

well in the village centre irrigated their small plots by means of the traditional furrow dirt canals (dulab). A daily bus carried them to Nablus, for shopping, medical treatment and marketing their produce.

Like the Marj Na'je farmers, the Zbeidatis acquired their credit from Nablus merchants and commission agents. They shared an elementary school, and a mobile UNRWA clinic, both located in Marj Na'je. However, the relationship between the two communities were correct but not amiable. There was virtually no inter-marriage between them. The Zbeidatis are derisively called "badu" (bedouins) by the people of Marj Na'je, while the latter are referred to as "fellahin" (peasants) by the Zbeidatis. The strained relationship in fact has much more to do with cultural diversity than with conflict of interest. Marj Na'je farmers were and continue to be almost exclusively owner-cultivators; their plots, about 30 irrigated dunums per household on the average, occupied their full household labour capacity throughout the year. In Zbeidat, on the other hand, the size of the average household was considerably higher and owned plots smaller size; most farmers resorted to leasing surplus land from neighbouring landlords. (Maps 11:2 and 11:3 illustrate the distribution of agricultural plots in Marj Na'je and Zbeidat respectively).

The War of 1967

By the mid-sixties the Ghor el-Far'a region, where Zbeidat and Marj Na'je are located became a thriving agricultural area for re-settled peasant refugees. A decisive factor in this land revival was the drilling of numerous artesian wells by local landlords with assistance of government and UNRWA refugees. In Ghor el-Far'a alone 30 wells were under use. irrigating a total cultivated area of 35,000 dunums (al-Damin, 1979:26).