

The future of these cleavages in Zbeidat is related, in my opinion, to the manner in which those farmers who benefited most from the new technology are likely to invest their surplus income. A chief impediment to any meaningful investment in Zbeidat (as opposed to hoarding) lies in the precarious relationship the villagers have to their land (nonrecognition of title deeds) and to their dwellings (nonapproval of building permits). This situation, however, has begun to change. In January, 1980, after 13 years of struggle by the villagers, the Jericho Military Governor granted a building permit to the four subclans.

Since investment in private dwellings constitute the first objective for peasants who accumulate money, the denial of building permits (due to the presumed miri status of the land) reinforced the instability of Zbeidat's farmers' relationship to their land and constituted an obstacle for any form of investment aimed at village development. When fieldwork for this village was concluded (summer, 1980) about thirty nuclear and joint households (almost 50 percent of the total) had prepared for building permanent brick houses, at the cost of 800-1,500 dinars (\$2,640-\$5,000) per unit. For the rest, two more years would be needed before they can lay aside such a sum. The important question here lies not in the potential differentiation between wealthy and poorer peasants, but in whether Zbeidatis are going to invest their newly accumulated surplus in infrastructural projects for the development of the whole village or in the further fostering of peasant individualism. While the seeds of wealth differences among households can be seen in the contrasting indices of consumption items (ownership of refrigerators, TVs, electric generators, etc.), the majority of Zbeidat farmers realize that communal projects (such as piped water) may be a prerequisite for their own individual welfare, as they have seen in adopting the centralized irrigation system.