

in addition, has land north of Marj Na'je which he has difficulty in leasing because of security restrictions placed by the Israeli army on the movement of Arab farmers outside the immediate vicinity of their villages (Al-Salih, 1980:Inter.; see also Zananiri, 1980).

The pattern of share-cropping between Zbeidat farmers and the six landlords follows the same procedure discussed for Ghor el-Far'a in Chapter 10. Contracts between the two parties tend to be, on the whole, oral agreements based on trust. This is not the case with commission agents whose transactions are written in detail and signed in two copies. I do not have figures for Zbeidat on this point but Sharab's study, conducted across the river where similar leasing arrangements prevail, showed that only 17% of the tenants had written leases, while the vast majority (83%) relied on oral agreements with the landlord (Sharab, 1975:29, Table II-8).

One peculiarity of Zbeidat is that the major landlord, al-Salih, controls decisive shares in the main regional market at Nablus and acts himself as a commission agent for his sharetenants. In this case the triple control over land, credit and marketing outlets exercised by the landlord determines the investment alternative for the farmer. However, the fact that 37% of the land cultivated in Zbeidat is owned by the farmers themselves (Table 11:2) and the presence of five other landlords offering 42% of the total land leased (Table 11:3) renders the conditions under which the main landlord determines these options relatively favourable to the tenants.

In our view, however, the crucial factor determining the degree of independence exercised by the village from their biggest landlord was the farmers' control of their main water resources, and their ability to harness external sources of aid in the transfer of their agricultural technology from furrow irrigation to drip irrigation.