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Just a Peep into Palestine

Israel's Closed-door Policy for Internationals Going to Palestine as an Extension of Its Control over Palestinian Movements. A Case-study of Denied Entry by Israel

ARMA, The Arab Master's Programme in Democracy and
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EIUC

European Inter-University
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and Democratisation

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JUST A PEEP INTO PALESTINE:
ISRAEL'S CLOSED-DOOR POLICY FOR INTERNATIONALS
GOING TO PALESTINE AS AN EXTENSION OF ITS
CONTROL OVER PALESTINIAN MOVEMENTS.
A CASE-STUDY OF DENIED ENTRY BY ISRAEL

BIOGRAPHY

Henriette Gentil prioritizes educational experiences that are multidisciplinary and cross-cultural. After a year of hypokhâgne, she studied humanities at the University of Colorado, and human rights and democratisation at the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC)

ABSTRACT

Weaved into the discussion of Israel's legality in occupying Palestine, in all its different meanings, is the issue of borders and migration. By controlling the Palestinian visible and invisible borders—within, in and out—, the Israeli state grants itself the power to rearrange the different spaces and to manage the individuals who move across them. Through a system of geographical fragmentation and administrative monitoring, it regulates the flow of (im)mobility of Palestinians in and out of Palestine; keeping refugees away, pushing residents out, locking persistent bodies in. Feeding into its project of denial, dismissal and erasure of Palestinian presence, the present paper investigates Israel's policy of denied entry to internationals going to Palestine, suggestive of an intention to limit access and support to both Palestine and Palestinians, physically and discursively.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Agence France Presse
AFPS	Association France Palestine Solidarité
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
COGAT	Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Unit
DCI-P	Defense for Children International - Palestine
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ID	Identity Document
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PM	Parliament Member
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling

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INTRODUCTION

There is no change in our policy. The idea that Israel is preventing people from entering whose opinions are critical of the state is ludicrous; it is not happening. This was a mishap. A guy at the border overstepped his authority.

Mark Regev, spokesman for PM Benjamin Netanyahu, May 2010

They found my articles [that] I wrote in Belgium and the blog I had written about Palestine later on. I also described visiting a friend living in a refugee camp outside of Nablus, describing going to this protest. All these things were too rebellious for them, I guess. ... They told me that I picked my side in the conflict. ... They told me that I was using my work as a cover for activism.

K.Z., denied entry at Ben Gurion airport

I am not going to free Palestine at the bridge ... You are not going to free Palestine from the airport.

I.B., native of Jerusalem, May 2017

Occasionally, one will hear of some well-known public figure who is denied entry by the state of Israel; Richard A. Falk (2008), Noam Chomsky (2010), Blade Nzimande (2015), Hugh Lanning (2017). Sometimes the refusal occurs at a pre-border; it is an administrative rejection that abstractedly prevents the individual, civil society organization, international delegation from entering the territory, as was the case for the 2006 fact-finding UN mission to Beit Hanoun led by Desmond Tutu (Human Rights Council, 2007). The common fault that

¹ Bronner, E. (2010, May 17). Israel Roiled After Chomsky Barred From West Bank. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/18/world/middleeast/18chomsky.html>

these unwanted individuals and groups share is that they want to enter a space that Israel² is reluctant to allow access to: Palestine³. Some might not even wish to go to Israel but it is a border that they must cross. These singular examples must not fail to show that the denial of entry is a practice that is linked but not restricted to international and national representatives, and their related state politics. It has become a policy aimed at all forms of solidarity with Palestinians and support of Palestine, which are perceived as challenges to Israel.

The number of denied entries to internationals has significantly increased since 2011, reaching 16, 534 in 2016 (Lior, 2017). While it might be explained in large part by the coming of citizens from Georgia, Ukraine, and Egypt (an issue that will not be addressed in this paper, although they crossed paths at the Tel Aviv detention center with some of the individuals interviewed), in 2016 alone, at least 18% (nearly 3 000 individuals) were refused for “public security or public safety or public order considerations” (Lior, 2017). Furthermore, the Knesset passed a new law in March 2017 which allows for the limitation and refusal of entry, visa and residency permit to individuals or groups who call for an academic, cultural and economic boycott of Israel and “any area under its control” (interpretable as its settlements in the West Bank⁴) (Jarvi Gamble, 2017; Shaham, 2017). Another detrimental aspect of the law is its potential to affect Palestinians who are temporary residents of Israel, a string that reminds us of Israel’s complex web of policies meant to restrict the long-term and short-term immigration, internal and external mobility of Palestinians. A typical feature of occupation and colonialism, Israeli control over Palestine’s external borders and

² *Author’s note:* by Israel, here I mean the state of Israel, its governing authorities and the territory associated with it (as announced in 1949 on 78% of “Mandate Palestine”, which is the territory delineated by the British Mandate of 1922. In 1967, the territory under Israeli authority expanded to include the other parts of “Mandate Palestine” – West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem – which were then occupied and on which settlements have since been built).

³ *Author’s note:* by Palestine, here I refer to the historic land and the people living on it; in the larger sense, I mean “Mandate Palestine” (the territory delineated by the British Mandate, which includes its 1948 and 1967 occupied parts) and in the narrower sense, the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Stately speaking, it is the governing structure put in place since the Oslo Accords. Throughout the research, I use the word to mean either of these things or all of them, usually expanding it to include the Palestinian diaspora as a whole.

⁴ *Author’s note:* by West Bank, I refer to the Palestinian territory which was under Jordanian rule before it was occupied by Israel in 1967. Today, this territory is under Palestinian, Israeli or Palestinian-Israeli control. I will use the term when I wish to highlight its state of colonized fragment.

its right of entry does not simply threaten the freedom of movement and thought of internationals who are Palestinian supporters. It targets Palestinian immigration and movement, hitting them in their right to self-determination, to residency and to return. In I.B.'s words, born in East Jerusalem, Israel works "to limit to a maximum the mobility and the right of residency in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and last but not least, East Jerusalem, and to deter an opening to the world and an opening of the world to Palestine". Doing so, it aspires to sap both civil and governmental international support for Palestinians, monopolize the conflict's narrative, and isolate and erase Palestine and Palestinians.

As we hope that it will become clear in our interviews, the persons who were denied entry were not tourists traveling for a couple of days and who regrettably saw their vacation revisited, although a measure no less arbitrary. They are journalists, teachers, students, researchers, and volunteers and most of them were intending to spend their short-term, and possibly long-term, future in Palestine. Why were they denied entry? What does it suggest about Israel's policy? How does it fit into the wider framework of the colonial occupation of Palestine? These will be our guiding research questions. The border crossing experience and the process of denied entry (visa application, interrogation, body and personal belonging searches, detention center, deportation) is our window into that policy.

In light of the current Israeli regulations and of the personal testimonies gathered in this research paper, Israel's legal justifications to deny entry starts to resemble a restriction of freedom of opinion, turning ideological conflicts into security threats. Palestinians are directly and indirectly targeted and affected, none the more so when humanitarian workers and human rights practitioners are refused access by the Israeli government for presumed security reasons. Robert Piper, the current UN humanitarian coordinator in Palestine, shares his worries: "Looking ahead, we fear that any worsening in the political and security situation could lead to greater access restrictions, as has been the case in the past" (Gostoli, 2016).

In a first stage, we will highlight some major aspects of Palestinian life that illustrate mobility and immobility in the everyday, the external borders and the many internal/external frontiers that compose the Palestinian landscape; and in a second stage, we will expand the discussion on Israel's control of external frontiers to include the

restrictions on the movement of internationals and reflect on a policy of denied access to Palestine. But firstly, to understand how this extensive and intensive control over mobility is made possible, we will sketch an overview of the international system that established the state monopoly to manage movement and grant (or refuse) entry unto its territory, notably through an all-embracing administration. By including stories of resistances, we ultimately wish to provide the reader with basic tools to deconstruct the mechanics of movement and crossing, and encourage creative and alternative ways to negotiate them.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH, PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

The methodology can be explained in two parts; one of theoretical and background reading, and one of research and field work on a specific case study.

The research embraces a qualitative and inductive approach, one acknowledging subjectivity and giving priority to the meaning and the process. The analysis is exploratory and relies in part on narrative description and constant comparison. The elected case study is the denial of entry to internationals by the state of Israel. The field work initially took place in Palestine before I was myself denied entry by the Israeli government which led the latter part of the field work to be conducted in France and in Jordan. The research mostly relies on the participation of individuals in interviews, which were guided by a pre-determined questionnaire. The fieldwork also included unstructured observation, formal and informal group or individual exchanges, conferences, storytelling and document analysis.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Both primary and secondary sources were used in the process. For the gathering of background information on Palestine, the primary sources were comprised of press releases and reports from human rights organizations (DCI-P, Addameer, WCLAC, B'Tselem, HRW, UN and others), government reports and legal documents (Israel, US, UN notably), current journal articles and newspapers. Furthermore, I met with representatives of Palestinian NGOs (DCI-P, Addameer) and

attended conferences in Palestine and in France (Palestinian Children and Israeli Detention Policies, Preventing Violent Extremism, Birzeit university talk on Palestinian resistance and violence, Parisian Institut du Monde Arabe's conference on Border(s)). I also participated in community events in Palestine (exhibitions, movie screenings, wedding, Red Cross gathering) which enabled me to informally observe and discuss with Palestinians the subject of control and movement (including detention, identity cards, permits, checkpoints, protests). The secondary sources consisted mainly of theoretical literature on borders, space, colonialism, movement, territorialization, governmentability, documentation, security, securitization, invisibility and resistance.

For the gathering of information on Israel's procedure of denied entry, the primary sources included the interviews, my personal experience and the interactions with French and Israeli institutions (Israeli embassy in Paris, French consulate in Jerusalem, Israeli ministry of Interior, Israeli lawyer). I engaged in storytelling with Palestinians in Palestine, France and Jordan, and exchanged with international civil society groups that are supportive of Palestinian resistance (AFPS, Welcome to Palestine). I also was gratefully given access to personal records of some of the individuals interviewed. Current Israeli regulations, press releases and newspaper articles helped to frame the immigration policy of the Israeli government but I found that the information on denied entries (numbers, composition, procedure, reasons) were overall not easily available, which constitutes one of my research limitations.

LIMITATIONS

Collecting additional data and combining additional methods of fact-gathering would have enabled more breadth and depth. The time and space restriction were also constant challenges to keep in mind, especially after I could not return to Palestine. It prevented my field work to be *in* Palestine and kept me in France for a month. I re-oriented my case-study on internationals who were denied entry by the Israeli state in order to be able to conduct field work from afar. My location impacted who I could exchange with and how, and the time frame limited the number of individuals I could interview. Most of them were conducted within the span of ten days. Furthermore, language was an obstacle at times. Several laws, press releases and governmental information

were only in Hebrew. When translating French quotes from interviews and readings, I tried my best to retain their meaning. Exchanges with Palestinians either had to be in English (neither's primary language) or verbally limited and reliant on bodily communication, which often caused a differently valuable bonding.

INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The interviews were conducted individually, except for two of them; one was with a mother and two of her daughters, and one was with a couple. In total, seventeen individuals were interviewed, fourteen of them having been denied entry by the state of Israel. The remaining three are part of a family whose mother was deprived of her residency in Jerusalem. Eleven of the interviews were carried out in person, two by phone and four through email, with all of them usually involving follow-up by phone or email. With the individual's consent, I recorded the interviews which I later transcribed, granting me the possibility to dive into the language and personality of the individual as well as compare the interviews in their details of the procedure, the emotions and reflections expressed. The recordings and the transcriptions allowed for an in-depth analysis and a broader perspective at the same time.

To ensure that cross-examinations were possible, the interview was based on a questionnaire. The first part concerned the procedure of denied entry, asking for more technical and to-the-point questions (official reasons for the denial, interrogation details, past travels in Palestine, passport and stamp, institutions, etc.) and the second part focused on the individual's interpretation of the procedure and their reaction to the experience, asking more open-ended and personal questions (unofficial reason for the denial, border crossing strategy, interactions at the border, emotions, activism, etc.) The interviews reflected the questionnaire's structure; one part of the objective was to understand what had been the person's experience at the time, and how they related to it now, and another part was to bring together the different personal backgrounds and experiences to map out the Israeli procedure of denied entry and extricate the reasoning behind the denial of these individuals. The interviews were semi-structured, conducted with the questionnaire in mind but the questions were only asked at the end, if they had not been answered already. In retrospect, even if

there was the risk to give it too much space, I believe that my personal experience of the issue was helpful in establishing an initial connection with the individual and that my knowledge of the situation benefited the communication and conversation.

GROUP MAKE-UP OF THE INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

Out of the 14 participants, all carried passports either from the U.S. or from Western Europe. Two of the US citizens also held another nationality. Their age at the time of denial ranged from nineteen to fifty-five years old. 11 are females, three are males. I contacted them through Palestinian organizations or international civil groups supportive of Palestine (from Europe and the US) or through Palestinians who personally knew them, or referred to by the individuals themselves because a “denideen” (as some Palestinians call them) is usually connected to other denideens, especially in Jordan where a community seems to have gathered.

Eight persons were refused at the Ben Gurion Tel Aviv airport, and six at the Allenby/King Hussein bridge. Only two tried to re-enter, one at the bridge and one at Taba from Egypt; both were re-denied. The recorded attempts were made as early as 2006 and as late as February 2017, most of them taking place between 2014 and 2016. Only five individuals (three at the airport, two at the bridge) in total were given a paper to sign, stating the reasons for their denial. None, out of the 16 attempts, were given any writing proof that the individual was banned for a specific amount of time.

I.

STATE MONOPOLY OVER MOVEMENT
AND THE INTERNATIONAL STATE SYSTEM

1. EMERGENCE OF MODERN STATES

Modern states, through establishing an extensive administrative bureaucracy, have worked to impose their legitimate, or at least de facto, authority to determine the movement of their population on their territory, in a logic remindful of their monopoly over violence. They collect social statistics which generally lead to the issuance of identity documents, enabling them to identify who is on their territory and who in the population they wish to include/exclude (citizen vs. immigrant and traveler), thereby controlling the movement of the population within their society (voting, taxes, military service, social welfare) and in/out (who can travel out, who can travel in and the process to do it). Institutionalizing the relation between the state and its population helped the control of individual and collective bodies in order to ensure the reproduction and sustenance of the state.

1.1. Growing borders

Borders are a founding principle of the modern nation-state. Giddens (1985) analyzes that it is “a known and geographically drawn line separating and joining two or more states. ... [and] are only found with the emergence of nation-states” (p. 50). In the eighteenth century, they became essential for defining a nation’s territoriality and the sovereignty and jurisdiction associated with it. As Anderson (1996) declares, “the frontier is the basic political institution” (p.1), by which he means that it is from the establishment of external boundaries that the state developed its authority. Explaining his conceptualization of biopolitics and biopower, Foucault (2004) has spoken and written about the evolution

of the relationship between sovereignty, territory and population. With the rise of the nation-state, borders became the needed new frame within which the government could exercise its sovereignty. It redefined the state's relationship to the territory even as the population emerged as a new political character. Interlinked, the relationship between the sovereign power, the territory and the population evolved as the space assembling them was altered with urban expansion, the development of the city and the acceleration and amplification of movement. The need to establish clear borders was crucial to the management of one's population; fixed boundaries meant a more fixated population, thereby a better ability to know the latter and control its movements. Furthermore, it went hand in hand with the nationalist ambitions of the nation-state which longed for a uniform, formalized and unified identity. The state's appropriation of the population, bringing together the public and the private sphere, served its nation-building goals in shifting the focus from internal movement to outside borders, helping to "expand 'outward' to the 'national' borders the areas in which persons could expect to move freely and without authorization. Eventually, the principal boundaries that counted were those not of municipalities, but of nation-states." (Torpey, 1998, pp.242-3)

1.2. Re-discovering the population

When demographics started to be used in the eighteenth century, it was for the purpose of conducting mortality tables in the context of epidemics (Foucault, 2004, p.69). The study of a population was a perspective of de-population then. When it went from being perceived as an element of a sovereign's power (a collection of subjects to whom one could impose laws from above) to technico-political subjects (a set of processes to be managed from and within its "naturalité"), there was a growing need to study populations beyond epidemics and mortality, and "penetrate" into their daily lives. The insight could place the state in a position of insider from which to predict and influence the actions and reactions of the population. By the "naturalité" of a population, Foucault means three things: a series of variables, with one invariable (desire), that shows constancy in its phenomena. What results then is that the state might not be able to ensure that a population will do what it is told to do but it can act on all the known factors (bearing in mind the universality of desires and the constancy of phenomena) so

the population can and will obey. The power to act on these factors is tightly tied to the knowledgeability of the state, which depends on the capacity to access, update, and store information. This relates directly to the “embracing” capacity of the state (gathering) and the “legibility” of the population (translation and availability).

1.3. Embracing infrastructural power

Mann (1984) echoes a trend in modern sociological reflection when he speaks of the state “penetrating” and “reaching into” a society, arguing that it signals a shift away from indirect authoritarian rule. The major tool for direct penetration was the construction of infrastructural power which represents “the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm” (p.5) Torpey adds a valuable notion to this more traditional sociological concept of state “penetration” when he speaks of the state “embracing” its population, asserting that it aims to infiltrate *all* of society and include *all* individuals present on its territory, to ultimately better differentiate and exclude within the presented population. He too links this embracing ability to the state’s administrative and bureaucratic might: “I believe we would do well to regard states as seeking not simply to penetrate but also to embrace societies, “surrounding” and “taking hold” of them—individually and collectively—as those states grow larger and more administratively adept.” (1998, p.244) A successful embrace called for an extensive administration, which in turn became indispensable to the well-functioning of the state apparatus, the latter relying on the former for the constant need to develop and practice its embrace.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

2.1. Monitoring

Social statistics-gathering was professionalized and regularized in the nineteenth century (Urla, 1993, p.819), a privileged technology to inform the state on its population: “Knowledge was power, and the knowledge of the population produced by the census gave those in power insight into social conditions, allowing them to know the population and devise

appropriate plans for dealing with them” (Kertzer & Arel, 2004, p.6). Although not the sole means of state monitoring, the census is still one of the most ancient, prevalent and efficient tools to categorize and define a population. Kertzer and Arel argue that “the census does much more than simply reflect social reality; rather, it plays a key role in the construction of that reality. In no sector is this more importantly the case than in the ways in which the census is used to divide national populations into separate identity categories: racial, ethnic, linguistic, or religious.” (2004, p.2) Anderson (1991) speaks of the census as one of the colonial techniques (such as maps) whose objective is to define *all* things, constructing a scheme with firm boundaries that could be replicated as would a tracing paper and a template; a “totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state’s real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments, and so forth. The effect of the grid was always to be able to say of anything that it was this, not that; it belonged here, not there. It was bounded, determinate, and therefore –in principle –countable” (p. 184).

2.2. *Regulating*

Noiriel, a leading socio-historian on the field of immigration, claims that the establishment of the civil status in 1792 post-revolution France was a landmark change in the treatment of the population since it established the state registration as a requirement for national existence and recognition. It became a condition for citizenship, the only means to exist as a full participant in the nation-state: “From that moment on, an individual could only exist as a citizen once his or her identity had been registered by the municipal authorities, according to regulations that were the same throughout the national territory’ (1996, XVIII).” The state’s takeover of spaces that used to be the domain of religious institutions or other private or civil organizations went hand in hand with its ambitions of absolute control over its population:

[T]he French state removed from the Catholic Church the task of tracking the population. As a religious and nonterritorial organization, the Church was interested mainly in shepherding its own flock, and hence often ignored the registration of Jews and Protestants. This posture simply would not do for the purposes of a modern territorial state, which must keep track of all (potential) taxpayers, soldiers, and citizens.

(Noiriel, 1996, XVIII)

As the government bothered itself with registering presence on its territory and distributing rights and duties, it began to take on new specific responsibilities, such as the registration of birth or the administration of “poor relief”, in order to fully be informed on, and thus in control of, all resources and bodies within its territory. In this way, it took on the role of both the demander and the supplier of information.

2.3. Documenting

Identity documents – including identity cards, permits, travel documents and passports – became the ends and the means of population control; it established a systematic recording of the population, thus ensuring the availability of information at all times. It managed to secure a steady influx of updated data by requiring individuals to regularly transit through its administrative loops in order to ask, renew and obtain (in theory) certain rights. By forcing a population to move through its administration, the state not only directs individuals through events and actions in their lives, meeting points between the state and the individual, but in this manner, it also makes sure to know where one is and to possibly predict where one might be in the near future. A population becomes “legible”; visible, readable, in legal terms as the root of the word suggests. In other words, a population should be visible: transparent, open and public in the tradition of the panopticon. A population should be readable: its constituents and particularities deposited in a written medium easy and quick to assess. In sum, a population should be recorded, documented and categorized, ready for management: “it is in the interest of state authorities that people be understandable through the categories in which they fall.” (Kertzer & Arel, 2004, p.3) The law can, and usually must, be used in the process and one of the ultimate goals to this legibility is to decide which part of the population to exclude/include, who is “eligible” for certain rights, duties and privileges.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL STATE SYSTEM

3.1. Passport as an expansion of state boundaries

The passport, prior to the modern state, already existed in various forms issued by different states. It began as a regulator of internal movement for one wishing to travel outside of its department (France)

or state (United States, Germany). Identity documentations that serve as internal passports have a history of discrimination, subjugation and even erasure of a minority within a population. Examples include the French identity card during the Vichy government stamped with “Jewish” and the South African identity card stating the racial category of the bearer (black, coloured, white) during apartheid. Not unsurprisingly, there were many attempts, sometimes successful but only for a little while, to abolish passports. At the beginning of the French revolution, Jacques Peuchet declared: “Passports are against all principles of justice and reason; there is only the oversight of rights and political inconsistency that can consecrate them.” (Noiriel, 1998, p. 39) and the General Assembly suppressed them, for a couple of months only.

The nation-state evolved and strengthened itself alongside the claim and establishment of its authority on movement: “Modern states, and the international state system of which they are a part, have expropriated from individuals and private entities the legitimate ‘means of movement,’ particularly though by no means exclusively across international boundaries” (Torpey, 2000, p.4) It was not a given initially that a state should have the legitimate, let alone monopolized, authority on the control of movement. Rather, it had to work to secure its authority, developing a strong administration through which to control the population residing on its territory as well as the people passing through. To achieve this, it coordinated with other states to create an international system of regulation of movement that included general rules of migration and standardized technologies of control. Today, one can hardly avoid the established system with its related administrative application, border security control, and customs and immigration authorities. In this international state system of passports, citizens appear vulnerable and used as products to be branded, traded, and shipped back. One would argue that their process of crossing is not made safer in multiple ways: they are at the same time non-defendable by their government when the sovereignty card is brandished by a destination state (an example of the illusory absolute state control over mobility) and caught in a game where states negotiate borders and bodies amongst each other.

3.2. Citizens as an extension of the state

With the introduction of passports, states simultaneously extend their authority in controlling the international mobility of their citizens and

claim a relative responsibility for their movement. By carrying national passports issued by their government, citizens become an extension of the state, a body that belongs to, represents and reflects upon the state: “Individual voyagers have thus been transformed into quasi-diplomatic representatives of particular countries, simply because the issuing state has usurped the capacity to authorize movement and thus “embraced” the traveler as a citizen-member of the nation-state.” (Torpey, 1998, p. 250) In this light, the state claims ownership over the body of its citizen, expanding its biopower beyond the boundaries of its territory. At the same time as it exercises its control, it works to convince the population of the necessity for the state to monitor and control movement. They present themselves as the protector of international mobility, the grantor of access and guarantor of safety. When they are not able to provide a safe passage or even a safe return to their members, they can lose their credibility as the authority of movement for their citizens, causing one to question the privileges afforded with passports.

3.3. Right of entry

Although commonly accepted and recognized as an expression of sovereignty, the right of states to control the entry on their territory was not originally recognized as a prerogative and is a fairly recent development in international law (Torpey, 1998, p.251). It was mainly to avoid unwanted immigration and consequent unwanted responsibilities to immigrants that states began to exercise this right: “Passport and visa controls are crucial mechanisms ..., the ‘first line of defense’ against the entry of undesirables. Indeed, the fundamental purpose of passports from the point of view of international law is to provide for the admitting state a prima facie guarantee that another state is prepared to take back the alien that the destination state may choose to expel” (Goodwin-Gill, 1978, p.26). What caused reasons for worry was the fact that the right of entry could at times resemble a de facto naturalization because through residency, “rights and obligations come into being which resemble those resulting from nationality” (van Panhuys, 1959, p.55). For the state’s legibility purpose, passports thus play various roles: a voucher for belonging to a state, a certificate of identification verification, a medium for profiling. Although almost universally required for admission into a foreign territory, it does not in any case ensure the individual’s safe passage and right to entry, especially when it equates to a contested right to return.

Looking at the international state system today, one can easily see how entrenched the control of our movement has become as it regulates our ordinary and extra-ordinary mobility, making us forget or keeping us unaware of our dependency. We are active participants, respondents and initiators in the state's administrative apparatus; we apply, renew and pay for documentations, and we use them to access our rights treated as privileges. We have learned to accept documents as our identity and that they (our documents and our identity) can be required of us at any time. What is more, we associate them to our freedom of movement, our ability to move. Torpey takes a moment to acknowledge the implication nowadays of such control of mobility when he warns: "Where pronounced state controls on movement operate within a state today, especially when these are to the detriment of particular "negatively privileged" status groups, we can reliably expect to find an authoritarian state (or worse)" (1998, p. 243). With a system of identity cards functioning as internal passports, the Israeli government regulates the movement of Palestinians within Palestine and Israel; while West Bank residents must go through a network of checkpoints, wall, and permits to travel not just to Israel but across the West Bank, the Israeli state allows Israeli settlers to live in Palestine and build by-pass roads that connects them directly to Israel. Clearly, in the context of Palestine, the study of the management of movement *within* is as important as understanding how movement occurs *around* the outside borders because the notions of external and internal borders are not clear-cut in an occupied territory, often overlapping or crisscrossing, in a process of de-bordering that we will touch upon further on. Additionally, the said outside borders keep changing with Israel's continued expansion and infringement on the green line, for one. Internal mobility –or immobility– should be addressed then, even more so as occupying forces especially work to control it.

II.

IN-FOCUS ON THE MOVEMENT OF PALESTINIANS
WITHIN, TO AND FROM PALESTINE

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAELI CONTROL OVER PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT

In 1948, as the war occasioned all sorts of movement across the territories and borders involved, many Palestinians were driven from their homes, by the military or by other conditions of war. In the midst of movement attenuation, as the conflict subsided, the Jewish community found itself in the unlikely position of majority; 85 % of the population, when it constituted but a third of the population present in Palestine prior to the war (Leibler, 2011, p.488). The military and political leadership of the newly declared Jewish state interpreted this unexpected demographic balance as working to its advantage and subsequently aimed to secure it (Leibler, 2011, p.488). Migration has its importance in two major ways for the Israeli state; it is both a means of control over the Palestinian people and state, and a source of threat and fear calling for the continuation of control. With Israeli demographers predicting potential “Arab”-“Jewish” parity by 2050 at the latest, the Israeli government appears unlikely to favour a Palestinian state, and relinquish its hold on demographic outcomes (Parsons & Salter, 2008, p. 708).

1.1. (Up)setting the ground: contested borders and spaces

W.B. Gallie (1956) introduced the expression “essentially contested concepts” to bring attention to the fact that there are “concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users”. (p.169) One of the leading scholars of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies presents security as such an inherently challengeable – and oftentimes challenged – notion.

(Buzan, 1991, p.7) In the context of Israel and Palestine, especially as issues of security and borders hold such significance, it seems relevant to consider borders as “essentially contested concepts”, in the sense that they are not fixed, not agreed upon and overlapping, without denying however their very real materiality for their crosser.

Space is another term that is part of an ongoing multidisciplinary debate over its meaning and application. How one thinks about space has implicit and explicit consequences on how they approach what is ‘found’ in that space. Conceiving space as a continuous surface or as a fixed volume can carry very negative and negating social and political effects: it ignores space’s ever-evolving physicality and its ever-building construction, as well as the relation between the space and the peoples and cultures present. Thereby, it denies the mutually shaping dynamic of space and people, and sets the ground for the denial and erasure of such people and culture. If something can be crossed, it can be trespassed and conquered; envisioning space as something with borders poses the question of the issuing authority in setting these borders. We absolutely need to approach space as socially constructed in its simplest meaning (as well as in Lefebvre’s notion, “each living body is space and has its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space”, 1991, pp.169-70) to move away from the dominating physicality aspect. Paradoxically, focusing on space as something material in the present makes one disavow the presence of people and the past of the space, as if space was empty, a virgin ground to work with. Israel, in 1948, invested the Palestinian space, declaring it “vacant” at the same time as it forced and maintained its vacuity so it could “occupy” it at ease, erasing names, replacing them, envisioning space as a subject and a property which may prevent it from actively engaging with space in time. Space as a two-dimensional surface is an illusion of immobility and an abnegation of movement. It can lead to conceptions of what is present “as phenomena ‘on’ this surface”, thus depriving the people, culture and space of history: “Immobilized, they await ... [our] arrival. They lie there, on space, in place, without their own trajectories” (Massey, 2008, p.4). Advocating for an alternative approach to space, Massey proposes three required (re)considerations: space is the product of interrelations, space is a sphere of possible multiplicity (“where distinct trajectories coexist”), and space is always under construction (2008, p.9). Such an approach can help us to detect and challenge colonial ways of thinking, and hopefully prevent the reproduction of old ones and the production of new others.

Falling into that space, borders have been an essential recurring question in defining Israel's identity and legitimacy as a state. Its Declaration of Independence, which marked the beginning of the Jewish state and was its first legal instrument, did not explicitly define territorial borders. David Ben-Gurion, then Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, is believed to have pushed for leaving unclear the reference to the UN Partition Plan. He wrote about the negotiations between the UN and the Jewish advocates for an Israeli state:

There was a proposal to determine borders, and there was opposition to this proposal. We decided to evade (and I choose this word intentionally) the matter for a simple reason. If the UN fulfills all its resolutions ...then we on our part ... will honour all the resolutions in their entirety. So far, the UN has not done so ... Therefore, we are not bound by anything, and we left this matter open for developments

(Falah & Newman, 1995, p. 693).

Such a statement reflects an initial challenged relationship to international standards; it is unwilling to adopt a founding principle of a typical modern state and is reluctant to wait for international action or approval. An inflexible stance on inflexible frontiers suggests an intrinsic belligerent readiness at the heart of its nationhood's origins, a defensiveness conditional on external actors' behaviour, and an expansive and colonial mindset. In effect, ever since its creation, Israel's borders have been on the move, some radically expanding, others gradually spreading, a few carefully retreating: "The region has experienced five additional wars since then, and the borders have been changed no less than eight times, leaving Israel in control of a much larger territorial expanse than that gained in 1948." (Falah & Newman, 1995, 693) This flexibility in frontier lines makes some scholars speak of a "de-bordered" state set in a world trend of de-bordering, understood as "an increasing permeability of borders together with a decreasing ability of states to counter this trend by attempts to shut themselves off." (Albert & Brock, 1996, 70) In Israel and Palestine, this means the diffusion of the bordering process throughout the territory:

border policing does not only happen at the territorial limits of the state. The control of the population happens throughout the state. ... For Israel, the Green Line and separation barrier do not play the role of airtight frontiers:

colonization has projected citizens deep into occupied territory as the state has effectively de-bordered itself through expansion. There is no single border of the Israeli state and boundary policing must take place everywhere (Parsons & Salter, 2008, p.703).

There are permanent invasions, such as the settlements and military presence, and there are periodic invasions, such as house evictions and demolitions, night raids and arrests. A recent example of this infringement is the storming of Israeli security forces in Ramallah in March 2017 to arrest the Palestinian activist Basel Al-Araj, ultimately leading to his death (Hassan, 2017). This was despite the fact that Ramallah is considered zone A5, under full PA authority, thereby demonstrating a disregard at the same time for the body of the Palestinian state as well as for the body of the Palestinian individual.

1.2. Census in Israel: offense of absence

As mentioned above, in 1948, the Jewish community was the unexpected majority, and the leadership of the new Israeli state intended to keep it so. The same year, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) was instituted to accompany the Israeli leadership in their demographic and administrative decisions (cbs.gov) and the “Committee Alongside the Military Government” was created as a temporary policy-making body addressing the Palestinian “infiltration” from outside borders (cited in Leibler, 2011, p.489). The combined activities of both were dedicated to monitoring the population within the Israeli-defined borders: the Committee planned and conducted a census of the local Palestinian population while the Bureau established a population registry of all residents on the territory.

As we saw, the census is commonly employed as a means to embrace before rejecting, including to exclude; the Israeli government used the information obtained to draw a line between the remaining Palestinians and what it called the “illegal returnees” (Leibler, 2011, p.489). In other words, it was the instrument to decide who would be granted citizenship and who would not, who would be given the right of residency and

⁵ The Oslo II Accords of 1995 partitioned the West Bank into three administrative zones: area A (under PA civil and security control), area B (under PA civil control and joint PA-Israeli security control) and area C (under Israeli civil and security control).

who would be deemed legal. Voluntarily, it had lasting effects: “[T]his registry would become the basis upon which Israeli citizenship was first granted” (Leibler, 2011, p.489). In 1949, the Israeli state began to issue mandatory ID cards to the population of its territory, based on the November 1948 census. Palestinian eligibility to this national identity document depended not only on one’s proven continuous residence in Israel between 1949 and 1952 (time of granted citizenship) but, quite simply and radically problematical, on one’s presence on the Israeli territory at the time of the census. This latter requirement barred numerous Palestinians from citizenship and any possibility of return. It permanently kept out of the books anyone who was not on the territory at the time, literally stripping people of their identity as they were denied entry, tragically ironic when the reason for wishing to enter was to apply for an identity card.

In the aftermath of the 1967 war, Israel undertook another extensive census of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, again leaving any Palestinian who were not present on the territory unable to register, losing their right to residency. I.B. was born and raised in Jerusalem, along with her eight brothers. During the 1967 census, six of the children were abroad looking for work or finishing up their studies, and only one of them was able to come back in time. Later on, the rest of the children who were registered in 1967 also lost their right of residency because they spent more than three years living abroad, which is the maximum amount of time allowed for East Jerusalemites to spend outside of East Jerusalem before they risk losing their resident status. “I have eight brothers,” I.B. notes, “none can legally reside in Jerusalem. I do not see any families from my teenage years, from when I was young. Today, currently, there are no more families that I know; either the old people are dead, or they joined their children elsewhere.”

1.3. Documenting a continued quiet deportation: Jerusalem as the emblem

Since 1967 and its annexation of Jerusalem, Israel’s politics of driving out unwanted Palestinian presence has relied heavily on a set of usual and unusual administrative measures. The usual measures would be ones to be expected in a state administration, such as birth and marriage certificates, proof of residency, family reunification, etc. However, even these common documents are rendered difficult to obtain, often

confronting Palestinians to unjustified refusals of application and lengthy procedures. Moreover, even when approved, the documents can be assigned a close expiration date which then forces individuals to routinely subject themselves to the uncertain administrative process with all the costs it entails (financial, economic, social, psychological, etc.). However normal these necessary documents sound, they do not appear to be dealt in a normal manner. On top of this, one can find the unusual required documentations such as exit and travel permits, typical of East Jerusalemites' complicated condition both in the national and the international state system. One of the ways that the relation between both plays out is when a native of Jerusalem acquires a nationality outside of Israel.

T.Z. was born in Jerusalem in the 1960s. He studied in France for several years, managing to come back to East Jerusalem every three years in order to extend its exit permit granted by the Israeli ministry of Interior. If he had not done so, he would have lost his residency, in accordance to the law at the time that forbid East Jerusalemites to stay away for more than seven years without renewing their residency permit. In 1995, the ministry established the 'center of life' policy and demanded that Jerusalemites provide evidence that Jerusalem is a 'center of life' to them, setting "a high standard of proof that required the submission of many documents, including such items as home ownership papers or a rent contract, various bills (water, electricity, municipal taxes), salary slips, proof of receiving medical care in the city, certification of children's school registration" (B'Tselem, 2013). Apart from demonstrating how administrative and bureaucratic measures can effectively and legally strip individuals and groups of natural rights, the 'center of life' policy also illustrates the power of the Israeli state to constantly disrupt the Palestinians' lives, adding expressively to the feeling and state of insecurity. The ministry implemented the policy retroactively, thereby not only affecting the future of the city's residents but also their immediate present as their past was now under scrutiny. Since 1995 and up to 2014, at least 11,312 East Jerusalemites lost their residency (B'Tselem, 2015). T.Z. is one of them. After acquiring the French citizenship, he traveled to Jerusalem to renew his resident status. At the border, he was refused entry and the Israeli officer tore his permit apart in front of him. T.Z. was not willing to speak about his experience but his wife shared his story with me. To this day, he wonders if what enabled the Israeli government to strip him of his right of residency

was the knowledge of his new French citizenship, thereby alluding to the primary function of passports as a guarantee that the individual belongs to a state (Goodwin-Gill, 1978, p.26). From the perspective of international law, Israel could expel him because France had to receive him. Having dual nationalities does not seem to offer double protection for Palestinians.

Many have argued that the status of East Jerusalemites corresponds to statelessness, in the sense that they have no official nationality and the usual rights that it entails. Van Waas (2008) is right when she declares that nationality is “the right to have rights” (p.31). East Jerusalem identity cards does not list any nationality. Their bearers are “unclaimed” by the Israeli government at the same time as they are unable to be claimed by the PA, all the while as the territory on which they live is intensely claimed. They find themselves at the crossroad of borders, restricted by the law precisely because they are outside of it and ignored by it: “in a world where having a nationality is the norm, the stateless find themselves excluded from the normal legal regime. More than that, the stateless “outcasts” are susceptible to increased marginalization, discrimination and insecurity” (van Waas, 2008, p.12). States are not accountable to the stateless. Not only does that make them more vulnerable to violations, but it affords them even less space and audience to express it, their voices often translated into echoes.

2. ERASING, IMMOBILIZING, ENCLOSING: INVISIBLE FORCES

2.1. *Erasure through monitoring*

In the context of colonialism, monitoring a population can well serve the process of subjugation and erasure of that same population. Although there are multiple means to negate and erase a people, one of them is paradoxically through the over-awareness and over-surveillance of its collective and individual body. The process of erasure, of covering up the presence, of aiming for the absence, is not incompatible with the step of acknowledging the presence. On the contrary, the will to erase a population sometimes necessitates first having to go through procedures of extensive identification and monitoring. In Palestine, an intensive and pervasive system of administrative and monitoring tactics are used to keep the state of Israel informed of the status, movement

and activities of the daily lives of Palestinians in the different areas of the Palestinian state and society. It enables Israel to better target the individuals and groups to include/exclude, restrict/reward with the overall goal of reducing the capacity, agency and might of the whole Palestinian population. As Tawil-Souri (2011) aptly phrases, “there may very well be a practice of fragmenting, isolating, transferring, and erasing Palestinians, but they need to be counted, documented, monitored, and controlled first” (p.68). These two processes can seem difficult to reconcile because the extensive monitoring of a population betrays an acute awareness of their presence and movement, even if the end goal is to better suppress this existence. Yet the process of erasure takes diverse forms that are active at different times and spaces; the documenting and monitoring does not even have to happen first and does not even have to end to allow for the fragmenting and erasing project; it is a dual process that can occur and develop simultaneously, at times independently also of each other. The refusal to acknowledge a presence (denial) is already an active act of erasure in the present; the refusal to recognize such a presence (dismissal) is a step further into erasing the presence in the past. For the colonizer to morally convince itself of the legitimacy of its presence and present, and therefore securing its future, it must empty the colonized space, riding it of its history through changed narratives, altered landscape and buried people. This is especially true when the Palestinian presence is re-interpreted in meanings suited to Zionist beliefs and ambitions. Language, for that purpose, is a powerful medium, both instrument and message conveyer. Having Hebrew and Arabic on Palestinian identity cards can be a daily reminder of occupation –a fact already difficult to erase– as it reminds the bearer to whom it needs to be legible. The individual is confronted to his role in the occupation; applying for and using the identity card is an act that “necessitates [one’s] acknowledgement of the system of Israeli occupation as the mechanism of approval over one’s mobility” (Tawil-Souri, 2010, p.32). Attempts of erasure of Palestine can happen simply with the imposed over-visibility of Israel, coupled with the substitution of words (“Palestine” for “Israel”, “West Bank” for “Judea and Samaria”, “Arabs” for “Palestinians”). There is a difference between an interpretation of history and a diversion of history; the first one is acknowledging the subjectivity of historians and history as a social discipline that continues to feed itself, necessitating constant review and re-appraisal of the far past in light of the recent one; the second one is

the manipulation of history to fit one's ideologies and interests. When naming the other is a threat in itself, then the presence of the other is undeniably too alive not to be feared. Colonial practices of erasure go hand in hand with initiatives to neutralize and immobilize them.

2.2. Immobilizing: neutralizing the neutral

The Israeli government works to keep refugees and others with a claim to Palestinian ancestry out of their current state borders, as well as it aims to push Palestinians within their borders out of their homes and lands through the administrative system of permits (building, work, residency), of area partition (land under military control, settlements, by-pass roads, checkpoints) and of identity cards (different allowed spaces for the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and residents of Israel). It paradoxically and simultaneously works to immobilize Palestinians in their movement – as individuals, as a people, as a nation and state: “Against the background of transfer, fragmentation, and erasure exists a bureaucratic system of keeping Palestinians where they are: subjects of sustained, if changing, forms of colonialism, occupation, and oppression.” (Tawil-Souri, 2011, p.68)

One of the most efficient ways to at the same time remove and immobilize is through the systematic arrest and incarceration of a population, and this policy becomes especially meaningful in its long-term intent and impact when it massively targets children. Each year, around 700 children, from 12 to 17 years old, are arrested and prosecuted in Israel's military detention and court system. (DCI-P, 2016, p.20), the only country to automatically try children in military courts. (Bochenek, 2016) Stone throwing is the most common accusation (B'tselem, 2011) and can be punished anywhere from two to twenty years of imprisonment. During arrest and detention, children commonly report mistreatment (physical and verbal violence, humiliation, intimidation, etc.) and the lack of implementation of their rights (family member present during interrogation, information on the right to remain silent, to an attorney, etc.). Based on a DIC-P study conducted between 2012 and 2015, 88% of the children arrested were not informed of the reason for arrest and of the destination. The actions of the Israeli army, court and prison seem incompatible with a wish to re-insert a child into a peaceful society, creating lasting trauma, instilling fear, impacting their schooling, isolating them from their family and community. It is commonly understood that

the soldier is not guided by law and accountability, seldom respecting the principle of the presumption of innocence, seeing the suspect before the child and the culprit before the human being. This attitude is made possible because it is embedded in a pervasive antagonistic culture that portrays the Palestinian 'Other' as a terrorizing threat, thereby encouraging and legitimizing the practice of terrorism towards the Palestinian people through the military's (and settlers') freedom to act with impunity. One might be ten years old, one might be innocent, one might have thrown a stone, it does not matter much because the message is clear: when abuse is possible, the threat of abuse, however real, is omnipresent: "The point of control is not so much the law itself or the incarceration, but the control over the possibility of control." (Parsons & Salter, 2008, p.709) In such a context, all children give in to fear because they know they *can* be arrested, and a whole people gives in to fear because it knows that its subsistence is not secure.

When there are legal protections, there is no guarantee that they will be respected by the Israeli soldier or by the court. This politics of deterrence can prompt Palestinians to opt for security rather than justice, stability and immobility rather than visibility and activity. When people start to hierarchize their rights – letting go of a right owed to them by the state to provide for themselves another right – it signals both a lack of faith in the state's willingness to uphold their rights as well as in the individual's and its community's ability to pressure the state to uphold them. It is a natural subjection to a greater power, a nature that can nonetheless incite the state to infringe more, and on more rights.

2.3. *Reaching enclosure*

Closure is an evolving feature in the Palestinian present and past landscape which operates at two levels; an internal closure that seeks to restrict movement within the West Bank, and between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, and an external closure that aims to control movement from Palestine into Israel. In addition, an external closure also works to constrain general movement to and out of Palestine. The Israeli government practices its control through a territorialization of the space, both geographical and administrative, a process especially well explained by Parsons and Salter:

"Closure has two broad mechanisms facilitated by occupation and

colonisation: first, the fragmentation of Palestinian territory through intensive settlement construction and a complex network of interconnecting bypass roads; second, the imposition of a restricted mobility regime through checkpoints manned by Israeli Border Guards and the IDF, in conjunction with travel permits issued by the Civil Administration” (2008, p.705).

Central to Israel’s occupational agenda, the practice of closure can be seen through the state’s investment in bifurcated infrastructure, checkpoints, identity documents and a permit system (Parsons & Salter, 2008, p.702). Closure grants favours to none; the dead bodies of individuals accused of terrorism and killed by Israeli forces are barred from returning to the West Bank for their burial ceremony. Whether for public order, sanitary or unprofessional reasons, the result is the same: a community is deprived of one of its most significant rites of life. I.B. and her daughter L.K. testify to the general difficulties surrounding burials in Palestine: to bring back the body of a Palestinian wishing to be buried in East Jerusalem, some attempt to smuggle the body in, as if a crime was being committed. The Israeli government tries to prevent it, L.K., interprets, because “it will tie us to the place”. Z.M.’s tale is another life and death example of Palestinian experiences: his immediate family lives in the West Bank, but his mother is from a town which, since the construction of the “security fence” (apartheid/separation wall) begun in 2003, has been cut off from the rest of the West Bank. The whole family now needs to ask for permission to cross over to the nearby maternal village. While it is a deep inconvenience in itself for everyday familial bonds, it also carries a significant psychological and social impact when it prevents communities to reunite, celebrate and support each other around important life events. Z.M. received his traveling permit too late to visit his grandfather who was ill at the hospital and he could only attend his funeral. Even in death, humane considerations are hardly reached.

Parsons and Salter offer a valuable complication to both the concept of closure and the interpretation of space in Palestine when they argue that the wall does not work as delimitations of a prison but plays precisely on an imbalance between restrictions (which are the norm) and authorizations (which are the exceptions): “The barrier does not incarcerate the OPT; rather, it radically constricts the flow of population (and goods). Palestinians can still pass through the barrier – the issue is then not enclosure, but control of porosity.” (2008, p.703) It illustrates

the Israeli state's intention to control the mobility of Palestinians at the same time as it suggests the workings of a state of surveillance and fear, and one reliant on uncertainty and unpredictability to ensure obedience. It is a subtle distinction between enclosure and control, expectations and uncertainty, fixity and non-fixity. Deleuze makes this distinction: "Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point." (cited by Parsons & Salter, 2008, p.709)

3. NON-MOVEMENT WITHIN: FRAMING BORDERS

3.1. *Borders as a space of lesser rights: checkpoints as a "no-space"*

As Foucault declares, "A good sovereign is someone who is well placed inside a territory and a good territory that is well policed is a territory that has a good spatial disposition." (2004, I) In this light, it should not be of any surprise that the Israeli government works hard to manage, shape and control Palestinians' space. Augé (1991, pp.100-101), speaks of the "non lieux" (non-places) created by sur-modernity: a non-place fits into a world "where transit points and temporary occupations are multiplied in luxurious or inhumane modes, where a tight network of transportation means that are also inhabited spaces is developed" leading to "the solitary individuality, to the passage, to the temporary and the impermanence". Border crossings such as the checkpoints in Palestine constitute such non-places. At the same time, borders are "practiced places", "a crossroad of mobiles" (de Certeau, 1990, pp.172-3) and display a transformative capability that can involve physical, psychological and functional changes.

The Qalandia checkpoint can well illustrate this shift in time and space. It made its debut in late 2000 as an earth mound serving as an internal checkpoint which separated "the southern boundary of Ramallah from the northern (Arab/Palestinian) Jerusalem suburbs of Al-Ram and Beit Hanina". (Tawil-Souri, 2010, p.30) By 2006, it had transformed into a concrete border crossing with concrete barricades, fences, a watchtower and a set of technologies (security cameras, electric iron turnstiles, biometric identification devices) that enables extensive monitoring and screening of Palestinians. Because Israel considers Al-

Ram a part of the greater area of Jerusalem, the separation wall was built in such a way as to attach Al-Ram to Israel while weaving its way around the massive checkpoint. Qalandia, then, now works as a “hard barrier between the West Bank and the greater Jerusalem area and Israel, and also among various points within the West Bank.” (Tawil-Souri, 2010, p.30) It is one of the ten ‘official’ crossing points of the West Bank that are “built like border crossings, reinforcing the illusion that they are normal sites marking the border between two sovereign entities and concealing the fact that Israeli rule applies on both sides of the terminal.” (Kotef & Amir, 2007, p.982) Checkpoints are a stage where movement and non-movement meet; unmovable and movable borders through which Palestinians are allowed or prevented mobility. They represent at the same time very real, very visible separations and very fragile, very imagined impermeability between different worlds. The fragmentation of the Palestinian space and the ensuing isolations of its elements have been called many things; open-air prisons (Tawil-Souri, 2011, p.78) or ghettos, a five-star occupation, isolated pockets of land, a “‘postmodern’ map” (Newman, 1996, p.365 & p.369). The main compass to negotiate the space could be the identity card.

3.2. Inner mapping: identity cards

At the same time as the Israeli state pursued a strategy of exclusion of Palestinians based on territorial presence monitored through a regular census-taking, it started a new system of identity cards for all Palestinians across its old and new territory, re-arranging the space to set the borders Palestinians could not cross, defining how Palestinians were to be present. Today, the PA is in charge of issuing identity cards in the West Bank and the Israeli government manages the situation of East Jerusalemites and of Palestinians within Israel, while the case of the Gaza Strip remains unclear. With the Oslo accord, the PA can now issue two basic travel documents: the *bataqa hawiyya*, a personal ID card, and the *jawaz safr*, a passport. (Parsons & Salter, 2008, p.710). However, the cards are still given Israeli-supplied numbers and must be approved by the Israeli Civil Administration before being dispensed. The system of identity cards reflects a policy of division of space and people, inclusion and exclusion, well beyond symbolical value. The object itself is an identity marker; visible to all, legible by most, interpretable by many. The plastic sleeve that covers may serve as a protection and a brand: the

colours immediately allocate the card bearer (and not owner because individuals are as much proprietaries of their identity cards as they are of their citizenship) to non-Israeli spaces and to one of two Palestinian zones of residence, be it the knowing eye of the soldier, civil servant or simple passerby: a green card for the West Bank and Gaza, and a blue card for East Jerusalem residents and Palestinian citizens of Israel. With each colour comes a set of spaces and borders that one is allowed to travel; they distribute privileges of physical movement (or lack thereof) and their ensuing civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. In a successful monitoring state, identity documents regulate movements and interactions in the different public and private spheres of individual and collective lives. When we receive and internalize the meanings allocated to them, they become us, an extension of us, sometimes transcending their materiality to erase our individual body; it is a carrier of information, a granter of rights and privileges, an object to negotiate with authorities, a conditioner of relations. It is a media. As Tawil-Souri describes it when she speaks of the *hawiyya* (literally, “identity”) identity card, media is “a mechanism by which we learn and internalize values, beliefs, and norms of (our) culture and as a material device in which are encoded the dominant beliefs and norms of society.” (2011, p.83)

When an object becomes the state’s material referent to identify an individual and thereby establish a relation, it is a space for restriction and repression but inevitably also for interaction which then brings up possibilities of negotiation, deviation, re-interpretation. So it is for Palestinian identity cards: “ID cards have become one of the tactile, everyday, mundane, yet fundamental Palestinian experiences of carrying Israel’s terms of domination in one’s back pocket or purse. It should come as no surprise, then, that ID cards are also matters of negotiation, interpretation, and resistance.” (Tawil-Souri, 2011, p.82) In the end, imposed identities must be assumed by the bearer for the system to work, and even if they are not radically opposed, they can be adjusted. Similarly, borders can be moved, dis-placed. Both are moving spaces that can always be crossed precisely in part because they are moving spaces. The illusion that a state controls identities by controlling the access to identity cards which themselves give access to specific spaces, may work but it will almost always also not fully work. Surveillance is never total since it depends on fallible technology (that can be broken or manipulated), on chains of command that can fail in communication, and ultimately relies on individual discretion even if the said individual

is situated at the bottom of the pyramid of power. This is the doom of the surveillance authoritarian state that wishes to emulate the panopticon; even if it is possible for the state to know everything everywhere at any time, it is impossible for the state to know for certain that it *does*. If there is a space for error, then there is a space for resistance. N.P. is a resisting recidivist. She is a regular negotiator of borders, routinely defying the boundaries of her registered identity. At times, at checkpoint, she sits next to a friend with an East Jerusalem residency permit; she lets down her hair, puts on wide sunglasses, speaks English with a European accent, and they pass through to East Jerusalem without having to show her 'invalid' West Bank identity documentation. She plays the International card.

4. MOVING IN, MOVING OUT: PALESTINIANS INTERNATIONALLY

4.1. Background on passports for Palestinians: in a permanent status of transition

Tracing the evolution of the role of passports in trans-national movement, Torpey analyzes that although they have come to be associated with citizenship and nationality, the process to obtain the travel document is in fact so varied, multiform and ever-changing that it is difficult to draw a universal legal practice and application of international travel documentation. It is widely agreed though that to leave a state, or at least to enter one, a passport is required: "Because states and the state system have monopolized the power to regulate international movement, persons must possess a passport regardless of its origins of issuance; this situation creates anomalies for those who have difficulty in claiming affiliation with a particular state." (Torpey, 1998, p.252) With the last point raised here, one can imagine the further challenges it implies for individuals who have difficulty in claiming affiliation with a particular state because it is not recognized by others as a fully functioning state or is not able to be an autonomously functioning state, if it is under occupation.

When it involves documents to travel abroad, Palestinians are administratively divided; as a general rule, those with the Israeli citizenship can also hold Israeli passports, East Jerusalem residents ask for travel permits from Israel, or temporary passports or travel permits

from Jordan, West Bank residents ask for passports from the PA, or for temporary passports or travel documents from Jordan, and Gaza Strip residents are supposed to receive passports from the PA or laissez passer from Egypt. (Tawil-Souri, 2011, p.74). Expectedly, the different documents grant different rights to their bearers, especially when considering Gazans. In all cases, the Israeli state has the last word on their ability to enter and exit their homeland; even PA or Jordanian travel documents must be approved first by the Israeli administration and then by the Israeli police at the borders.

Only understanding the allocation of travel documents is confusing for many state institutions and individuals involved, and purposefully so, as it seems designed (or left non-designed) to be unpredictable in its steps, length and outcome, thereby contributing to an overall climate of insecurity and instability linked to an Israeli administration known for its intransigency and paradoxical unreliability. With a network of material and immaterial checkpoints dividing their space, Palestinians must constantly negotiate borders in a structure that has built-in uncertainty and inefficiency:

The obtuseness of the system constitutes a form of control no less effective than the restrictions on passage by themselves. ... nothing is transparent ... it is never clear who will receive a permit and who will not ... If the restrictions were consistent, then people would be able to plan their steps.

(Ziv, 2004, p. 5)

Furthermore, when Palestinians successfully navigate the labyrinth of bureaucracy, they may present themselves with the proper, required and approved documents at the borders and still face opposition to their right of movement:

No one can be sure that he or she has not been –or will not be – ‘prohibited for reasons of security.’ The reasons are so numerous, and the use made of them changes so much, that uncertainty becomes the ultimate system of control within the framework of the certainty of the occupation. ... In this way the permit is not a means of making things easier for the residents, but a way of controlling them through the threat of not giving a permit.

(Ziv, 2004, p. 5)

The irony of having to pass through checkpoints in order to apply for documents that will allow one to pass through checkpoints is echoed

in the need to ask for permits to Israel in order to apply for visas to other states. The snowballing and snake-that-eats-its-tail effects further call into question the coherence of the travel permit system and suggest the Israeli state's intentional use of bureaucracy to restrict Palestinians' mobility internationally. (Ziv, 2004, p.10).

4.2. International exclusion/inclusion: self-identification and state appropriation

States can ultimately decide when citizens are theirs and when they are not. When it is in their interest, they choose which part of their citizens' identity matters, and they are able to principally thanks to the information obtained through the thorough administrative system they have put in place. A recent example of how Israel plays with its recognition of national identity is with the television show called Arab Idol. The Israeli government was initially reluctant to "let" Palestinians participate in a television show considered by some to promote Arab culture in its diversity and encourage pan-Arabic sentiments in their unity. What is more, the show has a significant reaching power with the worldwide audience it attracts. To give an idea of its popularity, in 2013, the second edition's grand finale was followed by no less than 100 million viewers (France 24, 2014), which was the year that saw the victory of Mohammed Assaf, a Palestinian from the Khan Younis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. On top of unwanted public exhibit of Palestinian presence, another reason for Israel not to be an inveterate fan of Arab Idol is the involvement of some of its most fervent opponents: the show is recorded in Lebanon and sponsored largely by Gulf countries.

For the 2014 edition, the Israeli government quite simply tried to impede the movement of Palestinians participants. Two of them were "Arab citizens of Israel"⁶ and had to be issued special temporary Palestinian passports by the PA in order to attend the first round of the show in Lebanon. This first complication might have been more due to

⁶ It is worth pausing here to problematize the term. Israeli-issued identity cards present a nationality box. As Tawil-Souri argues, the intention is to differentiate between the blue ID cards held by Israeli citizens; the choices available are Arab, Bedouin, Druze, Jewish or the country of origin if a non-Jew is also a non-Palestinian. (2011, 72) Palestinian citizens of Israel show "Arab" for their nationality, as do all residents of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. They are "Arab citizens" of Israel, denied a nation (Palestine) and denied full Israeli nationality.

Lebanon's refusal of Israeli passports than to Israel's refusal that they travel but it still shows the complex maneuvers required to navigate administrative rules that govern Palestinian movement. Nonetheless, when the two Palestinian participants returned from Lebanon, they were interrogated by the Israeli Security Agency, commonly known as Shin Bet, that confiscated their passports. (Marom, 2014) In another twist of irony, the two participants decided to ask for the help of a former member of the Israeli Likud party, well known for his support of settlements, which triggered some accusations of collaboration. (Marom, 2014) What happened then is ironically paradoxical. In line with a strategy to contain the visibility and diffusion of Palestinian presence, parts of Israeli society opted for another move to "invisibilize" Palestinian rhetoric and neutralize the debate: several media outlets started to embrace the two contestants as Israeli. Haaretz ran as a headline "Next 'Arab Idol' may be Israeli", the network I24News declared "Two Israeli fulfill the Arab Idol dream in Lebanon" and the Times of Israel announced "Israelis sing on Arab Idol, for Palestine" (Bensaada, 2014). This of course was in spite of the fact that they self-identify as Palestinians (Marom, 2014). Not only is this behaviour threatening to mask the unequal treatment and citizenship status operating between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, but it also strongly demonstrates a typical colonial mentality of entitlement over the colonized subject's identity and body. What the Israeli media's action showed was the attempt to hide and highjack the Arab Idol participants' identity, claiming ownership over their body. It is an active part of erasure, not only denying the individual's power to define themselves but also, clearly denying a Palestinian nationality to begin with.

While some carefully selected Arab citizens of Israel are seemingly being celebrated in Israeli public discourse precisely for their ties to Israel and not their Palestinian-ness, when Arab citizens of Israel are accused of terrorist activities, their affiliation to the Israeli state is dealt with in a quite different manner. Nahad Abu Kishaq was stripped of his nationality by the ministry of interior after he was suspected of suicide bombings, as if he did not deserve and did not represent Israel, as if this symbolical removal and dismissal somehow erased all connections and mutual responsibilities, past and future, between the Israeli state and him (BBC, 2002). Identity documents may regulate lives and allow rights and they may only be "pieces of paper" that can be torn apart in the end, but the act will not erase the past. Where one comes from and

the reasons that they act in the way that they act remain, along with the state's accountability in creating an inclusive social environment.

At play here are the competing meanings afforded to citizenship and nationality, and the issue of identity as defined by the state or the individual, which is especially complex in a colonial context where nationhood can be a double-edged sword for the colonized, a political claim resisting invisibility and exposing them to further exclusion by the colonizer, threatened by narratives of a dis-unified nation. When in movement, should an individual be mainly perceived through their citizenship (and which one then, if one is allowed to have more than one, if at all) or through the state that issued its traveling documents (for example, Israel), or in light of the actual rights that come with these issued documents (for example, travel documents from Israel do not offer the same rights as an Israeli passport)?

4.3. Welcome to Palestine, unwelcome to Israel

In the nineteenth century, as movement expanded trans-nationally and began to be serviced by non-governmental companies on an increasing scale, the governments found the need both for monitoring and controlling the fast-moving, fast-growing migration, and for the involvement of these non-governmental companies to assist them in these tasks. Emerging modern states in Europe demanded that steamship companies “[oversee] for them whether particular people should be permitted to travel to the destinations they had chosen” (Torpey, 1998, p.243). As other transportation modes appeared, the free market expanded globally and trans-national movement intensified, governments increasingly worked with private companies to monitor the movement of people, expanding the role of the private sector in the matter, which increased the state's reliance on its compliance at the same time as it legitimized the state's authority over movement. The interdependence created an open door to different levels of complicities between private companies and governments. Although there are a number of problematic issues linked to the state's control of movement and its relationship with private entities in controlling it, it seems an important step that, at the very least, travelers be able to arrive to their destination before the local national immigration authorities decide if they should stay, rather than have private companies apply immigration policies of a state on the territory of another state. Borders of the application of international law are thus blurred.

Recently, the Israeli state has been leaning on and playing with this relationship and its power to influence private companies. Responding to the invitation of Palestinian organizations, the movement “Welcome to Palestine” was launched in 2009 in order to protest, among other things, the obligatory passage through Israel to arrive in Palestine. On July 8th, 2011, a massive arrival of people (1 500 were expected) at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv was planned, with the intention of announcing at the border control that they were going to Palestine. (AFP, 2012) Opposing this campaign, the Israeli government pressured the British low-cost airline Easyjet and six other aerial companies to refuse to embark several travelers leaving from London, Bâle and Geneva. (AFP, 2012) The ministry of interior’s decision to release a “black list” of 342 names to worldwide airlines is an episode unprecedented in the history of civil aviation (Mari, 2012).

The over-stepping of the Israeli government’s boundaries illustrates a tendency to disregard established or customary international law, typical rules of engagement, by over-controlling and over-extending into spaces that are not theirs. It reveals a fierce determination to monopolize the narrative over what is happening in Palestine and Israel, seeking to restrict and deny the availability of truths despite the result that such a behaviour is suspiciously incriminating. Policing of bodies and spatial expansion are constantly in progress in Palestine. Within this framework, it might come as no wonder that the denial of entry to internationals is routinely practiced. Such a policy aims to obstruct and bar the coming and presence of internationals to Palestine – potential witnesses and testifiers.

III.

OUT-FOCUS ON THE MOVEMENT
OF NON-NATIONALS TO PALESTINE

Now looking specifically at the movement of internationals moving to, through and from Palestine, we wish to investigate the procedure of entry and exit of the territory in the hope to understand the Israeli government's policy of denial of entry. For this purpose, fourteen individuals have been interviewed; all have been denied entry by the state of Israel at least once and only a few were given a paper explicitly stating the reasons: "illegal immigration considerations" and "public security or public safety or public order considerations" which are some of the most common ones. (Pex, n.d.) Muharremi defines security vetting as "an evaluation method that considers whether a person is an acceptable risk to the state and its public order" (2015, p.4). We suspect that the Israeli government's restriction of movement of internationals coming to Palestine is based on an interpretation of national security that does not allow for support of Palestinians, whichever form it might take, and that considers activism as a threat and a non-acceptable risk. What is more, as we will show, the Israeli state does not simply refuse entry to individuals but employs various methods to deter future attempts, often resulting in national bans whose lifting process is costly, unclearly stated, made difficult to navigate and unlikely to be appealed.

1. BACKGROUND ON EXTERNAL BORDERS IN PALESTINE

1.1. Initial separation: Palestinians, Israelis, internationals

There are two ways in to the Palestinian territories, which include the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. One can come either from Israel or from Jordan, with the latter implying the passage

of three borders – Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian. Palestinians must go through the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge while Israelis are prohibited from using it, and non-nationals can choose where to cross from. However, the Israeli government considers individuals with dual citizenships through their local nationality, which means that a Palestinian-French, for example, is Palestinian and an Israeli-French is Israeli, once they present themselves to the border. This may be directly tied to the government's immigration policy, allowing the right of return to Jewish individuals while denying the same right to Palestinians.

As for the internal spaces of Palestine and Israel, Israeli are theoretically restricted from entering Gaza and parts of the West Bank under PA control, which corresponds to zone A of the Oslo II Accord – today some 18% of the West Bank territory. As a general rule, Palestinians with West Bank and Gaza identity cards are respectively restricted to the West Bank and Gaza, which means that to access Israel proper (also known as Palestine 48) and East Jerusalem, they must apply for a permit. Non-nationals can usually travel across Israel and Palestine, unless they are issued a stamp that only permits travel in the West Bank, excluding Israel and East Jerusalem. What is already made rather clear is that, starting at the external borders, there are much divisions and separations of individuals according to their nationality, along with an identity imposition that does not allow a bi-national to choose the 'other' nationality.

1.2. Unavoidable border: Israel-in-between

In accordance with the international state system on movement, and although states' legitimacy in allowing or preventing access was not originally a given, Israel has the sovereign right of decision on migration to, from, and within its territory. More problematic, and a clear feature of occupation, is that it also exercises authority over migration to, from, and within the current Palestinian territory. Therefore, to reach Palestine, one must go through Israel in one way or another. As I.B. explains, the Allenby/Hussein Bridge is "a crossing point that is not truly a frontier but a temporary one because it is between the West Bank and Jordan but under Israeli control".

The procedure of entry to Israel can be divided into three parts: the visa, the customs, the interrogation, which theoretically occur in sequence but possibly overlap in practice. Israel has visa exemptions with about

a hundred countries; if the reason for traveling to (or through) Israel is tourism, one can receive a visa for up to three months upon arrival, although “the duration of the stay in Israel will be determined by the Border Police.” (Embassy of Israel to the US, n.d.) If one is intending to come to Palestine for work, studies, internship or volunteer purposes, they have to go through the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Unit (COGAT), the Israeli governmental institution in charge, among other things, of visa and permit of stay issuance to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Some unsuspected borders occur pre-boarding, beyond Israeli and Palestinian territorial borders. The El Al Israel Airlines Ltd. questions its customers prior to boarding the aircraft, which can lead to further interrogations, complete body searches and the checking of personal belongings. Other airlines, such as Easy Jet, have complied with Israeli demands in the past and denied the boarding of some of their customers, whose names were provided by the Israeli government. This avant-garde frontier post may determine whether one can fly to Israel and if so, how they will be received when they land.

1.3. Stepping aside: technical overview of the denial of entry procedure

Based on the testimonies collected, the process of denied entry is usually and generally as follows. In Ben Gurion, the individual handed their passport to the customs officer and was asked a couple of questions, including the reason of their presence in Israel. The customs officer, retaining their passport, told them to step aside to the waiting room for more questioning. The number of interrogations that occurred from that moment on until the individual was taken unto the aircraft ranged from two to three, and the total waiting time until the decision was a minimum of eight hours, at which point the individual was taken either to the detention center or to the airplane. The final decision was delivered in a room where the individual was finger-printed, eye-scanned, and informed that they were being denied entry. Some (three) were given a paper to sign, stating the reasons for their denial. The person was then taken towards the exit to collect their bags, before they were (almost always) strip-searched and then taken back to the waiting room. Out of the eight participants refused at Tel Aviv, five were taken to the detention center to spend the night. They were driven there in a van, taken to a dormitory, and given food and water. They were able

to make a phone call and to receive phone calls. The waiting time at the detention center ranged from one night to thirty hours. All eight individuals were escorted from the tarmac directly to the aircraft where the Israeli officer handed their passport either to the flight attendant or directly to them. In the former case, the flight attendant gave the passport back to the individual when they boarded the plane or when they left the plane, or they gave it upon arrival to the border police of the destination they had flown to.

At the Allenby/King Hussein bridge, a similar procedure was followed. The person handed their passport to the customs officer and was asked a couple questions, including the reason of their presence in Israel. The customs officer, retaining their passport, told them to step aside to the waiting room for more questioning. The number of interrogations that occurred from that moment on until the individual was taken onto the bus back to Jordan ranged from two to three, and the total waiting time until the decision was a minimum of four hours, at which point the person was taken towards the exit to collect their bags and then escorted to the bus back to Jordan. Only one individual reported being finger-printed and eye-scanned, two were given a paper to sign, stating the reasons for their denial. Their passport was given to the bus driver by the Israeli officer, who either gave it directly to the person or to the Jordanian border police upon arrival.

2. BACKSTAGE: CROSSING STRATEGIES

2.1. *The disappearance of Palestine: negotiating values*

When asked if there is something that would immediately put someone aside for questioning, nearly all participants immediately answered: ties to Palestine. It includes past travels there (whether mere tourist presence or political involvement), online activism, Palestinian acquaintances or friends, Palestinian origins, etc. For self-protection as well as for the protection of others, many advised (and many practiced) erasing anything related to Palestine and Palestinians. Feeling more or less at ease at the Israeli border can require a conscious and sometimes thorough combing of one's self presentation, from their physical appearance to their online presence, without forgetting their personal belongings and electronics. They "removed" certain items from their

luggage (kuffieh, posters, books), “cleared” their electronic devices (files, pictures, social network accounts, phone contacts or emails), and “cleaned” the language and words they used (Palestine, Palestinians, Palestinian places, persons with Arab sounding names, knowledge of Arabic). Strikingly, this approach is deeply reminiscent to the colonial practice of erasure, and unsurprisingly so since what the individual is trying to do is mimic the Israeli mentality and behaviour in order to cross over. A technique of replacement is practiced, in words and in feelings, with the substitution of words (“Israel” instead of “Palestine”), feelings (passivity instead of confusion, nervousness, outrage or even hatred) and opinions (neutral or Israel friendly instead of pro-Palestinian and anti-occupation).

Several participants shared that saying “Israel” instead of “Palestine” was challenging, for political-moral reasons and because they did not have the linguistic reflex. During my interviews, some were even unaware that they were using “Palestine” when conveying the words of Israeli officers: “‘Have you ever been to Palestine?’ (laughs) No, he did not say Palestine, he said: ‘Have you been *here* before?’” At the same time, they were very aware of the words that the Israeli security officers used (or did not use) as embodying a mentality of occupier in denial of the history of the land and the people that lives on it: “they did not mention the name Palestine”, “the word Palestine is not a thing that exists in their language”, “it is one of the few times that he would use the word Palestine.”, “they phrased it as ‘areas controlled by the PA’”.

Although there are reasons to support the decision to stay silent on Palestine at the border, since as F.T. observes “once they see the words West Bank they turn sour”, the price and cost of such an act is worth questioning, for one’s own ethical integrity as well as for the sake of Palestinian support. Doing so, is one actively participating in Israel’s colonial project of erasure of Palestinians or is one simply beating the colonizers at their own game? B.Z., who during her last stay in Palestine was writing articles for the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, admits that “you have to put a lot of your values aside which is really hard to do.” Some participants played the role of the ignorant or allowed themselves to make borderline racist allusions in order to win potential Israeli sympathies: “Going through my phone, they asked: ‘Who is Tamal?’ and I said, ‘Oh a man I met at a bar, who keeps harassing me’, [implying] Arabs, am I right?”

All these transformations point to a conscious and unconscious

re-visitation and negotiation of identities. Each person decided on the length they were willing to go in order to win the right of entry, sometimes resulting into feelings of guilt. It is a constant balancing between the moment (at the border) and the project (getting to Palestine), a perpetual re-assessment of one's ethics and opinions over the hope and meaning of getting in; living values in the now or sidelining them to be able to actualize them soon. Some participants could not or would not keep the performance until the end or until a certain limit. They decided to make Palestine visible, making themselves visible. O.L. loudly stated "Ramallah" when asked where she was going, taking the risk to be put aside, which materialized very quickly. T.N. was born in Palestine, grew up in Jordan and now lives in the United States; she did not back down when she was asked to elaborate on the history of Israel. She said: "I know Israel was founded in 1948, and my family had to leave". Reflecting on it afterwards, she wondered:

Maybe if I had lied, and said I was doing my pilgrimage to the holy land or something, maybe they would not have questioned me. But because I told the truth, which was dumb on my part in retrospect, it did not work. I do not think they are interested in the truth, or if the truth is not the truth they want to hear. It has to be their truth. If I had said, okay, there was the *war of liberation* in 1948, and Israel came into existence, *war of liberation or independence*, that is what they call it. I know the history very well, from their perspective and our perspective. If I had told the line, they would have let me in, but I could not. And I said it very objectively ... as historians would ... Israel was founded in 48. It is a historical fact that they do not want to hear. They wanted me to say Israel was here 2000 years ago ... and finally the Jews came to the promise land to find a home for themselves. That is their version of history.

Without guaranteeing the right of passage, lying, in T.N.'s case, might have been acceptable for the Israeli border police; it would have meant the subjugation of the Palestinian to their power, their narrative, their appropriation of history.

2.2. *Don't lie but don't tell the whole truth: the thin line in colonialism*

Truth is a central instrument of the border crossing, used by both sides, manipulated by the individual to get in, manipulated by the border police as a reason for mistreatment or even to refuse entry. Several travel and militant organizations warn that lying to the Israeli officers is a reason to be denied entry, while many individuals are accused of lying when

telling the truth and many others (or the same ones) are aware that they must lie if they want to cross over. N.X. initially received an entry stamp and a three-months visa at the Allenby Bridge before her partner's past travels in the West Bank caused them to be put aside for questioning, ultimately ending in both being denied. She reflects: "They say, 'You lie, you lie', so what? We were going to go to the border and say, 'We are going to live at a refugee camp, work there and live with Palestinians', [and] they would have let us in because we were being honest?" It is difficult to assess where the need for lying first occurs, if it is the Israeli border control's severe reputation or if it is the awareness of a certain security mentality within a context of occupation and colonialism that necessitates to hide one's intentions, although legal and rightful they may be, and often are. The individual constantly weighs how truthful to be, which parts to brandish or admit and which parts to hide at all costs or until confronted with the lie. F.X., an Irish national committed to independent journalism and anti-colonial struggles, phrases it so: "When you are in these situations, you are trying to give enough of the truth, trying to intercept what they know, and give them what they know but no more. You want to make it sound plausible but not give too much away so you are constantly making this calculation about how honest to be."

Israeli security officers, on the other hand, occupy a position of truth seekers, but not of all truth. Their approach is one centered around national security, however unclear what is meant with this mentality and title. As one interrogator efficiently communicated, "I don't care. I don't care if you do drugs, I don't care who your boyfriend is, I don't care about you. What I care about is the safety of my country". The Israeli security services, in line with the rational of security services in general, bothers itself with the truth it seeks and nothing else, problematically acting as both the prosecutor and the judge of a trial where the accused is allowed no witnesses and no lawyers. T.N.'s story exemplifies this disinterest in the discovery of truth, or rather the invested interest in not investigating it. She self-identifies as an academician and informed the border police that she was a professor in the U.S. currently on sabbatical who had a volunteering contract with Birzeit university:

They asked me to produce my ID from the institution I was with. I said, 'I am on my sabbatical, why would I carry my ID with me? You can go to the website of the school and I can give you the address, and you can look

me up, my name and my picture will come up.’ ‘No, we are not going to do that.’ They refused to verify anything I told them. They were just adamant, stubborn ... obviously from my perspective they had made the decision before even interviewing me. ... I said, ‘I have the phone number of the vice president and the president of the university, please call them and verify my story, this contract is for volunteering purposes.’ And they said, ‘No, we are not going to call anybody, we are not going to verify your story.’

Throughout the interviews, it appeared that the Israeli border police dismissed evidence and invented false accusations. Just as T.N.’s report shows, they did not seem to care about her truth, inasmuch as her truth was in the way; the truth, volunteering in the West Bank, was the problem.

In situations of heightened security, a lie on one thing becomes a near-admission of guilt on all other things. F.X. entirely refused to feel this externally-imposed guilt when he felt another more significant internal guilt, the fear of endangering others if he not only did not lie but continued to be passive. When he realized that he would not be accepted in and that all that he would say now would only harm the Palestinians whom he knew, F.X. fully committed to denying and “uncooperating” to the point of comedy. He would say “no, not me, just a coincidence, it is a funny coincidence” or “strange, cannot explain that” as the Shin Bet agent showed him articles from the Electronic Intifada that he had written and asked him questions about persons that he knew. He was lying in plain sight, “almost to the point sometimes that she would kind of smile at me, because she knew that I was lying”. When faced with the argument that if one lies to the border agent—it is only fair-play that they be deported, it is worth recalling that the Israeli border police is not any border police. F.X. makes a needed distinction:

You are lying to an occupier ... That is completely justified, ethically, morally. It is necessary, to lie. If you are at all pro-Palestinian or sympathetic of Palestinian struggle, you have to lie, to hide that ... In terms of journalistic ethics, you must lie all the time to get into situations, to report, so you are making calculations on how truthful to be.

When it comes to borders between the occupier and the occupied, the colonizer and the colonized, the commonly understood line between what it is wrong and right to do has to be re-assessed. In such contexts of over-security found at borders, there is little room for humour or

unlucky misunderstandings, instantly branded as suspicious. When asked “You go to West Bank?”, F.X. answered “Maybe, Bethlehem perhaps”, understanding that the question was if he was planning to go to the West Bank. However, a couple minutes later, entering his passport details in the computer, the officer accused him of lying to him because there were records of him passing checkpoints in the West Bank. Trying to explain then that this was a grammatical and linguistic misunderstanding was useless; F.X. was a suspect until proven innocent, sent to the waiting room.

3. BORDERS: LOADED CROSSROADS

3.1. *Colonial borders*

Initiatives such as the Welcome to Palestine movement attempt to draw attention on an undeniable feature of occupation: Israelis’ control over Palestinians’ borders. Palestine has very little, if any, say into who can travel in and out of their designated land. The PA is not in charge of the allocation of visas, whether asked in advance for work, studies, internship, volunteer purposes which must go through the Israeli COGAT, or asked on the spot at the borders to the Israeli customs police. Short-term visitors and long-term residents alike are dependent on the Israeli state’s executive decision. T.N.’s reaction well illustrates the lack of agency and influence of Palestinian institutions in the matter. On her sabbatical, she toured Israel/Palestine and visited her old school, Birzeit university, from which she obtained a volunteer contract. Afterwards, at the Allenby bridge, when asked about the purpose of her stay, she said that she intended to volunteer as a teacher. When the custom officer told her that she could not volunteer without permission from the Israeli government, T.N. responded “I am not going to Israel; if you would like, do not give me permission to go to Israel, I just want to go to Birzeit, to the West Bank.” It would be easy, and dangerously so, to judge this demand as naïve and misinformed, as it strikes exactly on point the situation of occupation, the juxtaposition of borders and the precedence of administrative and Israeli frontiers over physical and Palestinian ones. The security personnel informed her: “No, you cannot do that because to get to the West Bank, you have to enter through Israel. This is the government of Israel.”

Sharing his deep frustration and disbelief of being denied entry, F.X. points out the absurd but very real situation of colonial space and power:

[It is] just a very oppressive, disempowering feeling of injustice, that these occupiers who occupy and colonize this land have the right to tell you and the Palestinian next to you whether or not you can step on this land. ... You are in Palestine, you are physically in Palestine, but there are a lot of heavily armed Israelis standing between you, and you are completely isolated.

Visibly, there is little doubt left as to who the authority in charge is at the borders of the Allenby Bridge. F.X. was taken to a Shin Bet office whose walls were covered by a blown-up poster of an Israeli flag and faded Israeli tourism posters. Meanwhile, none of the security staff were Palestinians but “All the baggage staff, cleaners, non-security staff were all Palestinians. ... We would see big groups of them in their orange canvas written off in Arabic. There was a little shop where you could buy coffee and he was Palestinian, and [I was] thinking how strange a relationship that was, working in their own prison.”

3.2. Unsuspected borders: a mini Israel outside of Israel

Three participants made the “mistake” of flying with El Al Israel Airlines Ltd. which practices pre-boarding questioning and searches, a first screening that causes initial stress and subsequent red flags at the Tel Aviv airport. It is very clear that, upon landing, they were already marked as necessitating more questioning, if not plainly lined up for deportation. I.D., studying Arabic in Palestine for the summer, reports: “El Al security in the Cairo airport had given me a thorough run-down of questions and emptied my backpack multiple times. The security agent took away all of my disposable cameras as a ‘security risk’. I think my passport had already been flagged before the plane landed in Israel”. Having partly grown up in Cape Town, Z.L. was questioned by a South African El Al agent in the airport of Johannesburg. Again, the unclear territorial and legal borders are made visible between the competing authorities of private corporations, the sending state and the receiving state; under what authority did South African El Al agents operate? A conjunction of identities appears to be at play: their nationalism as South African citizens and residents, their ideologies as security officers

of an Israeli state company, their religious beliefs as representatives of a Jewish state. Z.L. analyzes the converging and diverging points between her interrogation in Johannesburg and the one in Tel Aviv:

[South Africans Zionists are] all very much Zionists, pro-Israeli in the way they speak, in the way they think. The word Palestine is not a thing that exists in their language ... Also, I think there is a naivety ... Zionists overseas support Israel and what they are doing but they are not racist, they do not actually practice such heavy forms of racism, they are not aware of that, that it exists, whereas Zionist Israelis are very openly racist and oppressive, they embrace it and they talk about it freely, it is normal. I could see that distinction in the way that I was interrogated in south Africa. [South Africans] were very pro-Israel but there was not this hatred and racism there ... They do not think of Israeli as being hateful, racist and oppressive, [they see it as a] Jewish liberal homeland in this dark, oppressive Middle East. Whereas when they interrogate you in Israel, they are very openly racist ... expressive of their hate.

3.3. Administrative borders

As previously evoked, one must go through COGAT if they wish to go to the West Bank or the Gaza Strip for reasons other than tourism. As described on the government's website, COGAT is "responsible for implementing the civilian policy in Judea and Samaria and towards the Gaza Strip ... [and] for coordination and liaison with the Palestinian Authority ... As part of the unit's activities, it promotes humanitarian projects, the economic and infrastructure field; and ... are in cooperation with the international community to develop and improve the standard of living for Palestinians living in these regions." (mod.gov, 2017) Notwithstanding the choice of words that echoes our abovementioned colonial project of Palestinian erasure, having to go through this Israeli governmental unit is a first border one is hesitant to cross. The two following situations can explain this wariness. All the participants interviewed who had come to Palestine as exchange students confirmed that their schools, although official partners of Palestinian institutions, could not guarantee their safe passage and none had recommended asking for a student visa. A.K. first came to Palestine as a French exchange student and attended Birzeit University near Ramallah. He recalls having to rely on his own resourcefulness: "it is really about making your own way". A student visa application would mean having to send a request to COGAT, whose headquarters are at Beit El, Ramallah, and would make the applicant visible and vulnerable, visible

with their intention to invest themselves in Palestine and vulnerable in that they surrender to the Israeli government's decision and the related procedure's length, cost and uncertainty.

It is especially challenging when one has a "stable" situation to which they must go back to, such as studies, work, or a volunteer position. Border crossings and renewals of visa are a source of pervasive stress for unrecognized residents. A former exchange student at Birzeit university, A.K., shares, "At each crossing, [when] you enter, you are so happy for a week. The first month, you do not think about it too much; the following month, you start thinking about how to exit and the third month, that is all you do and think about." F.T. shares another example of the complications that can be brought when dealing with COGAT. She was offered a last-minute position at a West Bank university and first entered the territory as a tourist. When renewing her visa at Beit El, she asked for a work visa but only received a tourist one, valid for a year but stamped "not permitted to work". She spent two years in the West Bank, negotiating her stays, and as her visa was once again expiring, she left for Jordan. Back at the Allenby bridge, the agent at the passport control asked what she had been doing in the West Bank for all this time and F.T. replied that she was teaching English: "I never hid this from them and it was on the computer and I always showed a work contract." This time, she was denied entry and escorted by ten soldiers back to the bus to Jordan. When she asked for the reason why, "no work permit" was the answer, although she had been regularly asking COGAT for one. She had left her home three days earlier in the morning, not saying goodbye to her housemate who was sleeping.

C.R. has a long history of dealing with COGAT as she regularly worked as a volunteer and a researcher for a Palestinian NGO in Gaza. She points to the limitations of COGAT's power and mentions the particular situation of the Gaza Strip: "In consulting with several attorneys, Israeli and Palestinian alike told me that one's entry into Gaza is separate from whether the Ministry of Interior and border police allow an international to enter into Israel. So, it is possible COGAT can accept your entry into Gaza but you are not able to enter Gaza as the border police (Ministry of Interior) refuse you entry into Israel." Another complication that she warns against is the length of the procedure when one's name is suspicious in the eyes of the Israeli government: "it always took a month for me to wait for approval as one COGAT major told me I have an Arab surname and Arab surnames take longer--two times

I have had Israeli captains and majors over the phone when I would check on the status of my entry into Gaza tell me this”. This practice seems to be a recurring one in Israeli institutions.

4. THE CROSSING: QUITE A SHOW

4.1. First assessment: the usual suspect in the waiting room

When advising its citizens on traveling to Israel, the US government’s website declares: “the US government seeks equal treatment and freedom to travel for all US citizens regardless of national origin or ethnicity” and in the same paragraph, goes on informing them that “some US citizens of Arab or Muslim heritage have experienced significant difficulties and unequal and hostile treatment at Israel’s borders and checkpoints” and that “US citizens with extensive travel to Muslim countries or of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin may face additional questioning by immigration and border authorities.” (state.gov, 2017) It is difficult to read this and not interpret it as a flagrant warning from ones of Israel’s loyal allies to expect racism in Israel. Echoing this, all participants described the evident racism at the Israeli borders: “You cannot arrive and be Muslim or Arab without immediately going to that room.”, “Sickening. Yes, there is racism everywhere, there is hatred everywhere but most people in societies nowadays especially where I have grown up in a kind of liberal western society, they know that if you are a racist, then you better hide that ... Whereas, there, it is so in your face”, “This is hilarious, it is almost fun to observe, that it is something that happens, everyone looking at each other ‘Here we are, Ibrahim over there, Muhammad over there’”.

Passports are mediums that allow legibility, making individuals readable in terms that reflect the state’s thinking and suit its purposes, whether efficiently or not. When one is made over-visible by the details contained in their passport, they must bear the consequences. Often, instead of swift *laissez-passer*, passports become the cause of immobilization as they mark out individuals based on their nationality, place of birth, profession, age, picture – factors that work to generalize and stereotype a group, paving the way for racial profiling. It is often challenging to personalize and humanize interactions at borders,

something that would take more than a couple of questions through a glass window to deconstruct.

T.N. is a Jordanian-US citizen, born in Palestine. As she is well aware, having her place of birth exposed on her passport did not play in her favour at the Israeli customs, as it generally does not play in the favour of Palestinians’:

I am Palestinian originally. On my US passport, it shows that I was born in Palestine which did not sit very nicely with them of course, as you know, they want to erase the name of Palestine, or they try to erase the name of Palestine.

She was the only participant who was asked about Israel’s history and to develop on the matter, suggesting an unhealthy intention of further attempts of subjugation:

Then they switched the discussion ... asking about issues on the history of Palestine and Israel – Israel, they did not mention the name Palestine – the political situation, all kinds of very specific questions, like my own personal view about the situation, which was totally irrelevant to what is happening. I feel they were just trying to antagonize me and get me angry.

Another example of over-visibility is N.S.’s story, however this time it was the apparent irreconcilability between what was presented on his passport and his physical presentation that baffled the border security. Because the truth was too visible, something invisible was suspected. N.S. self-describes as a white American with a very white sounding name but often perceived as coming from Latin America or the Middle East. Traveling for the first time to Israel with an organization that aims to create support for and solidarity to Palestinians, the team had warned him that he might be put aside for questioning because of his appearance (he has a bushy beard) and it did not miss. The first meaningful interaction that he had with an Israeli security agent set the tone for the rest of his experience: “Did you change your name or did you recently convert to Islam?” Mind-blown, he had to ask the agent to repeat his question and then explain that he simply liked his hipster beard.

We see racism in the US all the time. It is an everyday thing. Anti-black racism is something that happens in the US every single day. ... I had never seen anything [the waiting room] so celebrated as ‘Oh you look Muslim, go to

that room'. It was crazy, I had never seen something so obvious in my life. 'Oh you are wearing a scarf around your head, go to that room' ... The whole line in front me, before I got sent, everyone that was an American Jew was passed right through, and everybody that had a headwrap, it was very obvious, was immediately sent to this room. I see racism all the time but to see it so prevalent and widely done and no apology for it.

N.S. was the only participant who did not ask the Israeli officers for what motive he was being denied entry, and for good reason: he did not feel that he needed to. He explains: "Once they asked me about my name and being a Muslim, they gave me a reason without giving me a reason. It felt very clear." Being "racially ambiguous" in the way that he presents prompted him to experience full-on racial profiling. For N.S., there is no doubt that the reasons for his denial are tied to his identity, legible with difficulty, or rather its legibility did not match the visible, baffling the expectation and stereotyping, evading all possible categorization usually required of law enforcement. Being unplaceable was a threat: "Two things [played into my denial of entry], the assumption of me being Muslim or Arab, and the inability to place me in the preconceived categories that they have, already decided for people coming to the country." He was not "understandable through the categories under which [he falls]", to refer back to Kertzer and Arel's argument that the state reads people according to their terms, terms that they recognize (2004, p.2).

Most of the participants described similar obvious racial discrimination in the makeup of the waiting room where many spent several hours in, some up to a whole day. People with Arabic sounding names, a nationality from or a place of birth in the "Arab world" – or simply a travel stamp-, wearing a headscarf or a bushy beard, *seeming* Arab or Muslim; these were all reasons to immediately be granted the right to the waiting room. It might be impossible to predict who might be denied entry to Israel, but it appears very possible to predict who will be interrogated.

4.2. *Interrogation: meeting your opponents*

Arriving at the customs desks, some of the participants attempted to choose their smuggler, knowing that the initial interaction would determine the rest of their passage, a gamble that does not always play out as desired. F.X. and N.X. were denied together at the Allenby bridge and remember their selection criterion: "(F.) In the end we decided to

go to a man maybe in his fifties ...(N.) He was laughing so we thought, 'This guy looks alright'. ... (F) He gave them their stamps and off they went, yes, so we thought, 'Maybe this guy is in a good mood.'

Workers for border security usually display a strong nationalism, although the fact that it is a government job and a placement for conscripts results in different degrees of political convictions: "The political opinion of the interrogator counts a lot. Some will just do their job and not bother you. I often slipped through the cracks like this."

F.X. recognized a profile in the interrogators' attitude, Israeli security becoming one body, generalized and de-humanized in return: "From my experience, [it was a] quite typically Israeli power trip, showing no humour, no humanity, no understanding. There was no good cop, just bad cop, the whole time". Clearly, even if the Israeli uniform can blend the officers together, their words may be distinct enough to be memorable as O.L., who had been regularly living in Palestine, reports: "I burst into tears. 'Can I at least call my friends in Ramallah and let them know that I am not going to make it? Because they will be waiting for me, and can I tell them I am sorry, I cannot come?' And the woman looks at me, 'We will find your friends and deport them too.'"

Z.L. remembers particularly well the different individuals that she dealt with, suggesting that she was approaching the interactions in a humanistic way, resisting the objectification often happening at border crossings: "His name was Israel and he never left Israel and he was this fervent nationalist. I did not mind him, I did not love or like him, he is a horrible person, but he was amusing, he was like a character." Her second interrogator triggered a very different physical reaction, that this time she linked to a particular Israeli attitude:

I never hated someone so much in my entire life ...When I talk to you about that kind of hateful, racist, cold Israeli demeanor, he was that embodiment of that. ... I had that same story of doing a bit of work with that women's rights organization in Jerusalem, and he said, "Is that a Palestinian organization? and I said 'Yes', and he looks at me 'Why would a pretty girl like you want to help the Palestinians?'. Which was nauseating. ... The frustrating thing was, that, I have never been faced with someone I have hated so much but had to be nice to, because I was still hoping I would get in.

She was still able to find humour in his performance: "He was also funny, he would say: 'Last time, you said you were going to work in a

kibbutz, did you do that?’ ‘No, I have not done it yet, I really want to, have you worked at a kibbutz? [He answered] ‘Do I *look* like I work at a kibbutz?’”

N.S. recalls the absurdity that the conversation could reach at times:

They started asking me about my religious beliefs ... ‘I am not really religious but if I had to pick a religion, my family is Christian, I would be Christian’. They asked me to quote from the Bible, the last book, the last page of the Bible [that] I was reading, and when I told him the Bible that I had most recently read, he told me that [it] was not part of the Bible. It just turned ridiculous. My favourite verse of the Bible is Galatians 30 verse high 3, and he said, ‘That is not part of the Bible, there is no book in the Bible called that’, and I [said], ‘There is. Do you have a Bible, I can show you.’

Some noted the particular distribution in the hierarchy of the border police officers: “Apart from the people actually interrogating me, everyone else leading me, searching me, at the detention center ... seemed my age or younger. I was 22 at the time. They seemed teenagers; they did not know what they were doing, they were following.” Indeed, many referred to this atmosphere of uncertainty, wondering if it was mostly performance and bluff or if it was a purposeful strategy, a randomness part of the system:

Part of what they are doing seems thought-through and they present this image of ‘We know exactly what we are doing’. They want to give you the impression that they know everything that you have done, they want to make you feel as if the time [when] you were in Palestine, they have been watching you, they know exactly what you did, so ‘do not lie to us’ but I wonder how much they actually know ... An image making them more fierce than they actually are. Do they do stuff around randomly? They hand out a paper and sometimes they do not, tell things and sometimes they do not; is it still part of the mind game they are trying to play with you? ... How much is them missing something or being smart, thinking ahead.

For B.Z., the experience might be a game in which one is the toy: “They were just a group of kids, [the] only thing they had been told is ‘Mess with them, say the weirdest thing, make them question everything.’” Not forgetting that the interrogators are the ones with the authority to decide if one shall pass, N.S. interprets the apparent randomness in the Israeli security’s decision-making as a powerful tool aimed at creating an atmosphere of fear:

I do not know if it is purposeful or not but the arbitrary nature of it is what gives it its power in terms of fear. Arbitrary punishment is so much more scary than punishment that makes sense and follows reason. Maybe I am wrong, maybe they have some formula. ... In my opinion, the arbitrary nature of that final decision is what gives it power and creates a level of fear. Never knowing exactly what is going to happen, that is very frightening and would make a person second guess whether or not [they] want to make that trip.

The relative unpredictability of who is refused entrance might work as a successful deterrence to prospective travelers.

4.3. Criminal accusation: a basic requirement for the denial of basic rights

I felt like a criminal being deported

K.Z.

The Center for Jewish Nonviolence is an organization that seeks to bring “Diaspora Jews to Israel to stand in solidarity with Palestinians in nonviolent action against the occupation.” (centerforjewishnonviolence.org, 2016) When briefing American participants on how to approach the interview at the Israeli borders, the two Israeli-American attorneys advised: “Do not lie but say as little as possible.” The recommendation and the mere fact that an organization feels the need to ask for the guidance of lawyers to ensure the safe passage of its members are strongly reminiscent of a trial in a criminal justice system, except that this one is conducted by military and security personnel and the accused is not told what they are accused of, given no chance to defend themselves against it. Furthermore, it gives no means for the accused to appeal the decision in the future. In the actual Israeli Courts, the practice of not stating the content of the accusation is commonly and systematically used against Palestinians, child and adult alike. Administrative detention can cause them to be imprisoned without knowing the motive for renewable periods of up to six months.

Interactions with policing and security services usually convey the impression that one has committed a crime, or is about to, and although some participants shared having experienced much worse interrogations in other countries, most of them felt that they were being treated as a criminal, at one point or another, whether they were conscious of it or not: During the interrogations, there was an awareness that everything that one would say or show could be used against them: “I answer

carefully, trying to answer truthfully without ‘incriminating’ myself”. Most vividly felt that their “crime” was to be supportive of Palestine, whichever form it might have taken. K.Z., a volunteer with a European Commission scholarship, showed that she internalized this feeling of guilt, needing to remind herself that she was in her right: “They were just trying to see if any information would come up ... if I would commit to anything else- commit! I did not do anything wrong.” Some feared that being perceived as an activist would cause trouble for the persons that they knew, especially Palestinians for whom it could have direct consequences, making them guilty by association:

That was the most worrying thing in that interview, the knowledge that maybe because I had not taken enough precautions ... there was a risk that I was going to incriminate a lot of people, or that they [Israeli security] were going to get names from emails or something. And that is when I started to, not panic, but realize that it was very much more than me, especially for Palestinians who only have West Bank IDs. It could potentially mean that they are trapped in the West Bank for the rest of their lives.

F.X. feared the contagion of accusation onto others and his fear was well-founded in the short term: his partner, N.X., was initially allowed entry and given a three-months visa until the customs officer decided that F.X. was suspicious and asked for her passport back. Several hours and interrogations later, both were denied entrance. When asked why she was barred from entering, N.X. interprets the main reason to be “because I was with him”.

Some resisted the association with criminality and illegality, shocked to be treated in such a manner and arguing that they were not. T.N. wondered: “I felt like I was being treated ... like I am a criminal. I was criminalized ... What is going on in their thinking? Why would they treat me in a demeaning way and as a criminal?” A Palestinian-American who did not have a West Bank residency at the time, M.B. stressed that, although the reason for her denial of entry was considerations of illegal immigrations, her papers were always in order and her situation regularized: “All the time I was staying here, I was legal and with their consent, with no problems. I always used to travel and get my visa; sometimes I used to get it from here, locally. I was never illegal for a second. I was always legal.” Doing so, both seem to cling to a notion of just law and of just application of the law, one that does not seem to be often found in matters involving “national security” matters, especially in Israel.

The individuals who had the chance to taste their condition of prisoners the furthest were those who spent time at the detention center in Tel Aviv. Seeing her plans for the short- and long-term future abruptly and radically questioned, O.L. contemplated remaining in detention:

I called the lawyer, an Israeli lawyer who works in this area of Israeli law. [He told me that I had] two options: ‘Stay here, spend a couple weeks in Israeli prison while they go through your case; or let them deport you to the country you came from, and at that point think of potentially hiring a lawyer, go through some legal proceedings from there.’ And he said, ‘I really advise you to go back the country you came from because you do not want to spend two weeks in an Israeli prison’.

O.L. had heard enough about Israeli incarcerations, courts and justice to see his point.

Many of the participants vividly described invasive body searches, a process recalling the vulnerabilization, dehumanization and objectification typical of security practice, routinely happening at checkpoints. Biopower in mind, the physical control of bodies at the borders went so far as to practice isolating the deportee, singling them out from the rest of the people present, removing them from the group, commanding them what they could or could not do. Although she had been denied entry already, K.Z. speaks of the persisting interrogation while being physically vulnerable, which demonstrates intentional abuse even as she was afterwards forced into quasi-quarantine when waiting for her flight back:

[They] searched my whole body, one of the woman checked my whole body while asking me the same question all over again, after I was denied already. After this, they put me and my luggage bag back in the waiting room for another two hours, and after this check was done, I was not allowed to touch anything. I wanted to make a phone call, open my computer, get something from my luggage; I just had to sit. I could not touch my luggage because it was security checked, I was not allowed to go to the toilet by myself, someone had to come with me. Someone was watching me at all times.

A.K. further testifies to the process of isolation when he reports the imposed physical separation between him and the others on the plane: “I had a whole row to myself because I could not be in contact with other people.”

4.4. *Terror in the court room: “un-cooperating” becomes terrorism*

Several participants were openly and clearly accused of being a terrorist or being associated with terrorists: “He started saying that I had paid a terrorist org, [that] I had given my money to a terrorist org.”, “If you will not cooperate with us, we will have to assume you are associated with terrorists”. A.K. recalls that the security agent yelled “You are a terrorist!” as he took his fingerprints and told him that it would be given to Interpol. The reasons for such strong accusations, obviously negatively connoted in the Israelis’ eyes, were the refusal to give access to their electronic devices and to continue answering their questions.

A couple participants demonstrated, when their patience or integrity reached a certain point, that they had had enough. They stopped waiting for approval, respect and/or rights, and initiated the reclaiming of their freedoms and values. O.L. refused to be treated as a criminal and the lack of rights that it entails, or rather, she remembered that even criminals have certain rights in democracies: “I feel that I have the right to a lawyer, people cannot just detain you and not tell you your rights, because in the US, this is part of the constitution, you at least read somebody their rights (to remain silence, to a lawyer). None of that here.” Not waiting to be told what her rights were, she claimed them herself; she was granted a phone call and called a lawyer. In a similar fashion, some participants decided, early on or when reaching a tipping point, that they were not going to respond, cooperate or justify themselves. They said no or remained silent. They did not ask for their rights but rather, exercised them, even if it meant appearing guilty. F.X. remembers the transformation of the atmosphere, his physical reaction and mental switch:

I think it knew that it was over, that there was no chance of getting in so I allowed myself to be more.. I was not playing the game, anymore. ... Much more intense atmosphere because I was in this office with her [Shin Bet agent] ... Big Israeli flag behind her, it was irritating, I found that annoying ... I had a hooded top on. It was quite cold with the air conditioning, and we did not have other clothes, so I remember I had my hood up, and I maybe felt like I was in high school, in the head teacher’s office, knowing I am in trouble but not really caring. I did care, of course I cared, constantly thinking about my friends, and the fact that this is it, I am not going to be able to past.

F.X.'s performance could be interpreted as a sort of appropriation of criminality, one that might be treated as illegal by Israel but not by him, which is to support Palestine. It touches on delicate borders between legality/illegality and legitimacy/illegitimacy as well the competing authorities of international law and national law. In essence, not believing in the international legality and legitimacy of the Israeli security agent, their interaction and his whole experience, perhaps made him accept the criminality label, embrace the crime and become the criminal.

Some participants may have been breaking the common stereotype of criminals but not of activists. All participants had at least one nationality that was from a Western European country or the United States. The majority was traveling alone, only three individuals came with travel groups. I.D. recognizes: "I fit the profile of a typical western activist aiming to bear witness to the occupation in Palestine." And there is much to say on this stereotype, starting with the reasons why it might be an issue for the Israeli government, what does it intend by activism and why it is threatened by it.

5. DISCOVERING YOUR (LACK OF) RIGHTS, RE-DISCOVERING THEIR (LACK OF) RIGHTS

5.1. Follow your passport

Testimony to our right to move and exposé of our identity, the passport is an essential element for the crossing of borders and unsurprisingly plays a significant role in the process of denial entry. Many participants spoke of their relationship with it, the manners in which the precious object was handled by other hands and the various reactions it aroused. Some worried about its invisibility, others worried about its over-visibility. All participants mentioned it and even if named only once, the passport's presence was felt throughout the stories as the medium that allowed the participants to travel to Israel in the first place, sometimes as a guarantee of protection, sometimes as a trigger for trouble, ultimately as the survivor whose scar testified about their experience. Initially, however, the reason that makes one obey the custom officer who points to the waiting room for further interrogation is that this is where one's passport is being transferred to: "I follow my passport".

Interestingly, not all the individuals interviewed perceived the object of the passport in the same way. Some differed over the identity of the owner, whether it was the state (“your passport is owned by the country you are coming from”) or the individual (“it is my passport, it is my property”). In any case, some sense of individual ownership was acknowledged, and it was unanimously felt that the state of Israel certainly did not have a claim, and that certain rights came with the passport which were not respected. For some participants, what exactly those rights were was unclear: “I did not realize it was okay for them to take way your passport like that” while for others, they were clear and clearly disregarded: “No one explained that he [the driver] was going to have it. ... Don’t you agree that we have a right to know the status of our passports? What if he lost it?” The passport became the symbol of one’s right to move, the gateway into the losing of all rights: “[I had] never been in a position, luckily, where I had been denied my rights in so many ways, especially in the cell. I do not have any rights here, I cannot leave, I cannot do what I want, I do not have my passport, I do not have anything ... I cannot do anything here. It is totally in their control, I have no agency over this”. Most participants echoed this sense of intense exposure and vulnerability over the separation with their passport.

5.2. To thought and opinion

At least four of the participants had written articles online for news site (Electronic Intifada, Palestinian Monitor, Mondiaal Nieuws) and/or in blogs about Palestine, on various subjects (women’s groups, protests, arrests, paramedics, etc.). The border police found their articles and confronted them with it. Furthermore, at least four individuals were accused of attending protests. Those who admitted being present to at least one protest stressed that they were there as witnesses or as journalists, not as activists in the front lines: “I was not in the front line throwing a rock; I was there as a journalist, standing in the back.”, “I was not in the front, I was staying in the back. It is dangerous in the front, of course I can see that they are going to make fires ... and throw things”. This defensiveness and distancing with activism can be problematic as it seems to associate it with violence and, while one is at it, to condemn violent actions. But the Israeli security did not go so far; their accusations were the intention of attending demonstrations and the presence at demonstrations. K.Z. explains how they twisted her words in the article

that they found online: “When the Israeli soldier got kidnapped, I wrote how hard it was for me to witness the Palestinian celebrations, because even though I rationally understand why Palestinians would respond that way, to me all lives are equal. Apparently, they read this as: “I was very happy when the soldier was kidnapped.”

Accusations pertaining to expressions of thoughts and opinions further complicate the process to appeal the decision, as K.Z. cleverly points out: “When they deny you because they did not like what you wrote or because of your opinion, then it is very difficult to appeal legally because I know that I did not do anything illegal. I did not do anything wrong according to any law so based on what are you going to appeal?”

5.3. To information

As a rule, the Israeli border officers did not inform the individuals of the situation (the process, the decision, the accusation, the ban) they were in and, least of all, of their rights. They sat in the waiting room for hours, not knowing when they would be called, what the next step would be and if they were accepted or refused, and even when they would be told. When questioned, the Israeli security agents would ignore them, answer in vague terms (“I do not know, “You will see”) or say something and then its opposite. It appears that there is a conscious practice of keeping the individual confused, unknowing and anxious, in effect more vulnerable. If one does not know when they will be out, or if they will be out, they remain in tension with no end in sight, not knowing how to manage their resources (strength, tiredness, hunger, patience) because they are unsure how long they will need them for. Furthermore, the interrogators use this state of uncertainty as they play on the person’s hope to still get in: “If you cooperate, the decision is not final, you might still get in, but you need to cooperate. If you help me, I can help you.” Although this strategy could be argued for in the framework of a security interrogation - notwithstanding ethics – the persistence of lack of information and misinformation when the decision has been made as well as when the individual has been told, starts to resemble rights abuse. B.Z. struggled to understand when she would be allowed to leave, being misled and not told that she would be taken to the detention center first: “‘Where am I going just now?’ At first, they were saying that they would fly me straight out, and then they

were not, just saying ‘Follow this person’, and they would not tell me. When I got to the van taking me to the detention center, they told me ‘Get in’”. At the detention center, with still no confirmation of where she was, she faced the same attitude from the guards:

In the cell, the first part of messing with you [is that] they leave a bit of time before they answer. I do not know what is happening and I want to know exactly what is happening, [I was] asking ‘Where am I, for how long, how can I contact my family?’, and them, ‘Wait in the cell’, [and] they lock the door. I was banging on the door, ‘Tell me what is going on’. I wanted to know how long I was going to be there for. Am I being held here? Am I going to have to figure out how to be released from this prison? I did not realize if it was a detention center for the night.

B.Z. was eventually told that she would fly out the next day but some participants only found out where they were being taken when they boarded the plane, and they still did not know what was going to happen after they landed: “I [had flown] from Chicago over Rome to Tel Aviv, so I was asking them, ‘Are you sending me to Chicago? To Rome? To Brussels which is where I live? Where are you sending me? ... So, they brought me to the flight and when I reached the gate I knew that I was going to Rome, but I [did not] know what [was] going to happen in Rome.”

Problematically, there was a non-systematic availability of information to individuals for the reasons of their denial, written or even verbal. Most were not even informed of a ban while others were told that they would never be able to come back, although it seems more likely now that all participants were banned for at least five or ten years. Until further notice, a denied entry seems to be a synonym of ban. Furthermore, none were clearly informed on the procedure to re-enter, at the border but also afterwards when dealing with the Israeli embassies or ministries.

5.4. To privacy

No participants were told that the interrogations were being recorded, so the assumption is that they were not. At a first stage, participants were asked to give their father’s name, their father’ father’s name, their email addresses, their local numbers. They were typically asked for the names of people that they knew in Israel, in the “West Bank or PA controlled areas”, Palestinians especially. Bodies and luggage were searched, at

times on the verge of comical paranoia: “[they were taking] books out and searching through every page of the book. I remember them taking an eye shadow pallet and looking at every little square ... They searched my hair which I thought was really weird.” During his interrogation, F.X. suddenly realized that his interrogator was aware of the content of his luggage: “our possessions [his and his partners’] had been searched without our knowledge or consent.”

Some availability of information was beyond the individual’s control. At least one person found out that the Israeli security knew about their second nationality passport, although they had never used it. Another realized that, with his new passport, they must have accessed the travel details of his former passport because they had traces of him at checkpoints in the West Bank when he was traveling with his old passport. Many individuals were told that there were records of their presence in the West Bank, passing through checkpoints. Although he had de-activated his Facebook account in the morning, F.X. discovered that the Shin Bet agent could still access some of its contents: “They knew the time [of de-activation] and were able to see things that were posted even though it was de-activated.” As he notes, the only way for them to have access to it was if they had been looking at his account before he froze it, but he gave them no reason to investigate him before crossing the Allenby Bridge because “there was no way for them to know that I was trying to go to Palestine that day.” He is forced to conclude that “either Facebook has an agreement that they give access to social media, ... [an] agreement with Israeli security agencies to openly give information, or the Israeli security agencies can just bypass it.”

Electronic devices are mediums that can be as treacherous as passports in that they make visible personal information that one might not wish to show, especially as they are machines that the owner itself might not fully control and especially as they can be searched and manipulated by other knowing hands. “Your smartphone can be your biggest enemy in the wrong hands, and your social media and internet presence, alongside information on phones and laptops, can betray you.”, F.X. warns. Many security agents required access for the person’s phone, either asking them to hand over their phone, or going through it together. N.S. had been advised beforehand by the coordinators of his travel delegation to turn off his electronics. Both N.S. and A.K. refused to relinquish their phones and it is the few instances when the Israeli security officers directly addressed the threat of deportation, clearly

stating that if they refused, they would not enter: “You are not going to turn on your phone? Alright, you know that I am going to send you back to the US?” A.K. was even courteously informed: “But you know that we can access the content of your phone without actually having it, right?”

Overall, although the individual had the right to invoke their right to privacy, it came with a price; it was usually taken as a lack of collaboration that justified the Israeli security in invoking its right to deny entry. Moreover, as several participants discovered, their digital privacy did not appear to be protected; however unclear the involvement of the private corporations of social media services, the availability of the information and the means to make it available to the Israeli security forces were plain.

5.5. To movement

Out of the 14 participants, six carried US passports and the rest had Western European documents (Belgium, France, Ireland, United Kingdom). Two of the US citizens also held another nationality: one Jordanian (originally from Palestine) and one Palestinian (although she did not have the residency at the time of her refusal). For all except the last two mentioned, their denial of entry by the Israeli state was usually expressed as the first radical denial of their right of movement. A couple individuals mentioned that they had been previously aware that their freedom of movement was a privilege (as opposed to a right) not afforded to all: “I have gone my whole life being able to go where I wanted. Freedom of movement was such an obvious thing for me, just natural, and ... I knew that not everyone was as privileged as me ... and people cannot move with the ease that I had, ... so I was aware of how privileged I was with my British passport” However, their privilege was never questioned and obstructed in such a way, causing them to reassess their relationship to movement: “The idea that there is a place that I am probably never allowed to enter again, is just very strange for us as Europeans because we are so used to doors opening wherever we waive our passports.” For some, it heightened their awareness and sensitivity to movement, theirs and others:

When I got banned and I was not allowed into Palestine, I was so outraged. No one had ever denied my freedom of movement before, and what was

this injustice, how could they do this, how could they stop me from going somewhere where I wanted to go? It never happened, and then you think about it, right? You think about the thousands and thousands and thousands of Palestinians who still have the key to their homes, or the land of Palestine that is now called Israel ... My lack of freedom of movement is nothing, is a non-issue when you look at the broader issue. ... At least we had that freedom to try, some Palestinians do not even have that freedom.

Most were conscious that their immediate movement was being controlled, contained and restricted, none the more so the individuals who were held at the detention center (“hearing the door shut behind me ... and realizing that there was no handle on the inside”), but for most, the main issue was not the momentary confinement, a transitory stage they had relatively anticipated and could endure, but being prevented from accomplishing what they came here to do, arriving in Palestine. Their lack of agency in the matter was particularly intolerable as the decision came from Israel, whose border authority could be questioned, and for no good reasons, or more specifically, for colonial reasons one found hard to swallow.

5.6. *To reside (to return?)*

Three of the participants were living in the West Bank and had their lives there; they were working, had a place to live and pets they were responsible for. They left to renew their visa and were not let back in. As K.Z. poignantly shares,

I had planned to spend two years there. I was settled, my job was there, everything was there. And suddenly from one day to the other, I am in Belgium living with my parents, I am broke, I have no jobs. I was not planning on being there or being in that group of people, so I am just starting all over suddenly. ...It is not the same as losing your home home, the place where you grew up, but it is a home that is taken away from you. I do not think you can really explain to people what that is like until it happens to you.

Two of the participants had jobs and apartments lined up, four had committed to volunteer programs, one was regularly working and conducting research for the Gaza Community Mental Health Program. Most of them were intending to spend their short-term, and possibly long-term, future in Palestine. F.X. speaks of this sudden termination,

the emptiness one is left with as they realize that they have been deprived, stolen from. It is a sort of de-rooting:

I was really sad. Just a real feeling of loss, a real profound feeling of loss. From the age of 14 or 13, the moment I started to become politicized, the moment I started to become aware of my Irishness as well, my Irish identity, as an Irish person in Scotland, and became interested in politics, and Irish history and colonialism, anti-colonialism struggles, very quickly I made the link between Palestine and I studied Arabic at the university specifically because of this interest. It was always my intention to go back and spend a long time.

One of the three participants that was settled in the West Bank, M.B., had her teenage daughter on the other side of the Israeli border. As she is Palestinian-American, the US embassy was quick to assure her that they could arrange for her daughter to be brought to her. M.B. was born and grew up in Ramallah; she told me that she is Palestinian first and American second. She told the US embassy that the problem was not that her and her daughter be together, rather, the solution was that they be *together in Ramallah*.

6. REVIEWING THE PERFORMANCE

6.1. *Reactions of institutions: power of (non)interference of entry*

The instable immigration situation of non-nationals living in Palestine can deeply affect an individual psychologically, socially and professionally, as they have the chance to be denied at each crossing, let alone when it actually occurs, but the situation also impacts the people and institutions that depend on the individual, which is yet another indirect way to affect Palestinians practically and morally. Most participants had internships, volunteer positions, jobs lined up with Palestinian organizations, institutions, companies and had to inform them that they would not be able to deliver. Although Palestinian organizations usually expressed their sympathy, they were seldom surprised because “it happens often”. Their powerlessness in the process, although it concerns activities on their territory, is well understood as an expression of their vulnerability to the Israeli authority: “the NGO I was going to work for could not do anything as they were Palestinians and had no control over entry”, “the problem is that the leaders of these NGOs

...they [Israeli] hassle them and make it hard for them to enter Israel so they are very fearful of someone like me or you to get involved.”

Foreign institutions were no better when it came to having a voice in the decision-taking. Even in the cases when participants had a letter from a known foreign institution, the Israeli officers –and by extension the Israeli government –did not seem to take it into much consideration. At the time of denial, the only significant role that the embassies could hold was checking that their citizen was well treated: “They [the UK embassy] told me: ‘If they are mistreating you, we can sort that. If they are not giving you food and water, we can sort that. If they have not told you when you are leaving, we can fix that. And if they have not given you a phone call.’ Apart from that, there was absolutely nothing they could do.” Several American citizens contacted their embassies and consulates afterwards and received confirmation that their experience was not at all an isolated case: “The consular apprised me that they had a ‘mountain’ of complaints from American citizens who were denied entry to Israel, that I was just one of them.”, “there is even a comity that has been formed to handle all these issues, I was only one of hundreds of people to be denied entry”. The Jordanian police at the Allenby Bridge also shared that it was a common practice, ironically giving more information on the length of the ban than the Israeli border police would: “they said [that] they do this all the time ... [and that] it will probably take another five years if I want to go back.”

Some institutions referred to the state’s right of entry as included in its sovereignty package: “They said [that] they could not interfere with the Israeli, [and] any government and their decision about entry or denial of entry”. A US citizen was stunned to discover how unwilling or unable the US government was to get involved in the matter: “[it] is really amazing because, well, I am not as amazed as I was, but they just bow, they bow to what Israel does, Americans just bow”. E.X. expands this sentiment to all states when she concludes: “What disgusts me the most is the complicity of governments.”

6.2. Others’ reactions: deconstructing the deportee stereotype

What vs. well yeah

When telling their stories around them, the participants were faced with two main reactions, one of surprise and confusion, and one of relative expectation and understanding. The difference mostly lied in

the individual's degree of awareness on the reality of the occupation. The latter group was composed of people who were well familiar with Israeli practices of restricting access to Palestine, usually by having gone there themselves or quite simply by being a Palestinian aware of the practice. F.X. remembers various reactions from Palestinians: "Some would be surprised, or [saying] 'Well done', or 'Good to know that there is support', or 'What can I say, I have never seen Palestine.'"

The shocked folk response can be explained in two folds; first, there was astonishment at finding out that non-typical "security threats" individuals with privileged passports could be denied entry: "[they] did not expect it to happen to me because apparently I look innocent.", "most people I told were shocked that a white American girl would be denied entry." The refusal of Americans specifically was confusing to many, as T.N. recalls:

Most of my friends here are Lebanese, Arabs, some Palestinians. Mostly professionals. Everybody was just stunned, 'You are an American right? You have an American passport? ... And they did not let you in? How could they do that? Same thing as my colleagues in Massachusetts. They were just stunned. So taken by surprise that they denied entry to an American citizen. ... To an American citizen. As a holder of a US passport.

Such people might be even more stunned to find out that two deported US citizens were greeted by American security upon landing: "I was really heavily harassed on my entry by the security in the US ... I was almost out, and all of a sudden these two officers with the dog pull me aside and they go through all my bags, read every single page of my journal, ask me tons of questions, 'Why wouldn't they let you in to Israel?'" While it is unclear if N.S. was, ironically, once again racially profiled or if the US officers were investigating his reasons for being denied into Israel, O.L.'s partner (denied entry as well) was explicitly told by the US agents that he was being searched because he had been put on a list, showing how mentions of "public security" is a serious matter beyond Israeli national boundaries.

Secondly, the perplexity came from the confusion over why Israel would deny entry to them, seeing it as a complex misunderstanding, a misjudgment on the Israeli side and a misrepresentation on the individual's part, or the manifestation of over-paranoia from a military state. Many echoed a widespread obliviousness to the mechanisms of Israeli occupation: "A shock and surprise that this even existed and that

it was practiced”, “People did not understand the political situation well enough to entertain this possibility”, “A lot of people of course do not know these things. They are confused about it, do not really understand why I would be banned, because there is no real logical explanation. When you do not do anything illegal, why would you get banned? For them it is just unclear.” Z.L. even recalls the reaction of an Israeli citizen, in disbelief that she had been banned “from just going to the West Bank, this does not make sense.” But Z.L. was even more stunned to realize that the Israeli guard driving her to the airplane was completely unaware of his government’s (and supervisors’!) thinking behind the denial of entry to internationals:

He said, ‘Why are you being banned? ... Have you been to Gaza?’ ... And I feel like this highlights how ignorant the Israelis are on how oppressive and controlling they are when it comes to the occupation in general but also letting people in and out. His assumption of why I am banned was ‘Oh she must have been rubbing shoulders with Hamas in Gaza’, it is not ‘Oh she just travelled through the West Bank, to Palestine’.

A.K. speaks of the doubts that his circle of friends had in believing that he was risking being refused each time that he crossed the border:

Many thought that I was making up this idea [of difficult crossing], to act like a militant. ... I felt this very strongly when crossing back from the Egyptian border with friends that had come to visit me. Before the border, I told them ‘Now we have one goal, crossing the border so I get my visa, we are not joking around’. They were taking it lightly, they had spent a week in Palestine, they did not believe in the process of occupation. In the line, they were saying, ‘Yes when we get back there, we will do this and that’. I was telling them, ‘Shut up’. ‘Come on, stop it, there is nobody here.’ Afterwards, I got into a big fight with one of them. [He told me] ‘You are imagining things’. Later [after I was denied], [he told me] ‘Yes, you were right, I understand better’, especially because he himself experienced a nasty, full-on interrogation when leaving from Ben Gurion. Going through the experience of being personally attacked is not the same thing.

6.3. Process of re-entry: am I banned? silence on the line

Only four individuals were told at the border that they were banned for ten years (one of them during her second attempt, since she had not been told the first time). Perhaps some might have preferred not to be told anything instead of doubtful information resembling abusive

intimidation: “Are you going to keep lying? I hate liars and you are lying. You make me sick. You are denied entry to this country. Do not come back, never, not in your life. You are not welcome here.” The vast majority did not know for sure if it was a denial or a ban, and most still do not know. Two found out when they tried to re-enter and the ban was confirmed to them. Many *believe* that they were banned because they compared their stories, stamps and denial papers with individuals who have been able to figure out more, either by re-attempting to enter or by talking to lawyers.

Very few did more than speak with embassies and Israeli lawyers, because of the cost and unlikeliness of a positive outcome. Israeli institutions appeared to be either reluctant to inform or uninformed on the process of appeal and re-entry, making some wonder if it was not intended to be so. Individuals were led from one department to another over the phone, or, as B.Z. experienced, were subjected to further interrogations: “I was told to contact the Israeli embassy in the UK. They were just phenomenally unhelpful, they just tried to interrogate me again over the phone”. When Z.L. finally managed to reach an officer at the Tel Aviv airport, she was informed that if she had been denied entry, she was banned for ten years but they did not ask for her name: “He said: ‘I do not know who you are but you have been banned for ten years.’” Being given an answer verbally, over the phone, anonymously makes her distrust the content.

The fogginess of the process and the reputation of court decisions work as efficient deterrence, in addition to the financial and emotional cost. Those who have been detained worry about having to go through this again. As N.S. points out, whether it is a ban or not might not even matter because, in effect, it can very well be: “It is very prohibitive anyway because who is going to spend thousands of dollars? To me it is basically a lifetime ban, I hope not, but it definitely feels that way.” What is more, if one is not banned, nothing can certify that if they attempt to enter in the near future, they would not either be denied again or this time receive a ban. All this leads more than one to conclude “they do not want you back”.

7. RESISTANCE: WHAT FORMS DOES IT TAKE?

One of the strengths of resistance is that it does not necessarily have to be planned, which means that resistance hosts an inherent unpredictability and spontaneity that cannot be contained, set in time and space, framed like an identity document. None can know for certain how it will be expressed and when it will appear, not the system trying to prevent and suppress it, not the people about to enact it. It can be invisible, private, and silent, and yet undeniably present. Resistance happens every day and opposing borders, forced identities, allocated spaces can be about seizing an opportunity. Each time he crosses the Allenby/Hussein Bridge and he is asked by the Israeli customs officer, 'Where are you from?', Z.M. from Tulkarem does not fail to reply, "From here."

7.1. Negotiating borders and identities: resistance in the moment

All participants resisted, in one way or another. The fact that they intended to travel, live, work, and volunteer in Palestine was already an act of resistance, a political statement in itself for the Israeli government, an acknowledgement of a people and their inhabited land. In that, some might find some comfort. Several went further into the assertion of the presence of Palestinians by naming Palestine, recounting the history of the region, mentioning friendships with Palestinians. Doing so, they upset the colonial mindset of denial and erasure, and the narrative of colonial Zionism.

Some used cordiality and composure in the face of racism and mistreatment; others used insolence and carefreeness when confronted with intimidation and invasiveness. Rights were outspokenly demanded, reclaimed once and for all, summoned noiselessly. Some told truths that bothered; others lied, said no and remained silent. Many bonded with other suspects in the waiting room and in the detention center. Several did not fail to see the humour in the moment: "[They are very] comical, acting 'I am so big and bad and tough', this guy sitting there across from me, sits in an office all day, telling me how he is a hero because he catches terrorists and stuff like that. Come on, you are just harassing people."

Opposing the oppressiveness of occupation also expressed support for the Palestinians: refusing to give information (phones, contacts,

details), giving information that did not please the Israeli officers (admitting to going to protests and writing articles), wearing a kufiyeh on the airplane back from Tel Aviv and continuing to wear it in future travels. One firmly stood her grounds, telling the Israeli representatives what she thought of Palestinians, but of them too: when she was accused of writing one-sided articles and having picked her side of the conflict, K.Z. answered “I do have my opinion about the situation in this country, but that is allowed in a democracy. Besides, I have also talked to Israelis about their opinion, both before, during and after the recent war and intend to keep doing that over the next three months as well.” The Israeli officers reproached her with engaging with the Israeli side “maybe one weekend per month. You will always spend more time on the other side.” To which K.Z. responded: “Yes, I probably will.”

7.2. Resisting as a foreign body: solid(arity) binds and bonds

Palestinians and internationals in Palestine must cross borders. They may go through the same systems of control, submit to the same ritual of identity screenings; they may be using the same vehicles, roads, currency, products and resources available. They may even walk in the same space and cross the same borders in protest, almost as one body. But they do not have the same bodies: they are not marked, identified, valued and dealt with in the same way by the state of Israel.

At the border, the participants did not fail to note the special treatment that Palestinians were receiving, with Israelis showing indifference, disgust, contempt and disregard:

Seeing the way that they were shouting at the Palestinians, [there was] a young woman with one two-year-old in her arms crying [and] they were screaming at her”, “there was a Palestinian woman sleeping and the Israeli police wanted to wake her up but they were almost disgusted by her, they would not even touch her. ... sickening”. F.X. relates this behaviour to the overall atmosphere: “A Palestinian woman [wearing a hijab] is led crying from a curtained search room by a customs agent, while young Israeli employees stand around, playing on phones and flirting and laughing with each other, seemingly desensitized to the systematic humiliation and dehumanization of the Palestinians around them.” K.Z.’s own episode of abuse points to the general desensitization that F.X. evokes, suggesting that her own dehumanization is possible because of her proximity to Palestinians, a dehumanization by association: “Afterwards I was taken in a separate room for one final security check. Three security officers turned all of my belongings inside out and body searched me while

their supervisor interrogated me. I was forced to answer every single question all over again, while they were laughing in front of me. They also asked me if I had studied Arabic at a mosque before or ever tried to convert to Islam.

Being denied entry by Israel does not hold the same significance for a Palestinian and an international; for the Palestinian individual, the social, psychological and moral implications also go beyond the individual, transposed unto the Palestinian community, people, nation and the possibility of an autonomous state. Refusing entry to a Palestinian is part of a national project of erasure, fragmentation, isolation and transfer aimed at the Palestinian individual and collective body. The persons interviewed seemed aware of this. They drew parallels between their experience of Israeli security and control and their treatment of Palestinians to personally understand how they were linked, but constantly relativized their situation in comparison to Palestinians' systematic restrictions and oppressions: "it gave me a very narrow fragmental glimpse of ... what Palestinians go through in their day-to-day lives, faced with so much hate and racism and hate and nastiness. ... and this feeling of anger and injustice was one afternoon, it was not every single day of my entire life, constantly and far more intensely, way more intensely" (Z.L.), "our experience was disempowering and frustrating, but I was not denied entry to my own land by an occupying power" (F.X.).

Furthermore, they acknowledged that their personal taste of Israeli forces was not only privileged in their dealings ("People ask 'Were you scared?'. No, I was not because I have a British passport" Z.L.) but also lasted two days at the most: "in the grand scheme of things, you are fine. Palestinians struggle every day and have incredible strength" (F.X.). Meanwhile, Palestinians either deal with the oppression of Israeli forces systematically or they (almost) never do; Palestinians living in Palestine compared to Palestinians who cannot travel, cannot live or have never been to Palestine. F.X. currently lives in Jordan: "Most of my colleagues, most of the people that I speak with on a day-to-day basis are Palestinians. I am always asked, 'Have you been to Palestine, have you seen Palestine?', and most of them have not. So that is always a reminder, living in a country where pretty much the majority are Palestinian refugees." M.B. highlights this reality for Palestinians when she places her denial into the framework of the long-practiced policy of evicting and deporting Palestinians from their homes: "There are

so many stories, you know. This is it, the story of our people. It was not a single unique thing; it was happening and it is happening and will continue to happen, unfortunately.” Minimizing her own trial, she also shines light on how normal and common refusals may feel for a community shaped in part by the denial of their right to return.

Some did not need to go a long way to put their experience into perspective: “I had a conversation not long before I left [for Israel to be deported] where a Palestinian friend of a friend vividly described to me being harassed and abused by an IDF soldier at a checkpoint and I would say my experience [of refused entry] did no more to push me in a direction of believing in the liberalization of Palestine and freedom and rights, than that conversation did.” (N.S.).

7.3. Resisting internationally: stories as international medium

As F.X. recognizes, “At least I have been to Palestine, at least I have seen Palestine, and it is more than... more than most Palestinians in the world that are unable to go there.” While it might be a comfort for some, it is also a source of power. Being denied entry into Israel only re-affirmed what many already knew but it allowed them “to experience a little bit, as opposed to an observer or completely outside of it.” (N.S.) Individuals who have been denied entry can find themselves in a useful position, one of facilitating a discussion on Palestine that can start with a first-person narration. They can be mediators at the borders between insider and outsider, an opportune balance to begin informing less knowledgeable others. Having had the chance to live in Palestine offers “[an] outside perspective but [a] more in-depth understanding, a personal insight to what it is like... A powerful tool when it comes to explaining things to people.” (Z.L.)

Being banned from Israel prompted some to reconsider the meaning of their presence there, radically calling into question one’s role into the occupation: “It is kind of opportunist being a journalist or working with an NGO in Palestine, almost the profiting of oppression. Yes, it is important for journalists to be there, to tell their stories, but who can do a better job than me than a Palestinian journalist who has been there for years? I do not need to be there.” Others also engaged in self-criticism when they reflected on the impact that their personal experience had on their involvement in the Palestinian struggle: “I should not need it to affect me particularly to take a stand, to have a principled position

on it. It does not change the way that I feel about Israel and Zionism, it does not necessarily make it worse; it is just that it has impacted me, in a minor way.”

N.S. was bound to Israel with a delegation traveling to Palestine whose ultimate goal is to bring back stories to the US and advocate for change. His personal experience at the borders did not make him lose sight of the wider objective of Palestinian resistance and his role in supporting it:

The issue is not me getting into Palestine, or me trying to get into Palestine ... I talked to a Palestinian friend of mine the other day and she was saying ‘Oh, do not worry; when we are free, we will let you in. When we are liberated, we will let you in’- and that is the way I look at it ... My thing would be more to point at the policies created in the nation that is basically imprisoned by another nation.

7.4. Crossing can be as meaningful as having crossed: I have seen enough, thank you

All the participants who had spent time in Palestine were eager to return, finding a job, an internship, a volunteering opportunity –a way. It would have been the first time of only two of the denideens. Although N.X. has not spent time *in* Palestine, her memorable experience of the Israeli border in Palestine has been an effective window into the occupation of Israel. She describes the border crossing as

very degrading but also very eye opening because I have only heard of what was going on there about the occupation. That was the first time that I actually saw ... that it is a land under occupation, and that it is disgusting the way that they treat people and I only saw a glimpse, every day that is happening at checkpoints ... What we saw is only a little bit, but it made me realize that it is actually happening, because I had never seen it at first hand before.

The other participant who was never able to set foot in Israel and Palestine echoes the same sentiments: “It was illustrative and illuminating. A microcosm of the arbitrary and repressive treatment that Palestinians receive at the hands of the Israeli government. Very small in comparison but at the same time very illustrative of what this experience looks like.” (O.T)

7.5. *Resisting at the moment: what happens now?*

Negotiating borders –applying for the proper travel documents, undergoing security checks with x-rays of personal belongings, body searches, interrogation of intention- is seldom a pleasant experience. It has become a required passage to entering spaces that we wish to enter, the reward of such obedience being the access to the space desired. We see borders as transitioning spaces, non-places, a necessary stop-over rather than a desired full-stop; a medium for a destination. Border controls may seem like neutral spaces, for frequent travelers familiar, undifferentiated sites replicated internationally, but they reveal much of the state that controls them if one apprehends them like a tourist would a monument worthy of attention. The different queue lines according to different passports, the items sold at the airport shops, the languages used for the direction signs. Sometimes borders are an end in themselves, none so obvious as when one is refused into a territory. When the ultimate result of the enterprise is the denial of the price, we are left at the borders despite the fact that we might actually be traveling on a round trip, sent back to our starting point. But sometimes the experience at the borders is enough; more than that, sometimes our presence at the borders, our experience *of* the borders, can be turned into something valuable. As N.X., N.S. and the others show us, one does not necessarily need to be *in* Palestine to witness the occupation. The passport control and the waiting room are spaces that abound with overt racism and discrimination, the beginning of rights violations. If one's ultimate goal is to support Palestinians and Palestine, then how can one best ensure this? Is it by crossing the border at all costs? Is it by shedding light on the borders that one witnesses? How much of it is personal and how much is one willing to put aside to view the big picture?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WHY ISRAEL FEARS INTERNATIONALS: WHEN PRESENCE DISTURBS PUBLIC ORDER

Gathering the undesirables

The persons interviewed all had ties to Palestine and Palestinians, having stayed there in the recent past, except for two individuals for whom it would have been the first time. Of the two, one was racially profiled as Muslim or Arab, and the other was “flagged” because of her partner. The Israeli border police was aware of the participants’ relationship with Palestine, hearing it from the individuals themselves and/or having digital records of their past presence there. While it might be a “funny coincidence”, to borrow F.X.’s words, that all were on their way to Palestine and that most had spent an extensive period of time there in the past, what can also be of interest is the overall profile of these individuals who were denied entry.

Nationality-wise, all were citizens of the US or Western Europe. At the time of denial, three of the participants were living in the West Bank (teaching or interning at a university), two had jobs (with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society) and apartments lined up, four had committed to volunteer programs (in refugee camps, teaching English at Birzeit University), two were students (studying Arabic in Bethlehem for the summer, Arabic literature PhD program in the US) and one was regularly volunteering and conducting research on mental health at a Palestinian NGO in Gaza. More than a third of the group had publicly written on various subjects concerning Palestine (women’s groups, protests, arrests, paramedics, etc.) for news sites (Electronic Intifada, Palestinian Monitor, Mondiaal Nieuws) and/or in blogs. Again, they are journalists, teachers, students, researchers, volunteers and most of them were intending to

spend their short-term, and possibly long-term, future in Palestine. They appear to represent people who aim to engage in meaningful and enriching exchanges with Palestine and Palestinians. And yet, or precisely so, the persons who were fortunate enough to be informed, were denied entry into Israel for “illegal immigration considerations” and “public security or public safety or public order considerations”. As F.X. remarks, “When independent journalism is considered a threat to a society’s ‘public order’, profound questions must be asked about the values and principles of that society”. Furthermore, when medical staff, humanitarian workers, human rights researchers and practitioners are refused access to a territory in a state of war, for presumed security reasons, not only are human rights treated as ideologies that become security threats, but they are placed in a critical situation where they are deemed superfluous, their legitimacy for existence questioned and their monitoring obstructed.

The issue is not whether these individuals’ immigration status was in order because it is part of the problem; the Israeli government controls Palestinian affairs in that matter and the administrative branch in charge of issuing visas denies or delays applications for work, volunteer, internship and studying purposes. The issue is not if the individuals lied or not to the border police because it is part of the problem; they are lying to the occupier to go to an occupied land. In a colonial context, as F.X. points out, the lie is ethically justified and necessary; there is an implicit and explicit understanding on both sides that intentions to go to Palestine are challenging Israel. The issue then is security, safety and order and the heart of it seems to lie in Israel’s definition of activism.

WHEN WITNESSING BECOMES ACTIVISM

They told me that I was using my work as a cover for activism
K.Z.

As Falah and Newman analyze, “it is the nature of perceived threats that enables us to understand the security considerations put forward by any state.” (1995, 693) Israel fears activism, and by this it means a variety of things, starting with one’s presence in Palestine, whatever the motives may be, and one’s acknowledgement of Palestinians. Intending to go to Palestine is suspicious to the state of Israel because they

interpret it, at best, as oblivious to the situation and, at worse, as openly supportive of Palestinians. The willingness to go to Palestine points to an open-mindedness to the conflict, a readiness to see for oneself and confront what one hears. It defies the narrative of Palestine as a dangerous land and Palestinians as terrorists: “Do you know that in the West Bank they can kill you in ten seconds?”, one interrogator asked. It sends the message that one doubts the Israeli side of the story, the truths that they present. At the Allenby Bridge, L.K., whose husband is from Bethlehem, was thoughtfully advised: “For your security, we advise you not to go.” Witnessing the occupation can lead to public reporting of the occupation. Witnessing the occupation, as Israel is well aware, can lead to activism. One might not come to Palestine as an activist, but they may well become one. B.Z. comments on the difficulties of neutral journalism:

All articles I wrote were in a sense pro-Palestinian because they were coming from that point of view. They always did present the Israeli sides but it is hard to be neutral in that kind of situation. It is very difficult to be a journalist there and not have your articles be pro-Palestinian because pro-Palestinian means anti-occupation. I am against anything that the army is doing which means I am like anyone who sees what is happening there would be.

International presence in Palestine poses two significant threats to the Israeli government; it exposes the flaws of its narrative of the conflict and thereby risks compromising the smooth running of its actions. It is a challenge to its rhetoric of terrorism and fear, and it is challenging its future ability to monopolize the discourse and mobilize international support. Letting people engage with Palestine is the potential, the promise that they will find out the Palestinian truths, which would disrupt their peace in their projects of occupation and expansion. The Israeli government knows that spending time in Palestine with Palestinians can only create sympathy; like anywhere else, individuals will bond with each other, become attached to the life, to the land and the people, but still differently so as the oppressive and repressive situation of occupation hardly leaves one indifferent. The personal might very likely become political. The Israeli state does not wish internationals to invest themselves, their time, money, energy, and feelings in Palestine because, in the colonizer’s mind overpowered with security threats, engaging with Palestinians is dis-engaging with Israel, defending Palestinians is attacking Israel: “If you are Palestinian, and

if you are planning to help Palestinians ... in any shape or form, they would put you aside, question you, and maybe deny you entry. ... if you have the intention of helping Palestinians, which means unhelping Israel. If you feel for the Palestinians, they translate that as being an enemy of Israel.” (T.N.)

One of the things that enables Israelis to continue their occupation of Palestine is their persuasion of some powerful international players that their security (Israel’s and theirs) depends on it. Lipschutz notes that “security ...is meaningless without an ‘other’ to help specify the conditions of insecurity. This ‘other’ is made manifest through differences that create terror and collective resentment of difference--the state of fear--rather than a preferable coming to terms with the positive potentials of difference.” (1998, 10) Allowing access to Palestine endangers the hyper-reality that Israel has founded its legitimacy of actions upon because it exposes its Palestinian ‘other’ as other than what Israel claims it to be. As the ‘other’ becomes familiar and ‘normal’, the apparent ‘normalcy’ and necessity of its occupied condition will come into question. The greatest danger to Israel perhaps is that Palestinians become legitimate in their struggle, and that instead of simply revisiting Palestinians as terrorists, one could go so far as to revisit terrorists as illegitimate. Without this threatening ‘other’ to foster fear and terror, Israel will find difficult to convince its audience of the need for extra-judicial powers to counter this imagined ‘threat’. The securitization, occurring worldwide but intensely so in Israel, transforms a normal issue into a security one, allowing for “security measures” instead of normal measures to be taken in addressing the issue. Where the Israeli state is especially successful is that it is convincing its population (and several in the international community) *enough* that they do not actively move against the government’s actions. Resistance exists in Israel and internationally but it does not pose a significant *enough* threat to the state that it stops acting in the way that it is acting. Rather, the Israeli government works to limit that threat by limiting access to Palestine, by controlling who (internationals, Palestinians) and what (truths, discourses) goes in and out, even moving beyond its territorial control when it seeks to prevent certain events and speeches taking place abroad.

But we are abroad, now we are abroad, and there are many ways to overcome borders. Over-securitization betrays feelings of threats. When disruption is feared, disruption is made possible, because it is believed

to be possible by the other party and because it is already disrupting since it is feared. Litfin purports that “the supreme power is the power to delineate the boundaries of thought--an attribute not so much of specific agents as it is of discursive practices.” (1991, 18-19) We might not be able to reach the people who we initially wanted to reach, but we can reach those who need to listen and learn. There is disruptive power in storytelling, and tales of denied entries are always illustrative counter-narratives to the land of the free and democratic Israel.

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