

Dispossession and empowerment in the ethnography of Palestinians in the occupied territories

Frances Hasso, Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics in Occupied Palestine and Jordan. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 2005, 231 pp.

Tobias Kelly, Law, Violence and Sovereignty Among West Bank Palestinians. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006, 199 pp.

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Abstract This article is a review of two recent ethnographies on Palestinians in the West Bank: *Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics in Occupied Palestine and Jordan*, by Frances Hasso (2005), and *Law, Violence and Sovereignty Among West Bank Palestinian* by Tobias Kelly (2006). Hasso examines the significant and unique role of women in organizing the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the Occupied Territories, as compared to Jordan, while Kelly examines the jurisdictional and practical problems of labor disputes for male workers in a West Bank village. The two books exemplify how ethnographies of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories oscillate between documenting dispossession and empowerment.

Keywords Ethnography · Palestinians · West Bank · Resistance · Occupation

More than a decade ago Hammami and Tamari (1997) suggested that “Palestinian sociology has been enveloped by the incessant intrusions of politics into its agenda, its motifs, and even its methodology. The politics here involve the twin issues of dispossession (from the successive wars of 1948, 1967, and 1982) and of nation building (since 1988)” (p. 275). From this materialist starting point, they sort research in Palestinian sociology into three phases. The first phase in the late 1960s and

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the 1970s, focused on documenting processes of political and economic dispossession (land tenure, the peasant household, share-cropping, proletarianization, and capitalization of agricultural) and documenting “peasant culture” (village histories, folklore and customs). In this period, research on the changing political-economy was central to leftist political debates about class, and research on peasant culture was central to building a “national heritage movement” and “a unified national identity” (Hammami and Tamari 1997, p. 277). The second phase began in the 1980s, as Palestinian society moved from dispossession to resistance, Palestinian sociology studied voluntary works groups, labor organizing, women’s committees, the student movement, and Islamicist movement. The intifada uprising that began in 1987 led to a flurry of publications on popular mobilization and attracted many international authors. But like earlier research on dispossession, “much of this work, though vivid because of its proximity to the revolutionary moment, suffers from the absence of a critical perspective” (Hammami and Tamari 1997, p. 277). With the arrival of Oslo in 1993, a third phase emerged that focused on state-building projects. In addition to public opinion polls and census surveys by independent research centers and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), sociologists focused on “the nature of the new political order evolving in PNA-controlled areas, with their social and juridical ramifications” and a policy orientation (Hammami and Tamari 1997, p. 278).

Since Hammami and Tamari’s assessment, several book length ethnographies on the Occupied Palestinian Territories—largely from research in the West Bank—have appeared, which bare similarities to all three phases of their research typology, and answer their call for more attention to critical theory. For example, Rosenfeld (2004) and Taraki (2006) share similarities with the earliest phase of research that described dispossession and transformation at the level of work and family. But in both cases, these books introduce new critical perspectives, especially by integrating class, gender and cultural levels of analysis. Frances Hasso’s (2005) *Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics in Occupied Palestine and Jordan*, fits best into the middle phase of Palestinian sociology, in that it studies political organizing, but her comparative perspective enlightens the intersections of gender, class and national fields of power. Tobias Kelly’s (2006) *Law, Violence and Sovereignty Among West Bank Palestinians*, fits largely in the third phase of state-building in that it was designed to study a new regime of legal jurisdictions, but it indicates that a fourth phase may have emerged that examines the turning of Palestinian areas into “encysted” ghettos (Bowman 2007), or carceralized societies (Bornstein 2008).

Hasso’s book is an excellent merging of extensive new interviews and existing scholarship on women partisans in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). The DFLP emerged popularly, along with other Palestinian nationalist groups like Fateh and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), after the June 1967 war which defeated Nasser and brought an end to the dreams of pan-Arabists. Fateh, led by Yasser Arafat, was secular nationalist, but not leftist; the PFLP, led by George Habash, was leftist, but viewed national liberation as a priority above all other social and political struggles (p. 10); and in 1969, Nayef Hawatmeh (breaking from the PFLP) formed the DFLP, which argued for the primacy of class analysis and struggle (Hasso 2005, p. 11).

The DFLP was marked by an “intellectualism that often blunted the romance of militant violence, which was usually reigned back in favor of working within existing civil society and movement structures, grassroots mobilization, or institution building. These strategies made the party relatively inclusive of women in all political fields, since in comparison to men, much higher social risk is attached to their militant activity” (ibid, p. 41). Hasso’s research, however, indicates that there were differing commitments by partisans to mass mobilization and militarism in different countries at different historical moments, and she compares Jordan and the Occupied Territories. Both Jordanian and Israeli forces arrested, deported, and tortured political activists between 1967 and 1987, but in the DFLP women became more powerful in the Occupied Territories than they were in Jordan, and in the Occupied Territories they were more involved in mobilization and less vulnerable to sexual conservatism (ibid, p. 90). In 1989, Hasso worked with women activists in the Occupied Territories on a self study of their income generating operations and she interviewed 63 employees. She re-interviewed 56 of them as well as an additional 29 in 1995, and did further follow up in Syria, Jordan and the Occupied Territories in 2000 (ibid, pp. xxv–xxvii). Her comparison of women’s roles in the DFLP in the Occupied Territories and Jordan explains women’s relative empowerment in the Occupied Territories, and their loss of power in the 1990s, in relation to the different “political fields” in which they operated.

In Jordan, leftists in the DFLP and the PFLP called for the overthrow of the royal regime because it was a colonial creation like Israel (ibid, p. 35). A civil war in Jordan in 1970–1971, largely in Palestinian refugee-camps, crushed Palestinian militia, killed about 3,000 people, wounded about 10,000, led to the imprisonment and exile of thousands of activists, and nationalist movements were forced underground (ibid, p. 32). Consequently, the Jordan branch of the DFLP had “relatively rigid rules of membership and affiliation, particularly given the dangers of being exposed to Jordanian state repression, which was particularly harsh for involvement in leftist Palestinian organizations” (ibid, p. xix): “martial law helped to structure a secretive organization whose members had to prove their allegiance to a party program” (ibid, p. 109).

Protest was suppressed in Jordan, but professional associations and trade unionists “had significant clout” (ibid, p. 20); consequently, the Democratic Front in Jordan, called by the Arabic acronym *Majd*, organized in cells to recruit party members and party “friends” from unaffiliated women’s, professional, students, labor and charitable groups (ibid, p. 54). In the 1980s, *Majd* activists established several organizations that were not formally affiliated with the party, such as the League of Jordanian Democratic Women (*Rand*), the League of Jordanian Democratic Youth (*Rashad*), and the Workers Committees (ibid, p. 55). *Majd* women were as active as men “in many sectors and gained high-profile leadership positions in elections within the federation of bank clerks in Jordan (6,000–7,000 members) and the women’s federations” (ibid, p. 57).

Several factors limited the acquisition of power by *Majd* women. Like women elsewhere, they faced gendered constraints which included their triple burden of domestic, wage and political work (ibid, p. 107). Specific to Jordan, “political secrecy requirements and conservative social morality codes sometimes worked

together in a manner that allowed partisan men to control women's embodied gender or sexual expression" (ibid, p. 113). The Jordanian monarchy "relied on alliance with conservative tribal and religious forces. Here a patriarchal gender order serves as a palliative for men who might otherwise resist an undemocratic regime, evidencing how gender and sexuality are often at the heart of politics" (ibid, p. 18). Partisans in Jordan "were impacted by nationally bound and state-reinforced patriarchal gender logic and social organization in which few rewards were attached to women's political leadership and engagement" (ibid, p. 115).

In the Occupied Territories, "as in Jordan, the lack of legally permitted avenues for participation contributed to the politicization of professional organizations" (ibid, p. 22). However, the lack of a state, except for the Occupying Israeli Army, and the presence of international actors like the UN and international NGOs, provided a different space in which to operate. In 1972, Voluntary Work Committees (VWCs) at Birzeit University organized students, professors, secondary school teachers, professionals, and youth from the Jerusalem and Ramallah areas (ibid, p. 22). "By 1976, factional competition within the VWCs led to the creation of party-based 'voluntary work committees'" (ibid, p. 23). In 1978, DF partisans created the Workers' Unity Bloc and the Women's Work Committee, later called the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC). The WUB unionized in villages and towns, provided or coordinated low-cost or free services, (such as health care, legal aid, workers' education, and cultural events) and organized collective bargaining for those employed in the West Bank (ibid, p. 74).

"DFLP women were instructed by the party leaders outside the territories to join the Voluntary Work Committees, expand their membership base, and then recruit women directly into the DFLP" (ibid, p. 67). But in the Occupied Territories, organizers were "flexible in their application of the PFWAC program" and tempered the antireligious connotations of Marxism and the security risks of nationalism, sometimes to the chagrin of DFLP leaders (ibid, p. 79). Hasso quotes one activist who says:

I did not mobilize them with ideology like other members of the PFWAC were mobilized.... No. I used to say to them: "Who of you embroiders? Who of you knits?" I went down exactly to where people were. (ibid, p. 79)

In the early 1980s the PFWAC bought sewing machines and supplies for traditional women's crafts and organized a biannual bazaar for women to sell their products. By the mid-1980s, they had organized cooperatives for women to buy, sell, or trade their crafts and processed foods (ibid, p. 79). The PFWAC's established preschools, adult education and other cooperative projects in unisex spaces that provided a service for some, an income for some, and could raise women's gender consciousness and mobilize them for nationalist activity by creating associations outside of the home between housewives, employed married women, and politically active women (ibid, p. 80). The PFWAC activists negotiated with, as opposed to directly confronting, gender roles so that families, especially men, would not be threatened by women's activities outside of the home (ibid, p. 82). In this way, the DFLP in the Occupied Territories was "more independent of the central party, allowing for local pluralism and locally defined mobilization and

innovation” (ibid, p. 41). “The success of the PFWAC in particular widened the ranks and standing of women in the DF branch” (ibid, p. xx). “The impressive level of women’s involvement in this mass-based organization, in turn, increased women’s influence in the DF party branch in the territories” (ibid, p. 115).

The political field that shaped women’s partisan activity was not confined to the national context, but also included the changing global field. Clearly, DFLP party theory and practice developed “in relation to the worldwide revolutionary movements (and postcolonial states) of the 1950s and 1960s” (ibid, p. 32). Leftists had a commitment to “modernity” which included rationality, heavy industrialization, agrarian reform, “as opposed to feudalism, sectarianism, tribalism, and fatalism” (ibid, p. 32). “DFLP women were also affected by the 1975 Women’s Conference in Mexico: ‘We saw that there was a lively international women’s movement, women demanding their rights, making conferences, using particular slogans about women-these applied to our situation here’” (ibid, p. 68). However, DFLP women had to walk a careful line between advocating for their liberation, and voicing criticism of their oppression that would play into the hands of colonialism and Zionism that portrayed Arabs as backward. “Engaging in an internal gender critique with [foreign women’s] delegations, [Hasso argues], was viewed by many as destructive because it undermined the international case for Palestinian self-determination, which was assumed to require ‘civilization’” (ibid, p. xxv). “This cultural politics, in turn, muted Palestinian women’s explicit gender critiques of their own societies before English-speaking audiences, where they often focused instead on the costs of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and class oppression” (ibid, p. xxv). Alternatively, in the Occupied Territories women’s involvement symbolically demonstrated the “modernity” of Palestinians to the international community (ibid, p. 90). However, the “narratives of DF men often strongly distinguished between women’s public-sphere liberation and their sexual or bodily freedom, the latter being viewed as superficial, individualistic, and Western” (ibid, p. 100).

The intifada (1987–1992) remilitarized the struggle and was a setback for women. Communiques from the clandestine male dominated United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) “generally either avoided women and gender issues or reinforced an image of the intifada as a male endeavor supported by women” (ibid, p. 122). “Women were threatened and killed in other manifestations of a masculinized street politics. As the popular committees were made dangerous to join in August 1988, nationalist and Islamist ‘strike forces’ (*quwaat al-dhariba*), dominated by teenage boys and young men, became more powerful” (ibid, p. 125).

The threat of being accused of moral collaboration to some extent controlled all girls and women for a period, legitimating the restriction of their mobility and political activity, as well as their harassment, terrorization, and, occasionally, murder. The UNLU did not act quickly or firmly to defend women and girls from these campaigns, since it included factions involved in the killings and leftist authority within it was increasingly weakened as a result of imprisonment, deportation, and disagreements. The PFWAC and other women’s committees also did not actively challenge these attacks. (ibid, p. 126)

The arrival of Oslo and the PNA were further setbacks for women's leadership. Feminist activism "may have been seen as a liability by Palestinian men elites as they jockeyed for power in a state-building period" (ibid, p. 163). "The replacement of grassroots organizing with state building remasculinized national politics in the 1990s as women lost influence in agenda setting" (ibid, p. 131). Feminist organizations turned from mass mobilization to trying to shape the laws and policies of the emerging Palestinian state (ibid, p. 131).

The Oslo Process and the creation of the PNA undermined the mass mobilization of women and reorganized the limited access of Palestinians to their legal rights. Kelly (2006), echoing Hajjar (1997), shows how the continuing dominance of military governance in the lives of West Bank Palestinians since Oslo "means that their relationships with public officials are predominately those of subjects rather than citizens" (ibid, p. 13). Kelly's book describes six labor disputes in detail, collected during 18 months of fieldwork from the summer of 2000 to the spring of 2002, in a village in the Ramallah District. Four cases involve Palestinian workers and West Bank Palestinian private employers (three factories and a labor contractor); one involves Palestinian public school teachers and the Palestinian National Authority; and one involves a Palestinian worker and an Israeli settlement municipality in the West Bank. He also describes West Bank Palestinian workers inside Israel with several anecdotes, but no particular case of dispute is considered in detail. Generally, the cases illustrate that claiming one's legal rights are inextricably bound up with political and military power, and in Israel that means being Jewish, while among Palestinians it means personal connections to militia leaders.

Kelly describes the jurisdictional ambiguity in a dispute over severance between a West Bank Palestinian employee and his West Bank Israeli settlement employer. In the 1990s the PNA tried to prevent Palestinians from working in the settlements (ibid, p. 67), and in June 2002, the Israeli army banned settlers from employing West Bank Palestinians; however, settlements continued to employ them (ibid, p. 66). Many Palestinian lawyers argue that Israeli law should not apply in the West Bank, but PNA law, or Jordanian law should apply because the Israeli occupation is a violation of international law. But in this case, Israeli law, which was applied to the settlers, was of greater value to the Palestinian worker. In 2003, an Israeli National Labour Court ruling said that Jordanian law applied by the PNA was the default law in the West Bank but in "specific circumstances Israeli law could be applied if it could be proved that there was a discriminatory effect in not doing so" (ibid, p. 77). The case illustrates that legal jurisdiction in the West Bank is not really determined by the territory upon which one stands, but largely upon the personal ethno-national status of the individual parties.

When it comes to workers making claims against fellow Palestinians in the public or private sector, Kelly shows that connections to the coercive powers in the PNA are determinate.

When they had problems with their Palestinian employers, landlords or neighbours, the [Palestinian] villagers would seldom turn to the PNA courts.

Instead they would take their claims to one of the different branches of the

PNA security forces, or local political factions. This process intensified following the start of the second intifada, as the formal court system became increasingly paralysed and discredited in the eyes of many people in the village. Judges, witnesses and lawyers were often unable to reach the courts due to Israeli checkpoints, cases were extended indefinitely and armed Palestinian groups increasingly imposed their own visions of justice, without reference to the formal court system. In the face of the seeming rise of the *fawdat as-silah* (chaos of weapons), alternative power structures appeared to be filling the vacuum left by the apparent collapse of the PNA. (ibid, p. 113)

“Most notably, Preventative Security and Force 17 would routinely become involved in the enforcement of dispute settlements and forms of discipline, cutting the courts entirely out of the process” (ibid, p. 124). “More importantly perhaps, the governor, who was nominally responsible for coordinating all the PNA security forces in his region, also had his own police force and prison, housed in the same compound as his office” (ibid, p. 125). “In this context, there were frequent accusations that [the governor’s] office favoured the dominant economic and political personalities in Ramallah. One of the unionists involved in [a factory] strike claimed to [Kelly] that [the governor] owed his position to the large families of Ramallah and therefore did not want to make problems with them” (ibid, p. 135). Access to legal rights was dependent on mobilizing political relationships to these coercive powers (ibid, p. 136).

Kelly describes how coercion also directly shaped the making and implementation of civil service law. When public school teachers struck in protest of political corruption, leading members of the strike were arrested by Palestinian security forces, taken to prison and charged with abuse of power (ibid, p. 146). Some teachers were fired and others forced into retirement.

The PNA police closed down a privately owned television station in Hebron and the Peace and Love radio station in Ramallah, after they broadcast programmes that appeared to support the teachers’ demands. No other newspaper or radio station, in a media largely seen as loyal to the PNA reported the teachers’ demands in detail. The PNA-owned “Voice of Palestine” took to broadcasting apparently fake announcements from the [strike organization], saying that the strike was over. Intimidation by the police was widespread. In Hebron a demonstration by students who supported the strike was violently broken up. In several other places, most notably Ramallah, police officers surrounded the schools of striking teachers. In May 2000, Omar Assaf, one of the most prominent of the teachers’ leaders, was arrested. (ibid, p. 148)

“Although by no means a unified entity, the various sections of the PNA used their administrative and coercive power in order to prevent [legal changes demanded by the teachers] from being enforced” (ibid, p. 150); furthermore, “after the leadership of the strike was arrested in Ramallah, many teachers began to lose interest in the [strike organization]. Most of the teachers in [Kelly’s village of study] simply disavowed any connection with the strike organisers” (ibid, pp. 155–156).

Kelly says that “support among the general public and teachers began to decrease considerably. Many people accused the strikers of trying to ‘undermine the PNA’ or having their own political agenda” (ibid, p. 148). Kelly relates that one informant told him that the striking teachers had failed to show respect to Arafat, the symbol of the nation. Similar statements were being made daily in the Palestinian media by political appointees like the Deputy Minister of Education, and the leaders of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) (ibid, p. 158).

Oddly, after describing it, Kelly dismissed the role of coercion in breaking popular support for the strike. He claims that the people in his village of study “were far from scared of the PNA security forces, as their presence in the village was severely limited” (ibid, p. 161).

The PNA security forces were a source of amusement rather than fear. In particular, the disparity in the weaponry available to the Israeli and PNA security forces was a source of constant jokes, and the few security officers in the village were constantly being teased for being ineffective. (ibid, p. 162)

People took the side of the PNA against the striking teachers because, he says, the PNA “was absent from the lives of the people of the village” (ibid, p. 162). “Paradoxically, the need to support the PNA did not result from its tangible presence, but rather from its absence and the fears that this produced” (ibid, p. 163). “The anxieties caused by the potential absence of any institutions to support the village’s residents meant that the PNA gained their support, not despite, but because of its own failings” (ibid, p. 164). To me, this severely underestimates the power of the militia in ordinary people’s lives, and contradicts Kelly’s own evidence. Ultimately the fierce opposition to the PLO’s autocratic rule of the PNA was expressed in the elections of 2006, but that was too late for Kelly’s book.

Regarding Palestinian employment in Israel, Kelly’s research presents findings similar to my own (Bornstein 2002). For example, he explains how: even those with permits are unable to enforce their claims due to security barriers (ibid, p. 15); contractors often under-reported the wages of those with permits (ibid, p. 102); and soldiers make local arrangements at checkpoints that allow Palestinians without permits to cross (ibid, p. 91). In some cases the similarity is uncanny. For example, I wrote:

[My informant] explained to me that a month earlier, when he tried to cash his paycheck, no funds were available in the account. The contractor assured him that it would be made up in the next paycheck. It was not, and after a second month of work without pay, [my informant] told the contractor that he was now two months behind in his salary. Until the money came, he was not going to work, nor were the other workers...Though he kept himself busy with worthwhile projects (planting and pruning, painting and repairing) he often repeated that he hated being around the house “like a woman”. (Bornstein 2002, pp. 54–55)

Kelly wrote:

[My informant] decided to carry on working without pay, as there were no other jobs available. It was, he told me, better to go to work than stay at home “like a woman”. However, when the time for the next month’s wages came, the contractor said he still did not have any money. This time [my informant] had demanded his last two months’ wages and told his employer that he was not going to work if he did not get paid. The contractor again said he had no money and therefore he would not pay. [My informant] told me that at this point he had got angry with the contractor and had demanded his money again. (ibid, p. 101)

Kelly’s cases provide valuable examples of the injustice of the post-Oslo arrangements, but some of his assertions are problematic. For example, in order to establish the importance of studying labor disputes, Kelly quotes one informant saying that “virtually everyone he knew who had worked in Israel had, at one time or another, taken a case to the Israeli courts, or at least visited an Israeli lawyer” (ibid, p. 7). Kelly says that “nearly everyone” he met in the village had a story about taking a case to court in Israel and the “awareness of legal rights and the use of litigation was an integral part of life” (ibid, p. 27). To me, this is astonishing, and Kelly admits that this observation “strongly contrasts with the claims normally made about residents of similar West Bank villages...[The lawyer and anthropologist George] Bisharat has written that for many Palestinians, there is a lack of ‘awareness and involvement in the law of the lawyers and the state’” (ibid, p. 27). Kelly says that he will “reconcile these claims about the ‘alienness’ to Palestinians of formal state law with the fact that [he] was constantly being introduced to people who had either won great amounts of money in the courts, or were angry and upset about losing a case” (ibid, p. 27). This contradiction, however, is not reconciled, nor is the widespread use of litigation substantiated by convincing data. In fact, Kelly points out several times that “more often than not workers were reluctant to push for the enforcement of the law, which seemed to be routinely broken” (ibid, p. 42), which is more consistent with my own research (Bornstein 2002, p. 60).

There are actually numerous other details, mostly tangential to the cases at hand, that are problematic. Kelly states that while he was in “the village it was difficult to find any examples of the significance of *hamula* [clan] membership” (2006, p. 36). While this may be true for his village, wider research indicates that the clan’s significance has increased as evidenced by higher rates of *hamula* endogamy (Johnson 2006). Kelly claims that Palestinian citizens of Israel preferred marrying their daughters to West Bank Palestinians, because they were more traditional and respectable, but West Bank Palestinians did not want to marry their daughters to Palestinian citizens of Israel because such men were not trustful (2006, p. 97). While some may have told Kelly that, in my experience, people have differing opinions based on multiple criteria, but many stated the opposite, i.e. that West Bank men were untrustworthy because they only wanted Palestinian Israeli women for the ID card and, consequently, the parents of Palestinian women with Israeli citizenship demanded expensive prenuptial divorce agreements which are recorded in religious courts (Bornstein 2002, p. 109). The anecdote that was the most disturbing was about Palestinian men who were forced to sleep inside Israel for

work because it was too dangerous to cross back and forth everyday. In regard to their time in Israel, Kelly says that they “relished the chance to escape their families and experience what they called *hurriyya* (freedom) in Israel. When I visited their flat it would be full of Israeli soft-porn magazines and the smell of marijuana” (ibid, p. 92). While I do not doubt the truthfulness of his reported observations, as the sole characterization of workers in hiding in Israel, it could lead an unknowing reader to misunderstand their general conditions. My own friends and acquaintances who have had to hide at night in order to work during the day are not partying in Tel Aviv, but are living in construction sites, garages and farms, in shelters such as shipping containers, without proper facilities, suffering separation from their wives and children, and fearful of police raids. These blind spots may be related to Kelly’s avoidance of Palestinian family life and his lack of engagement with Palestinian women, the later of which he acknowledges (ibid, p. 23).

Despite these details with which I quibble, Kelly’s descriptions of the experiences of people on the ground enlighten “the context for the wider violence. Perhaps most importantly, the implications of these small-scale conflicts, and their injustices, will need to be addressed if any future peace process is to have a lasting purchase” (ibid, p. 8). Ultimately, Kelly’s book affirms a smart and critical point: “if access to their legal rights is to be effectively guaranteed for all the people who live in the region, the paradigm of collective sovereignty and separation will have to be radically rethought. The promotion of collective rights, in the face of territorial integration and the unequal distribution of political and economic resources, not only means that access to collective rights is one-sided, but that individual rights are always in question” (ibid, p. 181).

Kelly’s book may be an indication that Palestinian sociology is moving from the study of state-building, to a new wave of studying dispossession. Hasso’s book, too, which began during the second phase of activist studies shows how the arrival of state-building was, ironically, partly a slide away from popular democracy. It may be that Hammami and Tamari’s three phases of Palestinian sociology are not linear but cyclical. It may be more accurate to say that research is oscillating between studying dispossession and victimization and studying resistance and empowerment.

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