

<b>Institution: University of Sussex</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA 21 Politics and International Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> Challenging Domination and Promoting Cooperation in Israeli-Palestinian Water Politics
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This case study focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict within the context of the Oslo peace process. It documents four areas of impact, the underpinning research and associated engagement and dissemination activity having: (1) [REDACTED TEXT] (2) significantly enhanced public and policy understanding of, and debate on, the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict, within Israel, the Palestinian territories and internationally; (3) [REDACTED TEXT] and (4) contributed to the emergence of influential critiques of international policy on water ‘cooperation’.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>This case study draws upon work conducted by Jan Selby on the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict. First, the research has shown that this conflict is much less intractable than is often claimed. The research has critiqued pessimistic Malthusian accounts of coming ‘water wars’, as well as those liberal functionalist readings which see water cooperation as a potential catalyst to peace-making. It has shown that water is becoming less, not more, important as a source of power and conflict, and that the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict would be solvable, were its political context different or were other core final status issues close to being resolved. The research has argued, in sum, for a politically and economically contextualised approach to the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict, and to water conflicts more generally [see e.g. Section 3, R1, R2].</p> <p>Second, and more crucially for the purpose of this case study, Selby’s research has advanced a set of critical analyses of existing Israeli-Palestinian water relations. The 1995 Oslo II Agreement – which transferred powers from Israel to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank, and remains in effect today – included lengthy provisions on water that promised increased supplies for West Bank Palestinian communities, and established a system of ‘coordinated management’, including a Joint Water Committee (JWC) with equal Israeli and Palestinian representation. These terms were initially lauded as amongst the most far-reaching and positive of the Oslo peace process. Selby’s research showed, however – in the first substantive critiques of these terms – that they essentially reflected Israeli positions and interests, and were facilitating the reproduction and extension of Israeli control over trans-boundary water resources, as well as a worsening of the already critical water supply situation within West Bank Palestinian communities [e.g. R3].</p> <p>Subsequently, Selby was given access to JWC negotiation archives, and used this material to produce a systematic qualitative and quantitative analysis of JWC processes and outcomes for 1995-2008 [R4]. Key findings of this research were: that Israeli-Palestinian water ‘cooperation’ has been associated with a significant per capita decline in Palestinian water supplies; that Israel has consistently used the JWC to veto Palestinian water developments; that Israel has repeatedly made its approval of Palestinian projects conditional upon simultaneous Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) approval of water facilities for its illegal West Bank settlements; and that the PWA – with the knowledge of PA President Abbas and prior to him President Arafat – had approved every Israeli application for water supply facilities for settlements, despite them being illegal under international law, and one of the major obstacles to Palestinian statehood. The latter finding constituted the first such evidence of the PA lending its official consent to parts of Israel’s settlement expansion programme.</p> <p>This research was all conducted by Jan Selby, initially at Lancaster and Aberystwyth, but since January 2005 at Sussex. Since then, Selby’s research in this area has been supported by the ESRC, and the EU FP7 project Climate Change, Hydro-Conflicts and Human Security (CLICO).</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p><b>R1</b> Selby, J. (2005) ‘Oil and water: the contrasting anatomies of resource conflicts’, <i>Government and Opposition</i>, 40(2): 200-24. ISSN 0017-257X.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

- R2** Selby, J. and Hoffmann, C. (2012) 'Water scarcity, conflict and migration: a comparative analysis and reappraisal', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 30(6): 997-1014. ISSN 1472-3425.
- R3** Selby, J. (2003) 'Dressing up domination as "cooperation": the case of Israeli-Palestinian water relations', *Review of International Studies*, 29(1): 121-38. ISSN 0260-2105.
- R4** Selby, J. (2013) 'Cooperation, domination and colonisation: the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee', *Water Alternatives*, 6(1): 1-24. ISSN 1965-0175.

All four of these publications were subject to double blind peer review. R1 and R3 were submitted for RAE 2008. R2 and R4 are submitted for REF 2014. Outputs can be supplied on request.

### 4. Details of the impact

As summarised in section 1, this research has had impacts in four areas:

1. [REDACTED TEXT]

#### **2. Enhanced public and policy understanding and debate:**

Selby's published analysis of the JWC negotiation archives [R4] has generated extensive debate, and some policy change. This research was intentionally published in an open access journal to maximise non-academic readership. It was also presented to a range of policymaking audiences (including in the West Bank, and at the European Commission); and was summarised in a widely disseminated policy briefing [C5].

The findings of this research were extensively covered within the Israeli, Palestinian and international media, including in *The Guardian*, the leading liberal Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, and the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds* [C6]. They were disseminated by Palestinian civil society organisations, international Palestinian solidarity groups, and international donor organisations supporting the Palestinian water sector [C7]. They were also widely read and circulated by local and international policymakers. For example, the research was read and commented upon within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and distributed to the UK Consulate in Jerusalem and the UK Embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman, as it provided information on the subject which was previously not known to British officials [C8]. The research has already been extensively cited, for example by the leading Palestinian human rights NGO Al-Haq [C9]. Indicative of the impact of this research, Selby has been invited to present it before the Arab League [C10].

In turn, the research has generated public discussion on the JWC and appropriate political responses to it. Within the Palestinian water community, the revelation of the extent of PWA approval of settlement infrastructure provoked extensive and heated debate, culminating in a former head of the PWA – the Palestinian official who had been most centrally involved in approving settlement water facilities – writing a 7,000 word response [C11]. Disappointingly (though unsurprisingly, given the weakness of the anti-occupation movement within Israeli society), there has been no equivalent debate within Israel.

The research has also enhanced understanding and contributed to policy change amongst international donors. Selby's research showed that donor-funded water projects in the West Bank have often been approved because the PWA was simultaneously approving settlement facilities, and thus that donors have, whether wittingly or unwittingly, been complicit in activity which they themselves view as illegal and a major obstacle to peace. While a few donors had previously known about this, most donors did not: for example, according to the ICRC, it was not aware that approval of one of its water projects had been negotiated as part of a quid pro quo linked to PWA approval of a settlement facility [C12]. The extent to which this research has also led to changes in donor policies is more difficult to say. [REDACTED TEXT] Equally, in recent interviews, donors have been uniformly unwilling to go on record expressing negative views of the JWC [C12]. [REDACTED TEXT]

3. [REDACTED TEXT]

#### **4. Challenges to international policy on water 'cooperation':**

International policy on trans-boundary water issues favours 'cooperation of any sort, no matter how slight', on the grounds that 'cooperation' is preferable to 'conflict'. This orthodoxy has recently been subject to extensive critique from 'hydro-hegemony' researchers, who have sought to show how

## Impact case study (REF3b)

water 'cooperation' can function as an instrument of hegemony and injustice. Selby's critique of 'cooperation' in Israeli-Palestinian water relations has provided the formative empirical evidence for this research programme [C14]. In turn, hydro-hegemony research has been widely read, and lessons from it learned, within the international water policy community. For example, hydro-hegemony research, and Selby's work, have influenced the thinking of the Stockholm International Water Institute (one of the leading water policy institutes worldwide) and made it better understand that cooperation is not a panacea or something that should be promoted at any cost [C15].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- C1** [REDACTED]  
**C2** [REDACTED]  
**C3** [REDACTED]  
**C4** [REDACTED]  
**C5** Selby, 'Water cooperation – or instrument of control?' Global Insights Policy Brief (University of Sussex, March 2013). At: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/global/showcase/globalinsights>  
**C6** Ian Black, 'Water under the bridge: how the Oslo agreement robbed the Palestinians', *The Guardian* (4 February 2013). At: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/on-the-middle-east/2013/feb/04/israel-palestinians-water-arafat-abbas>. Amira Hass, 'Liquid asymmetry: how the PA is forced to support water projects for West Bank settlements', *Ha'aretz* (6 April 2013). At: <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/liquid-asymmetry-how-the-pa-is-forced-to-support-water-projects-for-west-bank-settlements.premium-1.513694>. 'British newspaper: the Oslo Agreement was a means to dispossess Palestinians of water and lands', *Al-Quds* (5 February 2013). At: <http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/416096>  
**C7** See e.g. websites of the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem: <http://www.arij.org/publications/papers.html>; the Israel Occupation Archive: <http://www.israeli-occupation.org/2013-03-09/researcher-uncovers-hidden-facts-of-israeli-palestinian-water-politics/>; and the Emergency Water and Sanitation-Hygiene Group: <http://www.ewash.org/en/?view=79YOcy0nNs3D76djujAnNDST>  
**C8** Research Counsellor, Middle East and North Africa (and Head of Research Analysts, FCO, from July 2010 to July 2013), email to Jan Selby (18 October 2013).  
**C9** Elisabeth Koek, *For One People Only: Discriminatory Access and Water-Apartheid in the OPT* (Ramallah: Al-Haq, 2013). At: <http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/water-for-one-people-only-discriminatory-access-and-water-apartheid-in-the-opt>  
**C10** PWA Deputy Chairman, email to Jan Selby (30 March 2013).  
**C11** Fadel Kawash, 'A commentary on what *Ha'aretz* newspaper published in relation to a British researcher's claim that the Palestinian Authority approved the construction of water projects for Israeli settlements considering this as an acknowledgement from the Authority of the legality of settlements', (April 2013) (in Arabic). Original at various sites including: <http://www.fateh.dk/2013-03-10-19-02-16/2011-12-31-10-28-42/3473-2013-04-16-21-02-52.html>. Translation available on request.  
**C12** Transcripts of interviews with, and email replies to questions from, international donors working in the Palestinian water sector (2013). Available on request.  
**C13** [REDACTED]  
**C14** Quote from: United Nations Development Programme, *Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis* (New York: UNDP, 2006), p. 226. For a critique drawing upon Selby's work see e.g. Mark Zeitoun and Jeroen Warner, 'Hydro-hegemony: a framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts', *Water Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (2006), pp. 435-60.  
**C15** Director, Transboundary Water Unit, Stockholm International Water Institute, email to Jan Selby (23 October 2013).