Navigating Past the Crucible and into the Blue

The Water Energy Nexus: The bold plan signed by Israel, Jordan and the UAE addressing climate, peace and trade. Can the promise of a better future really be wrested from the clutches of past conflict in the Middle East?

By Tobias Gisle
Abstract

The Water Energy Nexus or WEN is an understanding between Israel, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) whereby Israel will provide Jordan with desalinated water in return for Jordan providing Israel with renewable energy (RE). The UAE will finance the new RE projects in Jordan earmarked for this task. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three countries was signed in December of 2021. This idea was hatched by the NGO EcoPeace and under the framework of the Abraham Accords signed in 2020 between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain and the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994. Yet even this ambition is modest in comparison to the visions of EcoPeace, where in the longer term they would like to see the EU as the model to aspire to, using green technology as the founding pillar to drive trade, expand renewable energy, export water and water usage models and create a bedrock of expanding peace.

This thesis will attempt to ascertain how credible these dreams are by delving into the histories of each of these three countries regarding diplomacy, environment, green technology, the green transition, land usage, water and narrative. As a starting point, it will evaluate current narratives coming from Israel and the Arab world by looking at articles mentioning the “other countries” in three newspapers, Al Jazeera, Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post. Above all the background of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict looms large in many of these questions.

Contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ p. 7

1.1 Aim ............................................................................................................................................... p. 8

1.2 Method and Theory ......................................................................................................................... p. 8

2. Setting the Stage. Climate, EcoPeace and the Abraham Accords ......................................................... p. 9

2.1 Climate .......................................................................................................................................... p. 9

2.2 EcoPeace Middle East, The Green Blue Deal (GBD) and the Water Energy Nexus (WEN) ................................................................................................................................................. p. 10

2.3 The Abraham Accords ..................................................................................................................... p. 12

2.4 Ethics, About the Author ................................................................................................................. p. 12

2.5 Summary, Stage Set ......................................................................................................................... p. 13

3. Finger on the Pulse – Media Depicting the Other, Al Jazeera, Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post ......................................................................................................................................................... p. 13

3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... p. 13

3.2 Method .......................................................................................................................................... p. 14

3.3 Aim and Timeframe ......................................................................................................................... p.15

3.4 Media ............................................................................................................................................ p. 16

3.5 Al Jazeera, (AJ) ............................................................................................................................ p. 16

3.5.1 The Limitations of Choosing Al Jazeera ...................................................................................... p. 18

3.6 The Jerusalem Post (JP) ................................................................................................................ p. 18

3.7 Times of Israel (TOI) ...................................................................................................................... p. 18

3.7 Keywords ...................................................................................................................................... p. 18

3.9 Analysis ......................................................................................................................................... p. 19
3.9.1 Positives and Negatives................................................................. p. 19
3.9.2 Jordan and the al-Aqsa Mosque............................................... p. 19
3.9.3 The United Arab Emirates in the Israeli Press........................... p. 21
3.9.4 Themes: Stalwarts of Contention, Dreams of Collaboration....... p. 22
  3.9.4.1 Threats to Collaboration Coming from Israel...................... p. 22
  3.9.4.2 Threats to Collaboration Coming from the Arab World....... p. 28
  3.9.4.3 Apples and Pears. Tracking Narratives of the Same Event..... p. 36
  3.9.4.4 Fake it ‘til You Make It. The UAE in the Israeli Press........ p. 39
3.10 Summary, Media Narratives......................................................... p. 43

4. The Crucible. The History of Israel and Palestine and the Historical Narrative........ p. 45
4.1 Introduction.................................................................................... p. 45
4.2 Method......................................................................................... p. 45
4.3 Aim............................................................................................. p. 45
4.4 Theory......................................................................................... p. 46
4.5 Why the WEN?............................................................................ p. 49
4.6 Israel Through Time. History, Ideology, Diplomacy and Environment........ p. 49
  4.6.1 Zionism and the Triumph over Nature................................. p. 49
  4.6.3 From Theory to Practice. Building Institutions to Divide and Settle the Land................................................................. p. 53
  4.6.4 1967. Occupation and Polarization. Continuities and Discontinuities. p. 56
  4.6.5 The Rise of Revisionist Zionism and the Settlement Movement..... p. 57
  4.6.6 The Left and a Lesson in Changing the Narrative.................. p. 58
4.6.7 Netanyahu, Populism, the Right and Foreign Relations......................... p. 59

4.6.8 Summary, Israel Through Time................................................................. p. 60


4.7.1 Diplomacy in Israel and the Abraham Accords.................................... p. 61

4.7.2 Water Management in Israel................................................................. p. 65

4.7.2.1 Occupation of Water........................................................................ p. 66

4.7.2.2 Let there be Water............................................................................ p. 68

4.7.2.3 Water, Narrative and Ideology......................................................... p. 71

4.7.3 Renewable Energy in Israel................................................................. p. 73

4.7.4 Environmentalism in Israel................................................................. p. 75

4.7.5 Summary, The Present Moment.......................................................... p. 77

5. The Arab Predicament, The UAE, Jordan and the Palestinian Question............... p. 77

5.1 Aim........................................................................................................... p. 77

5.2 Method..................................................................................................... p. 78

5.3 Unity and Disunity. The Crucible of the Palestine Question...................... p. 78

5.4 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan........................................................ p. 81

5.4.1 Palestinians and Jordanians................................................................. p. 83

5.4.2 Economy of Jordan............................................................................... p. 83

5.4.3 Renewable Energy in Jordan............................................................... p. 84

5.4.4 Diplomacy in Jordan: Peace with Israel and the Abraham Accords..... p. 85

5.4.5 Jordan at a Crossroads........................................................................ p. 86

5.5 The United Arab Emirates (UAE)............................................................ p. 86
1. Introduction

For the Middle East, the geographical reality of water shortage, climate change, and the global need for an energy transition are all factors that impact the present and future of the region. Rising to these challenges will be difficult without international cooperation. In recognition of these basic facts, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the Water Energy Nexus (henceforth WEN) was signed among Israel and Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December 2021 during the UN Climate Change Conference 27 (COP 27) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (Eyl-Mazzenga, 2022). Under the terms of the agreement, Israel will build or expand desalination plants which will provide Jordan with large quantities of water, a resource that the desert kingdom is greatly lacking (Yoon et al, 2021), from the Mediterranean via pipelines. In return for these water projects, Jordan will build solar farms in its desert interior that will be connected to the Israeli grid and supply Israel with green energy. In addition to Jordan and Israel, the UAE is also involved in the deal as it will provide the funding for the solar and wind farms. In short, this deal potentially presents many opportunities to deal with issues such as water security, the health of waterways, emission reduction, diplomacy, the opportunity to boost trade while at the same time addressing some of the medium- and long-term climate and environmental concerns and promote peace in the region. Furthermore, at its most visionary, this is a project which wants to build a framework on which to build an EU-like project in the Middle East based on renewable energy and desalination (Zeveloff, 2019).

The UAE, Israel, and Jordan are all very different countries with different yet at times interlocking histories. Israel and Jordan are the two states that have the most to do with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict whilst the UAE is outside this immediate neighbourhood. The UAE is one of the richest countries in the region due to its oil reserves, Jordan is one of the poorest and Israel is an OECD member with a diverse economy with particularly strong sectors in the defence industries and in hi-tech. On the other hand, in many Arab countries, Israel is a pariah state that they associate with Arab humiliation and the Nakba. All deals with Israel are bound to be harshly criticized in the region.

Two developments have been instrumental to create the conditions where MoU could be signed. The first is the work of the NGO EcoPeace Middle East, and the second is the Abraham Accords. EcoPeace is the organization that came up with the idea of the WEN as a part of the Green Blue Deal it has proposed for the region discussed below. The Abraham Accords are a set of peace and trade agreements originally signed in 2020 among Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain (Yossef, 2021).
There are many threads that could be researched in this area of study. There is a need for a detailed analysis of the technical requirements, the pros and cons of desalination at scale, the problems connected with renewable energy strategies, and the feasibility of changing the economies of the Middle East into a hub of renewable energies. Although I shall briefly touch on some of these issues, the primary focus will be another.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to ascertain how credible the project is regarding diplomacy, environment green technology, the green transition, land usage, water and narrative. Above all looking at the background, “the crucible”, of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the problems associated with trying to navigate around this central issue. Therefore, I have divided the thesis into four main chapters, with the theories specific to each chapter presented in the introduction to each. Chapter 2 of the thesis, “Setting the Stage” is a section about the region in general terms, speaking specifically to the issue of climate, EcoPeace and the Abraham Accords. Chapter 3, “Finger on the Pulse” is dedicated to current press narratives. Here I have sourced articles from the Israeli press, the “Jerusalem Post” and “Times of Israel” that write about Jordan and the UAE respectively. For one view from the Arab perspective, hostile to both the UAE and to Israel, I have sourced articles from Al Jazeera mentioning Israel.

For chapter 4 and 5 of the thesis, I will take deeper dive into the history of the region. Therefore, chapter 4 is titled “The Crucible” about Israel, the conflict and issues related to the WEN. Chapter 5 is entitled “The Arab Predicament” about the view of the conflict and issues related to the WEN from some perspectives from the Arab world. This chapter, 5, is then further divided into sections about of Jordan and the UAE respectively to show their interests and perspectives separately. After this presentation of history and current attitudes I will attempt to draw some conclusions in chapter 6, “Conclusion to the Thesis”. Prior research will be mentioned wherever relevant, but it is worth noting that I have not found any prior research pertaining directly to the WEN, rather I rely mainly on news articles and EcoPeace own plan to assess the project directly.

1.2 Method and Theory

The method as such will be most clearly shown in chapter 2, “Finger on the Pulse” On these articles I will perform critical discourse analysis (CDA) to try to discern prevailing trends and underlying ideologies present in the articles. For the other chapters in the thesis, I will continually present the underlying
theories in each chapter, for example settler colonial theory and sectarian securitization theory in the chapter 4 on Israel.

2. Setting the Stage. Climate, EcoPeace and the Abraham Accords

2.1 Climate

“The main expected changes are higher temperatures and more heat waves, lower and less reliable precipitation and more extreme rainfall events. Second-round effects are likely to include reduction in soil moisture, run-off and groundwater recharge, increased frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, loss of winter precipitation storage in snowpack, and sea water intrusion into coastal aquifers as sea levels rise.” (Ward and Ruckstuhl, 2017, p.39).

(Climate impacts for the Middle East include) “decreased precipitation, significant warming, more frequent extreme weather events, and a rise in sea level. (as well as posing) key hazards posed by these changes—greater water scarcity, falling agricultural productivity, an increased probability of flash floods, and saline intrusion into groundwater—will be accentuated by a growing population.” (Mason, Zeitoun, and Mimi, 2012 p.38)

The Middle East is one of the places in the world where climate change is expected to have the biggest effects. It is one of the hottest regions in the world and one with a large and growing problem of water scarcity, rising seas, expanding deserts and a growing number of days per year of extreme heat. This is made worse because it is a densely populated region, especially along the coastlines. Rabinowitz has compiled some of the numbers that face the Middle East according to climate projections. He has found that the projections are dire, “temperature hikes in the region will be significantly steeper than those predicted for the world at large. By 2050, average yearly temperatures across the Middle East could be 1.5 degrees centigrade higher than they were in 2005; by 2100 they could be 4 degrees above their 2005 figure—double the projected planetary rise” (Rabinowitz, 2020, p17). However, the specific problems faced by climate change are different in the various countries. For Israel, one of the hardest challenges may be desertification, as Pink explains “There is evidence to suggest a that 50% reduction in rainfall in the Jordan River basin will occur. (...) Approximately 50% of Israeli farmland is threatened by climate” (Pink, 2018, p.193 and 196). For Jordan, as I will show in the section on Jordan, the greatest threat may be to the water supply “climate models predict further increased temperatures with doubling in the frequency, duration, and intensity of droughts by 2100” (Yoon, 2021, p.1). For the UAE, with several main population centres based on shallow beaches on the edge of the sea, the greatest threat may be sea level rise.
Both Rabinowitz and Ward also speak about the inequality hidden in the numbers, not only will the effects be felt in massively different ways for rich and for poor, both between countries and within them, but the responsibility for the emissions also causing climate change is similarly skewed. In per capita terms, the average Emirati citizen is the 9th highest emitter in the world, the average Israeli is the 29th highest whilst the average Jordanian lies in 104th place and the average Palestinian at 180th place (Rabinowitz, 2020, p.36). Perhaps it is thus not surprising that the perception of environmental problems in the region focuses less on emissions and more on the related but more tangible problem of a lack of water (Keulertz and McKee, 2021). After all, the poor in the region are hardly contributing to climate change whilst many of the rich in the region have a vested interest, as oil and gas producers, not to speak too loudly about the cause of the change. Water on the other hand is a topic everyone can agree on must be solved. Yet Rabinowitz, like EcoPeace, have hopes for the countries in the Persian Gulf and the “sun belt” writ large, because of their perfect placement for RE and for their susceptibility to the effects of climate change. Israel has reasons of its own to decarbonize, both because of the effects of climate change and its precarious position within the Middle East, and the dependence on the EU and the US for trade and diplomatic support.

2.2 EcoPeace Middle East, The Green Blue Deal (GBD) and the Water Energy Nexus (WEN)

“Bromberg likens the EcoPeace plan to a similar agreement that helped cement peace in Europe six years after the end of World War II. In 1951, six European countries agreed to jointly regulate coal and steel production, forming a compact that would become a precursor to the European Union. French foreign minister Robert Schuman saw the European Coal and Steel Community as a prophylactic against renewed conflict, especially between historic enemies France and Germany. Schuman observed that the accord would make war "not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible." (Zeveloff, 2019)

EcoPeace Middle East is an organization that has offices in Tel Aviv, Amman and Bethlehem. EcoPeace, previously named Friends of the Earth Middle East, was formed in 1994 in the wake of the Oslo Peace agreements and the peace deal signed by Jordan and Israel in the same year. In their own words “EcoPeace Middle East is a unique organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists. Our primary objective is the promotion of cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage. EcoPeace has offices in Amman, Ramallah, and Tel-Aviv dedicated to the self-interest and mutual gain for Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians” (Bromberg, Majdalani and Taleb 2020, p.7)
The organization has been focusing on regional ecological challenges since its inception. For example, EcoPeace spearheaded the campaign to save the Dead Sea, now an issue that is front and centre of the environmental debate in Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories. In Gaza, they successfully lobbied the Israeli government to allow the UN to build a water treatment facility by showing that the raw sewage coming out of Gaza was a threat to a coastal desalination plant in the nearby town of Ashkelon. With regards to the GBD and the WEN, EcoPeace wants to boost “Jordanian/Palestinian/Israeli cooperation to improve adaptive capacities on water and renewable energy security by creating a water and renewable energy exchange.” (Bromberg, Majdalani and Taleb, 2020 ecopeace). As one of the organizations promoting person to person connections between Israelis and Palestinians, it is no stranger to the fraught landscape of historical narrative and the difficulty in threading the needle for all the actors that need to be included in dealmaking at every level. Given its ample experience with working both “top down” through lobbying elites and “bottom up” through grassroot organization and educational initiatives, EcoPeace was perhaps uniquely able to both pioneer a regional initiative like the WEN and to successfully lobby the relevant governments about the project.

The Green Blue Deal (GBD) is the vision of EcoPeace, and it rests on five pillars: Jordan River restauration, Reallocation of water distribution between Israelis and Palestinians, Bottom-up education on issues regarding environment, water, climate, and conflict resolution and the WEN. As to the WEN, EcoPeace writes that “In the Middle East, the failure to resolve already existing water scarcity challenges is a national security issue, which under conditions of climate change will be multiplied to a level that threatens regional stability. However, climate change can equally be seen as a multiplier of opportunities where a nation or a region could see the threats posed by climate change as a “chance to reconsider existing policies and decide to work across borders” (Bromberg, Majdalani and Taleb, 2020, p.3).

The potential for the WEN is wide in its scope as can be seen by the quote above with regards to the EU. The EU parallel is attractive in more ways than one, the idea of the WEN is based on emulating the Schuman Agreement from 1951. The Schuman Agreement paved the way for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), since coal and steel were the building blocks with which mid 20th Century economies were built. The ECSC subsequently became the European Community and later the European Union. The WEN builds on the assumption that while the economies of the 1950s were built on coal and steel, the economies of the 2020s will be built on renewable energy and water management. The peace dividend that the EU could build between former enemies could be paralleled by Middle Eastern former enemies. Likewise, the symbolism of the oil and gas producing countries instead becoming energy giants in the new
field of energy is poetic. At the most positive end of the prediction, “The Mediterranean region could be considered both a water, energy and food (WEF) nexus” (Quagliarotti, 2020). It is estimated that the “sun triangle” states of Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE could provide not only Israel with energy, but around 30% of the EUs energy needs with solar and wind energy if the right investments are made and cooperation remains stable.

However, there is an additional piece of background that indicates how these proposals work when transitioning from ideas from a think tank into agreements signed by politicians. In the original 2019 proposal from EcoPeace, the idea was to have the three governing entities with which EcoPeace collaborates, to sign an agreement. However, when the MoU was finally signed, the Palestinians had no part in it. Instead of a deal consisting of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians, the UAE was added in place of the Palestinians. Given the cooperation between the different EcoPeace offices, this was a blow for the Bethlehem office and to the unity of the organization. This blocking of the Palestinians reflects both the longstanding conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the sometime difficulties between the Palestinians and the various Arab states, and with the framework of the Abraham Accords.

2.3 The Abraham Accords

The Abraham Accords is the name given to the agreement that normalized relations among Israel, Bahrain, and the UAE. Since then, other countries such as Sudan and Morocco have been added to the agreement in varying levels of increased ties. The Abraham Accords was negotiated during the Trump administration and were signed on the White House lawn on September 21st, 2020. During 2021, by Binyamin Netanyahu, Donald Trump and the foreign ministers of the UAE and Bahrain. By any measure, in terms of trade, culture, tourism and military cooperation, the UAE and Israel are by far the main players in the Abraham Accords (Maital & Barzani, 2021). See also chapters 4 and 5 on the Arab World and Israel, respectively.

2.4 Ethics. About the Author

As a Swede living in Israel since 2009, I have been looking for ways to understand Israel and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, especially on environmental issues. To this end I have written about Israel in various Swedish, English and Israeli publications. Furthermore, as part of this Master’s programme, I have done an internship at the Israeli progressive think tank Mitvim. Mitvim members Nimrod Goren and Gil Murciano are both quoted in this thesis, as is the Mitvim annual survey on attitudes in Israel. I have also conducted informal interviews with some of the people involved in this deal, but since they are informal,
they are not quoted directly. The familiarity with and easy access to Israeli politics, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, history, culture and the Hebrew language may have contributed to the foregrounding of these issues in the thesis above intra-Arab concerns. None of this is an ethics issue per say but given the polarized nature of the debate it can be worth noting where I live and work.

2.5 Summary, Stage Set.

If Europe now is an entity tightly wound up in various military, political and trade agreements; by comparison the Middle East is one of the least integrated parts of the world in terms of trade and organizations of regional collaborations. “The relatively small share of investments distributed across MENA (...) countries reflects their low level of integration.” (Ufm-OECD Progress report, 2021). As we have seen, the narrative of the WEN an attractive idea that could change this.

In fact, with the UAE’s resources, Israel’s technical knowhow and the largely untapped power of the region’s deserts, there is no apparent reason why this dream could not be realized. So, what is the problem? The problem has to do with both political realities, historical injustice and narratives from all sides of the conflict. I will explore the attitudes prevalent in Jordan, the UAE and Israel and the historic background to these attitudes to see the specific challenges that face the integration of the Middle East.

Both the Abraham Accords and all the various deals emerging from it are about dealmaking in spite of conflict, never about solving the most pressing issues in the conflict itself. In terms of the agreement, this is a primary example of “navigating” the crucible of the conflict, a kind of “politics of avoidance” that has been prevalent in many parts of the Abraham Accords and the deals resulting from it. Of course, the conflict has a way of making itself known anyway. As we shall see in the rest of the thesis, the narrative of the dynamic, dealmaking, prosperous region facing its problems head on, ecological or otherwise is far from dominant in the media or the historical record of the region.

3. Finger on the Pulse – Media Depicting the Other, Al Jazeera, Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post

3.1 Introduction

In this section I have gathered articles from the Al Jazeera, the Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post. The purpose is to identify what kind of things the press is writing about whilst writing about the “other”, therefore the source material has restricted itself to articles in Al Jazeera with the search word “Israel” and in the Israeli press with the search words “Jordan” and the “UAE”, January-April in the spring of 2023. Although the articles often cover current events and seldom cover projects with environmental
implications like the WEN, the idea here is to identify tendencies, trends and ways of writing to find ideological leanings through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This way, we can put the “finger on the pulse” of the current discourse in the chosen Arab and Israeli media, thereby identifying the mood in the area where the WEN wants to make progress.

### 3.2 Method

The texts I have gathered, with their different focus and drastically different ideological starting points; all show their perspective from a very definite direction. The method that I will use to check these articles is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA establishes that text is a source of power, and it can be used to establish the ideological presumptions hidden in the text. CDA, especially of the work of Isabella and Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk will guide the analysis of the ideological prisms through which we can explore media coverage of the themes covered in this study. CDA is especially suited to identifying ideology in the media, “news making is based on cultural routines and professional practices that are taken for granted and hence implicit and hard to observe directly. Analysis of news talk is therefore able to reveal the (usually not explicit or intentional) ideologies of journalists.” (Van Dijk in Wetherell et al 2001, p.196). The above-mentioned theorists have shown that through CDA, we can unpack a text to identify the ways in which an argument is constructed. Fairclough (Fairclough 2012, and Fairclough, 2013), invites us to see arguments as an instrumentalization of language which can be broken down to a simple structure. The CDA Fairclough and others propose will thus be used throughout this section.

There are several useful examples that include Fairclough’s analysis of Tony Blair’s explanation of the New Labour position (Fairclough, 2012). By promoting several tools to use while identifying the different categories shown in the text of Blair’s discourse, we can extract a useful set of approaches to reading media coverage of events in Palestine/Israel. Fairclough’s method invites us to seek the claim, the circumstantial premise, the means-goal premise, goal premise, value premise and finally, if applicable, alternative options and ways in which these alternative options are addressed. The claim Blair made in his famous speech defending what was “new” in “New Labour” was to “analyse the challenge of change and meet it” (Fairclough 2012 p.85-92); the means-goal is to adopt a “third way” in a manner that Fairclough subsequently adopts a useful method of analysis. Fairclough’s analyses the various premises and alternative options given in Blair’s speech and this is the basic structure that I shall use while analysing some of the source material.
There is also much to be said about following Teun van Dijk in his understanding of disclaimers, where discourse is often used to strengthen in-group/out-group thinking, disclaimers such as “I have nothing against them but...” or various forms of blaming the victim. He shows us that this can be the way to uncover an ideology. His understanding of ideology is a reiteration of Marxist ideas where “ideologies are the basis of dominant group member’s practices (say of domination) they provide the principles in which these forms of power abuse may be justified, legitimized, condoned or accepted.” (van Dijk, 1998, p.35). He also suggests that we can identify observable bias in several ways, “(t)here are many discursive means that strongly suggest such as negative evaluations of “them”, including hyperbolic emphases on obviously bad behaviour and other rhetorical moves, such as metaphors or comparisons (...) that define us as victims and them as evil aggressors (van Dijk, 2022, p. 16). We can bear this last pointer in mind while reading some of the quotes from the source material, as hyperbolic language for the enemy and the total innocence of one’s own side is commonplace in material regarding the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict.

3.3 Aim and Timeframe

The aim of this section is to analyse the type of discourse that is used in the Israeli press about Jordan and the UAE and identify common themes. in the “Centrist Zionist” Times of Israel (TOI) and the “Rightist Zionist” Jerusalem Post (JP), and the Qatari news organization Al Jazeera (AJ). There is a high frequency to the prevalence of Israel in Al Jazeera and for Jordan and the UAE in the Israeli press, so I have taken articles from the limited timeframe of the first 4 months, Jan-Apr, of 2023. This timeframe was chosen almost at random, but recent comparative to the time of writing, to create a manageable framework, with 21 articles for Jordan in the Israeli press, 19 for the UAE in the Israeli press and 20 for Israel in Al Jazeera. Within this framework, I can not only assess the material using discourse analysis but also finding out the frequency of terms used in these articles by using word searches.

For my purposes here, perhaps the ultimate source would be to analyse what journalists thought of the WEN specifically. However, the WEN is at the planning stages at the time of this writing so a trove of articles discussing the issue simply doesn’t exist. Therefore, I have used source materials that often deviate from the issues of collaboration and environmentalism, but which do paint a picture of attitudes prevalent in the press about the “other” country. For example, the most covered issues in the source material have to do with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, violence on the West Bank, and the protests within Israel opposing the Israeli government’s “judicial reforms”. The main aim here is not to discuss these topics specifically, but to get a feel for how the other countries are portrayed more generally. The point here is to put the “finger on the pulse”, so to speak, aiming to get a feel for the kind of things written about the
other countries and revealing the ideologies that underpin these attitudes. Through this indirect route, we can discover some of the possibilities and the limits of cooperation between Israel, Jordan and the UAE.

3.4 Media

Here I will be taking the pulse of media representations of Israel from Al Jazeera, the world's biggest Arab media conglomerate based in Qatar. Conversely, I will also look at the Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post with regards to Jordan and the UAE.

The idea here is to create a kind of snapshot of prevailing attitudes to the other countries involved in the WEN. Although few of the articles mention the environment specifically, the differences of attitudes in all three cases offer a stark reminder of the challenges to the ideological feasibility of the project. We will see that we can easily identify articles that involve Zionist and anti-Zionist positions, and conversely pro-Jordanian and anti-Jordanian positions and as well as the strangely banal, branded image of the UAE in the Israeli press. From this we can identify some difficulties of meeting foreign policy goals based on cooperation.

3.5 Al Jazeera, (AJ)

The Qatari news network Al Jazeera is easily the largest of the media outlets in the Arab world. It was formed in 1996 by the ruler of Qatar Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa Al Thani. Although I am dealing with articles published on the Al Jazeera website in English, it is primarily a TV station with Arab and English versions broadcast throughout the world. The station would like to convey itself as an “honest broker” and shows news that is meant to appeal to some baseline of Arab sentiment. For Barkho, “The most common principals among Al Jazeera ethical codes relate to ‘the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political over professional consideration.’” (Barkho, 2021, p.1359). Indeed, Al Jazeera has proved to be very agile is its mirroring of the mood in the Arab world. In 2013, Shibley Telhami is speaking about Al Jazeera when he posited that “It seems clear that the popular Arabic outlets succeeded because they reflected the hearts and minds of the region on core issues, not because they shaped them” (Telhami, 2013).

However, it is easy to overplay both the independence of the broadcasting and the mere mirroring of opinion that Al Jazeera claims to provide. When it comes to independence, the outspokenness has limits. Al Jazeera is dependent on the Qatari monarchy “(l)little is known of how Al Jazeera as a network is financed apart from the fact that it is owned and funded by the royalty in Qatar” (Barkho, 2013, p.41).
Similarly, the claim that Al Jazeera simply is mirroring Arab sentiment also needs to be seen with some scepticism. As the largest TV channel in the Arab world what it does not only mirror opinion, it also helps to shape opinion. As we shall see when looking at the articles, the angle in Al Jazeera is clearly anti-Israel. This is unsurprising because support for the Palestinian cause is common though not ubiquitous throughout the Arab world. An intriguing angle to this comes from the study by Telhami mentioned above, where he investigates from which TV station Arab Israelis get their news. The reason the Arab Israelis are the most interesting group is that they are the group in the Middle East who most clearly have a choice of which television to follow, Israeli TV or Arab TV and if they choose Arab TV which channel will they choose. Press freedom is higher in Israel than in most of the Arab world, and of course they can speak Hebrew and choose the Hebrew channels if they so wish. Around half of the participants in the study chose Al Jazeera whilst only 17% chose Israeli TV. This gets even more revealing when he followed with other questions and found that there was a strong correlation of Al Jazeera viewers who had family members who had been made refugees in the course of the history of Israel. Indeed, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is not the only conflict where the channel has been accused of bias, it has “caused a great deal of diplomatic tension between Qatar and the United States government as well as many other Arab countries like Jordan, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Libya because of its reporting of certain political issues and Middle East conflicts, while criticism against Qatar was rarely mentioned on the network” (Al Rawi, 2017, p.3) Less obvious in the source material is that Al Jazeera is predominantly anti-UAE. After all, the UAE is Qatar’s great rival in the Gulf. Therefore, when the Abraham Accords were signed with Israel and the UAE being the primary players, Qatar opposed it all means necessary (Mason, 2021), including through Al Jazeera. Qatar created a “Qatari media campaign strongly criticizing the normalization with Israel, which even attacked the acting ruler of the Emirates, Mohammed Ben Zayed, accusing him of neglecting the Palestinians” (Michael and Guzanski, 2020, INSS). Of course, there is a broad variety of opinions in the Arab world, even with regards to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict so often seen as central to the region. The Abraham Accords itself is one example of this discord.

3.5.1 The Limitations of Choosing Al Jazeera

By choosing Al Jazeera as my single source of articles from the Arab world to analyse, I run the risk of showing the Arab world as a united entity with a single voice. Of course, it is not. Indeed, a deeper study would take articles from around the Arab world, especially Jordanian and UAE sources. The limitation was done for two reasons. First, mundanely, simply because a thorough discussion on Arab attitudes in all their nuances is too large of a material for a Master’s and is more suitable for a Ph.D. Secondly, and
perhaps more importantly, I have chosen Al Jazeera not because it is the only opinion in the Arab world but because it is a recurring theme in many of the ideologies prevalent in it. As the largest news network in the region, it also has a great role in both reinforcing and cementing this ideology, thus exemplifying the kind of opposition that the WEN and the Abraham Accords is likely to encounter.

3.6 The Jerusalem Post, (JP)

The Jerusalem Post is a conservative yet mainstream anglophone newspaper founded in 1932 under the name The Palestine Post. According to its website, it has millions of unique visitors to its site every month and is the most read English news website about Israel in the world. Because it is anglophone it is both easier for me as a non-native Hebrew speaker to read, and the conservative bent means that you often find articles criticizing the Palestinians and other Arab countries, notably Jordan. Of note is also that they have held events both in Dubai and Marrakesh since the Abraham Accords, but not in Amman (About JP). There is no need to push this fact too far, but they have thus been directly affected by the accords and, as we shall see, they do not seem unaffected by the branding and hype associated with the UAE in the Israeli press.

3.7 Times of Israel (TOI)

The Times of Israel is an online anglophone daily newspaper founded in 2012 by UK born journalist David Horowitz and has “no political partisan affiliation” (About TOI), of course, this non-affiliation is within the context of internal Israeli politics, which is why I designate it “centrist Zionist” even whilst both right- and left-wing Zionist writers will often write articles in the paper.

3.8 Keywords

For JP and TOI I have worked with the keywords “Jordan” and “UAE” respectively. For AJ I have used “Israel” and “Abraham Accords”. The source material includes articles on politics, culture, business, and security. They are also a mix of opinion pieces and news items, including a few interviews. There are 60 articles included in the source material. Pictures have also been omitted from the material, also this for reasons of brevity.

3.9 Analysis

3.9.1 Positives and Negatives
From a broad-brush perspective a few things about all the articles stand out. I have divided the articles about the country they are speaking about into broadly positive, negative or neutral articles. In the TOI and JP articles speaking about the UAE, 11 are positive to the UAE (articles 22-29, 31, 33), whilst 7 are neutral (articles 30, 34-39), and only 2 are negative (articles 32, 40). In the same papers whilst speaking about Jordan none are positive, 13 are neutral (articles 1-13) and 7 are negative (articles 14-20). In Al Jazeera 18 are negative about Israel (all articles 41-60 apart from 50, 55) while 2 are neutral (article 50, 55). As for the general direction of the articles in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 16 out of 19 of the articles about Jordan in JP and TOI centre on the Palestinians (apart from articles 1,3 and 6) whilst only 3 of the 20 articles about the UAE do (articles 34-36). All but one (article 50) of the AJ articles are centred on the Palestinians. Already here there is an obvious pattern: Jordan in the Israeli press is portrayed as either a neutral actor or an extension of and connection to the Palestinians. More specifically, Jordan is often described in the source material as what Israeli politicians say about Jordan, not what is happening within Jordan in its own right. Many Jordanians have Palestinian heritage, precise numbers are hard to come by but a conservative estimate is that “(i)t is generally acknowledged that roughly half of the Jordanian population is of Palestinian origin, but numbers are highly politicized and therefore contested” (Chatelard, 2010 [Jordan: migrationpolicy.org]). Because of Jordan’s closeness to the conflict the articles are less about Jordan as much as they are about the Palestinians.

3.9.2 Jordan and the al-Aqsa Mosque

The single reason by far that Jordan appears in the source material is the fact that Jordan has authority over the Haram al-Sharif or Holy Sanctuary, the site of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, or Temple Mount. This is true in the Israeli press but even more so in Al Jazeera. The complex is run by the Jordanian Waqf, which has control over all matters that relate to the site, through a board that includes both Jordanian and Palestinian representatives. This arrangement is seen by many Palestinians as the last unoccupied part of Palestine because of this Jordanian control (AJ, 2022, [al-Aqsa]). For Jews, the single most holy place in Judaism is the Western Wall, directly under the Temple Mount, the only remaining part of the Second Temple which was built by King Herod. According to tradition Herod’s temple is built on the same spot as the First Temple built by the biblical King Solomon. Perhaps the most explosive idea in the Middle East in terms of religion is that Israel would revoke this status quo. There are many ideas about how this could happen, ranging from allowing the now forbidden Jewish prayer at the complex to building a new Jewish Temple on the site.
The problem with this entire argument is that there is lopsided attention to the site, with most Arab Muslims venerating it, many Jews argue that the most important part of the complex is the Western Wall, not the Temple Mount. Nonetheless, in 2014, Arab citizens of Israel answered a poll declaring that “a large majority of respondents (84 percent) were convinced that Israel was acting with the intention of harming the historic status quo on the Temple Mount (al-Haram al-Sharif, or al-Aqsa Mosque) in Jerusalem” (Radai et al, 2014, p.104). There are indeed Israeli Jews that long for the Temple to be rebuilt such as the “Temple Institute” (Gounon, Al Monitor, 2023), but the enthusiasm for the project seems to wax and wane, the height of the Temple fever seems to have been some time in the 2010s, in 2013 30% of Israelis wanted the Temple to be built (The Forward, June 12th 2013). This should not be confused with the larger amount who want Jews to pray on the Temple Mount. For the question of Jewish prayer, at its height in 2017 a poll found 68% of Israelis supported Jewish prayer to be allowed on the Mount. However, by 2022, this number had shrunk to 50% (Tol 3rd May 2022). Furthermore, the campaign for the Temple Mount and promoting this opinion, comes from a very specific part of the “national-religious” movement to which many settlers belong. Outside this group, allowing prayer at the site is a minority view and extremely unpopular among secular Israelis and even among many in the religious community. In the Ultra-Orthodox world, no one may enter the complex until the time of the Messiah. Indeed, the site forbids Jews from entering with a sign posted by the 3rd Rabanut, the chief religious authority for Jews in Israel. Politicians as well are in general skeptical of changing the status quo with Netanyahu repeatedly saying he would respect it. Although Itamar Ben-Gvir from the Religious Zionist party wants to see Jewish prayer at the site he has not been forthright about supporting groups like the Temple Institute and not spoken openly about destroying the Mosque.

Larkin and Dumper argue that although the site has always been revered in as the third holiest in Islam, modern Palestinian focus on the site may have arisen through “al-Aqsa’s increased sanctity with Palestinian and Arab resistance to Israel’s post-1967 occupation of East Jerusalem and ideological opposition (a “mirror syndrome”) to the resurgence of Jewish Messianic nationalism and its inherent territorial claims (restoration of the Third Temple and Eretz Israel)” (Larkin and Dumper, 2009, p.39). It is also important to keep this “mirror syndrome” in mind throughout the thesis, because its effects can be seen time and time again where the Israelis and Palestinians mirror each other’s ideologies and claims. With regards to Al-Aqsa, whether you see ancient Islamic roots or modern nationalist roots to the issue, it is hard to overstate how much power it has as a rallying cry to Arab Muslim Palestinians and other Muslims around the world. It is no accident that the second Intifada became known as the Al-Aqsa
Intifada, or that a powerful militia formed during this intifada was named the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade by its founders, who came from the ostensibly secular Fatah movement (Penn, 2016, p.4).

All this is omnipresent in the source material. Two key events happened in the time of collecting the source material: Israeli police raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque on March 24th Al-Aqsa raid AJ, and Itamar Ben-Gvir, the far-right Israeli law maker and minister of internal security visited the site on January 3rd Ben Gvir visit CNN. Both instances sparked many articles, AJ’s press coverage of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is mentioned in 15 out of 20 pieces (all articles apart from 48-50, 56-57). In contrast, whilst covering the same events, the Israeli Press mentioned the Al-Aqsa Mosque, often calling it the Temple Mount, 8 times (articles 2, 3, 13, 16, 18-20) out of 21 whilst speaking about Jordan, often quoting Palestinian sources. This may of course have to do with the specific timing of the study, studying another time period may well produce less mentions of the holy site. However, it is still noteworthy that this object of veneration and symbol of Palestinian resistance for most Muslims would be mentioned so many times. Many of the articles about Jordan in the Israeli press are designated as “neutral”, not because they are neutral in tone, but because they use Jordan to make a point about internal matters in Israel. Often criticised are far-right politicians damaging ties to neighbours. These articles chose not to directly engage the Jordanian response, but rather using Jordan for point scoring in internal debates.

3.9.3 The United Arab Emirates in the Israeli Press

The UAE in the Israeli press is striking in its difference. A key difference to the way the UAE is seen in the Israeli press is that the reports are largely positive, identifying the UAE as a force for business and collaboration in a range of areas. With regards to the UAE in the Israeli press, the Al-Aqsa Mosque is mentioned in one singular piece, signifying an understanding of the conflict whereby the UAE is largely uninvolved in these contentious areas. This despite the unambiguous nature of this one article, reporting on the statement put out on the UAE’s Foreign Affairs Ministry website “The UAE today strongly condemned the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard by an Israeli minister under the protection of Israeli forces” (Article 35, Jerusalem Post staff, JP, Jan 3rd). Apart from this one exception, the general sense is that Jordan is tied to the conflict in a way that many in Israel believe that the UAE is not, that the Emirates can be kept on a separate level of relationship, in line with Netanyahu’s “peace for peace” formula that will be discussed later.

In terms of the WEN, however, the need is for a relationship not only with the Emirates who wish to fund the Jordanian side of the deal, but crucially with Jordan itself, without who the whole deal falls apart.
Another important aspect for the WEN is not only what is said, but what is left out of the source material. While the material is full of questions of religion, identity and violence in its many iterations there are many things that are left out. For example, “water”, “environment” and “renewable energy” are very nearly absent in the whole source material. Even the hugely important issues for the region of “oil” and “gas” are only mentioned in two articles (article 23 and 33). This shows how under-discussed environmental issues are in both the Israeli and the Arab press, and what a lot of work environmental organizations must do to raise awareness about these issues.

3.9.4 Themes: Stalwarts of Contention, Dreams of Collaboration

There are several points that the source material makes that make the prospect of collaboration in projects such as the WEN more or less likely. I have broken them down into four themes: “Threats to Collaboration Coming from Israel”, “Threats to Collaboration Coming from the Arab World”, “Apples and Pears, Tracking Narratives of the Same Event” and finally the special case of the UAE in the Israeli press, in “Fake it ‘till You Make It”

3.9.4.1 Threats to Collaboration Coming from Israel

As we have seen, most of the political landscape in Israel is keen to keep relations with Jordan and the UAE at an amicable level. However, there are some actions by lawmakers and some pieces in the source material which seem uninterested in this goal, mostly this has, predictably, to do with the Temple Mount. One such piece is David Weinberg’s piece below.

Under Jordanians, the Temple Mount is a Center of Incitement. (Article 16)

Standing beside every world leader he possibly can, and when meeting Israeli prime ministers too, Jordanian King Abdullah defiantly declares his self-anointed “custodianship” over the Temple Mount and “all holy sites” in Jerusalem. (…)

At a minimum, one would expect the Jordanians to do everything possible to help keep the peace by blocking attempts to turn the site into ground zero for violent Arab insurrection, wild Palestinian rioting and the most antisemitic and genocidal anti-Israel incitement. Alas, the Jordanians have done no such thing. Despite their purported joint control (with the Palestinians) over the Waif, the Islamic trust that runs al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock shrine on Temple Mount, allows the Waif and its Palestinian preachers to insanely inflame nationalist passions and provoke hostilities against Israel. Using al-Aqsa as a base for physical assaults on Israel (like storing weapons) and as a platform for the ugliest education about the evils of Jews and Israel is not an occasional thing. It has become the Jordanian-sponsored standard of behaviour on the Temple Mount. This has been the contribution of Jordan’s much-ballyhooed “special role”
condition. Al-Aqsa Mosque Imam Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, the former chief mufti of the Palestinian Authority, often has used the Friday sermon pulpit on the Temple Mount to spout lies and historical distortions like this: “The Arabs are among the earliest peoples that settled in Jerusalem, 7,500 years before the Christian era…,” and “There is no evidence of a historical Jewish presence in the city.” He also claims that “the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque is everything that surrounds the walls, whether roofed or not,” including the “Al Buraq Wall” (meaning the Western Wall). (…)

Where are Abdullah’s efforts to prevent such an explosion? Judging by the type of violent rhetoric he allows to erupt from the mouths of preachers on the Mount that he presumptuously has “custodianship” over in some sort of partnership with the PA – Abdullah isn’t trying too hard.”

(David Weinberg, JP, 9th Feb)

Using Fairclough, CDA can be performed on this piece by identifying the categories of the “claim”, “circumstantial premise”, “means goal premise” and “goal premise” (Fairclough, 2012, p. 105-6). The “claim” here is that the Jordanian government and King Abdullah himself “isn’t trying too hard” to “do everything possible to keep the peace”. The “circumstantial premises” that backs this up is that “Jordanian-sponsored standard of behaviour on the Temple Mount” has led to al-Aqsa being used as a “base for physical assaults on Israel (like storing weapons)” and “as a platform for the ugliest education about the evils of Jews and Israel”. The apparent “goal premise” here is that “the Jordans to do everything possible to help keep the peace”. The apparent “means goal” premise here is that King Abdullah “presumptuously has “custodianship” over” the “preachers on the Mount”. By this short rendition, the goal here is that King Abdullah/ should step in and order strict rules and censorship. However, there are two indications that this is no mere policy recommendation for the Jordanian government and King Abdullah. Therefore, there may be a second set of “goal premises” that are much more implied than explicit. This is because of two reasons.

Firstly, although JP is anglophone and thus aimed at an international audience, this is an Israeli newspaper whose readership is primarily composed of English-speaking Jews in Israel and around the world, especially in the USA. We can note the words rattled off in quick succession, “violent”, “Arab insurrection”, “wild Palestinian rioting”, “antisemitic” and “genocidal” “anti-Israel incitement” in the circumstantial premise, are not the kind of words used for convincing the alleged “sponsors” of this behaviour to change his ways. Instead, these premises are designed to strike fear in the Israeli and foreign Jewish reader.

Secondly, there is the provocative language against the Jordanian government. We can note the term “self-anointed”, and the inverted commas around the word “custodianship”, later he also puts “special role” in inverted commas and by placing the term “much-ballyhooed” in front of it which employs mockery
in his arsenal to criticize the current arrangement. The term “purported joint control” with the Palestinians is used to propose that the Jordanians have lost control over the situation.

So, what are the secondary “goal premises” if not to convince the Jordanian government? The “value premise” is helpful in pointing us in the direction of where the implications lie in the phrase “one would expect” this to be done, with the “one” implying Israel, either its government or its populace. By portraying the Palestinian preachers and their sermons in the Mosque as a threat, the Jordanians of having lost control and the “status quo” as an unsettled issue, there is only one conclusion. Namely that it is within Israel’s power, and perhaps in Israel’s interest, to change the status quo and take more control of the site, possibly drastically more.

This is not the only article calling for the chastisement of the Jordanians in the source material. Sometimes, as in the case of the article above and below, it is journalists who write opinion pieces, and sometimes it has to do with reporting on what politicians or activists have to say. One example of this is that the Waqf was found to have held “sins of the Nakba walks” in Jerusalem (Article 14). “Matan Peleg, chairman of the right-wing organization Im Tirtzu said: “The Waqf is a hostile organization that tries to harm Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. We expect the political echelon to stop surrendering to the King of Jordan, and to make it clear that Jordan has no foothold outside Temple Mount.”” (Article 14, JP, reprinted from Walla, March 28th). The “claim” here is that “The Waqf is a hostile organization that tries to harm Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem”. The “means goal” is for “the political echelon to stop surrendering to the King of Jordan” and the “goal premise” is that “Jordan has no foothold outside the Temple Mount”. The argument is seemingly legalistic, arguing that the authority of the Waqf needs to be kept the inside the Temple Mount. But it is also a battle for hegemony, where no mention of the Nakba can be made by “foreigners”, and to keep the War of Independence within the Israeli national narrative. Again, we can note that Peleg, like Weinberg, sees the King of Jordan as directly responsible for the Waqf. We can also note the militaristic term “surrendering” the implication being that Six Day War is still being fought. Most revealing of all is the key signifier in the claim itself, “sovereignty in Jerusalem”. Sovereignty pertains to the narrative because it signifies that Israel not only has sovereignty in East Jerusalem, but also that it ought to have such sovereignty, a concept that is rejected by the international community and even parts of Israeli society.

Even if the Jordanian government wanted to do this, it may not be the question of authoritarian hand waving as Weinberg and Peleg seems to believe. The situation is such that leadership of the Waqf was somewhat changed in 2019 reflecting the delicate balance the Jordanian government and the Palestinians
have over the organization. Kuttab writes that “The Jordanian government attempted to avoid political appointees so as not to be accused of interfering in local Palestinian politics” (Kuttab, 2021). The kind of crackdown on what can be said within Al-Aqsa that Weinberg is asking for seem to be disconnected to the realities of the handling of the site. In the same spirit as Weinberg and Peleg, the opinion piece below was written by Alan Meyer, who is not a journalist at the TOI but wrote the article in the “blogs” section of the paper. It must be said that writing a blog in the Times of Israel is open to all, and the role of Meyer is a far cry from the senior political analysts who write opinion pieces for Al Jazeera. Even so, the article is such a distillation of Israeli right wing talking points that I think it deserves an analysis.

**Drive them out from where they drove you out (Article 20)**

“After the Six Day War in 1967, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) signed off on Resolution 242 to set the parameters for the achievement of peace among the Arab states in the area. In it, the UNSC allowed Israel to remain in occupation of the acquired land until she had agreements with all the Arab states in the area for “secure and recognized boundaries.” But even then, she need not withdraw from all territories. Thus, Israel’s “occupation” cannot be considered as illegal because, as yet, there are no agreements of any description with Syria or Lebanon nor with the Judean Arabs under the rule of the Palestinian Authority nor even with Hamas in Gaza. Thus, a man-made interpretation of something allegedly revealed to an Arab trader living in what is now Saudi Arabia, became the cornerstone of a “square” belief and policy that organisations such as the UN and other governmental and non-governmental organisations futilely try to bash into the “round” hole of a resolution to the 100 year Arab-Israeli conflict: the impossibility of ‘land for peace’ under Islam. This “cornerstone” of Islamic interpretation is known as the *waqf*, an “endowment in perpetuity”. While it is true that Israel did return land to Egypt in 1979 in return for, essentially, a cold peace, and peace treaty with Jordan, external bad faith actors used the principle of the man-made Muslim *waqf* to further their goal of the removal of a legal and sovereign re-constituted Jewish polity from the Middle East.” (Meyer, TOI, 11 April)

In CDA, we can identify “key signifiers”, single words or multiple-word expressions that can identify the underlying meaning (Rear and Jones, 2013, p.375). The main ideas underpinning this article are concepts of reality and unreality. We have three key signifiers of note that pertain to unreality. The first is also a “claim” in Fairclough’s sense because it is the main thrust of the article, namely that “Israel’s “occupation” cannot be considered as illegal”, we can note both the inverted commas and the clearly ascribed meaning, namely that there is no occupation. This argument begs the question. If Israel doesn’t sign documents declaring that the occupation is an occupation, there is no occupation. It is the kind of legalistic merry-go-round that often comes up when reading the material of the supporters of the occupation. This is
supposed to hide the fact that Meyer simply doesn’t except that the UN charter forbids the acquisition of land by force because of the disastrous consequences this has had throughout the ages. As far as this argument goes, all policy proposals based on the assumption of there being an occupation are meaningless.

The second key signifier is a phrase that “man-made” sticks out. According to Mayer, the Muslim Waqf is such a man-made organization, but the Quran itself also fits this category, as the phrase “a man-made interpretation of something allegedly revealed to an Arab trader living in what is now Saudi Arabia” suggests. The third and last noteworthy key signifier is the way he calls Palestinians “Judean Arabs” and therefore not a people in their own right.

To sum up these key signifiers, Meyer sees the Palestinians as an unreal, imaginary entity and Islam as a “man-made” religion that mandates the use of violence to reclaim land through the Quranic inversion to “Drive them out from where they drove you out”. To Meyer, this is the essence of the conflict. Because of the fake nature of Palestinians and Islam, any deals with Muslims will be fleeting and very existence of the Waqf is a reminder of the Muslim ambition to rid the Middle East of Israel. The argument underlying this statement is a classical Israeli argument this is an avoidance of calling the people in question Palestinians because of the colonial belief that there is no such thing as a Palestinian people as a unified entity, only Arabs who happened to live on the land where Israel was to be created. Obviously there have been Arab peoples in the area for a long time but according to people like Meyer (as with Smotrich and Lazaroff below) calling them a people that by extension should have national rights is simply nationalist propaganda. This is a belief was expressed in Golda Meir’s famous quote to the same effect (Mann, 1968).

Calling a people a non-people is of course an aspect of colonialism with deep roots and nearly always comes when atrocities are called for or committed (Snyder, 2018, p.141). Furthermore, when it comes to labelling groups and religions real and unreal, we must ask the corollary question, what does Meyer see as real and true as opposed to all the unreality he is describing? The atheist approach would be to call all religions equally man-made. Less controversially, most people agree that all nations are man-made creations, and that identities as citizens or as a “people” are categories that all people are socialized into. However, this is not what Meyer is saying, he is rather dividing the line between real and fake nations along religious and ethnic fault lines. If he considers some things “man-made” it stands to reason that he sees some things as “God-given”, it is therefore not a stretch of the implication is that there is a real here, opposing the imaginary. Israel is the real to the imaginary Palestine, Judaism is the “God-given” to the “man-made” Islam, Jews are the real people in existence to the Palestinian non-existence.
By using a Quranic verse Meyer paints Muslim Palestinians as the eternal purveyors of violence. By this he ignores the fact that many Palestinians are non-Muslim, even prominent leaders who have fought against Israel like George Habash (AbuKhalil, 2020). More importantly, eternity is vital to this argument, after all, if Meyer is right and the root of the entirety of the conflict revolves around Quranic concepts there is no solution, only enemies to be met with force. We can also note how well this idea fits with Tim Snyder’s “Politics of Eternity”, whereby your country is seen not as an organic evolving entity but as an eternally innocent entity, beset by external and internal enemies. As we shall see, eternity is a theme that also repeats in some of the anti-Zionist texts in Al Jazeera. The pointlessness of the spirit of the article can be exemplified by the passage in the Hebrew bible, “In the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded you” (Deuteronomy 20:16–17), embedded in the stories of the conquest of the Holy Land, the very texts that many Zionists have lent on to justify the creation of Israel. Indeed, justifications for violence abound in religious texts of the Middle East and we should be weary of ascribing it too much weight, let alone a permanent feature of any specific people. After all, this kind of trope is also found in many anti-Semitic writings.

Here we have seen a few examples of writers who exemplify the problem of collaboration coming from Israel. It must be noted that these voices do not speak for the majority in Israel. Rather, as we shall see, Israel is split on the issue. The left wants collaboration with Israel’s neighbours and much of it still believes in the two-state solution based on a “land for peace” formula. Netanyahu, who doesn’t believe in the “land for peace” formula and instead marketed the Abraham Accords as a “peace for peace” formula has nonetheless publicly committed many times to maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount/Al Aqsa. The point of this section is not to say that Weinberg, Meyer and Peleg “are” the Israeli sentiment in some monolithic form. They do however represent some of the right-wing media eco-system that is even more prevalent in Hebrew speaking outlets such as the paper Israel HaYom and the TV channel Arutz 14 (Goishman and Cohen, 2022 Election 2022, Haaretz) and in the messianic national religious Zionist movement. These articles are a taste of some of the unvarnished narrative coming from the right wing in Israel in its most aggressive form. They show most clearly the settler-colonial tradition which cannot and will not compromise for any end. We should note that these are the same forces that are trying to implement the so-called juridical reform, calling for Jewish prayer at the Temple Mount and for increased settlement of the West Bank. For Israel, any dreams of collaboration like the WEN may depend on the strength or weakness of this movement.
3.9.4.2 Threats to Collaboration Coming from the Arab World

The Arab world has forsaken the Palestine cause (article 43)

When Zionist forces embarked on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine to establish the state of Israel in 1948, the plight of the Palestinian people shocked the Arab world. It angered Arab nations who were amid their own anti-colonial struggles and elevated the liberation of Palestine to the status of a pan-Arab cause. But as Arab regimes, both republican and monarchical, became more established, the draw and the utility of the Palestinian cause for Arab leaders slowly began to fade. The abandonment of the Palestinians is directly related to the undemocratic nature of Arab regimes and their continuing political dependence on the United States, the main supporter of Israel and its settler-colonial project. Indeed, Palestine today appears like an afterthought in the Arab political order, with many states making peace and normalising relations with Israel, the only colonial state left in the Arab world. (…) The normalisation process between some Arab states and Israel that was shepherded by the Trump administration is just another iteration of the gradual Arab abandonment of the Palestine cause. It culminated in the so-called Abraham Accords, which despite all the promises of “benefits” for the Palestinians, held nothing of value for them or their national aspirations. (…) In fact, the Arab normalisation with Israel has only emboldened the Zionist state in its oppression of the Palestinians and paved the way for the de facto annexation of the occupied West Bank. (…) Today, it appears that only the Palestinians can lead their own struggle for liberation – one that is based on a national project that includes all sectors of Palestinian society inside Palestine and in the diaspora and that is based on the ideas of inclusion, pluralism, and democracy. (Imad K Harb, 14 May)

Israeli protests: The clash of competing settler-colonial visions (article 41)

“(T)he aim of the Zionist movement has always been the colonisation of all of historic Palestine. But, as the Zionist forces vied for control of all Palestinian lands, they always faced one major challenge: demography. (…) The approach of the centrist establishment is not to reject ethnic cleansing but to control its course and dress it in the rhetoric of law and respect for human rights. From their perspective, the right-wing “solution” is detrimental to the Israeli settler-colonial project. In their view, weakening the judiciary and by extension, the perceived democratic order and rule of law in the country, could diminish Israel’s soft power and undermine its international legitimacy.” (Kadan, AJ, 12th April, my italics)

Israeli violence is the problem (article 44)

In the face of yet another attempt to cover up Israeli crimes, those of us committed to truth, justice, and decolonisation must always keep our sight fixed on the only violence that explains the reality of the situation: Israeli settler-colonial violence. (Ayyash, AJ, 10th April, my italics)
While surveying the source material coming from Al Jazeera, the striking thing is the uniform perspective. All but one of the articles paint Israel in a negative light, and this one exception is not positive but neutral. As noted, 14 out of 20 articles mention Al-Aqsa, 3 of the 5 opinion pieces specifically describe Israel as a “settler-colonial” enterprise (articles 41-43). Not a single article argues for cooperation with Israel in any field. I have not even been able to find any mention of a way Israel could theoretically act in order to create a situation where collaboration would be acceptable, to any entity in the Arab world, such as ending the occupation of the West Bank and allowing for the creation of a Palestinian state. Indeed 5 of the articles (articles 41-44, 56) specifically argue against peace treaties or normalization with Arab nations. Furthermore, even acts that are difficult to justify, such as the 4th of April car ramming on the Tel Aviv beach front that wounded several and killed one Italian tourist, “terror attack” is put in quotation marks and the final word is given to Niwad Awad, the executive director of the Council on American–Islamic Relations, who says that the attack was “the result of decades of Israeli subjugation, humiliation and oppression of the Palestinians” (Article 55, AJ Staff, Apr 7th, AJ). Here we have a situation where AJ staff changes the context from something very specific, the death of a tourist, to something very generalized, “oppression”. Similarly, for Ayyash, we must “keep our sight fixed on the only violence that explains the reality of the situation: Israeli settler-colonial violence” (Article 44, Ayyash 10th April, AJ). This is in response to those that speak about Palestinian attacks, be they on settlers, soldiers or civilian Israelis living within the green line, or even tourists. Of course, avoiding even speaking about violence by Palestinians is quite an unclear strategy. The ones committing the violent acts certainly do not want to be forgotten, especially not by Palestinian society. The commitment to only speak about Israeli violence also prevents the discussion about strategy or tactics, violent or otherwise, from happening at all. Both these examples are very much in line with van Dijk’s, perhaps ineloquent but to the point, schema of ideological discourse “1. Emphasize Our GOOD things! 2. Emphasize Their BAD things! 3. De-emphasize Our BAD things! 4. De-emphasize Their GOOD things! (van Dijk in Caldas and Coulthard, 2022, p.149).

Harb is Director of Research and Analysis at the Doha sponsored Arab Center Washington DC (About ACW DC). I have taken the article entitled “The Arab world has forsaken the Palestine cause” (article 43) as a main piece to analyze because it synthesizes many of the perspectives prevalent in AJ in a single article. It also speaks directly to the idea of collaborating with Israel and can therefore act as a guide to the kind of opposition we can expect to cooperation efforts such as the WEN. It is analyzed according to the system from Fairclough that I also have used above (Fairclough, 2012, p. 105-6). The main “claim” is given in the title, “The Arab world has forsaken the Palestine cause”. The “circumstantial premises” are twofold, pertaining to how Israel acts and what it is on one hand and how the Arab world acts on the other. So, for
Israel, “circumstantial premise” is that the Zionist forces of what then would become Israel “embarked on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine to establish the state of Israel”, that is to say this is what Israel does. What Israel is on the other hand, is “the only colonial state left in the Arab world”, one where the United States plays a key role as “the main supporter of Israel and its settler-colonial project”. For the Arab world the “circumstantial premise” amounts to a devolution from the situation whereby this colonial entity first “angered Arab nations who were amid their own anti-colonial struggles”, but alas “the Palestinian cause for Arab leaders slowly began to fade”. There are two additional “circumstantial premises” that have led to this development, the “undemocratic nature of Arab regimes” and their “continuing political dependence on the United States”. The “goal premise” here is the “liberation of Palestine”. An “alternative option” to the liberation of Palestine is found in the “normalization process between some Arab states and Israel” such as the Abraham Accords but Herb is “Addressing alternative options” by dismissing them because the Accords “held nothing of value for (the Palestinians) or their national aspirations”. Instead, the “means goal” is for “Palestinians can lead their own struggle for liberation” which is “based on the ideas of inclusion, pluralism, and democracy”.

By starting out on the premise that Israeli forces “embarked on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine to establish the state of Israel” he is placing the Nakba at the center of the conflict in a simple zero-sum totality, Zionists arrived, ethnically cleansed the land and therefore could establish a state. The Nakba is discussed later in this thesis, core to this section is the using of the phenomena as a singular cause, without any background of the war of 1948-49 or the reasons for the growth of Zionism. The issue of calling Israel “the only colonial state left in the Arab world” is yet more contentious, again I will explore this theme later. Suffice to say here is that if Israel is merely a colonial entity like the British in India, then the goal is simple, to remove the Jewish settlers. Indeed, the end goal of the “liberation of Palestine”, with undefined borders. Although Harb hopes they will be “based on the ideas of inclusion, pluralism, and democracy”, the democracy he envisions is a “national project that includes all sectors of Palestinian society inside Palestine and in the diaspora”. Whether the Palestinian Authority, Hamas or some other Palestinian faction will be the force that can shepherd this democratic state into being is unclear, but we can note that democracy has not always been their strong suit. More ominously, some seven million Jews that live in Israel are completely missing from this vision of an otherwise democratic, pluralistic and inclusive state.

Of course, Harb could be talking about a Palestinian state within the parameters of a two-state solution, but there are a few indicators that he is not. Firstly, by placing the onus on the Nakba and 1948 rather than the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, it stands to reason that the former is the historical
ill that he would like to counter. Secondly, the history is such that the time period which he laments is
gone, where the “anti-colonial struggles (...) elevated the liberation of Palestine to the status of a pan-
Arab cause” is a period where there was no ambiguity, the Arab states in the wars of 1948, 1967 and 1972
wanted to end the Jewish state. The only “alternative option” mentioned in the piece, the Abraham
Accords simply “emboldened the Zionist state in its oppression of the Palestinians and paved the way for
the de facto annexation of the occupied West Bank”. We can note the switching back and forth between
the occupied West Bank now being the center of attention for the first time instead of the wider idea of
Israel’s colonialism and illegitimacy. For the statement to be viable, Harb needs the added “de facto"
because what the Accords did do, as we shall see, is shelve Trump’s “Peace for Prosperity” plan (Guzansky
and Feuer, 2021), with its planned “de jure” annexations. The UAE reportedly had this as a precondition
to the Accords being signed, something the UAE sees as a victory for the Accords. It should be said that
Harb is not wrong on the point of de facto annexation, Israeli analysts agree that this is indeed happening
(Goren, 2023). However, the usage of the term “paved the way” implies that the Abraham Accords were
a means to the end of annexing the West Bank, a much more questionable assumption. A point that does
have some validity is that the Accords could not have been signed were it not for the authoritarianism of
the Arab states because of the solidarity with the Palestinians among the Arab public, but this has a
chicken and egg dimension. Were it not for media outlets like Al Jazeera and people like Harb constantly
questioning the legitimacy of Israel as a state, identifying it as merely a colony, it is possible that the Arab
public would feel differently about normalization, Israel, the possibility of peaceful coexistence, a future
of a solution to the conflict and the validity of peace deals.

Palestine advocates see opportunity in Biden-Netanyahu discord (article 56)

Palestinians have been left out of the demands of the so-called “pro-democracy demonstrations”
in Israel, as well. The Israeli Supreme Court, whose powers the anti-Netanyahu protesters have
rallied to save, often upholds laws that target and repress Palestinians, analysts have said. (Harb,
March 30th)

What future for Israel: chaotic, catastrophic, or constructive? [Article 46]

Benjamin Netanyahu’s new government of fascists and fanatics has brought Israel to a historic
crossroads in just 100 days. (...) Israel may turn into a combination of autocracy and theocracy,
ending all hopes or illusions of peace in Palestine and paving the way for the apocalypse. But then
again, Netanyahu’s failure does not mean democracy will flourish and peace will prevail. After
decades of occupation and oppression, Israel’s society and polity are so terribly dominated by the
violent right and far-right parties that any future constellation of a governing coalition is bound to
The spring of 2023 was a time of the extraordinary civil strife within the Jewish Zionist factions, when Israel experienced the largest demonstrations in its history regarding the what the government see as legal reforms, but the opposition sees as a threat to Israeli democracy. Central to the demonstrations are a raft of laws that aim to weaken the Supreme Court which has been scapegoated as a left-wing activist vehicle by the populist right and the Basic Laws which the court upholds. The centre and the left in Israel have therefore come out on the streets in defence of these institutions and laws. As we see in the quotes above, there is widespread distrust for the demonstrations among the writers in Al Jazeera. Harb, in his second article suggests that nothing good will come from these demonstrations because “Palestinians have been left out of the demands of the so-called “pro-democracy demonstrations”’.

That Palestinians with Israeli citizenship have failed to attend the demonstrations in large numbers is a criticism that is often echoed within the Israeli left. However, the maths of the situation means that demonstrations that would both criticize the legal reforms and the occupation would never get hundreds of thousands to come to the protests in Israel (Derfner, 2023 Don’t Mention the Occupation). Nevertheless, there are often anti-occupation protesters present at the events who come with their own banners, t-shirts and slogans (Pfeffer, 2023).

“The Israeli Supreme Court, whose powers the anti-Netanyahu protesters have rallied to save, often upholds laws that target and repress Palestinians” (article 56, Harb, AJ, 31st March). This has some elements of truth to it, Harpaz and Shany found that “the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court during all of these years may be seen as an exercise in judicial acrobatics, simultaneously regulating and legitimizing the occupation” (Harpaz and Shany, 2011, p.515). For example, the Supreme Court has created a situation where the major settlement blocks in the West Bank are legal. On the other hand, the Basic Law and the court has stopped both racist legislation and outlawed some settlements and therefore creates a pathway, if an insufficient one, toward a legislative system that includes all citizens in Israel (Barak, 2006).

Kadan follows Harb and writes in much the same way that, that all democracy in Israel is no different than “perceived” democracy, and the rule of law is no different than the “perceived” rule of law. Israel here is presented as a monolith, a beast always moving in one inevitable direction, without pressures or contradictions. Indeed, “The passage of the Basic Laws allowed Israel to whitewash its occupation, presenting itself as a human rights champion, while the Oslo Accords covered up its oppression of the Palestinians with the language of “peace negotiations””. The claim here is that the true nature of the
Israeli state is “oppression of the Palestinians”, whilst all moves, “the passage of the Basic Laws” and the “peace negotiations” in adverted commas, are “whitewashing” this fact. There is some merit to both these claims. The Basic Laws carry an inherent paradox (Peled, 1992, p.432) whereby they both provide for the equal treatment of all citizens and at the same time try to square this with the aim of being a Jewish state, the famous formulation in the declaration of independence of “a Jewish and democratic state” presents a foundational problem for Israel, leading some observers call Israel an “ethnic democracy” (Smooha, 2002, p.477). Similarly, the Oslo accords did not grant Palestine independence, and indeed the closure of the West Bank and Gaza since the Oslo accords has made life for many Palestinians not better but worse (Hass, 2000). Kadan’s idea is that the only thing driving the Israeli left and centre when they oppose the occupation is that they “faced one major challenge, demography”. Now, it is true that demography and demographic fears are an integral part of the Zionist movement (Garb, 2002, p.220, Freedman 2017, p.157), not least because if Israel did hold on to the West Bank and Gaza in its entirety then Jews would be outnumbered and in some one-state future the risk is that the Jewish state may be ended at the ballot box (Shlaim 2001). However, saying that this is the one and only major concern with the occupation within Israel is disingenuous. Israeli anti-occupation groups such as Peace Now and Breaking the Silence are officially Zionist organizations (Feige, 1998, p.85). All these examples show that, more than the details, the problem with Kadan’s analysis is its totality, the blanket statements about Israel and Israeli motivations, the superlatives and judgements landing so hard and so fast it is designed, as with Wienberg’s article about the al-Aqsa mosque, to present a deplorable totality of an enemy without redeeming features.

In another piece about demonstrations, senior political analyst Bishara at first seems to endorse the position of the protesters, saying that “Israel may turn into a combination of autocracy and theocracy, ending all hopes or illusions of peace in Palestine and paving the way for the apocalypse.” (article 46, Bishara, AJ, 11th April). However, he also agrees with the other AJ writers that “then again, Netanyahu’s failure does not mean democracy will flourish and peace will prevail. After decades of occupation and oppression, Israel’s society and polity are so terribly dominated by the violent right and far-right parties that any future constellation of a governing coalition is bound to be extremist, whether it is more or less religious, whether headed by Benjamin Netanyahu or “General Benny Gantz” (see above). Bishara does give clues to his own position by using the signifier “illusions of peace” and giving a special space for the rank of Gantz, “General”. Which is to say an unreal peace kept in place by a general in the occupying army. In the source material from Al Jazeera, the only hint that Israel could do things differently and thereby
lead to a different outcome is Bishara’s use of the term “constructive” in the title, given the actual text, one is left to wonder what this may be.

The central problem is that so much of what Al Jazeera writes comes back to Kadan’s explicit use of the signifier, “always”. This signifier exemplifies the claim that the Zionist movement’s crucial component “has always been the colonisation of all of historic Palestine” (article 41, Kadan, AJ, 18th April, my italics). There is an importance to “always” in politics generally. “Always” is akin to words like “destiny”, “eternity” and “inevitability” and usually obscures more than it shows (Snyder, 2018). As an example of mirroring, we can see Netanyahu who claimed in his 2016 speech to the UN that “This conflict rages because for the Palestinians, the real settlements they’re after are Haifa, Jaffa and Tel Aviv,” (Netanyahu, 2016 Netanyahu UNs). Thus, Netanyahu draws a similar but opposite conclusion to that of Kadan, that Palestinians never want peace and always want to the overthrow of the entirety of Israel, not just the occupation and the settlements founded on the West Bank and other occupied areas since 1967. The absurdity of both claims is clear in other contexts, because we are talking about centuries long developments of national history and the winding paths they take. Both are akin to saying that all German leaders believe in the concept of Lebensraum because Hitler did (Smith, 1980, p.51).

Indeed, both views are coming at the argument with one eye intentionally shut. With regards to territory, Kadan must know that, even among ardent Zionists, the area that should be under Jewish control has been fiercely debated. The tradition of Jabotinski wanted this to include what then was Transjordan (Shlaim, 2001, p.81, Sarig, 1999) while the first partition plan put forward from the United Nations in 1947 (Ben-Dror, 2007, p.1000) was a compromise that Israel and Ben Gurion were willing to sign forewent most of the Galilee and large parts of the Negev for the Jewish state as well as the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The history after 1967 has indeed, as we shall see, split Israel into camps that are for and against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (Sorensen, 2008, p 313). Mainstream Israeli left-wing and centrist positions since 1994 have officially had a two-state solution as their stated policy goals. Even Netanyahu has claimed this as his official position in the famous Bar Ilan speech in (Bar-Ilan TOI, 2013). Although when it comes to Netanyahu and his claims, these should indeed always be informed by the actions taken by his administrations rather than the words themselves in isolation.

Tim Snyder’s main idea here is that there is no pre-determined path, none of Martin Luther King’s “ark of history” (Snyder, 2018). The truth is more like the contrary, no national movement has had goals that
remains unchanged for some century and a half. History is not predetermined, but contingent on people and of narratives or stories (Harari, 2014). Netanyahu knows full well that the PLO made dangerous and difficult compromises in the signing of the Oslo agreements. Equally, all the writers as well as all politicians know all about the struggle in Israel between the left that wanted to allow for the creation of a Palestinian state and the right who wanted to continue the occupation. It was plain for all to see. It led to Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin being assassinated by a supporter of the occupation at a peace demonstration in 1994 (Kort, 2002, p.282).

Of course, if we were to take the opposite view, of states, peoples and ideologies as dynamic and evolving, we must also acknowledge that things can get much worse as well as much better. Many have argued that Israel is on course to becoming a messianic dictatorship a view we also saw with Bishara’s analysis above. Benzael Smotrich is the leader of the National Religious party in Israel, formally the first in line whilst Itamar Ben Gvir is the second, more on Ben-Gvir in the section below. Smotrich was made Finance Minister in the 2022 government led by Netanyahu, whilst Ben-Gvir was given the previously non-existent role of Minister of Internal Security. People like Smotrich and Ben-Gvir, already government ministers with a contempt for democracy, could end up taking over the country (Harari, 2023, Haaretz, Messianic Dictatorship in Israel?). This development would not only hurt Israel but would surely affect the Palestinians as well.

Both Kadan, Bishara and Ayyash use settler-colonialist theory to inform their analysis, and I shall return to the discussion as to whether this is an apt description of Israel in the section on Israel. We can briefly note that there is certainly a place for “settler-colonial” theory with regards to Israel, if nothing else because views like Meyer’s, Ben-Gvir and Smoltrich continue to thrive in modern Israel and have deep roots to the beginning of Zionism. Meyer’s article is a case in point, belittling Palestinian grievance and reducing it to Islamic tradition and uncalled-for nationalism is indeed in the spirit of colonialism. However, we can also note how the articles in Al Jazeera use the term “settler-colonial” as a key signifier to describe Israel, as a continuation of the ideas that it is something fake, unreal, an entity with no validity, a foreign presence in the midst of Arab lands.

In the view of AJ, there is no real path forward for Israelis to support an Israeli state since it is, by definition, a settler-colonial enterprise. But the thesis of settler-colonialism does need to be supplemented with other theories. Using it in isolation, or in political spin, can miss so much of the motivations driving Israeli political life. The way it is used by many of AJ’s writers becomes another way in which the movements mirroring each other, the eternal settler-colonial enemy Kadan is describing is similar to Meyer’s banal
claim that Palestinian resistance to occupation is solely based on Islamic tradition. However, the problem with the blanket view of Israel that Al Jazeera employs is not simply that it mirrors the Zionist movement. The main problem is that real issues get lost. For example, by blaming \textit{de facto} annexation of the West Bank on the Abraham Accords misses the target of the settlement movement in Israel. Real issues like Gazans not having adequate drinking water or the restrictions of movement for Palestinians in the West Bank and in Gaza, or the constant military incursions signifying life under occupation is mixed in with the furious denials of the usefulness of the Israeli left and the implication that Israel is a foreign entity in the Middle East that must be defeated. If the only question is an eternal repetition of the question whether Israel should exist, all other questions risk hanging in the air until “liberation”.

\subsection*{3.9.4.3 Apples and Pears. Tracking Narratives of the Same Event}

This section will track two cases in the source material. Firstly, we have the raid on the Al Aqsa Mosque on the 4th of April. In this we can see the striking differences between how the raid was described in Al Jazeera and the Israeli Press. Secondly, we have the differences within the Israeli press, where the Times of Israel and Jerusalem Post describe the provocative speech of Benzael Smotrich. Smotrich said that the Palestinians do not exist whilst standing in front of a map which depicted “Greater Israel”, something that includes Jordan in its imaginary range. The point is to show what the differences in emphasis firstly between the Arab and Israeli press, and then the “inside Israel” perspective.

"Police said they entered the mosque after masked youths barricaded themselves inside the place of worship atop the Temple Mount with fireworks, clubs and rocks and refused to come out peacefully. Officers apparently believed the group intended to assault Jews visiting the Mount on Passover Eve. (...) Clips uploaded to social media showed troops beating already apprehended Palestinians inside the mosque. (...) Police said they tried to convince rioters inside the mosque to leave but that the group refused to comply, leaving security forces no option but to enter the building.". (Article 19, 5th April, TOI Staff, TOI)

"They kicked them out, they beat them, they handcuffed them and put cuffs on their legs and feet and threw them on the ground like sacks of meat." (Article 55, quoting Nihad Awad co-founder and Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), 7th April, AJ Staff, AJ)

In these radically different descriptions, we can see the TOI focusing on “masked youths”, with the police perspective given a central place. A key perspective for TOI is what happened \textit{before} the intervention. Awad, on the other hand, gives us a graphic image of the aftermath, where the “sacks of meat” analogy gives a dehumanizing image of thuggery shown \textit{because of} the intervention. TOI does give the corollary that “Clips uploaded to social media showed troops beating already apprehended Palestinians inside the
mosque”, obviously something that makes the Israeli police look bad. Yet image seems to be the primary focus here, hence the comment “uploaded to social media”. However, the main point here is to garner sympathy for the police, since they had “no option but to enter the building”. In fact, the police perspective is all we get, this operation was intended not to increase the violence, but to prevent it. This is because the youths inside the mosque intended to “violently oppose” the entry of Jews. So, the question of violence is taken away from actual police violence and instead onto planned Palestinian violence by those who intended to spend the night in the compound. The question of why Jews need to be allowed to go there at all remains unaddressed in this article.

“Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich of the far-right Religious Zionism party caused an international outcry after saying in a speech at a conference in Paris that the Palestinian people are an “invention” while standing behind a map of “Greater Israel” that includes modern-day Jordan.” (Article 10, 20th March, Tovah Lazaroff, JP and AP)

“Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has violated the peace treaty between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and made “racist” remarks about the Palestinian people, Jordan’s Foreign Ministry charged on Monday.” (Article 9, Lazaroff, 22nd March, JP)

This event prompted the Jordanian parliament to expel the Israeli ambassador to Jordan (See source articles above). The disregard that Smotrich and Ben-Gvir show Jordan is particularly obvious and a problem both for Netanyahu and potentially a problem for the WEN.

As far as the CDA goes with regards to the quote above, I will focus on the specific use of quotation marks in the two quotes, following the intertextuality referred to by Fairclough, as an example of how subtle a change can be in a text to still show its position clearly (Fairclough 1992, p. 84). The way this is used is close to the idea of floating signifiers, a ““floating signifier” belongs to the ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of signs.’ (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002, p 28). For our purposes here we can note the struggle of the reality of meaning, shown using quotation marks. The two quotes above are indicative of the difference between the centrist position of the TOI and the right-wing position of the Jerusalem Post. For the TOI, we get to see Smotrich called “far right” and therefore outside the Israeli mainstream. “Invention” and “Greater Israel” are also put in quotation marks thereby showing that this is not the position of the newspaper. Greater Israel is the dream of the Israeli right wing that spawned the settler movement that I shall discuss in the section on Israel. In JP, however, the quotation marks are instead put over the word “racist”. Thereby Lazaroff seems to suggest that when Smotrich called the Palestinian people an “invention”, this is not a racist statement and perhaps a position without values.
Both examples show signs of minimising and maximising the shock value of the events. We can see the difference also in the TOI. On the one hand it is critical to right-wing politicians questioning the validity of Israel’s peace deals and the existence of Palestinians. On the other hand it would rather focus on Palestinian youths “armed with fireworks, clubs and rocks” than police violence by the Israeli police. What these two things have in common is that both loose talk about breaking peace deals and potentially violent confrontations be termed as security threats in very different ways. However, when the TOI downplays police violence it is not dissimilar to when JP downplays calling the Palestinian people an “invention”.

### 3.9.4.4 Fake it ‘till You Make It. The UAE in the Israeli Press

‘Just scratched the surface’: Israel, UAE celebrate growing ties and trade

“My mother sends her regards to the people of Israel,” Fahima Al Bastaki, the chief business and market development officer of the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), said to laughter at a gathering of UAE and Israeli business leaders and officials on Tuesday in Tel Aviv. The simple words perhaps best reflect the excitement, enthusiasm, and — still — awe that surround the growing ties between Israelis and Emiratis since the signing of the Abraham Accords on the White House lawn two years ago, holding the promise of opening up new cultural, tourism and economic worlds for citizens of both regions. “It is surreal” to be in Tel Aviv, said an attendee at a conference held at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE), which on Tuesday hosted Abu Dhabi’s largest business delegation to Israel. “Who would have thought this could happen in our lifetime,” he added, words that were repeated over and over during the conference organized by the TASE for the delegation, which included representatives from the finance center Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), the Abu Dhabi Fund of Development, Mubadala Investment Company, the national oil company ADNOC and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange among others.

“Who would have thought, two years ago, that this would have happened,” said TASE CEO Ittai Ben Zeev at the event, where he and UAE ambassador to Israel Mohamed Al Khaja and the chairman of ADGM, Ahmed Al Zaabi, rang the opening bell amid a flurry of confetti and wide smiles. Over 120 MOUs — memorandums of understanding — have been signed between the countries with more to come, he said, along with a double taxation agreement and a free trade agreement. There are currently 72 weekly flights between Israel and the UAE, which will rise to almost 80 a week in the coming weeks, he said. Trade relations have surged, Al Khaja noted, and “we believe we can easily be Israel’s top five trading partner” within five years.

Since the start of the relationship, Israel and the UAE have seen trade jump over 500 percent to some $1.2 billion in 2021, from $190 million in 2020, said Shira Greenberg, chief economist at the Finance Ministry, at the conference. An investment treaty signed between the two countries to set out the infrastructure to enable mutual investments was negotiated and signed in just one week. (Article 31, Solomon, 23 Apr. TOI)
How to Succeed in Business in the UAE

“The uniqueness of building a foothold in the UAE is that it is also a steppingstone to the entire Arab world, even to countries with which Israel has no official commercial ties.” (Article 24, Gazit 23rd Feb, JP)

Nothing is Impossible for the UAE, It seems there is nothing the UAE leadership cannot achieve. (Article 22)

The panel discussion provided a unique opportunity to understand the achievements of the UAE in fulfilling its human rights obligations – which get undermined in the 24/7 global media cycle. Participants got a chance to understand the issues, challenges, and gains made in the UAE through thoughtful discussions by experts with evidence-based analysis on the subject. (Article 22, Cohen, JP, 6 March)

Defence tech company Rafael opens facility in UAE (Article 29)

RAFAEL said its "new office will enable the company to explore opportunities in the region, utilizing its culture of collaboration and innovation to create relationships with governments." "will be exhibiting an array of defence solutions and innovative technologies, some for the first time in the UAE, including the IRON BEAM high energy laser weapon system (HELWS). The IRON BEAM HELWS is designed to augment the capabilities of air defence systems like the IRON DOME.” (Bob, 16th Feb, JP)

Netanyahu denies report of Israeli crisis with UAE (Article 36)

The UAE reportedly said that it would not buy Israeli defence systems until it felt that Netanyahu can control his government. (...) Israel reached an agreement with the UAE this month on the text of a customs agreement that will govern the free trade agreement between the two countries, it said. Once the free trade agreement comes into force it will “expand the economic, commercial and political relations between Israel and the UAE,” the Foreign Ministry said. (Lazaroff, JP, 12th March)

India-Israel-UAE-US business forum in Abu Dhabi important for region (article 25)

“there is a lot of synergy between the two countries because of Israel’s leading place in the hi-tech sector and the UAE’s centrality in global trade and innovation. our pipeline of projects in solar, wind, rail transport infrastructure – multibillion-dollar initiatives that will take time and expertise”, (Franzman, JP, Feb 23rd)

UK’s BP teams up with Abu Dhabi state oil group to buy 50% of Israel’s NewMed Energy (article 33)
The two energy firms will buy 45% of the free-floating shares the public holds in NewMed Energy, (...), and about 5% of Delek Group’s stake to take the Israeli offshore natural gas producer private. (Wrobel 28th March, TOI)

The difference is obvious and immediate when consulting articles depicting the UAE after the acrimonious coverage of Al Jazeera’s coverage of Israel and the Israeli press coverage of Jordan. Here we have an overwhelmingly positive image of the Emirates where the focus is on science, business, and technology rather than in a focus on political struggle and violent confrontation.

Shoshana Solomon (Article 31) writes perhaps the most poetically about an Abraham Accords event the “mother that sends her regards” espouses a sense of familiarity and intimacy. Finding Fairclough’s (Fairclough, 2012) “claim” is not easy since it could be many things, they all tend towards the same direction, something akin to amazing. Perhaps “It is surreal” is common to all of them. The exotic nature of the relationship is most thrilling for Solomon, where the “excitement, enthusiasm, and — still — awe that surround the growing ties between Israelis and Emiratis (...), holding the promise of opening up new cultural, tourism and economic worlds for citizens of both regions”. Note that there is more than a little “mythology of the mysterious East” (Said, 2003, p.165) in this description. The main theme of this thesis, the “circumstantial premise” or problem needed to be overcome, is conspicuously missing from Solomon’s piece as it is for many of the pieces in the source material that pertain to the UAE. One could say, perhaps cynically, that the problem here is that there is no problem. There is a “goal premise”, as in “we believe we can easily be Israel’s top five trading partner within five years”, but in some ways the goal has already been achieved, the meeting of Israelis and Emiratis in settings where business can be done. The “means goal is that “Over 120 MoU’s — memorandums of understanding — have been signed between the countries with more to come”. In this we can gage a clue to the importance of the WEN to the Abraham Accords, while it is true that there is an MoU underpinning the WEN, we must not exaggerate its importance for either government since it is one of more than 120 such MoUs. We can also note the presence of ADNOC representatives in the forum, marking the interest of the oil industry in the trade that may arise from the conference. As we shall see, whilst the economic relationship does indeed go both ways, with Israeli technology being sold to the Emiratis and the UAE investing in Israel. However, the tourism mentioned is all about Israelis going to the UAE, especially Dubai.

Mark Gazit (article 24) gives a typical example of how the Israeli press hopes for business opportunities by using the words “foothold” and “steppingstone” as signifiers. The metaphor invokes either the vision of an adventurer or a military unit, crossing rivers into foreign or enemy territory to get to the other side
and establish a conquering presence. Using the right tactics, Israeli businesses may gain access to millions of potential customers in the Arab world, even in “countries which Israel has no official ties”. A guess is that Gazit is not writing about “enemy” nations of Israel like Syria and Iran, but of other GCC countries perhaps particularly Saudi Arabia whom many analysts believe gave its implicit backing to the Abraham Accords, and who regularly appear in the Israeli and American media who speculate on when and how the Saudis will join the accords (Taylor, Washington Times, 2021 [SA to join], (Mandel, Israel HaYom, 2022 Will SA join?). Even in the field of human rights, Edy Cohen writes in a cheery headline that “There is nothing that the UAE cannot achieve" (Article 22, Cohen, JP, 6th March). As we shall see, this is not the way human rights organizations speak about the situation in the UAE, particularly regarding the treatment of foreign workers, but also in other measures such as the freedom of expression.

Seth J. Franzman (article 23) writes an article about a MoU that has been signed between the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and the Italian oil giant ENI. However, this is not how he frames the prospective deal, instead the wording is that the MoU aims “for cooperation on energy transition projects and sustainability initiatives between ADNOC and the Italian energy group ENI” (Franzman, JP, March 4th). The way Franzman portrays it is that the two companies are focused on sustainability because of the focus of Carbon Capture Sequestration (CCS) and the related technique of Blue Hydrogen, while in fact, as we shall explore further in the section on ADNOC in the UAE, both techniques have been targeted by critics as attempts to gaslight and delay the energy transition (Adu, 2018).

Yonah Jeremy Bob (article 29) is similarly sanguine about the defence industry when he quotes a press release from Israeli defence industry heavyweight Rafael that says they will be “utilizing its culture of collaboration and innovation to create relationships with governments” (Bob, JP, 16th Feb) in their new office in the Emirates. As we shall see, the controversiality of the Accords still stops the UAE from becoming a major importer of Israeli weapons, but the Israeli military industry is still aiming for this eventuality.

AJ and JP seem to find a rare issue of agreement in that the Abraham Accords looks strong “the relationship’s core remains intact” (see below, article 45, Ibrahim, AJ, 29th March) and the quote from the Israeli foreign ministry that “(o)nce the free trade agreement comes into force it will “expand the economic, commercial and political relations between Israel and the UAE” (article 36, Lazaroff, 12th March, JP).

Is Israel’s far-right government jeopardising Emirati ties? [Article 45]
Recent Israeli escalations with Palestinians created apparent tension with the UAE but the relationship’s core remains intact, say analysts. (...) The UAE’s relationship with Israel was governed by pragmatism, making the Gulf state “happy to continue” investing in and attracting Israeli companies, specifically in the cyber and AI technology sectors, security monitoring and other defence-related industries – as long as its economic statecraft was not affected. (Ibrahim, AJ, 29th March)

Crucially, this is the only time we see relevant material to the larger thesis. For much of the Israeli press, the conflict is far away from the conflict, the “good Arabs”, who are sanguine about Israel rather than the “bad Arabs” who make problems.

3. 10 Summary

“(O)pposing narratives of both sides are characterized by the absolute justification and idealization of the national self and the cultivation of its victimized collective identity alongside the exclusion and the devaluation of the “enemy” and its narrative. (Maoz and Ron, 2013, p.282)

There has been much research about the narrative difference from Israeli and Palestinian sides. For example, the use of the term “separation barrier” or “Apartheid wall” describing the wall or fence Israel has built toward the West Bank (Rogers, 2008, p.82). The term “Israel Defence Forces, or IDF” is not a term Al Jazeera will use (Barkho, 2021, p. 1366). This leads us to a question here whether these Israeli and Palestinian narratives are competing for hegemony in Gramsci’s sense (Gramsci, 1971). On the one hand, on the “global” scale, we can see that there is indeed such a struggle going on, pertaining to how the conflict is covered in international media and received in international politics. In politics, this is primarily seen as which states will condemn Israel for what actions. On the other hand, the struggle for hegemony is quite different within Israel and the Arab world due to the filter bubbles (Pariser, 2011), whereby the ““enemy” and its narrative” from the Maoz and Ron quote above, simply may be absent from the pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli media consumer, something that actually may have gotten worse in the era of social media. It is therefore within their own countries (or regions in Al Jazeera’s case) where they are struggling for hegemony. This difference of the frame of reference is of course bound to lead to misunderstandings and complicates all visions of cooperation such as the WEN.

Reading Al-Jazeera, most Israeli actions seem to have similar sinister intentions. Even the motivations of the Israeli left, be they an attempt to create a two-state solution or the struggle for democracy, are all painted with the same brush, they are a front for hypocritical settler-colonialism, “whitewashing” occupation and oppression. Israel will “always” be an oppressor, a colonial state and as such an aberration in the Middle East. Likewise, the Abraham Accords was signed to “improve Israel’s Arab relations at the
expense of Palestinian rights” (article 46, Bishara, AJ, 12th April). The underlying question is never how Israel should behave, or what kind of state it should be, rather the only question is if the state has any legitimacy in the first place. There is no exposure to the opposite narrative, since none of Al Jazeera’s pieces have an Israeli audience in mind. However, dismissing the internal struggles within Israel as irrelevant may turn out to be a mistake for Al Jazeera. If all the articles are ultimately about the if question; it runs the risk of making the reader less, not more, informed about Israel. In turn this may make finding solutions to any problem harder rather than easier. It is an interesting thought experiment to see what would happen to Al Jazeera if Qatar did join the Abraham Accords which some have speculated upon (Guzanski, 2020). Would they be able to continue with this kind of coverage of Israel? It is possible. For now, though, this is the kind of opinion Israel can expect to find in the Arab world as seen by Al Jazeera. There are of course other voices in the Arab world, like the governments of Jordan and the UAE, but for Al Jazeera, there is anti-Zionist hegemony.

This is of course very different in the Israeli press. It stands to reason that the struggle is all about the how and what kind of state Israel should be rather than if it has any legitimacy at all. This struggle over hegemony covers everything from the role of religion in the state, to the judiciary, to citizenship and of course to the occupation. We saw a small piece of this play out in the difference between the TOI and JP on Smotrich, but the split goes very deep indeed. We have seen some examples of writers from the hard right in the Israeli press. They portray Jordan, despite the peace deal, as an enemy entity strongly associated with the Palestinians. Think of Weinberg scolding the Jordanian king himself for failing to restrain Palestinian preachers, or Meyer’s assertion that the root of the conflict lies in Palestinians and Jordanians weaponizing of Quranic verses. These articles are written with open disregard for any potential Arab reader, yet in their context they are allowed to flourish precisely because they reflect ongoing prejudice common in Israeli society.

As noted, what we find when reviewing the source material on the UAE, is that most often it is based on a superficial narrative based around business and great relations. The Israeli press seem mesmerised by the fabulous wealth of the hyperreality of Dubai transcends any Middle Eastern reality of conflict and oppression. It is the tourist brochure picture of the Emirates, the vision of the smiling air hostesses at the Emirates as an enduring image. Nothing gets too deep into the United Arab Emirates, its internal or external politics, its place in the Arab world or its connection to the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict. It is very much reminiscent of the kind of attitude that Katie Wachsberger observed and warned against, calling it a “The gold rush mentality in Israel does not consider the practical interests behind these public displays
of collaboration, which often represent more than just economic opportunities. They shed light on the importance of demonstrating the tangible benefits of the agreement to the UAE public, influencing popular sentiments, providing material for pundits and public intellectuals, and generating confidence among the business elite.” (Wachsberger, 2021. p.5). Thereby, the Israeli reader can live in the illusion that the UAE on the other hand is portrayed as a country Israel can do business with, completely disassociated with the conflict. As we a shall see, this assertion is simply not true. In both Jordan and the UAE many people feel a deep connection with the Palestinians and cannot completely disconnect themselves from them.

For the sake of the WEN, the Arab world does need to create an alternative view to Al Jazeera. Perhaps one which does not abandon the Palestinians but can figure out an opinion that learns to live with a better version of the Israeli state and can even help that state to come into being. The best option for Israel seems to be to stay out of AJ altogether, which could be done by peacebuilding, keeping people like Ben-Gvir from positions of power and at all costs avoid escalation at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Because, to paraphrase Smotrich in the source material, what happens in Palestine does not stay in Palestine.

4. The Crucible. The History of Israel and Palestine and the Historical Narrative

4.1 Introduction

In this section investigates some of the historical basis for the narratives we have seen above. As a reminder to the question at hand it is that this thesis: will attempt to ascertain how credible these dreams are by delving into the histories of each of these three countries regarding diplomacy, environment, green technology, the green transition, land usage, water and narrative. To start answering these questions, it can be useful to unpack some of the fundamentals of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, especially concerning foreign policy and environmental concerns in Israeli society.

4.2 Aim

The aim of this chapter is to put some of these narratives, as well as the aims of the WEN, into its historical and current political context. As we shall see, there are many complications in the way of creating such international cooperation infused in the essence of both Zionism and anti-Zionism, stretching all the way back to the birth of the Zionist project. This is true both in ideological terms, in terms of how the state of Israel was built and in terms of how the history of Israel has unfolded.

4.3 Method
The method I will use is to analyse the history of Israel and the current situation wherever it is relevant for the ambitions of the WEN. As we shall see in the theory section, there are several ways of analysing Israel. One way is through settler-colonial theory, another through “sectarian securitization” theory. I will use both these theories when looking at Israel with regards to the WEN and its aims. Both theories have their problems and limitations, but my intention is to let both theories supplement the other. Especially important in the Israeli case is to also emphasise the presence of fear in Israeli society that has been a backdrop to all Israeli action and ideology throughout its history.

4.4 Theory

There are several ways of interpreting Zionism, some scholars, as many of the journalists in Al Jazeera, use the term settler colonialist (Massad, 2018; Abu Lughod, 2020). Settler colonialism “is an interpretative framework of cumulative historical analogies” (Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022, p.46), meaning that there is no strict definition but rather a framework of global trends where settling the land became a feature of colonialism in countries all over the world from the Americas to Australia and certain countries in Africa, particularly South Africa. For Gabriel Piterberg, Zionism adheres to the “three fundamentals of hegemonic settler narratives (…) the uniqueness of the settler nation, the exclusive primacy accorded to the settlers’ subjectivity; and the denial of the presence of the colonized.” (Piterberg, 2018).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is certainly more than a little colonialism colouring the early Zionist project which has a bearing on certain strands of policy and narrative far into the modern age. Indeed, the very first Zionists in the Levant built their worldview in civilizational terms, using the flowery language common among national romanticist writing at the time. The idea of dividing the world into civilized and the uncivilized provided common justifications globally (Said, 1979). This perspective helps in discussing certain strands of Zionist thought as it pertains to old style European claims of superiority over native peoples in the region. For Mendes-Flohr, Zionist thought owes its background to a “cult of Spinoza” (Mendes-Flohr, 1979), of secular rationalism in the Jewish community in Europe. This is not unlike or unaffected by the ideas of the French revolution and the Scottish Enlightenment, which of course were weaponized by France and Britain against the “uncivilized natives” in the era of colonialism (Kohn and O’Neill, 2006). For Israel, the settler colonial perspective would return with a vengeance with the occupation and the settlement of the West Bank after 1967. This is because of the ideology of the settlers, who believe they are repopulating the Biblical homeland of the Jewish people, often because the act of settlement facilitates the coming of the Messiah (Ben Shitrit, 2015). Furthermore, the state itself
employed many of the same strategies of land division that were used during the Nakba again in the West Bank (Falah, 2003).

So, we have this tradition of scholarship. However, we have already seen how this term is thrown around in the political rhetoric as an argument for deeming Israel as an aberration of the Middle East, increasing the dissonance between the narratives inside and outside Israel. Israeli political life rooted in Jewish history both in Europe and the Middle Eastern as well as European history. Therefore, the framework of settler colonial theory only goes so far in describing Israel because of the particularities in Jewish history that led to the growth of Jewish nationalism and the internal dynamics within Israel. It is also useful to investigate what possible policy recommendations can come out of this designation. As we have seen, for Al Jazeera the analogy is something like France in Algeria, where the settlers are driven out in a war of liberation and the natives and back to their homeland. Abu Lughod, on the other hand, is speaking to an Australian audience when she laments that something like the cooperation with the indigenous population that takes place in Australia through the Aboriginal Cultural Protocols Guideline is unimaginable in Israel. This is because Israel is nowhere near to be able to give the official apologies that Australian authorities have given to Aboriginals (Abu Lughod, 2020, p.5). She is correct in that we are nowhere near this point. However, which analogy we use is critical. If the analogy were Australia, where we could be speaking about names of places changing, museums and universities acknowledging guilt and public symbols being worked out and changed, this would be a painful but possible national conversation to have in the future. If the analogy is French Algeria, on the other hand, the answer is only military. In contrast to French Algeria, however, there is no obvious mother country to Israel. Where is the obvious sponsor to Israel like France was for the Pied Noir in Algeria? More pertinently for Israeli Jews, where would the Jews go if they were ousted from Israel? This simple fact has proved a unifying force in an otherwise splintered Israeli society throughout the history of the state.

In contrast to the parallel history of European colonialism that was consistently built on dreams of glory, the backdrop of Zionist ideas, though often glorifying in nature, cannot be separated from the emotion of fear. In fact, many studies argue that fear is perhaps the most basic fact about Israeli political life (Goodman, 2017; Del Sarto, 2017; Levi and Agmon, 2021). “the very foundations of the nation state – such as shared recent memories, common language and culture – were still lacking, even within the dominant Jewish community. What the Jews who immigrated to Israel did have in common, nevertheless, was that ‘they were all victims of anti-Semitism, discrimination, persecutions and pogroms’ of which ‘the holocaust was [...] the peak’. This traumatic situation engendered ‘a nation constantly on edge, which continues to
suffer from a continuous sense of collective anxiety and a highly developed survival instinct’. (Levi and Agmon, 2021, p.308). A concept to pay attention to in this quote is that there perhaps is little of the shared memories which could form another basis for the state outside of the politics connected to fear. Unlike German and Italian unification there was little besides the amorphous idea or Jewishness keeping them together in terms of culture. The difference between a Polish family fleeing the Holocaust and an Iraqi family fleeing the Farhud, would be the same difference between a Polish and an Iraqi family were it not for the shared experience of persecution. The Farhud is the name given to anti-Jewish riots that expelled nearly all the Jews from Iraq by 1941 (Berman, 2019, p.1 and p.16). Similar actions, and anti-Jewish expulsions and policies were held all over the Arab world both before and after Israel became a state, for example Nasser expelled the vast majority of the Jews of Egypt in 1956 after the Suez Crisis (Helfont, 2015, p.4). In fact, this experience was almost universally shared by Jewish immigrants coming from other places than the anglosphere like Britain, South Africa, Australia and the New World more broadly.

This presence of fear as a unifier of Israeli life, leads me to adopt a supplementary approach to analysing Israeli society beyond settler colonialism. Del Sarto uses the term “sectarian securitization” to describe Israeli political life and means that the success of revisionist Zionism in the 1970s supercharged this trend. This is a term she borrows from the theory surrounding many states where sectarian identity supersedes centralized government, such as Iraq or Lebanon. Of course, there are many ways in which Israel contrasts with these states, as an OECD economy with a competitive parliamentary democracy. Even so, the question of security and ethnicity is so central to Israeli culture and identity that she feels this term captures the Israeli case. She recreates the worst-case scenario of this focus on security “(B)y incessantly invoking supposedly primordial loyalties, threats and fears, the vicious cycle of sectarian securitization makes the peaceful resolution of conflicts highly unlikely, legitimizing instead the pursuit of violence and policies of force. As conflicts inevitably become defined in ‘primordial’ terms, rather than as disputes over resources and power, sectarian identities and security become quasi-ontological categories that are extremely difficult to deconstruct.” (Del Sarto, 2017 p.777). The fear drives the security thinking, so when claims are made that Israel is an unreal construct, perhaps simply a colony, without an inherent right to exist, critics of Israel are playing to Israel’s strength by presenting a threat that can be solved by military means. The weakness of the “sectarian securitization” angle is perhaps both that the states it usually points to are so different to Israel, and that by emphasizing this angle we might overlook the central and strongest claims of settler-colonial theory, „,er where applicable, the wide-ranging nature of the subject matter sometimes necessitates the use of other theories that will be presented wherever the need arises.
4.5 Why the WEN?

Within Israel, there are other oddities with the deal that do directly have to do with internal Israeli policy. One of these oddities has to do with land. Over 60% Israel is desert, yet the desert areas house a mere 13% of the population (KKL, 2013) idea of having to go to Jordan for a tract of desert seems at first glance to be an odd choice for a country with so much. As we shall see, the land issue must be explained at some depth because it has to do with the history of Jewish settlement in the Levant and the ideology that surrounds it. Another has to do with water. Israel is on the one hand known as a water superpower, where its water policies are showcased around the world. On the other hand, it is accused of “hydro-apartheid” by the Palestinians. This oddity is exemplified by two rapports from the World Bank, one in 2009 and one in 2014. The first is extremely damning regarding Israeli policy in Gaza and the West Bank, while the second is celebratory, focusing on Israel’s achievements in the domain of water within the Green Line. How can it be that we came to this stage? The question is one that exposes how the interplay of power, conflict and the clash of ideology hold sway in Middle Eastern politics.

4.6 Israel Through Time. History, Ideology, Diplomacy and Environment

By investigating Israel’s history, I attempt to find the roots of the problems associated with the WEN, in terms both of ideology, diplomacy and the ongoing constraints that land and water issues bring with them. As we shall see, fear and securitization have forced Israel into becoming an insular, inward-looking country that sees much of the surrounding region as a threat, therefore complicating diplomacy. The settlement movement and the rise of the populist right wing has only made this problem more acute. The colonial roots of Israel have played a role in making land expensive and hard to access for projects like the WEN. Conversely, the potential country-killing problem of lack of water is something that has made Israel a world leader in water management and desalination. Further, the OECD membership and highly developed high-tech sector has made Israel an attractive partner for countries in the Gulf. To sort out the forces pushing and pulling Israel into and away from regional cooperation, as well as what this means for the green transition, I have chosen to present a few key takeaways from different parts of Israeli history that highlight the possibilities and challenges for these plans.

4.4.1 Zionism and the Triumph over Nature

Zionism was created through a mixture of ideas of escape from oppression of Jews in Europe, fed by the Passover myth and the nationalist movements of the 19th Century. There was also a strand of thought
from Marx and Freud that you could build a “new man” and create “new countries” by changing society on a fundamental level. Some see this as a remnant of the messianic vision of early Judaism, living alongside the rationalist tradition of Spinoza (Mendes-Flohr, 1979, p.443). There are several apparent dichotomies attached to Zionist thought, such as the strong and the weak Jew, the untamed wild and the rugged pioneer, the crowded Europe and supposedly empty Levant. The city dwellers of Europe could therefore be presented as weak and intellectual as opposed to the strong farmers, builders and soldiers that it was believed that the new country would need. The strong Jew, such as Max Nordau’s “Muscle Jew” from 1898 (Presner, 2003), as metaphor for the glory with its inherent settler-colonial undertones; and the weak Jew as metaphor for the fear of annihilation with its inherent self-understanding as the permanent victim (Freidman, 1990, p.278; Sternhell, 1998). For Zionists looking to attract Jews living in Europe, the dichotomies were an effective propaganda tool. In practice, of course, the strong and the weak can work together to create a single-mindedness that can be difficult to penetrate or change in terms of narrative. Indeed, in psychological terms, fear and aggression are closely linked, exemplified by the simple fight or flight reaction to threat.

The emotion of fear and the pursuit of glory can easily intermingle and in Israel it had created an atmosphere of militarism, which can be seen throughout Israel’s history (Ben-Eliezer, 2000, p.8). Therefore, much of Israeli political life is centred around securitization, and formulating a problem as a security threat vastly increases the chances that the policies suggested can be realized. Of course, the focus on security together with both the fear and the glory would each in their own way make it difficult to reconcile with the people they would encounter when settling the Levant, and this reverberates all the way to the present day making international relations more difficult.

Sternhell theorizes that most of the basic principles of Israel were to be formulated at the time after WWI, i.e., the period of the 2nd Alia. At this point the most influential people in the movement worked on farms “in Palestine at that period, physical labour was held to be a national value and had a special character: this was also the instrument par excellence of the conquest of the land” (Sternhell, 1998). The special place in the Zionist movement of the “new farmer” was to have profound effects on the development of Israeli environmentalism and its boundaries.

Perhaps the most obvious embodiment of this ideal that encompassed both soldier/farmer socialist movement was the kibbutz. The kibbutz pioneers wanted to change both themselves and their environment. Ari Shavit in his reading of the early ideology of the Ein Herod Kibbutz in the early 1920s, looks at photographs of the early Kibbutz pioneers “the young men I see are indeed new Jews. They are
strong, buff, beaming with certainty. It is hard to believe that the parents they left behind in Eastern Europe were shtetl merchants or ghetto scholars. Within a short period of time, the transformation among the youngsters was beyond comprehension (...) their fine torsos are proudly on display” (Shavit, 2014). With the “new man” in the “new land” came the idea of rebirth, redemption and building anew. This meant building both new cities and settlement in remote areas. Part and parcel of early Zionism was on the idea that the Jews should return to the earth in a rural idealized setting, especially since they wanted to transform the Jews as well as the land to which they arrived.

So where does this mix of glory and fear, the clean slate of the wild that Zionism came to change, and the constant fear leave environmental concerns? Again, we see a paradox here. On the one hand we have the rural ideal, the romanticism of rugged terrain and a special place for the tree and the forest, on the other the nature that needed to be civilized, to be transformed by man. So, are the Jews coming to take command over nature or coming to preserve and conserve nature? Can you both build cities on the land and preserve the wonderous wilds? These things, surely, are not the same. Schoenfeld makes this point as well, “The slogan of 'making the desert bloom' captures this ambivalence. It is about again being in connection with the earth, but it does not value the letting the desert be as it is found, rather making it become something else.” (Schoenfeld, 2005, p.98). Indeed, although there was romanticism about the wilderness, the wildness and the untamed aspects of the Levent, there was never any real question which way the Zionist movement would choose. In fact, despite the ambivalence inherent in the romanticized idea of the wilderness, immediately upon arriving to the newly acquired Jewish lands the barrenness, the deserts, the swamps and the sandy coastal plain were all considered as something that should be brought to heel. “Most of the European-trained landscape gardeners practicing in Palestine in the early twentieth century adopted the commonly held perception of the existing landscape as depleted and barren (...). It was considered a tabula rasa on which the new Zionist homeland would be designed, creating ‘something from nothing’ (yesh m’ayin)” (Rosenberg, 2005 p. 1. italics in original).

De Shalit captures this early ideology “Nathan Alterman’s 1934 lyrics about the transformation of coastal sand dunes into the city of Tel Aviv capture the ethos aptly: ‘Wake up, O sand, because cement is attacking you/stone and cement/a hand full of iron/a path is paved/a city sings a song’ (...) The ruling elite in Palestine and then Israel strove to transform the environment into both wheat fields and apartment blocks in ways that “meant 'civilising' the environment (...) They wanted to convert the Middle East – including the environment – to ‘civilisation’ (...) (de-Shalit 1995, p.76-77). the Zionist ideas for development of the land took many forms, of course, some of these forms included development,
draining of swamps, settlement and the building of cities. However, this is not to say that romanticism and the passion for wild spaces was dead for the Zionist movement, far from it. Again, we find a paradox in two potentially irreconcilable ideas underpinning the Jewish National Fund (JNF/KKL), one was buying land for Jewish settlers, and one was to green the land. This often meant establishing National Parks and planting forests, since these efforts could combine these two goals “For Israelis the individual tree is part of the greater forest. The forest is important in redemption of the land, a concept again based on biblical descriptions of Eretz Yisrael.” (P.8, Cohen, 1993). From these ideological and religious beginnings, Cohen contends that “The forests are employed in the state-building effort (...) as a method of occupying land, such that its use is reserved for the state alone, and, second(ly) by assisting in the process of providing employment for the massive wave of immigrants, thereby allowing for nationally planned population dispersal.” (Cohen, 1993, p.19). The ethos of the Tabula Rasa and the new land that needed to be moulded into civilization was about to be supercharged by the events that led to the creation of the state of Israel.

As it was with land, so it was with water, with a few important distinctions. Land was converted and settled with the help of a few organizations, chief among them the JNF. Water, of course, has been front and centre of Middle Eastern conflict for millennia, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is no different. There is a section on water below, but here I want to focus on its connection with ideology. In the farm-centric ideology of Labour Zionism, “unrestricted access to water resources has been perceived as a non-negotiable condition for the survival of a Jewish national home (...) Throughout the first twenty years of existence of the state of Israel (1948), developing water legislation and large-scale water infrastructure was a central pillar of its nation building” (Dai, 2021, p.4). As mentioned, in terms of perception, water is today the environmental risk that people in the Middle East, far ahead of climate change as the largest perceived threat (Keulertz and McKee, 2021). As we shall see, water is of critical importance in the case of Jordan, as well as one of the most contentious and politicized questions in the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It was also critical both in the imagination of the Zionists and in the iconic water towers built over each new settlement of the Yeshuv (pre-state Jewish community), the real change in water management came after the state had been established and water was seen as critical to the immigration project. This was the building of the National Water Carrier (NWC), which radically altered the water sources, especially the Sea of Galilee, the Yarmouk River and the Jordan River. As we can see, Zionism affects the ideas of the WEN in several ways, settler colonialism and securitization make international cooperation difficult. With regards to water management and environmentalism we can see Zionism and the “New Land” myth involving a commitment to transforming the land in a show of technological prowess which can potentially work in favour of the WEN.

One of the factors that sealed Israel’s military victory in the (War of Independence/ Nakba/ First Arab Israeli War) war was the fact that perhaps the most capable of Israel’s enemies, Jordan’s Arab Legion that had been trained by the British, was being commanded by King Abdullah whose political ambition was to control the Arab parts of Palestine more than ejecting the Jews from the land. He even met with Golda Meir to come to this agreement. This made the Jordanians, in Avi Shlaim’s words “the best of enemies” something that much later was to have an impact on the peace with Jordan and ultimately the WEN and other treaties. At the same time, for the Palestinians, the war came to be called Al Nakba, the disaster, since some 700,000 Palestinians of the 1.2 million living on the land were forced to leave (Shlaim, 2004; Morris, 1988, Morris, 2011 New Republic; Pappe, 2006). The Palestinian refugee problem is important to this study insofar as it and the Israeli victory has formed opinions, myths and hegemonic ways of thinking in both Israel and in the Arab states. As we have seen not least in the press segment, these ideologies will also form the framework and the boundaries and taboos about land, water, ecology and foreign relations. For Jordan, the relationship with Israel has been complicated from the beginning, with many in government being willing to work with Israel and a large part of the population not only being pro-Palestinian but also having Palestinian heritage.

4.6.3 From Theory to Practice. Building Institutions to Divide and Settle the Land.

When the state of Israel emerged from the fighting victorious, all the ideological elements of pre-state Zionism were elevated to state ideology, ready to sculptor the land into a new reality. The state, particularly under Ben Gurion’s dominant Labor party, continued to be in the thralls of the pastoral romanticism of nature and the citizen soldier exemplified by the model society in the kibbutz. This commitment to an agrarian ideal was rooted in the belief that “An agrarian existence was viewed as an element for increasing the productivity and changing the employment base of the Jewish people, and contributing to nation building by creating closer links between the recently arrived new immigrants and their ancient homeland” (Feitelson, 2002 p.300). This turned out to be for several reasons. Feitelson goes on “Firstly, rural settlement and agricultural development were seen as an effective way to establish control over the land, particularly in frontier areas (...). Secondly, rural settlements and agricultural development were viewed as an effective way to absorb the massive immigration wave of the early fifties (...). Thirdly, agricultural development was viewed as essential for supplying food to the burgeoning population” (Feitelson, 2002, p.300-301). With this ideological backdrop, the War of Independence/Nakba, presented Israel with unprecedented land acquisition, the pre-state Yeshuv had
owned a mere 6.8% of the land whilst after the land confiscations this eventually rose to 93% of land under Israeli ownership (Falah, 2003). For the newly formed Israeli state, this question of land, and what to do with the millions of acres of previously Palestinian land was answered decisively by Ben Gurion “[w]e won indeed by conquest, but without settlement these conquests do not have a decisive value, neither in the Negev nor in the Galilee nor in Jerusalem. Settlement—this is the real conquest” (Quoted in Kellerman 1993, P.83).

So, settlement, that previously involved land bought from Arab owners, now involved settlement of reclassified land from previous Palestinian ownership. This system was quickly made into state policy. Forman and Kedar describe the legal process that followed regarding the land that the Palestinians had left behind, many lands and properties were seized outright, and “the gradual normalization of this seizure began almost immediately, with the repeated reclassification of the land, first as ‘abandoned land', then as ‘absentee land', and finally as ‘Israel Lands'. (Forman and Kedar 2004 p.4). The foundational setup of the mix of official use of laws that transferred millions of acres from the property of the Palestinians to “Israeli lands” used two efficient tools at its disposal, military zoning and the complex legal framework that had been established. This framework saw the JA (Jewish Agency) and the JNF (Jewish National Fund) together with the Israel Land Authority (ILA) take control of the lion’s share of the land expropriated from Palestinians. This was done through the Development Agency (DA) The DA In 1950 a “bill now specified that agricultural land could be sold only to the state or the JNF” (Forman and Kedar, 2004, p.818). Furthermore, none of these agencies are completely independent. The ILA, even today, controls over 93% of the land in Israel, and the JNF is legally bound to nominate 10 of the 22 that sit on the board of directors in the ILA and owns some 80% of the land together with the JNF (Manski, 2010 p. 1-4). This situation is the background to which we can find the oddity identified by Barak-Erez in 2008 in the following quote “In contrast to the tradition of other Western countries, most land in Israel is publicly owned and administered by a government agency: the Israel Lands Administration” (Barak-Erez, 2008, p.1). In terms of water management, this control has actually been a boon, allowing Israel to micromanage water usage in ways unthinkable in countries with more diversified control of water assets.

The land transfer regime was finally ended in the 1950s, when Israel sought to stem the tide of lawsuits from Palestinians that was threatening to overrun the legal system. Therefore, land ownership between Jews and Arabs has ossified in this ratio within the green line. For Piterberg, this expansion of land acquisition after the metropole, in this case the British, had left, is critical to calling Israel a settler-colonial state (Piterberg, 2018). The result of the land transfer regime has been that the issue of land remains one
of the most contentious for the Arab community in Israel as well as for the rest of the Palestinian diaspora. For our purposes here we can see both why Israeli lands are valued far higher than the regional average and why the question is so politically explosive among both Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel and the wider Palestinian community.

In terms of environmental stewardship, the question became even more entangled because of the JNF. While the JNF certainly is the authority that takes care of national parks in Israel, as we have seen, it is not an environmental organization in any normal sense of the word. Even in theory, the two diametrically opposed ideas of developing and conserving the land being advanced by the same organization is difficult to make sense of. In practice, this creates another problem, the history of the JNFs role in dispossession some will lead some to see all forms of environmentalism from Israel as linked to this factor. Resistance to Zionism will therefore concern itself with resisting the very organization also charged with protecting nature. Indeed, in the words of one activist scholar, Israeli environmentalism is at its heart “Israeli green colonialism, denoting the apartheid state’s misappropriation of environmentalism to eliminate the Indigenous people of Palestine” (Sasa, 2022). Even today, the JNFs role in furthering environmental agenda and as a government agency also leads to a very tangible basic problem that ironically led to the formulation of the WEN, the fact that land is expensive and inaccessible for any use, and also that of a large-scale investment in green energy. “According to the JNF, only eight percent of Israel's population lives in the Negev, which is sixty percent of the country's landmass. JNF PR does not mention that, with eighty-five percent of the Negev designated off-limits to civilian uses, the portion of the Negev available for civilian uses is more densely populated than the center of the country” (Manski, 2010, p. 11-12). This means that when EcoPeace rightly points out that it is going to be hard for the government to install a PV solar strategy, what they actually are talking about is that the JNF, the ILA and the state itself are putting themselves in a situation because of the basic idea of zoning that places much of the Negev out of the market in an effort to control the indigenous Bedouin who live there and create spaces for possible Jewish immigration, that is to say the very reason the agency was formed in the first place. Yet the irony goes deeper still. There have been attempts to formulate an energy transition plan within Israel’s borders. An example of one such plan is when the left-wing Meretz party and the Green Party ran together in the 2019 election on a platform including an “Israeli Green Deal” (Palatnik et al. 2022) which called for a powerful PV strategy in Israel. One lawmaker involved writing the proposal told me that the only way that it would work would be to work with the Arab community in order to use their lands for solar fields, especially in the north, because Arab owned lands, which we remember stands for 7% of all lands in Israel, are not as rigorously regulated as lands owned by the various state organizations. We can expect resistance to such
projects from the Arab community, especially if it is suggested by other political forces than the green left wing. Indeed, the relatively modest project of building wind farms on the Golan Heights on Druze land has already been met by protests (Bassist, 2023, Al Monitor Golan Heights Druze protesting).


After Israel emerged victorious from the 6-day war in May 1967, it gained control of the West Bank, the Gaza strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula (for 12 years). In terms of land, strategy and ideology, there are both continuities and discontinuities in the way Israel treated this victory as opposed to the victory in 1949. As Falah has shown (Falah, 2003) as an example of the continuity at play is the patchwork of land set aside for military use, national parks and forests and the communities that he calls “exclaves”, that is the settlements in the West Bank (and previously in Gaza). Similarly, the narrative of the compatriot in danger surrounded by others is a colonial logic that is easily played upon by settlement supporters. This is especially true in Israel where the “pioneer” making the “deserts bloom” was already part and parcel of Zionist ideology, therefore the settlers could claim to just be continuing the work of the Kibbutzim. Add to this the similarity to the patchwork strategy employed by the Yeshuv in the Galilee for example, and the continuity is obvious. So, the dividing and conquering with exclaves, national parks and military zoning of the West Bank has been under the protection of the state since 1967. The restrictions and laws started almost immediately after the victory regarding land and especially water. “Soon after the occupation, Israel imposed a number of military orders to control Palestinian water resources. On August 15, 1967, the Israeli military commander issued Order No. 92, in which water was considered as a strategic resource. This order was followed by numerous other orders aimed at making basic changes in the water laws and regulations in force in the West Bank. (...) The area commander can refuse to grant any license without the need for justification. Despite the rapid increase in population and demand on water since 1967, Israel has granted Palestinians of the West Bank very few permits for new water wells, all except 3 of them to be used exclusively for domestic purposes. In addition, the Israeli policy of metering all Palestinian wells served as another mechanism to restrict water use by Palestinians” (Gasteyer et al. 2012 p.461). So, the zoning practices and the control of the water resources continued into the occupied areas since formation of the state.

In addition to the continuities there are also discontinuities. First, the number of Palestinians that fled the area was vastly fewer, leading to a large population, not displaced, but living under foreign military occupation. Secondly, while Israel had during its founding been able to count on a large amount of foreign support, particularly from the West, this was not the case with the occupations of 1967, where the
international community gradually turned against Israel. Thirdly, as we shall see, the occupation was eventually to lead to a splitting in Israeli society into those that supported the colonial expansions and settlement building in the newly conquered areas, and critics of this policy. For all international relations, the occupation remains a stumbling block. The WEN is only different because of the framework of the Abraham Accords but the conflict remains potent.

4.6.5 The Rise of Revisionist Zionism and the Settlement Movement

As the national debate became more fragmented in the 1970s with the takeover of government by the revisionist Zionist Likud party in 1977, this had implications for the ideology of the state. The alliance of the right now included a large part of the Mizrachi population and the national-religious movement. Broadly speaking, the Mizrachi were more religious than the secular Ashkenazi who built the state and its ideology and could therefore work together with the National-Religious movement. They distrusted the Zionist establishment and the ruling Labour party because they often had been mistreated in the early days of the state (Shavit, 2014) and they mistrusted the Arabs because the countries they had been expelled from and oftentimes stripped from their positions, were overwhelmingly Arab states. This tit-for-tat dynamic of racism is often overlooked in the literature, but it is glaringly obvious in Israel. The national-religious movement, on the other hand, often identified the expansion of Israel in religious terms and believed that it signified the coming of the Messiah. Both groups, for different reasons, were susceptible to the ideas of the revisionist movement was based on inspiration from the revisionist Zeev Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky had believed it was foolish to make concessions to the Arabs of the Middle East and that Israel must be protected by an "Iron Wall", an avid expansionist, he believed that Israels borders should eventually include all of what was then Transjordan (Shlaim, 2012, p.81). Jabotinsky died in 1940, but, with the enlargement of Israel after the 6-day war, the revamped ideas of early Zionism of colonizing by settlement again started gaining traction. Although many Israelis initially supported the settlement movement, most of the settlers themselves came from messianic National-Religious groupings. The arguments introduced by the revisionist Zionists were informed both by the messianic religious and the colonial fever that gripped them, but also by fear. This is the fear that without the West Bank, Arab armies would be able to threaten the heartland of Israel, not only Jerusalem which would be at the border of a potentially hostile Arab neighbouring country, but such a move would also put the coastal plain within striking range of any weapon under the Palestinians control.

For Del Sarto, the paradigm of security sectarianism became entrenched during the post 1967 era, “the search for security was equally built into the idea of Jewish statehood. (...) (R)evisionist Zionism, however,
put an even stronger emphasis on the unchangeable condition of Jewish collective insecurity—perhaps best exemplified by the notion of ‘living by the sword’, in conjunction with Jewish ethno-nationalism and maximalist territorial claim.” (Del Sarto, 2017, p.768). At this time the split in Zionism was unavoidable. If the occupation made foreign relations more difficult, the settlement movement and its supporters in government maximised its politicization, making a withdrawal from the West Bank a taboo subject for any right-wing government.

4.6.6 The Left and a Lesson in Changing the Narrative

Through the 1980s, the first war in Lebanon and especially after the first Intifada, the support for the settlement enterprise started to wane. When Labour Zionism came back to power in the 1990s and early 2000s, in the Peres, Rabin and Barak governments, it reinvented itself from a party of ethnically separationist socialism to a force for diplomacy and peace. This force opposed the revisionist and messianic incessant defence of the occupation and the settlements and led to the Oslo Accords being signed in 1993. The Oslo agreement that gave the Palestinians localized regional rule by the Rabin government. We can note that some of the ideology of the left at this time was driven by fear. The left started to champion the argument that separation from the Palestinians and the dismantling of the settlements would give Israel peace from the security threat apparent in the Intifada, partly because of the fear of a future one-state reality unfavourable to Jews. The ideology of the Israeli left is something of a contradiction. It partially accepts an anti-colonial narrative, although seldom speaks about it in these terms. As we have seen, much of the same practices of fragmentation and the building of “exclaves” that were used in the West Bank are merely continuations of the policies used in settling the land since the birth of Zionism. However, for the Israeli left, accepting the arguments of the anti-Zionists in full would entail the simultaneous denial of the right for Israel to exist. The basic fear underlying Israeli society rules out a wide acceptance to this view of history. Instead, the occupation and the settlement movement gave the left an opportunity to reject the colonialism of 1967 but to avoid speaking about similar colonialism earlier in Zionist history. This partial acceptance of the narrative of colonialism allowed the left to split the Zionist project into a “motherland” and its “colonial outposts”. As a narrative, speaking out against the occupation became a palatable argument for a large section of Israeli society. As historically problematic this may be, it still allows the left to use the philosophy of freedom without challenging the core belief in the state. Yet, the most interesting thing about the experience of the left of the two-state solution is not their hypocrisy, most ideologies are hypocritical in one way or another. Most important is their ability to change the narrative, use the elements of Zionism that can be helpful, harnessing the fear and embracing
some of early Zionist socialism, yet trying to end some of the most blatant examples of injustice. This is the lesson for the WEN, that ideologies can adapt, making way for positive change.

**4.6.7 Netanyahu, Populism, the Right and Foreign Relations**

Despite the arguments of the left successfully tapping into the basic model of secular securitisation, threats to the two-state solution abounded. The death of Rabin, the failure of the Oslo Accords to produce a two-state solution, the Second Intifada and the simple slogan of the right that “compromise breeds terror” has seen Benyamin Netanyahu rise to power and become the longest serving prime minister in Israel’s history. Netanyahu has built his brand on the idea of being the only leader in since the 1980s who does not believe in building some sort of Palestinian state alongside the Israeli state, despite committing to it momentarily in 2015 (see above). This is what has made him so popular with the right wing in Israel. As noted, populism is growing in Israel. Populists, if they are not driven by imperial motives (such as the settlers are), usually focus on the perception of “elites” who are preventing the populace to achieve their full potential, and this potential will be realized within a national framework by beating these elites back (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). This has meant branding both left wing Israelis and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship as internal enemies. There is some debate over whether Netanyahu is a populist (see Finchelstein, 2020 and Filc, 2010), but there certainly is populism in the Israeli right wing.

With the formation of the government of 2022 Netanyahu has formed the most right-wing coalition in Israel’s history. This government is based on Netanyahu’s Likud party, the Ultra-Orthodox parties and the settler’s Religious Zionism party which some commentators have called fascist or proto fascist under the leadership of Finance Minister Benzael Smotrich and Minister of Internal Security Itamar Ben Gvir (Peled. 2020), who we met earlier in the press section. Justice Minister Yariv Levin is perhaps the face of the new Israeli populism, who focuses on reducing the power of the High Court to make it subservient to the Knesset, something that has brought on the largest protests in Israel’s history and at the time of this writing is still unresolved.

In sum, this government has ramped up the turmoil in Israel, with much of the government pursuing pro-settlement and *de facto* annexationist policies but also potentially expansionist policies in the cause of “Greater Israel” and with ministers who want to change the status quo at Al Aqsa/ Temple Mount. Furthermore, when settlers rioted in the Palestinian village of Huwara, setting fire to hundreds of cars and killing 3 people after two were killed in the settlement by Palestinian assailants, Smotrich supported the rioters and called for the Palestinian village to be destroyed. In statements such as this and his seeming
disregard for borders, Smotrich seems to take very little from the side of Israeli society rooted in fear and security thinking and instead uses blatant messianism blended with the most colonial aspects of Zionism to justify any violence against Palestinians. As we have seen, populist right wing settler ideology and environmental concerns are difficult to square, especially with regards to international cooperation. However, Netanyahu would like both to commandeer this movement and to improve Israel’s regional standing. After all, he is of course one of the key players of the Abraham Accords.

4.6.8 Summary, Israel Through Time.

As we have seen Israel is a country with settler-colonial beginnings where fear and securitization are decisive factors in assessing any progress that may be made in terms of international cooperation and progress in the environmental sphere. It is also within the grips of a struggle over narrative of two visions of what Zionism may be. One Israel is a place where populism, religion and messianism lead Israel toward the authoritarianism already present in the West Bank. Another Israel, more grounded in Spinoza than the bible, although based in the same fear and colonial-settler paradigm as Zionism is, is also steeped in rationalism, secularism, international collaboration and a belief in liberal democracy. Crucially, the left sees a possibility in another type of Zionism that may be open to certain moves towards an Israel/Palestine with less injustice. Netanyahu believes international cooperation can be achieved without a commitment to liberal democracy and without taking steps to end the occupation. However, whatever political force wins the struggle will retain its commitment to the land policies of a patchwork various military, agricultural, urban and national park zones created in the wake of the Nakba that render much of the land off limits or too expensive for renewable energy creation zones. With this history in mind, we can now turn to the present day, and explore what it means for Israel and the region.


4.7.1 Diplomacy in Israel and the Abraham Accords

“Israeli diplomacy retreated over the years into a defensive siege mentality, with minimalist goals. Much of the focus came to be on holding the line and arresting a further erosion in Israel’s international standing, legitimacy, and positions, rather than promoting Israel’s interests” (Freilich, 2018, p.299).

Israel has no foreign policy, just domestic policy. —Henry Kissinger

Small states do not have a foreign policy, only a security policy. —Moshe Dayan
Even within the populist zeitgeist described in the previous section, Netanyahu was able to make some extraordinary progress in the field of diplomacy. In collaboration with the Trump administration was able to create a bond with several Arab states which led to the signing of the Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the UAE in 2020. From the perspective of populist discourse, we must also be weary that populism is all about spectacle (Finchelstien, 2022; Snyder, 2018), so a grand signing of treaties on the White House lawn may for some be more important than the terms of the agreement or the benefits this may bring. The populist obsession with optics can generally deter change or make them only at a superficial level. However, not all of this is superficial, as we have seen, the Abraham Accords have indeed brought with them multiple changes in many areas.

At first glance, Netanyahu does not seem a likely candidate for a peacemaker. However, we can also see parallels in history for this contradictory stance in foreign policy for the Israeli government. Israel under Ben Gurion tried to create the image of a wall of enemies encircling Israel but a wall of allies encircling these immediate hostile neighbours. To this end he fostered good relations with the West, especially the United States, but also with Iran under the Shah and with Turkey as well as starting various diplomatic missions to Africa, especially Ethiopia. Another widely held perception in Israel is the image that the “right wing leaders are the leaders that bring the peace” partly this is a misremembering of the peace deal with Egypt, whereby Menachem Begin, a right-wing leader, signed a peace treaty with Anwar Sadat in 1979 (Shaim, 2014). The problem with this view of history is it was not Begin’s intransigence that sealed peace but rather Sadat’s insistence. Begin was against the deal from the start and had it not been for his aides and the enthusiastic behest of Sadat, the deal would never have been signed. What instead is remembered is the prologue, Sadat’s grand gesture of coming to Israel and speaking at the Knesset in 1977, under the invitation of Begin. The Oslo peace agreements, on the other hand, are seen to be a “bad deal” for Israel because of a narrative on the right and among the settlers that it “led to terrorism”. Similarly, the disengagement from Gaza was led by the very man who allegedly was responsible for the massacres at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982 (Freidman, 1987), and who set the spark for the Second Intifada by climbing the steps to the Temple Mount in 2000, namely Ariel Sharon. Of course, the two-state solution was and is the preferred outcome for many within the international community not least the US and the EU.

In terms of foreign policy, fear and secular securitisation often leads Israel into impasses that are difficult to get out of. When speaking about foreign relations, we can remember Henry Kissinger’s observation quoted above that for Israel “foreign policy is domestic policy”, that is that the internal dynamic constrains
external action. This is of course true for many countries, but the splintered political and social landscape makes it all the more true for Israel. Haklai summarizes this impasse as in two points as follows “First, there are divergent and incompatible worldviews within Israeli society about its appropriate borders. Second, the threshold for translating these worldviews into political influence is relatively low due to Israel’s electoral rules and multi-party political system. Finally, the fragmented political system has provided hardliners and opponents of compromise with a veto power throughout most of the time that has passed since the 1967 War. (Haklai, 2023, p.307). Furthermore, the problem with losing territory, even exclaves, may be more difficult in a democracy than in an authoritarian system because anything that can be framed as losing a war is going to be difficult to sell as an election winning prospect. Add to this what is described above about the right wing of Israel’s deep commitment to the settlement project. At least for the right, the path to any peace with the Palestinians is blocked.

Despite Netanyahu’s defiant image on the settlement issue, he has often been able to turn foreign policy to his advantage, be it through thundering speeches at the UN, in Congress in the US and now with the Abraham Accords. The Abraham Accords are an important achievement for Netanyahu. However, all foreign policy is made with a keen eye for how these issues would be viewed inside Israel. Therefore, foreign policy is contingent on if it can coexist with right wing ideals in Israel, which in turn is contingent on engaging in populist rhetoric, expanding the settlements of the West Bank and to engage in the “juridical reform” to weaken democracy that the populist right-wing media craves. For Netanyahu, the signing of the accords fits these criteria, “The previous Netanyahu government highlighted the Abraham Accords as a groundbreaking achievement by the right-wing camp in Israel and proof of its success in advancing its goals without concessions to the Palestinians” (Murciano, 2023, p.2). The idea is to completely bypass the crucible. Indeed, he claims that they are a move away from the paradigm of “land for peace” onto the paradigm of “peace for peace”,

Although the Abraham Accords as of this writing include quite a few countries, none are more important for Israel than the Emirates, in terms of economic clout and the sheer cultural openness that the UAE has shown toward Israeli issues, who even opened a Holocaust memorial museum and has hosted various Jewish religious groupings. While the peace with Morocco, Bahrain and Sudan are mostly military and formal affairs, Israel and the UAE are having a “warm peace” as former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said, with free trade deal signed in 2021 and contacts on a multitude of levels. This could result in deals worth as much as $46 billion or some 2.3% of GDP for Israel whilst the UAE could gain up to $17 billion or some 0.8% of GDP (Maital & Barzani, 2021).
Inside Israel, Netanyahu was able to score a dramatic win with the Abraham Accords in terms of public opinion in Israel. In drastic contrast to the Arab world, in Israel the deal has almost universal support across the political divide. Most of the left (Haaretz, 2022, Lapid Hails AA) and the right (TOI, 2020, Netanyahu Signs AA) in Israel have hailed both the peace treaty with Jordan and the Abraham Accords. Further in terms of public perception, it important to note that Israeli celebrities and wealthier citizens now often go to the UAE and take just as many vacation pictures next to the Burj Khalifa as next to the Acropolis, something that has never been true in any other Arab country. The peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, for example, signified an end to hostility and formal relationships but the peace was never one of free trade and open borders leading some to claim it was a “cold peace” (Owen, 2001). Importantly, Cairo is not seen as a tourist destination. Though the cold peace narrative is contested by some who proport that cooperation is much friendlier than the popular imagination allows for (Aran, 2014), this is nonetheless the recurring theme in public discussion in Israel.

As an example of the public support of the Abraham Accords, 53% of Israelis believed them to be a turning point in Israeli-Arab relations while only 27% disagreed (Mitvim Survey, 2022). Part of their appeal is precisely the “peace for peace” formula, which does not engage with the fundamental dividing line in Israeli society. Indeed, there is little evidence that Israel changes its policy toward the Palestinians (Koplow et Al, 2021, p.44) because of the Accords. Although, as we have seen, the process of signing of them may possibly have stopped some de jure West Bank land annexations, but de facto annexation is another matter. Rather, the government bases its policies toward the Palestinians with the policies decided on internally, often based on security concerns and the ideologies of the parties, and then tries to justify this to the normalization countries, just as you would expect from the quotes of both Kissinger and Dayan above.

A case in point is that in the same survey from above, 53% disagreed with the proposal to freeze settlement expansion and to resume negotiations with the Palestinians in return for full diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia (Mitvim Survey, 2022). This means that there must be some segment of the population that agree both that the Abraham Accords are a “turning point”, yet also believe that settlement expansion is more important than peace with Saudi Arabia, the wealthiest Arab State with considerable power in the region.

As we have seen in the analysis of the press, the threat to cooperation in Israel comes almost exclusively from the far right. Although we can note that this comes not only from Netanyahu’s coalition partners but
also from within his own Likud party, where one can find rhetoric that is not only anti-Palestinian, but anti-Arab in general (Arutz 7, 2023 Miri Regev: I didn't like Dubai).

The “peace for peace” formula may go down well with Netanyahu’s voters and in the pages of the Israeli press, but this does not mean that it is internationally accepted or that “anything goes” for the normalisation countries. The government Netanyahu formed in November 2022 has decidedly dampened the enthusiasm for the accords both because of heightened tensions with the Palestinians, scandalous ministers and because of the massive protest movement. The willingness of the UAE to enter the Accords despite attitudes of the Arab public and many Arab leaders does not mean that the UAE can be completely detached from public opinion. While the more moderate government of Bennett and Lapid in 2021-22 was invited to Abu Dhabi, there is a notable absence of an invitation to Abu Dhabi for Netanyahu, and the even more notable absence of an invitation to Washington. The Huwara incident led the Emirati government to step in and “prompted an Emirati decision to invest 3 million dollars in rehabilitating the village. Although modest, this step signals an extraordinary and direct intervention in the heart of the raging conflict. It signals a reversal of the non-intervention approach and its replacement by proactive action that responds directly to events on the ground. Reportedly, the violence in Huwara may have also resulted in an Emirati decision to suspend a signed deal for the purchase of advanced weapons systems from Israel.” (Murciano 2023 p.12). To be clear, I am not suggesting that the democracy movement in Israel and the Arab normalisation countries have identical, or even similar goals. Indeed, authoritarianism by itself will not hinder collaboration with neighbouring states, after all the Middle East is awash with authoritarianism. The problems for the Arab world will remain to be the core issues: the Palestinians, settlement building, state and settler violence, Jerusalem and the Al Aqsa Mosque.

This is in line with what Wachsberger observed in the UAE already in 2021, though then speaking about Palestinian resistance rather than Israeli intransigence, “It is not obvious to many people that the whole thing will not fall apart at the first sign of organized Palestinian resistance, regardless of how unlikely that may seem now,” expressed a young Egyptian tech investor currently working at a new Saudi-based fund (in the UAE)”” (8-9 Wachsberger, 2021).

4.7.2 Water Management in Israel

Israel, including the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) is a water restricted country where it only rains in the winter, $1.5 \times 10^9$ m$^3$ reach the water reservoirs through rainfall (Murakami, 1995), a number that is shrinking through climate change. The water situation has always been restricted. British surveyors
estimated in the 1920s that the country’s water supply could allow for a total population of no more than 3 million people (Seigel, 2015). Therefore, control of water resources has been one of the crucial ingredients to enable large scale Jewish immigration into the country, so it became a Zionist mission to conquer the resource enabling the transformation from the “barren” to the “blooming” in the ideology discussed above.

As with so much else in the conflict, only more so, the two strands of thought depicting innovation and injustice run parallel. It is a story of both the start-up nation and the occupier, and it would be amiss to speak about one without speaking about the other. In “The Occupation of Water”, Amnesty reports that “One of its most devastating consequences is the impact of Israel’s discriminatory policies on Palestinians’ access to adequate supplies of clean and safe water” (Amnesty, 2017). 90-95% of water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption. Some of the research underlying the Amnesty report explains that “On a per-capita basis, water consumption by Palestinians is approximately 73 litres per capita per day (l/c/d) compared to about an average of 300 l/c/d for Israelis in general and 369 l/c/d for settlers. In other words, the per-capita consumption in Israel is 4 to 5 times higher than the Palestinian per-capita consumption in the Palestinian areas.” (Gasteyer et.al, 2012, p.461). At the same time, the World Bank describes Israel’s water policies thus “(d)espite being one of the most water scarce countries in the world, Israel has achieved water security and full cost recovery through tariffs through a series of ambitious reforms” (Marin et al for the World Bank, 2017), and Siegler’s book, “Let there be water” explores the ways why Israel, in his words, became a water superpower. These dual ways of analysing the water situation in Israel and Palestine will be looked at briefly below to finally conclude both in terms of narrative and in terms of the water management itself.

4.7.2.1 Occupation of Water

On the theme of we can see history of water management in the conflict as a history of water grabbing and injustice in the fight for control over water recourses. Worse, in the theory of water grabbing, Israel controls of the water resources not only for its own sake that, but a control of the Palestinians as an objective in its own right. Veldwitch explains in the concept of “water grabbing”, “In many cases, water is not the aim of grabbing, but rather instrumental for achieving underlying objectives of controlling revenues; water often serves a particular purpose of producing value for which also other resources are needed: land particularly, but also reordering labour/jobs, value chains and so on” (Veldwisch et al. 2013).

1 Heading taken from Amnesty International’s 2017 rapport.
As explained above, the struggle over water resources predates the state of Israel but has continued throughout its history. The draining of swamps started at the outset of Zionism, the state water company Merokot was formed in 1935 and the National Water Carrier (NWC) was inaugurated in 1964 was built in the Galilee near Lake Tiberius/ The Sea of Galilee to use the lake and the Jordan River that emerges from it to bring the water in vast quantities around the country. With this came the associated policy of damming of many tributaries to the Jordan River. So, even though many water policies were already in place prior to the Six Day War of 1967, in terms of injustice that persist until the present day, the inequality of water resources is mostly about the handling of the water issue in the OPT, both the West Bank and in Gaza.

For the West Bank, the high elevation of much of the land means that there are substantial aquifers underneath. “Following the 1967 War, Israel took control of water resources, and developed wells, throughout the West Bank, together with a water supply network serving settlements that linked into the Mekorot network. Palestinian water rights in the West Bank were abrogated, including from the Jordan river.” (World Bank, 2009). The settlements are a particularly striking feature of this injustice, because they use on average 7 times more water per capita than in the surrounding Palestinian communities yet draw their water from the same aquifers. Because Israeli settlements controlled most of the available farmland in the West Bank, agriculture has declined among Palestinians since the occupation began. Israel has both destroyed wells that immediately following the occupation, and then has systematically turned down permits for allowing the Palestinians to drill new wells. Yet Israel, being downhill from the aquifers on the hilly West Bank, can then collect the water for use by Merokot. Some water, often reaching 50% of all water (Dai, 2020), is then sold back to the Palestinians to make up for the shortfall. Consequently, Palestinians accuse Israel of hydro apartheid. Following the Oslo accords in 1994, the water situation has been regulated by the formation of the Joint Water Association or JWA, with representatives from both the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Article 40 of the Oslo Accords allocates the water from the three aquifers under the West Bank collectively known as the Mountain Aquifer, this allocation is estimated at 80% for Israel and Israeli settlements and 20% for the Palestinians (Trottier, 2007, p.45). The JWA and article 40 were supposed to be interim agreements that were to be resolved in the final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Of course, the final status talks were never signed so these agreements persisted. The JWA is accused of perpetuating an unequal arrangement and of giving a much larger say in water issues to Israel than to the Palestinians. As an example of this we can look at the new agreement that was signed in 2017 that “allow Palestinians to lay water pipes and networks without the JWC’s approval. However, since the new agreement does the same for Israel, allowing it to lay new supply
lines for Israeli settlements without JWC approval, Israeli overall control of the Palestinian water sector remains, since no additional water goes to Palestinians except with Israeli consent” (Dai, 2020, p.7).

As with most aspects of life in general, the situation in Gaza is worse than it is in the West Bank. As mentioned above, well over 90% of the water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption (World Bank, 2009). So, while the water situation in the West Bank is unequal, the situation in Gaza is dire. The occupation and the closure of Gaza have made progress in the water situation difficult. Article 40, settlement building and insufficient water supply plagues both Gaza and the West Bank, much of which is the consequence of the occupation and the colonial attitudes it brings with it. However, many studies also cite misuse and poor governance as a contributing factor to the Palestinian water situation. In Gaza, the situation became anarchic after the closure of the enclave after the Hamas takeover in 2007. The response to inadequate supply of water was met by drilling of private wells which in turn put even greater pressure on the coastal aquifer that feeds the strip, leading in turn to seawater infiltration. Usage of home desalination systems skyrocketed, as did the inability to pay water bills. Also, the economic situation with high unemployment, led many to turn to agriculture and therefore to a higher level of water usage, with new farmers using inefficient and water wasting techniques (Siegel, 2015, p. 178). All these things have only exasperated the water stress on Gaza. In the West Bank there has also been an inability from the side of the Palestinian Authority to “fix leaky pipes, drill in the areas designated by the agreements, irrigate with recycled wastewater, pay market rates for water and build desalination plants that could greatly reduce their wastage” (Gvirtzman, 2014). Some of this can be explained by a lack of technological knowhow and a lack of funds, but this is also a question of government performance generally.

4.7.2.2 Let there be Water²

For a country that could barely feed itself with a much smaller population, today it is not only self-sufficient in fruits, vegetables, dairy and poultry, it also exports billions of dollars of high quality, water intensive products each year. (Siegel, 2015, P.40)

As mentioned, the Zionist project first saw the need for water as an existential struggle and the lifeblood of settlement in Eretz Yisrael. As an example of the existential risk Israel placed on water sources, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) even bombed a dam that Syria was building in 1964 that threatened to cut off some of the headwater that was feeding the Sea of Galilee.

² Heading taken from Seth Siegel’s 2015 book.
As we have seen, Merokot, the NWC and the damming of rivers was often a boon for Israel but made life difficult for the Palestinians and Jordanians. Furthermore, all this development has come at a steep environmental cost, perhaps one of the most serious is that the Sea of Galilee has a fatal problem in that it is located at 213.6m below sea level and scientists realized that if the water level drops below a certain level, the lake risks becoming irreversibly saline, turning the lake into an inland sea. This outcome would certainly bring social and ecological disaster. As for the Jordan river, most of which now does not reach its destination in the Dead Sea “mainly due to exploitation and diversions, only 20–30 million cubic metres (MCM) of water reach the Dead Sea each year, compared to the historical 1,300 MCM that used to flow into the Dead Sea. This represents a 97% reduction in the river’s flow and has contributed to a 50% decrease in its biodiversity since the 1930s” (Talozi, Altz-Stamm, Hussein and Reich 2019 p.914)

Despite the problem of environmental degradation, there have also been some remarkable achievements. Over the decades, Israel has used a variety of methods to reduce water use. From surface runoff collection to recycled wastewater to irrigate crops to drip irrigation. Another element has to do with trade and pricing, where water is seen as a commodity rather than a social good. on the other hand it has led to employing the most hi-tech agricultural systems in the world. Israel uses concepts such as “virtual water” where policies are implemented to hinder that thirsty crops such as oranges are exported while importing much of what the most water intensive products such as beef, ensuring that “virtual water” is not lost from the country. There have also been public awareness campaigns, which were used simultaneously with increased pricing to reduce domestic water consumption from 115l per capita in 1997 to less than 90l per capita in 2013 (World Bank, 2017, p.30).

The political situation and the narrative over water has also changed. The development of the economy generally has led to a decline of agriculture as a percentage of GDP, which plays a role in balancing the interest of different groups and shift away from the demands of farmers growing thirsty crops. This is also related to the changing political climate discussed earlier, where the agricultural base of the Labour party was replaced by the small-town urban base of the Likud. Therefore, “discourse also changed within these years. During the first forty years of Israel’s independence the discourse over water shifted gradually from one centred on the development of resources as part of a nation building effort, to a highly technocratic–managerial one.” (Feitelson, 2002, p.299). However, the changing discussion also had to do with the success of the water policies themselves. In accordance with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, if there is enough water then the public discussion can move on to other areas. The water issue could thus in Israel move out of the politicized domain of public discussion and into the domain of experts in the field of policy
and technology. This is exactly the type of shift that the Palestinians have not been able to experience, trapped as they are in the dual problem of occupation and mismanagement.

The newest innovation that Israel has enthusiastically embraced is desalination. In fact, it is one of the countries that relies most heavily on desalination technology in the world. It has five desalination plants along the Mediterranean coast that provide 70% of household water supply today. Most of Israel’s desalination plants use the technology of Reverse Osmosis (RO) “Unlike in thermal desalination processes, no heating or phase change takes place. Rather, major use of energy is for pressurizing the feedwater, and so the energy requirements for RO depend directly on the concentration of salts in the feedwater (Spiritos and Lipchin, 2013. P.7). The success in the ability to service the public with desalinated seawater has also had some effect on the viability of the Sea of Galilee. The level of the Sea of Galilee was for the first time regulated by reversing the National Water Carrier in 2022 thereby adding desalinated water to recuperate the water level, potentially being able to reverse some of the damage done to the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River and even the Dead Sea that the river empties into. As mentioned, the Dead Sea is experiencing precipitous drying up and reversing this would be a major accomplishment. There have been several criticisms of the desalination system, the first is that the water left over from desalination is a thicker, saltier water mix known as brine which traditionally and in Israel is released back into the Mediterranean, albeit at between one or two kilometres directly from the coastline. The second criticism has to do with the filters used by the desalination process. Alon Tal, in his study of Israel’s desalination facilities, posits that these two criticisms have been taken seriously with regular monitoring of marine life by the brine outlets and the level of the chemicals discharged by the desalination plants. He points out that while these problems require continuous monitoring, so far of more than a decade of desalination, there has not been an indication that these facilities are causing lasting environmental damage. Tal even claims that “based on Israel’s experience, the environmental benefits of desalination should not be understated. They include freeing up water for stream rehabilitation initiatives, reducing scale in the drinking water, reducing the salts in recycled wastewater and providing water for neighbouring countries that are even more parched than Israel. Another of the less-appreciated bonuses of desalination is that it increases the ability of farmers to plan ahead.” (Tal, 2018, P.16).

However, there is another potentially more damaging problem on the horizon and this is the question of energy usage. The desalination systems create a “volume of GHG emissions of 400 million tons of carbon dioxide worldwide (by way of comparison, this was roughly equivalent to the volume of French CO2 emissions in 2021). (Eyl-Mazzega and Cassigno, p.22, 2022). This is no small problem, so, in fact, if
desalination is going to have a positive effect all round both on climate, as well as water security and in taking the pressure off the freshwater systems, a RE strategy to supply the new demand for energy is not only helpful, but essential. This is not least the case in Israel, where desalination plants use 5% of all energy produced, and the total energy use of the Israeli water system stands at 10% (Tal, 2018, p.1). A truly sustainable water supply system will only be achieved when desalination comes to rely on renewable energy sources.

Taken as a whole, water management and the reversal of water scarcity has been a success for Israel, with some important caveats. Desalination, as we have seen, has some downsides such as chemical spillage and brine production which must be monitored and kept under supervision, but studies show that the foremost problem with desalination is energy usage. If not offset by renewable initiatives, desalination has the potential to damage the total helpfulness of desalination for the environment in the midst of a climate crisis that in turn is hitting the Middle East especially hard. For Israel, notwithstanding the challenges, the different measures taken to conserve, recycle, educate the public, regulate and desalinate water has meant that Israel has gone from a water stressed country to a country of surplus water supply.

4.7.2.3 Water, Narrative and Ideology

For Israel, on the ideological level, we can see a combination of the “politics of fear” and the technical-managerial perspective discussed above. The national project has always had water as a primary objective of nation building with the fear of water shortage leading to national calamity is an ever-present danger, which has led to the “securitization” of water. In fact, seen from different perspective, this securitization has both led to innovation and to injustice. EcoPeace explicitly warns against this phenomenon “EcoPeace does not encourage the securitization of climate or water issues, which would narrow the range of negotiations and valuable opportunities for action. Rather, EcoPeace promotes the view that climate and water issues must be indeed regarded as a fundamental part of national security, but from a regional human security perspective” (Bromberg, Majdalani and Taleb 2020, p.3). Dai notes that for some policymakers in Israel the Mountain Aquifer of the West Bank is an essential part of Israeli national security and thus that “accepting an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank, and hence relinquishing control of the territory’s resources, is interpreted by some as equivalent to an act of national suicide” (Dai, 2020 p.5). This thinking has certainly influenced support for settlements and the related support for unjust water agreements.
As for the increasing prevalence of technical-managerial perspective, we find a striking difference between this perspective and the politicized focus on injustice with the Palestinians “From the outset, the Israeli bargaining position has emphasized joint management and technical solutions that promote conservation and augment the water supply from additional sources. The Israeli position is embedded within a technical discourse that is future oriented and concerned with planning and management. In contrast, the Palestinian position is more complex because the Palestinians continue to view water use within a historical context through the prism of the Israeli military occupation. In contrast to the Israeli position that is forward looking, the Palestinian position focuses on what they consider to be an unfair and unjust distribution of the water resources since 1967” (Weinthal, and Marei, 2001 p.9). Dai finds the same problem but expresses it slightly differently, while “Palestinians adopt a discourse of collective rights of self-determination over water resources and insist on the recognition of these rights as a pre-condition for further discussion on the division of the region’s water resources (...) Israel argues that it has already done what international law required it to do. It claims that Palestinians have caused the water scarcity in the Mountain Aquifer by refusing to develop their own underground water resources, fix leaking infrastructures, build sewage treatment plants, irrigate land with modern water-saving devices, or bill their own citizens for water usage, etc (Dai, 2020, p.5). As an example of the Israeli point of view in this, they point out that there is near universal access to water in Palestinian households as opposed to a very small amount at the time of Jordanian control of the West Bank before 1967. Gvirtzman is a fiery example of a partisan Israeli who accuses the Palestinians of using the water issue as a war of narrative "There is no real Palestinian desire to solve water problems; they prefer to perpetuate the water problems in order to besmirch the State of Israel. They view water as a tool with which to bash Israel." (Gvirtzman, 2014).

There are of course reasons for the Palestinians unwillingness or inability to be forward looking, the occupation continues at pace and the blockade of Gaza has meant that many years passed before the UN was allowed to start building desalination plants and even water treatment plants in the strip after the Hamas takeover in 2007. Furthermore, as we have seen, the agreements that have been signed are obviously unequal and therefore injustice is baked into the situation. However, the Palestinians would of course do well if they learned lessons of water usage from Israel, even if they agree on nothing else. In this sense, insistence on focusing on justice can hinder some policies that have been successful in reducing water usage in Israel such as adequate pricing “Compared with Israel, Palestinian water tariffs barely cover operating costs. Although the Oslo II Agreement clearly states that the price of water should be based on real cost, i.e., water should be regarded as a commodity, Palestinians insists that attention should be paid to the payment for water as part of the population’s total income, and so water is framed as a social good”
Water bills go unpaid around 65% of the time in some parts of the West Bank and 80% of the time in Gaza (World Bank 2014). The result of this policy is a chronic lack of funding for Palestinian water providers who in turn provide inadequate service or simply do not pay their employees, further exasperating the problem.

As in so much of the conflict, this seems like a bind, where the fact that each side is locked into its own perspective can hinder movement on the issue. However, water is not something that can be squirreled away in narrative, it is a constant need that must be solved to meet demand daily. Brooks reminds us that “Contrary to a commonly held impression, history demonstrates that riparian states around the world prefer to cooperate over trans-boundary water bodies rather than to fight over them.” (Brooks et al. 2013, p.672). Furthermore, there is the opportunity of water in the peacebuilding process itself “the provision of water services is thus often viewed as a critical “peace dividend” that can bolster state legitimacy while serving the needs of the population in the immediate aftermath of conflict (Weinthal et.al. 2011 p.144).

For EcoPeace, the peace dividend does not have to wait, indeed it cannot wait for a future peace deal and is an issue that can and should be solved already before this. The revolution of water conservation and desalination that has taken place in Israel means that there really is no reason to keep policies that perpetuate injustice. Indeed, EcoPeace is the first to point this out and changing article 40 in the Oslo Accords is one of its goals. “Given the technological advances in the manufacture of new water, water issues are no longer a zero-sum game as they were at the time of the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1995. Final status natural water allocation issues are easily resolvable between Israel and Palestine so that climate cooperation can advance based on greater political certainty for the water sector for Palestine” (Bromberg, Majdalani and Taleb, 2020, p.32).

4.7.3 Renewable Energy in Israel

“(B)y adopting Policy and Ambitious Policy targets, energy-related GHG emissions could be reduced by about 60 percent and 90 percent, respectively, by 2050 relative to the reference year of 2005 with only a minor impact on GDP growth. (...) increased use of domestic RE reduces the reliance on imported coal and oil. On the other hand, the main source of RE in Israel is solar energy, while wind potential is not yet proven and hydroelectric and nuclear-based power generation are not feasible. Accordingly, to meet the goals of RE in power generation, demand management and storage of electricity, as well as wind and waste-to-energy, should be promoted. (Palatnik et. al 2022 P.12-13)
The introduction of a PV energy strategy as emphasised by Palatnik seems like a perfect strategy, yet progress remains sluggish. Despite the ample resources in the form of hours of sunlight Israel’s electricity is made from 66% natural gas and only 7% renewable energy 2019 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019 [cbs.gov.il]) As we have seen in the history there is the problem of land to contend with for a robust move toward energy transition, but this is no reason not to promote rooftop solar or other low hanging fruit. Thus, the reasons for this must also reside elsewhere. The emissions in Israel per capita are slightly lower than Germany but this is not the most relevant statistic. Germany is an industrial powerhouse with a large industrial sector, Israel has very little heavy industry in comparison. Its main emissions in Israel come from transportation and energy production, not industry. Indeed, although Israel and Jordan have set targets for emissions reduction, the progress is slow and both countries may not reach their modest goals if the implementation occurs at the current pace. Current policies include feed-in tariffs and auctions for renewable projects. Both would benefit from increased investment in renewable energy, electric vehicles, better connectivity to the grid and greater cross-border cooperation. (Bressler and Hamad 2019 p.378). Furthermore, “(d)espite a 17 percent year-on-year increase in 2018–2019, Israel’s solar energy penetration rate remains among the lowest in the world, especially when compared to OECD countries” (Ashwarya, 2021, p.322).

The amount of solar energy that needs to be built in Israel to offset fossil fuels in energy production is daunting. This is a reality that the WEN needs to factor in. When it comes to lowering emissions, the difference between the ambition of other OECD countries and the ambition of Israel is especially stark. Indeed, if we are to compare the regional ambitions of emission reduction in Israel, Jordan and the UAE with the efforts in the West, two giant deals stand out, the Green Deal of the EU and the Inflation Reduction Act undertaken by the Biden administration. “The EU ratified the European Green Deal (EGD) in January of 2020, where the overriding ambition is to reach net zero emissions from the EU by 2050. The continuation refers to the success where the economy of the EU has grown by 60% growth since 1990 and at the same time achieving a 28% emissions reduction” (https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/eu-achieves-20-20-20). Furthermore, the “European Green Deal” is on track to deliver a 55% emission reduction since 1990 levels by 2030. For this the UAE must move beyond symbolism and envision a different future. The IRA in the USA has the potential to reduce emissions in the USA by 40% over a fifteen-year period (Mckinsey Rapport, 2022 -IRA-heres-whats-in-it).

So, what is going on? Why is climate change so low on the agenda? Part of the problem with this discussion is how it is framed. Which threats penetrate the Israeli media landscape, and which get pushed to the
side? The answer has to do with securitization and the prevalence of fear in Israeli society more deeply. Israel is good at dealing with short term threats like military challenges but less so when dealing with longer term threats like dismantling the occupation. Anecdotally, I can mention that every time Hezbollah builds a lookout post on the Israeli boarder this gets a news item where residents and military commanders are interviewed, climate change gets nothing like this kind of coverage. This also has to do with nationalism since a nationalist will tend to think that all problems can be solved internally, inside the nation, whilst climate change is entirely dependent on international cooperation. Given this prioritization the answer is simple, Israeli citizens do not see climate change as a decisive threat, at least a far less worrying prospect than threats that can be solved with weaponry. Water is different, as we have seen. While water shortage is an immediate and potentially existential threat to Israel, the more amorphous threat of climate change stays frustratingly low on the agenda.

Indeed, while talking about climate change as a threat there is a parallel discussion of energy security taking up bandwidth in the energy discussion. While energy security is a real thing, keeping the lights on can be difficult in dysfunctional systems such as Gaza under blockade or Lebanon in its economic crisis, this discussion can also easily be manipulated. This was the case also in Israel where “energy security” was touted as an existential problem (see, for example, Foster, 2016, Energy Security for Israel). Now, there are states that will not trade with Israel, but many others do, and lack of oil or gas has not actually been a problem on the scale that has inflicted blackouts on Israel. Indeed, as Robert Vitalis has shown regarding the US government, energy independence is largely a creation of narrative rather than actual need because the markets keep selling no matter the political situation (Vitalis, 2020). Of course, it is mainly the oil and gas industry that touts the “energy security” narrative, although it has been used in the US for promoting various foreign policy goals. So, when large quantities of natural gas in the Tamar and the Leviathan deposits outside the Israeli coast and in the 2010s and extraction deals had been signed, this discussion largely dissipated. The elusive goal of “energy independence”, could now be presented as a “solved problem”, or in Netanyahu’s words “a gift from God” (Wootliff, 2015 Netanyahu gas TOI).

We must keep all of this in mind when we are talking about RE and emissions reduction in the Middle East, we are starting from an internationally low vantage point where the energy transition is a long way off and the environmental organizations have their work cut out for them.

4.7.4 Environmentalism in Israel

Both (Israeli and Palestinian) narratives (are) of living on the land, displacement, and return. Wandering in exile, vulnerable and yearning, is a classical theme of Jewish culture. Palestinian
national identity in the years since 1948 has been constructed along a parallel theme. In each narrative, there is an intimate connection between identity, land, and dignity. (Schoenfeld 2005 p.97)

Schoenfeld, in his book on Palestinian and Israeli environmental narratives, classifies these narratives as being either romantic, managerial or focused on environmental justice. (Schoenfeld, 2005, p. 94) The idea being that the romantic environmentalism focuses on the majesty of nature, and the romantic feel of untouched wilds. Environmental justice movements, on the other hand tend to focus on inequality, which is an obvious aspect when governments or business interests decide which group is going to bear the burden of pollution or climate threats, and it is not hard to guess which groups will be given priority and which groups will be negatively affected.

Of course, in the Israeli case, there is the propaganda discussed above of a tabula rasa, the wild and untamed lands yearning to be turned into something “better”. So, the romanticism is there, but the result can hardly be described as environmentally friendly. This has nonetheless given rise to some pastimes such as making hiking immensely popular in Israel. Given these restraints, as well as the issues described above that disadvantages those that speak of injustice such as the occupation, it is not surprising that “Israeli environmentalism, even in its struggles with governments, operates largely within the framework of managerial environmentalism” (Schoenfeld, 2005, p. 102). All this is in stark contrast to Palestinian environmentalism that tends to lean heavily toward environmental justice, making the contact between them such as the collaboration EcoPeace is working toward as difficult. The Palestinian approach has the redistributive justice angle that fits well into the national ideology but can contrast with goals that by necessity need to focus on minimizing conflict. On the Israeli side, there is pressure to work toward a non-conflict consensus approach that skirts difficult issues and focuses on the practical. “It is quite stunning in a Freudian way to recognize that when Israelis speak of environment as a regional issue that needs transnational cooperation, they can ignore the Palestinians, and look to the Mediterranean states; and the Palestinians in parallel fashion can claim to be looking to Arab states, ignoring the Israelis.” (Fischer, 2006 p.168). This observation is indeed apt, but however Freudian it may be, it is more than that. It is the needle that environmental organizations and politicians alike must thread if they are to get their projects across the finish line. Michael Mason makes this point as well and criticizes the perspective of EcoPeace for not making the connection between threats from climate change and the occupation more explicit “significant media impact (especially in Israel) with a campaign identifying a “climate crisis” for the region on the basis of scientific projections of increased water scarcity and sea level rise (...). (C)limate change is thus viewed as an additional source of instability for Israeli-Palestinian relations, but purely in exogenous
terms: there is no consideration of the social or ecological or social vulnerabilities to climate hazards produced by the occupation.” (Mason, 2013, p303). Of course, as we have seen, this is hardly surprising, since any other path than the technical-fix perspective is with all probability going to be viewed as partisan and therefore suspicious by the relevant agencies.

4.7.5 Summary. The Present Moment.

Given the pressure that Jewish history bestows upon the present moment, it is hard to see how the fear underlying Israeli society can be erased. The resulting security thinking is therefore built into the Israeli state, as is the importance of Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people. In terms of water in the Middle East, water insecurity is a potential country-killing threat and Israel has placed water security at the highest level of importance ever since the Zionist project first came to the Middle East. As we have seen, there are two parallel traditions, one of force, of bombing dams and blocking wells for Palestinians; and one of innovation, technology and sound water management. Israel has pioneered drip irrigation, reuse of wastewater and since the turn of the millennium, desalination. There is no reason why this “miracle of water” should not also be used to alleviate injustice and promote international cooperation.

Environmentalism in Israel risks running into several different taboo and hegemonic subjects. Firstly, we have the subject of the dispossession of Palestinians and the role of the sometime environmental organization JNF. Secondly, we have the occupation, while this is no taboo subject for certain sectors of Israeli society, notably the left, it is certainly a taboo for the right, some of whom deny that there is any occupation going on in the first place like Meyer in the press section. Therefore, any mention of the occupation is potentially dangerous for any environmental initiative. Thirdly, we have the issue of land, tightly wound up with the first reason, in that we find it as being the root cause both of expensive Israeli land and of the tight controls Israel has placed on this land for different uses.

I will write more of what this means in the conclusion of the thesis but suffice to say here that, for Israel, the future of diplomacy and deals like the WEN depends in the region depends on how much the conversation can change and longstanding policies can be changed, how solutions can be found with regards to the fear underlying society and the resulting security thinking. However, Israel is of course not alone in deciding the outcome of the WEN, so now we shall look at these issues from the point of view of the Arab world.
5. The Arab Predicament\(^3\), The UAE, Jordan and the Palestinian Question

5.1 Aim

The aim of this chapter is to discuss some elements of the history leading up to current events in the Arab world with regards to the central questions of this thesis regarding all the elements of the WEN, diplomacy, environment, green technology, the green transition, land usage, water and narrative, with regards to the backdrop of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. First, I will discuss some elements of the Arab world as a whole and after this delve into the positions of Jordan and the UAE specifically.

5.2 Method

Given the huge spectrum of issues briefly discussed, the vast differences between the UAE and Jordan, and the deep fissures and breadth of opinion within the Arab world, I have not chosen a specific theory to analyse the situation. Rather I will refer to research in each section in turn, for in support in each relevant theme.

5.3 Unity and Disunity. The Crucible of the Palestine Question.

"Arab politics became increasingly divided with each monumental event and ultimately ruptured during the Arab Winter. (...) the resulting crises for Arab solidarity—the violent death of Arab secularism and socialism in Iraq and later Syria, the endless variations of Sunni vs. Shia militancy, regime vs. people, Islamist vs. secular, one Arab state vs. another, Muslim vs. non-Muslim, etc.—were parts of a bigger failure to be overcome: imagining an inclusive, participatory public sphere in the Arab countries, where the Palestinians have always enjoyed a universal appeal among the masses" (Marrar, 2017, p.911).

Arab unity is an idea with high appeal within the Arab world, and it has been the vantage point for many ideological currents within the Middle East. However, the reality is closer to the opposite of unity. "Economically, the Middle East is characterised by a low level of integration: it is a region where less than 13 per cent of trade takes place between neighbouring countries." (Dachtler, 2021). Although this region is majority Arab and majority Muslim, and despite international organizations such as the Arab League, it is anything but a coherent bloc.

Analysts have debated the questions of unity and disunity from several different angles. It is worth noting that one of the most popular unitary movements was Arab Nationalism. Arab Nationalism, as well as pan-

\(^3\) Heading taken from Fouad Ajami’s 1992 book.
Islamism, came into being in the final years of the Ottoman Empire as an answer to the largely failed attempt to promote Ottomanism, a “supra-ethnic, supra-religious identification with the empire, initially as official policy then broadly adopted by the empire’s intellectuals” (Campos, 2011). Arab nationalism declared that the multi-ethnicity of Ottomanism could be solved by finding common ground among Arabic-speaking people, yet allowed the multi-religiosity to remain, especially between the largest religions of Islam and Christianity. This was the era of the nationalism in Europe and of Jewish Nationalism, Zionism, had a profound effect on the ideologies to come in the Arab world. Arab nationalism was thus opposed to Jewish nationalism from the start, and Zionism was inextricably linked with the colonialism that followed the break-up of the Ottoman empire.

However, this ideology of unity was always in contrast to the disunity experienced among the various elites and centres of power in the Arab world, both in opposing early Zionist immigration (Fromkin, 1989, p.446), the prosecution of the 1948 war (Shlaim, 2014) and later in the 6-Day War of 1967. As we shall see, central to this disunity in terms of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict was the history of Jordan, tightly wound up as it is with the history of the Palestinians and owing its existence to British interests. The Palestinian issue was a unifying factor in Arab politics during the decolonization period following WWII and became transformed into a global cause for the international left among students coming from all over the Arab world to Paris (Di-Capua, 2021). For many intellectual currents, the Nakba and the formation of the Israeli state was the culmination and a continuation of colonialism, and a symbol of humiliation. Indeed, humiliation is the emotion running through all the various left wing and Islamist movements in the Middle East, and a unifying understanding of the Arab predicament (Fattah and Fierke, 2008; Goodman, 2018). Many have also sought to weaponize the feelings of humiliation. Therefore, when Abdel Nasser took power in Egypt in 1952, his anti-colonial, populist and pan-Arabist government focused on two international issues that took priority over others, Arab unity and the Palestinian cause (Mutawi, 1987, p.49.).

For this study, it is worth mentioning perhaps the most audacious project of regional unity in the Middle East, namely the United Arab Republic (UAR). The UAR was an attempt spearheaded by Nasser, based on his pan-Arabist, Arab Nationalist ideas (Gershoni and Jankauski, 2002, p.101) to create a unified country from the geographically separated territories of Syria, Egypt and the related United Arab States (UAS) comprised of the UAR and North Yemen and with Iraq with regards to military cooperation. Both entities lasted in their original form between 1958-1961. It failed for many reasons, perhaps primarily because it was not seen by the Syrians as an equal partnership (Podeh, 1999, p.151) and was eventually viewed by
many Yemenites as yet another colonial intrusion (Blumi, 2018). It was also resisted by the monarchies in the region, notably Jordan (Jankowski 2002, p.174). This failure, for some meant that “the UAR collapse irretrievably damaged Pan-Arabism. The 1967 war only accentuated this trend” (Ma’oz, xi, 1999, in Podeh). Furthermore, some stress that the centrality of the Palestinian cause in Arab politics can be seen both as a unifier and a reason for the failure of unity. Ajami agrees that the Palestinian issue is front and centre of Arab politics and places the fundamental splintering of the Arab cause after the 6-Day War after 1967, at this time the radical republics (Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the North African states) proposing pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism lost out to the conservative monarchies (Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf countries), “the radicals’ loss was the conservative states’ gain :The latter had the money, the former had been in error, had lost the war and the land (the monarchies now wanted to) exorcize the region of the irresponsibility of pan-Arab doctrines” (Ajami, 1992, p.83). After the Israeli victory in the 6-Day War, the 4th Arab summit in Khartoum released a statement of the “three nos”, “no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no negotiations with Israel” (Khartoum Resolutions). Although some scholars suggest that these “three nos” where papering over divisions in the Arab world and that a close examination of the texts shows that it lays the groundwork for the peace agreements to come with Egypt and with Jordan (Meital, 2000), the very formulation shows what kind of rhetoric was needed in terms of public perception in the Arab world.

After the Six Day War and the failure of the UAR the result was a strengthening of nationalism within the various Arab nations rather than an alliance across state borders, notably in Syria (Podeh, 1999), and in Palestine. Of course, Palestine had been the unifier, but until this time it was seen as “Arab territory” in a generalized sense that could be administered by other Arab states after the Jewish state’s demise. However, after the 6 Day War and the humiliation of these states, resistance to Israel became a nationalized phenomenon inside Palestine. With this, the Palestinian resistance became the de facto unifying force for the Arab factions and the idea for Palestinian independence became more prominent (Hudson, 1969). In some sense, this global appeal of the Palestinian cause has been with us ever since, not least during the two Intifadas, “(t)he Intifada assumed a spiritual importance in the eyes of millions of Arabs, epitomizing hope that people-power resistance might one day enable disaffected Arabs to achieve their objectives of justice, equality, and emancipation.” (Sardiki, 2000, p.83).

There are several ironies with regards to this history and the Abraham Accords. One is the role of Egypt, the most populous of the Arab nations and historically the most powerful country in the region. After the Egyptian revolution in 2011, the regional power of Egypt has comparatively declined, government of Abdel
Fattah al-Sisi even sold two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia in 2016 (Salman, 2016). Various GCC countries have rushed to fill the void left by Egypt for the leadership of the Arab world. Today several GCC countries including the UAE, but not Egypt as in the days of the UAR, have troops in Yemen (Blumi, 2018). Unlike in the early EU and more like in the UAR, the Gulf countries, especially the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, are funding militias and political entities within the region to secure their interests from Yemen to Syria to Libya to Sudan (Krieg, 2022). Indeed, this is less like how European countries deal with each other since 1945 and more like how European countries traditionally have dealt with peripheral countries in the so called third world.

Another irony is the presence of Israel at the heart of the Accords. If Ajami and Marrar are right and the Palestinian issue lies at the heart of Arab solidarity, then the expansionist visions of the Abraham Accords as an EU-like organization with Israel at the centre is a death knell to Arab unity as we know it. This is because the act of tying Israel to the conservative Arab states is in some ways a UAR experiment in reverse. One where both Palestinian participation, radical notions of Arab unity and any semblance of Arab nationalism in Nasser’s populist, anti-colonial sense, are turned on their heads. As opposed to the case of the UAR, however, the experiment will proceed in the name of pragmatism, not popular opinion. Indeed, if the deals connected to it are to be successful, they are wholly dependent on authoritarian governance that can weather the storm of public opinion.

5.4 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is, as mentioned, hard to separate entirely from the history of the Palestinians. During the heady days of the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire following WWI, and the era of the Sykes-Picot line separating British from French interests, the British also separated Transjordan from Mandatory Palestine in 1922 (Ochsenwald and Fischer, 2014, p.454). The boundaries of Jordan were as much decided on in the north by Sykes and Picot, and to the west by the whims of British Prime Minister Lloyd George, who wanted all the major sites from the bible to be included in Mandatory Palestine (Fromkin, 1998, p. 274-5). The Hashemite Kingdom was formed in many ways to placate the Emir Hussein of Mecca after his participation in the Arab Revolt on the side of the British against the Ottomans in WWI and after he had been ousted from the Arabian Peninsula by the forces of Ibn Saud (Karsh, 2007, p.299). Indeed, some observers call this land “Hussein’s consolation prize”. This is because the British had created this country largely in light of what it was not, i.e. it was not in the biblical heartland, it was not Syria with its ancient roots and where the French had ambitions, it was not the cradle of civilizations that is Mesopotamia, and it was not the Arabian Peninsula of Mecca and Medina that was controlled by the
forces of Ibn Saud. What became Jordan was a nearly landlocked country defined by deserts, its lack of water and its lack of natural resources. Because of these imperial considerations, what emerged was a difficult geography for building a state.

The irony of the WEN is that this was made worse after the creation of the state of Israel, as one of the main reasons for the shortage of water in Jordan to begin with was the diversion of much of the River Jordan for Israel’s National Water Carrier. As Gasteyer explains, “the JNF worked with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and the new government to implement the Mekerot and launched a 'Seven Year-Plan' aimed at diverting the Jordan River water south toward the Negev desert, specifically through damming the freshwater sea of Galilee (effectively diverting inflow to the Jordan river) and diverting that water to serve irrigation, industrial development, and domestic development, as well as in the new nation” (Gasteyer et al. 2012 p.459). This has led to water being one of the most fraught issues of the relationship between Israel and Jordan, and an unequal one at that “Jordan has been compelled to agree to Israel’s diversion of the vast bulk of the water from the Sea of Galilee in order to be allowed to exploit the Yarmouk (a major river that feeds the Jordan) and other local resources unhindered.” (Ward and Ruckstuhl, 2017, p.60). As we have seen, it is also tightly connected to the history of water and the Palestinians.

The geography and the relationship with Israel and the Palestinians all mean that Jordan “As one of the four driest countries in the world, water scarcity is by far the greatest impediment to planned growth and development, with far-reaching impacts across all sectors. Water scarcity is expected to be exacerbated by climate change, which has already decreased rainfall levels and increased temperatures.” (Pink, 2018, p.199). So, Jordan faces enormous challenges, many of which are connected to climate change. These include inadequate water resources, lessening rainfall and extreme heat. For the population, things look dire but are going to get much worse, with a high population growth that includes both influxes of refugees, especially from Syria, and a high birth-rate (over 3 children per woman on average) and means that Jordan is faced with a young and restive population with few opportunities in a worsening climate situation. Yoon puts it bluntly in when his team of twenty scientists assessed the water situation in the country 2020, “In the century ahead, Jordan faces the grand challenge to secure its water future. Jordan’s population, already reeling from the impacts of refugee influxes, is expected to grow twofold to threefold by the end of the century. Meanwhile, the country’s water resources will dwindle further under the impacts of climate change and groundwater mining. If Jordan carries forward passively, our integrated multiagent model results point to severe, potentially destabilizing water-security impacts on Jordan’s
population. To gain a foothold on its water future, Jordan needs to implement an ambitious, politically challenging portfolio of coordinated supply- and demand-side measures to mitigate water-security declines driven by socioeconomic growth and climate change. (Yoon et al, 2020 p.9).

5.4.1 Palestinians and Jordanians

This history also means that this hundred-year-old distinction of who is a Palestinian and who is a Jordanian was blurred from the start because of its imperial beginnings but became even more entangled after the Nakba sent 420 000 Palestinians into a Jordan that at the time included the West Bank. After the Six Day War in 1967, roughly 300 000 Palestinians fled eastward across the river into Jordans current borders (Oschenwald and Fisher, 2014, p.556). Thus, throughout the history of Jordan, there has been tensions between the East Bank, mainly Bedouin, Jordanian population and the Palestinians, who after 1967 numbered roughly half the population. The kings of Jordan, Abdullah I, Hussein and Abdullah II (discounting Talal who abdicated after a year in office) have owed their position to the British and have traditionally been close to the British and then the Americans and have been an often-unwilling enemy to Israel, much to the dismay of many of the Palestinians. Furthermore, the Jordanian government was never supportive of the Palestinian independence movement. When Jordan lost control of the West Bank to Israel after the 6-day-war, the official government position was to aspire to reclaim this land for Jordan, only in 1988 did the government change this position and accept the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people. They did, however, tolerate Palestinian guerillas using Jordan as a base of operations for raids into Israel immediately following the war. However, this unstable situation deteriorated until 1971 when the events of Black September unfolded between the guerillas and the army. “The situation exploded into civil war between the Jordanian army, which included Palestinians, and the Palestinian guerrillas, which included Jordanians” (Massad 2001, p.13). The Jordanian army won the short civil war and the Palestinian guerillas were forced to retreat to Lebanon. As we have seen, the relationship with Israel is further complicated by the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the control of the Waqf and any unrest at the site puts Jordanian collaboration with Israel on the back foot.

5.4.2 Economy of Jordan

“Dividends from the oil rich to the oil poor have helped consolidate the states of the latter, creating political interdependence” (Sadiki, 2000, p. 87)
In addition to the water scarcity and susceptibility for extreme heat, Jordan’s economy has been classified by some scholars as being an “an oil economy without having oil.” (Winckler, 2022, P.430), which is to say that the economy has several rentier features common to oil states. Although Jordan is known as a RPLA, resource poor, labour abundant country, since it is lacking in natural recourses (Cammett, 2015), this does not mean that Jordan is unaffected by the rentier economy and the economies of oil, on the contrary, “Oil revenues in MENA are complemented with other unearned income streams from aid, remittances and government regulation, which together constitute a broader challenge of ‘rentierism’” (Hinnebusch, 2006, p. 374). This is because of several factors to do with the geography and cultural connection the oil economies across its southern and eastern borders. A large part of the reasons for this have to do with remittances. Many Jordanians, especially in the service sector, work in the GCC countries and send the money home. There is also there is direct aid from these same countries. Hinnebusch also notes that Jordan, like Lebanon, receives an inordinate amount of support from the oil producing states because of its connection to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of course, both these streams of revenue will be inexorably linked to the price of oil. Thus, Jordan’s economy is tied to oil in several ways, many of which are detrimental to indigenous growth. Unlike Israel, Jordan also lacks natural gas “Israel's natural gas reserves are currently estimated to supply the country for at least 25 years. Jordan, on the other hand, does not have indigenous natural gas resources, which is why the instability around and attacks on the Egypt pipeline led the use of natural gas declined dramatically from 89% to 17% in 2012” (Abu Hamed and Bressler, 2019, p.182). The lack of, but dependence on, oil, is yet another reason for Jordan to invest in RE.

**5.2.3 Renewable Energy in Jordan**

When it comes to RE, studies show that some of Jordan would be particularly suited for both solar and wind “Ras Munif for wind Al-Risha for solar. Jordan has high electric production cost that is directly linked with the oil prices. An alternative is renewable wind and solar electric power production. (...) The result is to install windmill farm in the mountainous area in the north, where wind speed proved to be viable, while the eastern desert is suitable to install solar power station.” (Halasa 2010, P.209). The same quoted above also reports that the UAE is already funding solar energy projects in Jordan, for example a “103MW project in Aqaba and 200MW project in Muwaqqar funded by the UAE/Abu Dhabi fund for development. The 200MW plant’s $128 million cost will be financed by a grant” (Abu Hamed and Bressler, 2019, p.385). However, as the same report points out, as in Israel and in the UAE, but unlike Morocco, renewable energy projects are not experiencing significant growth, and have not risen above the level of novelty in the
Jordanian energy sector, with 4% of Jordanian energy coming from renewable sources at the time of the study (Abu Hamed and Bressler, 2019, p.380). That is, very similarly to Israel, Jordan receives a staggering 96% of its power from fossil fuels.

So, if at all achievable, turning Jordan into a RE powerhouse theoretically has many advantages, including reducing emissions in the region, creating more energy security, reducing the dependence on foreign oil and reducing the rate to which the Jordanian economy is tied to the oil price. As will be discussed in the section on the UAE, though, there is little to suggest that RE will increase democratic tendencies or spread power more evenly in the kingdom. It is also the case that clean energy, just like oil, is a rent that may perpetuate the rentier economy of the region. Furthermore, it would be amiss not to mention that Malik, somewhat ominously for the future of the WEN, assesses that “the symptoms appear all too familiar: weak private sector, unproductive investment in white-elephant projects, pervasive rent seeking and a large and oversized public sector.” (Malik, 2016). In a similar vein but related directly to the WEN, Winckler reminds us that “it should be taken into account that the vast majority of the joint Israeli-Jordanian infrastructure projects that were planned have not yet materialized” (Winckler, 2021, P.439).

5.4.4 Diplomacy in Jordan: Peace with Israel and the Abraham Accords

Jordan did sign a peace deal with Israel in 1994, under American pressure and amid an economic crisis. Since then, the peace between Israel and Jordan has been solid, and the connections between the Hashemite Royal Family and the various Israeli governments have been amicable (Shlaim, 2014). However, given this history of the split between the government and the Palestinians and their supporters on the other, the tensions between much of the population who want to see a much tougher stance on Israel and those that want work with Israel on a range of issues remain. Given this tension the result has been that peace deal we saw above has been described as “cold” (Owen, 2000), and there is very little trade or tourism between the countries.

With regards to the Abraham Accords, even on the government side, there has been little support for the Accords. This is because of they go against the traditional government position, as Barari puts it, “(t)he peace first, normalization later concept has been dealt a death - blow by the Abraham Accords” (Barari, 2020 p.15). With the population, the situation is even worse, they enjoy a meagre 10% support in the country (Ma’oz, 2022, p.3). For many, the WEN deal, as the 1994 peace deal and the Abraham Accords more generally, signifies a betrayal of Arab solidarity and the Palestinian cause. This can be seen in the effect the WEN deal had in parliament and on the streets. “When the project was announced, several members walked out of Jordan’s House of Representatives in protest.” (Eyl-Mazzega et al 2022, P.14).
This was not only felt in parliament but also on the streets, after the MoU was agreed upon there was a demonstration against it attended by a few hundred people, and Al-Jazeera found several prominent people within the environmental movement in Jordan to speak against it, among them was the head of Jordan’s Environmental Union Omar Sushan who said the deal was “a political project (...) You cannot justify this project from climate change; this is a normalisation project” (Al Jazeera. Davis, 21st Nov 2021). Clearly there is a political dimension for a climate advocate to speak out against a renewable energy deal on the grounds of normalization, this seems to be more about narrative than about a sustainable future. Yet it is an indication on how difficult the project may be to implement on the ground.

5.4.5 Jordan at a Crossroads

As we have seen, the introduction of extra water into the Jordanian grid and energy recourses is desperately needed for the water-stressed country. Likewise, the expansion of renewable energy could be one way to turn the prison of the country’s geography into an asset. At the same time RE investment can help to fight the climate change that is already affecting Jordan’s precarious climate. Furthermore, the issues of water, RE, the economy and climate change are interconnected, and the WEN has the potential to work toward a better future for all these issues.

Of course, if these kinds of projects are not seen as benefitting the people but only the elite, progress will tend to be stifled. However, for Jordan this is not only a question of the “elite” versus the “people” in classical populist discourse. It touches the heart of Jordanian sensitivities, the question of helping or hurting the Palestinians. Indeed, nothing can be done to change the solidarity that so many Jordanians feel for the Palestinians, whether they are of Palestinian heritage themselves or not. What can potentially be changed is the narrative of any collaboration with Israel that is automatically to the detriment of the Palestinians. The onus here is on Israel to prove that this is untrue, and on the Jordanian government to prove that peace is a good deal for Jordanians, something the WEN can potentially lend a hand to.

5.5 The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The United Arab Emirates is a union of seven smaller states, each with their own monarchy and different economies, previously known as the Trucial states (Zahlan, 2016, p. xi). The British forced a treaty on these states already in 1820. The UAE was then unified into one federated state when the British withdrew from the area in 1971. The structure of the government is such that the monarchies in each of the Emirates is designated a specific role. The presidency goes to Abu Dhabi and the vice presidency and the premiership to Dubai. The UAE signed the Abraham accords under the leadership of then crown prince Sheikh
Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan popularly known as MBZ. MBZ has effectively been ruling the country since 2014 because of his brother’s (Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan (Sheikh Khalifa)) ill health, Sheikh Khalifa died in May 2022, formalizing the transition (Khaleej Times, 14th May 2022). The UAE is considered an absolute monarchy with a press freedom index that Freedom House ranks as “unfree” (Freedom House, 2016) and epitomizes the idea of “non-competitive polities in which there is neither representation nor taxation” (Sadiki, 2000 p.88).

5.5.1 The Economy of the UAE

The UAE is one of the wealthiest Arab nations, and the basis of its wealth originates with its holdings in oil and gas. Furthermore, it has one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world with over $820 billion (Garg and Shukla, 2009, p.33). When the oil was first discovered in, the revenue of the emirate skyrocketed from $150 000 in 1961 to $84 million dollars in 1966. Today, the UAE has proven reserves of 105 billion barrels of oil in 2019 (Gulf News, 4 Nov 2019). Furthermore, it has some 4% of the world’s proven natural gas reserves with some 6 trillion cubic meters in 2000. The largest oil company in the UAE is the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), which I will discuss below.

The problems associated with oil economies, such as the Dutch disease, sometimes called the “oil curse” the problem of one product being sold to the detriment of the rest of the economy (Fardmanesh, 1991) and other problems associated with rentier-state economies has led the UAE and especially Dubai, to try a host of measures to diversify away from raw material production and delve into the realms of finance, travel (mainly airports and airlines), trade and tourism. Indeed “the share of oil revenue in the UAE has decreased from 70% in 1970 to 40% in the 1990s” (Haouas, 2014, p.5). Yet the oil curse question remains and signifies a difference between the emirates, particularly between oil rich Abu Dhabi and oil poor Dubai, the two largest emirates. It can also work the other way round, sometimes the oil economy can stabilize the non-oil economy, such as during the financial crisis 2008-9, when Abu Dhabi poured billions of dollars into stabilizing the economy of Dubai (Reuters, 2014, 16th March).

5.5.2 The Abraham Accords Seen from the UAE

“Over the past two years, our belief in peace has seen us achieve countless milestones. We have turned plans into concrete action, and developed a thriving relationship to help us accomplish our shared strategic objectives. We will continue this work as we deepen the Accords, and spread their inclusive vision of a regional community for progress.” (Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, MBZ, 15 Sept. 2022, quoted on the UAE embassy in the US’s webpage)
Since the 00s, the UAE has been looking for ways to create its own foreign policy separate from that of other GCC countries. Dina Esfandiary writes that this originates with the aftermath of the Arab Spring and Barack Obama’s “Pivot toward Asia”. At this time the emirates sensed both a threat of their traditional American allies leaving the area, and the threat that Iran would ferment revolutions to their advantage around the region. They also sensed opportunity since many traditional Arab powers’ such as Egypt collapsing and leaving a power vacuum (Esfandiary, 2023). It is in this era bolder, less risk averse foreign policy that the Abraham Accords must be seen. Of course, despite being an Arab country, the UAE has never been a direct combatant against Israel in any of the wars it has fought, so tensions with Israel are low by the standards of the region. It is also not the first time that the UAE has floated the idea of normalized relations with Israel, being one of the co-signees to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API), “(t)he 2002 Arab Peace Initiative led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the Gulf states, Egypt and Jordan, offered normalization with Israel in return for Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Abraham Accords thus marked a fundamental change for some of the Arab initiative’s leading supporters”. (Murciano, 2023, p.4) What Murciano is referring to is the prerequisite for peace being to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in the API, and the conspicuous absence of this clause in the Abraham Accords. He goes on to point out that this is not coincidental, since the background is one of personal animosity between Mahmud Abbas and the UAE government. It can also be noted that several observers suggest that the API is the primary reason why bringing Saudi Arabia into the accords is so difficult, as it could be construed as humiliating for the richest Arab state.

Analysts point to several advantages that the Emirates may seek to gain from the Abraham Accords. One advantage is military, the GCC countries are some of the countries that spend the most on the military per capita in the world. Above all this has to do with that the “UAE armed forces greatest fear(...) has always been an attack from Iran” (Davidson, 2008 p.271), here Davidson is specifically talking about a foreign threat, as opposed to internal threats coming from groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. The Gulf of Hormuz separates the UAE from Iran by only 39km at its shortest point. Israel, as a major regional military power, could boost the Emirates’ defensive capabilities, especially since Israel sees Iran as its main regional enemy. As we have seen in the press section, Israeli defence companies such as Rafael already have offices in Dubai. However, one UAE general cast doubt on the military aspect of the cooperation and said that "The military sphere will be the last dimension of the cooperation with Israel, we have to be careful how we progress there" (Esfandiary, 2023, p.85). One area which shows a large growth potential is in the medical sphere (Kan-Tor and Gardener, 2021). Another area has to do with agriculture, Israel is a major innovator in the agricultural space and the UAE grows only some 10-30% of its own food (Gueraiche,
Therefore, some analysts propose that “the development of economic relations between Israel and the UAE is (...) driven in particular by Israel’s agrotech sector, that offers solutions to the UAE, which for their part intend to develop their agricultural sector to achieve greater food security p.25 (Eyl-Mazzega and Cassigno, 2022).

Another area is tourism, around 300 000 people have travelled from Israel to the UAE between 2020 and mid-2022 (Dachtler, 2022). While this number is astonishing, and still growing, very few Emiratis come to Israel. On the surface this is surprising, why would Emiratis not want to see Jerusalem? This is one of the many indicators that the Abraham Accords do not create the same enthusiasm in the UAE as in Israel. Another area of cooperation, unsurprisingly yet seemingly at odds with the RE focus of the WEN, is that there was another MoU signed by the UAE and Israel for an oil pipeline that would be built from Eilat to Ashkelon for oil from the UAE that would come in through Emirati tankers, transported overland and on towards European markets across the Mediterranean. This is part of an old geostrategic dream started by the British to circumvent the Suez Canal completely and have a new access point for oil from the Gulf to connect to European markets as planned by the Iraq Petroleum company, the one-time parent company of ADNOC (Ferrier and Bamberg 1982, p. 164-5). Although this deal is now frozen citing environmental concerns in Israel (Reuters, Dec. 16, 2021) we can see how fossil fuels are still part and parcel of the Abraham Accords. Furthermore, several deals have been made regarding ADNOC ownership of natural gas, among other things a 22% stake in the Tamar gas field in Israeli territorial waters (Guzansky and Feuer, 2021). These deals may potentially put ADNOC in a precarious position, since one of the gas fields outside Israel, not Tamar but Karish, sparked a diplomatic spat between Israel and Lebanon and an escalation with Hezbollah over maritime borders during the summer of 2022 (Hendrix and Rubin, aug. 13th, 2022 Tensions flare between Israel and Hezbollah over disputed gas fields - The Washington Post). All this is not to say that the investments of renewable energy are unimportant for the UAE, but investment in RE is not a main priority of the Abraham Accords, remain the consideration of the subsidiaries of the oil companies, particularly ADNOC. Therefore, when MBZ speaks about the “shared strategic objectives” between Israel and the UAE, there are several factors, military and economic, that he could be referring to. A “regional community for progress”, is a soundbite that jives well with both the Israeli “start-up nation” and American values more generally.

5.5.3 The UAE, the Abraham Accords and the Palestinians
All these reasons that the UAE has to collaborate with Israel should not lead us to believe that the matter is settled. On the contrary, in the realm of public opinion, it is anything but. In 2021, when asked about the new relationship with Israel, “an Emirati official referred to (its) new policy as the UAEs new 'zero enemy' foreign policy. (However) Official, public normalization was risky, especially as domestic opposition remained significant and required a strong hand to quell it.” (Esfandiary, 2023, p.84-85). Studies show that, as noted on the section on Jordan, in the Arab world the deal was always a potentially risky project, connected as it is with the conflict. This is the primary reason why support for the accords remains low in the Arab world “in 13 Arab states with 300 million people showed that 88% of the respondents opposed normalization with Israel and 79% of them support the Palestinians.” (Ma’oz, 2022, P.6). Interestingly, even 71% of Emiratis oppose the deal despite government media control (Pollock and Kassin, 2022). Moreover, the main point of Pollock and Kassin’s study is not only that the support is low but that it is shrinking further still.

The Emirati goal is clearly to keep the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict from affecting the deal. To drive this point home, we can look at a little-known aspect of the deal, in that the UAE even “started allowing goods from illegal Jewish settlements – labelled “from the land of Israel” – to be sold in its markets” (Harb, 2021). Thus, the UAE is less strict in this matter than the EU which forces Israel to mark all goods coming from settlements on occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) in November 2019 (The Guardian, AP, Nov 21, 2019). However, we must note that, from the UAE's perspective, the deal did chalk up a victory of sorts in saving the theoretical possibility of a two-state solution (Guzansky & Marshall, 2020) Many reports conclude that the UAE and MBZ signed the deal on the explicit condition that Israel squash the proposed “peace and prosperity” plan put forward by the Trump administration (Guzansky and Feuer 2021, Barzani and Maital 2021, Dachtler 2021). With its proposed land annexations of as much as 30% of the West Bank, the deal was unpopular in most governments around the world to say the least. Moreover, as I have investigated in my BA “Making Annexation Great Again” (2020), this “peace deal”, signed by Trump and Netanyahu but without the Palestinians involved, was by 2020 already bogged down in Palestinian resistance and the intricacies of Israeli internal politics. According to Netanyahu's biographer Anshel Pfeffer, experts consistently claimed that there was no chance that Netanyahu would have passed this deal into law and had no appetite to go through with annexation (Pfeffer, May 7th, 2020). Nonetheless, for the UAE, “According to senior officials, not only was the willingness to accept normalization with Israel not intended to be at the expense of the Palestinians, but its purpose was actually to preserve the relevance of the two-state solution and contribute to stability in the Middle East” (Guzansky and Feuer, 2021). With regards to the WEN, we have seen how the Palestinians were supposed to be part of the WEN according to the
EcoPeace plan, but were not only left out of the MoU, but replaced by the UAE. With what we have seen of the relationship between the Emirati and Palestinian governments, and with Israeli interests, this development is easy to understand. This of course adds to the sense that the fate of the Palestinians is slipping from the international agenda more generally and from the Abraham Accords deal in particular.

5.5.4 Renewable Energy and the UAE

“The Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050 and the Dubai Net Zero Emissions Strategy 2050 aim to provide 100% of the energy production capacity from clean energy sources by 2050”


“Why does an oil producing emirate, seated on one of the world’s most sought-after resources, 7 per cent of the world’s proven reserves, feel compelled to invest in ‘clean’ energies?” (Gueraiche, 2017. p.180), he goes on to list the dangers to energy security inherent in over reliance on fossil fuels and the all-important branding image of the UAE as a progressive liberal force in heart of the Arab world. Another answer that could be mentioned above is given by Rabinowitz and has to do with long term self-preservation, “by 2100 the country could lose as much as 5,000 square kilometres to the surging tide, a figure representing 6 percent of its entire landmass. With much of the population concentrated along the Arabian Gulf, many will be forced to relocate. UAE government sources indicate that by 2100 the sea surge could impact 85 percent of the population and 90 percent of the country’s infrastructure." (Rabinowitz, 2020, p. 42). These factors have combined in making the UAE a large player in the renewable energy sector in the region. Indeed, Jordan and the UAE are the 3rd and the 4th best installers of renewable energy in the region respectively, and Jordan has the highest percentage of its electricity coming from RE, even outperforming Morocco in installed if not percentage of electricity from RE. (Prontera and Rubino, 2023 p. 11-12). The prize project of the UAE in terms of RE is the world’s biggest solar park the Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum solar project, that I have on the front page of this thesis, with a total area of 77 km2, which has a planned production capacity of 5000 MW by 2030.

Of course, as alluded to above by Gueraiche’s question, the UAE faces conflicting incentives as a major oil producer. The temptation for an oil producing country is of course to keep changes cosmetic in the face of climate change. “Thanks to renewables, they can diversify their fossil fuel-dependent economies set up new development trajectories and increase their international influence in the emerging low-carbon world. However, by supporting the energy transition, they risk undermining the political and social foundations of their regime” (Prontera and Rubino, 2023, p.3). This ambivalence is reflected in the level of commitment being devoted to the transition. In the quote above it is said that of the Emirates, at least
Dubai is committed to net zero by 2050, but the serious steps being taken to get there are notable by their absence. The GCC countries are some of the world’s largest emitters per capita. “Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE have the worst ecological footprints per capita in the world, according to a groundbreaking international rapport that also found that the world has lost half of its wildlife in just 40 years” (WWF report, 2014). The hyper consumption can be seen in every sector, where oil is cheap and abundant a wasteful culture has been allowed to percolate, “Maintaining Ski Dubai’s slopes alone is responsible for the emission of over 500,000 tons of CO2 per annum, an amount equivalent to the overall emissions of 1.8 million Sudanese” (Rabinowitz 2020, p 43). The energy used to create electricity is powered by natural gas in the UAE it stands at 99%, even higher than the levels in Israel and Jordan. The total energy consumption of the UAE stood at 130 000 000 MW in 2019, so when we are speaking about the largest solar park in the world operating at full capacity in 2030, the solar park will generate some 5000 MW, adding to the 400 000 MW installed already by 2017, we are speaking about some 5% of the UAE energy needs being provided by solar energy. According to a 2022 study by Ramachandran, solar is projected to produce less electricity than the projected use of nuclear power in 2030 and equal to the projected increase of the dirtiest fuel, coal fired power plants which will produce around 3% of Emirati energy at this time (Ramachandran et al, 2022 figure on p.8). In fact, according to the same study, the emission reduction of the UAE since 1971 has been 0.2%. Again, we can compare this to the emission reduction ambition of the EU and the US mentioned above on the section on Israel.

5.5.5 Oil Production and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)

Even more worrying than the internal emissions reductions that the UAE could hope to achieve is that of the actions of the oil industry itself. After all, the damage that oil does, once sold, is not limited to the internal use discussed above because it is subsequently burnt all over the world. The greatest benefit that the UAE could bring in preventing climate change is creating a plan to end fossil fuel extraction in the long run. ADNOC, however, is doing no such thing.

Under the auspices of the British, the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (now the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, ADNOC) was formed as a subsidiary to the Iraq Petroleum Company, ADNOC was nationalized as the British left and in 1988 the Supreme Petroleum Council was formed to act as the board of directors for the company and its various subsidiaries and is thus tightly wound up in the government of the UAE itself, particularly in the government of Abu Dhabi. The company has emerged as the 12th largest oil company in the world by production. ADNOC is one of the few oil companies in the world committed to increase oil production despite growing awareness of the threat to the climate, it will increase production
from 4 MB per day to 5 MB per day in 2030. Further still, “Just 10% of ADNOC’s expansion is compatible with the IEA’s scenario for the world to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The IEA said the 2050 goal requires no new oil and gas projects to be approved after 2021, but 90% of the oil and gas expansion being planned by ADNOC were advanced after this date and would have to stay in the ground to be compatible. ADNOC’s “overshoot” of the IEA net zero scenario is therefore 6.8 BBOE, the third largest worldwide” (Harvey, 4th April, 2023, the Guardian).

Instead of reducing output, they aim to “Reduce operational Green House Gas (GHG) emission intensity by 25% by 2030 (and) Enhance our Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) capacity by 500% by 2030” (Our 2030 Sustainability Strategy – ADNOC). Of course, there is a real possibility that carbon capture can reduce current emissions at ADNOCs facilities (Hertwich et al. 2008, p.352), since ADNOC has the third highest emission intensity of all major oil companies after the Russian Gazprom and the Iranian NIOC (Shojaeddini, 2019, p.3). However, this approach is questionable at best because as Adu points out, although carbon capture (CCS) has never been proven to work at scale has a host of problems including leakage and the obvious problem that an oil company uses the practice of carbon capture to reduce emissions at the same time that they increase production of the same product that is causing the emissions (Adu et al. 2018). This would be useful in the scenario where the facilities themselves were the key to reaching net zero, but this is simply not the case. Net zero means a reduction in use of fossil fuels everywhere, not only on oil rigs. Indeed, CCS is often used simply to enhance the extraction process, acquire subsidies or simply for narrative purposes. Biologist and climate journalist George Monbiot puts it bluntly in another context, “CCS has been the magic fix for climate breakdown (...) Most of the very few projects brought to fruition around the world have been abject failures. (...) It would be wrong to say the technology doesn’t work. It works precisely as intended, even if it never materialises: it is a highly successful method of buying more time for the fossil fuel industry” (Monbiot, 2023).

ADNOC also suggests working with “Blue hydrogen” as an alternative to “Grey hydrogen”. “Grey hydrogen” involves the high emission technique of simply burning natural gas to create hydrogen. “Blue hydrogen” is the same thing but the carbon from the burnt natural gas is captured, Ajanovic found that this technique may possibly reduce the carbon emissions by half to that released by “Grey hydrogen”, however, methane leaks and other problems mean that “(d)espite resulting in lower emissions, the technology is still far from being climate neutral” (Ajanovic et Al, 2022, p.25). Again, we encounter the same problem, fossil fuel companies that want to continue pumping the fossil fuel with some new technological quick fixes. Now there is a better option. The EU lists “Green hydrogen” as one of the hopes
of the green transition, this is hydrogen completely made by renewable energy that is converted into hydrogen fuel by electrolysis, but at present “Green hydrogen” accounts for a mere 1% of all hydrogen produced in the world.

Closer to the goals of the WEN is the other measure that ADNOC has been undertaking in response to the climate crisis. This has involved a marked investment in renewable energy, to this end it formed the Renewable Energy company Masdar. Launched in 2006, Masdar is the company mainly responsible for renewable energy and the futuristic sustainable Masdar City (Mills, 2015 p.38). The principal role of the UAE in the WEN is as a funder and an owner of certain facilities in Jordan that will be built in accordance with the WEN, therefore Masdar is a contender for the company that may be made responsible for the building RE facilities in Jordan if the WEN comes to fruition. Sultan Al Jaber is the CEO of both ADNOC and Masdar, as well as a government minister, the UAE therefore saw it fit to name him the president-designate of the upcoming international climate meeting in the COP 28 in Dubai in December 2023. It is almost superfluous to point out that we face the problem of dual incentives, that an oil company invests in efforts to mitigate climate change whilst on the other hand increasing production of oil, or that an executive of a major oil company can chair an international climate meeting (Madiche, 2016. p.44).

5.5.6 The UAE, Democratization and the Green Transition

If the clean transition were to happen in the oil producing states of the Gulf, how would this scenario relate to authoritarianism? Oil economies, as we have seen, often favour an authoritarian, top-down form of government, not unlike a singular oil well from whence money and power flows. Is there any chance that exchanging the oil well for solar and wind energy will promote more inclusive forms of governance? There seems to be little evidence that this is the case. Indeed, studies suggest that the field of renewables is susceptible to the same kind of forces that uphold the rentier state and the authoritarian systems that often arise in these constellations. “The mere rise of renewables in the national energy mix is not sufficient to alter political asymmetries or empower new social actors. (...) These systems can easily recreate a top-down approach to energy governance (Prontera and Rubino, 2023, p.6). It is thus a similar structure in terms of authoritarianism, where energy in the form of electricity rather than energy in the form of oil may be used as the central currency. Whether we are speaking about centralized renewable energy or of oil, the energy economy is highly compatible with autocratic rule. Similarly, as we have seen, that normalization with Israel is for the moment still dependent on autocracy.

5.5.7 The UAE, Diplomacy, Oil and Renewable Energy
“When all is said and done, a decision on the part of leaders of the GCC six to keep their precious assets buried and embrace renewables requires them to make a mammoth leap of faith.”
(Rabinowitz, 2020 p.115).

As we have seen, with regards to the mammoth leap of faith in the quote above, there are reasons to hope for and work for an energy transition even in an environment where the oil companies have an outsized role in government. For the UAE, we can take the low corruption index spoken about before. Relatedly, there is the high level of rule-of-law, abiding by rules formulated in 1971 by Palestinian Judge Al Bitar during the formation of the Emirati constitution, “In 2011, the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law index ranked the U.A.E. thirteenth and the United States twentieth in its survey of sixty-six countries” Pelton, 2018, p.91). This means that if the UAE leadership truly wanted change, they should have the authority to push it through. There are also the issues of all branding and narrative, if the UAE is perceived as a bottleneck hindering the transition it could be bad for business, especially for the international expats living in the country. The election of Sultan Al Jaber to the director of the COP caused a scandal of the kind that the UAE usually avoids, signalling a misunderstanding of the role of public perception in other countries with freer press than in the Middle East (‘Absolute scandal’ The Guardian, 2023). Some put their hope in the symbolism of the world’s largest solar field, the WEN, the hosting of the COP 28 and smart cities like Masdar City could potentially create a snowball effect where symbolic change translates into real change. There may come a time where the UAE must, for reasons of self-preservation and international reputation, live up to the hype.

5.6 Summary. The Arab World and the Future of Collaboration

Collaborating with Israel goes against many of the ideologies present in the Arab world, breaks many taboos, and could potentially be damaging to the rights and the bargaining power of the Palestinians. However, as we have seen, it can be and has been beneficial for both the UAE and Jordan in economic, technical and military terms. The success of deals like the WEN therefore depends on many factors, from the less appealing quality of being able to suppress dissent, to more positive ones like achieving results for the population beyond the elite, to formulating a vision and explaining where the Palestinians fit into it. As I will discuss below in the conclusion to the thesis, the rhetoric for greater collaboration is rather bland and uninspiring at present, more of a list of investments and trade deals than ideology, in comparison to the colourful, fiery denunciations of Israel we have seen in the press section.
6. Conclusion to the Thesis. Navigating in the Shadow of the Crucible

Given the history that has brought us to the current moment, what have we learned about the possibilities of navigating the crucible and creating a new dynamic in the Middle East? As a reminder, the question that this thesis has attempted to ascertain is this: how feasible these dreams are in terms of the histories of each of these three countries regarding diplomacy, environment, green technology, the green transition, land usage, water and narrative?

History shows us that there is the irony that the WEN seems to answer some problems that the conflict itself has created. Jordan was created by the British allocating territory that saw the land cut off from the Mediterranean with only a small strip of coast by Aqaba on the Red Sea. When the state of Israel was created, the National Water Carrier was perhaps the decisive ingredient that enabled large scale Jewish immigration into the newly formed state, but also the key culprit in reducing the Jordan River to 10% of its former size, condemning Jordan to water scarcity.

For the Arab world generally, as we have seen, there has been a strong focus on the Palestine question since the birth of Zionism and especially since the birth of the state of Israel and the Nakba. All questions of unity and international cooperation have traditionally been tightly bound together with support for the Palestinians, by diplomacy, by force of arms or at the very least by rhetoric. Although many factors including Israeli/Egyptian and Israeli/Jordanian peace have contributed to a decades long decline of Arab Nationalism, the Abraham Accords still seem to have broken many taboos by creating a kind of anti-Nasserist international grouping.

Jordan, as we have seen, must contend with its geography and the inherent weakness this gives it towards the oil producing states and towards Israel. Tragedy compounds in Jordan with chronic water shortage, refugee influx and a constantly growing population. Jordan must change its trajectory for reasons of water security, economics and political stability. The WEN is one such project that hopes to alleviate this situation. However, the large Palestinian population and allied forces in Jordan will tend to reject all deals with Israel and will be susceptible to the traditional narrative that Al Jazeera is providing. Furthermore, the pro-Palestinian and the pro-collaboration with Israel factions have deep historical roots and unfortunately have some strong “elite” versus “people” features.

The UAE, for its part, is intent on forming its own path with regards to foreign policy, and this has led to a “no enemies” policy that has included the Abraham Accords and collaboration with Israel. In turn, this has enabled a wave of agreements, investments and a boom in trade. As we have seen, many in Israel believe
that the opening of the relationship is proof that no progress is needed in the conflict. A closer reading of the UAE regarding the Accords shows something else. In opinion polls, official statements, investments in Palestine and initially signing the Accords on condition of halting de jure annexation of the West Bank all speak of a UAE much more involved in the conflict than either the Israeli or the Arab public are aware of, trying to counter the adverse effects of the agreement.

Nonetheless, the UAE doesn’t seem to have its own narrative to support the Accords beyond the vagaries of the elite language of “pragmatism” and “business interests”. Perhaps this partly has to do with the somewhat fickle reasons why the project was allowed to take off, namely the personal animosity between MBZ and Mahmood Abbas. Whatever the reason, it does make it hard to counter the centrality placed on anti-Israeli sentiment that flows throughout the region. Indeed, the argument that the agreement won’t have negative effects for the Palestinians may be good damage control, but it is not going to enthuse very many. For Jordan and the UAE, it is imperative to change the narrative and find a way of not seeming to abandon the Palestinians but, where possible, to incorporate them into the deals they make with Israel. This is difficult but should not be impossible. As a side note I can say that finding analysts, intellectuals and think tanks based in the Arab world embracing the Abraham Accords has been difficult and most of the voices defending the deal tend to be either Israeli or American. If the narrative can hold its own against the positions of Al Jazeera and others, and not be seen as simply an elite project denying the Palestinians agency, it would be much easier to find support for projects like the WEN. Indeed, if such an intellectual force were to appear, it does not actually have to abandon criticising Israel, only its right to exist. One thought is to have the goal of Israel criticism like settler-colonial theory be made more explicit, perhaps incorporating goals of the country that indeed can look more like Australia than Algeria.

When it comes to narratives, we have seen the Israeli press and Al Jazeera push strikingly different notes. In Israel we can see that some parts of the Israeli press carry blatantly colonialist articles denying the Palestinians the right to exist, not only as a prospective state but also as a people. In these articles Jordan is seen as an enabler to the Palestinians and a hostile state. Conversely, the common thread in Al Jazeera is that Israel is a foreign entity in the Middle East, driven by a colonial-settler agenda that needs to be combatted in every way. Every iteration of the opposite tendencies in Israel, such as peace deals and the movement for democracy are ferociously denounced as hypocrisy and a kind of cover-up for this real underlying agenda. As we have seen, this is the traditional Arab position. The countries with relations with Israel such as UAE and Jordan will continue to carry the brunt of this criticism for any project including Israel. Israel is going to continue to have bad press from the Arab world until the situation radically
improves for the Palestinians, and frankly probably beyond this point as well. Israel itself is largely shielded from this narrative because of isolation, the language barrier and Israeli media, whereby the world of Israeli politics is by tradition often completely separated from the Arab politics surrounding it, resulting in a filter bubble effect.

As for Israel, we can make several observations. When it comes to green energy and the green transition, Israel is not keeping pace with the required changes, and we have seen some of the reasons why. One reason is that climate change is low on the list of perceived threats in Israel. Another reason has to do with land policy in Israel, the national project of settlement and land usage has tied Israel’s own hands and has rendered its desert land expensive and fragmented by military use and national parks, a system devised for Jewish control over the land. Therefore, the Negev is largely unusable for large scale solar projects. If Israel is to commit to a serious change in its renewable strategy and change the current 93% reliance on fossil fuel for energy, it may have to choose whether to rethink the land policy or export its renewable energy future in projects like the WEN. Conversely, this same nationalism, securitization and the centralizing of water rights in state hands has been a boon for water management in Israel. Indeed, Israel is a world leader in water management and an enthusiastic proponent of desalination, something that may help not only Israel but neighbouring countries as well, especially Jordan. The problem is that this leadership can easily be questioned. This is because, in terms of its water relations with the Palestinians in the OPT, particularly the tragic situation in Gaza, Israel is burdened with a system riddled with inequality.

With regards to diplomacy, both peace with Jordan and the Abraham Accords have been achievements for Israel. However, the relationship between Israel and the UAE since the Abraham Accords is incomparably better than it’s relationship with Jordan. We saw this in the source material as well. This is also apparent in the Israeli press about the UAE, indeed, the “gold rush mentality” flourishes in these articles. In a way the Israeli media seems caught in a loop which projects a wholly unrealistic picture of the “good” peace with the UAE and the “bad” peace with the Jordanians. We must also note that Israel is hamstrung by its own internal policies, and particularly the pro-occupation right wing who have doubled down on the colonial mindset. These factions often act against the peace agreement with Jordan from 1994, threaten democracy and can possibly also threaten the Abraham Accords. Indeed, Israel may easily delude itself on how little concern Emiratis have for the conflict.

Regarding ideology, Israel was formed using settler colonialism as a model with a background of fear, resulting in a system rife with sectarian securitization and militarism. However, the ideology is ever
changing. The right, through the settlement movement and the rise of populism, is ever more insular and nativist. Of course, a government peddling the crudest form of Zionist myths and an imperialist disregard for borders will pose a significant challenge to the accords, perhaps even a fatal one.

For Israel, the most important question is this: how much of the crucible will have to be untangled for the WEN to be successful? Netanyahu seems to believe that Israel does not have to change at all. After all, his “peace for peace” strategy for the Abraham Accords sounds remarkably like having your cake and eating it. This may still prove to be untenable. Yet even so Netanyahu could be right. If so, at its lowest ebb, perhaps the occupation can persist and only the status quo of the Temple Mount and the international borders with states other than a Palestinian state must be upheld. Perhaps this will be enough for a desperate Jordan and a UAE focused on stability.

There could also be a possibility for change here. The left in Israel has shown us how change is possible, and what is much more difficult to change. Indeed, when discussing visions for the future we must keep in mind the limitations of Jewish and Israeli history but what they may challenge is the sectarian nature of the state. What will be extremely difficult is to change the belief in the state itself. For example, it is important to note the power of the song by Gali Atari from 1986, “ein lanu eretz acheret” (we have no other country) narrative in Israel. The song has been repopularised in the pro-democracy demonstrations of 2023. At the demonstrations it signifies the opposition to messianic dictatorship, but its popularity even among the left signifies how strongly the country is united on this issue, namely that the Jewish state is allowed to continue to exist in some form. Therefore, the left may not be able to change the securitization of Israel, and most of the left will not be persuaded by the arguments of the settler colonial theory. However, what can be changed in the future can be gauged from the change that has occurred in the past. The left has changed from the farm centric ethnically sectarian socialism of Ben Gurion to a force for diplomacy and peace. As for the future, Israel could still allow for a Palestinian state living alongside in the spirit of Amos Oz (Oz, 1995) and David Grossman or introducing a federalized system akin to what AB Yehoshua proposed toward the end of his life (INSS, 2019 End of the Two-State Paradigm?), or indeed Peter Beinart’s more utopian vision of a one state future (Beinart, 2020 One-State Solution NYT). In one example of recent change, we are starting to see a politicisation of the concept of the “start-up nation” set against the religious conservative populist religious right. Indeed, “save our start up nation”, is one of the massive signs held up in the mass demonstrations on Kaplan Street in Tel Aviv every week to protest the government’s threat to democracy. The start-up nation moving forward versus the undoubtedly
backward-looking groups who seek to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem from thousands of years ago is indeed a powerful image in line with the WEN.

In one sense the UAE and Israel are in similar predicaments. Israel is holding on to the West Bank despite no government in the world explicitly backing this. Israel keeps an unpopular and costly occupation going, unwilling to let go because of the fear that it would upend internal cohesion and facilitate external enemies to open a new, possibly fatal front against Israel. The occupation is functional, if nothing else in terms of regime security. The UAE keeps fossil fuel production at the levels the oil companies and OPEC deem necessary. The overwhelming consensus among climate scientists is that much of the oil needs to be kept underground so that we can keep heating to manageable levels. Yet for reasons of internal cohesion, external threats to the economy and regime stability the necessary changes for the future are not made. The moves that these states have made to counter the threats are both easy to mock. The “two states for two peoples” slogan has some very serious problems and underlying hypocrisies, that often are accused of whitewashing Israel, just as the UAE’s Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park can easily be portrayed as inadequate green washing for a major oil producer. But both projects can also be seen as a pathway to change, a pathway for a different future.

The problem lies mainly in narratives. Narratives are crucial for projects like the WEN to work, and, ironically, EcoPeace has one. The EcoPeace narrative with its EU-like future of the Middle East with peace helping climate helping water security is a strong one. As noted at the start of this thesis there is no material reason that a different Middle East cannot emerge. One based on knowledge, cooperation and shared resources.

After all, if you can dream it, you can make it happen.
7. Bibliography

1. **Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................... p. 7


   Eyl-Mazzega, Marc-Antoine and Cassignol, Élise. (September 2022) *The Geopolitics of Seawater Desalination*, Études de l'Ifri *The Geopolitics of Seawater Desalination | IFRI - Institut français des relations internationales*


   Zeveloff, Naomi. (September 2019). *Sea, Sun, and Peace? An environmental group wants to unite Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians behind the idea that water can bring peace in the Middle East* The Wilson Quarterly Vol. 43, Issue 2.

2. Setting the Stage. Climate, EcoPeace and the Abraham Accords ........................................... p. 9

2.1 Climate ......................................................................................................................................... p. 9


Martin Keulertz, Musa McKee (2021) Clean growth for the benefit of both? Towards a more inclusive approach to EU–MENA environmental relations. Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations.

2.2 EcoPeace Middle East, The Green Blue Deal (GBD) and the Water Energy Nexus (WEN)
........................................................................................................................................................ p. 10

Bromberg, Gidon (Israeli Director), Majdalani, Nada (Palestinian Director) & Abu Taleb, Yana (Jordanian Director). (2020) Green Blue Deal for the Middle East. EcoPeace Proposal.

Desirée A.L. Quagliarotti (2020) Could the EU's new agenda for the Mediterranean turn climate change from a “threat multiplier” into an “opportunities multiplier”? N 52 EuroMeso

2.3 The Abraham Accords .............................................................................................................. p. 12


2.4 Summary, Stage Set .............................................................................................................. p. 13
3. Finger on the Pulse – Media Depicting the Other, Al Jazeera, Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post
........................................................................................................................................... p. 13

3.2 Method........................................................................................................................................................... p. 14


van Dijk, Teun A. (2021) *Social Movement Discourse: Manifestos*. Centre of Discourse Studies, Barcelona

3.5 Al Jazeera, (AJ)...................................................................................................................................................... p. 16

Barkho, Leon, (2021) *Editorial policies and news discourse – how Al Jazeera’s implicit guidelines shape its coverage of middle east conflicts* Volume 22, Issue 6

Telhami, Shibley (2013) *Al-Jazeera: The Most Feared News Network*. University of Maryland, College Park

Mason, John (Oct 2021) *Qatar Continues its Principled Rejection of the Abraham Accords as Anti-Palestinian*.

Michael, Kobi and Guzansky, Yoel (2020) *Might Qatar Join the Abraham Accords?* | INSS

Al-Rawi, Ahmed (2017) News values on social media: News organizations’ Facebook use Concordia University, Canada

3.6 The Jerusalem Post (JP).......................................................................................................................................... p. 18

The Jerusalem Post - About Us (jpost.com)

3.7 Times of Israel (TOI)............................................................................................................................................... p. 18

About The Times of Israel and its staff | The Times of Israel
3.9 Analysis.................................................................................................................. p. 19


AJ Staff (2017) *Al Jazeera, Al-Aqsa Mosque: Five things you need to know* | Al-Aqsa Mosque | Al Jazeera

Radai, Itamar; Elran, Meir; Makladeh, Yousef and Kornber, Maya (2014) *The Arab Citizens in Israel: Current Trends According to Recent Opinion Polls* adkan18_2ENG_4.pdf (inss.org.il)

CNN, (2023) *Israel's far-right Ben Gvir visits key Jerusalem holy site amid Palestinian condemnation* | CNN

3.9.1 Positives and Negatives....................................................................................... p. 19

3.9.2 Jordan and the al-Aqsa Mosque....................................................................... p. 19

Gounon, Claire, (2023) *Al Monitor The Israelis set for new Jewish temple on Al-Aqsa site* The Israeli’s set for new Jewish temple on Al-Aqsa site - Al-Monitor: Independent, trusted coverage of the Middle East


Times of Israel Staff, (2022) Half of Jewish Israelis support Jewish prayer on Temple Mount — poll Times of Israel Half of Jewish Israelis support Jewish prayer on Temple Mount -- poll | The Times of Israel


Penn, Kaydee (2016) “Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade: An Evolving Terrorism Force” by Kaydee Penn

3.9.3 The United Arab Emirates in the Israeli Press................................................. p. 21

3.9.4 Themes: Stalwarts of Contention, Dreams of Collaboration................. p. 22

3.9.4.1 Threats to Collaboration Coming from Israel................................. p. 22

Kuttab, Daoud (2021) *Will Waqf expansion strengthen Jordans control Jerusalem holy sites*  


Snyder, Timothy (2018) *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* Tim Duggan Books


3.9.4.2 Threats to Collaboration Coming from the Arab World............ p. 28


Arab Center Washington About - Research Organization | Arab Center Washington DC (arabcenterdc.org)

Guzansky, Yoel and Feuer, Sarah (2021) *The Abraham Accords at One Year: Achievements, Challenges, and Recommendations for Israel* INSS

Derfner, Larry (2023) *Thank God Israel’s Protest Movement Doesn’t Mention the Occupation* Haaretz

Pfeffer, Anschel (2023) *Protest’s Lesson for Anti-occupation Left: Mobilize Israelis, Not International Community* Haaretz

Harpaz, Guy and Shany, Yuval (2010) *The Israeli Supreme Court and the Incremental Expansion of the Scope of Discretion Under Belligerent Occupation Law* Hebrew University of Jerusalem - Faculty of Law Israel Law Review, Vol. 43


Smooha, Sammy (2003) *The model of ethnic democracy: Israel as a Jewish and democratic state*  
https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00062


Full text of Netanyahu’s speech at Bar-Ilan | The Times of Israel


Taylor, Guy (2021) *Saudi Arabia close to joining Abraham Accords with Israel, UAE* The Washington Times

Mandel, Eric R (2022) *Will Saudi Arabia join the Abraham Accords?* Israel HaYom

Monbiot, George (2023) *Here’s the truth about Sunak’s plans for the North Sea: he will sell out the planet to the dirtiest bidders* The Guardian

Ajanovic*, A; Sayer, M; Haas, R. *The economics and the environmental benignity of different colors of hydrogen* Vienna University of Technology (TU WIEN), Vienna, Austria

Adu, Emmanuel; Zhang, Yindi and Liu, Dehua. (2018) *Current situation of carbon dioxide capture, storage, and enhanced oil recovery in the oil and gas industry*

3.10 Summary, Media Narratives ........................................................................................................ p. 39


Guzanski, Michael (2020) *Might Qatar Join the Abraham Accords?* INSS

Wachsberger, Katie (2021) *Opportunities and Challenges for Israel-UAE Economic Cooperation*. Mitvim

4. The Crucible. The History of Israel and Palestine and the Historical Narrative................. p. 45

4.1 Introduction................................................................................................................................................. p. 45

4.4 Theory......................................................................................................................................................... p. 46
Massad, Joseph Against Self-Determination 2018 Humanity Journal


Berman, Katharine Barr From the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to the Farhud of 1941: Treatment of Jews in Iraq and Patterns of Jewish Emigration Yale University 2019
Helfont, Samuel (2015) *Post-Colonial States and the Struggle for Identity in the Middle East since World War Two* Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI). *Post-Colonial States and the Struggle for Identity in the Middle East since World War Two* - Foreign Policy Research Institute (fpri.org)

4.5 Why the WEN?........................................................................................................................................... p. 49


4.6 Israel Through Time. History, Ideology, Diplomacy and Environment............. p. 49


4.6.1 Zionism and the Triumph over Nature......................................................... p. 49


Schoenfeld, Stuart (2005) *Palestinian and Israeli Environmental Narratives.* York University

Elissa Rosenberg (2018) ‘Something from nothing’—constructing Israeli rurality Landscape


McKee, Emily K. (2011) *Socializing landscapes, naturalizing conflict: environmental discourses and land conflict in the Negev region of Israel*


4.6.3 From Theory to Practice. Building Institutions to Divide and Settle the Land ........................................................................................................... p. 53


4.6.4 1967. Occupation and Polarization. Continuities and Discontinuities. p. 56


Manski, Rebecca (2010) *Blueprint Negev, An expose of JNF’s role in the displacement of the Negev Bedouin* Middle East Report

Palatnik, Ruslana Rachel; Davidovitch, Ayelet; Sussman; Nathan, Krey, Volker; Riahi, Keywan; Gidden, Mattew (2021) How ambitious can the Israeli Green Deal be? ASSA ANNUAL MEETING

Bassist, Rina (2023) Why are Golan Heights Druze protesting Israel's wind turbines project? Al Monitor
Golan Heights Druze protesting

4.6.5 The Rise of Revisionist Zionism and the Settlement Movement........... p. 57

Oded Avisar (1970) Sefer Ḥevron ‘ir ha-avot yi-yeshuvah beri ha-dorot. Ben Gurion wrote the foreword to this book about praising Hebron from a Jewish perspective.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (2017) Sectarian securitization in the Middle East and the case of Israel

4.6.7 Netanyahu, Populism, the Right and Foreign Relations.............................. p. 59


4.7.1 Diplomacy in Israel and the Abraham Accords........................................ p. 61


Murciano, Gil (2023) *Leveraging Friction: Using Israel’s Tensions with Normalization Countries to Engage Them in Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking* Mitvim


Full text: Netanyahu's address at signing of Israel-UAE-Bahrain peace accords | The Times of Israel

Yair Lapid Hails Abraham Accords in First Address as PM, Says More Deals Expected - Israel News - Haaretz.com

Miri Regev: I didn't like Dubai, wouldn't go back | 7 ניירות (israelnationalnews.com)

Mitvim, (2022) *The Israeli Foreign Policy Index of 2022, Findings from the Mitvim Institute Survey*


Wachsberger, Katie (2021) Opportunities and Challenges for Israel-UAE Economic Cooperation. Mitvim

4.7.2 Water Management in Israel.............................................................. p. 65


Amnesty Special Rapport (2017) *The Occupation of Water*


4.7.2.1 Occupation of Water


4.7.2.2 Let there be Water


4.7.2.3 Water, Narrative and Ideology............................................... p. 71

Bromberg, Gidon (Israeli Director), Majdalani, Nada (Palestinian Director) & Abu Taleb, Yana (Jordanian Director). (2020) *Green Blue Deal for the Middle East*. EcoPeace Proposal.


4.7.3 Renewable Energy in Israel................................................................. p. 73


EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)


[https://israeldefense.co.il/en/content/goal-energy-security-israel](https://israeldefense.co.il/en/content/goal-energy-security-israel)


Netanyahu signs natural gas deal, passing major hurdle | The Times of Israel

4.7.4 Environmentalism in Israel................................................................. p. 75


5. The Arab Predicament¹, The UAE, Jordan and the Palestinian Question............................... p. 77

5.3 Unity and Disunity. The Crucible of the Palestine Question........................................ p. 81


Dachtler, P. (2022). *From New to Normal: Two Years after the Abraham Accords*. SSOAR


https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-khartoum-resolutions


5.4 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.............................................................................. p. 78


5.4.1 Palestinians and Jordanians...................................................................................... p. 83


5.4.2 Economy of Jordan.................................................................................. p. 83


5.2.2 Renewable Energy in Jordan................................................................... p. 84


5.2.3 Diplomacy in Jordan: Peace with Israel and the Abraham Accords..... p. 85

Barari, Hassan A. September 2020 *The Abraham Accord: The Israeli - Emirati Love Affair's Impact on Jordan*


Hundreds protest in Jordan against water-energy deal with Israel | Protests News | Al Jazeera

5.4.4 Jordan at a Crossroad.............................................................................. p. 86
5.5 The United Arab Emirates (UAE) ........................................................................ p. 86


Khaleej Times, 14th May 2022


5.5.1 The Economy of the UAE ........................................................................ p. 87


Haouas, I., & Heshmati, A. (2014). *Can the UAE avoid the oil curse by economic diversification?*

Dubai economic growth at its slowest since 2009 debt crisis | Reuters

Hendrix, Steve; Rubin, Shira (2022) *Tensions flare between Israel and Hezbollah over disputed gas fields*

August 13, The Washington Post

Murciano, Gil (2023) *Leveraging Friction: Using Israel's Tensions with Normalization Countries to Engage Them in Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking* Mitvim

5.5.2 The Abraham Accords Seen from the UAE ........................................................................ p. 87


**5.5.3 The UAE, the Abraham Accords and the Palestinians**


Harb, 2021, Al Jazeera *The utter failure of the Abraham Accords | Opinions | Al Jazeera*

Dachtler, P. (2022). *From New to Normal: Two Years after the Abraham Accords*. SSOAR

**5.5.4 Renewable Energy and the UAE**


*Kuwait, Qatar, UAE top world's worst wasters: WWF report - Arabian Business*

5.5.5 Oil Production and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)... P. 92

*Sustainability and Energy Transition - ADNOC*

Harvey, Fiona (2023) Revealed: UAE plans huge oil and gas expansion as it hosts UN climate summit | *Cop28 | The Guardian*

5.5.6 The UAE, Democratization and the Green Transition......................... p. 94


5.5.7 The UAE, Diplomacy, Oil and Renewable Energy.......................... p. 95

The Guardian Staff, (2023) ‘Absolute scandal’: UAE state oil firm able to read Cop28 climate summit emails | *Cop28 | The Guardian*

6. Conclusion to the Thesis. Futures for Collaboration in the Shadow of the Crucible........ p. 91

*The End of the Two-State Paradigm? | INSS*


Yehoshua, AB (2019) [https://www.inss.org.il/event/end-two-state-paradigm/](https://www.inss.org.il/event/end-two-state-paradigm/)


7.1 List of Abbreviations

ADNOC– Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

AJ- Al Jazeera.

API- Arab Peace Initiative.


CCS- Carbon Capture and Storage. See above.
CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis
CEO- Chief Executive Officer.
COP- Conference of the Parties, the UN sponsored climate discussion forums on climate change.
DA- Development Agency, and Israeli government agency.
ECSC- European Coal and Steel Community.
EU- European Union.
GBD– Green Blue Deal, EcoPeace overall strategy.
GCC- Gulf Cooperation Council, and organization for the countries of the Persian Gulf.
GDP- Gross National Product.
GHG- Greenhouse Gas.
IAF- Israel Air Force.
IDF- Israel Defence Forces.
IEA- International Energy Agency.
ILA- Israel Land Authority
JA- Jewish Agency.
JNF- Jewish National Fund
JP- Jerusalem Post
JWA- The “Joint Water Agreement” created between Israel and Palestine as part of the Oslo Accords.
JWC- The “Joint Water Council” the body created to regulate the agreement above.
KKL- Keren Kayemet LeIsrael, Hebrew acronym for the Jewish National Fund, JNF
MBZ- Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, ruler of the UAE.
MCM- Millions of Cubic Meters, a water measurement system.
MENA- The Middle East and North Africa.
MK- Member of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.
MW- Megawatts.
MoU- Memorandum of Understanding.
NWC- The “National Water Carrier” created by Israel in the 1950s.
OECD- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
OPEC- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.
OPT- Occupied Palestinian Territory.

PV- Photovoltaic. The most common type of solar panel.

RE- Renewable Energy.

RO- Reverse Osmosis, the most popular desalination technique in Israel.

TOI- Times of Israel.

UAE – United Arab Emirates.

UAR- United Arab Republic, an entity spearheaded by Egypt and Syria as an attempt to unify the Arab world, the attempt failed after only 3 years.

UAS- An offshoot of the UAR.

UN- United Nations.


Ufm- OECD Union for the Mediterranean, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

WEN- Water Energy Nexus, EcoPeace strategy for international cooperation on water and renewable energy.

WJP- World Justice Project, a project used for rating the state of the rule of law in each country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JORDAN IN JP AND TOI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ISRAEL IN AL JAZEERA**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Israeli protests: The clash of competing settler-colonial visions</td>
<td>12-apr</td>
<td>Mohamad Kadan</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The weeks-long demonstrations in Israel reflect the conflict within a settler society over how to handle the indigenous ‘demographic threat’.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Jerusalem’s Palestinians need more than Arab condemnations</td>
<td>12-feb</td>
<td>Jalal Abukhater</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>The Arab world has forsaken the Palestine cause</td>
<td>14-may</td>
<td>Imad k Harb</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Israeli violence is the problem</td>
<td>10-apr</td>
<td>M Muhannd Ayyash</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once again Israeli violence rages in occupied Palestine and once again Israel and its allies are trying to obfuscate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is Israel’s far-right government jeopardising Emirati ties?</td>
<td>29-mar</td>
<td>Arwa Ibrahim</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recent Israeli escalations with Palestinians created apparent tension with the UAE but the relationship’s core remains intact, say analysts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>What future for Israel: chaotic, catastrophic, or constructive?</td>
<td>11-apr</td>
<td>Marwan Bishara</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benjamin Netanyahu’s new government of fascists and fanatics has brought Israel to a historic crossroads in just 100 days.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Israeli attacks on Syria in the past year: Timeline</td>
<td>10-apr</td>
<td>AJ staff</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the past year alone, Israeli attacks on Syria have killed at least 44 people and injured more than 50.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Saved by a miracle’: Israel rocket attack on Lebanon spurs fears</td>
<td>11-apr</td>
<td>Mia Alberti</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People in south Lebanon fear a wider confrontation with Israel after cross-border violence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Who fired rockets into Israel from southern Lebanon?</td>
<td>07-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff and Maram Humai</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>While no group has claimed responsibility, Israel blames the Palestinian group Hamas in Lebanon for the barrage of rockets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Thousands join Israeli judicial protests amid soaring tensions</td>
<td>08-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tens of thousands of people rally in Tel Aviv to protest against the government’s proposed judicial overhaul.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td>Church criticises Israel’s ‘heavy-handed restrictions’ on Easter Palestinian Christians say their 2,000-year-old community in the Holy Land has come under increasing attack.</td>
<td>12-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td>Israel bans non-Muslims from Al-Aqsa until end of Ramadan Defence minister and security chiefs unanimously recommended the measure, PM Netanyahu says after violence at holy site.</td>
<td>12-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td>Israel launches air raids on Gaza, Lebanon Israeli army says it’s ‘striking in Lebanon’ following air attacks on Gaza amid rising tension in wake of Al-Aqsa raids.</td>
<td>07-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td>Israel’s Netanyahu vows ‘swift response’ to Jerusalem attack Israel’s security cabinet meeting in the wake of escalation of deadly violence in the occupied West Bank and the occupied East Jerusalem.</td>
<td>23-jan</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td>One killed, several injured in Tel Aviv attack A 30-year-old Italian man was killed and several others were injured in the incident, authorities say.</td>
<td>07-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff, Muhannad M Ayyash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
<td>Palestine advocates see opportunity in Biden-Netanyahu discord Washington’s criticism of Israel not about Palestinians but can lead to questioning of US-Israel ties, analysts say.</td>
<td>31-mar</td>
<td>Ali Harb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Israeli PM Netanyahu fires defence minister Gallant: Statement Minister Yoav Gallant on Saturday spoke out against the prime minister’s plan to overhaul the country’s judicial system.&quot; Who are the Jewish groups who enter Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa compound? Al Jazeera looks at the hardline ‘Temple Mount’ Jewish groups and why Palestinians protest their presence.</td>
<td>26-mar</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td>The Deir Yassin massacre: Why it still matters 75 years later The brutality of the Deir Yassin prompted thousands of Palestinians to flee, just weeks before Israel was created.</td>
<td>09-apr</td>
<td>AJ Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does the ‘status quo’ mean at Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque?
The status quo of Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is the reason why a single police raid can precipitate an all-out war.

60  11-apr  Adam Sella

AJ