (Hourani 1978).³

Such studies fail to identify and determine the organization of the labour process, the process of social production and reproduction. Their most crucial failure is that they do not identify whether there existed distinct social relations of production in the Jordanian countryside. This is in my opinion a central question, because every society has its specific social relation of production that needs to be analyzed in order to understand the society. In this attempt, besides the information concerning land ownership, I registered information about the old irrigation system that was in operation in the area of Deir Alla until the end of the 1950s. Water resources were an important means of production, through the control of which different clans maintained domination. They created a

1 For example see Weir 1976 and Abadi 1976, 1984.

2 See Oliphant 1880; Merrill 1881; Conder 1883 and Schumacher 1886.

3 There are many theoretical debates which emphasize that the wholesale adoption of theoretical concepts borrowed from the west leads the social scientists of the Third World to overlook many facts of the internal structures. See for example the feudal-capitalist debate of Dobb and others (Dobb 1946; Hilton 1982). The debate soon transferred to the Third World's social scientists; the Indian, (Harriss 1980; Alavi 1975; Banaji 1972, 1973) and the Turkish (Aydin 1986) debates are clear examples. It is important to note that there is another type of debate that is also relevant to our study, namely the Asiatic-feudal debate (Anderson 1979 and Tarabishi 1978, 1979).

social system of irrigation that played an important role in the social relations of production in the *Harrath* economy.

The following discussion is based on data derived from informal interviews with a number of people who were old enough to remember the 1920s and 1930s. These informants came not only from Deir Alla, but also from Irbid, Madaba and Karak. The reason for including informants from outside the region of Deir Alla, is to raise the comparative dimension and ask the question whether there was a distinct type of social relation of production in the whole of the Jordanian countryside. The informants originally belonged to two groups: the direct producers, and landowners (or sheikhs) .

3.2 The Old Irrigation System

With the construction in 1957 of the East Ghor Canal Project the old irrigation system became defunct and disappeared without any documentation. Since it is important to our study to understand the old agrarian structure it is necessary to explore this irrigation system. The only remaining source of information is the memory of older local informants.

Deir Alla is an agricultural area where the valleys draining into it bring seasonal torrents, mainly in winter. The most important source of such water is the Zarqa river. In order to utilise the water resources to the full a water canal network was constructed consisting of main and minor canals reaching the farthest possible piece of land. Three main canals (named *Mu'taredah*, *Shqaq* and *Maydan*) were established. These also acted as boundaries between the different clans' territories (see map 2).

Informants from Deir Alla claim that the old irrigation system was sophisticated and precise and that it was in fact more accurate in terms of the water distribution among the different clans and between the direct producers than is the modern system. This argument is derived from the fact that in the last few years, water supply has become irregular because of the JVA policy of expanding the size of the area to be irrigated in the Jordan Valley, mainly in the southern Ghor (see table 13). Since there are no maps of the old irrigation system left, I have made a plan based on the data given by the informants (see map 3).

At some time in the past few centuries a dam was constructed of huge rocks and mud that controlled the Zarqa river at the head of the valley. Main canals branched off from the dam, each canal irrigating the land of one or more of the clans. The clan leaders gathered every day to distribute the water, starting with that which comes from the dam and ending with the share of the *Harrath* or *Fellah* from the sub-canals.

The water distribution was based on the principle of the *Maosim*. The *Maosim* is a unit of measure which represents twelve hours of irrigation. The tool that was used for measuring the *Maosim* was a long wooden stick marked into parts, each part representing one *Maosim*, i.e. twelve hours. The number of *Maosim* consumed depended on the size of the land. Informants state that one *Maosim* was sufficient to irrigate approximately 100 dunums. This reminds us of some

of the JVA laws concerning water distribution. The JVA gives 4 hours every day for each agricultural unit ranging from 30-40 dunums. This means that there is a similarity between the old and new system in the water quantities distributed.

In this irrigation system there was a specialized person in charge of water distribution through the main canals who placed a measuring stick at the bottom of an empty canal. This canal irrigated a fixed amount of land that belonged to a certain clan or clans, as map 2 shows. After that, a drain was opened leading to the canal until the water reached the determined mark on the measuring stick. At that point the drain was blocked. Once the water in the canal reached the farthest point of land to be irrigated, the water in the main canal had dropped to the zero point on the measuring stick. This was a daily procedure.

But the procedure was not always as simple as that, because usually the main canal flowed into land owned by different clans. For example, as is shown in map 2, the *Shqaq* canal ran through land owned by the *Mamdub* and the *Elias*. The *Mamdub* owned about 2000 and the *Elias* about 1000 dunums. A daily committee of both clans was usually formed to supervise the water distribution from the main canal. According to the *Maosim* principle, the *Mamdub* would be given twenty and the *Elias* ten *Maosim*.

The same process was repeated inside each clan's territory. The water was distributed through a network of sub-canals. The same procedures were followed to ensure that water reached every cultivated *fadan* (this term will be discussed later in the chapter).

The main canal was built of stones and mud mixed with straw to prevent water leaking. The drains were blocked in the same way with smaller dams. This type of irrigation system depended on the existence of close social relations between different clans and within them. Each clan had its own territory cultivated by the members of the *Harrath* household, with no economic connections between different clan territories, but the irrigation necessitated daily contacts between different clans and thereby integrated different communities into an overall social structure. Its maintenance required cooperation: if as a result of the accumulation of mud and plants the water flow became weak in the main canal, or if the canal was damaged, members of different clans had to cooperate to clean it up or repair the damage. They were summoned for this from a distance by the sound of gunshot. Clans also formed patrols to guard the network and prevent the theft of water. *Hurr* clans had their appointed *'Beed* guards while *Ghawarneh* clans assigned patrols from within their family. The fact that water could be stolen implies a concept of ownership of water; for example, prior to the 1930s there were penalties that took the form of compensation to the Sheikh of the clan whose water was stolen. The most common method at that time was to deprive the thief of his own water share the next day and to give it to the one whose water was stolen. After the 1920s, the thief was referred to the government authorities and jailed until somebody (usually the Sheikhs involved in the matter) solved the problem and guaranteed that the thief would not repeat his deed. This was in addition to taking the latter's water share and giving it to the one whose water was stolen.

3.3 “Harrath” as a Social Relation of Production

The agrarian structure in Jordan remained backward⁴ to various degrees from 1858 to the 1940s simply because social relations of production did not change throughout this period. Until the 1940s, land and water, the two most important means of production in the *Harrath* economy, were under the control of clan leaders. Those leaders were unproductive, exploiting the direct producers who were the *Harratheen* or ploughmen. In this type of economy the *Harrath's* household and the clan constituted the basic social units.

In the Deir Alla area, the *Harrath* economy produced mainly cereal crops such as wheat, barley, white maize and sesame. Animal raising was the secondary means of livelihood for the community as a whole, but it was the primary source for the nomadic pastoralists (table 3 shows the importance of both activities). However, as I have argued earlier, this activity was not enough for the bedouin, and they also raided the agricultural communities.

In the 19th century the clans of Deir Alla used to give a major part of their surplus to the bedouin of Ajlun as *khawa*. Another part of the surplus was given to the state as tax. The rest was divided between the *Harratheen* and the sheikhs. The former taking one fifth of this amount even though the agreement was that the *Harrath* should have a quarter; the sheikh subtracted the amount of seeds he gave to the *Harrath* at the beginning of the year. The remaining surplus of four fifths would either be consumed or exchanged by the clan leader(s) in different markets, mainly in Salt on the eastern highlands and in Nablus in Palestine.

3.3.1 *Clan as a Social Unit: Social Stratification between Different Clans*

Ideology played a very important role in the functioning of the different communities in the Deir Alla area. Before the 1950s there was a one-to-one relation between the productive base of the society and certain social terms like *Hurr*, *Beed*, and *Ghawarneh*, but since the productive base of the society changed, such terms have lost their socio-economic content and their meaning has also changed. That is, previously, clan ideology functioned as part of the social relations of production, but now the clan no longer functions in this way; clan stratification has become an ideological superstructure. The social status of the different groups of *Beed* and *Ghawarneh* is culturally defined, whereas recently, *Hurr*, either as an economic or political term, has completely disappeared, as it was a term valid only for powerful clans in alliance with the Ottoman State. But such clans in Deir Alla remained powerful through their wealth (water and land) until the 1950s.

Therefore, *Hurr*, *Beed*, and *Ghawarneh* are different terms used to denote the different socially stratified clans that formed the society of the Deir Alla area.

4 Backwardness is the opposite of development, and development in our understanding is the changing of the existing social relation of production. Such relations did not change until the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s.

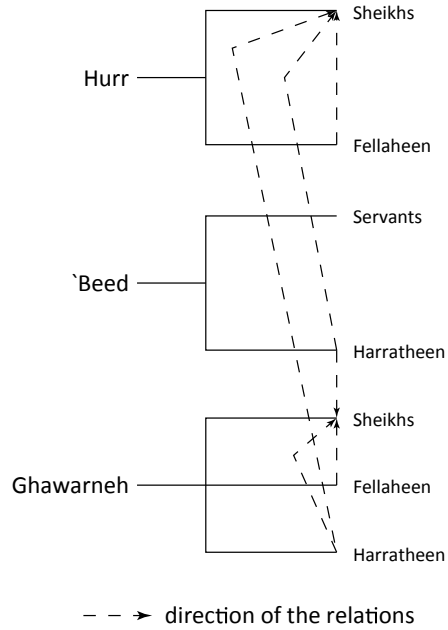


Fig 1 The social structure of the Deir Alla area before the 1950s.

3.3.1.1 Hurr Clans⁵

Both *Hurr* and *Ghawarneh* clans have their own leadership, while the *'Beed*⁶ do not. The latter settled usually in the territory a clan for which they worked.

In Deir Alla the *Hurr* represented the top of the social hierarchy in a society that was composed of different closed communities with each their specific clan territory. *Hurr* clans, as we have seen, were also called the *Bab al 'aly* clans, indicating their close connection with the Ottoman government.

In the Jordan Valley there were many such clans, like the *Edwan* in the southern Ghor, *Ghazaweih* and in the northern Ghor, and the *Shararah* and *Mamdub* clans in the area of Deir Alla. Such clans dominated a large area in the Jordan Valley, employing both *Ghawarneh* and *'Beed* clans and their households to cultivate their lands.

In Deir Alla all categories of clans existed. Informants from Deir Alla claimed that members of *Hurr* were few in comparison to the others but dominated a large area in the region of Deir Alla.⁷ They told that the *Mamdub* and the *Shararah* clans dominated most of Deir Alla region, for example they argued that before the 1920s and 1930s *Mamdub* territory was about 30,000 dunums, but when the

⁵ *Hurr* clans in the area are the *Mamdub* and the *Shararah*.

⁶ The English translation of the word *'Beed* is "slaves", but it does not imply the slavery mode of production.

⁷ Some informants in Deir Alla mentioned that the *Mamdub* family came originally from Syria. This is confirmed by Touma who mentioned that there is a family named *Mamdub* in Syria that is considered to be one of the largest absentee landowners in the area of Palestine (Touma 1986: 107).

Elias came, at the end of the 1920s, the latter appropriated at least a third of the former's land.

3.3.1.2 'Beed Families

'Beeds⁸ did not have clans. They were composed of individual households that came second in the social rank to *Hurr*. They were divided into groups, according to their social position, as either servants or *Harratheen*.

'Beed households who were servants of *Hurr* clans occupied a higher rank in the social hierarchy than did *Ghawarneh*, with whom they did not intermarry, even if the male was the son of the *Ghawarneh* sheikh. They only married with the other groups of 'Beed (servants or 'Beed *Harratheen*). *Ali* is an 'Beed, and he is proud of it. He told me the story of his family and how they came originally to the Deir Alla area:

"Here was a family composed of three brothers and one sister, they lived in a town called Berberah in Ghaza. One of the brothers killed a person from Berberah. The three brothers ran away to Jordan, two of them to the Jordan Valley, another to Salt. The sister knew my grandfather, and asked for his help in finding her brothers. He promised to help, but before that, both my grandfather and the girl promised to be siblings (Khowa). They came to the Ghor, and resided in Deir Alla area because they heard that one of her brothers was in the area. The girl was said to be very beautiful. And people began to recognize that the girl was very beautiful, and they told the sheikh Tawjiq al-Mamduh that there was a very beautiful girl with an 'Beed resident on his land. The sheikh came to my grandfather and said 'I want uncovered water'. The girl brought him water while her face was covered. The sheikh refused to take the water, and said 'I told you that I want uncovered water, which means I would like to see your face and to tell me what is your story'. My grandfather asked his sister to uncover her face, and he told the sheikh their story. The sheikh respected him and told him that he was most welcome to stay on his land and to work as a servant in his house. The girl became famous in the area, and a group of the Naser family (a Ghawarneh clan who lived around Swalha town, one kilometer to the south of Deir Alla) came to sheikh Tawfiq and asked him to marry the girl. Since my grandfather and the girl were resident on the Mamduh's land, nobody could speak with my grandfather without consulting the sheikh. The sheikh and that group came to my grandfather and asked him to agree to a marriage. My grandfather agreed on one condition: Her dower will be the dower of my bride. Tawfiq found a bride for my grandfather from a servant

8 Rodney (1972) and Goody (1980) argued that Arabs and Islam ad acquired slaves from Africa long before the beginning of the European slave trade. Rodney argues that slaves in the hands of Arabs were kept mainly for unproductive ends, for social prestige (Rodney 1972: 158). This is in contrast to Goody's characterization of the role of the African slave trade in Europe and America as being directed to productive and reproductive ends (Goody 1980: 28). It is clear that both Western Europe, Southern America and Arabs required slaves from Africa for several centuries. In the Western societies, however, slaves formed the economic base of the society, and the production was oriented towards the world capitalist market, while slaves in Arab hands became integrated as the lower members of society except for those, in the case of Deir Alla, who worked as servants for the *Hurr* clan leaders.

family working with the Shararah family, therefore my grandfather worked for Tawfiq as a servant. Also my father got married through the Mamduh therefore I am an 'bed of the Mamduh'.

From what *Ali* said, one can understand some of the social relations. It indicates the power of the *Hurr* leader (*Tawfiq al-Mamduh*) in his territory and how he became immediately the master of those resident on his land, so that the other clan asked permission to marry the girl, rather than *Ali's* grandfather, even though the latter was not yet a servant of the sheikh. *Ali's* grandfather became an 'Bed because of his colour and then (after marriage) he became an 'Bed servant. The colour is an important element here. Servants are invariably black and non-blacks cannot be 'Beed. The Naser family married a girl who was not black: she was not a blood relative of *Ali's* grandfather. The story also confirms the idea that the Jordan Valley was the place of thieves, killers, and others outside the law.

In Deir Alla, and in the Jordan Valley in general 'Beed households that were attached to the sheikh and his household as servants did not work in agriculture but as guards, rent collectors or domestic (personal) servants. Only *Hurr* clans had the privilege of having black servants. *Ghawarneh* clans for instance did not have this privilege, but they could have 'beed as *Harratheen* who gained their status from the other 'Beed (servants of the *Hurr*), that is to say, only through the black color did the 'Beed *Harrath* gain their social status above that of the *Ghawarneh Harrath*. In economic terms the 'Beed and *Ghawarneh* members who work as *Harratheen* were the poorest and most miserable group.

The 'Bed servant household lived, ate, and married through the sheikh himself. This was their reward for serving him. In addition the sheikh usually gave them a number of his animals as their property, but they did not own land.

There were different categories of servants performing different duties. Some were called *mashay al-sheikh*, who accompanied the sheikh wherever and whenever he went to serve and guard him. The servants usually worked together as a group; the size of this group indicated the power of the sheikh and his clan. There were also the *mashy al-sheikha* (the servant of the sheikh's wife). This servant was called the brother of the sheikha, a brotherhood appointed by the sheikh himself. According to this appointment the servant had absolute rights of brotherhood. Then there was the *hattab* (lumberjack), and the group of guards who were residents of the clan's territory maintaining peace and keeping the large groups of *Harratheen* under control.

The manner in which the prestige of a dominant clan reflects upon its 'Beed is expressed in the common saying in Jordan: *kalb e1-sheikh ... sheikh* (the dog of the sheikh ... is a sheikh).

As we have seen before, there were informants like *Ali* who were very proud of being 'Bed of the *Mamduh* clan. Informants argued that the *Mamduh* used to have at least 15-20 'Beed households, working as servants, and a much larger number of *Harratheen* working and tilling their land.

3.3.1.3 *Ghawarneh* Clans

Even though Ghawarneh clans had the lowest status in the society, they were economically better off than the 'beed.⁹ They had their own territory in which they dominated and exercised control over land and water. But in spite of this control over land and independence they came at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The 'beed did not control any land and were subject to the *Hurr* sheikhs, but they derived considerable material and political benefits from the association. In a sense the *Ghawarneh* were not part of the establishment whereas the *Hurr* derived their position from their association with the state, and the 'Beed in turn from their association with the *Hurr*. This inferiority is expressed by certain local legends, one of which says: 'Ghawarneh *people are the descendants of Solomon's demons*'. Another says: '*Ghawarneh* people were previously *Hurr*, until one of the great leaders of the clans got married to a girl belonging to a low status group (who were living outside the area of Deir Alla) named Katar; this group used to suck milk from the pig's udders. The leader were named as Khanus and Jamus, therefore this leader become Ghorany and his people became vulgar like him.'

3.4 Social Differentiation within the Territory

The Deir Alla area was divided into several clan territories. The quality and size of each territory depended on the power of the clan occupying it. This power depended on a number of factors, such as political relations with the state (as we have seen earlier in the case of *Hurr* clans), and the wealth of its leaders. Later, in the 1960s, the number of households within the clan played an important role in the size of ownership; this was to the benefit of the *Ghawarneh* clans. In each territory the clan leader(s) had the same exploitative production relations with the direct producers.

3.4.1 *The Process of Labour*

When a landless person asked for work on the land, and he agreed to the conditions of work, the landowner (sheikh) would allocate a plot of land to that person. From this moment the latter became *Harrath*. The assigned plot of land was called a *Fadan*.

3.4.1.1 The *Fadan*

Fadan can be defined in a number of ways. In the irrigated area, informants from Deir Alla claimed, the size of a *Fadan* ranged from forty to sixty dunums. The most important definition, which was common to Deir Alla and the rest of Jordan, is that the *fadan* was equal to one *Harrath*, i.e. each *fadan* should be cultivated by only one *Harrath* without the aid even of his married sons. Another common definition is that it was the area which could be ploughed by two oxen in one day.

9 The *Ghawarneh* clans in the Deir Alla area where the *Salim*, *Zayat*, *Jaber*, and the *Naser*.

In Deir Alla, the size of the *fadan* depended on the distance between the main canal and the plot. That is, if the plot bordered on the canal the size of the *fadan* did not exceed forty dunums, but if the plot was at the farthest distance from the canal the size of the *fadan* was to be less than sixty dunums. Other informants from Deir Alla claimed that the *fadan* was the area that produced approximately six sacks.¹⁰

3.4.1.2 Conditions of the Agreement

With the *Harrath's* agreement to these conditions, the landowner (sheikh) had the right to appropriate three quarters of the production plus the amount of seeds he gave to the *Harrath* for cultivation at the beginning of the season. The type of production was determined by the landowner. He also supplied seed, water, land and draught animals (especially the oxen). He provided the *Harrath* with *muneh* (provision), which is an amount of grain (usually white maize) used for subsistence by the *Harrath* and his family during the production cycle. This *muneh* was not deducted from the produce at the end of the season. Apart from providing the required implements, the *Harrath* would provide the plough, and he had to perform most of the work on the land and to take care of the landowner's animals. The *Harrath's* wife and daughters worked in the landowner's house (if the latter demanded this) besides carrying out the work in their own household and in the field.

3.4.1.3 The bonded *Harrath*

As soon as the *Harrath* ploughed the assigned *fadan*, he lost his freedom to move or work outside his master's territory until the period of the agreement was finished.¹¹ As the level of technology was very low and the division of labour rudimentary, the *Harrath* also had to depend on another sort of economic activity, namely animal husbandry. Animals such as cattle, goats, and sheep, were raised to supply meat, milk and milk products (butter, ghee, etc.) and wool. One can therefore generalize that in rural areas of Jordan there was no pure agricultural life; it was agricultural-pastoralism that prevailed even in the irrigated areas where irrigation was supposed to bring about higher yields relative to the arid rain-fed areas.

One can conclude that this production problem constituted the basic reason for the unfree status of the *Harrath*. He did not have the possibility of leaving his master's land. This argument can be understood by looking to another major element in the production problem, which ties the *Harrath* to the sheikhs of the clans. The latter were strongly involved in the production of the *Harrath* through the *muneh* and the draught animals supplied at the beginning of the year.

10 There are two general and common quantities for the sack (or shwal), either 50 or 100 kilograms, but informants are not sure about this point.

11 There was no agreement among the informants on the periodization of the agreement but all agreed that the minimum period was two years. This periodization can be related to both redistribution of the land in the territory and to the allow system that required two years to cultivate the *fadan*.

The agreement between *Harrath* and landowner ended immediately after *Kyaleh* (the process of measuring the grain) of at least the second year, but this agreement in most cases was renewed for another period, because the *Harrath* had no alternative. According to the new agreement the *Harrath* might not plough the land used in the previous period.

The people of Deir Alla called the *Harrath* the *Harrath* of the sheikh. They argued that the *Mamdub* leader(s) used to have tens of *Harrath* households working in his/their territory, while *'Beed* are called *'Beed* of the clan, not of the sheikh.

Harrath could not be called *fellah* because, as informants argued, the *fellah* cultivated his land by himself, which implies a concept of partnership with the landowner, while the *Harrath* only provides labour without any of the rights of partnership.

A *fellah* in Deir Alla gave only a third of his production, to the clan leader. Theoretically the *fellah* is a sharecropper. Both *fellah* and sheikh usually had close kinship relations. Unlike the *Harrath* the *fellah* decided what he would like to produce. But since *Hurr* clans were few in members while dominating a large amount of land, *fellah* as a labour form was not widespread among them. It was, however, common in the *Ghawarneh* territories, simply because such clans had a very large population, mainly of kinsmen.

Since the *Harrath* was not free this implied that landowners maintained a force of corvee labour, using *Harrath* labour not only for their private agricultural and non-agricultural activities, but also to work for other landowners to establish and maintain political alliances. This labour was unpaid and the *Harrath* would only get their meals during working time. This arrangement was usually maintained during ploughing and harvest times, and was *'uoneh* called by local people.

3.4.1.4 Surplus Extraction and Uses

After the extraction of a major part of the community's surplus by the state, the remainder was divided and distributed between the sheikh and the *Harratheen*. The sheikh distributed the remaining surplus (after the deduction of taxes) into four parts: the first part was set aside as *muneh*, for the *Harratheen*. The second part was left for his local consumption and for his *'Beed*. The third was given to the *Harrath* (1/5 of the production). The final part was exchanged in different market places, such as those of Salt, Ghaza and Nablus.

3.4.2 *Harrath Social Relation of Production: A Common Perspective*

The relations of production described above were general throughout the Jordanian countryside. For example, *Harrath* relations existed in Madaba and the surrounding area. Hamarneh (1985) found that the sheikhs of E1-Fayez, Edwan, and Abu-Jaber brought peasants from Nablus and Jerusalem to cultivate their lands. Later (early in the Mandate period) these also included poor tribesmen (called qutrooz) who had joined the agricultural labour force, as *Murab'i* (Hamarneh 1985: 91). *Murab'i* is an alternative name for *Harrath* in the area of Belqa. *Harrath* as a labour form was also widespread in the northern part of the country, mainly in

the Beni-Kenana district near Irbid (Ubeidat 1984: 36). This means that *Harrath* as a distinct social relation of production was dominant in most of the agricultural areas of Jordan.

3.5 Conclusion

Generally speaking the sheikhs did not use their power to develop agriculture: levels of technology remained low, and the low level of development of productive forces restricted evolution in the production relations. Informants from Deir Alla remember that in the 1930s the scything and threshing were usually delayed, until the rainy season ruined the harvest that was still on the *baider* (threshing floor). Informants claimed that the reason behind these delays was the large amount of harvest that people could not look after. This interpretation is partly right, but I believe that the reason behind this inability was the simplicity of the working tools, which were unable to absorb any changes in the balance of the production. That is to say that the society had limited ability to control the environment and thus was vulnerable. Therefore, the reason behind the stagnation of agriculture in the Deir Alla area and in Jordan generally resided in two main factors: first, there was no motive for either *Harratheen* or sheikhs to develop the productive forces. The second factor was the inability of the merchants and other landowners to reclaim land with large amounts of capital.

This situation was related to British colonial rule, through the unwillingness of the British colonial system to develop the country. The capital in the hands of individuals was very limited until the end of the 1940s. In Deir Alla, only the big landowners had notable amounts of cash. Money circulation in the whole of Jordan (east and west) during 1931-1932 was estimated to be only LP (Palestine Pound) 150,000 (Mahadeen 1981: 70).

The technology of transportation was also very simple (until the late 1930s it was maintained through animals). Therefore, commercialization and trade were limited because of the high risk to caravans. Informants claimed that the main trade route to the western part of the river was through the Katar and Zor areas (the areas located on both sides of the river), an area full of thieves and persons wanted for different reasons. The reason the latter were able to hide in this area was that, as we have seen, it was full of large dense bushes, like *Botom*, and of huge overlapping trees, like *cedar*. This meant that even if there were certain individuals who would like to market their products in the western cities, they would not be able to do so; this process was monopolized by the sheikhs.

Informants claimed that it was only in the 1940s that a bus appeared in Deir Alla; they said further that Deir Alla became an important station because early in the 1940s, both the *Elias* and *Hamed al-Mamduh* constructed a gas-station. Only by that time did the area witness some technological changes. Anyhow the retardation of the transportation technology had enhanced certain social values and customs. In Deir Alla social custom prohibited the sale of milk and milk products. The surplus of milk in all the communities of Deir Alla was discarded. I believe that this was the case because people did not have the requisite technology

and means of transportation to market their milk production in the nearby cities or towns, even though there were milk production enterprises in Salt and Nablus.

As for incentives and motives for developing the society: until the late 1920s Jordan's history was marked by bedouin raids. Some historians, such as (Abadi 1976, 1984), believe that raiding was one of the bedouin customs, but they do not identify the economic base of these customs. In this regard I join Hamarneh, Mahadeen, and Hourani in the belief that raiding was a way to secure the production of such clans. This situation led many *Harratheen* to leave their land and villages (Oliphant 1880).

Another factor which contributed to the retardation of agriculture lies in the nature of the agricultural communities. Sheikhs used to squander a large amount of their appropriated surplus on luxuries and banquets. Banquets became one of the most important expressions of generosity that marked the nature of the local Jordanians. Powerful leaders (mainly *Hurr*) boasted of having the largest and most splendid banquets. But such customs have also a political origin, because banquets contributed to the establishment and maintenance of good relations between different groups and clans. But the result was that the surplus was not invested into productive means.

The preceding factors blocked the way for the development of the rural structure of Deir Alla, the Jordan Valley and Jordan generally. Conditions for the development of production relations did not materialize until the beginning of the 1950s. Wage labour did not emerge until then and *Harratheen* were the dominant labour form. Payment was mainly in kind, and the most crucial feature of agricultural production remained use value and not exchange value, until the beginning of the 1950s.

Now one can argue that the *Harrath* economy represented a distinct form of production, a form realized through a distinct social unit, the *Harrath* household employing family labour. This unit had social relations of production with another social unit, namely the sheikh's household. Both units are internal to the economy, and the exploitation of the labour power is the nature of this relation. What I am trying to say is that one can find here the necessary conditions that constitute a mode of production. The placement of this type of economy in a certain mode of production is not the aim of this work, even though it is an important task, but one can give certain insights and some introductory elements to those who would like to rewrite the rural social history of Jordan.

In any case the *Harrath* economy was not primarily oriented towards external markets. The production is understood through the use value. It was not subjected to any external forces until the 1950s, when it actually became subordinate to such forces, namely international capital and the Palestinian influx, and to internal forces that were originally external to the area of study, namely local merchant capital. The *Harrath* economy was not compatible with the capitalization of agriculture, therefore such external factors played an important role in the destruction of this form of production, and in the emergence of various forms of productions of many types of crops: citrus, cereals and vegetables. These relations are realized through various production organizations: owner-family farm, sharecropping, small and big capitalist farms.

The Demise of the Harrath Economy

4.1 Introduction

The destruction of the *Harrath* social relation of production did not come about suddenly. There were a number of factors that contributed to the dissolution of the old agrarian structure. These included the emergence of merchant capital, the Palestinian exodus, and USAID involvement in the area. All these factors led to a major expansion of agricultural land by the end of the 1940s.

The first element of the development of the Jordan Valley was the reclamation process. This process took place throughout the Valley and was related to the wider economy of Jordan. Merchant capital was the first to begin the reclamation of land early in the 1940s. During these years merchants began to establish agricultural firms and to reclaim their land. They brought in machines and began to plant certain vegetables. The Palestinian migration to the East Bank as a result of the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948, resulted in demographic pressure in relation to agricultural output and resources (see tables 3 and 5). This resulted in an increase in the general demand for agricultural products, mainly foodstuffs. Since the agricultural sector in general and that of the Jordan Valley in particular were not able to meet such an increase in demand, it became necessary to start an agricultural development programme. Land reclamation in the Jordan Valley was an important element in this development. But because of the lack of economic resources of the state, foreign economic aid was needed. USAID was the first influential form of aid. Therefore, the structural changes in the Deir Alla area were a result of local, regional and international dynamics.

4.2 The Rise of a New Group of Landowners

In the 1920s, as a result of the establishment of local central authority in the East Bank, the bedouin stopped raiding and *Khawa* was discontinued. Ottoman taxes as a form of surplus extraction also disappeared. The working conditions of the direct producers improved, but only for a short time. The new state imposed taxes that replaced the Ottoman taxes, and moneylenders and merchants came into the area as merchant capital became increasingly important in agriculture.

In the Deir Alla area moneylenders were themselves the merchants. They came originally from Salt. The most powerful merchant family of all were the *Elias* who came from Salt in the late 1920s. The *Elias* brothers, Issa and Salih, first came as raisin merchants. After they settled in Deir Alla they built a mill in Darar village (near Deir Alla village) to grind cereals commercially. But since their customers

did not have cash, they were forced either to pledge a piece of land (*rahan*) or to supply an amount of cereal, especially wheat. As a result of their usury they became one of the largest landowners in the area of Deir Alla.

Informants claimed that Salih was the first who brought three chain tractors to the area in the late 1930s to reclaim his and his brother's land. During the 1940s he began to hire the machines out to traditional leaders. The sheikhs repaid Salih either in cash or by giving him a piece of land.

The existence of credit can be traced back to the early part of the twentieth century. The interest rate in Jordan during the first half of the century was estimated to have ranged from 20-40% (Lanzendorfer 1985: 168). Early forms of credit were based on usury. Usury was the dominant form until the 1950s and still constitutes a considerable share of total agricultural credit. Unfortunately there are no data on the extent of usury in Deir Alla, but one can understand its influence in the area through the fact that the *Elias* accumulated thousands of dunums during the period 1930-1960. The acceleration of indebtedness throughout Jordan was rapid: in 1939, farmers' indebtedness was only LP 196,000, while by 1946 it had risen to LP 681,000 (Hourani 1978: 88), a rise of 347% in seven years.

Until the mid 1960s usury in the Jordan Valley worked as a mechanism for land transfer from *fellaheen* and their traditional leaders to the merchants (who were also moneylenders in the case of Deir Alla). For example, informants in Deir Alla claim that Salih and Yousif Khorshid came to Deir Alla from Salt early in the 1930s. At that time Hamad al-Mamduh and 'Bed Mohamed al-Mamduh were influential and powerful landlords in the area. The merchants were not able to penetrate without the protection of the local powerful landowners. By the end of the 1930s these merchants were lending money to the *Mamduh's* sheikhs, for several reasons, apart from supplying them with certain foodstuffs such as raisins and flour, and were lending them the machines they had brought in to reclaim their own newly acquired land. The *Mamduh* debts accumulated to such an extent that they were not able to repay them, so that usually a piece of land was given instead of repayment. This process of land transfer intensified during the mid-1940s and until the mid-1950s because the reclamation process expanded.

By the early 1950s the *Elias* became the most powerful persons in the area of Deir Alla to the extent that traditional leaders like the *Mamduh* became dependent on the *Elias*. From the late 1940s into the 1960s the *Elias* were lending to both clan leaders and to the Palestinian refugees when land reclamation began on a larger scale.

Therefore, merchant capital was the first factor to introduce certain changes into the area. Its effectiveness was strengthened with the influx of Palestinians into the area by the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s.

4.3 The Palestinian Exodus

As a result of the creation of the state of Israel a large number of Palestinians migrated to the East Bank of Jordan and concentrated in the Jordan Valley. The refugees had two alternatives, either to work as wage labourers in industry or to

engage in agriculture. Since the Jordanian industrial economy could not absorb so many refugees as wage labourers, they soon accommodated themselves in agriculture, mainly in the Jordan Valley. This had important consequences for land appropriation and reclamation.

Both the traditional and new (merchant) landowners used the refugees to reclaim land. As a result of this situation new production arrangements were established. Landlords gave unreclaimed plots of land to refugees who looked for work and who had some capital, in contrast to a large segment of local people who were landless and poor and who were working on the land as *Harrath*. New direct producers (who became sharecroppers or tenants) received either a third or one half of the production. They had to participate in the cost of the production process, most importantly in the cost of reclaiming the land. The production arrangement depended entirely on the amount of capital the prospective farmer (i.e. sharecropper or tenant) was able to supply. Therefore landowners in Deir Alla established new work conditions for those farmers who wished to have a piece of land to cultivate, namely sharecropping, which emerged as a result of the reclamation process. Since this process needs extensive labour power, both the landlords and the refugees hired the landless poor local people as wage labourers to participate in the reclamation. Only at that time did *Harrath* as a labour form began to lose its importance, until it finally disappeared at the end of the 1950s. Thus the 1950s marked the change of the *Harrath* labour form into the wage labour form. Therefore, a new set of relations of production emerged, destroying the old forms represented by the *Harrath*. Because of the landlords' need for cash, which could be found only among some of the refugees, new production arrangements appeared. These arrangements depended on the sharecropper's financial situation.

In this period the demand for machines and other means of reclamation increased. The area of Deir Alla witnessed the introduction of machines through three channels. Firstly, informants from Deir Alla claim that the people of the village of 'Basya on the West Bank used to bring their machines to Deir Alla for hire; they charged 600 fils for reclaiming one dunum. Secondly, according to the informants, Salih a1-Elias was the first who brought three 'chain tractors'. After he reclaimed his land, he began to hire his tractors to others (traditional leaders and later in the 1950s to Palestinian refugees). Thirdly, machines were introduced by the Deir Alla Agricultural Research Station, which was established in 1952 by American experts (of the 4th Point program).

4.4 USAID Involvement in the Jordan Valley

As a result of a food shortage due to population growth partly caused by political factors, namely the Palestinian exodus in 1948 and 1967, it became necessary to introduce new varieties of food products to overcome the shortages. The introduction of new varieties of food grains required the adoption of new technology characterized by industrial chemicals and machinery. This was the major aim of USAID in the Jordan Valley.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was established in 1961. It is a public institution, acting as an agency for the foreign economic aid activities of the US government. USAID is responsible for extending development loans repayable in dollars and tied to US commodities and services. The Agency's development assistance programmes consist of integrated project assistance (Salim 1983: 46-47).

USAID accorded a very high priority to the Jordan Valley. Its director took pride that "Jordan's record of development is unmatched anywhere in the world" and the American ambassador in Amman claimed, similarly, that "the Jordan Valley (is) one of the world's most successful programmes of integrated regional development" (Boeker 1988: 4-5).

Throughout the period 1952-1988 US foreign aid (the 4th Point, IBRD, and USAID) provided approximately 1.7 billion dollars as economic assistance to Jordan in general and 773 million dollars to the Jordan Valley (Boeker 1988: 5). This came in the form of grants, loans, and technical assistance. Unfortunately there are no exact figures about the share of this assistance going to the Jordan Valley. But one can derive a general idea of the massive involvement of these agencies in the Valley from table 15 which lists USAID supported projects.

Generally speaking, US economic assistance to the Jordan Valley followed two strategies: firstly, from the mid-1950s until the mid-1970s, economic assistance was given in the form of large capital-intensive public projects, such as the East Ghor Canal Project, the land reform, dams, roads, etc. Secondly, in the mid-1970s a strategy to assist small farmers and villages was adopted.

A. First Strategy

The Jordan Valley first saw American involvement under the 4th Point programme in 1952.¹ The first stage of the programme was the establishment of Deir Alla Agricultural Research Station on an area of 400 dunum, later extended to 1200 dunums, on the land of Hamad al-Mamduh.² This station consisted basically of soil, fruit and vegetable experimental laboratories. In 1953 a team from the IBRD came to Jordan and made an intensive survey of the whole economy. On the basis of this survey they made a number of policy recommendations, the most important of which was the development of the Jordan Valley (IRBRD 1957).

They initially determined how much water would be needed to irrigate the Valley and made plans for the improvement of the area's water infrastructure. The plan was completed in 1955 and construction began in 1959 on the first 69 kilometres of the East Ghor Canal. The cost of this project was \$12 million, to which USAID contributed \$9 million as a loan (Boeker 1988: 10). The project irrigates 124,000 dunums. In 1963 USAID funded the largest dam in the world below sea level, the Wadi Ziglab Dam with a \$2 million grant (Boeker 1988: 17).

1 The name derived from the fourth points President Truman made in his 1949 inaugural address in which he discussed the need for American technical assistance to developing countries (Boeker 1988: 20).

2 There is an on-going dispute between Hamad al-Mamduh and the Ministry of Agriculture. Hamad is demanding higher compensation for the land taken.

In 1973 USAID lent the government \$10 million to construct an 18 kilometre extension of the East Ghor Canal that irrigates about 33,000 dunums (Boeker 1988: 12). In 1976 USAID funded the Zarqa Triangle Irrigation Project which draws water from the King Talal Dam to irrigate about 90,000 dunums (Boeker 1988: 12). In 1977 USAID provided a \$6.42 million grant to assist the JVA in irrigation management through the Technical Assistance Irrigation Management Training Program.

In 1975 USAID contributed \$29.15 million to building up the Jordan Valley infrastructure, such as upgrading and extending the main 105 kilometre road from the north to the Dead Sea, separate roads from each of 36 the villages to the main highway, 70 new schools, 16 new hospitals and health care centres, commercial centres, housing, a telephone system, and 14 government administration offices (Boeker 1988: 12).

In 1962 the Agency supported the land reform programme in the Valley in which land was redistributed in units which could be effectively irrigated, and determined the size of such units to be 30-40 dunums.

B. Second strategy

After establishing the basic Valley infrastructure, USAID geared its strategy to small farmers. In 1978 it provided \$1.4 million to establish the Jordan Valley Farmers Association (JVFA) (Boeker 1988: 24). The basic aim of the JVFA was the supply of basic production inputs (e.g. seeds and chemicals) and credit facilities (in cash or kind) to small farmers. Then in 1980 USAID contributed a \$6.42 million grant for developing the Agricultural Research Center at Deir Alla. In 1986 the centre examined over 800 soil samples brought in by local farmers aiming to help them to benefit from its other services (Boeker 1988: 25).

The reason behind this change in strategy was that the condition of the majority of small farmers (mainly tenants) had deteriorated rather than improved; this because of indebtedness. Actually there was a general tendency with many farmers in the Deir Alla area, especially in basin no. 23, to return to cereal production using natural animal fertilizers rather than chemical ones. As result USAID began in the late 1970s to change its strategy in order to attract the small farmers and tried to tie them to the land they were cultivating through supplying credit facilities (in cash or kind) under very favourable conditions. This was meant to be the role of the JVFA but (as we will see later in this chapter) the latter had become more or less paralyzed, simply because it could not compete in the existing agrarian structure of the Valley, since it was not subsidized by the government as was the case with the other credit institutions.

4.5 Credit Mechanisms

It is difficult to understand the credit system in Jordan separate from the socio-economic conditions existing in the agricultural sector as a whole. The credit system went through two stages: non-institutional and institutional sources of credits. Each type emerged in a certain historical period reflecting certain socio-

economic needs. The non-institutional source that could be traced as usury was discussed previously. The following is an attempt to trace the transition process from the first to the second, followed by a discussion of the periodization, reasons and consequences of the second source.

4.5.1 The Transition in Credit Sources

In the 1950s a new type of credit emerged in the form of government and private credit agents, but usury remained the most powerful form, constituting 59.5% of the total credits in 1955, while others like the Agricultural Bank, Cooperatives and government loans and aid constituted only 40.5% of the total credits (see table 4). This enormous change in the nature/source of credits is due to many interrelated reasons (the local, regional, and international factors that were discussed earlier). Until this stage the fact that credits were in terms of basic usury, had had certain effects. First was the rise of a new group of landowners who were basically merchants. Second was that of helping the new Palestinian migrants to settle in the Jordan Valley (Mahadeen 1981: 82). The third effect was the fact that the burden of reclamation and development could be divided between landowners and tenants. But because such non-institutional sources (private and personal) were unable to meet the financial requirements of agricultural development, and because the merchants-turned-landowners were charging very high interest rates, creating a heavy burden that people could not bear, and also because credits for machinery were too risky for such personal and private channels (Lanzendorfer 1985: 170), these sources began to dry up by the end of the 1950s, while other institutional sources of credits emerged.

Lanzendorfer (1985: 76) argued that the most important increase in agricultural mechanization in Jordan occurred between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s; the main cause of this increase was the agricultural development in the Jordan Valley (see table 6). Most farmers did not have the cash to share the cost of the development process with the state, and they were not familiar with the idea of personal capital investment and producing for the market. This was as a result of their traditional self-sustaining economy. The role of the international agencies was, mainly, to spread credits among all types of farmers in the Valley in order to tie them to production for the market. That is why in the 1960s certain private and parastatal governmental agencies emerged and the goal of the international agencies (USAID and IBRD) was finally achieved, as Khori (1981) argued that farmers of the Jordan Valley have shown they are willing to spend money and take risks.

4.5.2 Institutional Sources of Credit

Recently, in the Jordan Valley most of the commercially oriented production organizations have become increasingly credit dependent. The following institutions affected in this respect the majority of the farmers in the Valley:

commercial banks, the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC), the Jordan Cooperatives Organization (JCO), which was established in the 1960s, and the Jordan Valley Farmers Association (JVFA), established in 1978.

Commercial banks

In the 1980s commercial banks were increasingly incorporated in the agricultural sector and became the powerful source of credit. In 1983, the loans of the commercial banks formed approximately 85% of the total loans in respect to the other sources of credits (see tables 7 and 9).

Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC)

On the first of August 1960 the Agricultural Bank, the Construction Council and the Agricultural Cooperative Societies were amalgamated to form the ACC (Fanik 1970: 50). The board of the ACC was composed of four government representatives and four well-known big landowners (Mahadeen 1981: 87). The ACC's sources of finance are mainly the Central Bank of Jordan and international agencies such as the IDA (International Development Agency) (Fanik 1970: 50). The ACC issues three types of loan: seasonal loans (maximum duration twelve months), medium loans (maximum duration ten years), and long-term loans (maximum duration twenty years).

In the 1960s the ACC was the most powerful source of agricultural credits, replacing usury. Its share formed approximately 56.6% of the total credit, while usury accounted for about 18.8% of the total (table 8 shows the relative importance of the ACC). The ACC has continued to be one of the most powerful agricultural agencies, (table 9 shows the relative importance of the ACC, JCO and JVFA); its share of credits in 1985 was about 80% in respect to both the JCO and the JVFA.

The ACC specializes in medium-term loans as we can see from the distribution of its loans outlined in table 10. As for the interest rate charged by the ACC, it has been increased mainly for seasonal loans (loans that are usually taken by small farmers): it was 4% in 1960 rising to 6% in 1967 (Fanik 1970: 52) and then to 8% in 1979 (table 10). Medium-term loans account for the largest number. Such loans were given mainly for irrigation projects, especially for planting fruit trees, and for poultry farms (Lanzendorfer 1985: 172). From table 9, one sees that medium-term loans formed 67.1% of the total. This indicates that ACC loans are mainly directed to the wealthy landowners, because poor farmers (sharecroppers, labourers, and small landowners) do not have fruit trees or poultry farms. Another indication of credit inequality are the ACC's credit securities and guarantees that are mainly in terms of non-movable property plus financial security (Regional Union for Finance 1981: 23). In addition, loans should not exceed 60% of credit insurance in the case of medium and long-term loans, and 75% in the case of seasonal loans (Mahadeen 1981: 87).

These conditions indicate that only those who own substantial non-movable property (usually land and buildings) are the real beneficiaries from such institutions.

Jordan Cooperative organization (JCO)

The cooperative movement in Jordan began in 1952. The Jordan Cooperative Organization (JCO) is an agency representing all cooperative societies in the country. It was established according to the Cooperative Temporary Law in 1968 (JCO 1978: 21). The Cooperative Bank is the most important department of JCO. The Bank gives loans to cooperative societies at an interest rate of 2%, while the cooperative societies give loans to their members at a rate of 7%. The board of JCO comprises twenty members: ten government representatives and ten big landowners and agricultural merchants.³

The JCO gives three types of loans, seasonal, medium- and long-term. Table 11 shows the loans, their distribution and percentage as regards Jordan Valley farmers. It shows that the JCO concentrates on seasonal loans and that the percentage of loans given to Jordan Valley farmers for certain years (1979 and 1981) was 40% and 51% respectively. This indicates that the Jordan Valley consumed a large portion of the JCO's credits further indicating that a large portion of the Valley's farmers are dependent on credits. Farmers tried to produce as much as they could for the market in an attempt to cover their loans. In other words, indebtedness forced them to rely on the market.

4.5.3 *The Debt Trap*

Farmers became dependent on credits and at the same time on the market that they needed in order to raise enough cash to pay back the loans and to save enough for the next season. But small farmers became unable to repay the loans and interest charges because of a number of factors:

- A. The national market is subjected not only to internal forces, such as supply and demand, but also to external factors, such as the absorption by regional Arab markets of Jordanian agricultural products. In Jordan, demand is low relative to the increasing rates of supply. Abroad, competition of Jordanian products with those of Greece and Turkey in the regional Arab markets such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria is intense. Because of the high cost of production of Jordanian products, the Jordanian prices are higher than the general price determined by supply and demand in the export market.
- B. Through extra-economic factors big landowners acquire the privilege of imposing their products on the local market and of marketing their products in other Arab markets.
- C. The existence of such a variety of credit sources, which include the ACC, JCO, JVFA, and the commissioners who dominate the agricultural markets, has had its effect on the debt trap in which farmers find themselves. As for

3 Information from the officials of the JCO.

the first three sources the rule is that if, for example, the ACC gives a loan to a farmer, which the latter is unable to repay due to production and/or marketing problems, he should not get another loan from the ACC until the first loan is repaid. But this farmer can get another loan from another credit source as for instance the JCO; if the same happens here, he will still be able to go to the commissioners in the central markets. The latter will agree to give loans to indebted farmers, and not only to those indebted to the other sources of credit but even to those farmers indebted to the commissioners themselves. The reason behind this policy towards regular client producers is to gain control of the supply of vegetables and hence of prices.

In 1986 farmers of the Jordan Valley complained, asking the government to provide solutions for their inability to pay back the loans to the various credit sources. The government responded by giving orders to the ACC and JCO to reconsider the schedule for paying back the long and medium term loans and their interest for more than five years from the date at which repayment was due (al-Ra'i 1/10/1986 and al-Dustur 1/5/1986) .

But this government procedure did not address the needs of the small farmers, simply because their loans are seasonal. The government also asked the ACC to reduce loan interest to 6% for loans of not more than JD 1,000, 7% for loans of less than JD 5,000, 7.5% for loans of less than JD 10,000, and 8% for loans of less than JD 20,000 (al-Sha'b 20/8/1986). In this regard the government also decided to pay the interest on medium term loans given to the farmers, which was reckoned to be JD 1,241,933. This was on the condition that farmers would pay the loans due (al-Sha'b 17/5/1986).

In contrast to the other credit institutions the government measures did not cover the Jordan Valley Farmers Association (JVFA). The board of the JVFA was composed of ten big landowners headed by 'Adil Shamayleh, and five government representatives (information from members of the JVFA who are residents in the Deir Alla area). The JVFA specialized in seasonal loans for farmers of the Jordan Valley.

At present this association is unable to provide most of the services formerly provided to its members. These services include supplying credits with low interest and providing the basic production inputs. This situation has arisen because members were unable to pay back loans to the JVFA, and since the latter was not covered by the government procedures outlined above, the Association became ineffective. Statistics show that the percentage of loan repayment in 1985 was only 16%, which means that the JVFA and its members are in a worse condition, and this problem has not yet been solved.⁴ One of the farmers said to me:

“We do not know what to do. Shall we pay back the loans to the individuals, the ACC, JCO, the commissioners in al-Hesbeh (central agricultural markets) or look after our families [...] we should claim the rescheduling of our loans, at least the government loans (the JCO and ACC loans). Otherwise we will quit agriculture.”

4 See al-Sha'b 13/5/86, 25/9/86, 17/5/86, 18/1/86 and al-Ra'i 14/12/86.

In the light of these problems of credit and marketing, both problems that are common to the whole Valley, the government introduced a policy to control the vegetable production of the Jordan Valley, called *a1-Namat al-Zera'y*, and another policy to process the surplus of certain vegetables through the fostering of Agro-Industry.

4.6 Government Agricultural Policies

4.6.1 *Al-Namat al-Zera'y*

This is a government policy based on determination of the type, quality and quantity of production through controlling the planted area. It is accompanied by certain sanctions to enforce the government's prescriptions (the description of this policy is based on information from officials at the Ministry of Agriculture, the JVFA, and other individuals at the cooperative societies and on reports in *a1-Ra'i* newspaper 14/12/86):

- A. Any farmer who does not follow the instructions (either planting more land or planting different vegetables) will pay a penalty varying from JD 1-3 per dunum.⁵ Also he will be prevented from marketing his products through the Government Agricultural Association (AMA). Moreover, he has to pay a higher price for irrigation water, varying from 1.5-15 fils per cubic liter for four months.
- B. Those who follow the instructions will be paid JD 10-15 per dunum on condition that the government will not be responsible for marketing their products or vice versa.

4.6.2 *Agro-Industry*

Committees from the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Trade, and from the JVFA, ACO, and the Jordan Company for Marketing assembled in December 1985 and agreed upon establishing an agricultural-industrial center (*al-Sha'b* 14/12/85). The government aimed to process the agricultural surplus, and to reduce imports of agro-industrial products, which cost JD 27 million in 1984; the trade deficit for such products being JD 19 million for the same year (Industrial Development Bank 1988).

With such policies the government aimed to control production and to overcome the market crisis, which is basically caused by over-production, i.e. market suffocation. A clear example of this over-production was the Jordan Valley tomato crop of 1983-84, which had to be destroyed, but the government still had to compensate the farmers. The government built a tomato paste factory; the raw material was passed to this factory through the Agricultural Marketing Company.

5 The money penalty was originally JD 25-50 per dunum, but it has been reduced because a large number of farmers who were liable were big landowners.

The inability of the local market to absorb the agricultural surplus started to become apparent at the beginning of the 1980s and reached its most acute level by 1984 and after. Another indication of this problem was, as we have argued earlier, the inability of small farmers to repay their credits.

Therefore, one has to ask, to what extent have such policies, mainly *al-Namat al-Zera'iy*, succeeded in fulfilling their aims?

I believe that not only have the policies failed, but that they have actually become a burden on the government because of the financial aid given to the farmers who follow its guidelines. Over-production is still marked in the agricultural sector in general and in the Jordan Valley in particular.

The main reason for the failure of the policies is that big landowners contravened the government's instructions (al-Sha'b 13/5/86). According to an official informant in the Ministry of Agriculture the area that was planted in contravention of the policy in 1985 was 7,000 dunums in the Jordan Valley; one farmer alone had 2,200 dunums planted with tomatoes, comprising 31% of the total illegal area. According to the law this person should have paid approximately JD 5,000 in penalties, but instead he paid approximately JD 2,000. Because there were many cases like this, the government changed the penalties from JD 25-50 to JD 1-5 per dunum. Moreover, in the above case the tomatoes were marketed by the AMA, again in contravention of the law that stipulates that those who do not follow the guidelines will not be able to market their products; it seems that such penalties are enforced only against small producers.

4.7 Jordan Valley Authority (JVA)

According to the land reform programmes of the 1960s the state, represented by the JVA, controls the lands of the Valley that are irrigated by the East Ghor Canal, as well as the water resources; thus, the state is the effective owner of both land and water in the Valley.

The JVA is a government organization established according to USAID recommendations. Involved as it is in the economic and social life of the population it has played and continues to play a major role in the shaping of the present structure of the Valley. The JVA helped in the transfer of the farmers from their land to work as salaried employees.

It was decided in summer 1985 not to give any water for purposes of irrigation to farmers because the water level became too low. But farmers were obliged to cultivate their land simply for subsistence and in order to pay back (if this were possible) part of their debts. A group of farmers from the Deir Alla area went to the JVA to solve the problem, but without success. In consequence, those farmers assembled and went to Prince Hassan to explain the situation to him. A solution was suggested, farmers were permitted to plant some crops that do not need much water such as onions and *mulukhyeh*. As a result of this a large amount of these crops were marketed causing a reduction in prices.

This incident illustrates that a major problem facing the farmers of the Valley is that there is no cooperation between the JVA and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry, when it assigns certain crops to be planted, should inform the JVA so that the latter could supply the necessary amount of water, but this is not the case and the only victims are the farmers. In addition, the JVA raised the water price in the summer of 1985 from 850 to 950 fils for four hours per week irrigation. The situation was aggravated by the fact that there has been irregular water flow since 1984-85 due to JVA plans to increase the area under irrigation, mainly in the Southern Ghor (see table 13).

4.8 Conclusion

It is obvious that the development that has taken place in the Jordan Valley was an outcome of three main factors. The local factor is represented by the merchants who became the new landowners in the area starting from the early 1930s. The regional factor is represented by the Palestinian exodus starting in 1948. Finally, the state asked the help of the US government in solving the population problem, and accordingly both state and US economic aid programs started in 1952 and greatly accelerated the development process in the Valley. The major aims of this development were:

1. To resettle the Palestinian refugees of 1948 and 1967 in the Valley.
2. To break down subsistence farming and introduce new marketable crops in order to cope with population expansion.
3. To provide a better market and credit access to farmers.

The first aim has been discussed fully in this and in the previous chapter. The logic behind the second and third aims is that the introduction of new technology and new varieties of food products (mainly vegetables and citrus fruits) would force the majority of the farmers to produce basically for the market. In order to plant the new varieties farmers had to purchase chemicals as inputs, thus increasing the fixed production cost (this point is discussed in the cost/benefit analysis in the next chapter). Due to the increasing difficulty of covering these rising costs the majority of small farmers became so deeply involved in the credit system that they were at the mercy of the creditors.

The integrated regional development project in the Jordan Valley destroyed the old and led to the emergence of new commercialized relations of production. This process was greatly stimulated by the USAID programmes, which brought development to the area. These programmes favoured certain social groups and were disastrous for others. In the Deir Alla area, big farmers of the mechanized farms, farmers on owner-family farms, and the merchants and middlemen (the commissioners) are the groups which benefited from such integrated regional development, while the small farmers, particularly tenants and some sharecroppers, suffered.

The Social Organizations of Production

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the different types of social organization of production that at present coexist in basin no. 23. Sharecropping, tenancy, owner-family labour, big mechanized farms, and wage labour are the main forms found and each type is represented by a case study from the basin. Each study is representative of many similar cases and includes a cost/benefit analysis.¹

The analyses are presented for three reasons. Firstly, they represent particular task performance by wage, family labour from within the household, and kin labour from related households during farming practices. Secondly, they can be used to show how these different types of labour forms function in the overall agricultural sector. Thirdly, I wish to show how such forms possess certain production strategies in order to manage and adapt themselves to the present commercialized agrarian structure. In the discussion of those forms, merchants as a social group have to be brought into the analysis of the agrarian structure of the area, to examine not only the labour process inside the production unit but the relations of such units to the market. Merchants in this analysis are dealt with as a social group, which contrasts with the way in which other social groups are represented in this work within the social organization of production.

5.2 The Organization of Wage Labour

Wage labour has become a widespread form of labour throughout the agricultural sector in Jordan, and particularly in the Jordan Valley, because of its highly mechanized and intensive market-oriented agriculture. According to the agricultural census of the Jordan Valley in 1978 there were 1,999 permanent wage labourers and 23,425 daily wage labourers (Department of Statistics 1981). This number constitutes approximately 38% of the total labour force in the agricultural sector in Jordan (Department of Statistics 1983: 89). In 1973 only 19,927 wage labourers were working in the Jordan Valley (Department of Statistics 1973). This means that the use of wage labour from 1973-1978 has increased by 27.5%. But, because of the vegetable production crisis (mentioned earlier) in the Jordan Valley, Lanzendorfer (1985: 204) in his farming unit survey stated that more than 30% declared that they had more family labour involved in the holding than they had

1 Data on cost/benefit were gathered through a series of structured interviews.

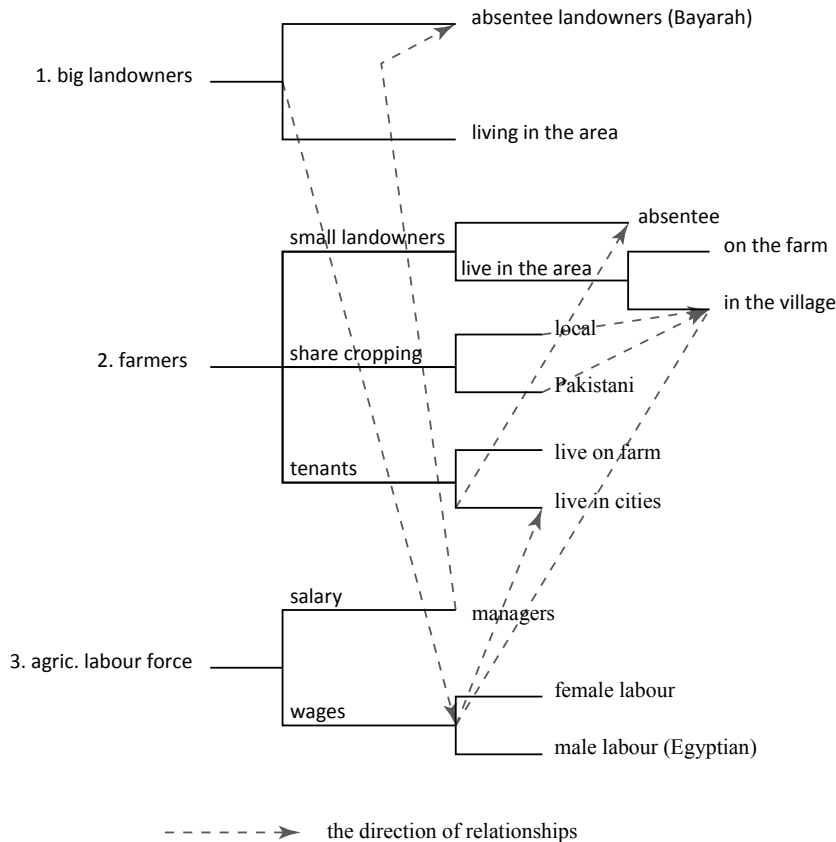


Fig 2 The structure of agricultural production in the Deir Alla area in 1986.

had five years previously. One of the main issues here is that wage labour forms a large portion of the total production cost for many of the different production organizations presented in the cost/benefit tables.

This part is divided into two: the female local wage labour organization, and the Arab migrant wage labour organization.

5.2.1 Female Wage Labour

Male wage labour from the local population has almost disappeared in the Deir Alla area. Firstly, many men have left either to join the army or to take up government administrative positions. "It is more secure than work in agriculture" some of the locals said. Secondly, education has helped in the migration of labourers to the cities and in the securing of work in the government bureaucracy. The JVA and the Deir Alla Agricultural Research Station have also absorbed many men from the area as employees. Therefore the cost of male wage labour is high, as will appear in the cost and benefit analyses. Farmers prefer female wage labour for a number of reasons:

- A. Females accept half of the wages that males earn. Their average wage/hour is 300 fils, while it is 500 fils for males.
- B. Since farmers and female labourers are living in the area, wages are not paid daily as has recently happened with the male Egyptian labourers. Farmers said: "A female can wait", i.e. because of her known place of residence she can be given her wages any time after the end of the season.
- C. Because they are known personally, resident females are a guaranteed labour force. In other words, the female market place is known to the farmers.
- D. Farmers claimed "Females are suitable for certain work, such as the process of picking, because this process needs more care than males take."
- E. "Women do not raise their heads until the job is done", is the stated opinion of the majority of farmers. This means that female workers work better and harder than male labourers.

The employment of female labour is done in two ways: through personal contacts between the farmer and working women in their villages, or through well known women who act as brokers. I met one of these women who is well-known in the Deir Alla area:

CASE STUDY NO. 1

Fatima is 33 years old, a widow, and a mother of 4 children. She lives with her parents in Deir Alla. Fatima is well known throughout the Deir Alla area, especially in Sawalha town. She is a woman who everybody respects, whether the farmers of the area, or the poor families living in the area who let their females work as wage labourers. Fatima herself started as an agricultural wage labourer and worked on different farms, not only in the area of Deir Alla.

The following is an account of how she established her position as a broker: Fatima's job is only keeping an eye on the female workers and any male around, she does not work with her hands unless she volunteers to work instead of an exhausted worker. She recalled that once when she was working with a number of females on a farm, she noticed that the owner of the farm behaved provocatively towards some of the females. She gave orders to the workers to stop working and demanded her own and her friends' wages for the previous working days as well as the wages of a complete working day, although they had as yet worked only one hour that day. She hit the owner and announced in the village and the area around that he was a bad man. As a result nobody would work with him or allow his females to work with him. Finally, he gave her all their money. That is why Fatima is very respected mainly by the poor families that permit their females to work.

She also recalled an occasion on which two black persons were looking for her in the village. They told her that they worked for a big landowner in his highly mechanized farm south of the Deir Alla area. They had come to ask Fatima to provide thirty female labourers. She accepted after they had agreed on the conditions of the work (the nature of the work, its period, the hours of work per day, and the wage per hour). They asked for the labourers to be ready for work

early next day. That same night she went to the families that permit their females to work. She went first to her relatives, then to the neighbouring families and then to other families in the village. She said:

“When we entered the farm we counted 60-70 female labourers [...] from the local areas, and Pakistanis and Indians [...] they work with their husbands who are permanent workers.”

Fatima claims that on this farm men were paid monthly salaries while the women got daily wages for a specified period. Females got 450 fils/hour, while males got JD 80/month.

“There were many machines in the section where we worked [...] there were two machines, one makes a hole in the land, the other places the seed or the transplant [...] our job is only to pick the fruit and place it into different-sized boxes with ‘For export’ written on them.”

In the absence of an official female labour organization it is obvious that the agrarian structure of the area has thrown up a certain form of female labour organization that regulates, organizes and safeguards the female labourers' rights. This organization is more effective than the institutionalized male labour organizations. As we have seen in this case, women workers' problems are tackled directly by Fatima, who is practically the leader of the female labourers in the Deir Alla area. This has engendered a high degree of personal loyalty among the female labourers. This loyalty strengthened Fatima's position in safeguarding the labourers' rights, especially in the light of the importance of female labour to the farmers. That is to say, since female labour is important and since all female labourers obey Fatima's orders this type of organization is successful and effective.

5.2.2 Arab Migrant Wage Labour Organization

As I have argued earlier, in Deir Alla male wage labour means migrant wage labour, more specifically Egyptian migrant wage labour.

There are no specific market places where Egyptians can gather to offer their labour power. In the cities Egyptian workers usually gather around or in front of certain well-known places such as the large mosques, for instance the Husain Mosque in Amman or the Irbid Mosque in Irbid. In the Deir Alla area the process of meeting the supply and demand of labour is performed through personal channels and in an unorganized way. Sometimes four to eight Egyptian workers live in one house or room in the town or village (Deir Alla, Derar or Sawalha) so that they are known to any person who needs workers. There is also another way of supplying the labour power: one of the common scenes in the area is a number of workers walking slowly between fields holding their tools such as axes and shovels, actually 'looking for work'.

CASE STUDY NO. 2

Sa'id is originally from the Bouhairi area in Egypt. He is 31 years old, married and has four children. He comes from a *fellah* family. He first came to Jordan in 1982, when he worked as wage labourer in construction in Salt and stayed there for about eleven months. Then he returned to Egypt for four months. He claims that a lot of Egyptian workers leave Jordan for Egypt during the winter season, because private economic activities then slacken off. He had spent most of his savings on traveling to Egypt and then heard from some of his friends that he could find work in winter or summer in the Jordan Valley. Therefore he and four of his Egyptian friends went to the Jordan Valley to work as seasonal part-time agricultural wage labourers. First they worked in North Shuneh, then he moved to Deir Alla in the winter season of 1985. By the time of the interview he shared a room in Deir Alla village with four other Egyptians.

He does any work that he can find in the area, not only agricultural work. The only way of offering his labour is by walking past the farms hoping for somebody to call. Sa'id passes through the fields at particular periods because he has enough knowledge about the timing of the agricultural processes and practices that need labour power, such as weeding, picking, furrowing, etc. to know when he is most likely to be hired. Concerning wages, Sa'id claimed that he used to get wages (before 1985) after the period of labour finished, usually after the end of the season (when the farmers market their product), but now he will not accept any delay in the payment of his wages. In response to an enquiry about the reasons that made him change his practice Sa'id said:

"Many farmers do not have money after they market their product [...] or at least they tell us that they do not have the money [...] and usually they do not give us our money [...] therefore I try to get my wages daily after the end of the agreed hours/day".

Sa'id claimed that he earns an average of JD 20/month, because sometimes he earns more than JD 40 and sometimes not more than JD 10. He usually sends at least JD 15/month to his wife and children in Egypt.

One of the major conclusions to be drawn from this case study is the tendency of the recent agrarian structure in the area to create a kind of bonded wage labour. Egyptian labourers are forced to continue working for their employers at least for one season in the hope of being paid eventually. But because labourers are not permanently resident in the Valley or even in Jordan (they are not specialized labourers, the same labourer can work in any available activity in any part of Jordan or outside of Jordan) this exploitative relationship is not stable, and the area of study has recently begun to experience disputes between the farmers and the Egyptian workers. Such disputes remain at the individual level and have not crystallized in the form of a general contradiction between farmers as a group and the Egyptian labourers.

5.3 Absentee-Tenancy: Sharecropping-Tenancy Relations

The emergence of new production relations in the area is a direct result of the general commoditization of society in Jordan and the Jordan Valley. In rural areas, agriculture has become a business. People with no agricultural background, with a limited amount of capital and without land became interested in agriculture in the Jordan Valley as an enterprise. On the other hand, there is a group of people who own land in the Valley and who live in the cities and do not cultivate their land but only rent it out. The first group of people rent the land from the absentee landowners for an annual fixed amount. But since this group of people are living outside the Valley they can be considered as absentee tenants. In this type of arrangement all production processes are maintained through the use of wage labour. Since the cost of wage labour is high to an extent that the absentee tenants with their limited capital are not able to bear, such absentee tenants have thought of the possibility of the wage labourers sharing the overall production costs, bearing in mind that Egyptian wage labourers, who are generally from a peasant background, are seasonal labourers without any security. This situation has led to a new production arrangement. In the area of study I have noticed such organization where the labourers converted to being sharecroppers in the same plot of land in which they used to work for wages. The resulting new production relations could be called sharecropping-tenancy.

CASE STUDY NO. 3

Ahmed is employed as a worker at the agricultural station of the University of Jordan and lives with his family in Amman. He hired a plot of land (one agricultural unit of thirty dunums) in 1983 from a colleague at the station at an annual rent of JD 1000. He wanted to make agriculture an additional source of income or even wealth; agriculture is a business for Ahmed rather than a way of life. He started using Egyptians as wage labourers in all the agricultural processes that are needed for vegetable production.

In 1983-84 he found that his profit was only JD 250, which was much less than he expected. This result was disappointing and he thought of alternatives to increase his profits. The chance seemed to come to him when two of the Egyptian labourers working for him in the preceding season suggested that they share the capital and labour inputs with him according to certain conditions. The rent would be divided equally between them and Ahmed. The cost of wage labour would be the responsibility of the Egyptians. Fertilizers, pesticides, packing material and transportation costs would be divided equally between the two parties, while water, commission and fees to enter the central markets should be paid by Ahmed. In return, the profits would be divided equally.

Both parties expected certain benefits from this partnership. Ahmed wanted to lessen the burden of the total production cost through decreasing the cost of wage labour and fertilizers. The Egyptians aimed to find more stable work that would be more profitable than their seasonal wage labour.

Agricultural processes	Cost of Processes & material / JD	No. of processes	Total costs JD	Notes
Ploughing	1.00	2	2.00	The first ploughing is in the beginning of June, the second after one month.
Furrowing	0.70	2	1.40	Furrowing is done immediately after the second ploughing.
Seeds:	0.5 (17.00)	1	8.50	People use approximately 0.5kg of seed for one dunum. Ahmed used wage labour in all the preceding processes. Also the Egyptians quit in this season.
Seeding:	8 (0.350)	1	2.80	
Fertilizer:				
(مغك) بلكرم دامس	40 (0.13)	1	5.20	
تافسوف ربوس	80 (0.07)	1	5.60	
تايونوالا تافلّم	25 (0.13)	2	7.15	
Wage labour	6 (0.45)	1	2.70	
Irrigation:				
Water	80 (0.003)	5	1.20	
Wage labour	5 (0.500)	5	2.50	
Weeding	12 (0.500)	3	18.00	
Pesticide Sprinkling:				
(م ³) سبوس	150 (0.010)	3	4.500	
(م ³) روميروب	47 (0.010)	1	0.470	
(م ³) تلان	100 (0.010)	3	3.000	
(مغك) نيئلانور	0.10 (7.15)	1	0.715	
Wage labour	0.500	8	4.000	
Harvest:				
Sacks	28 (0.085)	4	9.52	He used female wage labour for picking, the average cost of their wage labour is 0.35 / hour.
Picking	8 (0.350)	4	11.20	
Total Production	23000 kg			
Transportation	14.00	4	56.00	
Marketing:		24.00		
Fees Commission				Commission is 5 % of the total value of the marketed produce. The AMA refused to market Ahmed's production. The approximate cost of marketing is JD 24.
Credit		16.00		If we consider the JD 1000 loan he got, and if we divide this loan over two seasons JD 500 to each season, the cost of one dunum from this loan is 500/30 = JD 16.66.
Total Costs			185.60	

Table 1 Cost / benefit analysis for one dunum of cucumber in surface farming in the case of absentee tenancy production organization (in summer 1986). There was a problem of relating the different prices to different amounts of marketed produce, which made it difficult to have an average price with which one could determine the total value of production. What is important is that Ahmed claimed that he did not cover the total cost of production of the thirty dunums planted with different vegetables.

Their partnership proved to be mutually beneficial, because both parties received higher profits in 1984-85 than during the previous year. Therefore, they agreed to continue their partnership under the previous conditions.

In May 1985 Ahmed obtained a seasonal loan of JD 1000 from an agricultural cooperative society to pay his rent. The year 1985 was very bad for both parties, especially the winter season. As they did not follow the instructions of the

Ministry of Agriculture's *al-Namat al-Zera'iy* policy, they had to pay a penalty of approximately JD 85. In addition the AMA refused to market their production. This situation led Ahmed to sell part of the fifteen dunums' production of cucumber to wholesale merchants at a very low price. To make matters worse he was unable to sell the remaining produce from three dunums of cucumber and ten dunums of *mulukhyah*, all of which had to be destroyed. To see the whole agricultural unit or part of it fail is a common phenomenon in the area. This results either from inability to market the production or from the unsuitability of the seed for the land and climate of the area.

Neither party covered its total costs of the production. The Egyptians refused to continue the partnership, preferring to revert to being seasonal wage labourers because they found it safer and more profitable.

In May 1986 the loan had to be repaid, but Ahmed had lost his cash in the previous years and he could not provide the money. But the cooperative society demanded the loan three times, then sent him an official written warning but he still could not repay the loan. The cooperative society warned Ahmed's guarantor, who finally paid the loan and Ahmed became indebted to his guarantor. At this point Ahmed quit agriculture saying: "Agriculture is no longer a profitable business".

The destructive elements of this type of organization are situated in its total dependence on the market for land, capital and labour inputs. Ahmed's attempt to decrease the cost of production through divesting himself of the costs of wage labour by bringing in the Egyptians as sharecroppers was not sufficient to succeed. In part this was because both the Egyptians were single. They could not rely on family labour, which in turn forced them back into reliance on wage labour for the intensive processes such as sowing and picking.

The table below is an account of the cost/benefit analysis illustrating the farming and labour practices. Out of the total cost, the capital inputs (here, besides the industrial inputs, I have included credit as the cost of using the land and also water) amount to 35%, wage labour to 22%, whereas marketing took the largest share of the cost, 43%. The analysis of these figures can be understood from several viewpoints. Firstly, land preparation is performed through machinery (which is the case in all types of production organizations). Secondly, a huge amount of fertilizers and pesticides is used. This point demonstrates the fact that imported food grains cannot fit into the climatic and ecological features of the area without the use of a huge amount of imported pesticides and fertilizers. This evidence demonstrates clearly the real mechanisms through which the individual farmer is linked to the national market, and the dependence in turn of the agrarian structure on the world market. Thirdly, note the specialization through wage labourers based on sex. Females specialize in the processes that do not need an extensive physical effort such as seeding and picking, while male labourers specialize in those processes requiring more physical strength such as pesticide sprinkling, where it is necessary to carry a fuel pump on the shoulder and back, and also irrigation and weeding. Fourthly, the figure for marketing shows the reliance of tenancy on this process. Since Ahmed's failure was mainly a marketing

failure one could argue that the entire process of production is dependent on markets both for acquisition of inputs and marketing of outputs. In other words, it is subjugated and dominated by the groups of merchants and commissioners.

There was a problem of relating the different prices with different amounts of marketed production, therefore it was difficult to have an average price with which one could determine the total value of production. What is important is that Ahmed claimed that he did not cover the total cost of production of the thirty dunums planted with different vegetables.

5.4 Small Owner Intensive-Capital Organization

With the expansion of agricultural commercialization in the area, elements of the production process became more material advanced. As a result of adopting a highly mechanized and a highly labour intensive strategy, farmers of this type of organization are involved in an array of money payments (either through interest or/and cash payments for the available labour and capital inputs). The individual is the operational unit for management, while wage labour is the unit for production.

CASE STUDY NO. 4

‘Omar is 36 years old and unmarried. His father died in 1978 and he inherited a house in Tell al-Rabe’, located in basin no. 23, and also he inherited an agricultural unit near the tell. He graduated with a diploma from Damascus in 1973. He worked in one of the cooperatives in the Deir Alla area, and he used to help his father on his farm. In 1979 he bought four greenhouses. He soon earned enough to buy another two greenhouses in 1982, to expand the construction of his house in the village and to construct three shops, two of which were rented to a cooperative society, the third to a shopkeeper. From this he earned JD 85/month. Each greenhouse takes up an area of approximately 800 square meters, the remaining 28.5 dunums are cultivated with vegetables by using surface irrigation, while in the greenhouses he uses drip irrigation. The first real disappointment for ‘Omar was in the winter of 1986-1987 when he could not cover the production cost of three of the greenhouses. He could barely covered these losses by using his meager profits from the other greenhouses, which were planted with other crops. ‘Omar claimed that this difficult situation could be traced back to 1984, and that it was due to a number of reasons, among which the fact that the production of vegetables increased dramatically because “everybody” began to move into greenhouse production and because the JVA opened new irrigated lands in the southern part of the Ghor. He also said that he was totally dependent on wage labour and on chemicals, which were becoming more and more expensive.

‘Omar claimed that as soon as he repays his debt on the last two greenhouses he will try to sell them, and will try to find a family sharecropper, like one of his uncles (Barkat) who is sharing with a Pakistani family.

The Production Process – Costs		
The process & material	Cost in JD	Notes
Ploughing (twice)	2.50	Ploughing began in September
A) Inputs (capital):		
1– Fertilizers:		
• Chicken fertilizer	20.00	<i>mixed with the soil at the end of September</i>
• Goat fertilizer	27.00	
• Meckafuza fertilizer	5.80	
• Super fertilizer	3.60	
2– Rubber tubes:		
• 5 lines of tubes each of 64 m	6.40	
• Plastic start point	2.00	
• Plastic end point	2.00	
3– Iron frame of the greenhouse and 14 plastic covering sheets	107.00	The cost of the green house is JD 950 with 6% annual interest. This loan should be repaid with in six years
4– Mulsh (black covering plastic)	10.00	He used about 20 kg of mulsh
5– Threads	3.30	
6– Strings: 110 strings of 64 m	12.00	
7– Pesticides: 50 gas tins	45.00	
8– Transplants	20.00	He used 2000 transplants
9– Insectile treatment	24.00	4 litres once every two weeks
10–Insective treatment	20.00	4 kg once every two weeks
11–Fuel for sprinkler	06.00	30 litres.
B) Inputs (labour):		
1– Hoe (two times)	2.00	Hoeing is done immediately the second ploughing
2– Planting the transplant	10.00	Labour is carried out by females
3– Distributing and mixing the fertilizer	8.00	Four labourers worked for 0.400 / hour wage
4– Distributing the mulsh and tubes	06.00	Five labourers
5– Fixing the strings	04.00	Two labourers
6– Fixing the threads	06.00	Three labourers
7– Constructing the frame	25.00	
8– Covering the frame	08.00	
9– Tying the threads with the transplants for climbing	08.00	Four female labourers
10–Sprinkling for the whole season	24.00	Sprinkling is done 12 times during three month
11–Spring sowing	18.00	Sowing is performed six times / season, each time by three workers
12–Picking	28.80	There are two pickings / week, each pick is performed by two female workers the wage is 0.30 / hour
C) Marketing:		
1– Polystyrene boxes	36.70	JD 0.18 the cost of one box. Omar used 204 boxes
2– Transportation	101.50	Transporting the production from the farm to Amman. The cost of transporting one polystyrene box is JD 0.400

THE MARKETING PROCESS – INCOME					
Month	Week	Production (12 kg/box)	Average Price	Sold production in JD	Commission
Jan.	1	2			
	2	4			
	3	8	0.250 /kg	87.00	4.35
	4	15			
Feb.	1	20			
	2	22	0.125 /kg	148.50	7.42
	3	27			
	4	30			
March	1	25			
	2	23	0.100 /kg	91.00	4.55
	3	15			
	4	13			
Total		203		326.50	16.32
Total costs			JD 598.42		
Total income			JD 326.50		
Net loss			JD 271.92		

Table 2 Cost / benefit analysis of one greenhouse planted with cucumber in the case of a small capitalist farm (in winter 1986-1987).

One of the most striking aspects of this case study is the tendency toward this kind of change. Intensive capital and labour relations did not improve ‘Omar’s position. My argument here is that the present relations of the commercialized agrarian structure are in the process of expelling certain forms of social organization of production such as tenancy and the small intensive capital organization. It seems to be the case that even though commercialization did create such relations of production early in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, these relations have begun to recede.

In the following cost/benefit analysis farming practices and division of labour are well illustrated. It is clear from the following table that ‘Omar is adopting an intensive capital process that requires intensive human labour. Out of the total costs, the capitalized inputs took the largest share, 59%, whereas wage labour accounted for 24.5%, while marketing accounted for 16.5%. These figures demonstrate the total dependence of this organization on the market in all stages of the production process. The external relations of production are the determinant in this type of production as well as the others with the exception of the owner family-labour farm, i.e. they are all dominated by the merchants, both inputs and/or outputs.

Agricultural processes	Cost of process / material	No. of processes	Total costs JD	Sharecropper's costs (JD)	Notes
Ploughing	1.00	2	2.00	1.00	Machinery ploughmen
Furrowing	-	2	-	-	Family labour
Seeds	0.5 (17.00)	1	8.50	4.25	Seeding is carried out by family labour.
Fertilizer:					
(مغك) بيلكرم داميس	45 (0.13)	1	5.85	2.92	No wage labour
(=) تافسوف ربوس	85 (0.07)	1	5.95	2.97	
تايومال تافلس	25 (0.13)	2	6.50	3.25	
Irrigation:					
Water	80 (0.003)	5	1.20	0.60	No wage labour
Weeding		3 to 4 times			No wage labour
Pesticides:					
(ميس) سيبوس	150 (0.01)	3	4.50	2.25	No wage labour
(ميس) روميرب	45 (0.01)	1	0.45	0.22	
(ميس) تلان	110 (0.01)	3	3.30	1.65	
(مغك) نيئلانور	0.12 (7.15)	1	0.85	0.42	
Harvest:					
Sacks	27 (0.085)	4	9.18	4.59	Harvest began late September. Usually if the harvest is beyond the family labour power Abu Abdullah asks help in the Deir Alla area from other Pakistani families.
Total Production	2200 kg				
Transportation	-	4	-	-	Abu Abdulah used his own pickup.
Marketing:					
Fees	3.00	4	12.00	06.00	Barakat (the owner of the land) marketed the product, because the Pakistanis have no right to market the product through the AMA.
Commission	3.98	4	15.95	07.97	
Average price	145 fils / kg				
Total costs	-		76.50	38.20	
Total value	2200 (0.145) = 319.00 JD			159.50	
Net Value	319.00-76.40 = 242.59 JD				
Sharecropper's net share	242.59 / 2 = 121.29 JD				

Table 3 Cost / benefit analysis for one dunum of cucumber in surface farming in the case of Pakistani sharecropping (in summer 1986).

5.5 Sharecropping Organization: International Migrant Labour

The area of study is involved with international labour forms, namely Egyptian wage labour and the Pakistani family labour form. As I have argued earlier the Egyptian wage labourers moved to the valley as single men unaccompanied by any household members, and constituted the total male wage labour force in the area. In the case of Pakistani labour, it is whole households which have moved from Pakistan to the area of Deir Alla. The logic behind this international influx of labour can be traced to the lack of family labour farms. Because local family labour had disappeared mainly due to the bureaucracy and taking into consideration the importance (from the owners' perspective) of minimizing the cost of production,

this international family labour (working as sharecroppers) became widespread in the Northern and Middle Ghor: there are thirty families on thirty farms in the area of Deir Alla.

CASE STUDY NO. 5

Abu ‘Abdullah is a Pakistani peasant who came to Jordan around 1968. He worked as a wage labourer in the Irbid district, and as an agricultural wage labourer in Shagarah village near Irbid. Then he came to the Jordan Valley as a wage labourer working in the area of North Shouneh. When he moved to the Deir Alla area in 1980-1981, he came into contact with a person named Barakat and worked with him as a sharecropper. In the same year Abu ‘Abdullah sent for his family in Pakistan. In 1984 his oldest son married a girl from a neighbouring Pakistani family also working as sharecroppers in the same basin (no.23). Abu ‘Abdullah took the other agricultural unit that belonged to Barakat also as a sharecropper on the basis of one half of the production.

Vegetables are their main crops. Some follow the *Namat al-Zera’*y policy, others including Abu ‘Abdullah and his son ‘Abdullah do not. Indeed Abu ‘Abdullah usually makes a survey of what farmers of the area would plant, and also gets information from the Ministry of Agriculture about the types of vegetables it is recommending for that year. According to the information he receives he and his son grow certain crops that are needed in Jordan, but not assigned by the *Namat Al-Zera’ y* policy or ignored by the majority of farmers. Abu ‘Abdullah’s identification of the needed crops is based on his experience and knowledge of the Jordanian market. To make this idea clear: Abu ‘Abdullah and the rest of the Pakistani families in the area are famous in the Middle Ghor because in 1981-1982 they grew lettuce. In that season lettuce was only grown in the area of Jerash, therefore it was scarce, but it is always a needed crop in Jordan. When it came to marketing the crop, the Pakistani farmers got very high prices, and of course the owners of the land benefited. In the next season the other farmers grew lettuce, but it was a bad season for them because there was too much lettuce on the market, and in consequence prices slumped. The Pakistani sharecroppers meanwhile were growing different crops. Abu ‘Abdullah has now, by the late 1980s, about JD 15,000 cash, a pick-up truck, a motor cycle and has bought a piece of land in Pakistan.

Abu ‘Abdullah and his family live on the farm in a Pakistani style house built of reeds. The members of his family, three women and five men, carry out nearly all of the work that is needed. If they need help they get it from other Pakistani families, especially those with whom they have family relations. The thirty Pakistani families working as sharecroppers in the Deir Alla area maintain strong links. These close relations enable them to form their own community, that is, a cooperative one; none of them perform wage labour. That is why people like Barakat are satisfied with them as sharecroppers.

Pakistanis are known in the area of Deir Alla as ‘the clever farmers’. This perception has made the owners of land in the area well disposed to share with any Pakistani family on the basis of one half. Conditions of sharecropping on the

basis of one half in the case of Pakistanis are as follows: division of the cost of ploughing, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, transportation, packing material, fees and commission while weeding, seeding, pesticide sprinkling, fertilizing, furrowing, loading and irrigation is carried out by the Pakistani partner.

5.6 Family-Labour Organization

There are various types of family farms in basin no. 23. I have classified different forms as family-labour farms on the basis of the family as the main source of labour, whether the family is the owner of the farm, the sharecropper or tenant. Each case has different types of crops (cereal and/or vegetables). The production of vegetables is oriented towards the market, while cereal production is oriented towards family consumption. The next case study is an illustration of the owner family-labour farm.

CASE STUDY NO. 6

Abu Hani is a father of eleven children, nine girls and two boys. He owns one agricultural unit of 34 dunums, and he shares with his brother Ali another unit of land of 30 dunums that they have inherited from their father. Abu Hani and his family live on their own land in a mud brick house, while his brother lives in a nearby village called Abu Nigreh.

Abu Hani is the manager of both units. He cultivates his own unit with two types of crops, cereals and vegetables. The other unit which he shares with his brother is used mainly as a stable for his 31 cows and is also planted with clover for the cows. The two units are not far from each other, they are separated by one unit, which means that Abu Hani can look after both units.

The farm in which Abu Hani lives is divided into three parts: ten dunums cultivated with wheat, another ten with barley, and ten dunums with vegetables. The remaining 4 dunums are occupied by buildings (a house, a stable for a few cows, and a chicken coop). Abu Hani claims that the size of the parts being cultivated with wheat and barley are the minimum, whereas the size of the part cultivated with vegetables is the maximum. The determination of maximum and minimum is related to the consumption of his household members. But whatever is the need for vegetables Abu Hani would never cultivate more than eight dunums, while if he found that there was a need for more cereals, he would cultivate more than ten dunums of cereals. The decrease or increase of the size of the section cultivated with barley depends on the availability of forage for the cows from the previous year, whereas for the part cultivated with wheat it is dependent on the consumption of his household and availability of wheat from the previous year. The third part, cultivated with vegetables, has a fixed ceiling, which never exceeds eight dunums, but also depends on the area cultivated with barley and wheat. This means that Abu Hani gives cereal production more importance and significance than vegetable production. In this case cereal production is not for sale, but mainly for local consumption (as bread, and as feed for the cows and chickens), while

vegetables are directed towards the market. Here there is coexistence of market and subsistence farming. The latter supports the former in that the fallow system used by Abu Hani decreases the rate of dependence on inorganic fertilizers; in fact *Abu Hani* uses only natural fertilizers in the form of the manure produced by his cows and chickens.

Agriculture is not intensive in this case. Abu Hani says: "My land is *shalfa*". *shalfa* is land that is cultivated with vegetables immediately after the harvest of wheat or barley, or vice-versa. This system is fruitful for Abu Hani because it means a reduction of irrigation consumption, and the land retains its fertility that is further enhanced by the non-use of chemical fertilizers. As mentioned above Abu Hani is totally dependent on what are known as the 'Arab fertilizers'. He usually keeps 6-8 cows on his farm during the day and moves them around in order to manure the entire surface of the farm. To this end he has constructed troughs and hawsers at various points. Besides this he brings the cow manure from the other farm and spreads it on his own. This is why he does not need chemical fertilizers.

Neither does he use wage labour. Abu Hani, his wife and children with the help of Abu Hani's brother and the latter's family do and perform all work that needs labour power. Abu Hani usually works directly and also supervises all aspects of the agricultural process. His wife and sons help him in certain processes such as weeding, seeding, picking, packing, and manuring. Abu Hani and his oldest son Hani, who is 16 years old, and his brother Ali do all the furrowing, irrigation, dredging, and pesticide sprinkling themselves' Abu Hani believes that females are too weak to carry out such work. His wife, besides her work in the field, looks after the six cows on their farm as well as taking care of the household. Abu Hani, his brother and both their families do the milking every night.

Abu Hani has never used wage labour. He performs the different productive activities in such way that continuation is secured. The parts that are cultivated with vegetables are directed towards the market. The quantity, type and quality of vegetables is cultivated according to the instructions of *a1-Namat a1-Zerā'y*. Abu Hani grows not more than two or three types of vegetables. Thus he avoids the risk of penalties. He also takes extra care of such crops. That is why merchants often come to his farm and buy from him for a relatively high price; his products are classified as first class products.²

We have mentioned earlier that Abu Hani sets aside two other parts of his farm for barley and wheat. His ultimate aim in cultivating such crops, besides the domestic consumption of bread, is to ensure a supply of food for the cows. When the barley and straw are insufficient, Abu Hani finds a farm planted with vegetables where the crop has failed. This is a common phenomenon in the Deir

2 The Ministry of Agriculture has classified produce into three classes according to its quality. The first class is used mainly for export to the Arab Gulf countries, therefore the prices of such products are high. The second class is used for trade within the national borders. The third class is used mainly as input for the agro-industry and fetches very low prices.

Agricultural process	Cost of processes & material	No. of Processes	Total cost JD	Notes
Ploughing	1.00	2	2.00	First ploughing is in the beginning of June the second one will be 20 days later.
Furrowing	-	2	-	Furrowing is done immediately after the second ploughing. Abu Hani did not pay this cost, because family labour performed it.
Seeds & seeding	0.5 (17.00)	1	8.50	Abu Hani used approximately 0.5 kg of seeds to cover one dunum. Planting seeds comes immediately after furrowing. There is no cost of wage labour.
Fertilizers & Fertilizing	-	-	-	Fertilizers are domestically reduced (natural fertilizers). Abu Hani plants cucumbers immediately after cereal harvest (<i>Shalfaa</i>). No wage Labour is required.
Irrigation	80 (0.003)	5	6.00	Irrigation is performed without using any wage labour
Weeding	-	-	-	Weeding is performed continuously by the members of the family mainly women and children.
Pesticide sprinkling:				No wage labour is required, Abu Hani, his older son and his brother Ali performed the work.
(٣هس) سبوس	0.01 (0.45)		4.50	
(٣هس) تلان	0.01 (0.31)		3.15	
(مغك) نيئلانور	7.16 (0.13)		0.98	
(٣هس) روميرب	1.01 (0.50)		0.05	
Harvest: Sacks	35 (0.08)	3	8.92	Started from the beginning of October. No wage labour, the work is performed by all members of Abu Hani's family and Ali's family, but the majority of labour power was supplied by the female members.
Total production	2100 kg			
Transportation	5.00	3	15.00	
Marketing:				Fees are paid each time they enter the central market (<i>Hesbah</i>). Commission is 5% of the sold products paid to the auctioneer.
Fees	3.00	3	9.00	
commission	5%	3	21.00	
Average price	200 fils / kg			Each time Abu Hani goes to the market he finds a new price the average price is the average price for three different prices. One has to take that the products were marketed through the AMA.
Total selling price production	JD 420.00			
Total costs	JD 80.93			
Net profit	JD 339.00			

Table 4 Cost / benefit analysis for one dunum of cucumber in surface farming in the case of owner-family labour farm (in summer season 1986).

Alla area. He leases the farm and allows his cows to graze freely. The common rent of such farms is about JD 30.

Abu Hani's main agricultural concern is with his cows. Cows represent the main source of income and livelihood for his and his brother's households. Abu Hani and some other families who follow the same farming pattern sell the milk to the same merchant from Irbid. They have formed a sort of cooperation between them. All the barrels of milk are placed at 5 a.m. on the main road in front of one of the households engaged in milk production. Each member of the group writes his name on his barrels. A member of the nearby household sits near the barrels until the merchant arrives. The latter returns at approximately 6 p.m. The merchant arrives with sterilized barrels to find Abu Hani and others waiting to collect the barrels, in order to be ready for the next day, and to be paid. Abu Hani usually gets JD 15-20/day from milk production. He gives his brother Ali approximately a third of this. This share is the return for Ali's ownership of that half of the agricultural unit on which the cows are kept, and for his labour power consumed in different agricultural processes. The crucial difference between Abu Hani's case and the others we have discussed is that for Abu Hani agriculture is a way of life. It is clear that out of his own experience and that of his ancestors he has gained certain cultural insights to which his life is adjusted. One of the most important elements is the integration and inseparability of animal husbandry and farming. For Abu Hani agriculture is a combination of these activities. This is another form of the continuation of the agricultural mode combined with animal husbandry, but where part of the production is oriented towards the market. For the *Bayarah* and the Pakistani sharecroppers animal husbandry does not exist and agriculture is a professional business forming the main source of income and wealth, while for Ahmed agriculture is a side-business.

Another major element that could be analyzed through this case study is the change that has taken place in certain social values concerning milk production. It is obvious that, historically, for Abu Hani and his ancestors selling the milk was prohibited (as we have discussed earlier), while currently milk production forms his main source of income. This supports my idea that because the technology developed (mainly transportation and cooling devices) milk production became a profitable activity, and the social value of the prohibition on sale lost its meaning.

Another important issue concerning this type of organization is that the use of wage labour is more or less absent. Abu Hani says:

"We are happy because none of the Egyptian workers entered my farm. The misery of Ghor is a result of the Egyptian workers".

By looking at the following cost/benefit table, one might ask why, if Abu Hani made this huge profit (JD 339/dunum) did he not cultivate his whole agricultural unit, rather than just under eight dunums, in vegetables, and thereby greatly increase his profits? But he was only able to turn out such a high quality product (and thus obtain such a high profit) precisely because he concentrated on a small

area of vegetable cultivation. Therefore it is clear that the small scale production that characterizes family labour in this farm plays an important role in their competitive position.

5.6.1 Notes on the Cost/Benefit Analyses

One of the most important advantages of using the cost/benefit analysis is the possibility to calculate the social costs of particular processes, such as the value of family labour (male and female) in the production of different crops. The following is a clear example of this ability:

1. The value of the family and female labour can be calculated. In this attempt I took the production process of the absentee tenancy and small owner capital-intensive farm into consideration and calculated the average cost for only those farming practices that are common to the two. The practices connected with greenhouse construction such as the labour needed to construct the iron frame of the house and to cover it, tie strings and threads, etc., are neglected. The cost of labour in the absentee tenancy accounted for JD 41.2/dunum, whereas in the second type it is JD 88/dunum, therefore, if we take the average, the value of family labour would be JD 64.6/dunum.
2. The value of the female labour in the case of the absentee tenancy is JD 14 for seeding and picking, while in the case of the small owner capital-intensive farm, female labour accounted for JD 46 for picking, seeding, and some work related to the latter. Therefore, the average value of the family female labour is approximately JD 30/dunum.
3. Through the cost/benefit analysis one can see that the productivity of the different types of organization is approximately similar, indicating that levels of productive forces are generally the same. Thus the adoption of different capital and labour strategies and practices by all the different types produces approximately the same total yield/dunum.
4. In all organizations of production, land preparation is performed through the use of machines (mainly tractors).

5.7 Absentee Landlordism (Pyramid *Bayarah* type of Organization)

In basin no. 23, absentee landowners own approximately 41%³ of the land (this figure includes some who do not in fact grow anything: mainly those with land adjoining the Jordan River that forms a natural border with the occupied Arab land [West Bank]).

3 Based on my field work (during the late 1980s) and on the files of the Ministry of Agriculture. This figure presents certain problems. In the file of landownership of the JVA, there are about one hundred titles without a family name, therefore, it is difficult to know whether they are for residents of the area or not.

Sharecropping is not included in the calculation of absentee landlordism, because in the case of Deir Alla most of the owners who share their land with sharecroppers live within the basin, and also sharecropping does not appear in the renting contracts of the Ministry of Agriculture. Absentee landowners do not face the agricultural problems mentioned earlier, because big landowners guarantee their production through an extra-economic factor (we saw this instance in case study no.1 where Fatima and the other female labourers were loading vegetables in small boxes marked 'For export'). They rely for production inputs (labour and industrial) on the market (unlike the family labour farms), but they do not rely on the market for marketing (unlike the family labour farms, who do), for which they rely on their family ties. So both types are successful, essentially because they can rely on certain mechanisms that are outside the market and therefore have a competitive advantage over those who rely on market inputs and on the forces of the market for marketing their produce. Others, like the small absentee landowners who lease their lands for a fixed annual money rent at the beginning of the year and those who are engaged in the plantation of citrus trees, whether absentee landowners or people living in the area, also do not face the problems of the agricultural sector.

A unit of land planted with citrus trees is called locally *bayarah*. If the owner of a *bayarah* is living in the area he is the one who manages all production processes, but if the owner is a big landowner, a new type of arrangement is made, which I see as a new type of organization and term pyramid *bayarah* as it involves an organizational hierarchy.

The next case study illustrates this kind of production organization. This production system is described from the perspective of one individual (Abu Fathi), simply because he was, in the late 1980s, the only person in basin no. 23 engaged in such a system, and the impossibility of meeting the owners who live in Amman.

CASE STUDY NO. 7

Abu Fathi is a Palestinian immigrant who migrated to Deir Alla in 1952. At first he worked as a sharecropper on the basis of one third of the production on the land of a big landowner, Hamad al-Mamduh. In 1955, he transferred to work as a sharecropper on the basis of one half on the land of another big landowner, Salih al-Elias. Abu Fathi claimed that he became a sharecropper on the basis of one half when he was in a position to share some of the production costs. At the end of the 1960s and until 1977 Abu Fathi transferred from sharecropping to tenancy according to the wish of the landlord; throughout this period Abu Fathi was paying a fixed amount of cash annually.

The Elias family had received eighty agricultural units (about 3,000 dunums) as a result of the land reform of 1962 and began to change their land in 1978 into *bayarah*. From 1978 to the present Abu Fathi was assigned by the Elias as local manager to a number of clustered *bayarah* located in basin no. 23. He is paid a fixed salary. The owners built for him and his family a modern concrete house on one of the units.

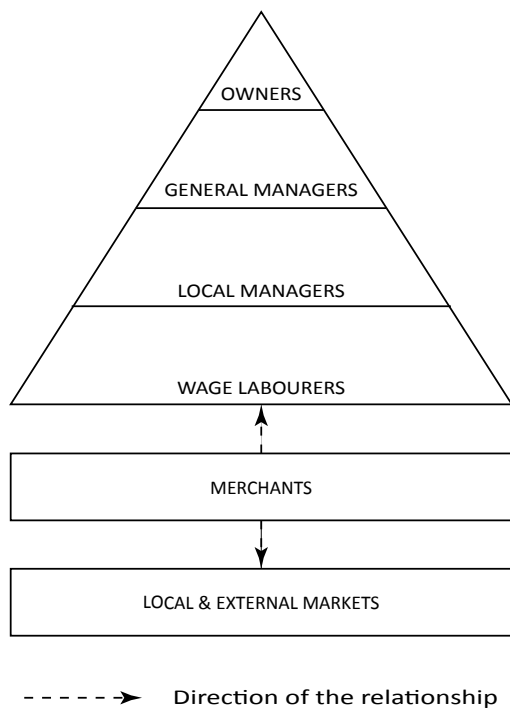


Fig 3 Illustration of the pyramid bayarah.

Abu Fathi is now (late 1980s) a direct supervisor of four clustered *bayarah*. He is one of many managers supervising the work of eighty *bayarah* belonging to the Elias brothers, all over the Middle and North Ghor. Above the local managers there is a general manager, who supervises all the local managers. This general manager is a middleman between the local managers and the owners. In this regard those local managers do not have direct personal relations with the owners, but direct production relations with the wage labourers who perform all the work in this type of organization.

Marketing the production of this type of organization does not take place as in other organizations (such as vegetable growing organizations). Indeed the process is reversed, as merchants come to the *bayarah* to buy the product while the fruit is still on the trees. This process is as follows: at the end of the season (but before the picking process takes place) merchants come to the *bayarah* to inspect the quantity and quality of the fruits. According to their inspection each merchant offers a price. The one who offers the highest price gets the produce. During this process Abu Fathi informs the general manager about the price offer; and subsequently the general manager informs the owner about the price and the merchant making the offer. If the owner agrees to the price the general manager instructs Abu Fathi to sell the produce. But if the owner refuses, Abu Fathi must wait until another merchant comes with a higher price. Here the owner is in a better position to determine the price than are the farmers who grow vegetables, which is why this type of production organization is profitable. The reason that

it is not widespread among small owners or farmers is due to a number of factors, such as its high costs and more essentially the fact that Pyramid *Bayarah* need large amounts of land, more than any of the small farmers have. The relatively small number of such big landowners means that they can determine the price. There are also a small number of small owners who plant their farms with citrus and who benefit from this situation where in effect they are protected by the big land owners.

5.8 Merchants

Merchants form a powerful segment of the present agrarian structure of the Jordan Valley, whether as owners of the private companies that import fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds, or as commissioners and wholesale merchants.

5.8.1 Merchants of the Basic Production Inputs

According to the laws of the Ministry of Agriculture, seeds should not be imported unless analyzed to ensure their suitability for the local environment. But in practice private companies import certain seeds without referring to the Ministry and sell them directly to the farmers. The result has in some cases been tragic, when the farmers discovered the unsuitability of such seeds for the environment, besides the high price that the farmers had to pay. This is what happened in 1984 when farmers discovered after planting that the squash seeds were not suitable. The result was that the crop was completely destroyed. No action was taken against the companies that imported the squash seeds and farmers did not get any compensation.

As for the high price, some officials at the Ministry of Agriculture argued that private companies imported, for example, cucumber seeds and had sold every single seed at 120 fils. During the same period the Ministry considered cucumber one of the main crops that should be planted according to its production regulation policy (*a1-Namat a1-Zera'iy*). The high prices formed a heavy burden for the farmers. The JVFA intervened because of pressure by its members and subsidized the seeds, and subsequently the prices were reduced to 15 fils per seed.

The same development took place with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The impact of intensive agriculture in the Valley made farmers rely upon chemical fertilizers on a large scale (see table 12). An informant from one of the cooperative societies in Deir Alla reported to me that Urum fertilizer, for example, was sold in 1984 for JD 76/ton. Since it is a required fertilizer, demand was high and it was completely sold out in December 1984. In the same month the fertilizer suddenly appeared on the market offered by the merchants for JD 110/ton.

The same happened in the case of the Mickafuza fertilizer, which used to be sold by the cooperatives for JD 116/ton. Later this fertilizer was offered on the market by the private companies for JD 130/ton.

It is clear that merchants dominate the input market; therefore, prices are high, and quality can be low. The significance of the merchants as a dominant group in relation to other social groups existing in the sphere of commercialization is demonstrated at the end of this chapter.

5.8.2 Commissioners

I have observed the operation of marketing in the central market for vegetables (*Hesbeh*). These market places are dominated by a few merchants who work as commissioners and wholesale merchants. They dominate the market in vegetable products in the Valley. As we have seen from the case studies most of the production is directed towards the market. The market therefore has become the crucial determinant of survival, dissolution or even competitive position for most of the social production organizations that produce vegetables in the present agrarian structure. This conclusion is drawn in the light of the fact that most such organizations generally have the same levels of productive forces (from the cost/benefit analysis one can notice that all the different organizations produce approximately the same amount). This situation is due to the presence of other social groups that appropriate the surplus labour of the direct producers. Therefore, the productive forces are the same while the social relations of production are different.

In these markets the farmer finds himself obliged to sell his products at low prices. The operation takes place as follows: first, when the farmer enters the market he has to pay the entrance fee of JD 3. Then he seeks out a *Dallal* who is a mediator between the farmers, who cluster in a group standing on one side, and the merchants or their representatives who form another cluster standing on the other side. The bargaining operation is started by the *Dallal*, who specifies a certain price for a particular product and calls out: "Who wants to sell?" If none of the farmers agrees, he raises the price, and so on. The price is raised every time farmers disagree until some do agree. Now comes the turn of the merchants. If none of them agrees on the last price reached, the *Dallal* starts reducing the price once again until a compromise is reached. The commission agency for which the *Dallal* works gets 5% of the total production value from the farmer. There is no competition between the merchants in this process of marketing; this seems to indicate that the merchants agree upon a certain price in advance.

Amman central market absorbed 62.4% of the total production of the Valley, Zarqa and Irbid markets absorbed 29.9%, while central markets in the Jordan Valley absorbed only 7.8% (USAID 1988: 67). Since most of the farmers of the Jordan Valley marketed their products in the Amman central market it is important to know the composition of the commission agencies in Amman central wholesale market. Private commission agencies formed about 93.4% of the total, the remaining 7.6% is comprised of government agencies and cooperatives (USAID 1988: 67). There were some farmers who knew other places where they could have got better prices but they could not do so because they were obliged to sell their products in these central markets to certain commissioners or wholesale

merchants mainly in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and al'Arda in the Jordan Valley. Some of those farmers claim that they were indebted to certain commissioners and were therefore forced to market their products in a market where that commissioner operated. The wholesale merchants and some of the commissioners gain on the double: first when they give loans and secondly when they buy the products for a low price and sell it to retail merchants for high prices. In this regard an assessment team of the Technical International Inc. sponsored by USAID conducted a series of interviews with thirty commission agents, exporters and wholesalers and twenty farmers at Amman wholesale market and found that about six families control two to four larger commission agents who in turn control most of the marketing operations through personal and kinship ties. They monopolize the information about marketing such as daily and seasonal prices, and supply and demand trends in other regional markets. A major element in their control strategy is having regular producer-clients⁴ (USAID 1988: 69), i.e. buyer and seller become creditor and debtor and the price is determined in advance of the process of marketing. This situation is maintained by increasing the debtor's indebtedness to a specific commission agent. This relationship has two effects. Firstly, it puts the producers at the mercy of the commissioners. Secondly, it puts the commission agents in a better position in the market i.e. through the regular flow of products these agents can direct and control the market. The *al-Sha'b* newspaper (16/11/1985) reported that one of the farmers in the Jordan Valley sold his cucumber production in 1985 for 200 fils/kg, while it was sold by merchants to the consumers for 320 fils/kg in the same period. Another farmer sold his eggplant production to a wholesale merchant for 60 fils/kg, while it was sold during the same period to consumers for 200 fils/kg. "Farmers are kept under the mercy of merchants, who are the source of their troubles" (*Al-Sha'b* 22/4/1977 and 13/5/86; *al-Ra'i* 4/6/1979 and 22/12/1979).

The high prices of fertilizers and seeds increased the total cost of production and if we bear in mind their uncertain prospects of marketing their products for good prices, small farmers are in an even worse condition.

One can notice that the owner-family farm was not affected by the problem of seeds, by the high prices of fertilizers and pesticides or by the marketing problem. Or at least if they were affected by some of these problems, it was to a much lesser extent than other farmers.

All of this means that farmers were kept as it were between a pair of pincers. The commissioners and the wholesale merchants formed one of the pincers, while the merchants of the basic inputs of production, such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., formed the other. To confirm this argument, neither the owner family-labour farm nor the Pyramid *bayarah* were caught by these pincers, because neither type is reliant on the *hesbeh* (market place). The market place for the latter is in the *bayarah* itself, whereas the owner-family farmers are partially dependent on the

⁴ It is interesting to mention that this type of exploitation was at work in the Deccan district in India. Banaji (1977) argued that over time, farmers would find themselves subsisting at the mercy of their creditors who would come to establish control over the production process from one cycle to the next (Banaji 1977: 1387).

hesbeh (even though what applies to the other type of production organization, does not apply to the owner-family-labour farm, because the latter's vegetable production is generally of the first class).

Synthesis

The rural transformation process in the Jordan Valley until the late 1980s can be described as follows: it is the change from simple agrarian structure, where the *Harrath's* household constituted the basic production unit adopting family labour, into a complex one, where there are many different types of production units adopting various labour forms. This complexity can be conceptualized through various levels of analysis: firstly, there are different production organizations, the owner family-labour farms, sharecropping, tenancy, small capitalized farms, and pyramid *bayarah*. Secondly, such organizations produce various types of crops, vegetables, cereal, and citrus fruits. Thirdly, these organizations adopt various labour forms such as the wage labour and family labour. Fourthly, labour forms can be looked at through an ethnic point of view. That is, they are performed by Jordanians, Egyptians, or Pakistani. This complex agrarian structure cannot be simplified; neither the survival nor the liquidation approaches explain this unique situation.

Studying the previous case studies and their cost and benefit analyses for different types of production organizations, one can conclude the following: through the use of unpaid labour, both types, sharecropping and owner-family farm, have been able to minimize production cost to an extent that played an important role in their adaptation process in a generalized commercialized agricultural structure. The difference of costs between the production organizations that use wage labour, and the family-labour organizations was approximately JD 64/dunum. Small farmers who use family labour (owner family-labour farmers and sharecroppers) as adaptive mechanism, succeeded in minimizing labour costs. Therefore they ensured not only their survival but also their competitiveness in an overall commercialized agrarian structure. The highly adaptive group among the family organizations is the small owner-family-labour farm, their adaptive mechanisms (the total reliance on family labour and the incorporation of animal husbandry as an inseparable activity of farming) made them less dependent on the vegetable product market and on the market of industrial inputs; they do rely on the milk market.

It is important to distinguish between various markets relations. It is clear that the vegetable product and industrial production input markets are characterized by instability of prices and are subjected to severe fluctuations by the wholesale and industrial input merchants and by the commissioners. This is coupled with the limitation of the internal market to match the increasing rates of vegetable supply that is a direct result of the integrated regional development programmes in the Jordan Valley. These factors resulted in two types of markets based on

the crop: the buyers' market for vegetables, where there is competition among the farmers (sellers). Here market merchants regulate the price. The other type of market is the sellers' market for citrus, where the sellers are big and few and therefore dominate the market, i.e. they and not the merchants set the prices. In addition, citrus fruits are also more likely to be exported than vegetables, since they are less perishable.

Those producers of vegetables who do not rely on family labour are forced to rely on credit. Either they get the inputs and become indebted to the seller merchant, or they receive a loan from one of the many credit institutions operating in the Jordan Valley. One of the sources is the *hesbeh*. *Hesbeh* here means not the market place, but rather the commission agencies operating in the *hesbeh*. A commissioner gives a loan to a farmer under certain conditions: either the farmer repays the loan, usually after one to two years. If he cannot repay, the indebted farmer is obliged to market production in the marketplace where that commissioner operates. This helps the commissioners to keep an eye on the financial situation of the indebted farmers and to ensure the return of the loans or at least part of them. But since the farmers are at the mercy of the wholesale merchants and the commissioners, their expectation of obtaining sufficient cash is low, and they may therefore be obliged to ask for another loan. The only sources of credit open to an already indebted farmer are the commissioners, mainly the big agencies. This credit structure works as a debt trap for the farmers.

This exploitation and the limitations it places on farmers pushes them into an increasingly deteriorating economic situation and ties them tightly to the credit market. The small owner family-labour farmers were aware of such a possibility, but were partially independent of the industrial input market and hence totally independent of the credit market. Farmers of this organization do not exploit their land intensively, but on a fallow basis (*shalfa*); they only cultivate the same crop in the same land after a lapse of at least two years. As part of their strategy to minimize the cost of inputs, they do not buy the barley and wheat seeds, and they themselves raise the transplants of particular vegetables such as pepper. That is why such farmers are not totally dependent on the market for production inputs, and they are totally independent of the wage labour market. The vegetable production of this organization is considered as of first class quality according to the classification of the Ministry of Agriculture. The reason for this is that such farmers do not concentrate on vegetable but rather on cereal production (barley and wheat) i.e. the size of the area planted with vegetables is dramatically less than any other production organization. Therefore the household members are able to devote great care and attention to their production.

But this is only one side of their adaptation equation. The other side is the milk production, which is not only important for them but is also an inseparable element of their farming practice. In this activity they are totally dependent on the dairy market, which is a seller's market. Their position in this market is strong, because they can set the price of the product. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the Jordanian dairy industry is small and therefore the supply of such products does not match the increasing rate of demand (which is due to the population

increase); secondly, milk production and selling are performed through the collective agreement of a group of sellers to deal with one buyer; that is, as shown in this work, several households cooperate in organizing the process of supplying their product to the same merchant. This implies that any disagreement with the merchant means the disagreement of the whole group. This cooperation helped those small farmers to protect themselves from exploitation by the merchants. Such households became incorporated in this type of activity, not because of the need for cash, but because they were practicing this activity traditionally, i.e. prior to the commercialization process their ancestors were already involved in it, and the cooperation is a result of this historical process.

My proposition is that the increasing commercialization process in agriculture reinforced the significance of family-labour and cooperation between the same type of farmers, i.e. between the less differentiated farmers and weakened another type of production relations, namely tenancy. But before going into a discussion of the proposition, one has to define this term. In this work I define tenancy as having two inseparable characteristics, the annual cash rent and the reliance on wage labour. I have stated in chapter 5 that the family-labour farm type could be found in many forms; sharecropping, small owner-family-labour farm and tenancy based on family labour and where the tenants are living on the farm. By the term tenancy here (under family-labour farm) I mean the rental-family-labour farm without emphasizing tenancy as a social relation of production. The reason for excluding it from tenancy relation is the position of the family members as the direct producers. The only difference between this rental-family-labour farm and sharecropping is the way of leasing the land, i.e. neither type controls the means of production, while both adopt the same farming practices by the same labour form (the family). Internally, part of their surplus labour is appropriated by the owner of the farm either in cash terms as in the case in the rental-family-labour farm, or in kind as is the case in sharecropping.

Anyhow, tenancy relations of production were established in the area at the start of the commercialization process in the beginning of the 1960s. This was in response to a need for cash, cash that was needed by the landowners for investment in this rising commercial economy. Tenancy subsequently declined as a result of commercial pressures. In the light of the instability of inputs (industrial inputs and wages) and production prices, i.e. the rising cost of production, and the increasing supply rates of vegetables, tenants became unable to bear the burden of the market. This deterioration of tenancy started when the Jordan Valley's production crisis came to the surface in the beginning of the 1980s.

Such are the reasons why most tenants I surveyed in basin no. 23 claimed that they are in a constantly deteriorating condition, and they envy those, such as the owner-family farmers and some sharecroppers, who use no wage labour and have animals. Abu Hani once said:

“You will see that everybody in Ghor will go to the previous life [...] producing cereals and having halal (sheep, goats and cows) [...] or soon will have to leave the Ghors.”

This means that the intensification of commercialization in agriculture led to the dissolution of production relations based on tenancy and of any production relations based on cash rent, credit, and wage labour. This includes also the small owner capital-intensive farms (see case study no. 3 as an example). It indicates further that only farms based on family labour survive and are supported by the overall commercialized agrarian structure. This type of organization has an inherent advantage in the process of commercialization of agriculture and has proved to be compatible with capitalist development.

Finally, we have to summarize the previous arguments concerning the recent strength of the family-labour farm compared to the dissolution of other types of production organizations. The existence of family-labour farms must be understood through the articulation of both internal and external social relations of production. Internally, the household maintains control over the means of production (in the case of the owner family-farm); the members of the family are not dispossessed of their means of production. Here the household provides the labour force for itself, i.e. there is no surplus-labour. But externally, the household provides the labour needed to produce the vegetables, not for itself, but rather for the merchants who exploit those farmers and maintain family surplus-labour. This situation is totally dependent on the type of crop; i.e. there is no externality for the owner family-labour farm's production of wheat and barley because these are directed towards household consumption. Therefore, I distinguish between the social organizations of production adopting the same family-labour form, simply because they demonstrate different internal and external social relations of production. For example, the sharecroppers adopting this type of labour form are not direct controllers of the means of production and the value of their labour is partially appropriated by the owner of the land, therefore internally the sharecropper's household is not working for itself i.e. surplus-labour exists. Externally, the sharecropper household is producing vegetables entirely for the market, and is exploited by the merchant; therefore, surplus-labour exists that is not within the control of the household.

Therefore, we must not be misled by the formal appearance of the family labour farm nor by the formal appearance of the family labour form, because they demonstrate different social relations of production even when they are clustered in one small area like Deir Alla. The family-labour farmers constitute heterogeneous groups and cannot be regarded in any case as homogeneous.

The other type of production, the citrus fruit production and its organization in big farms (Pyramid *bayarah*), do not face the problems that are faced by the organization of vegetable production. This type of production was a product of the commercialization process and is still reinforced by this process. Both the local and regional markets experience shortages of citrus production, therefore conditions are suitable for increasing and expanding this type of organization, but only those who have enough cash can establish such an organization (this does not of course include the small farmers). The owners of such organizations manage and adapt themselves not only through their own dynamism but through

extra-economic factors, which factors allow them to impose their production on the local and external markets.

The commercialization of agriculture involves various forms of labour, such as family-labour, wage labour, migrant labour both regional (Arab) and international (Pakistani), or a combination of family-labour and wage labour.

Generally speaking, organizations using family labour constitute a predominant form of production in the area of study. The existence of such forms of labour is the result of the nature of the production, the intensive production of vegetables, which requires similarly intensive human labour and care. Both the family-labour farm and sharecropping fit into this category, which is the reason why family labour constitutes 72.1% of the labour form used in producing vegetables in basin no. 23 (see table 2). This fact could be generalized to the whole Jordan Valley where we find that in 1981 sharecropping constituted 83.88% in the Northern Ghor, 81.36% in the Middle Ghor and 95.74% in the Southern Ghor (see table 14).

Deir Alla, 11 years after

In 1997 I came back to the Deir Alla for a considerable period of time in order to see what changes have taken place from the time of the main field research in 1986 and the time of writing in 1989. Immediately I realized that several hypotheses and predictions had been correct.

In this chapter I want to examine the socio-economic changes and the effects of the national development plans and the global forces on the agrarian structure of the study area. At the same time, I want to evaluate the hypotheses presented in chapter 6, written down in 1989.

7.1 Tenancy

Those who used to produce cash crops using intensive wage labour as absentee-tenants have left and quit agriculture, while tenancy with the use of intensive wage labour and high capital inputs is very limited.

This point applies to small scale tenancy production organizations. According to unofficial reports, about 70-75% of small agricultural units producing vegetables are indebted to various credit institutions, especially for the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC). After investigation, it appeared that about 80% of the debtors hold small stretches of land (one or two agricultural units), producing vegetables for the market, using capital inputs and above all hiring wage labour. In other words, those farmers who have high capital costs left their land, whether owners or tenants. As for the owners, they began to rent out their land plots on annual cash rent basis to either the Pakistani or Egyptians or Jordanian agricultural engineers.

Rent for a single plot (or agricultural unit) varies according to the plot's location. The plots located in the open waves of the eastern winds are lower in rent, i.e. about JD 1400 annually. Meanwhile, rent for those that are located elsewhere is higher, i.e. JD 2000. If one take the real value of rent, one will notice that there is a sharp decrease in value. The rate of inflation is very high (over 200%). That is to say, the level of living costs has been dramatically increased from 1986 to 1997. This is (partially speaking) due to the devaluation of JD in 1987. Meanwhile, rent is almost stagnant. This means that the living standards for this group are deteriorating sharply. Informants argued that they rely for their living on the salaries of their sons.

These changes can be phrased in another way; the parent generation turned to wage labour and the son's generation became servants in the civil and military apparatus of the state. This interdependency of generations inside the family will come to an end, especially in the light of the state policy since 1995-1996 to limit

the expansion of its bureaucratic apparatus as the World Bank has suggested. This means that the pertinent families will be trapped within a period of time, i.e. thrown away from the agricultural sector and from the bureaucracy. This situation strengthened the kin ties within the family in order to survive.

One can conclude that the harsh exploitation of small peasants and farmers and the deteriorating of their living conditions led to strengthened family and kin relations as a strategy to survive.

As for large-scale tenancy: such production organizations are highly capitalist mechanized ones. They are out of the crisis' equation, simply because of the coercing forces or the extra-economic power they maintain. Of course one can add to this group, another more powerful entity, namely the big owner capitalist organizations. These organizations are functioning very well in this chaotic agrarian situation.

7.2 Bayarah

This is still another well-functioning organization, both for the owners and for the tenants.

Informants from among the tenants believe that their financial situation is still better than that of the tenants producing vegetables, but it is compared to 1986. According to their domestic accounts, the average annual sales use to be about JD 11,500 in 1986, while expenses never exceed JD 2,000. Their net profit thus was about JD 9,500. In 1996, the average sale decreased to JD 8,000 and the expenses rose to JD 4,000. That is why the *bayarah* tenants argued that their "situation is not progressing, but is better than that of others". Anyhow, all informants agree that between 1986 and 1996 the cost of production increased by about 300%, whereas profits decreased by about 150%.

7.3 Family-Labour Farms

Such organizations are operating very well and are regarded as the most successful, specially the owner-family-labour farms.

They are successful with their own economic power, i.e. not like the big capitalist farms that use extra-economic power to function. They are operating in the same way as in 1986, adopting the specific strategy of minimizing the cost of production by exploiting their own family labour power on the one hand, and producing diverse crops (cereal and vegetables) and exploiting animal husbandry (i.e. milk production) on the other hand.

It seems to be that the strategy of combining animal husbandry and agriculture in a traditional way is crucial for competing and surviving in a very complex capitalist agricultural system. As for agriculture itself, such families produce various crops; cereals, mainly wheat, barley and other fodder. These crops are not for cash and occupy about 60-65% of the farm. The second major type of crop is vegetables produced for the market. These take about 20-25% of the farm. The rest, about 10% of the farm, is used for constructions (the house and stables for cows, sheep and small animal like chickens, ducks, swans, etc.).

In 1986 Abu Hani (a key informant in case study no. 6) used to grow wheat and barley for domestic consumption. In 1997 he added various fodder. This led to a decrease in the land size devoted to cash crops from 30-35% to 20-25%. This change took place because Abu Hani concentrated more on milk production, following the rise of milk prices in Jordan from 10 piaster in 1986 to 27 piaster in 1997.

When farmers need for wage labour, they hire females. The search for female labourers is based on kin relations. First, they search within the family. If nobody is found, they look within the clan, and finally within the neighbouring clans. Abu Hani expressed it in his own words: "I am proud that none of the Egyptians entered my farm". Generally speaking, I noticed that owner family labour farms in the area are more or less limited to three clans: *Khatatbeh*, *Mashalkha* and *Zbeidat*".

As for Abu Hani, his situation has progressed. He raised the number of cattle from eight cows in 1986 to fifty in 1997, and sheep from twenty to one hundred. During the last ten to eleven years, Abu Hani sold about twenty-five heads of livestock. Additionally, he bought a horse in 1995, which he uses instead of the tractor he used to hire for ploughing. In general, the number of animal (mainly cows and sheep) has risen from 28 in 1986 to 150 in 1997.

This type of production organization is not only surviving in an overall intensive capitalist agriculture, but is mostly competitive. According unpublished reports of the Deir Alla Agriculture Station, these owner family labour farms form about 10% of all production units in basin 23. This means 70 agricultural units out of the 700 units composing the basin (see table 2).

7.4 Pakistani

Again this is a very successful group in the area. The number of Pakistani rose dramatically to 300-400 families.

The average size of a family is about eleven. This is a very large size in comparison to the rural Jordanian family size, which is about seven. They form a distinctive ethnic community in the area. They are clustered in sub-groups of four to six families. Each family uses its own labour power, and if this is not sufficient, then members (males and females) of the other families come to help. In this strategy, Pakistanis never hire wage labourers.

In 1986 Pakistanis were sharecroppers, recently (1997) they had become tenants. They pay an annual monetary rent. This development occurred because they were operating very well and they felt that as sharecropper, the landowner received the benefits without investing much effort, while they invested all their efforts. Their main domestic consumption needs are produced locally in the farm. They keep different small animals as is the case for the local owner-family-labour farms. In addition, I noticed that each Pakistani family has an average of fifteen sheep.

7.5 Egyptians

In the former field research of this study, Egyptians were incorporated in agriculture in the form of free wage labour. This is still the case, but a new form began to appear, operate and expand, namely cooperative organizations of Egyptians.

The production relations concerning the Egyptians have changed. In 1986, Egyptians were operating in sharecropping relations with the owners. In 1997, they have become tenants. The working labour form in such organizations is again the cooperative non-wage method. Each five to six previously Egyptian labourers gather and rent one or two agricultural units. They share the costs, profits and losses. In each phase of the production process, they work together and market the products together. Such farmers are known in the area as the 'yellow maize producers'.

This type of production organization is also successful for adopting two strategies. First, they do not use wage labour, which is the crucial factor for the failing or success of agricultural business. Second, they concentrate on "rare" crops. By rare, it is meant that they are the only farmers who produce "yellow maize" on a large scale as cash crop. This crop is in high demand in the 'chicken sector' as fodder.

7.6 Agricultural Engineers Cooperatives

This type of production organization never existed in the Jordan Valley or in Deir Alla before 1990. It is a result of globalization. Globalization is referred to here as the accelerated movement of commodities, people, technology, ideas and images over the national borders (Long 1996: 37).

Certain German companies concluded contracts through NGOs with five (until 1997) Jordanian agricultural engineers from Amman, to produce certain crops without using chemicals, i.e. biological products. According to the contracts, the production is for the German market. The majority of farmers in Deir Alla know the story of the five cooperatives, but still refuse to be engaged in such types of organization, simply because the risk is high.

Finally, all the three groups, the Pakistanis, Egyptians and Jordanian agricultural engineers, exist and are expanding in the land of the first mentioned group of this book, namely the indebted small owner group who used intensive capital inputs and wage labour.

The internal dynamics of the capitalist rural development in the Jordan Valley expels small local farmers, turning them not to proletarians, but to an unemployed group of people. This is so because, as has been mentioned before, local male labour is not a favoured form of wage labour by most farmers. This is so because the rate of wages for such labourers is higher than for Egyptians. Meanwhile, local female labour is most favoured.

7.8 New Deterioration

All newly interviewed farmers argued that water for irrigation is polluted. Since 1994-1995 water supply derives from the King Talal Dam, rather than from the East Ghor Canal. The water held by the King Talal Dam is kept stagnant for a considerable period of time causing serious pollution. According to the farmers, the water is not only poisoning their crops, but it also reduces the fertility of the soil.

Two years earlier, a group of farmers formed a committee to negotiate the provision of water from the canal with the officials of the JVA. The officials promised to supply them with mixed water from both the dam and the canal. In 1997, farmers told me 'we are still waiting .. and they probably forget us'.

7.9 Predictions

Recently arguments have been raised to liberalise the sale of land in the Valley.

As was mentioned, over than 75% of small owner farmers are indebted to various credit institutions, especially the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC). Since land in the Valley is legally owned by the state representative, the JVA, credit institutions can not claim land from indebted farmers. At the same time such farmers cannot repay their loans in a deteriorating economic situation. This means that both parties fell in the debt trap.

The case is very complex. The harsh economic crisis in the agricultural sector leads farmers either to quit farming as was mentioned earlier, or to borrow even more in a hope to repay their debts. The question 'how to get the institutions and the farmers from this trap?' has become an acute problem for all parties.

It seems that the only solution is liberalising the land market. This means changing the land ownership relations from the state domain to 'individuals'. If this happens, at least 70-75% of small owners (mainly local farmers) will be thrown from their land. They will not be able to return to their land even as wage labourers as happens elsewhere. In the Jordan Valley, local male wage labour is not favourable. This means the demise of this group of people and the rise of 'we do not know how' in the 21th century.

Appendices

Number of irrigable dunums held prior to the project	Number of irrigable dunums to be allotted to holder
A. LAW 14 of 1959:	
30 - 50	To be allotted in full
51 - 100	50 d. plus 50% of the excess area
101 - 500	75 d. plus 25% of the excess area
501 - 1000	175 d. plus 15% of the excess area
Over 1000	300 dunums
B. LAW 13 of 1960:	
30 - 70	To be allotted in full
71 - 100	75 d. plus 50% of the excess area
101 - 500	87.5 d. plus 25% of the excess area
501 - 1000	187.5 d. plus 22% of the excess area
Over 1000	300 d. plus 10% of the excess area provided the total does not exceed 500 dunums.
C. LAW 31 of 1962:	
30 - 50	To be allotted in full
51 - 100	50 d. plus 25% of the excess area
101 - 500	62 d. plus 17% of the excess area
501 - 1000	130 d. plus 17% of the excess area
Over 1000	200 dunums

Table 1. Comparison of unit size scale in law 14 of 1959, law 13 of 1960, and law 31 of 1962. Source: (Hazleton 1974)

Type of crop	Ways of exploiting the land	Number of plots	%
Vegetables	Tenancy	108	15.4
	Family farms & Sharecropping	280	40.0
Citrus Fruits	Bayarah	290	41.4
Governmental property		22	3.2
Total		700	100%

Table 2. Distribution of plots in basin no. 23 according to the ways of exploiting the land and type of crop. Source: my field notes and the basin 23's file of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Year	Cereal Production (in 1000 tons)				Type & number of animals (in 1000 heads)			
	Wheat	Barely	White Maize	Sesame	Sheep	Goats	Cows	Camels
1927	35.0	12.0	3.22	20.0				
1947	37.0	3.0			125.0	280.0	59.0	
1948	100.0	441.0			113.0	332.0	64.0	
1949	139.0	56.0						
1950	106.0	41.0			226.0	358.0	81.0	
1951	69.0	50.0			274.0	393.0	42.0	
1952	220.0	93.0			223.0	348.0	32.0	
1953	100.0	113.0			226.0	324.0	71.0	15.0
1954	233.0	104.0			464.0	545.0	52.0	19.0
1955	79.0	25.0			515.0	626.0	99.0	23.0
1956	242.0	96.0			494.0	669.0	67.0	26.0
1957	220.0	81.0			453.0	541.0	64.0	13.0
1958	66.0	17.0			689.0	584.0	116.0	20.0
1959	103.0	26.0			621.0	454.0	100.0	23.0
1960	44.0	113.0	3.00	1.80	609.0	513.0	62.0	20.0
1961	138.0	62.0	8.10	2.20	528.0	451.0	45.0	19.0
1962	112.0	36.0	5.30	1.90	702.0	537.0	60.0	12.0
1963	76.0	23.0	3.40	1.70	741.0	565.0	61.0	13.0
1964	295.0	97.0	8.70	1.70	803.0	650.0	65.0	19.0
1965	278.0	96.0	8.30	1.40	987.0	759.0	73.0	19.0
1966	132.0	32.0	2.60	0.80	1136.0	766.0	78.0	17.0

Table 3. Cereal production, type and number of animals in Jordan for various years. Source: (Clawson 1971: 384, 420, 421, 418, 419; Ministry of Culture and Journalism 1972: 395)

Credit Sources	Loans (in 1000 JD)
Agricultural Bank	470
Construction Council	484
Cooperative Societies	68
Governmental Aids & Loans	340
Usury	2027
Total	3389

Table 4. Farmer's Indebtedness in 1955. Source: (Fanik 1970: 49)

Selected Years	Total population
1930	262,361
1935	282,944
1940	317,157
1943	340,000
1953	586,885
1955	642,147
1960	781,136
1968	112,600
1970	166,800
1976	201,840

Table 5. Estimated population of the East Bank (selected years). Source: (Konikoff 1946: 106; Department of Statistics 1976)

Years	Machines
1948	74
1950	84
1952	170
1956	439
1960	883
1962	1081
1964	1462
1966	2068
1973	3344
1975	3748
1977	4074
1979	4343

Table 6. Agricultural machines used and imported to Jordan (selected years) . Source: (Department of Statistics - various Years; Clawson and Landsberg 1971: 65). Data prior to 1967 include both West and East Bank.

Years	1969	1983	1984	1985
Loans	700,000	2,5478,209	25,513,898	26,289,000

Table 7. Loans of the commercial banks to the agricultural sector (selected years). Source: (Fanik 1970: 49; Ministry of Agriculture 1986: 49)

Credit Sources	Loans
Agricultural Credit Corporation	6.0
Commercial Banks	0.7
Jordan Cooperative Organization	0.5
Companies and Merchants	1.0
Usury	2.0
Others (relatives and friends)	0.3
Total	10.5

Table 8. Credits by source until 1969 in million JD. Source: (Fanik 1970: 49; Jordan Central Bank 1969, No.5)

Sources of credit	1983	1984	1985
ACC	5,605,485	5,467,559	7,930,299
JCO	3,244,654	1,696,524	1,902,245
JVFA	286,819	147,442	90,215
Total	9,136,958	7,311,525	9,922,759

Table 9. Loans of the ACC, JCO, and JVFA (selected years). Source: (Ministry of Agriculture 1986: 48)

Types of loans	Loans issued during 1979	Total amount of loans until 1970	Interest rate
Seasonal	1,122,314	1,175,643	8 %
Medium	2,344,046	9,995,977	7 %
Long -run	424,582	1,550,977	6 %

Table 10. Loans distribution of the ACC and interest rate for 1979. Source: (Regional Union for Finance 1981)

	Seasonal	Medium	Long-Run	Total	% of loans to JV farmers
1968				488000	
1978				3550979	
1979	2178978	152306	17000	3719042	40
1980	3306000	231700	5666	5628666	
1981	2556464	144269	7000	4006336	51
1982	2136305	606969	1600	2744874	
1983	3844690	229964	-	4074654	
1984	1224846	471678	-	1696524	
1985	1566390	335890	-	1902280	
1986	546035	296092	-	342127	44.4

Table 11. Loans, their distribution, and % of loans to the Jordan Valley's farmers given by agricultural cooperatives in various years. Source: (JCO 1968, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986; and Lanzendorfer 1985: 174).

Year	Pesticides and Herbicides	Fertilizers
1962		229.0
1965		1133.5
1972	808	7535.0
1976	664	987.0
1977	1451	773.0
1980	1850	2863.0
1981	1705	1691.0
1982	1143	5217.0
1983	844	27906.0
1984	922	5169.0
1985	606	8101.0
1986	1038	8025.0

Table 12. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides imported to Jordan for various years. Source: Department of Statistics - various years.

Project / Area		Cumulative Area		
		surface irrig.	pressure pipe	Total Area
East Ghor canal project + 8 Km Extension	1966	122,792	-	122,792
North of Zarqa river DA 1 - DA 23, excl. DA 3				
South of Zarqa river	1968	142,586	-	142,586
* DA 24 - 4,053 du				
* DA 25 - 15,741 du	19,794 du			
18 km extension project	1978	142,586	36,915	179,501
* DA 26 - 13,295				
* DA 27 - 13,360				
* DA 28 - 10,260	36,915 du			
(3) Zarqa triangle project	1978	142,586	51,129	193,715
* Zarqa Valley - 9,956 du (DA 29)				
* Zarqa Zor - 4,258 du (DA 30)	14,214 du			
(4) North East Ghor Project	1979	132,586	75,753	208,339
* Conversion 10,000 du				
* New lands 14,624 du (DA 33-39)	24,624 du			
(5) Hisban Kafrein project	1982	132,586	91,700	224,286
* DA 31 - 6,650 du				
* DA 32 - 9,297 du	15,947 du			
(6) Wadi Arab Irrigation	1984	124,342	103,944	228,286
* Conversion 8,244 du				
* New land 4,000 du	12,244 du			

Table 13. Development of irrigation area in the Jordan Valley Jordan Valley Authority Projects (areas in dunums). Note: In addition to the JVA project areas, irrigation was also practised in:

- Wadi Shueib 2,500 dunums

- private farm wells 21,230 dunums

Thus, the total irrigable area was 252,016 dunums by the end of 1986. Source: (JVA 1987)

	Northern Ghor	Middle Ghor	Southern Ghor
Cash	14.71 %	13.56 %	-
Sharecropping	83.88 %	81.36 %	95.74 %
Mixed	1.41 %	5.08 %	4.26 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Table 14. Ways of land leasing in the Jordan Valley. Source: (Mahadeen 1981: 106)

Period of project	Projects
1952-1966	Design and construction of East Ghor Canal
1963-1966	Ziglab Dam
1964-1967	East Ghor Community Development
1964-1967	Damia Junction / North Shuneh Rd.
1973-1977	East Ghor Canal Extension
1974-1977	Yarmouk - Dead Sea Rd.
1975-1978	Valley Village Development
1976-1978	Zarqa Triangle Irrigation
1976-1980	Magaren Dam Studies and Designs
1977-1984	Technical Assistance Irrigation Management Training
1977-1983	Farmers Association Technical Assistance, Training, credit
1981- present	Agricultural Research and Extension.

Table 15. Project sponsored by USAID in the Jordan Valley. Source: (Boeker 1988)

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Mohamed Fayez Tarawneh is Associate Professor at Yarmouk University, specialized in the Anthropology of development and particularly interested in rural development and social change. He is also the general manager of the 'Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia'. Some of his major publications concern a historical and social geographic study of the Jordanian town and countryside of Kerak, the participatory development in Wadi Araba and poverty in Jordan. A topic which he also investigated in the scope of his PhD research at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg published in 1994 as "Stämme, Landaufteilung und ländliche Siedlungsprozesse im 19./20. Jahrhundert im Karakgebiet (SüdJordanien)" (Erlangen: Fränkische Geographische Gesellschaft).

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Arabic Summary

إن أهمية تنوع واختلاف أشكال العمل في وظيفة الاقتصاد الريفي لمنطقة دير علا ووادي الأردن يمثل أحد القضايا الرئيسية في هذه الدراسة.

كما أن هذه الدراسة تهتم بإبراز جذور أشكال العمل المختلفة لذلك فإن التركيبة الريفية التي سبقت الحالية لمنطقة الدراسة تمثل أحد المسائل الهامة الأخرى.

تستند هذه الدراسة إلى عمل ميداني في منطقة دير علا في وادي الأردن استغرق ثلاثة أشهر عام 1986.

هذه الدراسة تتكون من خمسة فصول:

الفصل الأول يعرض المشكلة التي تعالجها هذه الدراسة، كما تعرض بعض المفاهيم النظرية والمنهجية التي اتبعت.

الفصل الثاني يناقش التطور التاريخي لأشكال الملكية الحالية في المنطقة.

الفصل الثالث يعرض التركيبة الاقتصادية - الاجتماعية القديمة (اقتصاد الحراثين) ، حيث يتم مناقشة العلاقات الاجتماعية لهذه التركيبة.

الفصل الرابع يناقش تطور نظام الديون ، ومؤسساته وآلياته المختلفة ويركز على بحث العوامل الداخلية والإقليمية والعالمية التي أثرت على المنطقة وأدت إلى اضمحلال اقتصاد الحراثين أما الفصل الخامس فإنه يستعرض التركيبة الريفية الحالية في المنطقة في هذه المناقشة هناك محاولة جادة لتحليل التنظيمات الاجتماعية للإنتاج لمعرفة كيفية عمل التنظيمات المختلفة ولتعريف العلاقات المحددة داخل المجموعة وبين الجماعات المختلفة في الوحدات الإنتاجية المختلفة. في الفصل الأخير يتم استعراض التغيرات التي حصلت في مجتمع الدراسة بعد إحدى عشرة سنة من قيام البحث الميداني الأول عام 1986.

إن ما نستطيع أن نستنتجه من هذه الدراسة أن إنتاج الخضراوات المكثف الموحد للسوق يتطلب عمل مكثف وعناية مستمرة. وتتلامح كلا من مزارع العمل - العائلية (المملوكة ومزارع المحاصصة) مع هذه المتطلبات، حيث أصبح العمل - العائلي شكلاً مهيمناً في الزراعة. بينما النوع الآخر من التنظيمات الإنتاجية التي تستخدم العمل المأجور المكثف والمنخرطة بنظام الديون كالمزارع المستأجرة وتلك التي تستخدم البيوت البلاستيكية تعاني من مشكلات جسيمة قد تؤدي إلى انحلال هذه الأشكال. بالإضافة إلى شكل العمل كمعيار أساسي في استمرار وتقوية أو انحلال هذه الأشكال، فإن السوق يمثل أيضاً عاملاً أساسياً في هذه المعادلة.

RURAL CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

The case of Deir Alla is a social and economic case study of developing Third World agriculture. The study is based upon historical sources, contemporary public information with statistics, and field work in the Jordanian village of Deir Alla. This fieldwork took place in 1986 and a report was prepared in 1989. For this publication additional field work in 1997 accounted for the rapidly changing social and economic situation.

The Ottoman feudal system, with the local *harrath* (ploughman) economy, changed gradually to private ownership since 1936, affecting the social relations of production. From 1950 onwards this development was strongly influenced by a sudden population increase (Palestinian refugees), the East Ghor irrigation system, the strong promotion of vegetable production and new technologies and institutions. Share cropping became the dominant feature of agrarian relations, but during the last decades international migrant labour expanded the wage labour system.

Some types of production organization, such as the small-owner-family-labour system, proved to be more successful than others, but with the current difficult economic situation the debt trap is felt by many of these small owners.

The book is important for the understanding of the social and economic history of the region, showing the dynamics of social change, but also because of its thorough analysis of the current situation, assessing theoretical models and predicting developments in a rapidly changing agricultural world.

Mohamed Fayez Tarawneh is Associate Professor at Yarmouk University, specialized in the Anthropology of development and particularly interested in rural development and social change. Furthermore, he is the general manager of the Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia. Some of his major publications concern a historical and social geographic study of the Jordanian town and countryside of Kerak, the participatory development in Wadi Araba and Poverty in Jordan.

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