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Organized Refugees and Fragmented Citizens:
A Comparative Ethnography of Marginality, Solidarity, and Politics across the Green Line

by

Silvia Pasquetti

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

Organized Refugees and Fragmented Citizens: A Comparative Ethnography of Marginality, Solidarity, and Politics across the Green Line

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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This study aims to specify the mechanisms by which sociolegal control affects group solidarity in two localities of urban marginality in Israel-Palestine: the Mahatta, a segregated Palestinian district in Lod, an Israeli “mixed” city, and the Jalazon refugee camp in the West Bank, only 20 miles from Lod. This research contrasts two distinct social morphologies: internal cohesion in the Jalazon camp and atomization in the Mahatta district. It also highlights the opposition between feelings of trust and pride in the camp and feelings of distrust and shame in the district. Both localities have internal lines of division. In the camp, there are divisions on the basis of place of origin, clan membership and political affiliation. In the urban district, there are divisions on the basis of ethnicity and oldtimer/newcomer status. Yet, Jalazon camp dwellers actively work to deactivate potentially paralyzing fractures, to develop and preserve internal solidarity, prevent or quench camp infighting, and pursue collective actions while symbolically investing in the camp as a source of dignity and pride. By contrast, in the Mahatta district, residents experience social fragmentation, mutual distrust, and routine violence and blame one another for their failed attempts at collective organizing.

I explain these different profiles of group solidarity, moral worldviews, violence, and politics as products of their distinct regimes of sociolegal control. By “sociolegal control,” I mean the control exercised by the institutions of the ruling power and enshrined in its legal norms and dominant discourses. I argue that the Jalazon camp dwellers navigate a regime of sociolegal control that has (unintended) collectivizing effects while the Mahatta residents negotiate their existence against a regime of sociolegal control that has (mostly intended) divisive effects. There is a triadic structure of authority at work in the refugee camp, which includes the Israeli army, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) and the Palestinian Authority (PA); camp dwellers are pushed by all three to valorize their group solidarity as a fundamental resource to both nourish from within and defend collectively against external threats. In contrast to the processes in play between Jalazon refugees and the authorities that influence their solidarity in the camp, the Israeli state’s security apparatus is the only institutional actor at work in the Mahatta district, and I argue that it serves to create social fragmentation and mutual suspicion among the urban residents, thus pushing them towards strategies of individual exit.

This study has a threefold relevance for theorizing mechanisms of group solidarity among marginalized populations in their connection to the role of the state as a “group maker.” First, I propose that a given state can distribute different techniques of control towards different segments of a population cast or kept outside of the sphere of official or full membership. This focus on the state’s distribution of forms of sociolegal control towards subcategories within an “unwanted” population helps us understand the formation of internal cleavages among people that otherwise recognize nationhood as a principle of membership. Second, by focusing on place-specific forms of sociolegal control, this study problematizes two distinctions: that between democratic and illiberal forms of state and that between the post-industrial Global North and the Global South. Using localities of urban marginality—refugee camps, squatter settlements, and urban districts of relegation—as a terrain for the theorization of group formation draws attention to how modern states, including democratic ones, might use illiberal practices and discourses driven by ethnoracial or ethnonational motivations towards segments of their citizenry. A third related theoretical point emerging from this study is that legal categorization, especially the opposition between the categories of refugees and citizens, does not have a fixed content in terms of its effects on group solidarity and political identities.

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**Introduction:
Structures and Experiences of Marginality across the Green Line**

He is not clean (*huwa mish ndif*), don't speak with him
Nasser (Mahatta district)

I like the camp (*mohaiaim*) because I like its people (*ahl al-mohaiaim*)
Yusef (Jalazon refugee camp)

Residents of the Mahatta district in the Israeli town of Lod are all Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, and most of them are poor. They often say things like: “Here [in the Mahatta], you never know who is in front of you;” or “Here, you can't speak politics;” clearly expressing feelings of distrust and fear of expressing political ideas in front of their neighbors. Across the Green Line, which serves as the “border” between Israel and the West Bank¹, another population of poor Palestinians under Israeli rule—refugees living in the Jalazon camp, most of them originally from Lod²—do not experience the same mix of social dissolution, distrust, and fear. Instead, these stateless camp dwellers in the West Bank perceive themselves as members of a worthy social group, develop trustful relationships with their neighbors, and engage into collective forms of politics.

What explains these differences in forms, levels, and mechanisms of social cohesion between these two poor Palestinian populations under Israeli rule? I will suggest that answering this question requires studying the distinct relationships that the refugees of Jalazon and the residents of the Mahatta district have with the institutional actors that manage the two locales, particularly the Israeli state. Therefore, this study has a dual focus on both the institutional practices and discourses at work in each site and the social and political lives of refugees and “minority citizens.” I examine and link the structures of sociolegal control and the dispossession and oppression experienced in the two localities. Based on a fourteen-month ethnography within and across the city and the refugee camp, this study explores the logic of internal fragmentation and mutual distrust among Palestinians in Lod and compares it to the social mechanisms at work in creating and preserving social cohesion among refugees in Jalazon, only 20 miles away. I also show how these differences in social cohesion affect when and how the populations living in Jalazon and Mahatta solve their internal disputes, and engage in politics or in violence. Specifically, I study how Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Territories and “minority citizens” of Israel navigate the distinct matrix of institutional practices and discourses that shape their proximate surroundings.

I explain these differences in social cohesion, political identity and practices, and frequency and directions of violent episodes in each site as products of their distinct regimes of sociolegal

¹ As I will explain in chapter 1, the West Bank is part of the Palestinian Occupied Territories, which have been under Israeli military rule since 1967.

² Palestinian refugees of Jalazon were expelled from Lod and from about 36 villages around the town during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war which led to the creation of the Israeli state. Chapter 2 will discuss the intertwined history of the camp and the city and situate it within the broader history of the Israeli rule over Palestinians from 1948 to the present.

control. By “sociolegal control,” I mean the control exercised by the institutions of the ruling power and enshrined in its legal norms and dominant discourses (Cohen and Scull 1983). I argue that the Jalazon camp dwellers navigate a regime of sociolegal control that has (unintended) collectivizing effects while the Mahatta residents negotiate their existence against a regime of sociolegal control that has (mostly intended) divisive effects. There is a triadic structure of authority at work in the refugee camp, which includes the Israeli army, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA)³ and the Palestinian Authority (PA)⁴; camp dwellers are pushed by all three to valorize their group solidarity as a fundamental resource to both nourish from within and defend collectively against external threats. First, the Israeli army defines camps as sites of terrorist activities and targets them more than other West Bank localities, thus generating a collective experience of suffering among camp dwellers against an illegitimate and arbitrary external force. Second, the UNRWA strengthens group solidarity among camp dwellers by negotiating its employment, educational, and health services with each camp separately, which facilitates the development of shared interests among camp dwellers. Embedded in an everyday reality marked by the Israeli army’s intermittent attacks and arrests, the services run by the UNRWA inside the camp are considered by the camp dwellers as fundamental resources in their collective struggle. Further, the UNRWA’s humanitarian role helps prevent the criminalization of the camp dwellers around their use of housing and shared space inside the camp. The recent establishment of the PA in 1994 has partially changed the overall collectivizing logic of the interplay between the Israeli army and the UNRWA. The inability of the PA to protect the camp dwellers against the Israeli army, its orientation towards urban middle class Palestinians, and its stigmatization of poverty have reinforced the external boundaries between the camp and the rest of the West Bank, especially the nearby city of Ramallah. Yet, the PA has also reactivated internal lines of division among camp dwellers—especially political factionalism and kin-based associationism—that, while never totally absent in the camp, had previously been more successfully deactivated by the work of camp dwellers.

In contrast to the processes in play between Jalazon refugees and the authorities that influence their solidarity in the camp, the Israeli state’s security apparatus is the only institutional actor at work in the Mahatta district, and I argue that it serves to create social fragmentation and mutual suspicion among the urban residents, thus pushing them towards strategies of individual exit. In particular, the security and penal apparatus of the state criminalizes Palestinians in the Mahatta district using a discourse that mixes petty criminality and potential terrorism. However, the state does not match its dominant discourse with collective forms of punishment. The Israeli security agencies (GSS)⁵ distribute rewards and punishment individually according to its perception of each resident’s attitude towards the state. As a result of this, Palestinians in the Mahatta district tend to cultivate one-on-one relations with Israeli police officers and security agents while distancing themselves from those Palestinians deemed “hostile” by the authorities; these are the key mechanisms for accessing housing and employment resources while escaping the punitive

³ In 1949 the U.N. General Assembly establishes the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to assist the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who had become refugees as an outcome of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

⁴ The Palestinian Authority (PA) is an institution of limited self-rule for Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, which was established in 1994 as a result of the 1993 Oslo Accords between the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and Israel. The PLO has been the main body of representation for Palestinians since its foundation in exile in 1964.

⁵ The main Israeli security agency is the General Security Services (GSS), also known with the Hebrew acronyms of *Shabak* and *Shin Bet*. In this study I will use GSS, *Shabak*, and *Shin Bet* interchangeably.

measures of the state. The pervasive fear of being labeled and thus treated as a “dangerous” citizen is enhanced by the state’s pressure on individual residents to monitor other residents and by its relocation of a great number of suspected “collaborators” (informers) from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Lod.

Before addressing the two key concepts that I use in this study—sociolegal control and group formation—and delving into my explanation of the mechanisms by which sociolegal control has different effects on social cohesion in the camp and the district, I would like to briefly discuss the threefold relevance of this research for theorizing mechanisms of group solidarity among marginalized populations in their connection to the role of the state as a “group maker” (Bourdieu 1989, 1991).

First, the case of Palestinians under Israeli rule shows how, far from being homogenous, state rule over stigmatized and “unwanted” populations can take different forms in different contexts. Specifically, it draws attention to how a single state can distribute different techniques of control over different segments of a population that it has incorporated but that it does not consider as full and legitimate members of its citizenry. It points to how this distribution of distinct forms of state control can, in turn, affect group solidarity and politics among the ruled population. This is particularly evident in cases of colonial rule. Focusing on the legal apparatus of the state, Mamdani (1996, 2001) has contended that official colonial categories developed by British and French rulers in colonial Africa shaped the political identities of the colonized and have also continued to affect politics in post-colonial societies. In his words: “There is a language particular to the modern state, including its colonial version. That is the language of law. Legal distinctions are different from all others in that they are enforced by the state, and then are in turn reproduced by institutions that structure citizen participation” (Mamdani 2001:653–654). Along similar lines but shifting attention from legal differentiation to class status, Go (2004, 2007, 2008) has studied the distribution of American colonial policies in the Philippines and Puerto Rico with particular attention to how colonial rulers related to the elites of the ruled populations.

My research builds on and merges these two models of duality—of citizens and subjects or of elites and non-elites—to explore how the Israeli state distributes different ruling strategies among segments of Palestinians along the axes of legal status and class as well as place. Palestinians in Lod are not just “minority citizens” and they are not just poor; unlike most Palestinian citizens of Israel, they also live as urban minorities in a city with a Jewish majority. Furthermore, the Mahatta district is built primarily on state-owned land and defined in state and public discourses (and also among its residents) as a dangerous and “illegal” zone. Similarly, refugees living in West Bank camps experience a unique form of sociolegal control (even among other West Bank Palestinians), which combines the UNRWA’s daily management of poverty with the Israeli army’s attacks and arrests.

Second, by focusing on place-specific forms of sociolegal control, this study problematizes two distinctions: that between democratic and illiberal forms of state and that between the post-industrial Global North and the Global South. Using localities of urban marginality—refugee camps, squatter settlements, and urban districts of relegation—as a terrain for the theorization of group formation draws attention to how modern states, including democratic ones, might use illiberal practices and discourses driven by ethnoracial or ethnonational motivations towards segments of their citizenry. Scholars have contended that the penal apparatus of the state has become the main, and at times only, state agency dealing with stigmatized populations in post-industrial Western societies (Wacquant 2009a, 2010a; Graham 2010; Beckett and Herbert 2011). Recent works have pointed to the increase in militarized techniques of control over poor

populations in South America (Auyero 2000; Caldeira 2000; Wacquant 2008a; Souza 2008). In their discussion of the concept of “social control,” Scheerer and Hess (1997: 130) also identify a tendency towards a bifurcated system of state control in post-industrial Western societies with “brutal top-down control measures” playing a major role in the management of those at the bottom of the social order along both class and ethnoracial or ethnonational lines: “Internal polarization of [Western post-industrial] societies and the creation of an ever-deepening gap between the fortresses of the affluent and the migrating miserable masses are developments that are resulting in a marked bifurcation of control styles. The prospects are normalization and de-institutionalization for the ‘in-groups’ and an increasing brutalization at the margins for the ‘out-groups.’” Furthermore, other scholars have conceptualized penal, humanitarian or welfare practices as complementary dimensions of broader regimes of institutional control over marginalized and stigmatized populations in both the post-industrial North (Ticktin 2005; Wacquant 2008a, 2009b) and in the Global South (Malkki 1995; Roy 2010; Agier 2011; Fassin 2011).

The Palestinian-Israeli case, and particularly the comparison between the urban district inside Israel and the refugee camp at its edge, straddles both the divide between democratic and illiberal regimes and the divide between “advanced urban marginality” (Wacquant 2008a) of the post-industrial North and urban marginality in the Global South. On the one hand, as Abu El-Haj (2010: 40) puts it, the Israeli state has “both liberal and distinctly illiberal dimensions: it is a colonial state and, for its Jewish citizens, a liberal democracy; it is governed by the rule of law and it operates with a sustained suspension of that law, under the rubric of military rule and the guise of security requirements. The Israeli state is that complex multifaceted matrix of forms and tactics of rule.” On the other hand, Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories also mix North and South formations. Israel is a post-industrial country and Lod can be defined as a site of “advanced urban marginality.” However, not unlike the rest of the West Bank, the Jalazon camp more properly belongs to the Global South. Thus, my comparative field study of these two localities allows me to bridge studies of marginalized populations in post-industrial cities and works on urban marginality in the Global South. In turn, connecting these two bodies of literature allows me to bring together themes that are often kept separate: criminal and political violence, penal and humanitarian interventions, marginality in cities and in camps.

A third related theoretical point emerging from this study is that legal categorization, especially the opposition between the categories of refugees and citizens, does not have a fixed content in terms of its effects on group solidarity and political identities. Arendt (1979: 297) argued that state citizenship is the only layer protecting human beings from expulsion from “humanity.” T. H. Marshall (1950) conceived of legal citizenship as a first step in a linear progression towards acquisition of civil, political, and social rights. If state citizenship is often considered a source of political empowerment, refugee status and refugee camps are central to the theorization of “bare life” and “spaces of exception” (Agamben 2005). However, state citizenship does not automatically have a protective role against dehumanization and dispossession. Segments of a state’s citizenry might become “dangerous” in the eyes of state rulers for their political ideals and practices (Panourgia 2009). State definitions of nationhood might lead to unequal citizenship regimes that differentiate access to citizenship as well as citizenship rights according to specific criteria of membership, for example, along ethnoreligious or ethnoracial lines (Brubaker 1992; Nakano Glenn 2011). At the same time, refugee status can be experienced as a source of visibility in the international arena to be used in projects of political emancipation or, by contrast, it can be perceived as externally imposed legal

categorization that clashes with how those categorized as refugees think of themselves. This is particularly true when the categories of refugees and citizens are attached to dispossessed populations negotiating their existence against powerful ruling agencies.

In this regard as well, the case of the Palestinians under Israeli rule is an excellent one to problematize the dominant perspectives on the effects of citizenship and statelessness on the political lives of marginalized populations. Scholars have contended that Palestinians inside Israel are “citizens without citizenship” (Blecher 2005) and that their citizenship is “hollow” (Sultany 2003; Jamal 2007) Indeed, as I will explain in chapter 1, the state’s definition of Jewish Israeli nationhood shapes a bifurcated citizenship regime, which differentiates between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens and abridges the rights of Palestinian citizens in the main realms of life including housing, education, employment, politics, welfare, and security. By contrast, the relationship between the UNRWA and the Palestinian camp dwellers in different regions where the UNRWA operates has evolved from a top-down approach directed at the depoliticization of the refugee’s predicament to a much more complex relationship that has often been mobilized by camp dwellers in their struggle for access to basic material resources and political recognition (Al-Husseini 2000; Peteet 2005; Knudsen 2009; Farah 2010). This study contributes to the specification of the conditions under which legal categorization—especially citizenship and statelessness—has empowering or disempowering effects on marginalized individuals and collectivities. Specifically, I suggest that understanding how and to what extent the state and other ruling agencies affect group solidarity and political identities and practices among marginalized populations requires shifting attention from abstract legal categories to the concrete practices and discourses that the ruling agencies attach to these categories in relation to specific places and people. This shift, in turn, allows one to examine how the state can differentiate its forms of control and then distribute them towards different subcategories of citizens and non-citizens; it also allows one to investigate how this process affects group life and political mobilization among subcategories of the ruled population.

Sociolegal Control

In this section, I first argue that existing state-centered theories of group formation cannot fully explain processes of group solidarity and political identities and practices among Palestinians under Israeli rule. I then give a short overview of the genealogy of the concept of “social control” as it has been used in sociology. Third, I explain how I use *sociolegal* control—rather than social control—to refer to practices that are grounded in the state and other ruling agencies. Drawing on my comparison between the camp and the district, I also highlight two ways to differentiate forms of sociolegal control: the united or divided structure of ruling agencies and the relative legitimacy that these agencies have in their relationships with the ruled populations.

The State and group formation: going beyond legal social constructivism

Unlike the early “primordialist” approach to social groups, which posited the “natural” existence of groups on the basis of “ascriptive” identities (Shils 1957; Geertz 1973; Horowitz 1985), current constructivist approaches to group formation highlight how social groups can be constructed out of a multiplicity of potentially available principles of membership including class, ethnicity, race, and nationhood. These approaches, which focus more on the making rather than the unmaking of social groups, build on Bourdieu’s (1989, 1991) theory of group formation as the outcome of symbolic struggles over categorization. Bourdieu (1991:221) identifies the state as a powerful “group marker” that is often able to “impose the legitimate definition of the

divisions of the social world.” Brubaker (2004) and Loveman (2005) expand this Bourdieusian framework to theorize how the symbolic power of the state, the state power to categorize people, creates social groups.⁶ Brubaker (2004:8) also contends that a focus on how the state symbolically creates groups works as an antidote against “groupism,” that is, “the tendency to represent the social and cultural world as a multichrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial, or cultural blocs.” The main argument of this Bourdieusian approach is that “official categories can contribute to ‘making up people’ or ‘nominating into existence’ new kinds of persons ... Conversely, a policy of *not* classifying or counting by ethnicity or race can impede group formation” (Brubaker 2009:33 emphasis in original). This state-centered constructivist approach has significant explanatory power. Indeed, scholars have studied how state categorization practices (naming, recording, counting, documenting and classifying) have affected peoples’ subjectivities and involvement in political action (Starr 1987, 1992; Petersen 1997; Scott, Tehranian and Mathias 2002; Loveman 2005, 2007; Markowitz 2007). Extending the focus on the symbolic power of the state to colonial regimes, Mamdani (1996, 2001) has contended that colonial official categories developed by British and French rulers in colonial Africa affected political and communal solidarities among the ruled populations. Recent works on colonial states have also examined how different actors within the colonial bureaucracies have engaged in classificatory struggles to categorize the ruled populations and to develop policies to manage them (Comaroff 1998; Goh 2007; Steinmetz 2007).

Yet state actors do not always operate without resistance. Nor do they always rely on categorization practices to attempt to mold the political terrain on which they operate. The analytic exclusivity given to the state symbolic power tends to obfuscate the struggles over group-making projects between state and non-state actors. This tendency is evident in the “cognitive turn” taken by these theories, which link people’s cognitive dispositions to the available official categories while detaching them from the social and political struggles in which people take part (Hirschfeld 1996; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004).⁷ Another analytic problem is that the neglect of the role of non-state actors prevents the theorization of how, beyond their classificatory practices, states intervene to block group-making projects from below through the coordinated distribution of strategies of inclusion and exclusion. The critique here developed contributes to recent theorizing about group formation beyond the symbolic power of the state (Wimmer 2008; Bailey 2008; Tugal 2009).

The question of the limits of the symbolic power of the state to shape group formation clearly emerges from the case of Palestinians under Israeli rule. A couple of examples will suffice. The Israeli state’s structure of official categories denies nationhood as a conceptual framework for Palestinian citizens of Israel. Precluded from symbolic access to nationhood, Palestinians in Israel are inserted into five ethnoreligious official categories: Muslims, Christians, Bedouins, Druze, and Circassians. Yet, since the 1970s, nationhood has become a salient principle for symbolic membership and political organizing for Palestinians in Israel (Rouhana 1997; Ghanem 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002; Pappé 2011). Along similar lines, shifting attention to the legal

⁶ Brubaker (2004:12) defines a social group as “a mutually interacting, mutually recognizing, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity, and capacity for concerted action.”

⁷ Riley (2006:383) draws attention to how “the post-Lukácsian-Marxist tradition” already worked from a “non-groupist” assumption. In addition to a privileged focus on class over ethnicity, the main difference between this tradition and the current state-centered theories of group formation is that the former studied the effects of “social structure” on group formation while the latter focuses on how the state “structure of categories” creates social groups.

categorization of place, Eyal (1996:420) shows that the categorization of Palestinian localities in Israel as “villages” did not prevent the urbanization of these places and their centrality as sites of grassroots organization around nationhood: “In 1976, Orientalists and government experts were completely taken by surprise, when the ‘committee for national direction’ (composed of ‘village’ mayors) organized mass demonstrations to protest government plans to confiscate more Palestinian lands.”⁸

The study of recent changes in the cognitive schemas of poor West Bank Palestinians also requires a theoretical framework that encompasses the state structure of categories along with other social structures as explanatory factors of group formation. Indeed, while nationhood constituted a salient principle of collective membership and mobilization in the 1980s, especially during the First *Intifada* (Uprising), the nationalizing discourse promoted by the PA—an officially recognized “national” authority of self-rule—since 1994, combined with the uninterrupted use of coercive means by the Israeli army, has engendered a resentful anti-elitist and classed counter-discourse among poor Palestinian populations. Thus, explaining the cognitive dispositions of these populations requires both a study of the conceptual categories available to them and also an examination of their deteriorating material status and their exposure to new (middle-class) lifestyles under the PA.

Given these limits of the Israeli state’s symbolic power to shape trajectories of group formation among Palestinians, the literature on Palestinians under Israeli rule has examined how the state has attempted to shape Palestinians’ political identities and practices through other, mainly coercive, strategies including political surveillance (Zureik 1979, 2001; Lustick 1980; Sa’di 2003; Cohen 2010), differential access to state benefits (Kanaaneh 2009), and mass arrests and incarceration (Hajjar 2005; Nashif 2008). Scholars have also conceptualized the PA as an institution through which the Israeli state exercises indirect rule over the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Usher 1995; Said 1996, 2001, 2004; Rabbani 2006; Weinberger 2006; Gordon 2008; Ghanem 2010). Further, recent works have linked the creation of the PA to the neoliberal turn of the Israeli economy (Shafir and Peled 2000; Lagerquist 2003; Peled 2004; Bouillon 2004; Hanafi and Tabar 2005; Clarno 2008). In other words, without explicitly engaging the theoretical literature on group formation, these works go beyond the symbolic power of the state and point to the different group-making effects of distinct coercive practices.⁹

This comparative ethnography of two poor Palestinian populations across legal statuses (refugees versus citizens of Israel) and spatial formations (refugee camp versus informal district mainly built on state-owned land) aims to draw attention to how the Israeli state not only introduces legal differences but also how it develops place-specific techniques of control. I also aim to situate the forms of sociolegal control at work in the refugee camp and in the district within the broader distribution of Israeli ruling strategies towards different segments of

⁸ According to Eyal, Israeli authorities have continued to mobilize “the discourse on the Arab village” despite its failure to control political change among Palestinians because its primary goal is not to control Palestinians but to create a separate (“Western-modern”) Israeli identity for the Jewish citizens of the state. While this line of inquiry is interesting, this article draws attention to how different state strategies have attempted to create separate identities *among* Palestinians (both within and across legal statuses).

⁹ Nashif (2008) shows how Israeli coercive strategies can have unintended effects by examining how Israeli prisons have become laboratories for group solidarity among Palestinian prisoners from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. By contrast, Kanaaneh (2009) examines the weakening of group solidarity among Palestinian citizens due to their different relations to the Israeli army and border police: Muslim and Christian Palestinians are excluded from the Israeli security apparatus while Bedouin Palestinians can volunteer in specific “ethnic” units inside the Israeli army and Druze Palestinians are subject to mandatory conscription.

Palestinian citizens and non-citizens in both its historical continuity and changes from 1948 to the present.

Two main perspectives on social control: Informal versus Formal; Socialization versus Punishment

The term “social control” takes on different meanings according to different disciplines: “Historians and political scientists restrict the concept to the repression of political opposition, while sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists invariably talk in broader and non-political terms” (Cohen 1985: 2). Within sociology, this tendency towards a broader use of “social control” is particularly evident in the American tradition (Hudson 1997: 451). For example, first, Ross (1896a, 1896b, 1896c, [1901] 1969) and, then in the 1920s, the Chicago School of urban sociology used this concept to refer to a wide range of both formal and informal restraints producing “social order” with particular emphasis on socialization in the households, schools, and neighborhoods. Adopting a modernization theory approach, they argued that the breakdown of social control leads to crime and deviance (Sumner 1997: 10). The emphasis on socialization extended to the role of the state. They considered the state as the actor that was called to intervene to deal with deviance produced by the weakening of informal practices of control mainly within the family. Ross explicitly differentiated between Western liberal democracies—where social order was, according to him, built mainly through formal and informal practices of socialization—and colonial regimes where militaristic coercion destroyed the existing social order among the colonized populations, which, he portrayed, as “having the primitive instinct of friendly association” (quoted in Sumner 1997: 17).

Black’s (1983; 1984: 5) “general theory of social control” also defines social control in broad terms but, instead of pairing it with social order, it matches it up with deviance: “social control refers...to how people define and respond to deviant behavior...social control is present whenever and wherever people express grievances against their fellows.” Black mainly focuses on informal practices outside the state and outside the law—ranging from violence, to informal dispute resolution, and to gossip—that people use in their reactions against behaviors they perceive as deviant.

Since the 1960s, another perspective on social control, mainly coming from Europe (Melossi 1990) and Latin America (Bergalli 1997), has squarely placed the state at the center of the study of how criminality and deviance is created and managed. Adopting a political economy perspective, Rusche and Kirchheimer (1968) and, then, Melossi and Pavarini (1981) proposed a ‘labor market’ theory of punishment positing a direct link between the type and intensity of state punishment and the fluctuations of the labor market: “Penalties in times of high unemployment...become not only more severe, but also less constructive, with more emphasis on simple containment, and less on education, training, and therapy” (Hudson 1997: 455). Labeling theory also contended that the act of labeling “deviants” and “criminals” by state agents such as police officers and judges is a productive act that can change both the social identity and behavior of the person labeled as well as how other people relate to him or her (Becker 1963; Goffman 1963; Lemert 1967).

In line with this analytic shift from informal to formal techniques of control, urban sociologists use the term social control to refer to state punitive approaches to urban poverty in post-industrial Western cities with particular attention to changes in urban architecture with the use of fences, gates, walls, and armed personnel to create areas that are off-limits for the urban poor (Mitchell 1997; Beckett 2010).

Foucault (1977) constitutes an exception to this state-centered approach to control and punishment. While his work fits well in the labeling perspective, he did not single out state power; nor did he identify specific categories of people—like the working class for Melossi and Pavarini—as particular targets of what he defined as “disciplinary strategies.”¹⁰ Recent works on surveillance mechanisms via technological devices mainly operate along the lines of Foucault’s argument about the diffusion of disciplinary mechanisms in late modernity (Lyon 1994). Similarly, Garland’s (2001) analysis of the rising concern with penal forms of control in Western societies does not center on the role of the state in creating and implementing punitive policies towards marginalized people.

The sociolegal control of marginalized populations: access to material and symbolic resources and legitimacy

In this study I use *sociolegal* control—rather than social control—to refer to practices and discourses that are grounded in the state. While sociolegal control is not restricted to the management of marginalized people, my focus here is on how the state deals with populations that it has incorporated yet defined as problematic and potentially dangerous. I also include the policies pursued by other ruling agencies such as humanitarian and international organizations that often complement state agencies developing forms of control over marginalized populations, particularly in the global South. Indeed, a crucial difference between the two forms of sociolegal control at work in the district and in the camp is the monopoly exercised by the Israeli state’s security apparatus in the former and the presence of a divided structure of authority centered on the tension between the Israeli army and the UNRWA in the latter. The UNRWA offers a source of material support but also claims and protection for the camp dwellers while the residents of the district can negotiate their access to both material and symbolic resources only through their relationships with security and police officers.

In addition to exploring how a divided versus a unified structure of authority affects social cohesion by shaping mechanisms of access to material and symbolic resources, my comparative analysis also draws attention to the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of the ruling agencies. Indeed, in the district, the interventions of the Israeli security agencies—what most residents define as “Shabak education”—are deeply intrusive but not fully illegitimate because the state monopolizes the discourse about personal and collective safety and because the Israeli police offer a visible and more legitimate face to the actions of the security services by promising to address the residents’ need for protection. For example, when a foreign philanthropist visited the district,¹¹ a resident complained to her about the presence of a police station in the heart of a newly built housing project inside the district. The answer, “But people everywhere in the world need the police,” prompted other residents to nod and made it more difficult for the complaining resident to articulate his critical position against the police as an agency that disenfranchises rather than protects the Palestinians living in Lod. By contrast, the Israeli army is clearly perceived by camp dwellers as an illegitimate and arbitrary force that expresses the power of an external and hostile sovereign. In search of protection and safety, camp dwellers look elsewhere, towards the UNRWA and also within the layers of leadership inside the camp applying

¹⁰ Cohen (1979) also theorized the emergence of a disciplinary society at the urban level—“the punitive city”—where techniques of control would be diffuse (rather than imposed by the state) and would be exercised on all city dwellers.

¹¹ This brief visit to the district was organized by a new foundation that attempts to use a multiculturalist platform to attract donors and convince them to invest in the city.

customary forms of dispute resolution. Building on Schmitt's (1996: 32-35) argument that political life is about "the ever present possibility of the friend-and-enemy grouping," I argue that "the ever present possibility of combat" attached to the distinction between friend and enemy is a concrete reality in the camp as all camp dwellers are considered "enemies;" while it remains potential in the district as the state demands from the residents to distance themselves from those individually singled out as "enemies." Chapter 5 will develop this comparative analytic framework and will also discuss the relationship between sociolegal control and space. Here I want to draw attention to how this study conceives of both individuality and group formation as products of a set of broader relationships and explores the role of the ruling agencies in shaping these relationships.

Group Formation

After 12 July 1789 the people of Paris were in a state of revolt. Their anger had deep causes, but as yet these had affected the people only in their common impotence (cold, hunger, etc. were all suffered either in resignation – serial behavior falsely presenting itself as individual virtue – or in unorganized outbursts, riots, etc.) On the basis of what exterior circumstances were groups to be constituted?

A group...disappears either by fragmentation (dispersal) or by ossification (inertia).

- Sartre [1960] 2004: 350, 407

This study poses the questions of how social groups are made and unmade in localities of urban marginality. I posit that group formation (and its variations) is an intermediate mechanism between sociolegal control exercised from the top and moral worldviews, interpersonal violence, and political action at the bottom of the urban order. Put differently, group formation connects the other two axes of analysis of this study: sociolegal control from above and political practices and identities as well as uses of violence on the ground. My exploration of group formation in the camp and in the urban district includes both morphological and social psychological features. Thus, I aim to explain why, in the camp, social cohesion is matched by feelings of trust towards neighbors and pride towards the camp while in the district, social atomization is matched by feelings of distrust towards neighbors and shame towards the district as an unworthy place.

The question of the creation of social groups is a prominent theme both in classical sociological theories (Toennies [1887] 1988; Durkheim [1893] 1933, [1897] 1951) and in contemporary political and social theories (Sartre [1960] 2004; Bourdieu 1989, 1991). However, classical theories tended to address issues of social cohesion and group solidarity within a linear historical trajectory from pre-modern to modern societies. By contrast, Bourdieu's (1991: 229) theory of group-making as the outcome of symbolic struggles over "the very representation of the social world" does not operate around the opposition between tradition and modernity. Yet, Bourdieu focuses on the making of social groups more than their unmaking. While he recognizes the theoretical possibility of the unmaking of social groups, its emphasis on the symbolic power of the state pushes him to focus on two main objects of inquiry: how the state creates social groups by naming them into existence and how it prevents their emergence by withholding the symbolic resources that are necessary for their development. In this regard, Sartre's theory of "seriality" and "groups-in-fusion" allows more room for theorizing the unmaking of social

groups. With “serial behavior, feelings, thoughts” Sartre refers to actions and ideas that are “imitated by everyone but never adopted by anyone” (310): “A series reveals itself to everyone when they perceive in themselves and Others their common inability to eliminate material differences” (277). Unlike “series,” “fused groups” or “groups-in-fusion” emerge “through the individual discovery of common action as the sole means of reaching common objectives” (387). The creation of groups is a reversible process. Actually, for Sartre, group formation often lasts for a short period of time as in the emergence of a guerilla unit or in episodes of collective peasant revolts. But it can also last for a long period of time and indeed Sartre defines the state itself as “a reified group-in-fusion” (Jameson [1960] 2004: xxxii).

Another aspect of Sartre’s (350-351) work that I use as a theoretical resource in this study is his emphasis on the emergence of bonds of solidarity under conditions of scarcity of resources:

Neither common need, nor common praxis, nor common objectives can define a community unless it makes itself into a community by feeling individual need as common need, and by projecting itself, in the internal unification of a common integration, towards objectives which it produces as common. Without famine, this group would have constituted itself: but why does it define itself as common struggle against common need?

The emphasis on scarcity of resources is particularly important for this study as I aim to explain how and why the relationship between individual and collective needs varies among two populations of poor Palestinians under Israeli rule, both struggling to obtain access to basic resources from employment to housing.

While Sartre’s *Critique* helps conceptualize group formation as a reversible and unstable process, Bourdieu draws attention to how the state plays an important role in processes of group formation. With my concept of “sociolegal control” I extend Bourdieu’s state-centered approach to non-categorizing practices. Specifically, I theorize the effects of different coercive and humanitarian measures on group formation. While a full explanation would require the analysis of the cumulative effects of the distinct discourses and practices making up each regime of sociolegal control as they interact with each other, let me briefly mention how two distinct practices of state control affect group formation in different ways: the use of informers by the Israeli security agencies in the district and the attacks by the Israeli army in the camp.

My research in urban Israel shows how the use of “collaborators” (informer) by the Israeli security agencies contributes to hinder group formation among Palestinians in the Mahatta district. Already existing divisions among Palestinian urban minorities—such as the divide in the Mahatta district between those who have lived there since the 1950s and “newcomers” arrived since the 1960s—are deepened by the residents’ concerns that their new neighbors might be in contact with the *Shabak*. Indeed, during my fieldwork, I was impressed by how ubiquitous discussions of “informer” and “the Shabak” are in the everyday lives of the residents of the district and how quickly rumors are circulated about those individuals who have obtained a teaching job, received a license for opening a mini-market, or secured the early release of a relative from prison. This argument resonates with the few works that have looked at the impact of the use of “informer” on the communal lives of stigmatized civilian populations (Rosenfeld, Jacob, and Wright 2003; Natapoff 2009).

By contrast, I argue that the Israeli military attacks and arrests inside the camp and the presence of the Jewish settlement of Beit-El opposite the camp—which includes a military court

and a large deposit of military vehicles—strengthen the refugees’ perception of unity and their understanding of shared interests in the face of constant, hostile military presence. My focus on place-specific coercive practices also deals with data about how the Israeli army treats different localities of the Palestinian Occupied Territories—disproportionally targeting refugee camps and certain cities (Johnson 2005, p. 92; Taraki and Giacaman 2006, p. 50)—and thus qualify works on how incarceration has created a collective experience of suffering among all Palestinians of the Occupied Territories (Hajjar 2005; Nashif 2008). The role of the prison in creating shared interests is also central to Zinoman’s (2001) argument that the colonial prison in Vietnam was crucial for the creation of an anti-colonial movement against the French rulers.

This argument of the different effects of coercion on group formation builds on and extends Wacquant’s (2010a, p. 211) argument that the prison is a core state capacity and that penalty is a productive power in order to specify how different types of penal policies—including underpolicing, overpolicing, hyper incarceration, technologically based surveillance, and the use of police informers—facilitate or prevent group formation. Thus, for example, unlike the group-making effects of the colonial experience of hyper-incarceration in Vietnam and the Palestinian Occupied Territories, scholars have contended that the hyper-incarceration experienced by African Americans in US cities has undermined their group and family lives (Clear 2007; Comfort 2008; Goffman 2009). Thus, a more comprehensive theory of group formation would explain under what conditions hyper-incarceration weakens a social group and under what conditions it actually creates a group where there was a population. Furthermore, my theorization of the link between sociolegal control and group formation also includes an analysis of the interventions of humanitarian agencies, which are especially active among displaced and refugee populations and other dispossessed populations, in order to understand their role in group formation and how they interact with state forms of policing.

Group Formation and Forms of Adaptations to Marginality

The third axis of analysis of this research, after sociolegal control and group formation, gives theoretical relevance to “the view from below:” the micro-processes that inform the constitution of political identities and practices as well as the formation of categories of perception of self, others, and nationhood and the formation of standards of right and wrong in the two sites. Specifically, I study the link between levels and mechanisms of social cohesion and moral worldviews, political practices, and informal dispute resolution among camp dwellers and urban residents. My goal is to show that political practices and moral worldviews do not develop and acquire potency in a vacuum; rather, political and cultural adaptations to and contestation of marginality take different shapes under different social and political conditions. Ultimately, I argue that structures and experiences of marginality co-vary across places. Through the concept of group formation, I connect the workings and logic of distinct forms of sociolegal control of marginalized populations and the development of subjective meanings and lines of conduct on the ground. Let me sketch the analysis of this intermediate role of social cohesion that I will develop in chapters 3 and 4 respectively for the camp and the urban district.

Informal dispute resolution and uses and directions of violence

My definition of sociolegal control excludes informal practices of control among family members and neighbors. Yet, in line with my dual focus on the structures and experiences of marginality, I establish a link between how sociolegal control affects social cohesion and how

people interpret and treat internal conflict. Take, for example, the practices of informal dispute resolution that camp dwellers of Jalazon use to police themselves. The use of these informal practices, including the use of collective forms of punishment against the families of those who have harmed other camp dwellers, cannot be explained in terms of “traditional” or “pre-modern” values. By contrast, building on Nader’s (1990) model linking external rule and internal dispute resolution among colonized populations, I address the question of how camp dwellers deal with internal conflict in the camp within their process of adaptation to a form of a sociolegal control that pushes them to valorize and protect their social cohesion. A similar insight on the link between forms of rule from above and informal dispute resolution emerges from Scheper-Hughes’s (1995) and Crais’ (1998) works on “popular justice” under Apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, I compare the forms and levels of violence against outsiders in the two sites under investigation in relation to their differences in processes of group formation.

Politics

Scholars have studied the role of state practices of control, from repression to surveillance, in shaping political protest and social movements (Marx 1970, 1979; Wilson 1977; Boykoff 2006; Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller 2005; Starr and Fernandez 2008). This study extends this focus on the link between sociolegal control and politics to the political practices pursued by dwellers of Jalazon and residents of the Mahatta district. For example, I discuss how the latter respond to a form of sociolegal control that undermines group solidarity and obstructs political discussion in public by pursuing individual strategies of exit aimed at the improvement of one’s material conditions. Yet, at the same time, they imbue with political meaning these individualistic practices, including the engagement in illegal activities such as drug-dealing, by considering them as a legitimate reaction against a state that neglects and criminalizes them. The UNRWA, in contrast, operates as a catalyst for the political mobilization of the refugees who consider the UNRWA’s services as fundamental resources in their collective struggle against the Israeli army.

Moral worldviews

Taghriid,¹² a Palestinian woman from Balata, a West Bank refugee camp, who has moved to the Mahatta district of Lod as a result of a marriage, tried to convince her husband, a Palestinian man who was born in Lod, to be more involved and helpful with in-laws and neighbors:

No one cares about the other [in the Mahatta]. Everyone works for his own benefit even between brothers. For example, my husband’s sister-in-law called Nasser [Taghriid’s husband] at 10:30pm and asked him to come and drive her to her parents’ home. He told her “I can’t, but if you called earlier I would do this.” This doesn’t happen in the West Bank because there the social relationships between people are important... They [men living in the Mahatta] don’t even drive their sisters if they asked for a ride! Though they might do it if someone offered them fuel or money to cover the expenses of the ride.

¹² All names of people are fictitious.

While Nasser often stated that he liked his wife because she was not “materialist,” he also thought that she was ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of living as a poor Palestinian in Lod because she was too afraid and too judgmental of her neighbors. I argue that the frictions between Taghriid and her husband, in-laws, and neighbors cannot be explained without an understanding of the differences between the two forms of sociolegal control in West Bank refugee camps and Palestinian minority districts in Lod and between the trajectories of group formation that they harbor.

Comparative Political Ethnography

This study draws attention to comparative ethnography as a methodology well-suited to exploring how the social structures and experiences of marginalization vary across place: how distinct regimes of sociolegal control affect social relations and community building among dispossessed populations. This comparative field study also contributes to the emergent stream of “political ethnography” among sociologists and political scientists (Joseph, Mahler, and Auyero 2007; Schatz 2009). These new field studies seek to shed light on aspects of politics that often remain invisible in nonethnographic studies, including everyday encounters with street-level state agents (Ismail 2006), political apathy (Eliasoph 1998), and experiences outside the realm of formal politics (Mahmood 2005). On this front, I document how refugees engage in collective (and more visible) forms of politics while urban residents spend much of their political energy in pursuit of defensive, individualistic problem-solving activities. I argue, that through a comparative approach, political ethnographers can explain the variety of meanings and experiences of politics among dispossessed populations not in terms of their individual characteristics, but, rather, in terms of larger institutional forces and local social structures. Along these lines, my comparison between the refugees and the urban minorities offers an antidote against essentialist explanations of the lack of collective action in the Mahatta district.

Over ten years I have developed the language skills, contextual familiarity, and social networks necessary for carrying out an ethnography in this contested field. This has included comprehensive language training in Palestinian colloquial Arabic, standard modern Arabic, and modern Hebrew, as well as multiple prolonged periods of work and study in the area (1998-2000 in Jerusalem and Israel; 2001-2002 and summers 2003, 2004, and 2005 in the West Bank), leading to the fieldwork in the Jalazon camp (July 2007-February 2008) and the Mahatta district in Lod (March-August 2008).

The methodological appendix, *Identity, Mobility and Marginality: Conducting Comparative Ethnography across the Green Line*, which concludes this study, provides a detailed account of how I conducted my fieldwork within and across the camp and the city. In this appendix I give information about the challenges and dilemmas that I faced in the field as a foreign researcher, I discuss the analytic value of moving across the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank, and I address the twin traps of heroism and terrorism that conducting fieldwork among Palestinians inevitably entails. Here I briefly discuss how I obtained access to the two sites.

When I arrived at Ben Gurion international airport in early July 2007 my initial plan was to start my fieldwork in Lod. At that time the political situation in the West Bank was extremely volatile due to the infighting between the two main Palestinian political movements, Fatah and Hamas, which just a month earlier had led to the split between a Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and a Fatah-dominated PA in the West Bank. Over phone conversations and email exchanges, several friends living in the West Bank had discouraged me from doing fieldwork there because they were afraid that I would become “a bargaining chip” in the ongoing political struggle for

power. However, after ten days of fieldwork in Lod I decided to move to the West Bank despite the uncertain political situation there. My fieldwork in Lod had started well with a lucky encounter with Marwan, a Palestinian taxi driver who had introduced me to many residents of the Samet Het, another segregated Palestinian district in Northern Lod. Despite his generosity, Marwan was amused by my presence there and repeatedly told me that all I needed to know about Palestinians in Lod is that everything in their lives is “illegal” (*gheir qanuni*). He also told me that there was no need for me to “waste” my time there. Most Palestinian residents of the Samet Het and Mahatta districts that I met through Marwan also expressed skepticism and uneasiness about my presence. They explicitly repeated to me that they were concerned for my safety or wellbeing and that they thought that nothing good could come out from my staying in Lod. At the same time, friends in the West Bank were clearly resentful for my staying in Lod, a place they defined as “good only for drugs.”

My first visit to the Jalazon camp in mid-July 2007 had a different flavor. Several camp dwellers, both educated and uneducated individuals, expressed their enthusiasm about the idea of my staying in the camp for several months. They explicitly said that they were fed up with surveys and questionnaires but they also said that they supported my plan to stay in the camp for a long period of time and that I was “like many young people in the camp who also study social work and sociology.” After this visit, which lasted for three full days and included an invitation by a family to stay with them at night, I decided to start my fieldwork in the camp. My intuition was that going back to Lod after an extensive stay in the West Bank would increase my ability to gain the trust of Palestinian residents of Lod as well as my ability to conduct fieldwork in Arabic. Alternately, spending several months in Lod before moving to the West Bank would generate hostility and distrust among the camp dwellers and other West Bank friends and acquaintances because, as it had already become clear to me during my first visit to the camp, Lod had a reputation of being a worthless place of criminality.

In the camp, I taught English to six female teenagers and spent hours speaking with them and their mothers about life in the camp. I shared the mixture of fear, uncertainty, and sarcasm that people felt after sunset, especially when there were power outages and people speculated whether or not that was a sign of the Israeli army entering the camp. I also observed how camp dwellers reacted to the Israeli army’s arrests which often occurred at night. A few times I was awakened in the middle of the night by the noise of military jeeps and gunshots to later learn the names of those arrested in the Israeli sweep and visit their families in the morning. My daily presence in the camp for eight months was authorized by the camp’s popular committee.¹³ At the initiative of one of the committee’s members I was also invited to join and record the weekly meetings of the committee. The members of the committee amusingly used to call me “the international member.” A few times they also insisted that I add my signature to the written minutes of the meetings, which a member took every week. I also spent three mornings per week inside the local UNRWA office and followed the UNRWA personnel, mostly Palestinians from other localities in the West Bank—in their visits to families inside the camp. I also followed and documented the protests of camp dwellers against the cuts in services provided by UNRWA, including a one-day occupation of two UNRWA buildings in the nearby city of Ramallah.

¹³ Camp committees (known as Popular or Service Committees) are bodies of self-government active in all West Bank camps. Their members are not elected but appointed by the main political movements. They also include representatives of the main camp institutions and centers. See chapter 3 for a more detailed account of the development of these committees and their relationships with the UNRWA and the PA.

While conducting my fieldwork in the camp, an area under Israeli military rule, I expected clashes between the refugees and the Israeli soldiers and arrests by the Israeli army. However, I was impressed when the refugees repeatedly emphasized that in sixty years of existence there had been only three episodes of violence among camp dwellers that resulted in death. The most recent case of killing, which happened in 2006, had led to the expulsion of four families—about 70 individuals—from the camp. During my fieldwork I witnessed how many camp dwellers supported this communal form of punishment as a step towards rebuilding social cohesion after the killing, strengthening group bonds inside the camp, and offering a unified opposition the Israeli army. I supplemented my ethnographic observations and informal dialogues with camp dwellers with 30 in-depth interviews with refugees between the ages of 20-60. I also conducted 13 interviews with directors of camp associations and centers, past and current members of the popular committee, and UNRWA personnel working in the camp.

While my presence in the camp did not particularly stand out as camp dwellers are used to interacting with different types of foreigners including volunteers, students, journalists, human rights activists that come to the camp to show their solidarity with the refugees, my presence in the Mahatta district was a live ethnomethodological “breaching experiment” (Garfinkel 1967). As a female foreign researcher¹⁴ without ties to the state or the municipality and without family in Israel, my interactions with the urban residents often revealed important unspoken rules and norms. For example, when I commuted with Aisha, a sanitation worker who lived in the Mahatta, to her workplace in a nearby city or walked with her in downtown Lod, our conversations in Arabic attracted a lot of attention, especially as I speak Arabic with a thick foreign accent. One morning when I entered a local post office to purchase a pre-paid phone card, the employees assumed that I was a distressed tourist and that Aisha was following me to try to obtain money from me. I also spent many hours almost every day with Aisha and her friends inside the district listening to her stories of violence, fear, betrayal, and suspicion. During my fieldwork in Lod, there were several episodes of shootings involving residents of the Mahatta or other Palestinian districts in the town. I witnessed how residents interpreted these episodes of violence and more broadly how they discussed issues of personal safety, criminality, and policing in their district. I also observed how residents related to the newly established police station next to the local school and I observed how the police behaved inside the district especially when they intervened to enforce house demolitions by cordoning off the area around the building scheduled for demolition. I also befriended Palestinian women from West Bank refugee camps and villages who had moved to Lod as a result of marriage and I discussed with them the differences in social outlook and lifestyles between West Bank and Lod Palestinians. I participated in efforts to organize a neighborhood committee. I volunteered as a teacher of English for a small group of teenagers and I discovered how already at such a young age, urban residents have negative opinions of the district and its inhabitants. My daily presence in the district attracted the attention of the police that stopped me a few times, each time asking me similar questions about who I knew in the district and why I was there. Each time I offered the same version: I was working for an Italian NGO and I was interested in funding after school programs in the local school. I often had the feeling and a few times the certainty that I was being followed as I entered and exited the district on foot. In order to obtain information about the local history of the district, I interviewed two elderly Palestinians who lived or used to live in the Mahatta before the 1948 war. I also conducted 15 interviews with residents in their twenties

¹⁴ See the methodological appendix for an in-depth discussion of the parameters of my fieldwork, including the complication of conducting fieldwork in Israel-Palestine as a non-Jewish Italian female scholar.

and thirties to compare stories about how the district has changed from the 1948 war to the present. Finally, I conducted 10 interviews with Palestinian activists and past members of the city council.

I conclude this brief account of how I entered the two sites and what data I produced with a reflection of what the perceptions of me that prevailed among refugees and urban residents reveal of their respective marginalization. This reflection builds on Venkatesh's (2002: 106) argument about the analytic importance of informants' point(s) of view. He argues that "Fieldworkers interested in uncovering the categories and processes of sense-making through which informants organize their social world meaningfully can benefit by charting the ways that fieldworkers are seen by subjects." On this front, the types of "information-seekers" that usually enter the two localities—humanitarian aid workers and volunteers in the camp versus agents of the local and state authorities in the district—affected how the two populations reacted to my presence among them. Camp dwellers actively sought my help to write grants for several cultural centers inside the camp, to encourage foreign delegations to support some of the camp institutions, to document through photographs various cultural and social activities inside the camp, and to write reports to foreign donors and supporters. They also systematically called me when other foreigners visited the camp. My routine performance for foreign visitors included a short presentation about my life in the camp with an emphasis on the refugees' generosity towards me. Additionally from the very first week of my sojourn, some camp dwellers were already teaching me the ABC of ethnographic fieldwork. A couple of students in social work, Tahsin and Majid, often approached me to discuss my techniques of participant observation and then, regularly scrutinized (and critiqued) my fieldwork. For example, after a couple of months inside the camp, Tahsin criticized the slow pace of my fieldwork: "Think of Jalazon as a tree, there is so much life running through its trunk and you are looking only at the leaves!"

Unlike camp dwellers, Palestinian residents of Lod reacted to my presence among them with curiosity towards an unfamiliar category: the foreign researcher; but also with suspicion as to my possible connection with the Israeli security agencies. My thick Italian accent, my connections with reputable people in the West Bank, and my Italian passport all made the "spy" option quite unlikely in their eyes. Yet, even though my role as police informer was highly implausible, residents never felt fully relaxed around me. A young man clearly explained his distrustful attitude with this story of habitual distrust:

If every day you are served hot tea, you get used to blowing the cup of hot tea before drinking it. So you can't possibly be from the *Shabak* but to my lips you are hot tea no matter what.

Many residents also saw me as a disturbed young woman possibly in search of drugs or a local boyfriend. But this scenario was also quickly belied by my banal routine. The category of "researcher" gradually became the prism through which residents related to me, though they remained forever puzzled by my interest in their current lives rather than historical events such as the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Internalized racism and stigma circulated among the residents who often expressed their frustration at the banality of my topic, everyday life in the district: "What do you want? There are only Arabs here" or "We had a history, now we have the cocaine." Along similar lines, they regularly scheduled interviews on my behalf with "the elderly" who could tell me about Arab history and traditions. Unlike camp dwellers, most residents voiced

concerns and doubts about my research on the district, which they perceived as an unworthy, stigmatized location of neglect and danger.

The methodological appendix provides a more detailed account of the parameters of my fieldwork. While ethnographic data constitute the bulk of my primary sources, the appendix also gives information about other data that I collected directly or through the help of two research assistants, such as newspaper articles, UNRWA documents, Israeli police reports, Israeli parliamentary debates, and the Lod municipality's official announcements. These documents are particularly helpful in the comparative analysis of the two forms of sociolegal control developed in chapter 5.

Overview of Dissertation: Structure & Chapters

This study is divided into two parts. The first part sketches the historical-institutional backdrop to the different forms of Israeli rule over Palestinian citizens of Israel (1948-present) and Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories (1967-present). Chapter 1 develops a historical-institutional perspective on the different modes of Israeli rule over Palestinian citizens and noncitizens and it outlines the legal rights and restrictions attached respectively to the legal status of citizens and noncitizen. In this chapter, I also examine how social contacts between Palestinians across legal statuses have been deployed since 1948, particularly across the noncitizen-citizen divide. Chapter 2 shifts the focus to the micro level of localities. It situates the refugee camp of Jalazon and the Mahatta urban district in Lod within the broader chain of places shaped by the interplay of ethnonational and urban policies in Israel/Palestine. This chapter draws attention to how the state uses space in its distribution of different forms of sociolegal control.

The second part constitutes the ethnographic core of this study and comprises three chapters: chapters 3 and 4 examine the social and political life in the camp and the district respectively. For each site, I focus my analysis on the four themes of: social cohesion, informal dispute resolution and violence, moral worldviews, and politics. In chapter 5, I compare the two regimes of sociolegal control at work in the two localities. This chapter mixes ethnographic observations of “street-level bureaucrats”—UNRWA employees and Israeli soldiers in the camp and Israeli police in the district—with an institutional analysis of official reports and a textual analysis of newspaper articles. The goal of this chapter is to show how each regime of sociolegal control shapes the everyday patterns documented in chapters 3 and 4.

Finally, my conclusion of this study explicates and formalizes the theoretical contributions of this study. I discuss the lessons that we can draw from the comparison between these two Palestinian enclaves. I make two arguments: 1) penal and humanitarian practices and discourses are critical but under-theorized factors in the making and the unmaking of dispossessed social groups; and 2) group formation is a central factor in the development of political identities and practices on the ground. The camp and the urban district are “strategic research sites” (Merton 1973) for a theory of group formation that both links sociolegal control and group formation and politics on the ground and that goes beyond the analytic exclusivity given to the symbolic power of the state—its structure of official taxonomies—by current theories of group formation. My conclusion also discusses how this field study contributes to the comparative sociology of urban marginality, the literature on state social control, studies of ethnicity and nationalism, and the comparative sociology of urban marginality. Finally, I call for more historical and ethnographic work on the social and symbolic relations between stateless Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

I. History & Institutions in Motion

Chapter 1

Trajectories and Mechanisms of Marginality: Ruling over Palestinians 1948 – Present

This chapter examines the development, logic, and boundaries of the Israeli citizenship regime as an entry point into a historical overview of the different forms of Israeli rule over Palestinians from 1948 to the present. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part highlights the role of religion in defining Jewish Israeli nationhood and shaping the Israeli citizenship regime. It explains how the specific logic of the Israeli citizenship regime has informed the Israeli state's policy mix towards two segments of Palestinians: the minority of Palestinians (about 160,000) who were able to remain as citizens within the borders of the newly established Israeli state after the 1948 war and the majority of Palestinians (about 700,000) who became refugees as a result of the 1948 war (Morris 1987). I also trace the state's legal and spatial structure resulting from the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and I show how the Israeli state has ruled over Palestinians in Israel mainly through coercive means including direct military rule, surveillance, and cooptation.

The second part addresses the addition of another layer to the Israeli citizenship regime as a result of the 1967 war that led to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem:¹ stateless Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Indeed, in 1967 Israel established military rule over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but did not grant citizenship to West Bank and Gaza Palestinians mainly for demographic reasons. By contrast, Israel annexed and claimed sovereignty over East Jerusalem and through its immigration laws created a new legal category for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem: permanent residents of the city.² Of these two legal categories – stateless Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem – I focus on the Israeli military rule over stateless

¹ From 1948 to 1967 the Gaza Strip had been under Egyptian rule and the West Bank and East Jerusalem has been under Jordanian rule. The Egyptian government never claimed sovereignty over the Gaza Strip while Jordan extended citizenship rights to the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and formally renounced to claim sovereignty over these territories only in 1988, one year after the beginning of the First Palestinian Intifada (Uprising, 1987-1993) against the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The Jordanian annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the period from 1948 to 1967 had been internationally recognized only by England and Pakistan.

² Unlike Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestinian residents of Jerusalem can freely enter and work in Israel, and are entitled to Israeli health insurance and social benefits. Unlike Palestinian citizens, Palestinian Jerusalemites cannot vote in Israeli parliamentary elections. However, they can vote in municipal elections. The renewal of permanent residency status for Palestinians living in Jerusalem has become particularly difficult in recent years. In particular, while until 1995 the residency status was renewed every year without any specific requirements, in December 1995, the Israeli Ministry of Interior has started revoking residency rights from Palestinians who fail to provide evidence that Jerusalem is “the center” of their everyday lives. This practice was ended in March 2000 after the intervention of the Israeli High Court of Justice. However, the Israeli Ministry of Interior has recently reintroduced the policy of revocation of residency rights from Palestinian Jerusalemites, especially those who spend a number of years outside the city boundaries. According to *B'tselem*, an Israeli human rights organization, since December 1995, about 3,000 out of about 170,000 Palestinians living in Jerusalem have been stripped of their residency status (http://www.btselem.org/english/Jerusalem/Revocation_of_Residency.asp last accessed March 21st, 2011).

Palestinians of the Occupied Territories.³ I give particular attention to the system of military courts and prisons established to manage the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories. This section also outlines the dual legal logic at work in the Territories, which excludes West Bank and Gaza Palestinians from the Israeli civil law regime while extending the state's civilian laws to both the lands of the West Bank and Gaza and the Jewish population living there. Further, I emphasize that from 1967 to the early 1990s, movement across the different territories under Israeli rule – the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Israel - was allowed for all categories of Palestinians and that the Israeli state's system of sociolegal control over all Palestinians across legal statuses and other lines of division was mainly centered on the deployment of its military and security apparatuses.

In the third part, I trace the process of differentiation in the forms of rule over Palestinians inside Israel and in the Territories, which has occurred since the early 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s the Israeli state mainly relied on direct coercion in its approach to both segments of Palestinians. Further, it allowed Palestinians' freedom of movement across the Green Line, which facilitated social and political contacts between Palestinian citizens of Israel and West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. However, as a response to rising nationalist feelings and mounting collective protests especially against land confiscation among Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line, the Israeli state has adopted new policies and introduced new institutions. In this part of the chapter, I focus on how this process of differentiation in the forms of sociolegal control has both affected the divide between Palestinian citizens of Israel and stateless Palestinians of the Occupied Territories and also influenced group formation and politics within each of these two categories. Four factors have strengthened the divide between Palestinian citizens and noncitizens since the early 1990s: 1) the introduction of new restrictions on Gaza and West Bank Palestinians' freedom of movement; 2) the creation of an authority of self-rule (the Palestinian Authority) for Gaza and West Bank Palestinians; 3) the Israeli Supreme Court's "judicial activism" to strengthen Israeli citizens' individual rights, which, while fundamentally upholding the privileges of Jewish citizens, has opened a broader space for court-based activism among Palestinian citizens; and 4) the introduction of new restrictions on marriages between Palestinian citizens of Israel and West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. These factors have also inserted and built on differences among Palestinians within each legal category, especially along class lines. Thus, in this part, I go beyond the macro-level focus on legal status to present some ethnographic and interviewing data on the process of differentiation of structures and experiences of marginality among poor and middle-class Palestinians of the Occupied Territories and among poor and middle-class Palestinian citizens of Israel. Chapter 2 will shift the focus towards the micro-level of localities in order to situate poor Palestinian refugees of the Jalazon camp and poor Palestinian "minority citizens" of the Mahatta district within this broader process of differentiation in the structures and experiences of marginality among Palestinians under Israeli rule.

³ While East Jerusalem is also part of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, in this study, the term "Occupied Territories" refers to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip if not otherwise specified.

Table 1: Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, Israel, East Jerusalem, and foreign countries⁴

Stateless West Bank and Gaza Palestinians	Palestinian Citizens of Israel	Palestinian “permanent residents” of Jerusalem	Palestinian Refugees in Arab and other foreign countries
4,108,631 (Year 2010) ⁵	1,517,700 20% of the Israeli population (Year 2009) ⁶	288,000 37% of the city population (Year 2009) ⁷	5,527,000

1. The Israeli Citizenship Regime

1.1 Ethnoreligious membership: Rules about Granting Citizenship

The Israeli citizenship regime is an exemplary case of how a state’s definition of ethnonational membership shapes its rules about granting legal citizenship (Brubaker 1992). Religion plays a crucial role in defining the boundaries of Jewish national membership and therefore shaping a bifurcated Israeli citizenship regime with different procedures for granting citizenship to Jewish and non-Jewish individuals.

The origins of this bifurcated citizenship regime can be traced back to the census conducted by the Israeli military during a seven-hour military curfew in November 1948, after the official establishment of the Israeli state but still during wartime. This census was the first attempt to register the citizens of the new state and the initial legal source of the distinction within the Israeli legal system between the Palestinians who had been able to remain within what had become Israeli territory and the Palestinians who had fled or had been expelled⁸ beyond the borders of the new state (Leibler and Breslau 2005, pp. 880-881). One of the main concerns of

⁴ The number of Palestinians in the world in 2010 was 11 million distributed as follows: 4.9 million in Arab countries (44.4% of total Palestinian population), 4.1 million in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (37.5%), 1.5 million in Israel (12.4%), and 627,000 in non-Arab foreign countries (5.7%) (Badil 2009).

⁵ See <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/PCBS/Downloads/book1749.pdf> (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, p. 10, accessed May 9, 2011). There are also about 300,000 Jews who live in settlements in the West Bank.

⁶ See http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_01&CYear=2010 (Israeli Bureau of Statistics, accessed May 9, 2011).

⁷ See http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_12x&CYear=2010 (Israeli Bureau of Statistics accessed May 9, 2011). In 1967, Israeli authorities significantly expanded Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries to annex East Jerusalem. Of the 490,000 Jewish Israelis who live in Jerusalem, about 190,000 live in settlements in East Jerusalem.

⁸ Morris (1987) has documented several cases of planned expulsion of Palestinians from villages and towns during the 1948 war but he has contended that there was no consensus among Israeli political and military leaders about the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. However, Masalha (1992) and Pappé (2006) have contended that a plan drawn by the Israeli army in March 1948 – Plan Dalet - was actually a master plan for the mass expulsion of Palestinians.

the census-takers was the demographic question of how many Palestinians had remained within the Israeli territory. The granting of legal citizenship to this minority of Palestinians was mainly dictated by practical and diplomatic reasons, including securing Israel's membership in the United Nations and drawing a clear legal distinction between the Palestinian minority inside the country and the Palestinians who had become refugees (Lustick 1980, pp. 61-63).

By contrast, the registration of the Jewish population of the state through the census conducted in 1948 was not a major concern. The founders of the state were motivated by the idea of granting citizenship to all Jews, both those who had joined the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) before 1948 – including the many Jewish refugees and migrants from Europe (mainly Holocaust survivors) – and those – about 450,000 - who arrived mainly from Asia and North Africa in the years after the end of the war (Eisenstadt 1985). To put it differently, this census was consequential only for the citizenship rights of Palestinians in Israel because the requirement of residency within the Israeli territory at the time of the census was relevant only for the Palestinians.

While most of the Palestinians who were not registered in 1948 had been displaced beyond the Israeli side of the Green Line, the census led to the creation of a paradoxical category within the Palestinians who eventually obtained Israeli citizenship: the category of the “present-absentees” (*nochechim nifkadim* in Hebrew). Practically, about 81,000 out of the 160,000 Palestinians who eventually received Israeli citizenship were not registered during the 1948 census because, while they had not crossed the Green Line, they had been internally displaced during the war (Leibler and Breslau 2005, pp. 896-897). These Palestinians and other Palestinians who managed to cross the Green Line into Israel immediately after the war, did not obtain legal citizenship until 1980, when an amendment to the 1952 Nationality Law removed the citizenship requirement of evidence of physical presence for Palestinians within the Israeli territory at the establishment of the state in 1948 (Kretzmer 1990, pp. 36-39; Blecher 2005, p. 735).

Thus, the granting of Israeli citizenship follows different rules for Jewish and non-Jewish individuals. On the one hand, since its establishment, the Israeli state has granted automatic citizenship to every Jewish person who wants to immigrate to Israel. The automatic citizenship rights of Jewish individuals were formalized in the period 1950-1952 with the adoption of two laws: the 1950 Law of Return, which recognizes the right of any Jew to immigrate to Israel and the 1952 Nationality Law which grants immediate Israeli citizenship to Jewish immigrants. The original version of the Law of Return did not provide a definition of “who was a Jew.” The Israeli parliament adopted an amendment in 1970 defining “a Jew” as “a person who was born to a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.” This state definition of who is a Jew and therefore entitled to automatic Israeli citizenship recognizes the principle of matrilineal transmission of Jewishness established by Jewish religious law.⁹ The same amendment provides that “a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew” are also entitled to the rights of immigration and citizenship enjoyed by those who fit the statutory definition of a Jew.

On the other hand, the 1952 Nationality Law is the only legislative act that regulates the granting and transmission of Israeli citizenship for non-Jews. As I outlined above, evidence of

⁹ Yet, it differs from Jewish religious law in that, according to Israeli law but not Jewish religious law, conversion to another religion trumps Jewishness by birth. Thus, a person who was born from a Jewish mother and then converted to another religion is not entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return.

residence inside the state in 1948 was the initial and most important citizenship requirement for Palestinians. This requirement of physical presence within the borders of the new state not only created the above-mentioned category of “present-absentees” but it also excluded the majority of Palestinians who had become refugees beyond the state’s borders. In order to enforce this exclusion, Israeli authorities used repressive means to stop the tens of thousands of Palestinians who attempted to cross the Green Line to reach their houses, villages, and lands inside Israel. First, in June 1948, the front units of the Israeli army were officially instructed to block the crossing of Palestinian civilians, which often included a shoot-to-kill policy.¹⁰ Second, after the census of 1948 and increasingly in the 1950s, the Israeli authorities criminalized the behavior of refugees who tried to cross the Israeli borders. In 1954, the Israeli parliament adopted a new law – the Prevention of Infiltration (Offenses and Jurisdiction) Law –, which defined those crossing the border as “infiltrators.” In the same year, responsibility for catching “infiltrators” was transferred from the army to the police and the number of “infiltrators” killed decreased while the number of those arrested and deported increased. The public discourse increasingly framed the question of “infiltrators” as a security problem on two levels: first, Israeli citizens living in the border area were at risk of pillaging and retaliation, second “infiltrations” were increasingly categorized as “hostile” activities linked to espionage or terrorism (Morris 1993; Piterberg 2001; Korn 2003). For those Palestinians who were able to prove physical presence in Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship, the Nationality Law recognized the right to transmit their citizenship status to their children by birth. Thus, a person who was born from a Palestinian citizen of Israel is entitled to Israeli citizenship by birth.

Non-Jewish individuals can also acquire Israeli citizenship by naturalization. The 1952 Nationality Law provides that the granting of citizenship by naturalization is a discretionary decision of the Minister of Interior. For example, non-Jewish spouses of non-Jewish Israeli citizens can apply to citizenship only via naturalization. It is also important to note that the ethnicity of the non-Jewish spouse can also affect how the state regulates the process of naturalization. Indeed, in 2002, the Israeli government barred those Palestinians from the Occupied Territories¹¹ who were married to Israeli citizens from obtaining Israeli citizenship. This decision led to the adoption by the Israeli parliament of an amendment to the Nationality Law of 1952 barring Gaza and West Bank Palestinians from applying to Israeli citizenship via marriage with Israeli citizens.¹² The exclusion of Gaza and West Bank Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens from those entitled to citizenship by naturalization stands in stark contrast with the amendment to the Law of Return made in 1970, which grants automatic citizenship to non-Jewish spouses of Jewish immigrants to Israel. The logic of the 1970 amendment to the Law of Return was “to ensure the unity of families, where intermarriage had occurred” (Lustick 1999, p. 422).¹³ By contrast, state officials justified the exclusion of Palestinians of the Territories from Israeli citizenship through marriage as a response to security and demographic concerns. First,

¹⁰ In 1949 the Israeli army killed about 1,000 Palestinians crossing back into Israel while the number of those killed trying to cross the border decreased to about 400 per year between 1951 and to about 100 per year between 1954 and 1956 (Korn 2003, p. 12).

¹¹ See the second part of this chapter for a discussion of the Israeli rule over stateless West Bank and Gaza Palestinians since 1967.

¹² See the third part of this chapter for a brief account of the Israeli Supreme Court’s decision upholding this ban on mixed marriages between Palestinians of the Territories and Israeli citizens.

¹³ While the Law of Return facilitates the immigration to Israel of Jewish individuals who are married to non-Jews, as I will outline below, the Israeli legal system does not include a civil marriage option for Israeli citizens and therefore does not recognize inter-religious marriages between Jews and non-Jews.

they have claimed that Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza are more likely to engage in terrorist acts inside Israel and can use marriage as a way to enter Israeli territory.¹⁴ Second, they have often given demographic reasons in support of the ban. For example, in 2006 Zeev Boim, the current Israeli Minister for Immigration Absorption, stated: “We have to maintain the state’s democratic nature, but also its Jewish nature. The extent of entry of Arabs [Palestinian spouses] into Israel is intolerable” (quoted in Cook 2006, p. 127).¹⁵

Interestingly, the extension of automatic Israeli citizenship to certain non-Jewish individuals under the Law of Return – those married to a Jew; those with a Jewish parent or grandparent; and those married to the child or grandchild of a Jew – has pushed hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish individuals to immigrate from the ex Soviet Union to Israel in the 1990s.¹⁶ Thus, while religion plays a crucial role in defining Jewish Israeli nationhood, Lustick (1999) has aptly defined Israel as a “Jewish and non-Arab state,” that is a state applying a definition of Jewish Israeli nationhood, which is inclusive of Jewish individuals everywhere – both those in Israel and those living abroad –but also of a conspicuous minority of non-Jewish individuals who were given Israeli citizenship because they could facilitate the immigration of Jewish individuals and because they were perceived as “assimilable” to the Jewish Israeli nationhood.¹⁷

By contrast, regardless of their citizenship status, Palestinians are permanently excluded from this state definition of Jewish Israeli nationhood. Thus, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and those who seek to obtain Israeli citizenship via marriage with Palestinian citizens, are perceived as a demographic threat to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, which, among other things, implies the preservation of a majority of Jewish citizens. Before examining how the state perceives and relates to its Palestinian citizens, I expand on my account of how ethnoreligious membership informs questions of personal status and the distribution of rights among Israeli citizens.

1.2 Ethnoreligious membership: Personal law and distribution of rights among citizens

Monopoly of religious courts on marriages and divorces

There is no civil marriage option in Israel. While the state recognizes retroactively civil marriages or non-Orthodox marriages among Jewish Israeli citizens performed abroad, it does not recognize inter-religious marriages. Indeed, questions of personal status including marriage, divorce, and burial are under the jurisdiction of four religious courts: Jewish, Muslim, Christian,

¹⁴ The initial decision by the Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai to free all applications for “family unification” filed by Gaza and West Bank Palestinians was justified as a response to a suicide bombing attack carried in 2002 by a Palestinian who, according to the Minister, had obtained Israeli citizenship through marriage. In reality, the terrorist attack mentioned by Yishai had been carried by a Palestinian who had Israeli citizenship because his mother had Israeli citizenship while his father was from the West Bank.

¹⁵ According to the Interior Ministry, since the early 1990s there have been about 22,400 applications from Palestinian spouses living in the Palestinian Occupied Territories for “family unifications.”

¹⁶ In 2009 there were 311,500 “others” (non-Jewish, non-Arab citizens) in Israel out of a total population of 7,485,600 citizens including also 5,656,300 “Jews” and 1,517,700 “Arabs.”

¹⁷ Non-Jewish non-Arab citizens identify themselves and are identified by other Israeli (both Jewish and Arab) citizens as members of the Jewish Israeli nation. Despite their membership in the Jewish Israeli national body - especially through their inclusion in the Israeli military - these citizens face problems in questions of personal status, especially marriages. Conversion to Judaism remains the only route for these citizens to fit the Israeli state’s definition of Jewishness.

and Druze¹⁸ religious courts. For example, the 1953 Law of Rabbinical Court establishes that the marriages and divorces among Jewish citizens are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the rabbinical courts. The monopoly of religious authorities on marriages and divorces prevents Israeli citizens from marrying across ethnoreligious lines.¹⁹ Further, the application of religious law to questions of personal status leads to the violation of other basic human rights. For example, rules about divorce are discriminatory against women in Jewish, Muslim, as well Druze religious laws. The extreme case is the inability of a divorced or widowed Druze woman to remarry. Another example is the Jewish religious law's provision that under all circumstances the husband's consent is a necessary element for granting a divorce to a Jewish woman. Thus, there are currently tens of thousands Jewish Israeli women who want but cannot obtain a divorce because of their husbands' refusal. According to religious law, the status of these Jewish women is that of "chained" women (*agunot*). *Agunot* cannot remarry and, if they have a child from another man, the rabbinical courts attach the status of "bastard" (*mamzer*) to this child and prevent him or her from marrying with other Jewish citizens except with those who carry the same lower status (Rosenberg 1996; Yefet 2008). Despite these and many other restrictions imposed by religious law on basic human rights of Israeli citizens, there is no mobilized social movement against the monopoly of religious authorities on questions of personal status. The role played by religion in the definition of Jewish Israeli nationhood impacts how most Jewish Israeli citizens relate to the monopoly of religious authorities on issues of personal status as a source of collective membership rather than a source of infringement of their individual rights (Fogiel-Bijau 2003).

Jewish non-governmental institutions and programs in support of Jewish immigrants

Three Jewish non-governmental institutions are recognized by the Israeli state as playing an important role in supporting and strengthening the Jewish Israeli national project: The World Zionist Organization (WZO), The Jewish Agency (JA), and the Jewish National Fund (JNF). These organizations are called "national institutions" in Israel. The WZO and the JA mainly work to facilitate Jewish immigration to Israel and assist new Jewish immigrants to settle in the country while the JNF's official mission is to acquire and develop land inside Israel for the Jewish population of the state. The WZO, the JA, and the JNF are represented in various state agencies, especially in the fields of agriculture, land planning and development projects. These bodies only serve the interests of the Jewish citizens of Israel. For example, the JA is actively involved in the planning, funding, and development of new rural settlements in Israel for Jewish immigrants (Kretzmer 1990, pp. 94-95). Along similar lines, the JNF not only owns about 13 per cent of state-owned lands in Israel, but it also plays an important role in the decision-making process about the allocation and development of non-JNF state lands. These bodies are also active in planning, funding, and developing Jewish settlements in regions of the country, which are densely populated by Palestinian citizens, such as the desert area of the Negev in the South and the Galilee region in the North. Thus, the ethnonational goal of increasing the number of Jewish citizens in those areas of the country where Palestinians still constitute a majority drives

¹⁸ The Druze are an Arabic speaking religious sect founded in Egypt in the eleventh century as an offshoot of Shi'a Islam. Today there are about 100,000 Druze in Israel.

¹⁹ Israel has ratified several international conventions on family and human rights, according to which the Israeli restrictions on marriage outlined here and in the previous section of the chapter, would be against international human rights laws. However, Israel's ratifications of international conventions include specific reservations or were not followed by the incorporation of the relevant international norms into domestic legislation (Merin 2005).

these organizations' actions (Falah 1989; Cook 2006, pp. 163-164). More broadly, while these bodies have tasks that can be defined as governmental tasks and they are represented in many state agencies, they only deal with the Jewish population of the state, do not operate within a system of accountability to all Israeli citizens and are not funded by Israeli tax-payers (Rouhana 1997, pp. 54-55). In addition to programs run by these three organizations, Jewish immigrants are also entitled to special state assistance programs which give "assistance in rent, loans for the purchase of housing, access to public housing," and they "are eligible for income maintenance while they are studying Hebrew, participating in job-training programs, or looking for work" (Lewin and Stier 2002, 493).

Military service and citizenship rights

In Israel, military service grants specific citizenship rights in two ways. First, there have been cases in which non-Jewish (non-Arab) children of foreign workers or non-Jewish (non-Arab) migrants from the ex-Soviet Union have been granted Israeli citizenship after serving in the military (Kanaaneh 2009, pp. 29-30). Second, serving in the military opens up access to a wide range of governmental assistance programs. The state provides mandatory military service for Jewish Israeli citizens while excluding the majority of Palestinian citizens from the army on the basis of their ethnonational membership.²⁰ Israeli citizens who have served in the military are entitled to "a wide range of financial assistance in the areas of education, professional training, housing, and starting a business, as well as exemption from or reduction in municipal property taxed, credit points or income tax calculations, free driving courses, and so on" (Kanaaneh 2009, p. 39). Beyond governmental help, serving in the army increases one's employment opportunities. Indeed, employers often include completion of military service as a requirement for a wide range of jobs, including jobs that are not related to security and do not depend on military experience. Further, citizens who served in the army are entitled to various governmental employment services ranging from informational courses about how to apply for a job to unemployment benefits. Citizens who have completed military service are also entitled to special fellowships at several Israeli universities and privileged access to these universities' dormitories (Kanaaneh 2009, pp. 40-41). The state also ties child allowances programs for large families (families with three or more children) to the presence of a family member who has served in the army (Rosenhek 1999; Lewin and Stier 2002).²¹ While the requirement of military service was removed in 1997, in 2002 the government has decided a 20 percent cut for families without soldiers (Adalah 2003).²²

1.3 Palestinian Citizens within the Israeli Citizenship Regime

Peled and Shafir (1998; 2002, pp. 110-112) define Palestinian citizens as "third-class citizens" at the bottom of a hierarchy including, at the top, the Jewish *ashkenazim* who came from Europe

²⁰ See below section 1.3 for an account of how two ethnoreligious subcategories of Palestinian citizens – the Druze and the Bedouins - have been incorporated into the Israeli army.

²¹ Jewish Ultra-Orthodox families and new Jewish immigrant families who did not have a family member who served in the army qualified for higher child allowance than Arab families under a different provision.

²² See "News Update: Adalah Challenges Attorney General's Claim that Discriminatory Cuts in Child Allowances are Legitimate and Proportional" http://adalah.org/eng/pressreleases/pr.php?file=03_03_10 (accessed May 10, 2010).

and settled in Palestine before the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 and, in the middle, the Jewish *mizrachim* who immigrate to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s from Arab and Muslim countries in Asia and Africa. They argue that these three layers of the Israeli citizenship regime are the produce of three citizenship discourses: “the republican” discourse that privileges the *ashkenazi* (European) Jewish citizens by recognizing them as the backbone of the Jewish Israeli national project resulting in statehood in 1948; “the ethnonational” discourse that unites and includes all Jewish citizens on the basis of Jewish descent and excludes Palestinian citizens; and “the liberal” discourse that includes Palestinian citizens and excludes the stateless Palestinians of the Occupied Territories. Of these three layers, this study focuses on how the Israeli state relates to its Palestinian citizens in Israel and stateless subjects in the Occupied Territories.²³

Despite their legal citizenship, the Israeli state and dominant public opinion perceive Palestinians in Israel as a collective threat to the state in demographic, symbolic, and security terms: they threaten the preservation of a Jewish majority among Israeli citizens; they are carriers of a national narrative which equals the birth of the Israeli state in 1948 to the destruction of the Palestinian society (the *Nakba*, disaster); and they are considered as permanently external to and potentially dangerous for the Jewish national project promoted by the state (Peled 1992; Rabinowitz 2001). In terms of Peled’s and Shafir’s citizenship model, the ethnonational principle of citizenship membership based on Jewish descent has historically constituted an important factor in the creation and implementation of state policies towards Palestinian citizens. A few examples will suffice to highlight how citizenship status for Palestinians in Israel is “a conditional privilege to be conferred by the state” (Rouhana and Sultany 203, p. 14); a privilege that does not entail civil and political equality with Jewish citizens and that can be restricted or even revoked (Blecher 2005). I focus here on the following areas: restrictions on land rights and on access to certain towns and villages; divisions into ethnoreligious categories with differential access to material resources; state repression and surveillance; and limits to political expression and activism.

State-owned land, unrecognized villages, and “regional selection committees”

The census, which registered Palestinians who were present in Israel in 1948, also operated as a mechanism to identify abandoned properties, land, and villages and to create a new land regime that legalized the land dispossession of displaced Palestinians. The logic of the census was that those who had left the new Israeli territory had also renounced their property and land rights. Further, the Palestinians who were not registered in 1948 but were granted Israeli citizenship in the subsequent years – “the present absentees” - did not obtain the reinstatement of their property and land rights. In the decade after the war, land privately owned by displaced Palestinians, internally displaced Palestinian citizens as well as communally held land was expropriated and categorized by the Israeli state: first as “abandoned land,” second, as “absentee land,” and, third, as “Israeli lands.” This process led to the categorization of about 93 percent of Israeli territory as state-owned land. In 1960 the Israeli Parliament passed “the Israeli Lands” legislation which established a state agency to control state-owned land: the Israel Lands Authority (ILA) jointly administered by the Israeli government and the JNF. As I mentioned above, the JNF is a Jewish land-purchasing nongovernmental organization whose mission is to buy and develop land for the Jewish population of the state. The ILA formalized the prominent role of the JNF in the management of state land by giving the JNF equal representation inside ILA. While the JNF’s

²³ See below section 2 for a discussion of the Israeli rule over stateless West Bank and Gaza Palestinians.

prohibition to lease to non-Jews applies only to JNF land (about 13 per cent of state owned lands), the “Israeli Lands” law extends the important role that JNF has played in decisions about land allocation, development and planning before and after the establishment of the state (Kedar 2001; Yiftachel 2006).

This process of land confiscation and appropriation by the state has also created two categories of “unrecognized villages.” First, there are Palestinian villages which were not counted in the 1948 census because all the villagers had fled their homes and had returned only after the end of the war. Second, the 1965 Building and Construction Law ignored the existence of dozens of Palestinian villages and made them illegal by defining the areas where these villages were located as “agricultural” areas where building was not allowed. These “unrecognized” villages, which do not appear in Israeli official maps, include about 45 Bedouin villages in the Negev, a desert area in Southern Israel, which the state considers as illegally built on state-owned land.²⁴ Since the 1970s, Bedouins have also been subject to a process of forced urbanization into new towns explicitly built by the state for them. Thus, today, there are about 90,000 Bedouins living in seven state-planned urban settlements²⁵ while 80,000 Bedouins have resisted forced urbanization and continue to live in “illegal” villages, which do not obtain any public services from the state and are liable to demolition (Abu-Saad 2008).

While the JNF promotes the establishment of Jewish agricultural and community villages and towns, “admission committees” operate as gate keepers to prevent Palestinian citizens from living in these Jewish villages and towns.²⁶ The ILA legislation recognizes the role of these committees, which often include members of the JNF and JA, in screening citizens according to the criterion of “social suitability.” In the case of Palestinian citizens wanting to join all Jewish communities, ethnonational membership plays a crucial role in the committees’ decision to reject their applications.²⁷ As I will discuss in the third part of the chapter, the exclusion of non-Jewish citizens from the JNF-owned land, the role of JNF representatives in state agencies, and the use of selection committees to screen citizens according to their ethnonational membership have been recently challenged in Israeli courts as violations to the principle of citizens’ equality.

²⁴ Palestinian Bedouins have historically adopted a lifestyle based on semi-nomadic pastoralism. The Negev is dotted with small Bedouin villages. The Bedouins claim ownership on the villages’ lands while the Israeli state argues these lands belong to the state. The state’s argument is based on a Land law adopted in 1858 by the Ottoman rulers - a law which was also used by the British during the Mandate (1920-1948) and has been included in the Israeli land regime. This law introduces the definition of “dead” land – *mawat* land in Turkish – that the Israeli state uses to claim ownership on the Bedouin lands. The law defines a “dead” land as “a deserted fallow land unused or not possessed or registered in the Estate Registry by a person or a group” and it states that a “dead” land should be transferred to the state (Meir 2009, p. 285).

²⁵ These urban settlements for the Bedouins lack basic services such as “intra and inter-city public transportation services, banks, post offices, public libraries, public parking lots, recreational and cultural centers ... Rahat, the largest town, with nearly 40,000 inhabitants, is the exception and has one bank, one post office, and a cultural center (Abu-Saad 2008, p. 1734).

²⁶ According to a study conducted by Adalah, a legal NGO, “selection committees operate in almost 700 agricultural and community towns, which account for 68.5% of the total towns in Israel, and around 85% of the total number of villages. Around 5.2% of the total population of the state (around 371,700 individuals) lives in these community towns. These towns fall within the jurisdiction of 53 regional councils, which are distributed throughout the country and exercise control over around 81% of the total land-space in the state” (http://www.adalah.org/eng/pressreleases/pr.php?file=07_09_23).

²⁷ There are also other cases in which citizens petitioned the High Court for discrimination against homosexuals and *Mizrahi* Jews in the selection process.

Division of Palestinian citizens into ethnoreligious categories

The principle of Jewish descent at the core of the Israeli citizenship regime permanently excludes Palestinians from the Jewish Israeli nation. At the same time, Israeli political leaders did not accept nationhood – Palestinian nationhood – as a principle of membership for the Palestinian minority inside the state. They developed a state’s official taxonomy based on four ethnoreligious categories: Muslims, Christians, Bedouins, and Druze. Thus, for example, during a session of the Inter-Ministerial Committee that the state had established in 1949 to discuss the question of “minorities,” Bekhor Shitrit, the then Minister for Minorities Affairs, argued that “Since Israel could not impose cultural assimilation, the best way to deal with the minorities was ‘to divide and subdivide them’” (quoted in Firro: 2001: 40). In another instance, Shitrit gave a specific example: “I think that we must foster among the Druze an awareness that they are a separate community vis-à-vis the Muslim community” (quoted in Firro 2001: 46).

The creation of this taxonomy was accompanied by distinct policies towards different ethnoreligious categories particularly in terms of inclusion into or exclusion from the Israeli army. While compulsory conscription includes all Israeli citizens, the Israeli minister of defense has the discretion to exclude certain individuals or specific categories of citizens. Thus, compulsory conscription has been extended to the Druze (Firro 2001; Hamdy 2008)²⁸ while Bedouins and Christians have been allowed to volunteer in the army (Falah 1985; Kanaaneh 2009).²⁹ By contrast, Muslims have been excluded from the military service. The recruitment of volunteers among the Bedouins and Christians involves the extension of material benefits as well as the promise of state protection against perceived threats from other ethnoreligious minorities. These soldiers qualify for all the material benefits that serving in the army grants to Jewish soldiers. At the most basic level, serving in the army gives access to a secure income. Thus, for example, given the chronic conditions of unemployment among the Bedouins, those who serve in the army are simply known within Bedouin communities as “employed” (Kanaaneh 2009, p. 39). Of all the material incentives accessible to soldiers, land discounts and favorable home loans are the most sought-after benefits (Kanaaneh 2009, pp. 42-43). Further, Christians have been encouraged by Israeli authorities to enroll in the military as a way to defend themselves against Muslim or Druze neighbors (Cohen 2010, pp. 180-181). There are no official statistics about Bedouin and Christian volunteers. Kanaaneh (2009) estimates a number of about 5,000 individuals who volunteer in the Israeli army and border police.

This internal division of Palestinian citizens according to ethnoreligious categories also reflects a hierarchy in terms of levels of perceived threat according to the state. Thus, Israeli authorities and dominant public opinion perceive Muslims as the most dangerous subcategory of Palestinian citizens in both demographic and security terms. Muslims have a high birth rate while Christians have low birth and high emigration rates while Druze and Bedouins constitute smaller and more manageable minorities within the Palestinian minority. Further, while Christians have historically been active in the Israeli Communist party, the main political actor mobilizing Palestinians inside Israel, Muslims are perceived as particularly likely to engage in activities against the state.

²⁸ According to Firro (2001, p. 42) at the turn of the 21st century about 40 percent of the Druze male labor force worked within the state’s security apparatus.

²⁹ While Bedouins have volunteered in special “Bedouin units” since the 1950s, like Muslims, Christians were initially excluded from serving in the army even as volunteers.

Table 2

Palestinian Citizens of Israel (2009)				
Ethnoreligious categories	Muslims	Christians	Druze	Bedouins
	1,098,500 ³⁰	122,000	125,300	170,000

Surveillance, Coercion, and Cooptation

From 1948 to 1966 Palestinians were placed under military government (*Memshal Tzvai* in Hebrew) (Peretz 1991: 85). The military government, which mainly operated through emergency regulations and was divided into three regional committees composed by representatives of the GSS, the police, and the army, imposed rigid travel restrictions on Palestinian citizens (Jiryis 1976, pp. 31-55; Zureik 1979; Lustick 1980; Korn 2000a, 2000b). This system of travel permits shaped the everyday lives of Palestinian citizens: “virtually every departure from the area of residence called for a permit: bathing in the sea, visiting relatives, seeking medical treatment, and, above all, finding a job. Each day, the military government in the various areas issued hundreds of travel permits, some for a single trip, others for lengthier periods. The travel permit specified the dates for which it was valid, the purpose for which it was issued, the destination, the route, and the date of return.” Korn (2000a, p. 586).

The military government had three goals. First, it limited Palestinian citizens’ freedom of movement as a way to prevent them from re-entering land that was expropriated from them (Peled and Shafir 2002, p. 112).³¹ Indeed, during the period of the military administration, between 40 and 50 per cent of all convictions among Palestinian citizens were for violations of the military government’s emergency regulations and 86 per cent of these convictions were for violation of a specific emergency provision which established that “the military governor [could] proclaim, by ordinance, any area or location a closed area where entry or exit were forbidden throughout the period that the ordinance remained in force, unless written permission was issued by the military commander, for exit or entry” (Korn 2000a, p. 588).

Second, while the percentage of Palestinians convicted for “offenses against the state” – including treason, contacts with enemies, and sedition - was very low (Korn 2000a, p. 583), the military authorities were concerned with preventing and repressing Palestinians’ political activities into two interrelated ways. First, security regulations were used to prevent, monitor, or repress attempts at collective organizing among Palestinians ranging from sports activities to

³⁰ In 2009, the Israel Bureau of Statistics counted 1,286,500 Muslims in the country: http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_04&CYear=2010. This number includes the 80,000 Muslim Bedouins living in seven state-sponsored towns and the approximately 90,000 Muslim Bedouins living in unrecognized villages. This number also includes about 18,000 Lebanese who relocated in Israel after the end of the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon in 2000. These Lebanese had served in the South Lebanese Army (SLA), a military force that supported the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, and therefore, they were located inside Israel when the Israeli army left Lebanon. On the legal status of these Lebanese ex-soldiers and their families in Israel see Herzog (2009).

³¹ This goal was explicitly acknowledged by Samuel Divon, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs in the late 1950s: “Consider what would happen if we abolished the [travel] restrictions. The Arabs who used to live in the empty villages...would go back and squat on the ruins, demanding their lands back. What good would that do? Their lands are in use. And then, when they have made as much trouble as possible about their own lands, they will start clamouring for the return of the refugees. They will form organizations, parties, fronts, anything to make trouble (quoted in Lustick 1980, p. 125).

openly political meetings. Thus, for example, in 1964, there was an attempt to organize a meeting between representatives of various sports associations from different Palestinian villages. The military authorities intervened by declaring the village where the meeting was supposed to take place a closed area and by arresting the meeting's organizers and participants (Lustick 1980: 128). If joint sport activities were considered a threat to the state as possible venues for nationalist organizing, it is not a surprise that open political activities were severely repressed. The most striking case from the period of the military rule was the dismantling of a Palestinian nationalist organization – el-Ard (the Land) – created in 1965. El-Ard organization wanted to present a list of candidates to the Israeli parliamentary elections. “The Military Administration moved hard and fast. Permission for the Arab Socialist List [the el-Ard list] to appear on the ballot was refused, el-Ard's leaders were separated and banished to remote Jewish towns, many members were put under administrative detention [detention without trial], and the organization itself was finally declared illegal. Subsequently several of its leaders were offered the choice of imprisonment or exile from the country” (Lustick 1980, p. 128).

State control of the political life of Palestinians was also achieved through the creation of a network of “informers” - “collaborators” (known as *meshatfei peulah* in Hebrew and *'umala* or *jawasiis* in Arabic) - under the supervision of the three regional military committees (Sa'di 2003a; Cohen 2010). “One of their [the informers'] central missions...was to report all nationalist sentiments they heard expressed in their villages and cities ... The result was a comprehensive system of reports from informers ... Security agencies found ways to strike at Arabs who took nationalist positions, especially by blocking their professional advancement. It was a carefully calculated system through which the security agencies tried to ‘educate’ Arab citizens in what they were permitted and what they were forbidden to say (Cohen 2010, p 235). The discretion that military governors had in regulating the movement of Palestinians created material incentives for Palestinians to become “informers” because travel permits constituted a crucial resource for improving one's living conditions, especially for those who needed to travel to find a job or seek medical treatment.

The third goal of the military government was to regulate and limit Palestinian access to the Israeli labor market, which, in the same period, was already under the pressure of absorbing hundreds of thousands of Jewish migrants mainly from Arab and Muslim countries in Asia and North Africa (*Mizrachim*). The control over labor was, however, a more temporary function which became redundant already in the mid-1960s when the Israeli labor market experienced a shortage rather than an oversupply of labor (Peled and Shafir 2002, p. 112).

Lustick's (1980) analysis of the “system of control” over Palestinian citizens after the end of the military rule in 1966 highlights the continuity in the logic and mechanisms of state control over Palestinian citizens in the late 1960s and 1970s. While the most draconian travel restrictions were removed, Israeli policies towards the Palestinians in Israel were driven by three interrelated and reinforcing components - segmentation, dependence, and cooptation – which had already been at work in the previous period. “‘Segmentation’ refers to both the isolation of the Arab minority from the Jewish population and the Arab minority's internal fragmentation. ‘Dependence’ refers to the enforced reliance of Arabs on the Jewish majority for important economic and political resources. ‘Cooptation’ refers to the use of side payments to Arab elites or potential elites for purposes of surveillance and resource extraction” (Lustick 1980, p. 77). Further, the network of “informers” managed by military governors during the period from 1948 to 1966, remained a central element of the relationships between the state and its Palestinian citizens after the end of the military rule in 1966 (Sa'di 2003b; JPS 1976, pp. 190-200). Finally,

with regards to political cooptation it is also important to note that, while Palestinian citizens have enjoyed voting rights since 1948, their rights to political expression are limited. In particular, in 1985 the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) passed an amendment to the 1958 Basic Law on the Knesset stating that a party-list that negates “the existence of the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish people” should be disqualified. This amendment was the state response to the first attempt by Palestinians to present a party-list demanding equal citizenship rights. In 1988, the Supreme Court was called to give a judicial interpretation of the amended law. In its decision, the Court identified three fundamental elements, which are central to the definition of Israel as a Jewish state and cannot be challenged by political parties: a) the right of return giving every Jew the right to immigrate to Israel; b) the maintenance of a Jewish majority in the state; and c) the connection between the Jewish Diaspora and the State of Israel. To sum up, party-lists challenging the ethnonational privileges of Jewish citizens run the risk of being disqualified (Kretzmer 1990, pp. 22-31; Peled and Shafir 2002, pp. 432-442).

2. Direct Israeli military rule over Palestinian noncitizens in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

The Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967 marked the introduction of another layer at the “border” of the Israeli citizenship regime: stateless Palestinians under military rule. Indeed, Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were not given Israeli citizenship, mainly for demographic reasons as to guarantee a Jewish majority among the Israeli citizenry. One of the first measures taken by the Israeli authorities after the 1967 war was to conduct a census to register the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories. As in 1948, the census took place during a military-imposed curfew. Those Palestinians who had been expelled from the Territories and those who were abroad during the war – about 300,000 out of 1.2 million Palestinians – lost their residency rights and were not allowed back into the Occupied Territories (Leibler 2011, p. 242). Unlike the Palestinians who became refugees from 1948, the Palestinians displaced in 1967 were not given refugee status.³² While causing a wave of mass displacement among Gaza and West Bank Palestinians, the extension of Israeli rule to these territories “reopened” the divide between the Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and the Palestinians, both refugees and non-refugees, who until 1967 had been under Jordanian and Egyptian rule. The initial phase of the military occupation, which lasted from 1967 to 1981, was informed by the attempt to mask and render “invisible” the military rule. Israeli military authorities initially relied on the bureaucratic apparatuses inherited from the Egyptians and the Jordanians and retained the Palestinian civil servants who already worked within these apparatuses.³³ Further, in contrast to the military rule over Palestinian citizens in the period from 1948 to 1966, the military rule over Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza was initially driven by a logic of relative freedom of movement, including movement across the Green Line, and improved living conditions for the population under military occupation.³⁴ The

³² Most Palestinians, who were displaced as a result of the 1967 war, relocated to Jordan. Some of these Palestinians already had refugee status because they had become refugees in 1948 and had relocated in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip until their second displacement in 1967.

³³ Just after the 1967 war, Moshe Dayan, the then Israeli Defense Minister stated: “Don’t set up an Israeli administration...Use the existing Jordanian administrative apparatus. Don’t make the same mistake that the Americans made in Vietnam” (quoted in Gordon 2008, p. 49).

³⁴ This is not to say that there was not military repression of the initial resistance to the Israeli rule.

Green Line became relatively porous with West Bank and Gaza Palestinians regularly crossing it mainly as daily laborers in the Israeli construction and agricultural sectors but also for visits to relatives and villages of origin. While a relative freedom of movement for Palestinians of the Territories created opportunities to physically cross the Green Line into Israel, marriages with Palestinian citizens of Israel allowed Gaza and West Bank Palestinians to cross the legal divide separating them from Palestinian citizens by obtaining Israeli citizenship via marriage with Israeli citizens. The improvement of Palestinians' conditions of life, as a result of several measures ranging from financial support to Palestinian farmers to the incorporation of Palestinian laborers into the Israeli economy, was considered central to state interests. As a 1970 Israeli military report states, "the only way to avoid a potential outburst of social forces is to strive continuously for the improvement of the standard of living and the services of this underprivileged society" (quoted in Gordon 2008, p. 63).

This emphasis of improvement of living conditions did not prevent the Israeli authorities from adopting thousands of military regulations to impose a permit regime, which introduced permits for a wide variety of activities, including land cultivation, publication and circulation of newspapers and books, and building licenses.³⁵ Similarly to the travel permits imposed over Palestinian citizens during the military rule, the permit regime introduced in the Occupied Territories facilitated the creation of a network of thousands of "informers" under the supervision of the Israeli GSS (Tamari 1990; Dudai and Cohen 2007, p. 42; Gordon 2008, pp. 42-44). Indeed, the approval of permits often required an interview at one of the GSS offices that were established in the Territories after the military occupation. During these interviews GSS officers could try to pressure Palestinians to become "informers" in exchange to a more expedite release of the travel permits. The GSS also tried to use the Israeli military court system created in the Occupied Territories after 1967 (see below) to recruit Palestinian "collaborators" by promising reduced sentences or improved prison conditions. However, while in the case of Palestinians in Israel, the goal was "educating" Palestinian citizens about the limits of their freedoms to speak and organize, the network of "informers" in the Territories was more part of the Israeli state's deployment of its repressive apparatus, mainly the army. Further, unlike the case of Palestinians in Israel, in the Palestinian Occupied Territories real or alleged "collaborators" have often become primary targets of Palestinian nationalist organizations active in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Hundreds of collaborators were executed during the First Intifada (1987-1993) - the first Palestinian uprising against Israeli military rule - while many others were relocated by Israel into the Israeli territory for their safety (Yizhar and Abdel-Jawad 1994).³⁶ Along similar lines, Israeli prisons became important sites for the development of the Palestinian national movement in the Territories despite the attempts by the GSS to use the prisons for recruitment of "collaborators" (Nashif 2008).

The Israeli military rule over the West Bank and Gaza Strip emerged into its full visibility in 1981 with the establishment of the "Civil Administration." Despite its name, the "Civil" Administration was (and is still today) a governing body run by the Israeli army (Shehadeh and Kuttab 1980; Hajjar 2005; Gordon 2008). Under the Civil Administration, coercive measures already introduced by military regulations following the war – such as house demolitions, curfews, administrative detention (detention without trial), road blocks, and banning of political

³⁵ According to Hajjar (2005: 59) in the early 1990s there were about 1,300 military regulations in the West Bank and about 1,000 in the Gaza Strip.

³⁶ Chapter 4 will include a discussion of the relocation of Palestinian collaborators from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Lod.

organizations – became commonly used tools to manage the Palestinian population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This shift towards a more widespread use of coercive tools was mainly driven by the need to quench the growing Palestinian protests against Israeli rule, especially Israeli policies of land control. Similar to the land regime inside the state outlined above, Israel expropriated large portions of land by transforming them from private lands into state land (Lein 2002, Weizmann 2007; Gordon 2008).³⁷ Thus, by the mid-1980s, about 52 percent of the West Bank’s lands had been categorized as state lands (Shehadeh 1997, pp. 25-30; Yiftachel 2006, pp. 65-67). Coercion was mainly exercised through the establishment of Israeli military courts with personal, territorial, and extra-territorial jurisdiction over Palestinians of the Occupied Territories. Thus, about half a million (out of the 4 million) Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, including children from the age of twelve, have been arrested and prosecuted in Israeli military courts since 1967. “Although not all Palestinians who are arrested are prosecuted in the military court system (some are released, other are administratively detained without trial), of those who are charged, approximately 90 to 95 per cent are convicted. Of the convictions, approximately 97 percent are the result of plea bargains” (Hajjar 2005, p. 3). Hajjar uses the term “carceralism” to define the system of Israeli military courts and prisons with jurisdiction on Palestinians of the Territories: carceralism “captures the fact that they [Palestinians] are treated collectively as suspected and punishable and are imprisoned, literally in that thousands or tens of thousands are in prison at any given time” (Hajjar 2005, p. 186).

Regardless of the emphasis on pacification through material concession in the first decade of the occupation or the later shift towards repression through direct coercion, the Israeli military over the Occupied Territories has operated since 1967 on a dual legal logic excluding West Bank and Gaza Palestinians from the Israeli civil law regime while extending the state’s civilian laws to both the lands of the Territories and to the Jewish individuals living there.³⁸ Interestingly, the presence of Jewish Israeli citizens living in settlements in the Territories has often been justified by Israeli state officials as a security tool for “national defense.” Thus, for example, in 1978, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the confiscation of private land from seven Palestinian landowners for the establishment of the settlement of Beit-El (just opposite of the Jalazon camp) by arguing that the presence of Jewish Israelis in the West Bank had a security purpose:

In terms of purely security-based considerations, there can be no doubt that the presence in the administered territory [the occupied territories, according to the terminology of the time] of settlements – even ‘civilian’ ones – of the citizens of the administering power [Israel] makes a significant contribution to the security situation in that territory, and facilitates the army’s performance of its tasks. One need not be an expert in military and defense matters to appreciate that terrorist elements operate more easily in territory occupied exclusively by a population that is indifferent or sympathetic to the enemy than in a territory in which there are also persons liable to monitor them and inform the authorities of any suspicious movement. With such people the terrorists will find no shelter, assistance, and equipment. These are simple matters and there is no need to elaborate” (quoted in Weizman 2007, pp. 99-100)

³⁷ This was especially relevant for the West Bank while in Gaza Egypt had already transformed a big portion of the Strip’s lands into state-owned lands and the Israeli administration just claimed state ownership on those lands.

³⁸ Israeli domestic legal regime also extends to Jewish settlers who have not requested Israeli citizenship but have moved from abroad to the Occupied Territories.

This quote illustrates the ambiguity between the security role of Jewish Israeli settlers as constructed by Israeli state institutions and the civilian status of the settlers, who, unlike Palestinians living in the Territories, are tried in civilian courts in Israel, enjoy full citizenship rights, and vote in the Israeli parliamentary elections (Ghanem, Rouhana, and Yiftachel 1998).

The only legal link between the Israeli military court system for Palestinians and the Israeli domestic legal system was the decision by the Israeli Supreme Court to allow Palestinians to submit petitions directly to the Court without appearing before any lower courts (Hajjar 2005, pp. 57-58). However, the Court has systematically rejected the thousands of petitions submitted by Gaza and West Bank Palestinians over the years, either by supporting the army's decisions or by dismissing the petitions as "security" problems. In his study of the Supreme Court's approach to the Territories, Kretzmer (2002, p. 124) contends that "The Court has not perceived itself as a judicial body that should play an expansive role in trying to protect basic rights [of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians] against violation by government, but as a body that must support the foundation of military legislation in the Occupied Territories." Palestinians of the Occupied Territories navigate a legal regime created and administered by Israeli military authorities and, while they can formally petition the Israeli High Court of Justice, their petitions often regard military regulations and thus are almost always rejected because they deal with "security" problems as defined by the Israeli army. Thus, in the Occupied Territories, the Court has not significantly interfered with the decisions of the Israeli military courts and has sanctioned practices such as expulsions, deportation, curfews, detention without trial, extrajudicial executions, and punitive house demolition (Sultany 2007, pp. 84-85).

3. Differentiation of forms of rule: Tracing the effects within and across the categories of citizen and noncitizen (1993 - Present)

The first and second parts of this chapter have highlighted how the Israeli state has ruled over Palestinians in Israel and in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip mainly through coercive measures. In the late 1970s and in the 1980s, this system of direct coercion, which marked state policies towards both Palestinian citizens and noncitizens, entered into a major period of instability. Palestinians under Israeli rule mounted collective forms of protest against the Israeli state, ranging from mass protests against land confiscation in Israel to a sustained popular uprising (the First *Intifada*) against the Israeli military rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (MERIP 1976; Lustick 1980; Hiltermann 1985, 1991; Lockman and Beinun 1989; Rouhana, 1989; Nassar and Heacock 1990; Yiftachel 1996; Rekhess 2007). In this third part of the chapter, I discuss how the mechanisms of rule over Palestinians have changed since 1993 and how this overall rearrangement of the system of rule over Palestinians has affected social relations among Palestinians. I explore three changes: 1) the creation of a semi-autonomous authority of self-rule (the Palestinian Authority, PA) in the Occupied Territories; 2) the promotion of new policies and discourses around citizenship rights by the judicial branch of the state, especially the Israeli Supreme Court, towards Palestinian citizens; and 3) the introduction of new restrictions on West Bank and Gaza Palestinians' access to Israeli citizenship via marriage with Israeli citizens. A caveat is here warranted. My account of the two previous periods (1948-1967 and 1967-1993) focused on the creation and implementation of specific Israeli policies without discussing the interplay between institutional policies and processes of group formation among Palestinians. By contrast, this section also includes an analysis of social

relations among Palestinians in this period (1993 – present)³⁹ as a first step towards my argument about the connection between sociolegal control and group formation in the Jalazon camp and the Mahatta district. Specifically, I contend that different Israeli policies introduced in the 1990s—including the creation of the PA, the regime of immobility for West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, the “sealing off” of the Green Line, and the Israeli Supreme Court’s discourse of individual rights for Israeli citizens—worked together to create a political terrain preventing Palestinians from meeting across legal status and place of residence and pushing them to develop different political interests.

3.1 The Introduction of Indirect Rule in the Occupied Territories

The 1993 Oslo Accords led to the creation of an authority of self-rule (the PA) in the Territories. The Israeli government also recognized the PLO⁴⁰ as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians and allowed many PLO officials to return with their families to the Occupied Territories. A subsequent agreement, the 1994 Gaza-Jericho agreement, identified the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho as the first two places where the PA could operate as an authority of self-rule by providing civil services to Palestinians living in these areas. Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994, the Israeli authorities have imposed increasingly strict restrictions on the movement of Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, effectively preventing them from entering East Jerusalem and Israel and barring them from travelling between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Further, the administrative division of the West Bank into three areas - areas A, B, and C – each associated to a different level of PA’s formal control,⁴¹ has created dozens of non-contiguous territorial enclaves within the West Bank. The establishment of Israeli military checkpoints on many West Bank roads and the construction of by-pass roads to connect Israeli settlements to the Israeli territory have intensified this process of territorial fragmentation. The Israeli state’s decision to retain the power to determine who can be registered in the PA population registry, and who can transfer their place of residence from one part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories to another has further restricted the movement of Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Zureik 2001:217– 218).⁴² Since the

³⁹ This analysis is based on interviewing and ethnographic data collected during my ten-year involvement with the Palestinian-Israeli context, which preceded my fieldwork in Jalazon and Lod. Specifically, in the summers of 2003, 2004, and 2005, I conducted fieldwork in several villages and refugee camps of the West Bank. I met with members of village councils and camp popular committees. I spent many hours speaking informally with families at night. I accompanied students in their daily commute to their universities. In the same period, I participated in the activities organized by some human rights organizations in Israel and I conducted interviews and engaged in informal dialogue with Palestinian students and professionals with Israeli citizenship.

⁴⁰ The PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was established in 1964 by the Arab League (a regional organization of Arab states) but quickly became an independent actor in expressing and supporting Palestinian nationalism. Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank have considered the PLO as their political representative in exile since its foundation.

⁴¹ The Oslo Interim Agreement, which was signed by the PA and the Israeli government in 1995, limited the area of Palestinian self-rule, area A, to the main West Bank towns while most West Bank villages and camps remained under joint PA-Israeli control (area B) and the area in proximity of Israeli settlements remained under full Israeli control (area C). After the removal of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip in 2005, the entire Strip formally constitutes area A (but see below for a new definition of the Strip as “hostile entity” according to the Israeli legal system).

⁴² For example, Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who live in the West Bank have been collectively denied the possibility of transferring their legal residence there. Further, in April 2010, an Israeli military order defined tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza living in the West bank as “infiltrators” subject to deportation to the Gaza Strip. While the Israeli army has not systematically attempted to enforce the order, its mere existence adds another layer of

Second *Intifada* (2000–2004), this process of territorial fragmentation has reached the micro-level of localities with prolonged curfews and closures isolating specific refugee camps, villages and towns. Additionally, the construction of a fortification system including fences and concrete walls in parts of East Jerusalem and the West Bank has further restricted the movement of West Bank Palestinians (Weizman 2007).⁴³ Within this context of forced immobility, the struggle over political power between the two main Palestinian factions—Fatah and Hamas—has acquired a new territorial dimension with the split between a Fatah-dominated authority in the West Bank and a Hamas-run government in the Gaza Strip since June 2007.

While this ongoing process of territorial fragmentation and spatial immobility has generated scholarly interest (Falah 2005; Farsakh 2005; Parsons and Salter 2008; Hanafi 2009), less attention has been given to the link between Israeli spatial policies, the working of the PA, and national group solidarity among Palestinians. In this section I examine how the working of the PA in the West Bank within the spatial regime imposed by the Israeli authorities has affected group solidarity among Palestinians. Specifically, I explore new class and moral tensions between an expanding urban middle class oriented towards the PA institutions and increasingly concentrated in Ramallah, the de facto “capital” of the PA, and the majority of poor Palestinians who do not participate in the new lifestyles pursued by urban middle-class families. Understanding the creation of these class-cum-moral cleavages is important for my analysis of group solidarity in the Jalazon camp.

Take the following comment from an interview I conducted in 2004 with Nasser, an unemployed young villager living in an enclave surrounded by fences and checkpoints:

There are two types of Palestinians: those who stand and waste their time under the sun and the rain at the checkpoints and those who are VIPs and feel the wind of freedom in their face because they travel fast in their cars.

With these words, Nasser, an unemployed young villager living in a small West Bank enclave surrounded by fences and checkpoints, summarizes his perspective on how the system of travel permits built into the regime of indirect rule has divided Palestinians between those who have received VIP cards and can easily cross checkpoints and borders and the rest of the population who are left alone to face Israeli policies of “closure.”⁴⁴ The VIP system of travel permits, which was institutionalized via diplomatic negotiations between the PA leadership and the Israeli government, includes three different categories of VIP cards, each carrying a different degree of

uncertainty and anxiety to the lives of Palestinians who are registered as residents in Gaza though they live in the West Bank. It is worthwhile to note that the use of the term “infiltrators” for Gaza Palestinians living in the West Bank reminds of the criminalization of Palestinian refugees crossing the Green Line in 1948 (Korn 2003). In both cases, the category of “infiltrators” has been imposed on those who disrupt a state-led process of legal-spatial separation: the divide between citizens and refugees in 1948 and between Gaza Palestinians and West Bank Palestinians in the last two decades.

⁴³ The structure that is currently under construction in parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem—what is often called as “separation wall” or “separation fence”—is in reality a complex fortification system made of concrete wall, electrified fencing, deep trenches, buffer zones, patrol roads, video cameras, sniper towers, and razor wire. This structure complements the system of checkpoints, roadblocks, and by-pass roads that has fragmented the West Bank into non-contiguous areas since the beginning of the 1990s.

⁴⁴ As Hass (2002:6) puts it, “‘closure’... means to deprive the Palestinian inhabitants [of the Occupied Territories] of their right to free movement. It involves a pass system first introduced in early 1991 and which has been refined and perfected ever since.” The Israeli policy of closure is mainly based on curfews, designation of certain villages or agricultural areas as closed military zones, roadblocks, checkpoints, and a system of travel permits.

individual immunity from the Israeli policies of closure (Bishara 1998:220–22).⁴⁵ The main beneficiaries of these travel privileges are the high cadres of the PA but there are also other PA officials, business executives, and merchants who benefit from less restrictive travel measures compared to ordinary Palestinians. The Israeli authorities have often explicitly linked their management of VIP cards—particularly the granting and withdrawal of these cards—to the security or political actions of PA officials. For example, on March 19, 1999, the Israeli Prime Minister revoked the VIP identification card of “three Palestinian Authority members” as a punishment of their involvement in “political activities” in Jerusalem.⁴⁶ Similarly, in February 2010, some PA officials belonging to Fatah had their VIP cards removed because of their participation in West Bank villages’ protests against the Israeli fence (Waked 2010). As Parsons and Salter (2008:712) put it, “these documents are a clear example of the government of Israel defining the mobility of a particular segment of the Palestinian population – constituting the part of the population that can move and that part which cannot.”

The frustration that ordinary Palestinians feel about an asphyxiating regime of travel permits translates into resentment towards those who are exempted from it. This resentment towards the PA leadership clearly emerges from comments like these that I often heard in refugee camps and villages:

The *Sulta* (the authority, PA) is made of VIPs, not leaders.

Those negotiators who came to Palestine⁴⁷ after the agreement were the unique beneficiaries; they have developed their trade, increased their bank balance and set their children learning abroad without looking at the refugees in Jabalia, Jalazon, and Asker camps who can’t even provide water and bread to their families.

Similar criticism was voiced by “ordinary” Palestinians even before the Second *Intifada*:

I trust the chairman,⁴⁸ but not the people surrounding him, people like Nabil Sha’th, Abu Mazen, Abu Ala. They made the Oslo agreement and the other agreements, and created all our problems now. Who are they? They were never in jail, they were never stopped at checkpoints. They have VIP status and don’t know what suffering is (Lønning 1998:181).

This class-based sense of estrangement and even betrayal is not directed to a restricted circle of high-ranking PA officials with VIP cards but extends to the urban middle class that has expanded

⁴⁵ According to the 1995 Oslo Interim Agreement, only one category of these three VIPs cards (VIP 1) exempts the carrier from all Israeli restrictions.

⁴⁶ See announcement by the Prime Minister’s Media Adviser on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/1999/Israel%20Withdraws%20VIP%20Status%20from%20Three%20Palestinian> (retrieved July 26, 2011).

⁴⁷ The interviewee is referring here to the PLO officials who returned to the Palestinian Territories as a result of the Oslo agreement. These PLO members and their families are often defined as “returnees” in the literature on Palestinian society (on these “returnees” see footnote 33).

⁴⁸ By “chairman,” the interviewee refers to Yasser Arafat, the PA president from 1996 to his death in 2004 after being confined under siege by the Israeli army in the PA governmental compound in Ramallah. Arafat, who was the chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO from 1969 to 2004, can be considered as the symbol of the Palestinian national struggle for four decades.

during the 1990s as a result of new employment opportunities offered by the PA institutions, by the growing NGO sector,⁴⁹ and by the private sector (Hilal & Husain Khan 2004).⁵⁰ This middle class is not a homogenous actor with the divide between “returnees”⁵¹ and local families and the competition between PA officials and NGOs as its two most important fissures (Hammami 1995; Tamari 2002; Hilal 2003, 2006). Despite their internal diversity, middle class Palestinians share new urban lifestyles and consumption patterns. The town of Ramallah, the de-facto “capital” of the PA, has also become the main center of life for this emerging middle class.⁵² Thus, in Ramallah, “new spaces (mostly commercialized) were created to accommodate the new thirst for urban pleasures. Internet cafés sprang up, new hotels and restaurants were established, several swimming pools were opened, a number of upscale and more modest fitness centers were set up, and even a disco was allowed to operate” (Taraki 2008a:71).

In his critical perspective on Ramallah’s “middle class enclave,” Abourahme (2009:505) characterizes the Palestinian urban middle class as “a class with an outward gaze and strong transnational links... [A class] better linked to Amman, the Gulf, Europe, and North America than it is to the rest of the West Bank.” He also argues that with the expansion of this class “new subjectivities premised on consumption as a social value have emerged and, as corollaries, discourses of non-violence and post-national/civil-society politics have been disseminated.” Taraki (2008b:77) gives insights into the dominant perspective from within this new urban middle class, which perceives itself as a force of modernity claiming the right to “a normal life” and pursuing “a new cultural hegemony in which the old-style austerity and Puritanism have no place.” In other words, urban middle class Palestinians are engaged in a project of critiquing and renewing “the culture of resistance” developed by Palestinians during the First *Intifada* and replacing it with a new understanding of “resistance” including “recreation and entertainment.”

Yet, this middle-class project of redefinition of political practices has engendered a negative reaction among poor Palestinians. In the view of many Palestinians from camps, villages, and other towns, the new lifestyles that the urban middle class has introduced in Ramallah make the outcome of the First *Intifada* even more difficult to accept. As Collins (2004:203–207) shows, “freedom” and “justice” were the main expectations of most Palestinians who mobilized during the First *intifada*. Thus, in the post-Oslo period, while middle class families in Ramallah started complaining about “loitering” and “sexual harassment” committed by youth from nearby camps

⁴⁹ In the 1970s and 1980s popular grassroots organizations were central forces in the Palestinian political mobilization. Under the PA these organizations were disempowered and replaced by a plethora of NGOs without any links with popular constituencies. These new NGOs, which are run by urban middle-class Palestinians, are perceived by the majority of poor Palestinians as forces that have depoliticized the Palestinian national cause under the pressure of international, especially Western donors (Taraki 1989; Jad 2007; Challand 2009).

⁵⁰ “The new middle class is composed of a number of sections. First, there are those in the higher echelons of the PA bureaucracy, and in public services. Second are the directors of Palestinian and international NGOs, as well as university teachers and administrators. Thirdly, there are those in management of the new enterprises, banks, and companies” (Hilal 2003:169).

⁵¹ The returnees are Palestinians who spent most of their lives abroad and who returned to the Palestinian Territories when the PA was established. Most of them had worked as high-rank officials in the PLO while they were abroad. The returnees in general come from middle class families who emigrated mainly because the Israeli economy in the 1970s and 1980s absorbed Palestinian unskilled and manual workers but did not offer opportunities to middle class Palestinians.

⁵² The internal migration of educated and professional Palestinians towards Ramallah greatly contributed to the high percentage of Ramallah residents who were born in other parts of the West Bank. Taraki and Giacaman (2006:44) find that “50 percent of Ramallah residents at the time of the [1997] census reported that they had moved from another place to Ramallah city, compared to 27 percent for Nablus and only 13 percent for Hebron.”

and villages who roamed around in the streets of Ramallah (Taraki 2008a:71), residents of camps and villages started voicing very different concerns and complains by mixing a class-based discourse of lack of justice and a discourse of moral corruption (Johnson 2007). In this view, the PA regime has introduced an acute awareness that, as many Palestinian dwellers of the Jalazon camp repeatedly told me, “Under the PA, you are someone only if you have money,” and that “Being poor under the PA is a disgrace,” and that “Ramallah is for rich people.”

These perceptions of class privilege and moral corruption also color how poor Palestinians interpret and react to political initiatives run by middle-class Palestinians. For example, Allen (2006:289–292) shows how poor Palestinians negatively reacted to a campaign against suicide bombings initiated by urban intellectuals based in Ramallah through a petition printed in *Al-Quds* newspaper in June 2002. While suicide bombing remains a controversial issue within the wider Palestinian society, this particular petition against suicide bombing was interpreted as an example of self-interested behavior by the petitioners who want to preserve their “good life,” and as an indication of their detachment from the suffering of the majority of Palestinians.

The mutual estrangement between middle class Palestinians and poor Palestinians is also reflected in their diverging temporal and political trajectories. Urban middle classes perceive themselves as the backbone of a new project of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and redefinition of political resistance. By contrast, poor Palestinians who are excluded from this project, which is mainly centered on expensive consumption patterns, also grapple with the PA regime’s reactivation of “pre-modern” forms of membership such as clan allegiances which had been weakened during the 1980s and the First *Intifada* (Brynen 1995; Frisch 1997; Abdo 1999; Bowman 2001; Roy 2001; Rubenberg 2001).⁵³

3.2 The Israeli Supreme Court’s discourse of individual citizenship rights

While Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have become pre-occupied with territorial, political, class, and moral divisions, Palestinian citizens of Israel have turned their attention towards their legal citizenship. Certainly, the creation of the PA played an important role in highlighting legal citizenship as an axis of divisions among Palestinians. But so did a new discourse of citizenship rights promoted by the judicial branch of the Israeli state (Peled and Shafir 2002).

The judicial activism of the Israeli Supreme Court in the 1990s strengthened the salience of citizenship for Palestinians inside Israel. While the “old” methods of surveillance based on cooptation and information-gathering through “collaborators” are still at work and state policies still discriminates against Palestinian citizens because of their ethnonational membership (Blecher 2005; Jamal 2007), the Israeli associational sphere and the Israeli courts have become a new important venue for professional opportunities and political activism for a new generation of young, educated Palestinians (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005; Payes 2005; Sallon 2009).

Under the influence of Former Chief Justice Aharon Barak, the Supreme Court offered a new forum for addressing social and political controversies in two interrelated ways. First, the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence recognized two new Basic Laws on human rights, which were adopted in 1992, as constitutional laws protecting the principle of citizens’ equality and affirmed

⁵³ In chapter 3 I will discuss how camp dwellers of the Jalazon camp interpret the expanding role of kinship-based “Village Societies” inside the camp in two main ways. More broadly I will explore how they have reacted to the new centrifugal dynamics introduced by the PA.

its right to decide the constitutionality of other existing laws through judicial review (Barzilai 1999; Galnoor 2003).⁵⁴ Second, the Court has developed a perspective on citizenship rights which gives more space to citizens' individual rights. This new individualistic perspective on citizenship rights emerges from Barak's academic writings (1995, 1998, and 2006) and legal opinions. Thus, in the 1990s, the Court offered a legal model of improved civil rights for "non-Jewish" citizens considered as an aggregate of single individuals. Barak's legal model does not recognize Palestinians inside the state as bearers of distinct communal or national rights. By contrast, it considers them as individuals "entitled to full equality" within "a Jewish nation-state."

Thus, for example, in the Qa'dan case (HC 6698/1995) the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the Qa'dan family – Palestinians with Israeli citizenship – had the right to buy a house in Katzir, an Israeli village – built on state-land - that had prevented them from buying a house by arguing that Katzir was a Jewish communal village and therefore non-Jews were not allowed. As Jabareen (2002, p. 205) contends in his critique of this decision, the Qa'dan family did not make particular claims to equality or land ownership as members of a national group or a native population. This is the main reason why their request for "a better quality of life" resonated with the Supreme Court's discourse of individual rights: "they sought – and are still seeking⁵⁵ – to live in a place with a different quality of life and standard of living from those where they are currently living."

This individualistic discourse of civil rights still denies nationhood as an important source of identity for Palestinians inside Israel. Further, it does not attack the state's definition of common good in ethnoreligious terms as determined by the interests of the Jewish Israeli majority. However, despite all these important limitations, this discourse of individual rights of "non-Jewish" citizens has highlighted the status of citizens of Palestinians inside Israel. This is particularly evident when this discourse of civil rights directed towards Palestinian citizens is compared to the Supreme Court's acceptance of a security-based legal discourse for the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories (Kretzmer, 2002; Hajjar, 2005, pp. 57-58; Sultany 2007, pp. 84-85).⁵⁶ This difference between, on the one hand, the security-based orientation towards the Palestinians of the Territories as expressed both by the PA's security role and by the almost unrestricted power of the Israeli army, and, on the other hand, the discourse of individual rights towards Palestinian citizens has shaped the latter's perceptions of their political interests and opportunities. During my conversations with young Palestinian students and activists volunteering or working for human rights organizations inside Israel, citizenship emerged as a crucial factor of difference between the political opportunities of Palestinian citizens and those of noncitizens. These educated Palestinian citizens of Israel emphasized how, despite their legal citizenship, the state perceives them as a threat to its own existence as a Jewish state because of

⁵⁴ These two laws are the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Freedom and the Basic Law on Freedom of Occupation. It is interesting to note that Israel is a country that lacks a written constitution and that, in the 1990s, the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court, in its capacity as a High Court of Justice, has granted constitutional relevance to these two Basic Laws as well as other Basic Laws previously adopted by the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament. To put it differently, the Court decided that it can exercise judicial review of legislative and administrative acts for the first time in the 1990s.

⁵⁵ See below section 3.4 for an account of recent legislative initiatives aimed at legally preventing Palestinian citizens from living in all-Jewish villages.

⁵⁶ This is not to say that "state security" is not also invoked in the Court's decisions involving Palestinian citizens but in the 1990s the Court highlighted the individual rights of Palestinian citizens in a way that does not find parallels in the Court's decisions regarding Palestinians of the Territories.

their national identity. They also expressed their awareness that certain Israeli policies such as land confiscation and house demolitions target both segments of Palestinians under Israeli rule. Yet, they also emphasized their limited civil and political rights and distanced themselves from the political predicament of the Palestinians of the Territories with sentences such as: “They have the [military] occupation; we are struggling for our civil rights” or “The PA is not democratic and is not a state; that is the challenge for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; they have to democratize the PA and turn it into a state; we [citizens] have a different challenge, we have to make Israel more democratic.” These comments also reflect a widespread awareness that their legal citizenship does not protect them from state coercive measures. In this sense, putting some distance between their problems and the problems of Gaza and West Bank Palestinians can also be interpreted as an attempt to avoid being reduced and treated by the state as a security threat.

At the same time, their attitude towards the Israeli state takes the form of direct engagement with the Israeli judicial branch and civil society (Jamal 2008). The above-mentioned decision by the Supreme Court to exercise judicial review of primary legislation – what Barak (1995, p. 16) defined as a “constitutional revolution” – has transformed the Court into a primary arena available for Israeli citizens to raise human and civil rights issues. Litigation has become an important form of political action among educated Palestinian citizens and lawyers have assumed a prominent role in articulating and expressing political claims (Sallon 2009, pp. 169-71).⁵⁷ Another interrelated aspect of the predominance of court-based political activism is the steady rise in associations, and especially legal NGOs, among Palestinian citizens as a privileged channel to pursue collective rights (Gidron, Bar, & Kats 2004; Payes 2005). Indeed, the rate of registration of associations created by Palestinian citizens increased dramatically in the 1990s and “approximately 80 per cent of all PAI [Palestinian Israeli] civil society associations were formed since 1988” (Haklai 2009, p. 879). In 1998 there were about 1,000 registered Palestinian NGOs inside Israel representing about 4 per cent of the total 20,700 NGOs in Israel (Payes 2003, p. 62).

The importance of engaging the Israeli courts and developing associations emerges, albeit in different forms, both from my dialogues with a new generation of educated Palestinians inside Israel and from my fieldwork among poor, uneducated Palestinians in Lod. Suad, a young Palestinian citizen of Israel referred to her father’s political activism with these words:

My father always speaks about the land and the homeland, he has always been a nationalist, our national identity as Palestinians is important for me too, but I know more than him about how to protect our rights as citizens, they [the Israeli state] use the legal system to discriminate against us, and we have to use it to improve our condition.

If Suad sees the courts as the main arena to struggle for Palestinian citizens’ individual and group rights, many poor Palestinians in Lod repeatedly expressed their frustration with the scarcity of available tools to struggle against house demolitions, one of their most urgent concerns.⁵⁸ On the one hand, some poor Palestinians in Lod commented on their hopes that their children would become lawyers and “understand what the law says,” for example, about house demolition. They also felt frustrated for their failed attempts at creating local associations and pressuring local

⁵⁷ It is also important to note that Palestinian legal NGOs explicitly tackle the question of the limits of litigation as a tool for social change. For a discussion of the potential and the limits of litigation, see Esmeir (2000).

⁵⁸ In the next chapter I will situate the predicament of marginality experienced by Palestinians in Lod within the broader matrix of Israeli policies towards Palestinian citizens.

authorities. On the other hand, many poor Palestinians in Lod have developed an anti-intellectual stance and consider local initiatives to establish NGOs as “empty words” (*ḥakī fāḍi*).

The shift towards citizenship issues among Palestinian educated elites inside Israel was initially buttressed by material concessions. The Rabin government (1992-1995) implemented affirmative action programs to hire Palestinian citizens in the public sector; the Ministry of Interior increased the budgets for Arab local councils; and the Ministry of Education increased the budget for Arab education (Rouhana 1997, p. 102, 211). These concessions were particularly meaningful for young educated Palestinians. A Palestinian lawyer in her early thirties explained that when she was a law student, she was very impressed by the new hiring policy in the judicial system: “There was this really big wave of nominations of Arab lawyers and judges.” While subsequent governments put an end to these material concessions, associational development and court-based activism have continued to provide opportunities for individual social mobility and professional achievement for a new generation of educated Palestinians (Haidar 1997).

Scholars have contended that the October 2000’s mass protests among Palestinian citizens were a turning point in the relationship between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli state (Bishara 2001; Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005; Peled 2005). Indeed, these protests were an expression of national solidarity with Palestinians of the Occupied Territories.⁵⁹ The Israeli police treated demonstrators in the same way that the Israeli army regularly treats Palestinian noncitizens: by using live ammunition. As a result, thirteen unarmed protestors were killed.

However, it is important to note that in the post-2000 period, while West Bank and Gaza Palestinians have remained isolated under a regime of spatial immobility, educated Palestinian citizens have continued to direct their political energy towards the Israeli courts and associational sphere. While generating a widespread sense of disillusion with Israeli institutions among Palestinian citizens, the brutal repression of the mass demonstrations in 2000 also worked as a threatening reminder that, like in the past, when Palestinian citizens were put under military rule, the state can and does resort to direct repression to police the boundaries of legitimate political discourse and practices among Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. Furthermore, in addition to spatial restrictions, the Israeli state has introduced new legal obstacles—especially a new ban on “mixed marriages”—to limit contact between Palestinian citizens and non-citizens.

3.3 The Reinforcement of the Divide between Palestinian Citizens and Noncitizens

In summer 2004, during a conversation with me, Abu Mahmud, a Palestinian refugee in his fifties living in Balata, a West Bank refugee camp, talked about his encounters with Palestinian citizens of Israel across the Green Line in the mid-1970s:

I remember that as a college student I was very happy to go to summer camps organized by the Nazareth municipality [Palestinian town in Israel] and connect with Palestinians there... I was doubtful because they were mainly members of the Israeli Communist Party while we had the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]⁶⁰ but I

⁵⁹ At the beginning of the Second *Intifada* – the Second Palestinian Uprising against Israeli military rule in the Territories –, which started in October 2000, many unarmed Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were killed by the Israeli army. The protests among Palestinian citizens in solidarity of Palestinians of the Occupied Territories lasted for ten days. As to the Second *Intifada*, it quickly lost its popular constituencies to become militarized (Johnson and Kuttab 2001; Hammami and Tamari 2001).

⁶⁰ Abu Mahmud refers here to the different political orientations of Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On the one hand, the Israeli Communist Party (*Maki*), which was founded in 1948 with a platform of Jewish-Arab cooperation, and especially the New Communist List (*Rakah*),

was very pleased that there was a space for interaction between people, an area for debate, communication, and meetings... We learned about land confiscation and house demolitions in the Galilee and I felt that we had the same problems...But now everything is gone (*kul ishi rāh*)...

Rouhana (1990) contends that the First Palestinian Intifada led to a widening gap between West Bank and Gaza Palestinians and Palestinians in Israel. Equally if not more important were changes in state policies, which were introduced as a reaction to the Uprising. These changes include: 1) the restrictions on Gaza and West Bank Palestinians' freedom of movement; 2) the creation of the PA; and 3) the increased salience of citizenship and relevance of court-based activism for a new generation of Palestinian educated professionals inside Israel. A fourth factor has further reinforced this split: the introduction of new restrictions on the marriages between Gaza and West Bank Palestinians and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. In 2002, the Israeli government barred those Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who were married to Israeli citizens from obtaining a legal permit to live with their spouses inside Israel. This decision led to the adoption by the Israeli parliament of an amendment to the Nationality Law of 1952.⁶¹ This amendment effectively banned marriages between Israeli citizens and Palestinians of the Territories. As I mentioned above (see p. 5), state officials justified this measure mainly in security terms by arguing that Palestinians from the Territories are a "hostile" population.⁶² They also expressed demographic anxieties about extending Israeli citizenship to Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens by exaggerating the actual number of West Bank and Gaza Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens.⁶³

In 2006, by a narrow majority of six-to-five, the High Court accepted this security-based logic and it upheld the decision of barring Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza from living with their spouses in Israel.⁶⁴ Chief Justice, Aharon Barak, who had initiated the "liberalizing" trend in the early 1990s and who voted with the minority, declared that "the law is a violation of the right of Arab citizens of Israel to equality." He also argued that "democracy does not impose a blanket prohibition and thereby separate its citizens from their spouses, nor does it prevent them from having a family life."⁶⁵ By contrast, Deputy Chief Judge Michael Cheshin who voted with the majority, stated:

which was established inside Israel in 1965 with a pan-Arab agenda, played an important role in the political lives of Palestinian citizens. On the other hand, Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank considered the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) as their political representative in exile (on the PLO see footnote 40).

⁶¹ On the Nationality Law of 1952 see pp. 4-5.

⁶² The initial decision by the Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai to free all applications for "family unification" filed by Gaza and West Bank Palestinians was justified as a response to a suicide bombing attack carried in 2002 by a Palestinian who, according to the Minister, had obtained Israeli citizenship through marriage. In reality, the terrorist attack mentioned by Yishai had been carried by a Palestinian who had Israeli citizenship because his mother had Israeli citizenship while his father was from the Territories.

⁶³ According to the Interior Ministry, since the early 1990s there have been about 22,400 applications from Palestinian spouses living in the Territories for "family unifications." The Ministry also stated that the number would reach more than 100,000 individuals if the statistics included the applicants' dependants. In reality, a journalistic investigation by Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper, reported that the Israeli Population Registry had recorded about 5,400 applicants (Cook 2006, p. 126).

⁶⁴ While the High Court's decision was also based on the "temporary" status of the amendment adopted in 2003, there are currently legislative initiatives to adopt a new citizenship law, which would permanently ban Palestinians and inhabitants of "hostile countries" who marry Israeli citizens from citizenship rights or entry permits in Israel.

⁶⁵ The texts of the minority and majority decisions are available at the Supreme Court's website: http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files_eng/03/520/070/a47/03070520.a47.pdf (last accessed March 28th, 2011).

The State of Israel, as we all know, is at war—or at least a quasi-war—which is cruel and hard, against the Palestinian Authority and the terror organizations that act from within it. The residents of the Palestinian Territories are *de facto* enemy nationals, and as such they are a group that presents a risk to the citizens and residents of Israel. The state is therefore entitled, in order to protect its citizens and residents, to enact a law that prohibits the entry of [Palestinian] residents of the territories—enemy nationals—into the state, as long as the state of war or quasi-war continues.⁶⁶

In a subsequent declaration made to the media, Judge Cheshin added that nobody prevents a Palestinian citizens and his or her spouse to live in the Territories: “No one is withholding from them the right to establish a family but the guy from Umm al-Fahm [Arab town in Israel] should go live with his wife in Jenin [West Bank town] (quoted in Yoaz 2006).⁶⁷

This new law on “mixed” marriages between Palestinian citizens and noncitizens is part of a broader system of restrictions on marriage practices of Palestinians under Israeli rule. Thus, for example, Gaza Palestinians cannot move to the West Bank as result of marriage with a West Bank Palestinians while West Bank Palestinians are eligible for “one-way permits” to Gaza if they want to join their spouses in Gaza and permanently live there forsaking their residency status in the West Bank (B’tselem 2008).⁶⁸

3.4 Citizenship rights of Palestinian citizens and the PA regime in the Territories: The Current Situation

The above discussion of the recent Israeli ban on “mixed” marriages between Israeli citizens and Palestinians of the Territories reveals the extent to which the reorganization of Israeli rule over Palestinians—the combination of the indirect rule in the Territories and the Israeli courts’ protection of Palestinian citizens’ civil rights—is far from being stable. Indeed, a cursory look at the current situation shows that both the “liberalization” approach promoted that the Israeli courts inside Israel and the establishment of the PA in the Territories have undergone changes and challenges.

On the one hand, recent and ongoing Israeli legislative and government initiatives have strengthened, legalized, or reaffirmed Jewish ethnoreligious affiliation as the core principle of the state and have attacked the core elements of the liberal component of the Israeli citizenship regime: the civil equality among citizens, the freedom to create associations, and the pursuit of Palestinian citizens’ rights through litigation and other legal tools (Rouhana and Sultany 2003; Sultany 2003, 2004, 2005; Blecher 2005; Jamal 2007). Three examples shed light on state initiatives aimed at maintaining ethnoreligious privileges for Jewish citizens within the state’s legal system.

The first example deals with governmental and legislative initiatives aimed at revoking Israeli citizenship from Palestinian citizens of Israel who have committed “terrorist” acts or have been

⁶⁶ During the Court hearing, state officials referred to 26 cases in which a Palestinian spouse who had moved from the West Bank or Gaza to Israel had been investigated for “alleged terrorist activities.” They did not specify if any of these individuals had been convicted.

⁶⁷ This statement is also factually incorrect insofar Jenin is located in “area A” of the West Bank, from which the Israeli army bans Israeli citizens. Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians from the Territories would be legally able to live together only in a Palestinian village in areas B or C of the West Bank.

⁶⁸ “Separated Entities: Israel Divides Palestinian Population of West Bank and Gaza Strip” available at: http://www.btselem.org/Download/200809_Separated_Entities_Eng.pdf (last accessed May 19, 2011).

“disloyal” to the state. In 2002, the then Israeli interior minister, Eli Yishai decided to revoke the citizenship of a Palestinian citizen who had been accused but not convicted of giving support to a suicide bombing attack inside Israel (Kanaanah 2009, p. 29). In 2008, the Israeli Parliament passed an amendment—*The Citizenship Law (Amendment n. 9) (Authority for Revoking Citizenship)*—which provides the revocation of citizenship in the case of “breach of trust or disloyalty to the state.” “‘Breach of trust’ is broadly defined and even includes the act of residing in one of nine Arab and Muslim states which are listed by the law, alongside the Gaza Strip. The law allows for the revocation of citizenship for breach of trust without requiring a criminal conviction. A new bill currently before the Knesset [Israeli Parliament] seeks to permit the revocation of the citizenship of persons convicted of espionage and assisting the enemy in time of war, and acts of terrorism...” (Adalah 2011, p. 18).⁶⁹ If this bill becomes law, Palestinian political leaders inside Israel who have already been accused to support Hamas or to have contacts with a “state enemy” could be stripped of their citizenship. Along similar lines, new bills propose to introduce a “loyalty oath” to the state as “a Jewish and democratic state” for all those who receive Israeli citizenship by birth and naturalization (Cook 2006, p. 165). If introduced, this oath will practically require the loyalty of Palestinian citizens to the Jewish national project promoted by the state.

The second example regards the criminalization of Palestinian citizens’ political activities. First, the state’s security apparatus plays an important role in monitoring Palestinian citizens’ political activities. In March 2007, Yuval Diskin, the current Head of the General Security Services (GSS)—the main Israeli security agency also known with the Hebrew acronyms of *Shabak* and *Shin Bet*—advised that “The Shin Bet is required to thwart the subversive activity of entities seeking to harm the character of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, even if their activity is conducted through democratic means.”⁷⁰ This statement came in the wake of the publication in late 2006 and early 2007 of four legal and political documents drafted by Palestinian legal NGOs and research centers in Israel. These proposals suggested constitutional changes to challenge “the Jewish character” of the state by targeting laws and institutions that qualify citizens’ rights according to their ethnoreligious membership (for example, JNF-owned lands opened only to Jewish citizens or the Law of Return that grants citizenship to all Jewish individuals who want to immigrate to the state).⁷¹ These proposals seem to fall within the GSS’ definition of activities that the GSS can repress or limit because they “harm” the Jewish character of the state. Second, there have been cases of Palestinian political leaders who have been indicted for their political statements or actions. In 2001 the Israeli Parliament stripped Azmi Bishara, then head of the Balad party, a Palestinian political party inside Israel, of his parliamentary immunity as a step towards his indictment for “supporting a terrorist organization” during a political speech. Bishara was also indicted for organizing the travel to Syria, “an enemy state” according to Israeli law, of some elderly Palestinians who wanted to visit refugee relatives there. While the Israeli Supreme Court reinstated Bishara’s parliamentary immunity and dismissed all charges, the ongoing pressure exercised by the GSS forced Bishara in exile. Furthermore, in 2010 the Israeli Parliament has stripped the parliamentary immunity of another

⁶⁹ “The Inequality Report: The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel” available at: http://www.adalah.org/upfiles/2011/Adalah_The_Inequality_Report_March_2011.pdf (last accessed May 19, 2011).

⁷⁰ <http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/may07/5.php>.

⁷¹ The four documents are: “The Future Vision” published by the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities; The Democratic Constitution published by *Adalah*; The Ten Points Document published by the *Mossawa* Center (The Advocacy Center for the Arab Citizens of Israel); and “The Haifa Covenant” published by *Mada*, The Arab Center for Applied Social Research.

Palestinian member of the Israeli parliament and the Attorney General has indicted him for visiting Syria and for having contacts with “foreign agents” during his visit to Syria (Adalah 2011, p. 58).

The third example regards the role of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in the Israeli legal system. The JNF not only owns about 13 per cent of state land; it also plays an important role in the allocation and development of non-JNF state lands. The exclusion of non-Jewish citizens from the JNF-owned land has been challenged by legal NGOs as a violation to the principle of citizens’ equality. In July 2007 a right-wing party, the National Unity-National Religious Party, proposed a bill that would explicitly add a provision—“Management of the Jewish National Fund’s Lands”—to the existing ILA Law of 1960 stating that the mission of JNF is recognized by the state and does not constitute discrimination. According to this proposed bill, the JNF will also exchange land with the state receiving land in areas such as the Negev and the Galilee in which there is a high concentration of Palestinian populations. Interrelated with the development of land only for the use of Jewish citizens, the use of “admission committees” in most Jewish villages and towns in Israel prevent Palestinian citizens from joining these communities on the ground of “social unsuitability.” The ethnoreligious logic of exclusion against non-Jewish citizens used by these committees has been recently challenged by the Israeli Supreme Court. In February 2011 the Court decided in favor of a couple of middle class and educated Palestinian citizens who were denied access to a Jewish village of 760 inhabitants in the Lower Galilee. The local “selection committee” had rejected the couple’s application due to “lack of suitability.” The Court accepted the couple’s argument that their application was denied because they were Arabs. The Israeli Parliament is currently discussing a bill - The Admission Committees Law – which seeks to inscribe the principle of “social suitability” into the law.⁷² Various villages and towns have also adopted new more explicit bylaws screening applicants according to their “values” including “loyalty to the Zionist vision” (Khoury and Lis 2010).

As these examples highlight, the Israeli legal system does not operate on the ground of the principle of equality among its citizens. While the Israeli Supreme Court has expanded Palestinian citizens’ civil and political rights, recent legislative and governmental initiatives have further excluded Palestinian citizens from the state’s definition of common good. Interestingly, the question of Palestinians’ citizenship boundaries is not only discussed by different branches of the state but also different Jewish non-governmental organizations. While some Jewish nongovernmental organizations such as the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency support the legislative initiatives to strengthen the ethnoreligious link between the Israeli state and non-state Jewish organizations, other transnational Jewish philanthropic foundations financially support the court-based activism and associational development among Palestinian citizens, because they consider this form of activism to be a factor that “facilitates the [Palestinian] minority’s integration into Israel’s society and provides the group with a democratic, non-violent channel for pursuing its communal interests” (Haklai 2008, p. 583)

By contrast, in June 2007, the process of growing territorial separation between the two areas that form the Occupied Territories – the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – has acquired a new political meaning with the split between a Fatah-dominated PA in the West Bank and a Hamas-run government in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the Fatah-dominated PA is currently pursuing a project of “statehood-by-2011,” which, in line with its operation in the 1990s, centers on institution-building and economic projects through international donor funding in West Bank

⁷² http://www.old-adalah.org/eng/pressreleases/pr.php?file=03_02_11.

cities, especially Ramallah (Khalidi and Samour 2011).⁷³ By contrast, since the takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas in 2007, Gaza Palestinians have been subject to direct forms of Israeli military repression, including blockades, attacks, and air bombardments (Finkelstein, 2010).

This historical overview of more than sixty years of Israeli rule over Palestinians has mapped the broader legal and spatial terrain in which the Jalazon refugee camp and the Mahatta district of Lod are located. It has also discussed how the forms of rule over Palestinians inside Israel and in the Territories have evolved from 1948 to the present and how recent policies and institutions have created distinct experiences of politics and introduced new divisions among Palestinians under Israeli rule. I have highlighted how since the 1990s West Bank and Gaza Palestinians have become pre-occupied with new territorial, political, and class divisions and how middle-class Palestinian citizens have mobilized their associations and the Israeli courts to expand the citizenship rights of Palestinian citizens and to redefine the constitutional nature of the state from an ethnoreligious state promoting the interests of its Jewish citizens to a democratic state enforcing the principle of equality among its citizens.

Table 3: Ruling over Palestinians 1948 - Present

	Legal Status		Movement and “Mixed” Marriage across the Green Line
	<i>Stateless Palestinians of the Occupied Territories</i>	<i>Palestinian citizens of Israel</i>	
1948-1966	Under Egyptian or Jordanian rule	Military Government	<u>Movement:</u> Not allowed <u>Marriage:</u> Not allowed
1967- 1993	Israeli military rule	Abolition of military government but same logic of coercion as previous period: cooptation, segmentation, dependence, and intrusive surveillance of Israeli	<u>Movement:</u> Allowed for both Palestinians of the Occupied Territories and Palestinian citizens

⁷³ Khalidi and Samour (2011:8) argue that the program pursued by the PA “is inspired by a model of neoliberal governance increasingly widespread in the region” and that it “recalls the PA’s promotion of Gaza in the mid-1990s as the next Singapore.”

		security agencies	<u>Marriage:</u> Allowed
1993- Present	Combination of PA regime of indirect rule and Israeli military interventions	Broader space for court-based civil rights activism but persistence in state policies of exclusion and deployment of the Israeli security agencies	<u>Movement:</u> Not allowed for Palestinians of the Occupied Territories; restricted for Palestinian citizens ⁷⁴ <u>Marriage:</u> Not allowed (since 2003)

Table 4: Effects of Differentiation of forms of rule 1993 - Present

		Legal Status	
		<i>Stateless Palestinians of the Occupied Territories</i>	<i>Palestinian citizens of Israel</i>
Class	<i>Political, Intellectual, and Economic Elites</i>	Cooptation into the PA regime of indirect rule	Associational development and court-based activism as a source of (individual) opportunities for (a new generation of) educated middle class Palestinians ⁷⁵
	<i>Poor Palestinians</i>	Direct Israeli military repression as well as multiplication of PA security forces ⁷⁶	Police surveillance and intrusive presence of Israeli security agencies

⁷⁴ Palestinian citizens of Israel can cross the Green Line into the areas B and C of the West Bank but they cannot enter areas A of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

⁷⁵ But the Israeli security apparatus still plays an important role in setting the boundaries of legitimate political discourse among Palestinians inside Israel including middle class Palestinians.

⁷⁶ The next chapter will discuss the role of another institution – UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency) - in the management of poor Palestinians living in Gaza and West Bank refugee camps since 1948.

Chapter 2

The Mahatta District and the Jalazon Camp: History, Structure & the View from the Street

Spatial segregation between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians is a fundamental feature of urban life on both sides on the Green Line. Spatial segregation is mainly the product of the Israeli state's ethnonational goal of maintaining a Jewish majority within the state and a settling Jewish population in the West Bank.¹ Inside Israel, from the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages in 1948 to the newly-planned Jewish urban centers in the Negev and the Galilee, the Israeli state has been actively involved in the reorganization of the urban and rural space along ethnonational lines since its establishment. In the West Bank, the creation of Jewish settlements on the top of many West Bank hills since 1967 has led to a bifurcated spatial order in which, despite their proximity to Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps, Jewish settlements are physically separated from these Palestinian spaces through the use of roadblocks, fences, trenches and military towers while connected with the Israeli territory by by-pass roads reserved for Israeli citizens. Further, the recent creation of the PA as an institution of self-rule for the Palestinians of the Territories has been accompanied by the spatial division of the West Bank into non-contiguous Palestinian enclaves separated one from the other by Israeli checkpoints and other physical obstacles. The "cantonization" of the West Bank has also been characterized by the distribution of different Israeli policies towards Palestinian cities ranging from leniency in Ramallah, the de-facto "capital" of the PA, to military repression in other Palestinian cities, especially Nablus and Jenin. Separated from other Palestinian cities and estranged from the surrounding villages and refugee camps, the urban enclave of Ramallah has given spatial expression to the (widening) gap between the urban middle-class Palestinians who are concentrated in Ramallah and are oriented towards the PA and the rest of the Palestinian population in the West Bank.

This chapter situates the Mahatta district in Lod at the bottom of the urban order in Israel with particular attention to its status as a segregated Palestinian district in a city with a Jewish majority. It also situates the Jalazon refugee camp at the bottom of the hierarchy of places in the West Bank and discusses its relationships with three nearby spatial configurations: the Jewish settlement of Beit-El standing on the top of a nearby hill overlooking the camp; the surrounding Palestinian villages, to which the land on which the camp stands belongs; and the nearby Palestinian city of Ramallah, which constitutes a middle-class urban world standing in strident contrast with the everyday lives of camp dwellers in Jalazon. For both sites – the Mahatta district in Lod and the Jalazon camp – I divide the discussion into three subsections: history, structure, and "the view from the street." The part on Lod also includes a critique of the analytic use of the definition of Lod as a "mixed" town.

¹ In 2005, Israel removed its settlements from the Gaza Strip. The state-led settlement project continues in the illegally annexed East Jerusalem.

1. Lod

1.1 A History of Expulsion and Resettlement Projects

The 1948 war, which led to the creation of the state of Israel and transformed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into refugees, also caused a demographic upheaval in the life of the town of Lydda – called Il-Led in Arabic – renamed Lod in the new Israeli state. Before the 1948 war, Lydda was a Palestinian town with a population of about 22,000 inhabitants. In July 1948, when the Israeli army occupied the town, the population had more than doubled due to the mass influx of internally displaced Palestinians from dozens of villages near Lydda. The military occupation of Lydda was followed by the expulsion of almost all of the 50,000 Palestinians from the town, including both regular inhabitants and those who had found refuge in the town. Expelled Palestinians left Lydda on foot and walked eastward for about 15 miles to reach the headquarters of the Arab Legion,² which then drove them to the Jordan-controlled town of Ramallah in the West Bank. During the trek, dozens, if not hundreds of refugees, died of dehydration and heat (Morris 1989, p. 211; Masalha 2003, p. 47).³

In September 1948, there were about five hundred Palestinians, mainly old and wounded people, left in the in the old city area. Additionally, five hundred Palestinians - train workers and their families - had been allowed to stay in order to continue to operate the train system in the town. The train workers mainly lived in the Railway Station district - the Mahatta district where I conducted fieldwork in 2008 – in the Western part of Lydda. This district had been developed by the British rulers in the 1920s to house the British staff and the Palestinian train workers within the broader plan of locating a major junction of Mandatory Palestine's railway system in the western part of Lydda (Golan 2003a, p. 123; Yacobi 2009, p. 22). In the period from July 1948 to April 1949, the Israeli military government established its control over these remaining Palestinians by physically concentrating them in two zones: the old city and the Rail Station district. These two areas were enclosed with wire fences, surveilled by Israeli military guards, and placed under evening curfews. Palestinians could leave these two zones only through permits (Yacobi 2009, pp. 33-35). The mass expulsion of Palestinians also marked a change in the ratio between Muslims and Christians among the remaining Palestinians. At the time of the British mandate, 80 percent of the Lydda's population of Lydda were Muslims (Casto and Dotson 1938). However, after the Israeli military occupation, 80 percent of the Palestinians who remained in Lod were Christians. While Israeli authorities saw all Palestinians who remained in Lod as a collective threat to the state's plan to settle Jewish citizens there, they perceived the Christians as less dangerous and more likely to "collaborate" than the Muslims. This is evident in the operation of a "local committee" established in the Mahatta district by Israeli authorities in 1949 as an intermediary body to communicate with the Palestinian residents of the district. The committee was mainly composed of Christians and Muslim residents of the district protested it claiming that it operated in favor Christian Palestinians (Yacobi 2009, p. 35).

² The Arab Legion was the Jordanian army. Israeli military officials gave two main reasons for the expulsion of Palestinian civilians from Lydda: first, they used the trek of Palestinian civilians as an obstacle against the advance of the Jordanian army; second, they thought that the view of tens of thousands of expelled Palestinians would "cause demoralization in every Arab area [the refugees] reach" (Morris 1989, p. 211).

³ The forced march of Palestinian refugees expelled from Lod has been vividly portrayed by Palestinian artists such as Ismail Shammout and remains a major element in the Palestinians' collective memory of the destruction of Palestinian society (the Nakba, disaster) in 1948.

After the war, despite the curfews, the fencing, and the military guards, hundreds of Palestinians – defined and treated as “infiltrators” by the Israeli authorities – attempted and some succeeded to return to their homes while many other internally displaced Palestinians reached Lydda and occupied refugees’ empty houses in the town. For example, an elderly Palestinian woman told me in an interview that along with some members of her family, she returned from Gaza, where she had fled during the war, to the Mahatta district of Lydda, where she was born and had lived until the war. She also described how she lived in two different houses inside the district before moving back to their original house which, in her family’s absence, had been occupied by another Palestinian family seeking refuge from a nearby village that had been destroyed during the war.

In 1949, as it had done in other former Palestinian urban areas, the state started the process of the repopulation of Lydda with Jewish citizens; first with refugees from Europe, including Holocaust survivors, and later and in more massive numbers with immigrants from Asian and North African countries. In general, about 125,000 out of the 190,000 Jews who settled in Israel in 1949 were directed towards former Palestinian towns (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003, p. 680). The decision to settle about 66 percent of Jewish citizens in former Palestinian towns in 1949 was due to a housing shortage but it also responded to a specific ethnonational logic: “Israeli wartime and post-war policy of resettlement of former Arab areas ... intended the ‘Jewification’ of Israeli space through blocking the return of uprooted Palestinian Arab refugees to their homes in former Arab areas” (Golan 2003b, p. 150). In December 1948, the Jewish Agency obtained the government’s approval to resettle Jewish immigrants in the empty houses and apartments of Lod and, by March 1950, a Jewish population of 8,400 had joined the about 1,000 Palestinians who remained in the town. The military government was in charge of surveying the “abandoned” houses and properties, identifying the town’s areas to be repopulated and the rate of population while the Jewish Agency was in charge of allocating the town’s vacant houses and lands to Jewish migrants. Further, the military governor was responsible for a comprehensive plan of demolitions including the destruction of most of the old town center (Golan 2003a, pp. 126-127; Yacobi 2009, p. 40).

In the period from 1950 to the early 1970s, the Jewish population of Lod – mainly migrants coming from North African and Asian countries – constituted about 90 percent of the total population, ranging from 11,000 out of 12,100 inhabitants in 1950 to 27,600 out of 30,600 inhabitants in 1972 (Yacobi 2009, p. 61). However, since the 1970s, the Palestinian population of Lod has steadily grown to reach 16,800 individuals (about 25 per cent of the town’s total population) in 2008.⁴ This change in the demographic ratio between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Lod is caused by two main factors. First, while the government continues to encourage new Jewish immigrants to settle in the town – the two most recent cases are immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union and from Ethiopia in the 1990s – middle-class (Ashkenazi) Jewish families tend to avoid Lod and many Jewish families leave the town as soon as they can afford housing in better-serviced and wealthier all-Jewish towns. Second, state-sponsored projects have included the relocation of Palestinian populations from other parts of the country to Lod. While these projects contradict the explicit goal of maintaining a Jewish majority in Lod, they constitute the state’s response to Israeli authorities’ perceived need of spatial and political control in other parts of the country. For example, in the 1970s the state initiated a policy of massive land expropriation in the Southern desert area of the Negev to create military bases and

⁴ See Israeli Bureau of Statistics (*kovetz yishuvim* 2008) http://www.cbs.gov.il/ishuvim/ishuvim_main.htm (last accessed May 28, 2011).

training fields. This policy displaced thousands of Palestinian Bedouins, some of which relocated in Lod (Cohen 2000). Later in the 1980s, when Gaza and West Bank Palestinians started an uprising against the Israeli military rule in the Occupied Territories, the state resettled several families of “collaborators” from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Lod (Yacobi 2009, p. 62). Further, Palestinian citizens of Israel moved to Lod from other parts of the country in search of employment in the nearby city of Tel Aviv’s low-wage service industry.

During my fieldwork in Lod in 2008, local Israeli politicians explicitly denounced the increase in the number of Palestinians in the town as a “demographic threat” in statements to the media. They also supported new policies intended “to strengthen the Jewish character” of the town and to encourage Jewish Israelis to settle there; one example is the construction and the marketing of housing units aimed specifically at ultra-Orthodox Jewish couples and Israeli security personnel. This reference to the demographic anxieties felt by Jewish Israelis in reference to the growing presence of Palestinians in Lod brings me to the question of segregation along ethnonational lines – specifically the divide between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens – as a fundamental feature of the spatial distribution of the state’s citizens.

1.2 The structure of spatial segregation

The State level

As I discussed in chapter 1 (pp. 10-11 and footnote 26), about 93 percent of land in Israel is owned by the state as a result of massive land confiscation after the 1948 war. About 80 percent of state-owned land has been leased by hundreds of rural “communal and cooperative localities” such as *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, which remain Jewish-only areas. Only about 8 percent of the Israeli population lives in these localities. Local “admission selection committees” screening applicants, and the JNF, which plays a prominent role in the management of state land, operate as gatekeepers to exclude non-Jewish citizens. While there are ongoing attempts by Palestinian citizens to obtain access to these localities on grounds of the principle of equality, for the moment, these challenges have generated limited support by the Israeli courts although counteractions by the Israeli parliament have cemented the ethnic homogeneity of these localities.

The great majority of the Israeli population – about 92 per cent – lives in urban areas. Urban localities are also spatially segregated mainly as an outcome of two factors: first, the massive demographic upheaval of 1948, and, second, the state ethnocentric policies of spatial control and development at work since the early 1950s (Kimmerling 1983). In the aftermath of the 1948 war, except for a few thousand individuals, the Palestinian minority inside the state lived in all-Arab villages and cities which pre-existed the state and were not destroyed during the war. The approximately 600 new municipalities the state has established since the 1950s have typically remained all-Jewish localities. Until the late 1960s, the military rule imposed on Palestinian citizens prevented them from moving freely, let alone changing their place of residence. Thus, the state’s first few decades of existence characterized a pattern of spatial divide between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens living in different villages, towns, and cities. This divide is also characterized by the spatial concentration of Palestinians inside the state in three main areas: 1) the Northern area of the Galilee; 2) the so-called “Triangle,” a central area of the state, just west of the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank; and 3) in the desert area of the Negev in the south. All-Palestinian localities in these three areas, which still include about 90 per cent of Palestinians inside Israel, have jurisdiction on only about 2.5 per cent of the Israeli territory. In

addition to being more overcrowded and having less land to develop, Palestinian localities are over-represented in the lowest strata of the state's rank of localities according to socioeconomic factors such as average income per capita, poverty rates, and percentage of wage-earners earning less than the minimum wage (Adalah 2011). Further, Palestinian villages and cities have historically been excluded from the state's list of "national priority areas," that is, specific municipalities - including Jewish settlements in the West Bank - which are entitled to state special benefits and additional funding for their "national importance."

Since the 1980s, all-Jewish towns, which were created after the establishment of the state, such as Upper Nazareth and Karmiel, have attracted Palestinian families, especially those from the emerging Palestinian middle-class inside the state (King-Irani 2007; Rabinowitz 1997). The settling of Palestinians in these towns has caused negative reactions among the Jewish residents including the initiative of a deputy-mayor encouraging residents to inform him about "Arabs who intend to buy flats in the town" (Mayost 2010). Attempts by Palestinian citizens to settle in all-Jewish localities are on the rise as a result of land scarcity and the high cost of real estate in Palestinian localities; at the same time, many of the available houses in Jewish towns are cheaper because of state-subsidized urban development programs that are flourishing in these areas.

Five Israeli cities have included both Jewish and Palestinian citizens since the establishment of the state. Four of these cities - Lod, Ramle, Acre, and Jaffa - were Palestinian cities until 1948 but underwent a radical demographic change during and just after the war with the expulsion of most of their Palestinian inhabitants and the resettlement of Jewish immigrants (Levine 2005; Monterescu and Rabinowitz 2007; Monterescu 2009, 2011; Yacobi 2009). The city of Haifa already had Jewish and Palestinian inhabitants but the demographic ratio changed during the war, moving from a Palestinian majority to a Jewish majority (Yazbak 2003; Rabinowitz 2007; Kallus and Kolodney 2010).⁵ These cities, which together include less than 10 per cent of Palestinian citizens (about 100,000 individuals), are commonly called "mixed cities" in the dominant Israeli public and scholarly discourses (see 1.3 below for a critique of this category). The percentage of Palestinians out of each city's total population ranges from about 10 per cent in Haifa (30,000 out of 300,000), to about 20 per cent in Ramle (15,800 out of 63,500), to about 25 per cent in Lod (16,800 out of 67,480), to about 28 per cent in Acre (12,500 out of 46,300), to about 30 per cent in Jaffa (15,000 out of 45,000).

A common feature of these five cities is the historical presence of "Palestinian enclaves," which are the product of the mass displacement in 1948. Typically, just after the 1948 war, the remaining Palestinians lived in specific areas of the cities. During the 1950s, Jewish immigrants, mainly from Asia and North Africa, started to settle in these areas to leave them typically in the 1960s and 1970s to relocate in newer parts of the cities. Thus, by the 1970s, these pockets of territory inhabited by Palestinian urban minorities returned to be mainly all-Palestinian areas (Kipnis and Schnell 1978). From a different perspective, in parallel to the attempts of Palestinian citizens to move from crowded all-Arab localities to more comfortable and better-serviced all-Jewish localities, some Palestinians living in these "mixed" cities have moved from their "enclaves" to new areas of the cities specifically developed by the state for Jewish immigrants.

⁵ The city of Beersheba was also a Palestinian city before the war and became an all-Jewish city after the war but unlike Lod, Ramle, Acre, and Jaffa, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian inhabitants was total and only recently have Palestinians moved into Beersheba again, a movement that resembles the recent settling of Palestinians in Upper Nazareth and Karmiel. Thus, Beersheba combines the ethnic cleansing of 1948 with the recent phenomenon of Palestinians settling in all-Jewish towns with the difference that, unlike other all-Jewish towns such as Karmiel, Beersheba existed before the establishment of the state and was reconstituted as an all-Jewish town after the war.

These population movements have led to various outcomes in terms of “integration” between Jewish and Palestinian inhabitants at the level of urban district. These outcomes range from the constitution of relatively stable Jewish-Arab “integrated districts,” to the demographic transformation of these areas with all but the poorest Jewish residents moving out and an increasingly higher number of Palestinian families moving in.

Thus, in each of these five cities, there are at least four different spatial configurations along ethnonational lines: 1) the “Arab enclaves,” which were created as an outcome of the 1948 war and which are still today inhabited mainly or exclusively by poor Palestinians; 2) districts with a majority of Jewish Israelis and a small minority of Palestinians; 3) new districts developed by the state in the 1950s and 1960s for Jewish immigrants but that have predominantly or even exclusively become all-Palestinian districts; and 4) all-Jewish districts. In general, levels of residential segregation are high in all five of the cities (Falah 1996).

The city level: the spatial distribution of Palestinians in Lod

The 16,800 Palestinians in Lod predominantly live in three segregated areas of the city: the Mahatta district in the West, the old city, and the Samet-Het district in the North. Since the 1980s, they have become the majority of residents of housing blocks in the Ramat-Eshkol district, which was initially built for Jewish immigrants in the 1970s. While, in the 1990s, local authorities directed new immigrants from Ethiopia to this district, Palestinians have continued to remain the majority.⁶ Just northeast of Ramat-Eshkol, there is another housing project – Neve Yerek (Green Oasis) – which was built in the mid-1970s as part of a governmental effort to address the phenomenon of illegal housing among Palestinians and which still today includes only Palestinian residents. A small minority of middle-class Palestinians live dispersed in new predominantly Jewish neighborhoods such as “Young Lod” and “Forest Gardens,” which feature private homes.

Of the three segregated districts, the Mahatta district and the old city are the two historical “Arab enclaves” which contained the about 1,000 Palestinians who remained in the town after the 1948 war. The third district - Samet-Het - is located just north of the old city, developed as Palestinian Bedouins moved into the city in the 1970s and 1980s mainly from the Negev and started to build shacks and then houses on state-owned land.

Located about two kilometers southwest of what remains of Lod’ old city,⁷ the *Mahatta* district – called HaRakevet in Hebrew – is sandwiched between the railway tracks to its east and the Nir Zvi moshav and the district of Ganei Aviv (Spring Gardens) respectively to its west and north-west. The Mahatta area includes four internal sub-sections, which have a different legal status. First, the area adjacent to the railway is what local policy-makers and journalists mainly refer as the Mahatta district. This area is almost completely built on state-owned land and thus scheduled for demolition. It also includes the houses built by the British for the railway staff in the early 1940s. These houses, with their “red tile roofs, brick chimneys, as well as front and back gardens,” are what remain of the British colonial design of the district in the early 1940s according to “planning principles of the garden city such as hygiene, light and air” (Yacobi 2009, p. 22). These houses stand in stark contrast with both the zinc-roofed shacks, which dot the

⁶ Today the inhabitants of this district are 70 per cent Palestinians, 20 per cent Ethiopian immigrants, and 10 per cent “veteran” Jewish Israelis who have lived in the Ramat-Eshkol since its establishment.

⁷ Most of the old city was destroyed just after the 1948 war.

landscape in between these red-roofed houses and newly built multi-story houses, also illegally built on state-owned land.⁸

Second, moving away from the railway tracks heading west, just opposite a Delek plant that manufactures and mixes lubricants, oils, and petroleum products,⁹ there is a small housing project – Warda (Rose) – consisting of “four housing blocks containing a total of 80 apartment units” (Yacobi 2006, p. 31). This housing project was built in the late 1980s. The idea was to demolish many of the illegal shacks and houses in the Mahatta area and move some of their inhabitants to these housing blocks while convincing others to leave town in exchange for money. Many families, especially, those that had managed to build houses in concrete, did not want to move to the new housing project, mainly because the apartments were small and cramped together. Eventually, a dozen families relocated to Rose. When I conducted fieldwork in 2008, Rose was renowned among the Mahatta residents for the predominance of two types of residents: divorced women with children or married women who rent the apartments to escape from drug-addicted or violent husbands, and families of “collaborators” from the Occupied Territories.

Just a few hundred meters further western to the Warda project, there is another, larger, housing project: Wahat al-Salam (Oasis of Peace, Neve-Shalom in Hebrew). The logic behind the construction of Oasis of Peace in the early 2000s was similar to what led to the construction of Warda two years earlier: by evicting some Palestinian families from the Mahatta area and better controlling the number that remained, the state could prevent them from building on and using additional state-owned land.¹⁰ In order to prevent construction, this time local authorities also placed boulders in the areas left by residents who relocated to the new housing project and other empty spaces. There are currently about 200 families living in Wahat al-Salam. The view from the street in this project differs from that in the nearby Mahatta area: “the [Wahat al-Salam] area has a system of perpendicular streets, along the length of which run cubical buildings covered with colored plaster. The houses are one to two-stories high and enclosed within a constructed fence. The roads are paved and the sidewalks are constructed of interlacing pavement blocks. Streetlights line the street and all the houses are connected to the city’s infrastructure systems” (Yacobi 2009, p. 95). During my fieldwork, an additional row of houses was under construction, a small health clinic was partially operating but it was located in an isolated area still not connected to the rest of the project through paved roads. The entrance to the housing project is dominated by two buildings: an elementary school and a police station. The

⁸ Residents contend that some of these multi-story houses belong to renowned drug-dealers.

⁹ Delek is a subsidiary of Delkol, one of the two major Israeli oil companies. The Delek website defines the Mahatta district as “the Western industrial park” of Lod. It also describes the compound in these terms: “The plant contains lubricant mixing facilities, filling and packing facilities, an installation for lubricant renewal, facilities for the manufacture and recycling of solvents, a central sewage treatment plant, warehouses and laboratories, as well as various buildings, a plant for the manufacture of water-based paint, and offices.” The plant, which was created in 1951, has currently about 100 employees mainly “Russians” – immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union who arrived in the 1990s. According to the residents, many of whom used to work there in the 1950s and 1960s, the plant is not anymore active. They claim that they used to see black smoke from the plant but this is not anymore the case. They also think that the “Russians” mainly do administrative work. However, according to the Delek website the plant is still producing lubricants. During my fieldwork it was interesting to see the “Russian” workers driving towards the parking lot of the plant and then disappear behind the tall concrete wall that surrounds it.

¹⁰ Yacobi (2006, p. 32) specifies that “the responsibility for the eviction of Arab families from the Rakevet neighborhood was turned over to ‘private subcontractors’ who conduct the actual negotiations” with the Palestinian families, convincing a few dozen families to leave the town in exchange of a monetary compensation. Other families were relocated to a new housing project – Oasis of Peace”.

police station with its police cars parked in front stands in a particularly visible part of the project, on the main road leading from the Mahatta to Ward and passing through Oasis of Peace towards the western part of the district. During my fieldwork I never saw a police officer walking in the district, they always drove everywhere. Interestingly, there are a number of small walking pathways linking the Mahatta area to the Oasis of Peace area, which allows one to avoid police cars. While the Mahatta area has parts that cannot be easily reached by car, the Oasis of Peace area with its regular perpendicular streets and with the houses' doors looking on the main street, is more open to external eyes. The police station used to be in the basement of the elementary school but according to the residents the entire school was put on fire as a sign of protest against the presence of the police inside the building. Previously, the police station was inside one of the Warda housing blocks. It now seems to have found its stable presence at one of the major corners of the new housing project, next to the school.

Further west, a mile passed Oasis of Peace, there is another area of the Mahatta district called *Pardes-Shanir*. In this area, the land is privately owned but it is officially intended for agricultural and not residential purposes. Thus many houses in *Pardes-Shanir* are also in danger of demolition. Unlike in the eastern area adjacent to the railway tracks, the houses in this western portion are mainly two or three-stories in much better condition, some with beautiful terraces and gardens. The houses are also in better shape than the relatively new buildings in the Oasis of Peace. The private ownership of the land is the crucial factor because it has screened out the most dispossessed residents who have tended to settle on state-owned land. Further, unlike residents of the Mahatta area, while still facing the threat of demolitions, residents of the *Pardes-Shanir* area, have mobilized to advocate for the rezoning of the area from agricultural to residential. While the state's recognition of private ownership of the land gives some more stability to residents of *Pardes-Shanir*, this area resembles the Mahatta area in its external markers: the unpaved streets, the uncollected trash, the lack of public transportation, and the presence of small informal services such as grocery stores and mechanics. According to the 2008 census, these four subsections of the Mahatta area include a total of about 3,500 individuals. In reality, the number is higher and today probably reaches about 6,000 people.

The *Pardes-Shanir* area, which marks the western boundaries of both the Mahatta district and the city, is separated from an agricultural cooperative – the Nir-Zvi moshav – through a partially constructed three-meter high wall. The construction of this wall was the outcome of an initiative by the upper middle-class Jewish-Israeli inhabitants of the moshav who objected to a master plan for the regularization of the *Pardes-Shanir* area - its transformation from a “agricultural” to a “residential” area – discussed by local authorities in the late 1990s. The plan ambiguously stated that the regularization would not compromise “the pastoral image” of the area, which seems to point to the imposition of limits on the building rights of the Palestinian residents as well as to the possible demolition of buildings deemed to defy this “pastoral image” (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003, p. 687). The inhabitants of the moshav pressured Lod's local council to include the construction of the wall as integral part of the master plan. While the Palestinian area today still waits for a better specified and detailed plan of regularization, construction of the wall started in 2002 but not for the planned length of 1,500 meters because residents of *Pardes-Shanir* obtained the help of legal NGOs to challenge the legality of the wall in Israeli courts. While in 2005 this court-based challenge to the construction of the wall seemed successful, the Regional Planning Committee – a governmental body responsible for urban planning in the area of Lod – continued to support the position of the moshav's residents arguing that the wall was necessary for their personal safety against criminal activities originating in the Palestinian area (Yacobi 2009, pp.

63-67). During my fieldwork in 2007-2008, about two-thirds of the wall had been built. Despite the legal challenges initiated by Israeli NGOs on behalf of residents of Pardes-Shanir, the construction of the wall was completed in December 2010. At the same time, plans to legalize at least certain areas of Pardes-Shanir have not been finalized, let alone implemented.

Another disputed area between Palestinian and Jewish residents in Lod is “the border” between Pardes-Shanir and the district of Ganei Aviv, which was built in the early 1990s mainly for immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union. The land on which Ganei Aviv is built was initially zoned as agricultural land and was outside Lod’s municipal boundaries. However, as part of the Israeli government’s decision to incentivize the construction of large-scale residential projects, the land was re-zoned as residential and included in the municipal boundaries of the city.¹¹ The residential project was mainly marketed to immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union – commonly called “Russians” – as a suburb of the city of Tel Aviv, which is distant about 20 kilometers from Lod (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2007, pp. 444-445). Despite the high quality of services in Ganei Aviv including a good public transportation system, the immigrants did not react well to the presence of their Palestinian neighbors. For example, Tzfadia and Yacobi (2007, p. 446) quote from an interview with a resident of Ganei Aviv: “Every day I see how they want to enter our neighborhood. We were promised that life will be fine here, that we will have everything: a train to Tel Aviv... But there are only Arabs here.” This quote also points to the often failed attempts by Palestinians to move into Ganei Aviv because, unlike the Palestinian areas just opposite this new district, Ganei Aviv offers a wide range of services from transportation to banking, which are absent in Palestinian areas. When I was in Lod, I visited a Palestinian woman who had succeeded in renting an apartment in a high-rise building in Ganei Aviv with her husband after promising that they would not write their names outside the door and they would not invite friends or relatives over to visit them. While she had mixed feelings about living in Ganei Aviv under these constraints along with the ongoing hostility from some of her neighbors, she did not want to return to Ramat-Eshkol – a district with a majority of Palestinians and a minority of Ethiopian immigrants. Now that she was pregnant, she felt that Ramat-Eshkol was not a safe place to live. Her dream was to move to one of the new mainly Jewish middle-class districts of the town but she could not afford buy a house in one of these districts which mainly feature private homes for purchase rather than apartments for rent.

The construction of Ganei Aviv constitutes the first of a chain of new urban districts which are currently planned or in construction as part of an effort to create and maintain a non-Arab space in a city with a growing Palestinian population. At the same time, the construction of the Oasis of Peace housing project in the heart of the Mahatta area constitutes the most recent attempt by the local authorities to regulate, count, control and contain the Palestinian population in this area of the city. Official discourse emerging from documents produced on Lod at the local and national level clearly draws upon two logics: 1) demographic concerns for the growing number of Palestinians living in the town; and 2) the preservation of the residential segregation between Palestinian and Jewish residents. For example, a report¹² written by the Israeli Parliament’s Interior and Environment Committee draws on information provided by Yoram

¹¹ Studies on the neoliberal turn of the Israeli economy highlight the decrease in the Israeli state’s control on housing policies. For example, for the first time in 1989, the Israeli state allowed immigrants to decide in which location to settle. However, it is important to note that the state has also introduced other policies to preserve its pivotal role in land development and urban planning. Specifically, in the early 1990s, the Israeli state began to subsidize “direct large-scale construction” in localities that it deemed to be strategic according to its ethnonational logic (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2007, p. 443).

¹² Copy of the original report in Hebrew is available from the author.

Ben-Arush, Lod municipality's spokesperson, transmits a sense of anxiety about the growing presence of Palestinians in Lod. It estimates the number of "illegal buildings" in the city to be about 2,000 if the estimate includes only housing units (apartments and houses), and increases the number to about 2,500 "constructions" if the estimate includes tin shacks. It also states that the phenomenon of "illegal building" is concentrated in the "**Arab sector**" [emphasis in the original text] and notes that according to Ben-Arush the two main causes of "illegal construction" are "economic profitability (illegal building allows for the avoidance of housing taxes) and housing distress." The report calculates that "there is a lack of 1,600 housing units for the Arab population, and that by 2020, considering the natural increase of the [Arab] population, there will be a shortage of 4,500 housing units." The recommendations of the committee are twofold. On the one hand, it recommends a stricter enforcement of house demolitions also noting that according to the police "residents show understanding of the fact that demolitions are inevitable" and that "during house demolitions in the years 2005-2006 in the city of Lod, no adverse events were recorded." On the other hand, it recommends the construction of 3,000 housing units for "the Arab sector in the Pardes-Shanir and the Rakevet neighborhoods." Beyond the technocratic language of enumerating numbers and rates, the report awkwardly combines opposite perspectives on the relationship between local authorities and the Palestinian residents of Lod. For example, the same paragraph first reports the point of view of the municipality spokesperson and engineers about the behaviors of the Palestinians living in the Mahatta district and Oasis of Peace Housing Project: "several housing units were severely damaged by the residents, and today require reconstruction and rehabilitation. Moreover, it was revealed that some families split, kept their original houses in the Rakevet neighborhood and also received new housing units." Second, it reports the complaint by *Shatil*, an NGO working on the mixed cities, that Palestinian residents of the Rakevet were not involved in the planning of the Oasis of Peace Project and that "the construction didn't take the cultural needs of the Arab population into consideration"¹³

The remainder of the report is dedicated to new districts in construction for "**the Jewish sector**" [emphasis in the original] with particular attention to so-called "strong populations." For example, the committee points to a new residential project – Garin Eyashiv – aimed at "the Zionist religious people [who] come to the city for idealist reasons." In this case, residential segregation between Jewish and non-Jewish (Palestinian) residents and demographic anxiety about the growth of non-Jewish (Palestinian) residents is disguised in the language of attracting "strong populations" driven by "idealist reasons."

Residential segregation along ethnonational lines – Jewish versus Palestinian districts – reproduces at the urban level what constitutes within the Israeli dominant public discourse the unmarked category: ethnic homogenous space. Thus, the marked category becomes those cities with both Jewish and Palestinian residents: the so-called "mixed cities."

1.3 Lod as a "mixed" city?

The term "mixed city" is a folk category that is commonly used in Israel – in daily conversations, in newspaper articles as well as in scholarly works – to refer to an urban setting inside the state that includes a Jewish majority and a Palestinian minority. These bi-national urban configurations are an exception inside the Israeli state. Thus, "mixed city" is the marked category

¹³ By "cultural needs" of the residents, Shatil mainly referred to communal and gender norms among Palestinian Bedouins, which would require a different arrangement of private and public space.

while the division between all-Jewish villages and towns and all-Palestinian villages and cities inside the state is the unmarked and normalized category. Other forms of “mixing” in terms of class, gender, or place of origin within each ethnonational category also tend to remain unmarked.

The term “mixed cities” precedes the creation of the Israeli state. It was first used during the British Mandate in the Peel Commission Report of 1937 – a plan for the partition of Mandatory Palestine into a Jewish area and an Arab area through exchange of population - to refer to four towns that had both Jewish and Palestinian inhabitants.¹⁴ In the 1940s, prior to the 1948 war, the term (*irme 'orevet* in Hebrew) was also used by the Hebrew press as well as Jewish politicians to refer to the predicament of Jewish minorities in towns with a Palestinian majority. Since the demographic upheaval caused by the mass expulsions of Palestinians during the 1948 war, the term has mainly referred to cities, which, like Lod, have a Jewish majority and a Palestinian minority. In the last two decades, it has been extended to refer to previously all-Jewish towns, which some Palestinian families have recently moved to in search of better services (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, pp. 199-200).

While commonly used by the Jewish Israeli public opinion, the term “mixed cities” (*mudun mukhtalaṭa*) is not widely used in Arabic. Since the 1990s, some Palestinian NGOs and associations inside Israel have used this term or another similar term – “share cities” (*mudun mushtaraka*) – when mobilizing within the Israeli associational sphere and court system. However, another term – “targeted cities” (*mudun mustahdafa*) – is often used by Palestinian organizations when engaging Arab donors or organizations to emphasize how the Israeli state develops specific policies against Palestinians in these cities (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, p. 221). During my fieldwork in the Mahatta district in Lod, Palestinians simply referred to the city by its name and they never used any of the above-mentioned terms even when they were discussing the specificity of Lod (“Il-Led”) as a city in which “there are Arabs and also Jews.”

The folk use of “mixed city” in the Israeli public discourse also penetrates scholarly debates among Israeli scholars. Monterescu and Rabinowitz (2007; 2008, p. 198) use “mixed town”¹⁵ as an analytic category to characterize an urban environment in which inhabitants meet and share certain styles of living and categories of belonging across ethnic lines. In their words, unlike a “divided” urban environment, everyday life in a “mixed” urban setting is characterized by two elements: 1) “a socioeconomic reality [that is] a certain ethnic mix in housing zones, ongoing neighborly relations, socioeconomic proximity, and various modes of joint sociality;” and 2) “a consciousness of proximity, whereby individuals and groups on both sides [of the ethnic divide] actually share elements of identity, symbolic traits, and cultural markers, signifying the mixed town as a locus of joint memory, affiliation, and self-identification.” Their argument is that “mixed towns” (have the potential to) contest at the local level the ethnonational logic of segregation between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens driving state policies in Israel. This is why they differentiate between “mixed” cities having a meaningful level of inter-ethnic sociability and “divided” cities in which state policies of ethnic discrimination are reproduced at the urban level.

¹⁴ The report was produced by the Peel Commission, a Royal Commission, which was set up by the British government after the first Arab revolt against British rule in 1936. Like other British documents, the report did not refer to “Palestinian” urban dwellers but to “Muslim” and “Christian” inhabitants in addition to “Jewish inhabitants.” The British government rejected the Commission’s plan of partition.

¹⁵ The authors use the term “town” rather than “city” to highlight that these “mixed” localities are peripheral urban areas inside the state in both function and size. In this sense, Tel Aviv is a city while Lod is a town.

By contrast, Yiftachel and Yacobi (2003, pp. 679-680) use another term – “urban ethnocracies” – to refer to how demographic and ethnonational state policies including Jewish citizens and excluding non-Jewish citizens affect the reorganization of space within the state including cities with a Jewish majority and a Palestinian minority. In their framework, all Israeli cities reproduce the exclusionary national project of “Judaizing Israel/Palestine,” which is driven by the “premise that Israel is a territory and a state that ‘belongs’ to, and only to, the Jewish people.” Urban districts inhabited by Palestinians inside Israeli cities constitute “‘internal frontiers,’ into which Jewish presence should expand” or which need to be contained with the construction of Jewish neighborhoods around them.

In this study, I do not use the term “mixed city” analytically because the objective presence of Jewish and non-Jewish (Palestinian) citizens in the same urban space does not tell much about the prevailing social and symbolic relations within and across these two ethnonational lines of membership. Nor does it reveal how state and local policies manage these exceptional bi-national urban spaces in Israel. While, in general, cities constitute an environment in which rigid ethnoracial or ethnonational boundaries can be easily destabilized and challenged, local and state authorities as well as ordinary members of the dominant (ethnoracial or ethnonational) populations can intervene in a variety of ways to reinforce the social ostracization of the dominated population. This is particularly true when, as in the Israeli case, institutional mechanisms at both the state and local levels actively work according to an ethnocentric, hierarchical logic that ostracizes and discriminates against Palestinian minorities in Israeli cities. Thus, in their everyday lives, Palestinians experience different encounters with street-level bureaucrats, especially the Israeli police and security forces, than their Jewish neighbors. They are also subject to a different set of discourses, which often highlight their presence in Jewish Israeli cities as a demographic and security problem. Only against the backdrop of these state’s policies and discourses can scholars understand how Palestinians adapt to and contest their predicament of marginality in Israeli cities and understand how they negotiate their social relations with other Palestinians as well as with Jewish citizens living in the same city.

In supporting the argument that “mixed cities” unsettle both the Jewish Israeli and Palestinian broader nationalist discourses, Monterescu (2010, p. 277) discusses cases in which Palestinians in Jaffa – another so-called “mixed city” - remember good social relations with Jewish neighbors in the post-war period of the 1950s and speak negatively about Palestinian neighbors - what he defines as a “counter-intuitive” memory in light of the mass displacement of Palestinians in 1948.¹⁶ However, this argument misses the specific relations that Palestinian but not Jewish citizens have with the Israeli state, especially its repressive apparatus. These “counter-intuitive” memories cannot be explained as, Monterescu contends, “both the existential product of urban mix and as an element of mixed towns’ sociological uniqueness” (278). By contrast, like the practices of the present, the memories of the past among Palestinian minorities within Israeli cities, can only be explained in relation to past and present state policies and discourses towards these populations. My analysis of intra-Palestinian relations in Lod (see chapter 4) will explore the link between how certain Palestinians in Lod stigmatize themselves and other Palestinian neighbors and how the state has intervened to disrupt social relations among Palestinians in the town. Further, I will also discuss the other side of the coin: how many poor Palestinians in Lod affirm their existence against the state by adopting practices such as drug-dealing and informal

¹⁶ Monterescu argues that scholars often reproduce these discourses through “methodological nationalism” and that his “mixed cities” paradigm allows a better understanding of how ordinary individuals unsettle broader ethnonational discourses in their everyday interactions.

housing and how these practices carry clear political claims against the state, claims that remain unacceptable or incomprehensible to most Jewish inhabitants of Lod.

1.4 Lod and its Palestinian districts: The view from the street, the view from the West Bank and the view from the Israeli dominant public discourse

Lod is a city of stark contrasts, which, even to a visitor who knows nothing of its history of mass expulsion and destruction, reveals quite palpably that urban development did not occur gradually over time and that “something” – some natural or human cataclysm – must have happened. This is particularly evident while walking among the ruins and the many empty spaces of the old city’s area, which was partially demolished after the 1948 war. The old city comes to life on Tuesdays when the weekly food market attracts local residents who usually live parallel and segregated everyday lives. Indeed, the weekly markets give some color and sound to an area, which otherwise does not usually attract crowds of people and is pretty quiet. The old city’s landscape made of vacant lots and ruined houses contrasts with the new downtown area of the city, which was built in a different location and features high-rise apartment buildings and a brand new indoor mall.

Housing blocks that were built in the 1950s and 1960s for Jewish immigrants often display signs of neglect and poverty, such as cracks in the external and internal walls, broken sidewalks, and old, overflowing trash bins in desperate need of replacement. However, here poverty looks different from the “illegal” districts where most Palestinians live. Despite their evident neglect, these projects – including those that today house a majority of Palestinian families – receive municipal services and they are organically connected with the rest of the city through public transportation. Yet, even in this case, when Palestinians become a majority, new dynamics emerge. Take the Ramat-Eshkol district, where I lived with a Palestinian family during the first two months of my fieldwork. In this district, which is within walking distance from the old city and has about 1,000 apartments, a three-bedroom apartment sells for about \$20,000. When I lived in the Ramat-Eshkol, a local resident brought me to visit the neighborhood school, which had been closed when the Jewish families moved out of the district. Residents were concerned that the local authorities wanted to open a yeshiva¹⁷ there rather than re-opening the school for their children. Indeed, this is what happened in September 2008. In the words of the Lod municipality’s spokesperson, “we need to strengthen the Jewish character of Lod and religious people and Zionists have a big part to play in this strengthening” (quoted in Jeffay 2008).

The Palestinian “illegal districts” of Lod including the Mahatta district look very different than the Ramat-Eshkol’s apartment buildings. They look like an irregular patchwork mixing one, two or multi-story houses built in cement and loosely constructed shacks with tin roofs. Cement blocks, bundles of concrete, and metal bars dot the landscape; the former have been placed by the local authorities to prevent further construction and the latter are what remains of demolished houses. The roads are mostly unpaved and sewage runs along the railway tracks that mark the eastern boundary of the Mahatta. Pools of sewage also develop in other parts of the district – including the state-sponsored housing projects within the district – as the pipes connecting to the city’s sewage system often break. Trash collection occurs only in the two housing projects and thus the rest of the district is characterized by “illegal” trash dumps especially along the railway tracks. The Bedouin families who moved to the Mahatta from the Negev own sheep and goats and some have horses. They have built structures to keep these animals next to their houses and

¹⁷ A Yeshiva is a Jewish religious college.

shacks. In general, unlike many squatter settlements in other parts of the world and unlike the Jalazon refugee camp, the district is not densely populated as they are still tracts of land without any construction. While local authorities were not able to stop the informal settlement on land zoned as state-owned land, they have directed their house demolition policies to specific areas such as the eastern boundary of the district, which, according to some residents, is a target for plans to develop an industrial zone or a residential area for families of the Israeli security personnel.¹⁸ Further, official policies also aim to maintain a “semi-pastoral” landscape in the western area of the district, in which land is privately owned but zoned for agricultural and not for residential purposes.¹⁹ In this case, house demolitions often target multi-story buildings, especially those that overlook the nearby moshav of Nir-Zvi. This view of multi-story houses, shacks, ruins, vacant lots, open sewage, trash dumps, and dens for sheep and goats starkly differs from the landscape that one finds just opposite to the “illegal” Palestinian areas, in the new district of Ganei Aviv, with its high-rise apartment buildings, public transportation, shopping malls, supermarkets, banks, post-offices, clinics, community and sports centers (Yacobi 2009, pp. 73-75).

To conclude this section on Lod, it is worthwhile to highlight that Lod in general and Palestinians in Lod in particular play an important role in the imaginary of Palestinian refugees who were expelled from Lod. It is also interesting to note that while refugees perceive the city as a place of criminality and neglect, the dominant Jewish Israeli public discourse often constructs the Palestinian districts in Lod as “refugee camps.”

The view of Lod from the Jalazon refugee camp in the West Bank is that the city is a dangerous place of drug-dealing and criminality, as well as a place where many Palestinian families of “collaborators” have been relocated by the Israeli authorities from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip especially during and after the First Intifada. Further, refugees emphasize how “*Ladadweh*” (people originally from Lod) now live in refugee camps and not in the city. They also disparage those Palestinians “of the inside” (“*al-Dahil*”),²⁰ who moved to Lod after the 1948 war as unworthy residents of Lod.

These negative discourses about Lod among West Bank refugees resemble those of Palestinian middle-class intellectuals who, originally from these cities, spent most of their lives in exile until they were able to visit these cities after the establishment of the PA in the 1990s.²¹ Tamari (2007, pp. 43-44) explores how these intellectuals, who visited these cities for the first time in the early 1990s after about 40 years of forced absence, do not feel connected to the current Palestinian residents of these cities for two main reasons. First, the current residents are very poor and live in under-serviced districts; an image that clashes with the exiled Palestinians’ memory of their prosperous urban lives before 1948. Second, the majority of current residents

¹⁸ Residents hope to legalize their presence in the Mahatta district and proposed to Israeli local authorities the construction of a school in an empty tract of land in the Western portion of the district. However, they had heard rumors that the municipality wanted to create an industrial zone in a portion of the district and also construct housing units for the Israeli security personnel in another empty area.

¹⁹ Ironically, some of the families who privately own land in the Pardes-Shanir area arrived to Lod as a result of a negotiation with state authorities and received land in Lod as a compensation of land that they owned in other parts of the state.

²⁰ Palestinians of the Occupied Territories often define Palestinian citizens of Israel as “‘Arab al-Dahil’ (The Arabs of the inside) or as “‘Arab 48” (the Arabs of 1948) to highlight that these are Palestinians who remained inside the borders of the new Israeli state in 1948.

²¹ These intellectuals returned to the Occupied Territories in the 1990s as a result of the Oslo accord. They also obtained travel permits for short visits to areas inside Israel.

relocated to these cities from other parts of the Israeli territory in the decades after the war and therefore they mainly appear as “strangers” (“*ghuraba*”) to the eyes of these exiled intellectuals visiting their cities of origins.

However, in the case of poor Palestinian refugees originally from Lod who now live in West Bank camps, the negative images of Lod as a drug-stricken place of criminality co-exist with labor and marriage practices that, over the decades, have rebuilt symbolic and also social ties with the current residents of the city. In the West Bank I often heard comments such as “for a Palestinian it is not good to know people in Lod,” which refer to the presence of “collaborators” in the city. At the same time, “Ladadweh” living in the Jalazon camp remember how in the 1970s and 1980s they preferred looking for construction jobs in Lod, their place of origin, rather than in other Israeli cities. More importantly, marriage strategies have continued to establish a link between camp dwellers coming from a certain city and current residents of that city. This is the case of many “Ladadweh” in West Bank camps such as Jalazon, Amari, and Qalandia, who have tried to find marriage partners for their daughters and sons in Lod despite their full awareness and acceptance of the city’s predominantly negative image as an environment marked by crime and drug-dealing, and the presence of relocated “collaborators” from the West Bank. Although West Bank refugees may consider current residents of Lod to be morally inferior to themselves, they are not truly “*ghuraba*” (“strangers”).

The view of Lod and specifically its Palestinian districts in the mainstream Israeli public discourse includes two predominant and overlapping images: the junkyard and the refugee camp. In a series of articles on the “mixed cities,” Haaretz, a leading Israeli newspaper, says that Palestinian “neighborhoods like Ajami in Jaffa... Harakevet in Lod and Juarish in Ramle resemble refugee camps. It is hard to believe that they are situated right in the heart of the State of Israel in the year 2000” (Galili 2000). Along similar lines, the descriptive account of Lod’s main problems written by the New Israel Fund - an Israeli liberal NGO running a variety of programs on poverty and inequality among Israeli citizens - includes the following sentence: “[Lod’s] Arab neighborhoods, at their worst resemble a Gaza refugee camp” (New Israel Fund 2005). While the dominant Israeli discourse uses the term “refugee camp” to highlight the physical conditions of Palestinian districts in Lod, Palestinian residents of these districts often mobilize the term “refugee camp” in their reactions to the state’s house demolition policies. This view of Palestinian districts in Lod as “refugee camps” is also borrowed by Western media. For example, an article published in *The Economist* (October 14th, 2010) about Lod states that “Ramat Eshkol, a housing estate built for Jewish immigrants in the ruins of Lod’s old Arab city, bulldozed after the 1948 war, is today a squalid slum, housing mostly Arabs. Piles of rubbish make it grimier than refugee camps in Gaza, the blockaded Palestinian territory 35 km to the south.”

The equation “rubbish/squalor – refugee camp,” which dominates the Israeli view of the landscape in Lod’s Palestinian districts, extends to a characterization of Palestinian residents of these districts as dangerous and violent people. Thus, the complete equation includes the following logical step: the deteriorated physical space of the Mahatta district resembles a Gaza refugee camp; and like Gaza’s refugee camps, this environment produces violent personalities. This link between a distinct physical landscape and a specific social behavior was central to a conversation that I witnessed one afternoon, in early May 2008 between Aviv, a member of the Lod Foundation - a new Israeli association, which was established in 2009 with the explicit purpose to foster “multicultural dialogue” in the city – and Khaled, a renowned Palestinian scholar who lives abroad and was visiting Lod for a few days. During a car tour of the Mahatta

district, pointing to outside the window, Aviv who was driving turned towards Khaled who was sitting in the back of the car: “it is as a refugee camp, look the unpaved roads, and look at these children barefoot, imagine what they will become.” Aviv was unaware that Khaled himself was born in a West Bank refugee camp. He had invited Khaled to visit Lod in order to involve him in some fund- raising projects for his Foundation. Khaled quietly replied: “maybe poets.” I recount this story to highlight how the comparison to a “refugee camp,” which marks how many Jewish Israelis define and describe Palestinian districts in Lod, is deployed to evoke both images of dirt and squalor as well as violence. By contrast, Khaled’s words do not point to an abstract ideology of mobility out of poverty as a result of individual agency but to his experience of the shared value of education – often not translated into occupational achievement – for Palestinian refugees in the West Bank.

This link between “refugee camp” and “violence” is also missing in the use of the term “refugee camp” among Palestinians in Lod, who mobilize this term every time that the local authorities demolish their houses. In this case, the term “refugee camp” symbolizes the Palestinian residents of Lod’s precarious relationship with the Israeli state and evokes the historical event – the Nakba (“catastrophe”) – which in 1948 transformed the majority of Palestinians into “refugees.”

The large contrast between the images that the term “refugee camp” evokes among Jewish Israelis – the logical link between dirt and violence – and the images that it induces in people, who were born or had spent time in a West Bank refugee camp, also emerges from my notes describing the Mahatta district during my first visit:

The [Mahatta] district is really in poor condition: I crossed the eight train tracks (no bridge or tunnel for people and/or cars) and entered the district on foot: unpaved roads, pools of sewage water, mounds of trash, a combination of big cement houses (some resemble villas) and shacks with zinc roofs. One could almost say that the Mahatta resembles the camp but there is a striking difference: the lack of external symbols of collective cultural and institutional life in the district. The camp is full of flags and graffiti, and signs, flags of political factions as well as national flags, and there are signs everywhere to mark the various local institutions: the popular committee, the village societies, the children’s center, the center for disabled people, the youth center, etc., you walk around and there are signs on the walls everywhere. Here, by contrast, the street walls are bare, no writing, no graffiti; one looks around and sees houses and shacks, a few small mini markets, a lot of vacant lots and often big rocks in the middle of empty spaces [later on I learned that the role of these rocks is to prevent the illegal building of other houses on state-owned land].

Like Khaled’s comment on barefoot children who can become poets, my fieldnotes highlight how the image of “a refugee camp” that colors Israeli descriptions of the Mahatta district does not grasp the strikingly different ways in which social life can be organized within localities of poverty sharing certain physical characteristics. Similar physical spaces can be imbued of very different meanings by their inhabitants as well as by external observers. This brings me to my second site – the Jalazon refugee camp – which, like the Mahatta district at the bottom of the Israeli spatial hierarchy, is located at the bottom of the spatial order to which it belongs, but, unlike the Mahatta district, is not imbued with meanings of stigma and unworthiness.

2. THE JALAZON CAMP

2.1. The Relationship between Palestinian Refugees and UNRWA: A brief history (1950-Present)

The relationship between Palestinian refugees and UNRWA – The United Nations Relief and Work Agency – has undergone fundamental changes in the more than sixty years that have passed since UNRWA's establishment in 1949.²² In order to understand these changes it is important to highlight that the political question of “resettlement” (*tawtiin*) has historically constituted the prism through which refugees have scrutinized and reacted to UNRWA's policies of interventions.

On December 11, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees to repatriation or compensation. This resolution – UN Resolution 194 (III) - states that:

[The General Assembly] *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return... (emphasis in the original).²³

However, the establishment of UNRWA was driven by the not so hidden intention of powerful political actors – especially Western countries – to encourage the “resettlement” and “renationalization” of Palestinian refugees in the host countries (Forsythe 1983). For example, in the 1950s and 1960s the United States covered 60 per cent of the UNRWA's annual budget. U.S. officials also interpreted the Palestinian refugee crisis within the framework of the cold war:

The refugees... will continue to serve as a natural focal point for exploitation by Communist and disruptive elements... The presence of three-quarters of a million idle, destitute people... is the greatest threat to the security of the area which now exists (the then Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee quoted in Peteet 2005, p. 67).

Thus, during the 1950s and the 1960s, Palestinian refugees, whose strong preference was to return to their homes rather than settling in the new countries, were hostile towards UNRWA's policies and often rejected them as disguised “resettlement projects.” The refugees' generalized suspicion towards UNRWA clearly emerged in the 1950s in their refusal to participate in employment programs aimed to transform them from uprooted peasants²⁴ into workers available for the local economies. The host countries – especially Lebanon, Syria, and the Egyptian rulers of the Gaza Strip – were also against attempts at resettlements and introduced legal obstacles to the political and economic absorption of refugees such as denial of citizenship, restrictions on building activities inside the camps, and movement outside the camps.

²² UNRWA began to give assistance to Palestinian refugees in May 1950. Before that, other organizations, including the Red Cross and the Quakers, provided temporary relief to the refugees.

²³ The original text is available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/3/ares3.htm> (last accessed June 15, 2011).

²⁴ The great majority of Palestinian refugees – especially those who ended up in refugee camps – were peasants.

The first generation of Palestinian refugees considered UNRWA as a political machine used by international donors to transform the unsolved question of their political rights into a problem of poverty and unemployment. A survey of refugee attitudes, which was conducted in the 1950s, reveals the strong words that refugees used about UNRWA comparing the agency to a “narcotics castle” and its services to the “giving of a shot of morphine” (Rempel 2010, p. 418). The refugees recognized the political agenda of UNRWA’s donors just as the UNRWA’s mostly Western foreign officials understood that, despite their utter destitution, refugees would accept shelter and food in the camps but they would refuse to participate in UNRWA’s large-scale works projects, which attempted to make them into a mobile labor force for the host countries.

After this initial mismatch between refugees’ and UNRWA’ intentions, in the 1960s and the 1970s, UNRWA’s officials shifted their initial focus towards an approach more open to refugees’ concerns and desires and, particularly, to their demands for UNRWA’s recognition of their political demands (Al-Husseini 2000, pp. 53-54; Peteet 2005, pp. 64-65). Thus, for example, in the 1960s, over 60 per cent of the UNRWA’s budget was dedicated to educational programs, which were highly regarded by refugees (Schiff 1989, p. 62). UNRWA also supported the establishment of “Youth Centers” in all the camps, which became another important arena for collective cultural and political activities inside the camps. Further, by hiring uneducated refugees as drivers, guardians, maintenance and service workers and educated refugees as teachers, social workers, and administrators within the UNRWA system, the Agency played a salient role in the employment of refugees inside the camps (Farah 2010). In the 1980s, refugees also began to make the distinction between “rehabilitation” (*ta’hiil*) in socioeconomic terms and “resettlement” (*twatiin*) as a political solution (Bocco 2010, p. 247).

Despite refugees’ initial mistrust, the UNRWA has emerged over the decades as an institutional layer operating as a protective shield for the reorganization of the collective life of refugees; it has also played a role in the transformation of camps into arenas for the articulation and expression of refugees’ collective identities and political projects. Current figures about UNRWA’s service point to the extensive bureaucratic and governmental role that UNRWA plays in the lives of Palestinian refugees: “UNRWA employs almost 30,000 people [mainly Palestinian refugees], caters to the needs of almost 4,700,000 registered refugees, and provides services in fifty-eight camps scattered in its five fields of operation. The Agency runs 689 schools and 10 vocational and technical training centres, attended by almost half a million students, with an educational staff of more than 21,200. One-hundred and thirty-eight Primary Health Care Facilities administered by almost 4,200 medical staff received more than 9.5 million patient visits in 2008. In the Relief and Social Services’ sector, 700 staff members assist more than 257,000 special hardship cases (6 per cent of total registered refugees) and supervise sixty-five Women’s Programme Centres and thirty-seven Community Rehabilitation Centres. The Microfinance and Microenterprise Department has awarded (since 1991-1992) more than 165,000 loans with a cumulative value of almost 182 million US dollars (Bocco 2010, p. 234).

The working of UNRWA as an institutional shield holds true for all of the regions containing Palestinian refugee camps. Of course, UNRWA is never the only institutional actor shaping the distinct form of sociolegal control at work in different refugee camps. For example, in Lebanon, the state has denied Lebanese citizenship to refugees, has severely restricted their access to the rest of Lebanese territory and has prohibited them from accessing the Lebanese labor market (Peteet 2005; Knudsen 2009). Here I focus on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under Israeli military occupation since 1967.

In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, UNRWA has interacted on the ground with the activities – mainly repressive and military actions – of the Israeli army, which has mainly considered the refugee camps to be “centers of terrorism” and the refugees to be “enemies.” Thus, for example, while UNRWA’s mandate does not include “protection” of refugees – whether physical or legal protection –, during the First Intifada (1987-1993), UNRWA began to provide “legal assistance and human rights protection” to refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Cernevak 1994, p. 308). Since then, except for the period of the mid-1990s when the establishment of the PA seemed to lead to a decreased role for UNRWA in the Occupied Territories (see below), there have been ongoing efforts to include a “protection regime” in the daily workings of UNRWA in the Occupied Territories, mainly through attempts to react against Israeli military actions restricting or nullifying the delivery of UNRWA services. This is the case of Israeli restrictions imposed on UNRWA mobile health clinics trying to obtain access to communities that have been isolated by Israeli army-managed physical barriers, or of Israeli restrictions imposed on UNRWA’s building plans, which have forbidden UNRWA from expanding or repairing refugee camps’ facilities because of their spatial proximity to Israeli settlements (Morris 2010). Israeli military authorities do not constitute an “host country” but an “occupying power” that does not accept any legal responsibility for the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories;²⁵ therefore, the UNRWA’s dilemma is how to work with Israeli military occupation while addressing the needs of the Palestinian refugees in the Territories. For example, a current effort towards a more complete refugee protection regime includes projects such as the construction of an UNRWA school which Israeli military authorities oppose.

After the 1967 war, UNRWA faced specific Israeli policies targeting Palestinian refugees. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli authorities contemplated resettling refugees outside the camps and into urban districts and declared this plan to be a ‘humanitarian policy of urban renewal and health development’ (Feldman 2009, pp. 28-29). In this case, while the Israeli re-housing programs relocated a few thousand people outside the Gaza camps, in general Gaza refugees interpreted this policy as a tool to deprive them of their refugee status and protested against it. In the West Bank, in the 1970s, the Israeli army requested the demolition of the “abandoned” refugee camps in the area of Jericho, from which most inhabitants had been expelled to Jordan during the 1967 war. In this case, UNRWA agreed to the demolition of the camps. In the 1980s, then, UNRWA had to negotiate the continuity of its services within the broader terrain of the Israeli army’s repression of Palestinian forms of political protest. Thus, for example, UNRWA decided to build high fences around its schools after the Israeli army threatened to storm and close UNRWA schools in cases of stone-throwing by the students towards Israeli vehicles (Schiff, p. 67).

While each country in which Palestinian refugees live has its distinct historical dynamics,²⁶ it is safe to state that mistrust towards UNRWA has re-emerged among refugees everywhere since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the Occupied Territories in 1994. Refugees in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan have been politically marginalized by the shift of political focus towards Palestinian “state-building” in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. At the same time, refugees in the Occupied Territories have come to interpret the UNRWA’s ongoing budget crisis

²⁵ “Israel rejected the claim that it had any legal responsibility to the Palestinian population [in the Occupied Territories] under the Fourth Geneva Convention [on Occupied Populations] from the outset of the occupation, while also affirming that it would nonetheless ‘respect its humanitarian provisions’” (Feldman 2009, p. 28).

²⁶ For example, Peteet (2005, pp. 52-53) highlights how in Palestinian camps in Lebanon, the decrease in UNRWA services, the penetration of camps by the Lebanese state, and the increase in criminalization of refugees in Lebanon have contributed to reduce this protective role in the 1990s.

and the resulting reduction of services in their camps as signs of a broader plan to dismantle UNRWA in the Territories. Indeed, in the mid-1990s “the transfer of UNRWA’s personnel and facilities to the PA was envisaged by both bodies” (Al-Husseini 2000, p. 61). However, while the decrease in international donations to UNRWA and the subsequent cuts in UNRWA’s services are ongoing realities, the protests of refugees, who felt threatened by the possible removal of UNRWA from the Occupied Territories, as well as the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, contributed to re-launch the role of UNRWA within refugee camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Thus, still today, Palestinian refugees living in the Territories perceive the presence of UNRWA as a buffer institution, which protect them from conditions of both starvation and political disintegration. These perceptions emerge from comments that one often hears in refugee camps. For example, during the protests against cuts in UNRWA services that I observed in the Jalazon camp in 2007 and 2008, refugees often commented that the suspension of UNRWA’s programs of food distribution would push them on the path of Somalia.

2.2 The Jalazon refugee camp

The name “Jalazon” is the combination of two Turkish words – “jala” and “zone” – which respectively mean “water spring” and “area.” Thus, literally, Jalazon means “the water spring’s area” (Jalazon’s UNRWA office).²⁷ Elderly refugees identify the presence of several water springs in the rocky hills on which the camp stands as a main source of attraction for the refugees who congregated in growing numbers in this area in 1948 and 1949 (Yahya 2006, p. 16). The refugee camp was officially set up in 1949 by the Red Cross on 240 dunam (0.23 square kilometers) leased for 99 years from the Jordanian government, which was the host country ruling the West Bank from 1948 to 1967. This leased land was mainly agricultural and woodland belonging to the adjacent village of Jifna, at the foot of the hill on which Jalazon was built. In May 1950, UNRWA substituted the Red Cross as humanitarian agency responsible for the administration of the camp.

The great majority of refugees to settle in Jalazon were peasants, with a minority of shepherds, workers, merchants, and craftsman. They came from two cities – Lod and Ramle - and 39 villages around them. A few other families came from other villages, which leads the total number of places of origin represented in Jalazon is 45. The largest number of refugees originally came from the village of Beit-Nabala, followed, in order, by Lod, the villages of Abbasia, Annaba, Dauaimea, and Um-Zinat (Yahya 2006, p. 19, p. 23). The refugees gathered inside the camp according to their places of origin. Village affiliation intertwined with kin membership and was considered a resource of mutual support.

Like all other Palestinian refugee camps, Jalazon was initially made of tents erected in a grid system. In the mid-1950s UNRWA started to distribute materials – especially asbestos and bricks – for the refugees to build their own shelters, ranging from one 3 x 3 meter single room without a kitchen or toilet for families with 1-5 members, to one 4 x 3.75 meter single room for families with 6-9 members, to one 4 x 4.45 meters for families with 9-11 members. Families with 11 or more members were eligible for two rooms (Al-Khatib et al. 2003). In the 1950s and 1960s in Jalazon, there were 15 communal toilets and a single communal water source for a population of about 3,500 (Al-Khatib and Tabakhna 2006).

Jordan ruled the West Bank from 1948 to 1967 and extended citizenship to the camp dwellers of Jalazon, all West Bank Palestinians, as well as Palestinian refugees who had settled in the

²⁷ Copy of the original report in Arabic is available with the author.

Jordanian territory. Refugees' memories about "the Jordanian period" (*'ayyam al-Urdun*) center on two elements: the policing of the camp by the Jordanian army and the creation of UNRWA facilities inside the camp. On the one hand, with a different level of details, both the elderly and refugees in their 50s and 40s describe the policing of the camp by the Jordanians in negative terms. An incident often quoted to illustrate the repressive role of the Jordanian army is the killing of a refugee boy of thirteen and a Jordanian soldier during clashes between the refugees and the Jordanian army. The Jordanians also had a police station inside the camp. On the other hand, refugees remember the construction of several UNRWA facilities in this period such as the office of the camp's director, the center for the distribution of food, two elementary schools, the first clinic, and the communal "restaurant" for children (which is now closed). Elderly refugees also often mention their difficult everyday lives in tents without electricity, their conditions of chronic unemployment, and their sense of relief in planting trees or cultivating the land inside the camp that had not been used for setting up tents or building UNRWA facilities.

While Jordan continued to claim sovereignty over the West Bank until 1988,²⁸ the Israeli army occupied the West Bank in 1967. The two decades of direct Israeli military rule – 1970s and 1980s – were marked by several physical changes both within and at the outskirts of the Jalazon camp. Within the camp, camp dwellers started to add rooms to their small shelters or to build new shelters in cement, often encroaching on land inside the camp, which they had previously used as small plots of cultivation or as courtyards. The construction of new shelters led to the deforestation of the hills including the uprooting of the trees that the refugees themselves had planted in the 1950s. Building activities led to the narrowing of public roads and rendered less visible the initial building grid planned by UNRWA in the early 1950s. Refugees also started building vertically, adding a second floor to their houses. While UNRWA's regulations prohibit building beyond the second floor, the first three-story buildings were constructed in Jalazon in this period. In 1977, the Israeli settlement and military base of Beit-El was established on a hill overlooking the camp, separated from it only by a road and a valley. In the 1980s, the Israeli army built a fence around the eastern part of camp to separate it from the nearby road for use by Israeli vehicles. It also surrounded this part of the camp with five military towers. While the fence and military towers blocked the eastern side of the camp – the side of the camp in which was (and is) located the main entrance to the camp - in 1988 UNRWA expanded the boundaries of the camp from 0.23 to 0.25 square kilometers mainly on the western slope of the camp.

In the first decade of direct Israeli rule of the West Bank, two Israeli scholars – an anthropologist and an economist - conducted a series of studies of West Bank camps including the Jalazon camp (Ben-Porath and Marx 1971). They contended that refugee camps had evolved into "normal" working class urban neighborhoods and that the presence of UNRWA was an anomaly building differences between the camps' "welfare recipients" and the "non-welfare population" of the Gaza Strip and the West bank. They recommended Israeli authorities to take up UNRWA's administrative responsibilities to further integrate the camps into the Gaza and West Bank urban fabrics. They also argued that the refugees did not organize around places of origin: "if no political organization of former co-villagers exists today, this means that the refugees have made no provisions for a return to their land. The prevalent ideology of a return to the village is thus not matched by an appropriate social organization" (Ben-Porath and Marx 1971, p. 17). Further, they suggested that life in the camps nourished among the refugees, a

²⁸ Israel has ruled the West Bank since 1967 but only in 1988 did Jordan renounce its sovereignty claims and annul the validity of the Jordanian passports carried by West Bank Palestinians.

dependent mentality made of “exaggerated expectations of benefits” and “exaggerated fears of independent life.” They perceived camp dwellers as a welfare-dependent population without a distinct (political, national, or place-specific) identity if not that instilled by UNRWA’s “camp policy” of providing free housing, health, and educational services. In the early 1990s, Marx (1992, pp. 291-292) revisited his findings in light of the changes triggered by the First Palestinian Intifada. His core argument did not change: the Palestinians who were displaced in 1948 were not socioeconomically worse-off than other Palestinian residents in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank; not in the 1980s and not even in the 1950s.²⁹ Their identity as welfare-dependent refugees was maintained mainly by the workings of UNRWA. He argued that during the First Intifada “the Israeli army gave another boost to the refugee identity by assuming, probably incorrectly, that the refugee camps were the centres of the uprising.” In his view, refugees’ identities were formed around UNRWA-shaped welfare-dependent mentality and not around political claims. Rather than worrying about the political dimension of refugees’ lives as the Israeli army was doing, Marx was mainly concerned about the role played by UNRWA in preventing refugees from pursuing a non-segregated and welfare-free way of life outside of the camps. His study did not discuss how, when he carried his study in 1971, both the refugees in the camps and the West Bank population – both refugees and non-refugees - outside the camps were stateless people under military occupation.³⁰ Camp dwellers’ memories about “the Israeli period” (*’ayyam Israel*) centers on the First Intifada (1987-1993), especially on the 43 days of continuous curfew, which the Israeli army imposed and on the many people who were killed, wounded, or arrested by the Israeli army during the uprising.

The establishment of the PA in 1994 started what camp dwellers call “the period of the Authority” (*’ayyam al-Sulta*). Unlike most West Bank camps, which are located in “area A” formally under full PA control, Jalazon is located in area “B” with the Israeli army formally retaining full responsibility on security issues. This is mainly due to the presence of Beit-El, an Israeli settlement of about 5,000 people, which was built in 1977 on the hill overlooking the refugee camp. In terms of changes to the physical landscape around the camp, the 1990s marked a process of spatial distancing between camp dwellers and Israeli settlers and soldiers with the building of by-pass roads for Israeli settlers far from the refugee camps and the removal of the towers and the fence from the main road on the eastern boundaries of the camp.

Socioeconomically, while “the Israeli period,” especially before the beginning of the First Intifada, was a period in which refugees had relatively steady income due to the availability of jobs in the Israeli construction industry, “the period of the Sulta” was marked by (male) unemployment rates as high as 30 per cent mainly because of Israeli policies of “closure” preventing Palestinian workers from crossing the Green Line into Israel. The Second Intifada intensified this combination of Israeli restrictions on mobility and camp dwellers’ impoverishment and chronic unemployment. While UNRWA has inaugurated new job-creation projects inside all the Gaza and West Bank camps since 2000, unlike refugees and other poor people in the Northern and Southern areas of the West Bank, for whom traveling to Ramallah equals to an expensive and day-long trip through checkpoints and roadblocks, refugees of

²⁹ This argument was mainly based on the conditions of the Gaza population, which in 1948 suffered from the mass influx of refugees but it contradicted their finding about West Bank refugees that “the economic income of the camp refugee is roughly 40 percent below that of the average resident of the West Bank” (Marx and Ben-Porath 1971, p. 55).

³⁰ In chapter 3, I will provide a more in-depth discussion of Marx’s findings about cultural and socioeconomic life in the Jalazon camp in the 1970s and compare them to my findings forty years later.

Jalazon have also benefited from the spatial proximity to Ramallah, where the presence of PA institutions has opened up opportunities in the service industry, and in the lower ranks of the PA's security and police forces. At the same time, the spatial proximity of Ramallah has exposed refugees of Jalazon to new consumption patterns and lifestyles of an expanded middle class associated with the PA and the Palestinian and international NGOs mostly funded by Western donors (Abourahme 2009). My discussion of social cohesion, morality, and politics in the Jalazon camp will encompass an analysis of the broader spatial and sociopolitical terrain created by the introduction of the PA's indirect rule in the West Bank while the Jalazon camp mainly remains managed by two institutional forces: UNRWA and the Israeli army.

2.3 The Jalazon camp and its surroundings: The view from the street

One evening in September 2007 a dozen twelve or thirteen-year-old boys from the camp were standing and looking at the flames rising from a pile of car tires that they had set on fire near the entrance of the camp before the main road begins to descend into the camp. They were protesting the news of some Palestinians killed by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip that same day. Burning the tires was an open challenge to the Israeli soldiers in the military tower located at the entrance of the Israeli settlement of Beit-El³¹ across the valley separating the camp from the settlement. Standing nearby with Abu Mahmud, a man in his early forties, who belonged to the so-called "generation of the Intifada" (*jiil al-Intifada*) – those who participated in the uprising of the late 1980s – I observed the boys bringing more tires to burn and Palestinian drivers slowing down as they passed the spectacle. A driver honked, rolled down the window of his car, and shouted at the boys to go home and that he did not need another "checkpoint" (*mahsom*)³² in his way home. Abu Mahmud told me if I could see the sad irony of tires blocking Palestinian traffic on the main road overlooking the camp. He remembered how, when he was a boy, a wired fence surrounded the boundaries of the camp on the side of the same road and how he and other boys from the camp almost every day attempted to cut a hole in the fence and throw stones at the Israeli vehicles driving on the same road. Then, Abu Mahmud continued, during the Second Intifada – especially in the period from 2000 to 2002 - the camp youth (*shabaab*) often walked to "City Inn" frontline in the Northern outskirt of Ramallah to protest against and throw stones at the Israeli soldiers. While the "City Inn" is a hotel, which re-opened after the end of the Intifada,³³ the term "City Inn" evokes among the camp's men in their mid- and late twenties, painful stories of injuries and deaths caused by Israeli soldiers' machine gun fire. Now, he concluded, the new generations of camp youngsters, who grew up during the Second *Intifada* and witnessed their older brothers arrested, maimed, or killed by the Israeli army, risk and sometimes lose their lives in their defiant challenges to the Israeli military tower standing across the valley at the entrance of the Israeli settlement.

The landscape around the camp bears the accelerated physical changes associated with the evolving forms of Israeli military rule since the 1980s, when camp dwellers participated in the growing protests against the Israeli military rule, which led to the First Intifada. In 2007-2008, when I conducted my fieldwork, there was no sign of the five military towers that overlooked the

³¹ Beit-El has a population of about 5,000 persons, mainly Orthodox Jewish Israelis.

³² Mahsom is the Hebrew word for checkpoint and while Palestinians also use the Arabic word for checkpoint ("haajiz") "mahsom" is the commonly used word.

³³ There is no clear date to mark the end of the Second Intifada. Spring 2002 was the apex of the Israeli repression of the uprising with the re-invasion of all Palestinian cities.

camp. Of the fence that had separated the camp from the main road until the 1990s for use by Israeli vehicles, what was left were some metal bars still standing up in the air and some tangles of wired fence on the ground. On the main road overlooking the camp, there remains an abandoned bus stop with a cement block in front of it, which, as is typical for Israeli bus stops in the West Bank, had this feature in order to protect Israeli settlers waiting for a bus or hitchhiking from possible gun shots or stones. This bus stop stood as a marker of the 1970s and the 1980s when the road was used by Israeli vehicles. In the 1990s, a system of by-pass roads for Israelis only was built across the West Bank circumventing Palestinian localities. In the case of the Beit-El settlement, the by-pass road, which cannot be seen at all from the camp, substituted the road that runs close to the camp. Another big cement block lies at the crossroad between the main road and a steep and narrow downhill road at about 50 meters from the camp's entrance. This cement block, now located under a big advertising panel targeting Palestinians driving by, is now abandoned just like the one in front of the bus stop. However, its meaning is practically the opposite as it was used by the Israeli soldiers to slow down and partially block the Palestinian traffic at the crossroad during the Second Intifada.

The steep, narrow road crossing the main road that leads to the entrance of the camp is also the only available route to connect the camp to Ramallah and the central and southern West Bank. This is a winding route that goes through the nearby village of Surda lengthening the distance between the camp and Ramallah by about ten miles. Indeed, the road on which the camp boys burned the tires, which leads directly to Ramallah, runs parallel to the settlement of Beit-El. Since the Second Intifada, once past the camp's entrance, Palestinian drivers have to turn on their right at the crossroad and drive downhill towards the village of Surda and then into Ramallah.³⁴ The rest of the road, which runs parallel to the settlement and would directly lead to Northern Ramallah, is always empty; driving or walking on it could be dangerous as it is could be considered a suspicious action by the Israeli soldiers who man the settlement's military tower.

At the camp's entrance, outside the original boundaries of land leased by UNRWA, there are two elementary schools for the camps' children, one for boys and one for girls. The elementary school for boys is a new building, which was under construction during my fieldwork. The construction works were finally completed after UNRWA and the Israeli army-run "Civilian Administration" reached an agreement about the height and the windows of the school. Located just opposite of the settlement, the school has two instead of the three initially planned floors. Further, the classrooms looking towards the settlement have long and narrow rectangular fissures in the upper side of the walls instead of regular windows.

The entrance of the camp is marked by a high metal arch with a Palestinian flag and other flags from different political factions hanging from it. An asphalt road splits from the main road and, past the arch, descends towards the central square of the camp and then continues to descend towards the village of Jifna, about 1 mile down the hill from the Jalazon camp. The first buildings along this road one encounters descending down from the two schools are the UNRWA's camp office with a blue metal door leading into a small courtyard and two offices. Opposite to the UNRWA office, there is a gas station, a pharmacy, and a photography shop. Further along the road, there is a basketball court, a mechanic, the biggest of the camp's five mosques, a clinic, and the offices of the camp's popular committee. The road leads to a small square with eight coffee places, some with chairs and tables outside around a newly built

³⁴ During the period from 2001 to 2004 the Israeli army closed about half a kilometer on the Surda-Ramallah road with roadblocks preventing cars from going through. Thus, during this period, camp dwellers, as many other Palestinians living in the same area, could reach Ramallah only through a combination of shared taxis and walking.

memorial for the camps' "martyrs." Around the small square there are also other shops including a butchery, which also operates as a small and open-air slaughterhouse for the nearby villages. In the area of the camp along the main descending road and the square the initial building grid planned by UNRWA in the 1950s is still visible. The rest of the camp radiates up and down the hill on which the camp is located in a web of narrow and winding alleys, some of which are too narrow for cars to pass. Many houses have vertical metal bars on their flat roofs as a sign of the intended addition of another floor. In the meanwhile, roofs are spaces equipped with couches and chairs and used in the evenings to meet up with family members and friends, and during the day, to hang out clothes to dry. On the top of the hill, outside the original boundaries of the camp, there are privately owned houses of families who, often as an outcome of upward mobility due to emigration of some family's members mainly to the Gulf States and the United States, have bought private land from the nearby village of Jifna. These families, as well as other camp dwellers, which have relocated further away from the camp, for example within the municipal area of Ramallah, continue to participate in the social life of the camp but their presence also generates tensions among the camp dwellers. For example, these families are usually better-off than those who have remained inside the camp and their eligibility for some of the services managed by the camp's popular committee – for example, loans to students – is questioned by some of the refugees. I mention this question here because the presence of these houses, at times resembling small palaces at the top of the hill, is one of the first things one visually notices in stark contrast with the crowded and small houses of the camp. In an interesting way, while the Mahatta district in Lod features a mix of big cement houses, shacks with zinc roof, and a public housing project with its perpendicular roads, interspersed within empty tracks of land, the Jalazon camp features a densely populated core made of narrow alleys and houses projected towards their second and third floor in search for more space within the boundaries of the camp.

A minority of very poor families still live in the 3 x 3 meter rooms, which were built by UNRWA in the 1950s. Almost all houses are connected to water pipes and electricity and have indoor toilets. Sewage remains a problem for the camp and the Palestinian village of Jifna down hill: many houses "are not connected to the sewerage system, instead using private latrines connected to percolation pits or allowing waste water to flood into the roads" (UNRWA 2010). Further, in some parts of the camp, the sewage system runs under thin layers of asphalt that cars and trucks can easily break.

In contrast with the Mahatta district in Lod, Jalazon has many publicly visible areas of sociability, especially for the men of the camp. These areas include the coffee places – in which women do not sit - and the camp's different institutions, which, in addition to their official functions, operate as spaces for discussion. This holds particularly true for the courtyard of the camp's UNRWA office. In this case, women who come for a request to the camp's director often stop for longer periods of time to speak with other women. At the same time, friends of UNRWA's regular employees as well as of workers hired through UNRWA's emergency job creation programs also come to the office to spend time especially if they are unemployed and in hope to find a job through UNRWA.

The next two chapters will compare the mechanisms of social cohesion, dispute resolution and violence, and politics at work in the Jalazon camp and the Mahatta district.

CHAPTER 3

Jalazon Solidarity: Social Cohesion, Internal Dispute Resolution, and Collective Politics

A woman in her mid-thirties, Samia, was born in the Jalazon camp but moved to Lod when she married a Palestinian citizen of Israel. During a visit to relatives back in Jalazon, Samia began speaking of the camp as a place where people help each other. However, as she nostalgically praised her birthplace, she hesitated, remembering how the camp's residents also heavily monitor each other:

Social relationships between people in the camp are... [She does not complete the statement]. People interfere in the personal lives of others. There are social relationships. You feel like all the people are one family even if they don't love each other.

Her discussion of Jalazon and its people mixed pride in the camp's social cohesion and political activism with sadness for how the social dynamics within the camp have affected her personal life:

I am proud to be from a camp. The patriotic feeling that any person who lives in a camp feels towards his country you can't find it in anyone who lives in a city. The country means a lot to the people who live in the camps. Of course those people didn't choose to live in a camp, but they love the camp.

On the other hand, Samia did not do well in school when she was a teenager due to the pressure that rumors about her supposedly "improper" behavior with a young man from the camp put on her family. She described how, first, people started staring at her when she was walking inside the camp; then, her best friend from school told her that she was not allowed to speak with her anymore; and finally, she missed many classes at school because she did not want to leave the home. She concluded her tale about the gossip with these words: "Because you live in a camp you can't be free. You are owned by everyone (*inte melk al-nas kolhom*)."

This chapter shows how and why refugees invest in their social cohesion as a fundamental resource in their everyday struggle for material and political survival. I discuss how the pursuit of social cohesion affects how camp dwellers deal with internal dissent, react to external threats, and mobilize to obtain access to material resources. I have organized this analysis of group solidarity, morality, and politics at ground level in relation to the workings of each of the three institutional actors that operate in the camp: the Israeli army (IA), the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), and the Palestinian Authority (PA). First, I give an historical overview of how these three actors have affected lines of division and solidarity among camp dwellers. Second, I briefly discuss the current population, occupational, and institutional structure of West Bank camps. Third, I discuss how camp dwellers respond to the practices and discourses of each of the three ruling agencies. Shifting the focus from the ground level here examined to the sociolegal control exerted from above, Chapter 5 will further explore how this triadic structure of authority operates in the manner of a social "glue" among camp dwellers.

3.1 Lines of Division and Solidarity in West Bank Camps: An Historical Overview

Refugees that settled in UNRWA-created West Bank and Gaza camps following the 1948 war mostly came from villages and once inside the camps they regrouped according to kin ties and place of origin (Tuastad 1997, pp. 112-115; Johnson 2005, pp. 76-77). The men originating from the same village, especially the elderly reproduced within the camps their villages' tradition of holding meetings (*diwan/dawaaniin*) for special occasions such as the celebration of a wedding or the period of mourning. They also used these meetings every time there was a dispute with refugees coming from other villages. In the villages of origin, every clan (*ashiira*) had its own *diwan*. However, as an outcome of dispersal in 1948, refugees from the same village who settled in the same camp joined the same *diwan* even if they belonged to different clans. In the Jalazon camp, the refugees originally from Beit Nabala—a village near Lod which was completely destroyed in 1948—constitute the only exception as they re-formed inside the camp the four main clans of their pre-1948 era village. This exception reflects the fact that most refugees from Beit Nabala settled in the Jalazon camp and thus each clan had plenty of members to recreate its own *diwan* inside the camp (Yahya 2006, p. 19).

While kinship was initially the most important principle of solidarity within camps, the relationships that camp dwellers developed with the UNRWA increasingly pushed them to organize across kin ties in order to develop a unified response to the UNRWA's infrastructural agenda and employment projects. Perceiving the UNRWA as an institution created by hostile external forces—mainly Western donors—to prevent them from returning to their places of origins, camp dwellers converged early on around a set of shared claims and practices aimed to prevent the depoliticization of their predicament of displacement. Thus, they supported employment in the camps and in the UNRWA institutions rather than the labor force outside the camps. They also claimed that their access to the UNRWA institution services including health clinics, communal restaurants, and schools in the camps was not a substitute for their right to return to their places of origin. As documented in chapter 2, refugees, hired as drivers, service workers, sanitation cleaners, guardians, teachers, administrators, doctors, and social workers, became more involved in the daily operations of the UNRWA, which made the UNRWA more open to their concerns and desires. This active participation of refugees in the workings of the UNRWA on the ground occurred in each of the area where the UNRWA established camps: the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria (Sayigh 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1979, 1994; Al-Husseini 2000; Peteet 1995, 1996, 2005; Bocco 2010; Farah 2010). As Husseini (2000, p. 53) puts it, “UNRWA's institutions—especially its schools and Youth Activities Centers—became places where a collective Palestinian exile identity, based on the memory of the land of Palestine and the claim of return, was constantly reactivated and transmitted to the younger generations.”

The IA's occupation of the West Bank in 1967 served to strengthen West Bank refugees' investment in their group solidarity. As I will discuss in chapter 5, since 1967 the IA has developed a discourse of camps as centers of terrorism, first attempting to dismantle them and then targeting them militarily via arrests and incursions. At the same time, the UNRWA has continued to offer an alternative discourse that constructs the camps as humanitarian spaces that the refugees are entitled to use to organize their collective lives. Camp dwellers' confrontations with the IA's explicitly hostile and punitive presence created a shared experience of suffering which broke through internal divisions along kinship and place of origin. Thus, the IA's unintended role as a vector of group solidarity was a central factor in the political mobilization of

camp dwellers during the First Intifada (Uprising, 1987-1993). Jalazon camp dwellers, especially men in their forties who participated in this uprising, remember it as the apex of a movement from kin-based associations to camp-wide political activities.

In the post-Oslo period (1994-present) the creation of the PA within a broader distribution of distinct military treatments by the IA towards different West Bank localities has reinforced the external boundaries between the camp and the rest of the West Bank, especially the nearby city of Ramallah, the “capital” of the PA. During the Second Intifada (2000-2004), for example, the IA developed a more lenient approach to Ramallah where the PA has concentrated its institutions, while other cities such as Hebron and Nablus and most refugee camps have become special targets of its military curfews and raids (Doumani 2004; Johnson 2005; Taraki and Giacaman 2006). While the PA’s orientation towards the middle classes living in Ramallah (Taraki 2008a, 2008b; Abourahme 2009) and its inability to protect members of the Jalazon camp have reinforced camp dwellers’ estrangement from city dwellers, furthering their collective bond and reliance on the UNRWA, escalating infighting between Fatah and Hamas under the PA rule has also activated divisive political factionalism inside the camp. In turn, in their attempts to preserve cohesion despite the paralyzing effects of political factionalism, camp dwellers have returned their attention to kinship-based associations—The Village Associations—as a possible antidote.

At the turn of the 21st century, dwellers of the Jalazon camp orient towards cohesion as a cultural value in sharp reaction to powerful external forces they perceive as explicitly aimed towards their social and political dissolution. These forces include the IA’s raids and arrests; the decrease in Western donors’ funding of the UNRWA budget, and the PA’s stigmatization of poverty and denigration of camp dwellers as “troublemakers” and “thugs.”

3.2 Population, Occupational, and Institutional Structure

Population Structure

Camp dwellers constitute a small minority of West Bank Palestinians. “The West Bank covers 5,500 square kilometers with an estimated population of 2.4 million... The West Bank is home to 771,000 registered refugees, around a quarter of whom live in 19 camps. Most of the others live in West Bank towns and villages. Some camps are located next to major towns and others are in rural areas. While the West Bank has the largest number of camps in UNRWA's five fields of operation, the largest camp, Balata, has a similar population [about 20,000 people] as the smallest camp in Gaza” (UNRWA website).

Jalazon is located 7 kilometers north of Ramallah. The governorate of Ramallah has 279,730 inhabitants including 140,827 males and 138,903 females. This population is mainly formed by young people with 38.1 % of the total population of the governorate being less than 15 years old.¹ 51.9 % of the total Governorate population live in urban areas, 42.3% live in rural areas,²

¹ But see below for differences in the age distribution between camp dwellers and city dwellers.

² While the percentage of the Governorate population living in camps has not changed from 1997 to 2007, it is worthwhile to note that in 1997 59.5% of the Governorate population lived in rural areas. Thus, in the last decade there has been a significant movement of rural populations into the urban areas, especially Ramallah city.

and 6.4 % live in refugee camps. 29.3% of the Governorate population has refugee status, if we include refugees who live in urban and rural areas.³

There are four other refugee camps in the Ramallah in addition to the Jalazon camp: Am'ari camp and Qaddoura camp⁴ inside the city boundaries and Deir Ammar camp and Silwad camp⁵, which, like Jalazon, is located north of Ramallah. At the southern outskirts of Ramallah there is another refugee camp - Qalandia camp – which is formally in the PA's Jerusalem governorate (indeed it is 11 miles northern of Jerusalem's old city) but is practically integrated in the urban fabric of Ramallah. The number of registered refugees in these camps ranges from 432 in Silwad, 1,585 in Qaddoura, to 2,351 in Deir Ammar, to 10,406 in Am'ari, to 10,791 in Qalandia, and to 11,182 in Jalazon (UNRWA). The number of actual residents in the camps is lower as there are families who have relocated outside the camps but maintained their residence inside the camps. Reasons for keeping residence inside the camps range from precariousness of living conditions outside the camps,⁶ to relocation in other camps, to symbolic attachment to the camp. According to the 2007 census conducted by the PA, the number of camp residents range from 359 in Silwad, to 1,132 in Qaddoura, to 1,724 in Deir Ammar, to 4,708 in Am'ari, to 7,340 in Jalazon, and 7,962 in Qalandia (PCBS 2007).

While out-camp migration does take place, refugee camps have not attracted non-refugees even if the Ramallah area is the main destination for internal migrants from the Northern and the Southern West Bank as it concentrates many employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. Thus, for example, in the Am'ari camp, which is located within the city, 80 percent of residents were born in the camp and 7 percent within what became Israeli territory in 1948. By contrast, in other neighborhoods of the city – both working class and middle-class neighborhoods – only half of the residents were born in the neighborhoods and the rest are Palestinians from Jerusalem, the Northern West Bank, and the Southern West Bank as well as from abroad (Johnson 2005, p. 82). In Jalazon, 97.4 % of the inhabitants are refugees and a tiny minority is composed of refugees registered in other camps but living in Jalazon (PCBS 2007).

Of the 7,344 residents of the Jalazon camp - almost equally distributed between females (3,635) and males (3,705) males – 44 % are under 15 years old and 12 % are between 15 and 19 years old, thus the majority of camp dwellers (56 %) are under 19 years old. Camp dwellers from 19 to 29 years old constitute about 16 % of the total population (9 % between 20 and 24 years old; 7 % between 25 and 29 years old). Thus, 72 % of refugees are less than 30 years old. In the following age groups, the older the age, the less people there are: 6.7 % between 30 and 34 years old; 6 % between 35 and 39 years old; 5 % between 40 and 44; 3.5 % between 45 and 49; 2.3 % between 50 and 54; 1.5 % between 60 and 64; and less than 1 % for the older age groups. The camp population over 65 years old is 2.6 % of the total camp population.

The population of Ramallah city (about 26,000 people) is also young but less than that of Jalazon and other refugee camps. 31.5 % of city dwellers are children less than 15 years old versus 44 % in Jalazon and 9 % are between 15 and 19 years old versus 12 % in Jalazon. Thus,

³ There are refugees who have never lived in camps, mainly refugees who had family ties or owned land in the West Bank. For example, refugees originally from Lod who live in Jalazon told me that Christian families from Lod directly relocated to the city of Ramallah and never lived in Jalazon and other camps in the area.

⁴ Qaddoura is an “unofficial camp”. Including Qaddoura there are 4 unrecognized camps in the West Bank to be added to the 19 recognized camps (Badil 2007).

⁵ Silwad camp is also unofficial camp.

⁶ During my fieldwork I spoke with families who after a few years outside the camp had returned to Jalazon during the Second Intifada because they did not manage to continue to afford living expenses especially rent outside the camp. This also points to the lack of assets and savings among many of the camp families.

while the majority of camp dwellers are less than 19 years old, this age group represents 40 % of the city population. The percentage of city dwellers between 19 and 29 years old is also lower than that of Jalazon (14 % versus 16 %). By contrast, city dwellers between the ages of 30 to 64 years old constitute 32 % of the total urban population while camp dwellers in the same age range are 25 % of the total camp population. Along similar lines, if the two PA's censuses of 1997 and 2007 are compared, population growth is higher in camps than urban areas in the Ramallah Governorate. Further, West Bank refugee camps have the highest population density of the entire West Bank, and, given the fixed boundaries of the camps, overcrowding is a major problem for all the camps.

Another important difference between Jalazon and Ramallah city is the educational disadvantage that the former has in comparison with the latter, especially in terms of post-secondary education, which is particularly relevant because higher education is what opens many employment opportunities in professional jobs as well as NGOs jobs in Ramallah. Thus, for example, in the age range from 25 to 34 years old, about 36 % of city dwellers have post-secondary degrees, especially BAs while in the same age range only 12 % of Jalazon camp dwellers have post-secondary education.⁷ These data on education bring me to the occupation structure of the West Bank refugee camps.

Occupational Structure

In order to understand the current occupational structure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip - both the differences and the similarities between these two areas and between Palestinian refugees and non-refugees living in them - it is necessary to link the occupational structure to the politico-spatial policies promoted by Israeli authorities in the Occupied Territories since 1967 and especially since 1993.

Soon after the beginning of the Israeli military occupation in 1967, the Israeli construction industry became the main source of employment for Gaza and West Bank Palestinians. In the West Bank – a predominantly rural society - the confiscation of agricultural land contributed to direct the Palestinian labor force towards employment in Israel. Ten years after the beginning of the Israeli military occupation in 1967, the percentage of the West Bank labor force employed in agriculture dropped from about 50 percent of the labor force to 27 percent of it (Tamari 1980, pp. 36-37). In general, for both Gaza and West Bank Palestinians, the Israeli higher wages constituted a strong pull factor.⁸ In the 1970s and in the 1980s the main alternative to wage labor in Israel was labor migration (in addition to employment in the UNRWA). Labor migration in the period between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s mainly regarded skilled and professional labor to the Gulf States: “Between 1975 and 1982, 102,000 persons left the West Bank, a figure equal to 56.6 percent of the natural population increase during those years ... Young men with secondary and postsecondary education were highly overrepresented in the migrant population ... With respect to those born in the 1950s and the 1960s, the number of male migrants exceeded that of men who remained” (Rosenfeld 2004, p. 41).

⁷ The most sought-after degrees are respectively in business and administration and in social sciences, with the former as an entry point into the private sector or the PA institutions, the latter, as a key to enter the world of NGOs and for refugees the UNRWA apparatus.

⁸ Gaza and West Bank Palestinian wage laborers in Israel were denied the right to unemployment benefit, were paid daily basis, and were denied access to the Israeli unions. At the same time the military government banned workers' unions in the Occupied Territories.

While labor migration was often a necessary step for educated Palestinians, the Israeli construction industry constituted the main source of employment for Palestinian laborers – especially unskilled workers – who, in the same years, “represented a third of the employed population and generated more than a quarter of the WBGS [West Bank and Gaza Strip] gross national product” (Farsakh 2002, p. 13). Until 1992, the number of Palestinian workers employed in Israel, especially its construction industry, steadily grew year after year to reach a peak of 115,600 workers in 1992.

Only four years later, however, in 1996, the number of workers had dropped to 62,300 (Farsakh 2002, p. 16). This decrease in the number of Palestinians working inside Israel affected the Gaza Strip more than the West Bank. Further, within the West Bank, it affected Palestinian refugees more than non-refugees. Let me address these two points separately. This shift of the Israeli economy away from Palestinian laborers, which coincided with the establishment of the PA self-rule in the Occupied Territories in 1994, had different logics in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. On the one hand, the removal of Gaza Palestinian workers from the Israeli economy was categorical, coincided with the fencing off of the Strip, and it preceded by about 10 years the removal of Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip.⁹ Thus, if during the 1970s and 1980s, almost half of the Gaza labor force was employed in Israel; in 1993 the percentage of Palestinian workers from Gaza who were employed in Israel had dropped to less than 15 percent and continued to decrease during the 1990s and especially after the Second Intifada. Further, the militarization of the only point of access for Palestinian workers into the Israeli territory – the Eretz checkpoint - rendered the crossing of the Green Line without a permit practically impossible.

On the other hand, the number of West Bank Palestinian workers employed in the Israeli economy also decreased, but this decrease was neither linear nor categorical for two reasons. First, in the 1990s Israel stepped up the construction of new settlements and the expansion of existing ones and directed a portion of the West Bank laborers towards Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Employment in settlement was not subject to the same restrictions and special permits applying to employment inside Israel. Thus, in mid-2000, an estimate of 35,000 West Bank Palestinians worked in settlement versus 72,000 still working in Israel (Farsakh 2002, p. 18). Second, related to the goal of expanding settlement and maintaining control over parts of the West Bank, the release or denial of working permits to Palestinians has become a tool of political control and punishment by the Israeli military authorities. This is unlike the Gaza Strip, which has remained isolated behind a fence and policed through air bombardments. At the same time, Palestinian wage laborers from the West Bank remain a source of “illegal” labor easily exploitable (Kadri and Macmillen 1998). Indeed, unlike Gaza Palestinians, an imprecise number of West Bank Palestinian workers still cross the Green Line “illegally” in search of jobs (Bornstein 2002). The ongoing construction of the “separation fence/wall” in parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the intensification of the policing of known “illegal” crossing points by the Israeli border police have also led to the emergence of a network of smugglers, which facilitate the crossing of “illegal” Palestinian workers into Israel (Parizot 2006).

With a focus on the West Bank, UNRWA data highlight some differences between Palestinian refugee and non-refugee populations both inside and outside camps in terms of types of employment and rates of unemployment. A significant finding is that refugees are more likely

⁹ In the 1990s, Israeli authorities started treating the two areas of the Occupied Territories differently: spatial isolation of the Strip without increasing the Jewish Israeli settler population there while doubling the number of settlers in the West Bank. The removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip in 2005 partakes of this dual logic.

than non-refugees to benefit from more lenient Israeli labor policies. Thus, for example, the unemployment rate among refugees decreased from 26.7 per cent in 2007 to 25.9 per cent in 2008 - practically reaching the general unemployment rate for the West Bank that year. This was mainly due to the increase of available jobs in the Israeli construction industry: “Overall, 12,500 more jobs were held by West Bankers in Israel and Israeli settlements (an increase of 20 per cent over 2007) ... Refugees accounted for 8,800 of the new jobs in Israel (70 per cent of the total) (UNRWA 2008). The fluctuation of the unemployment rate among refugees highlights the precarious status of those who work in Israel or the settlements. Thus, in 2010, the unemployment rate among West Bank refugees was 27.9 per cent (higher than the rate of the West Bank non-refugee population which was 24 per cent).¹⁰ The role of income from wage labor in Israel and the Israeli settlements today remains central to the occupational structure of refugee camps as well as other localities in the West Bank, especially rural villages close to the Green Line, but, unlike in the 1970s and the 1980s, rates and types of employment have become extremely erratic, which in turn increases the economic vulnerability of refugee camp dwellers.

The occupational structure of West Bank refugee camps has three main characteristics. First, the majority of camp dwellers are outside the category of “active labor force” mainly because they are too young, they are students, or they are housekeepers. Second, the two main types of occupation are: a majority of wage laborers (*ummāl*) in the local economy, Israel, or the Israeli settlements, and a minority of “employees” (*muazzafīn*) in the UNRWA and PA. Third, informal activities and temporary forms of work are widespread.

In the Jalazon camp, slightly over 65 percent of the camp population over 15 years old (3,340 out of 5,158) is not “economically active.” This percentage mainly includes students and housekeepers, and old and sick people. The camp’s active labor force (1,773 persons) includes wage laborers (58 percent), followed by employees in the public sector (the PA) (15 percent), UNRWA employees (12 percent), “self-employed” (5 percent), and “others” (10 percent). The unemployment rate is about 16 percent (UNRWA 2007; PCBS 2007). The majority of wage laborers (38 percent)¹¹ work in the local private industries – especially the service and construction industries – which have developed after the establishment of the PA. About 20 percent of wage laborers still work in Israel or the nearby Israeli settlements. The number of workers in Israel is likely to be higher than the one reported if it includes those who work there without a work permit. There are also seasonal jobs inside Israel such as olive picking. A woman in her mid-thirties told me:

Every year during the olive harvest ‘Israeli Arabs’ come in their cars, which have permits to cross the checkpoint,¹² and take people from our camp to collect olives... There is a kind of coordination between them [people from the camp] and a person from Israel who can cross them through the checkpoint. They go there as workers. They go to collect the olives. They pay them back oil, olives, or money. In the past

¹⁰ From another perspective, regional differences within the West Bank are also very important with the Northern and Southern West Bank having higher rates of unemployment than the Central West Bank.

¹¹ A confusing element is that the PA census seems to define waged laborers only manual workers working in Israel or the settlements while the category of “employees” is used to refer to “salaried workers” – both manual workers and white-collar workers – in the West Bank economy. Thus, some of the refugees who are workers in the West Bank construction and service industries are categorized as “employees.”

¹² They do not have any specific travel permit but they drive Israeli cars which are always allowed to pass through checkpoints.

they used to call them ‘al-Lishka workers’ because they used to go and work on Jewish land [inside Israel].

When I asked her the meaning of the term “Lishka” she replied:

I don’t know the meaning exactly but we grew up hearing them [people from the camp] saying ‘ummal al-Lishka’ (‘al-Lishka workers’).¹³ In the past they used to take them to harvest olives, oranges, Clementine or grapes, depending on the season. But today they only take them to gather olives.

The number of workers in the Israeli settlement might also be higher than the one reported mainly due to the stigma attached to working in the settlements. Camp dwellers who work in the Israeli settlements are mainly unskilled, unlike the great majority of skilled workers who still continue to work in Israel, and their main reason for working there is that jobs in Israeli settlements pay a higher wage than the jobs available for unskilled laborers in the West Bank local economy, which often pay salaries below the poverty line. Further, most of them rely on Palestinian subcontractors to obtain jobs in the settlements (Farsakh 2005, pp. 159-165).

From a different perspective, these data reveal that more than one third of employed camp dwellers indirectly receive their salaries from international donors, which are the backbone of both the PA’s and the UNRWA’s budget. At least one fourth of employed camp dwellers received their wages from working in Israel and the Israeli settlements while another third are wage laborers mainly in low-paid service and construction jobs within the local economy.

Between these two main categories - “worker” (*aamil*) and “employee” (*muazzaf*) - the latter constitute a privileged stratum not only in terms of wages but especially in terms of employment stability and benefits. However, the future of the UNRWA and especially the PA is also tied to the political situation. Thus, while the UNRWA and PA employees are better off than wage workers in Israel and in the local economy, they are also susceptible to changes in the Israeli military occupation as well as in the priorities of international donors.

In addition to these two categories, the occupational structure of the camp also includes the category of “self-employed” camp dwellers (5 percent). This category includes relatively stable small businesses, such as grocery stores, coffee shops, restaurants, and beauty salons whose customers are practically only other camps dwellers. Also counted in the “self-employed” category are much more fleeting and improvised attempts by unemployed or underemployed refugees to start new businesses in their houses or yards especially in time of extended curfews and closures such as during the Second Intifada. It is revealing that a study on the link between type of employment and level of poverty (regardless of location) in the West Bank found that “one third of the self-employed respondents are in extreme poverty and it is for the self-employed that the poverty risk is the higher” (Bocco et al. 2003, p. 59).

Further, during my fieldwork, 75 refugees (about 4 percent of the camp’s active labor force) were employed in the camp’s institutions as guardians, cleaners, and service workers, through the Job Creation Program (JCP), a program launched by UNRWA in 2000 to address the deteriorating material conditions of camp dwellers during the Second Intifada. This program,

¹³ “Lishka” means “official” in Hebrew. “Lishka workers” are those workers who have legal jobs inside Israel (Yaziji 1996, p. 103). It is evident that the olive harvest that this woman is referring to is not a legal job but an illegal job that requires the illegal crossing of checkpoints through rides in cars with yellow plates (Israeli plates). “Lishka” is a legacy from the past when most Palestinian workers held legal jobs inside Israel.

which offers one-to three month-contracts to unemployed refugees on a rotation system and which is present in all West Bank camps, also points to the phenomenon of underemployment among camp dwellers. Thus, those hired through the JCP are not counted as unemployed but if they do not find an alternative source of employment, they work only 3 months out of the year.

In terms of poverty rates, several surveys of households (Tamari 1993, pp. 160-166; Giacaman and Johnson 2002; Bocco et al 2003) as well as the PA censuses of 1997 and 2007 show the gap in household wealth and income between West Bank cities and refugee camps.¹⁴ For example, in their study of Jenin refugee camp in the Northern West Bank, Giacaman and Johnson (2002) emphasize that camp dwellers engage in “home production activities” that do not exist in cities: “52% of Jenin camp’s women respondents reported baking bread on a daily basis, compared to 23 % in Jenin town. 9 % in the camp still process dairy products, 23 % preserve foods, 15 % raise poultry, 17 % bake pastries and sweets always, and 59 % sometimes, and 4 % sell poultry and livestock products for money.”

Refugee camps are also primary targets of Israeli military attacks and thus workers living in camps are disproportionately affected by Israeli closure policies. For example, during the apex of the Second Intifada, in November 2002, 75 percent of camp dwellers reported that was “almost impossible” to go to work” against 57 percent of Palestinians outside camps; by contrast, in July 2003, when some of the closure policies were relaxed, the percentage of camp dwellers who couldn’t reach their workplace dropped to 35 percent, practically the same as the percentage of Palestinians outside camps (Bocco et al. 2003, p. 50).

Some interesting data emerge from comparing the occupational structure in refugee camps and towns/cities in the West Bank: 1) camp dwellers have a lower rate of employment in the PA public sector than Palestinians outside camps; 2) they also have a lower proportion of “employers;” 3) a substantial number of camp dwellers still work in Israel and especially the Israeli settlements; 4) they are particularly affected by Israeli policies of closure; and 5) during times of acute crisis, as during the Second Intifada, they turn inward engaging in economic activities inside the camp by opening small businesses (“self-employed” refugees) and by applying for ad-hoc temporary job creation programs run by UNRWA inside camps.

Institutional structure

Since the establishment of the PA, there have been rumors inside and outside West Bank refugee camps that UNRWA – or better its foreign donors – might consider to push for the re-assignment of some of the UNRWA services (and budget) to the PA. Camp dwellers are particularly worried about this possibility for two main reasons: first, there has not been clear political progress on the question of refugees’ internationally recognized right to obtain monetary compensation and to choose between return to their place of origin or resettlement; second, the PA has over the years – and especially after the Second Intifada – emerged as an institutional entity, which, like UNRWA, is fundamentally dependent on the financial support of international donors, but which

¹⁴ It is also important to note that certain rural areas close to the Green Line, which have remained under “full Israeli control (areas C) and which have a majority of the population registered as refugees, have been particularly affected by the loss of jobs inside Israel. Further, the construction of walls and fences around these rural enclaves has severed them from their agricultural lands, precluding agricultural work as a possible alternative to working in Israel. Indeed, in some of these areas, unemployment and food insecurity are often higher than refugee camps in the Central area of the West Bank such as Jalazon camp.

is much weaker than UNRWA and more directly tied to the political and extremely uneven relationship of power with the Israeli authorities.

Camp dwellers continue to consider the PLO and not the PA their political representative. The PLO, whose political role was in general greatly diminished by the creation of the PA, still maintains the status of Observer in the UNRWA Advisory Commission, which is the legal body that advises the UNRWA Commission General Office - UNRWA executive body - on policy-making and budget issues. Thus, it is the PLO and not the PA which represents West Bank camp dwellers among all other Palestinian refugees in the annual meetings of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, which also include representatives of the foreign donors.

I interviewed the director of the PLO Department for Refugee Affairs (DoRA) in his office in Ramallah, mainly to understand the relationship between the PA, the DoRa, and the Camp Committees (known as Popular or Service Committees); the latter are bodies of self-government active in all West Bank camps. The first thing that the director told me about the camp committees was the following:

The camp committees are independent, they are not employees, they are free, they don't receive instructions by the department, although they are not elected by the [camp] communities, they live there, and depending on the activities they are running, the problems they are trying to solve, they contact different bodies, from a [PA] ministry, to the electrical company, to the government of let's say The Netherlands to help them solve their problems... The department encourages them to knock on every door in order to meet their needs, because the Department doesn't have a budget, it is not a service department, but it represents the refugees in the meetings with UNRWA and the [foreign] donors.

Then, the director and I continued to discuss the composition of the committees and whether the Department had a role in the selection of their committee members. The underlying question was the relationship between these committees - whose members are mainly appointed by the different political factions - and the camp dwellers as a whole in terms of trust and representation. In many camps, the committees are composed of members appointed by Fatah, which is the dominant political movement (commonly called "faction") in the West Bank. In the Jalazon camp, many "ordinary" camp dwellers across political affiliation were proud of the "diversity" (*ta'duudia*) characterizing the camp Committee at least until June 2007, when the Hamas members of the committee were expelled as a reaction to Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip. Thus, during my fieldwork, the camp committee was traversed by tensions as a result of the decision to remove the representatives of Hamas, which, despite the historical legacy of leftist organizing in Jalazon, has a relatively strong support among Jalazon's camp dwellers.¹⁵ While the official members of the Fatah movement justified this decision because Hamas was not member of the PLO, other camp dwellers objected that this fact had not prevented the

¹⁵ Another open question is that Hamas is not a member of the PLO which was founded before the emergence of Hamas. Thus, after the expulsion of Hamas members from the camp committee a popular line of reasoning among those who supported this decision was that Hamas was not part of the PLO. However, those who criticized this decision pointed to the presence of Hamas members until 2007 and also to the fundamental role of the committee in representing the different points of view inside the camp, and not only one part of the camp dwellers.

presence of Hamas members in the Committee before 2007 and the continued presence of representatives of the Islamic Jihad, which is another political movement outside the PLO.¹⁶

The committees need to obtain a sort of authorization by DoRA to run their activities:

If they want to have a bank account, for example, they need the approval of the Department, which will send the letter to the bank saying that those names are recognized by us as members of that committee, and we authorize them to open an account.

DoRa also intervenes if there are conflicts regarding the composition of a committee:

If we understand all the parties are there, or most of the parties, or the families, or the village groups, I mean the groups according to their village of origins, if we know that they are accepted by the [camp] people... It is a flexible line... Are these serious people? We will know it from people in the camps through our personal contacts... There are also cases in which another group of people forms another committee inside the same camp and they come to us and say that they are more representative and serious than the other committee... We usually tell them: Unite, make a joint committee... Or if they are not serious, then we endorse the other committee... in any case, we should take into consideration the interests of the [camp] people and sometimes the general line of the PLO. We didn't notice people who have a dramatically different agenda, the committees mostly say what is accepted by the refugees, what the refugees also say.

In relation to the unsolved question of the camp Committees' composition, a proposal which is currently under discussion within refugee camps is the selection of members of the camp committees through elections instead of appointment by political movements. However, in this case as well, the specific legal and political dimension of the refugee camp as a place that was born out of mass displacement and that is not a "normal" locality such as West Bank cities and villages:

Take the PA's law about local elections. Where is the [refugee] camp? There is the city, the village, and the "tajammu'a" [a small group of dwellings],¹⁷ but there is no mention of camps. Should the PA add the camps to the law? Refugees then would get mad, would rebel... so the only solution is the informal one: bring people in the playground of a school, then they can have an election, but there can't be legal authorities to verify that for example someone less than 18 years old won't vote, or to dissolve the committee if it doesn't work properly, so let's speak about public election or even selection, maybe this is the only option.

¹⁶ An interesting sign of the crisis was the appearance of a painted writing with the name "Fatah" on the wall next to the building where the PC holds its meetings with an arrow pointing towards the entrance of the building. The writing remained for a couple of days and then was canceled as that part of the wall was repainted in white.

¹⁷ According to the PA's law on local elections, cities and villages run elections for municipal councils and smaller "gatherings" of houses (10-15 houses) run elections for a "committee"

This quote speaks to the relationship between camp committees and PA; a relationship which, even if the committees are mostly composed by members of the Fatah political movement, is characterized by a secretive and ambiguous position among PA officials and, in turn, by suspicion and frustration among camp dwellers. In the mid-1990s, camp committees mobilized against attempts by the PA, especially the PA “Ministry of Local Government,” to establish supervision over the camp committees. For example, in September 1996, representatives of all West Bank camp committees met in Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem in the Southern West Bank. In this meeting, known as The First Popular Refugee Conference, attendees drafted a list of points including their opposition to “efforts to legally terminate UNRWA” and their recommendation that “refugee camps should be regarded as one social, political, and legal unit with a distinguished character whose identity must be protected. Therefore they [camp dwellers] should not be pushed or included in municipal elections.”¹⁸ On the other hand, most refugee camps are located at the outskirts of West Bank cities and therefore, like these cities, they fall within the various non-contiguous “areas A” of the West Bank, which, according to the 1995 Oslo II Agreement, are under “full PA control.” From this perspective, Jalazon constitutes an exception as it is located in “area B,” which remains under Israeli security and PA civil control due to its proximity to the Israeli settlement and military base of Beit-El.¹⁹ Further, the PA has attempted to control and co-opt the camp committees by regularly financing their activities (ICG 2005, pp. 15-16). Indeed, most of the budget of the Jalazon camp committee comes from the PA. As a former member of the camp committee told me (regarding how the committee had changed between the early 1990s when he became a member and now):

Now it is totally different. First, they [members of the popular committee] have an office and a big budget. I consider this a big thing and an achievement that an organization in the camp has a big budget and offers services and aid for the people in the camp... Today it is more effective and has more of a role, like in solving conflicts and problems inside the camp, providing services... It has become a key part of the camp.

Indeed, despite the tensions generated by the complex relationship with the PA and the discontent generated by the lack of a more representative composition of the committee, most camp dwellers of Jalazon whom I spoke with (ranging in political ideas) recognize the important role of the camp committee in improving everyday life inside the camp. As a woman in her mid-forties told me:

Before we were like a lost person, we didn't know where to go and who to go to, maybe to the camp director... But now the popular committee makes things easier for the normal person.

¹⁸ At the same time they also recommend that “refugees who reside in cities and pay municipal taxes, have the right to participate in the elections, including the right to vote and stand for election, as they see fit.” The text is available at <http://www.badil.org/es/ariiculo-74-/item/616-recommendations-and-decisions-issued-by-the-first-popular-refugee-conference-in-deheishe-refugee-camp/bethlehem>.

¹⁹ Qalandia camps remains in “area C” while Shuafat camp is the only camp within the Jerusalem municipal boundaries as redrawn by the Israeli state after its annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967.

Interestingly, she made this comment after complaining about how the solution that the popular committee proposed for a problem of boundaries between her house and her neighbors' was not a fair solution (*ma kanish hal munsif*).

3.3 The Israeli Army (IA) as an Unintended Vector of Group Solidarity among Camp Dwellers

This section is divided into two parts. First, I provide a field-account of how the IA generates solidarity among camp dwellers by creating a sharp and clear external boundary in the camp. Second, I study how, in the absence of a reliable legal system, camp dwellers quench internal disputes via customary unwritten regulations and suppress behaviors they perceive as deviant with informal strategies such as gossip and ostracization in order to present a unified front against the IA.

The IA: An intrusive and unbridled hostile force

Bornstein (2008, p. 107) defines the IA's form of rule in the Palestinian Occupied Territories as a "carceral regime" that has labeled all Palestinians as irrational terrorists. Along similar lines, Hajjar (2005, p. 186) uses the term "carceralism" to describe how the IA considers all West Bank and Gaza Palestinians as "suspect and punishable." Nashif (2008, p. 10) cites an Amnesty International report stating that about 813,000 Palestinians out of 3 million Gaza and West Bank Palestinians have been imprisoned by the Israeli military authorities at some time between 1967 and 1993. Taking into consideration that at any given time all except for 20-50 Palestinian prisoners are men and that men constitute about half of the total Palestinian population, one can say that about 50 per cent of the total male Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories, including children as young as twelve, have experienced imprisonment in Israeli prisons. *B'tselem*, an Israeli human rights organization releases monthly bulletins on the number of Palestinians in Israeli prisons. At any given time there are between 5,000 and 15,000 Palestinians in prison. For example, in June 2007 when I started my fieldwork, the number was of about 9,300 including: those serving sentences (about 6,000), those detained until the conclusion of the legal proceedings (about 2,300) and those in "administrative detention" (830) that is detention without charge or trial on the basis of evidence provided by the IA to the military judges and never shared with the detainees or their families.²⁰ These detentions are always explicitly related to violations of the IA's rules prohibiting a wide range of violent and non-violent political activities and regulating Palestinians' everyday mobility and access to land and work.

Focusing on the period between 1967 and 1993, Nashif (2008)²¹ contends that the collective experience of imprisonment has cemented and strengthened the Palestinian national struggle against Israeli rule. He documents how Palestinians organized their daily routine in prison spending much of their time studying, lecturing, reading, and writing; how they developed an internal system of communication to bypass the surveillance of Israeli guards; and how they produced and circulated prison field-manuals with instructions on how to survive prison life, for example, how to handle interrogations. His argument resonates with Zinoman's (2001) findings about the role of the colonial prison in the rise of the anti-colonial movement in Vietnam.

²⁰ See http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners.

²¹ Nashif (2008, p. 19) uses the term "political captivity" (*al-asr al syasy*) to refer to the imprisonment of Palestinians to remain close to prisoners' understanding of themselves as freedom fighters against colonial rule.

Focusing on the role of physical violence perpetrated by the IA, Peteet (1994) discusses how the systematic beating of male Palestinians during arrests and imprisonment creates a shared experience of suffering that subverts the meaning of this IA's practice from a source of humiliation to one of heroism.

The present study suggests that a place-specific focus might draw a more complex picture of this interplay between the prison and national group solidarity. Indeed, poor Palestinians living in refugee camps perceive themselves, and are perceived by other Palestinians as being on the front lines of those arrested, detained, wounded, and killed by the IA. A comparative study of a refugee camp and two city districts in the area of Ramallah offers data that support these widespread perceptions, pointing to a higher percentage among the households in the camp than in the city that had a member arrested, wounded, or killed during the Second Intifada (Johnson 2005).²² According to anthropologist Marx (1992, p. 292), the source of this differential treatment is the IA's discourse of camps as centers of terrorism. He contends that the IA operates on the assumption that the camps are the epicenters of the political uprising and thus strategically targets them more than other localities. Interested in giving policy recommendations to the Israeli government as to how to govern the camps, Marx critiques the IA's discourse of camps dwellers as terrorists defining it as an involuntary "boost" to the interdependence of refugee and national identities for the Palestinians living in camps. As I will document in chapter 5, the IA has continued to label the camps—including their UNRWA institutions like clinics, hospitals, and schools—as primary facilities used by terrorists.

In her ethnography of the West Bank camp of Dheisheh, near Bethlehem, Rosenfeld (2004, pp. 196-197) argues that "Political imprisonment of Dheisheh residents was not confined to periods of marked upheaval and unrest but rather was a widespread phenomenon throughout the era of Occupation." The data on imprisonment that she provides are roughly similar to the data I was given by the local popular committee in the Jalazon camp: about 85 percent of camp families have had at least one member in prison and about 60 percent have had two or more members imprisoned at any given time. She emphasizes the role of the Israeli prisons in cementing the political consciousness of camp dwellers: "In the Dheisheh that was revealed to me in the late 1980s and early 1990s, prison experience was linked to—and even identified with—the acquisition of education and the deepening of political consciousness. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that there was a multigenerational consensus of deep appreciation for the political, value-oriented, and educational foundations that were associated with imprisonment." Rosenfeld's study draws attention to how the overrepresentation of camp dwellers among those arrested and imprisoned during the First Intifada was a source of pride and was seen by most camp dwellers as a contribution to the national struggle. In the Jalazon camp, particularly for male camp dwellers in their forties, the prolonged curfew imposed by the IA on the camp and their imprisonment during the First Intifada fueled their political mobilization and expanded what had been a solidarity insular to refugees, towards other West Bank Palestinians across location and class.

However, the establishment of the PA in 1994 has changed how male youth inside the Jalazon camp perceive their regular incidents with Israeli soldiers at checkpoints or at the military tower standing at the entrance of the nearby Jewish settlement as well as the periodic incursions of the IA inside the camp. The punitive measures of the IA continue to generate internal cohesion but,

²² See chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis of the spatial distribution of military strategies by the IA.

now combined with the PA rule,²³ have also created feelings of resentment among young camp dwellers against the nearby city where according to them there is not “real [military] occupation.” Thus, for example, Ibrahim, an unemployed refugee in his early twenties, described his participation in demonstrations against the IA at a checkpoint in the Northern entrance of Ramallah, only a couple of miles away from the camp, with a bitterness that underlines his feelings that other West Bank Palestinians fail to support the camp youth in their confrontations with the IA:

I used to go to the City Inn [checkpoint] to throw stones at the checkpoint. I got injured several times... We [youth from Jalazon] are all the same... Some of the guys [from different factions] died while others became disabled... At the end I realized that only guys from the camps were martyred.²⁴

Missing from camp youth’s stories about imprisonment is also an emphasis on political empowerment that their fathers experienced during the First Intifada and that pushed them to reach out to other Palestinians beyond the camp boundaries. Rather, like many other young camp dwellers, Ibrahim focuses on the deleterious effects of detention on the psycho-physical conditions of male youth released from Israeli prisons:

They [the IA] arrested him [Ibrahim’s cousin] 9 months ago at the Qalandia checkpoints [South of Ramallah]. He was going to Jerusalem when the army arrested him. He was fat when they arrested him and he looked so thin when they released him. It is very difficult. He started to have phobias especially of closed doors. He breaks any closed doors he sees. He is only 18 years old.

Hanady, a camp woman in her early thirties, wrote poems about her youngest brother’s change of personality after he was released from prison: he became introverted and detached from others and disinterested in his own life. Hanady’s poems emphasize the collective dimensions of her brother’s struggle and the need for the camp youth to stand united against their predicament of marginality. One of her poems starts with the following sentences:

My dear brother,
You, who are sleeping in depression, stand up and walk.
Stand up above the light from below which passes through the cell bars.
Stand up and conquer the jailer.
I will not let you surrender.
I will not let you die alive.
Stand up and follow the revolutionaries’ steps.
Your heart is boiling and your soul is flying around the walls.
...
I agree with you that we don’t have to be lost in a gap of lost time.

²³ See section of this chapter 3.5 for a discussion of how the creation of the PA has affected group solidarity among camp dwellers.

²⁴ Palestinians consider “martyrs” all those people whose death can be traced to the Israeli military occupation. On “martyrs” in Palestinian society, see Khalili (1997).

The time of humiliation and weakness.
The time of conspiracy and aggression.
But we will not surrender and we will not kill our hearts while they beat.
This entire generation has in his hand a right and a key.

Within the broader crisis of the national project under the PA, regular incidents with the IA inside the camp or on the outskirts generate solidarity among camp dwellers who feel that they are all special targets of this punitive and unbridled hostile force. Across gender, class, and age, all refugees have stories of daily, if distinct, incidents with the IA.

The 15 meter-high military tower standing on the other side of a small valley separating the camp from the Beit-El Jewish settlement constitutes the most visible evidence that the IA can cause harm to the refugees at any given time, day or night. Four hundred miles of no-go zone separates the military tower manned by armed Israeli soldiers and the boys' and girls' schools of the camp. In addition to the constant presence of the tower, Israeli military jeeps regularly drive on the road overlooking the camp. Until the First Intifada, both Palestinians and Israeli settlers used this road. Today, however, it is used by Palestinian drivers. The settlers use a separate, so-called by-pass road. Walking up hill towards their schools—and towards the military tower further on—and then exiting their schools and going downhill on their way back to the camp, students pass near the no-go zone under the scrutiny of the soldiers in the tower with their guns and binoculars. Standing near this area is risky. In three different incidents, six boys between 15 and 20 years old have been shot by soldiers in the tower in the period from October 2008 to August 2009, four of them died. While the IA's reports state that each time the boys were preparing or were throwing Molotov bombs, camp dwellers commented on these and many other previous incidents that the boys were shot standing hundreds of meters away from the tower or the settlement.²⁵ These episodes must be seen within a much broader and long-time pattern of IA's intrusions in the camp dwellers' lives. As described in chapter 2, until the First Intifada there were five military towers and a fence along the upper side of the camp and refugees in their forties often remember their daily confrontations with soldiers at the fence: they would attempt to approach the fence and soldiers would shoot at them. Another element of this long-term pattern of the antagonist relationship between the camp dwellers and the IA is the latter's intrusions inside the camp. The IA enters the camp for various reasons, ranging from arresting "wanted men" whose names appear on lists produced by the Israeli security authorities²⁶ to storming around the camp without specific goals other than a symbolic show of arbitrary power. For example, in October 2008 military vehicles raided the camp during a crowded funeral for a boy killed by the IA the day before.²⁷

The relationship between the refugees and the IA creates two predominant feelings among camp dwellers: first, a strong sense of insecurity; and second, an equally strong sense of defiance and hostility towards this illegitimate power. These two feelings emerge from stories that female teenagers shared with me about the intrusions of the IA in their lives:

²⁵ On the use of live ammunition by Israeli soldiers to disperse demonstrations or against Palestinian civilians standing close to checkpoints, military bases, no-go zones or settlements see this report of B'tselem, an Israeli human rights organization: http://www.btselem.org/download/200203_trigger_happy_eng.pdf.

²⁶ The Israeli security agencies use the interrogations of Palestinians who are arrested to obtain information about "wanted" individuals who are suspected of "terrorism."

²⁷ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/israeli-forces-kill-three-palestinian-youths-near-ramallah/7780#.TsVlxPJhGYA>.

I am talking about how they [the IA] enter our life and become part of us. And how they interfere with us while we are going to school, when they stop us to search our school bags; what is in my bag? There is a notebook and a pencil. And they keep searching the bag.

Most of our young men spend most of their life in the prison. It is a tragedy here (*sarat zaii ma'asa 'ana*).

I always remember how they take us outside of our homes, asking us to raise our hands, like we are occupying them rather than them occupying us. And this is their home not our home.

There is no safety [in the camp]. Safety means to feel completely secure in your life. For example, at midnight all the street lights are off, people are sleeping and nobody goes out after that time. So you can feel that it is not safe enough. The thing we are most scared of is the Jews [the IA].

Really, I feel jealous of the child who lives in England. They are living their life. We are not living here. Here at 10pm there is a possibility that the Jews might enter the camp. Everyone must hide and stay at home. Yesterday when the Jews entered, they were here on this street. A small kid was going to buy things from the shop when everyone was telling him to come back because the Jews were out in the street. So he got afraid and returned quickly to his home.

There is also a disabled girl who has problems in her legs. They [the IA] shot a sound and gas bomb at the school while we were leaving the school. The girl who was 7 or 8 years old and in the first grade did not have anything to cover her mouth with, so I removed the cover from my mouth and put it over her mouth. I felt pity for her because she was so little. And when I woke up I found myself in the hospital because of the gas that I smelled.

On the other hand, defiance characterizes how, generation after generation, camp dwellers relate to the IA. Take the valley in front of the boys' school and the road parallel to the settlement. These are no-go zones. There are no physical obstacles preventing camp dwellers from stepping foot in the valley but the nearby Israeli military tower stands as an ever present reminder that Israeli soldiers might shoot at those who walk in the valley. As a grown-up person who enjoys full freedom of movement in her life, I surprised myself when, after several months of life in the camp, I started feeling aggravated by the presence of the Israeli settlement and desiring "at least" walking around the back of the boys' school, where there is no real path but only rocky uneven terrain. A young man from the camp accompanied me. Walking slowly parallel to the back of the school, I did not dare to look towards the military tower where I imagined that binoculars if not guns were directed towards us. In retrospect I feel ashamed that I involved someone from the camp in my small "adventure" to see what the back of the school with its small fissures instead of windows looked like from the view of the military tower. However, at the time, the short "illegal" walk, that I had initiated, became an extensive walking "tour" of the different routes

that, over the years, refugees have used by foot to reach “services” (shared taxis) or to walk directly to Ramallah during periods of closures of different areas around the camp.

The group-making role of the IA also emerges from the widespread practices among camp families to visit each other in the aftermath of arrests, irrespective of the political affiliation of those arrested. Based on his fieldwork in Gaza and West Bank camps in the 1990s, Lybarger (2007) contends that camp dwellers negotiate their affiliation with Islamist versus secularist-nationalist political milieus in ways that accommodate their family and social ties to people belonging to other factions.²⁸ The need to present a unified front against the IA plays an important role in the camp dwellers’ investment in defusing political factionalism. With the escalation of the infighting between the secularist Fatah—the dominant Palestinian faction in the West Bank—and the Islamist Hamas—that has taken control of the Gaza Strip since June 2007—concerns about political factionalism have grown bigger.

One of the ways in which relationships are cemented irrespective of political affiliation is through visits and phone calls between neighbors following arrests. Two examples will suffice. One day in early fall 2007, I visited Rula, a small and youthful woman in her early forties, whose husband had been arrested the night before. Rula was sitting on a chair in her tiny yard surrounded by other women. She was quiet, staring at the wall, seemingly dumbfounded and unable to articulate her shock and sorrow. Some decorations were hanging on the walls around her yard. The bright color of the decorations mixed with the flowering succulents potted in small vases seemed to deepen the bitter irony of the events that had occurred during the night. In the evening, Rula and her husband had decorated to celebrate the release of one of their sons. Some of their imprisoned son’s friends had helped them. However, the celebration never took place because Israeli soldiers had irrupted into their place at around 2am. At first, Rula had thought that they had come to arrest another son of hers but then she realized that they were there to take her husband. The son who was in prison was then released at the mid-morning on the same day I visited her. Indeed, during my visit, the released son was sitting in another part of the yard, evidently confused with other camp men who had come to visit him and who alternatively congratulated him for his release and commiserated with him over the arrest of his father, whom he had not seen in years.

A few days later, when I returned to visit Rula, she told me that she had spoken with her husband on the phone and he had told her that he had been put under administrative detention for six months. She was fully aware that this meant the beginning of a prolonged period of uncertainty because “administrative detention” does not include a trial and the term of six months can be renewed for other six months and so on by an Israeli military judge on the basis of secret “evidence”—never shared with the prisoner or his family—provided by the Israeli military authorities or security agencies showing that the person still constitutes “a security threat” for the Israeli state. Rula’s long story of her husband’s and her sons’ multiple arrests over the years, was also full of references to the experiences of other camp women. For example, she explained that her family was not the only one to suffer from the uncertainty caused by “administrative detention:”

Yesterday, my neighbor Hiba was waiting for her husband to be released from prison but he wasn’t. They [Israeli authorities] renewed his sentence for 6 more months. They renewed his sentence the same day he completed his old sentence.

²⁸ Lybarger argues that this fluidity of political identities that he found in refugee camps can be extended to other localities in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. However, the bulk of his fieldwork was conducted in camps.

During my second visit, as she introduced me to other camp women who had come to sit with her, for each of them, Rula gave me information about their male relatives who had been “martyred” or who had been arrested. Rula’s husband and her older son support Hamas; however, her older brother who visited her every day for a week after her husband’s arrest and who promised to help her older son transition back in the camp is closer to Fatah. During these visits, supporters of Fatah do not refrain from showing solidarity with families who are particularly targeted by the Israeli army—and at times by the PA itself—because of their support of Hamas or the Islamic Jihad.²⁹ One neighbor who was visiting Rula noticed that the Israeli army’s arrests of supporters of Hamas inside the camp during specific periods:

They usually imprison them in December and then release them in June. They do this because of the anniversary of the founding of Hamas [December 1987]. They are not put in prisons but in detention camps.³⁰ There is no trial. They arrest them for revenge.

In return for this comment, Rula emphasized that this woman’s cousin who belonged to Fatah had been killed by the Israeli army during the Second Intifada:

He [her cousin] was “martyred” five years ago. Also, the Jews³¹ arrested his son [the son of her cousin]... They arrested him and her son [pointing to another woman] the day before yesterday.

Camp youth also engage in practices and discourses aimed at defusing membership in political parties as a line of division. In doing so, they also critique official leaders of these factions inside the camp. This was evident in the activities of few dozen Fatah activists in their late teens and early twenties who decided to start visiting all released prisoners, irrespective of political affiliation:

We go and visit people who were released from prison and we give them a plaque (*derea*) like this one... Today they [Israeli army] released five prisoners. We will give a plaque to a person from the Islamic Jihad... We don’t write on the plaque [the name] Fatah... We are going to visit another guy from PFLP... Today we will make five plaques like this one... every plaque costs us about 85 shekels. We collect the money [to pay for the plaques] from the youth (*al-shabab*)... We do this activity to congratulate them on their release from prison. It is like a championship plaque for

²⁹ Islamic jihad is an Islamist political movement that, like Hamas, is outside the PLO.

³⁰ There are two types of imprisonment without trial: “administrative detention” which is always 6 months renewable indefinitely for as many terms as a military judge deems necessary; and “detention without trial” which can last for a day to several months and entails that those arrested are imprisoned without a specific accusation or a trial. A third type of imprisonment is regular detention which entails a trial and a sentence.

³¹ Most West Bank Palestinians use the term “Jews” to refer to different segments of Israeli authorities and populations ranging from Israeli soldiers (who are mainly Jewish but might be Bedouin or Druze Palestinian citizens) to Israeli settlers (who are all Jewish) to “roads only open to Jews” (Israeli by-pass roads on which both Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel can drive as well as foreigners with a valid Israeli visa). Interestingly, Jewish foreign volunteers are usually called according to their nationality (Americans, British, etc.).

being in prison for years and not confessing on others. We consider them to be champions and we honor them.

This quote from camp youth illustrates how their struggle against the IA trumps any pre-existing political divisions within the camp. The rise of political factionalism under the PA rule—an issue that I will address in section 3.6—has deepened concerns about political infighting among family members and friends belonging to different factions. This fear of internal conflict characterizes frequent comments from camp dwellers of different ages, such as: “We are afraid that we will have a fight between brothers in the same family who belong to Fatah or Hamas.” Concerns for the preservation of cohesion within the camp relate not only to political factionalism but extend to the question of how to address issues of internal dissent, personal safety, and crime in the absence of a legitimate rule of law and in the face of an external hostile force.

Internal Cohesion and Informal Dispute Resolution

The triadic structure of authority operating in the camp does not provide a reliable legal system to mediate disputes or adjudicate in cases of suspected crime. The IA treats all camp dwellers as enemy nationals and conducts arrests and raids according a political logic that does not extend to individual questions of criminality among Palestinian populations. The UNRWA does not have a policing apparatus or a court system.³² The PA has created a police force, established a court system and adopted written penal codes (Usher 1996; Frisch and Hofnung 2007; Qafisheh 2011). Yet, the PA faces the paradox of providing police services to a stateless population that remains under Israeli military rule. As Johnson (2010, p. 53) puts, it: “Can there be Palestinian civil policing when Israeli violence does not distinguish civilian objects?” Given the limited legitimacy that the PA enjoys in West Bank camps, due to its weakness towards the IA, camp dwellers prefer using informal rules of negotiation and dispute resolution rather than rousing the intervention of the PA’s police. Further, scholars have contended that, when the PA intervenes in internal disputes within Palestinian communities, it mobilizes its kin and factional ties with the people involved rather than its formal apparatus of police, courts, and prisons; or it uses the latter to apply pressure on those with whom it does not have strong ties (Brynen 1995; Frisch 1997; Abdo 1999; Bowman 2001; Roy 2001; Rubenberg 2001). By doing so, the PA often creates divisions between those that have privileged family or political channels of access to PA officials and those that are less connected to the PA.

Given the lack of a legitimate legal system, the dominant view from the Jalazon camp is that the only available and effective tool to deal with internal issues including cases of physical violence, thievery, and harassment is “clan-based” or “tribal” law (*al-qanun al-'asha'iri*). This is a legal framework for the solution of disputes, which stems from customary regulations centered on the restoration of proper social relations as much as the achievement of justice for the individual victims. It often includes forms of collective punishment involving the family

³² The Questions and Answers section of the UNRWA’s website includes this question: “Does UNRWA run the refugee camps?” The answer is the following: “No. UNRWA does not administer the camps but is responsible for running education, health, and relief and social services programmes, which are located inside and outside camps. The Agency is not responsible for security or law and order in the camps and has no police force or intelligence service. This responsibility has always remained with the relevant host and other authorities” (<http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=87> accessed November 19, 2011).

members of the person who committed a crime. It comprises two elements: a method of dispute resolution through negotiation and conciliation (*sulh*) and a body of tribal rules stemming from the Bedouin tradition (Arif 1944; Welchman 2009).

Camp dwellers' use of customary law to defuse dissent, quench conflict, and reestablish cohesion in the aftermath of a breach of shared standards of correct behavior is a response to the IA's punitive approach that defines them as enemies and manages them through military interventions such as curfews, arrests and raids. This focus on how the IA's external pressure pushes camp dwellers to develop a cultural orientation towards cohesion thus seeking effective ways to neutralize internal conflict resonates with works on informal forms of "popular justice" in South African townships and squatter settlements outside and against the state under Apartheid (Scheper-Hughes 1995; Crais 1998). It also speaks to Nader's (1990) study of how, in Mexico, Talean Zapotec indigenous villagers have responded to colonial rule and then reacted against their incorporation into the Mexican state with practices of political autonomy centered on maintaining social order inside their villages and projecting an image of unity to outsiders. Specifically, Nader (1990, pp. 1-2) develops the concept of "harmony ideology" to explain the logic informing the system of dispute resolution among the colonized villagers:

An emphasis on conciliation, recognition that resolution of conflict is inherently good and that its reverse—continued conflict or controversy—is bad or dysfunctional, a view of harmonious behavior as more civilized than disputing behavior, the belief that consensus is of greater survival value than controversy.

She argues that that the "harmony model" of dispute resolution is a "counter-hegemonic" political strategy against powerful external actors. In the case of Jalazon, camp dwellers clearly distinguish between external violence produced by the IA and internal violence among themselves. The arrests, injuries, and deaths resulting from the IA's interventions cause grief and sorrow while increasing collective solidarity. By contrast, in addition to shock and sorrow, internal conflicts (especially those that are violent) cause a general sense of fear for camp dwellers about the camp's collective struggle with the IA and, therefore, its survival and future as a social group.

Between the establishment of the camp in 1949 and 2003 there has only been one case of murder inside the camp in the mid-1970s; however, since 2004 there has been a streak of three killings among the camp's youth. This unprecedented wave of violence compounded a generalized fear among camp dwellers for the weakening of the social fabric of the camp, already pressured by the increased political factionalism of the last two decades. The most recent case occurred in 2006 when a male teenager was stabbed to death by another youth. Teenagers belonging to three other families were involved in the stabbing. Camp dwellers remember the days following the murder as full of tension. The PA police arrested the murderer but the family of the victim asked for the collective expulsion of the four families involved—some 70 people—as provided by customary regulations. The various layers of leadership within the camp (from the elderly to the camp popular committee) supported the collective eviction of these families as a necessary step to prevent retaliatory acts between surviving family members. According to a member of the popular committee, in the days following the murder the camp was "on fire," ready to explode in a cycle of violence involving the family of the victim and that of the murderer:

That time, every night we heard the Sheikh calling the people of al-Jalazon from the mosque loudspeaker to go to al-Dawaima district (*hara al-Dawaima*)³³ to help “stop the evil” (*laman’a huduwth shar*).³⁴ Suddenly you would see all the people of the camp running to “stop the evil.”

Families that were expelled from the camp, rented apartments or relocated with relatives in nearby villages or refugee camps, hopeful that a final reconciliation would allow them to return to the camp after a short period. However, in 2008 the case was far from solved. On the contrary, there were several skirmishes (*munawashat*) between members of the two families, especially as a result of the evicted families’ attempts to use some of the camp’s institutions such as the UNRWA clinics and the camp’s children center. The victim’s family had not specified restrictions about the evictees’ freedom to engage in social activities in camp, such as attendance at school or medical visits to the UNRWA clinic in their “ceasefire” agreement (*‘atuwa iqbal*), which was recorded by the camp committee. Thus, every time an evicted camp dweller was spotted inside the camp by members of the victim’s family, tensions erupted and sometimes escalated into violent attacks to drive the evicted refugee out of the camp.

Two factors complicated attempts at reconciliation among the families. First, the lack of a recent precedent within the camp and the shock felt by the victim’s family and other camp dwellers generated confusion as to which rules to apply: who was allowed to return under what conditions; where those allowed to return would settle; which institutional actors could legitimately intervene as mediators; would customary negotiations be linked to the sentences passed by PA criminal courts about the man accused of stabbing the victim? Second, related to this confusion, the victim’s family resented the interventions of the PA because they did not believe it could be a neutral mediator. Their distrust of the PA was compounded by the fact that the evicted families had kin and political ties to the PA that the victim’s family did not. For example, when the PA arrested those who had chased evictees out of the camp, supporters of the victim’s family complained that these arrests added new insult to the family because they now suffered without their son and without “psychological comfort” (*raha nafsiia*). Many camp dwellers empathized with the victim’s family, especially its youth with these words:

The anger did not go outside and stayed inside. This created an abnormal reaction in the *shabab* [the young members of the victim’s family]... They started to ask themselves ‘why we didn’t do anything [why they did not avenge the death of their relative].

Along similar lines, a young man commented on the tensions and violent clashes provoked by this case of murder with these words:

³³ The victim’s family is originally from Al-Dauaimea village. As I identified the camp (Jalazon) and the extended family (from Al-Dauaimea) the materials I use in this section come from discussions and conversations with camp dwellers not related to the victim’s family.

³⁴ “Stop the evil” is a popular expression used in customary law to refer to attempts to calm down the situation and prevent retaliations.

Most of our fights take place outside the camp because if we have a fight inside the camp his whole family [the family of the guy he fights with] will come and defend him. So [when he wants to have a fight with someone] I take the person whom I want to hit outside the camp, I beat him then I come back home so that the fight is not extended between the two families. It is better like this.

This quote points to the externalization of violence to spaces outside the camp grounds as a good strategy to defuse it. Conflict within the camp is likely to attract the attention and intervention of relatives and friends while outside it becomes less monitored by the families. Further, outside the camp refugees face a hostile world not only due to the presence of the IA but also the negative attitude that non-camp Palestinians, especially those living in Ramallah, have towards the camp and its people. Thus, they are more likely to face and react to outsiders' attacks to their collective dignity and reputation and less likely to escalate their internal conflicts. Indeed, outside the camp, camp dwellers often help one another when they get into troubles with non-refugees.

3.4 The UNRWA: Source of Material and Symbolic Resources

In 2007 a new UNRWA elementary school was inaugurated at the entrance of the Jalazon camp at the outskirts of the no-go zone separating the camp from the Jewish settlement of Beit-El and its military tower. The IA initially attempted to block the construction due to security concerns, arguing that terrorists could use the school to attack the settlement. However, the UNRWA had insisted on the camp's need for the school in that location because of a lack of space in other parts of the camp. Events like this construction moving forward despite the IA's opposition cement the camp dwellers' reliance on the UNRWA for access to important material and symbolic resources for three reasons. First, the UNRWA opposes the IA's discourse of camps as centers of terrorism by defining and treating refugees as civilians who are entitled to basic rights including education, health, and employment. Over time, the UNRWA has more explicitly acknowledged the political claims of the refugees: "While the early [UNRWA] reports had presented the refugees as individuals lacking solidarity, later reports regularly expressed sympathy for their political demands and, in particular, their longing for return" (Al-Husseini 2000: 53). Second, the UNRWA's institutions have become places where the refugees feel protected from the IA. Indeed, all the UNRWA schools, clinics, and administrative offices have the sign "UNRWA" written in big capital letters painted in blue on the roofs. The UNRWA systematically takes note of all damages to its facilities caused by the IA and demands the IA provide evidence that their tanks, helicopters or planes targeted "terrorists" using the UNRWA facilities. As anthropologist Farah (2010, p. 390) puts it, "When armed conflict erupts, UNRWA deals with the humanitarian crises, but it also frequently compelled to respond to [the IA's] assaults on its personnel, vehicles or installations, which draws it into the highly charged political arena." Third, the camp institutions like the youth centers and schools become important spaces for refugees to socialize and discuss ideas and events. Thus, the camp dwellers perceive the UNRWA institutions as both sites of sociability and spaces that are somewhat protected against the IA's attacks.

The UNRWA's local office is the first institution that one encounters in the Jalazon camp going down the steep paved road that leads to the camp's main square. A blue metallic door

opens into a small courtyard and then two tiny rooms, one for the UNRWA director and the other for the UNRWA employees. Like in other West Bank camps, the UNRWA staff in the camp are Palestinians. Most are camp dwellers of Jalazon including the administrative staff and the teachers. The social workers that visit the camp three or four times per week are usually social work school graduates who live in the villages around the camp, or more rarely Ramallah. The social workers arrive by car at the local office and congregate there before going on home visits to camp families with whom they have scheduled appointments.³⁵ The office courtyard is a major social center in the camp, not only for the UNRWA staff but also for unemployed men who spend time there chatting with friends or relative employed by the UNRWA. The clinics are also centers of information, especially for women who come with their children to see doctors and meet informally with others gathered or waiting for similar services. Social workers employed by the UNRWA in the camp rely on boys or unemployed youth to navigate the maze of small streets in the camp. The boys and teenagers enjoy the privilege of driving in an official UNRWA car and help the social workers travel to reach the families they are working with. UNRWA social workers often use the term “guest” to characterize their role. Concerned about offending camp families by denying them certain services, they never explicitly tell a family that they do not qualify for a certain program even when it is clear to them that the request does not fit the specific requirements for that program. This is particularly the case when they are aware that decisions taken at the top of the UNRWA hierarchy have introduced new, more restrictive bureaucratic requirements for access to some of the services. They use a strategy of procrastination aimed to postpone any final decision especially in case of request rejection.

The local UNRWA staff is situated in an uneasy intermediate position between the enforcement of decisions made by the top UNRWA officials who are all internationals and the camp dwellers’ mobilization on the ground to keep the UNRWA accountable to them. The local staff announce cuts in services and face camp dwellers’ protests against these cuts. Higher-up officials release reports that announce funding decreases while promising to continue to offer services “pending a just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees.”³⁶ However, the reverberations of decreased services are felt on the ground in the relationships between camp dwellers and local UNRWA employees. Ultimately, it is at the local level that camp dwellers protest against the fact that the average annual spending per refugee has fallen from about \$200 in 1975 to around \$110 in 2008.

Before giving a field-account of the Jalazon camp’s protests against this decrease in funding and services and discussing what these protests reveal about the relationships between the Jalazon dwellers, the local UNRWA staff, and the international UNRWA staff, it is important to address the dominant meanings that the UNRWA services take on for the refugees. Four years after the IA occupied the West Bank, Israeli anthropologists Marx and Ben-Porath (1971) conducted a field-study of the Jalazon camp concluding that the UNRWA created economic dependency and psychological passivity among the refugees. What their study missed was the

³⁵ The purpose of these visits is to assess who is entitled to specific services such as additional food delivery or support for the construction of an additional room.

³⁶ The UNRWA website addresses the question: “Is UNRWA now closing down its services in anticipation of the imminent closure of the Agency?” The answer is the following: “No, UNRWA services are not being closed down. However, the Agency has been forced to implement austerity measures over the last few years due to lack of funds: financial contributions have not increased sufficiently to keep pace with inflation and a rising refugee population. This has resulted in a reduction in services...Nevertheless, UNRWA’s commitment to Palestine refugees remains undiminished, and the Agency will continue to serve them pending a just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees.”

role of the UNRWA as a buffer institution against three possible types of “exclusion” (Fraser 2010, p. 366): a cultural denial of respect and recognition; a political denial of participation in decision-making; and an economic denial of distribution of resources.

First, the UNRWA has created a space for the camp dwellers to develop their narrative of historical dispossession and national belonging, especially through its hiring of Palestinian teachers and its promotion of youth centers and other cultural institutions (Faherty 1959; Schiff 1989; Sultana 2007; Chatty 2010; Shabaneh 2010). This narrative rejects the reduction of the refugees’ predicament of marginality to one of poverty and unemployment and emphasizes how, unlike other refugee populations, in the case of Palestinian refugees the United Nations have not effectively advocated for repatriation (Schiff 1995, p. 5; Farah 2010, p. 394).

Second, despite its hierarchical bureaucracy with international officials at the top and Palestinian employees at the bottom and its dependency on Western donors, the UNRWA is the only institution at least partially accountable and responsive to the refugees’ demands and actions. By mobilizing collectively, refugee constituencies can (and do) engage the UNRWA in prolonged negotiations about the services it offers to the camps. Furthermore, they can (and do) pressure the UNRWA to extend its official role as deliverer of humanitarian services to one of legal and physical protection (Al-Husseini 2000; Morris 2010; Rempel 2010).

Third, camp dwellers imbue with political meaning their access to the UNRWA’s material resources on the assumption that unfulfilled practical needs can lead to infighting inside the camp and to the development of individualized alternatives to collective problem-solving. The political backdrop of the attempts by the General Security Services (GSS), the main Israeli security agency, to recruit “collaborators” informs the refugees’ sense of urgency for finding formulas guaranteeing a level of fairness within the camp in terms of distribution of the resources and jobs provided by the UNRWA. Unlike the case of Palestinian citizens in Lod that I will discuss in the next chapter, the relationships between the GSS and the Palestinian refugees are embedded in a daily reality characterized by the IA’s punitive measures including beatings, shootings, and imprisonment that create a clear Us-Them opposition. Palestinians in Israeli prisons, for example, support one another with suggestions about how to handle the GSS’ interrogations physically and mentally. Like the IA’s beating and shooting at the checkpoints, the GSS’ interrogation is for male Palestinians a “socio-national rite of passage” (Nashif 2008, p. 99). At the same time, the figure of the “collaborator” evokes deep feelings of both moral repugnance and political betrayal among West Bank Palestinians and alleged “collaborators” risk losing their lives at the hands of other Palestinians. Similar to the case of “neck-lacing” of alleged informers in South African townships under Apartheid (Scheper-Hughes 1995), hundreds of suspected “collaborators” have been killed by Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Yizhar and Abdel-Jawad 1994). For the reasons I discussed above in the section on the IA, the Us-Them dynamic between the camp dwellers and the IA is particularly strong and thus it already serves as an obstacle to the recruitment of “collaborators” within the camp. Yet, cuts in the UNRWA services surely affect the lives of the camp dwellers by undermining their main source of material survival; camp dwellers perceive this kind of deterioration of their material conditions as a political attack on their collective struggle against the IA. Kanaanah (2009) draws attention to the role of practical needs which is often neglected in studies of nationalism and politics among colonized and dispossessed populations. For example, she argues that practical benefits—from access to house loans to employee benefits and retirement plans—rather than ideational motivations, are the main reason for Palestinian citizens of Israel to serve in the Israeli military and police forces.

Given the role of the UNRWA as a buffer institution providing crucial material and symbolic resources, gradual cuts in UNRWA services since the mid-1990s have been met with waves of protests by camp dwellers. These protests include recurrent demonstrations, occupations of the UNRWA local offices within the camps and in nearby cities, stopping and confiscation of UNRWA cars, letters to local newspapers and interviews at local television stations. An analysis of the protests in the Jalazon camp from 2007-2008 reveal how camp dwellers perceived the cuts in UNRWA services as a threat to their cohesion and how, at the same time, through their mobilization against these cuts, they reinforce symbolic boundaries with external actors including UNRWA international staff and other West Bank refugee camps.

The concern that a decrease in UNRWA services might lead to social and political dissolution emerges from comments made by camp women during a one-day occupation of a UNRWA building in the nearby city of Ramallah in February 2008. Standing in the parking lot of the occupied building, a dozen women from Jalazon who, with what seemed to me a cheerful sense of complicity, approached a UNRWA truck parked in a corner of the parking lot. Two women climbed the high back of the truck and attempted to open the closed back doors. They laughed that they wanted to see if “they [UNRWA] hid food from us [refugees].” While other camp men and women had entered and occupied the building, these women remained in the parking lot the whole time speaking about the rising price of bread and other basic foods. Their main point of reference was Somalia, which, like the Palestinian Occupied Territories, often hits the headlines of international media with a blurred image of two categories: humanitarian disaster and political crisis. They noted that the UNRWA was responsible for keeping the refugees protected from the threat of “starvation.” At the same time, other refugees stood in front of the building’s entrance holding a banner with the following message: “The people of the Jalazon camp demand UNRWA respect their rights and fulfill its responsibilities toward them.”

When the Jalazon camp dwellers protested the UNRWA’s implementation of the Job Creation Program (JCP), a program that the UNRWA has run in West Bank camps since the beginning of the Second Intifada, they reinforced the external boundaries of the camp. The JCP offers one to three-month contracts to refugees for work as cleaners, guardians, and service workers in the camp institutions and clinics. It is funded by Western donors and based on a rotation system. The UNRWA clearly specifies the requirements of eligibility for these jobs. Final selection is made by the camp director in consultation with the camp committee. In fall 2007, after looking at the number of jobs granted to other camps, the camp’s popular committee concluded that the 75 positions given to the Jalazon camp was too low. The camp committee argued that the Jalazon camp received a lower number of positions than other camps because the committee had acted honestly while other camp committees had obtained more support because they had threatened the UNRWA staff. This set of arguments circulated among ordinary camp dwellers. For example, two elderly refugees sitting in the courtyard of the camp’s UNRWA office explained why the Jalazon camp was granted a low number of positions in comparison to other West Bank camps:

Unlike other camps in the North, Jalazon people didn’t use violent pressure [against the UNRWA] to obtain more positions. This is why we were discriminated against.

We didn’t invent jobs and we presented a list of positions that are really available at our institutions.

While the complaint against the implementation of the JCP was initiated by the camp committee, the two elderly refugees that made the comments translated the actions of the committee into actions of the entire body of refugees and then contrasted them with the less honorable and honest behaviors of other West Bank camp dwellers.

The emphasis on the Jalazon camp dwellers' commitment to fairness is central to the explanations given by the camp committee as to why it is difficult to coordinate the protests against the deterioration in the UNRWA services with other camps. Protests among West Bank refugees often take the form of "strikes," that is boycotts of the UNRWA services and the shutting down of the UNRWA offices inside the camp. "Strikes" negatively impact the quality of daily life in the camp. Yet, they also attract the attention of the UNRWA's international staff and push them to visit the camps that are "on strike." During the spring 2008, the Jalazon camp committee held a meeting to discuss how other camps in the Northern and Southern West Bank had suspended their protests after making a separate deal with the UNRWA that according to the Jalazon committee was unacceptable:

UNRWA tried to demolish the strikes. They don't want refugees to strike. This agreement [with other camps] will not meet the needs of the people. So Jalazon rejected it. There are also some people from the Northern camps against the agreement. UNRWA so far doesn't provide any camps in the middle [central West Bank] while the north and the south received [services and food]. We don't want UNRWA to divide the middle districts. We don't want UNRWA to give to Deir Ammar, Qalandia, and Amari [camps in the Central West Bank] and to leave Jalazon [out]. They know that Jalazon is the catalyst for the whole West Bank. That's why they want to leave Jalazon alone.

The representation of the Jalazon camp as "the catalyst" of the protests against the UNRWA serves as a symbolic tool that the camp committee used to highlight to the rest of Jalazon how seriously they take the tasks of pursuing their needs while holding the UNRWA accountable to refugee constituencies.

The protests against the JCP also created an opportunity for the camp committee to meet with the JCP coordinator, a European official, who, assisted by a translator, visited the camp in October 2008. The conversation between three members of the popular committee and the JCP coordinator was fraught with tension and frustration. The program coordinator focused on two things: the immense gap between the number of applicants from all camps and the funding for the JCP; and the exact match between the number of jobs that the camp had asked for, and the number it had obtained. While acknowledging that they had initially requested 75 positions, the members of the popular committee were interested in other things. One member explained to the JCP coordinator why he wanted more JCP positions in these terms:

We didn't like that other camps made pressure to increase their beneficiaries.

We are dealing with an increase in the price of food and I give you an example, we were forced to go to the shopkeepers in the market [inside the camp] to tell them to keep the prices down, so the people and the children can buy falafel and sandwiches.

As a response to these complaints, the program coordinator showed signs of boredom, reeled off a list of numbers from the JCP budget, or made remarks such as “What can we do? There are as many applications as families in each camp!” Moments of tension between the popular committee members and the JCP coordinator would ensue with the members of the popular committee making statements such as “You are a guest here,” “What is your salary?” or “Don’t complain, you are the strongest side here.” Eventually, after three hours of negotiations, the Jalazon camp obtained 25 additional jobs immediately, followed by a renegotiation of the number of jobs after three months. In the subsequent renegotiation, UNRWA, once again, reduced the number of positions granted to Jalazon to 75. Thus, in the end, the protest did not succeed. Yet, by initiating a discourse of its honest and peaceful dealings with the UNRWA, the Jalazon camp committee—unlike other camps that may have used violence or dishonest tactics to gain positions—strengthened the self-identification of the camp, promoting a general sense of worth and pride among camp dwellers.

3.5 The PA: contradictory effects on cohesion among camp dwellers

This section is divided into two parts. First, I will further develop my account of the political and cultural estrangement between poor and middle-class Palestinians under the PA rule that I began in chapter 1. Specifically, I will analyze how Jalazon camp dwellers are both aware of and excluded from the new lifestyles and consumption patterns that have developed in the nearby city of Ramallah, the “capital” of the PA. Embedded in space, polarization between poor camp dwellers and middle-class urbanites under the PA has further deepened the pursuit of cohesion. Social cohesion is thus a reaction to the stigmatization of poverty introduced by the PA and to the political marginalization of refugee constituencies under the PA political agenda. Second, I will discuss how camp dwellers have adapted to the centrifugal effects of political factionalism, which has been unleashed by the creation of the PA, by relying on kin-based associations as a less threatening principle of organization. I will also draw attention to how, in supporting these types of associations, camp dwellers, especially women, point to the relationship between the current political crisis of Palestinian society under the PA and the increase in moral corruption and gender violence in and around their camp.

The PA’s project in Ramallah: a middle-class enclave

Falah (2005) uses the term “enclavization” to refer to the spatial dimension of Israeli rule after the First Intifada. Indeed, since the establishment of the PA in 1994, the IA has used checkpoints, roadblocks, trenches, no-go zones, by-pass roads, fences, and walls to create dozens of noncontiguous territorial enclaves within the West Bank. While this ongoing process of territorial fragmentation has generated scholarly interest (Falah 2005; Farsakh 2005; Weizman 2007; Parsons and Salter 2008; Hanafi 2009), less attention has been given to the link between Israeli spatial policies, the working of the PA, and the social relations between different segments of West Bank Palestinians. However, class and moral polarization is perhaps one of the most striking features of Palestinian society in the post-Oslo period. As I documented in chapter 1, the expansion of urban middle classes—including PLO returnees from exile, NGO personnel, and PA officials—and their spatial concentration in Ramallah have created new spatial, class, and political divisions in the West Bank. The IA leniency towards Ramallah in comparison to refugee camps and even other cities has reinforced this sense of estrangement that poor

Palestinians experience from the urban middle classes of Ramallah (Bucaille 2004:56–57; Johnson 2007). Abourahme (2009, p. 505-06) aptly describes the political and cultural orientations of the expanding middle class living in the “Ramallah the enclave:”

A class that has little interest in ‘old’ politics or national projects—a class largely preoccupied with social distinctions. With its ascension, new subjectivities premised on consumption as a social value have emerged and, as corollaries, discourses of non-violence and post-national/civil-society politics have been disseminated to reach an almost hegemonic level. It is a class with an outward gaze and strong transnational links... Through the most mobile fractions of this middle class Ramallah is arguably better linked to Amman, the Gulf, Europe, and North America than it is to the rest of the West Bank... It is this middle class—apolitical, consumption-driven, status-conscious, fetishistic, internationally oriented—that leaves its mark most heavily and legibly on the social spaces of the city.

The PA-oriented middle classes co-exist uneasily with poor Palestinians who commute daily from refugee camps and villages to the city, attracted to employment opportunities in the service industry and the lowest ranks of the PA bureaucracy. As Taraki and Giacaman (2006, p. 50) put it, “Even though by day the city appears to be taken over by rural bodies and rural inflections, by night and, after the last Ford service has dispatched its passengers at their rural destinations, Ramallah wakes up to another life and to other pursuits.” This also holds true for the Jalazon camp which is connected to Ramallah by “services” (shared taxis) during the day but not at night; after 8pm in the summer and 5pm in the winter, it is practically impossible to find transportation between the two localities. Further, most camp dwellers do not own a car and the few who do have unlicensed cars that they mainly use within the camp or to go to nearby villages, but not to travel to Ramallah where the PA police could confiscate them.

Only seven miles away from Ramallah, the Jalazon camp is symbolically, socially, and politically very distant from the city. Every time I commuted between the city and the camp I felt as I was crossing two worlds apart, even when observing the most visible activities in the streets. For example, for a period of few weeks in fall 2008, the PA launched a civic program on how to respect driving regulations and how to use roads and sidewalks: PA policemen directed pedestrians used to walking in the middle of the road towards narrow sidewalks and stopped cars and asked for licenses. During that period, the city walls were covered with posters about the mandatory use of safety belts. These posters often appeared beside and at times superimposed over posters of “martyrs.” Seeing the two types of posters—drivers wearing their safety belts and “martyrs” killed by the IA—side by side reveals a tension between the project of a modern and organized city that pursues cultural and civic agendas and the “old” political project which (outside Ramallah) continues to shape daily life for many Palestinians, especially poor dwellers of refugee camps: the violent encounters with the IA.

During a visit to his sister’s two-story house in Ramallah, Abu Tarak, a camp dweller in his late forties, sat at the living room’s wide window and staring at the hills in the direction of the camp, sighed: “The camp is so close but so far at the same time.” Abu Tarak’s sister got married to an engineer from Bethlehem and moved with him to Ramallah in the mid-1990s. She had two children, a boy who was in high school and who wanted to become a painter and a girl studying business and administration at the university. Abu Tarak, who had spent six years in prison during the First Intifada and who had married a woman from the camp in the same period that his

sister had moved to Ramallah, had two younger children of 8 and 12 years old respectively. Sitting next to the window the whole time, he silently listened to his niece's account of her job prospects after completing her BA at Birzeit University. He nodded once in a while. She told him that there are job opportunities in Ramallah if you have a BA and speak English.

On our way back to the camp, walking up a steep road to catch a "service," with his children complaining about being tired of walking and his wife walking unsteadily on heels, Abu Tarak complained that there were not as many "services" to Jalazon in the evenings and we should have left his sister's house earlier. He knew that the camp was only a few miles away but it felt much farther. He was worried that his children, although they were still young, did not know English well and that their classrooms in the UNRWA schools were very crowded. His hope was that the camp's popular committee and UNRWA could work together to improve the quality of instruction for the camp's children. He was also frustrated that he did not have enough money to send at least one of his children to private English lessons in Ramallah. He compared the life chances of his and his sister's children shaking his head, and concluded: "People in camps are dependent on each other for their future; we need to help each other to help our children." Confronting the world of Ramallah, transformed by the concentration of the PA institutions and NGOs, is a painful experience for camp dwellers that expose them to the new importance of wealth under the PA. Inside the camp, Abu Tarak is a well respected figure for his years in prison and his renowned generosity towards his neighbor. However, he is excluded from the world of Ramallah where worthiness is defined by mastery of English, travels abroad, and participation in a rich calendar of evening cultural activities from movie festival to music concerts.

The city's high cost of living frustrates the camp dwellers that attempt to move to the city. For example, Hussein, who has a job as an employee in one of the PA "ministries," moved to Ramallah for seven years. When I met him, he had been back in the camp for about a year after leaving Ramallah due to the high rent and the debt he had accumulated while trying to keep up with it. Though necessary, his return to the camp was traumatic. He missed the lifestyle he had learned to appreciate while in Ramallah and resented the intensity of social relations inside the camp. At the time of this conversation, Hussein's process of re-adaptation to life in the camp had been difficult and incomplete:

There are a lot of things in which I don't interfere, and I don't want to hear about them. In the past, getting to know people's problems involved most of my time. Now I spent time at home with my wife and kids. Ramallah is better and more beautiful [than Jalazon]: I got used to living in Ramallah and now I live in Jalazon but I kept the lifestyle I learned in Ramallah. For example, this door here [his house's door] is always closed, my kids never go and play in the street. When I come back home from work I stay at home, as if I were living in Ramallah. I used to live like this there [in Ramallah], we didn't visit anyone; there [in Ramallah] there are social visits only for social occasions (*bas bil-munasabat*).

Hussein whose dream is to move back to Ramallah, now sees the camp from an outsider's perspective:

When I go out of the home I see the bad streets in the camp, the kids playing next to my home where I park my car. They broke my car's window glass when they were

playing in the snow. Sometimes they play football next to my car. From inside I am not relaxed (*nafsiian mish mirtah*).

Hussein's longing for the opportunities offered by Ramallah characterizes many educated West Bank Palestinians. The internal migration of professional Palestinians towards Ramallah has greatly contributed to the high percentage of Ramallah residents who are transplants from other parts of the West Bank. Taraki and Giacaman (2006:44) find that "50 percent of Ramallah residents at the time of the [1997] census reported that they had moved from another place to Ramallah city, compared to 27 percent for Nablus and only 13 percent for Hebron." This trend towards the concentration of educated, middle-class Palestinians in Ramallah can be understood only in connection with the broader distribution of military policies by the IA. Indeed, while the Fatah-dominated PA is pursuing a project of "statehood-by-2011," which centers on institution-building and economic projects through international donor funding in Ramallah (Khalidi and Samour 2011),³⁷ the IA continues to rule militarily on most of the West Bank. At the same time, Gaza Palestinians are subject to direct forms of Israeli military repression, including blockades, attacks, and air bombardments (Finkelstein, 2010).

The rise of Village Associations: concerns about factionalism and immorality

In the post-Oslo period, Jalazon camp dwellers have returned their attention to kinship, their initial source of solidarity and support upon arrival at the UNRWA camps, as a salient and effective principle of symbolic membership and social organization. The most evident expression of this trend is the transformation of "dawaaniin"—informal and sporadic meetings of the males from the same village during special events such as marriages—into formal Village Associations with regular meetings and activities. In 2007-2008 eight Village Associations were at different stages of development, some were running cultural programs for refugees hailing from specific villages while others were constructing buildings or collecting funds to buy land.

Scholars have contended that the PA regime has strengthened the salience of kin-based politics among West Bank and Gaza Palestinians by using kin ties between PA officials and constituencies on the ground to extract consent and distribute resources (Brynen 1995; Frisch 1997; Robinson 1997; Abdo 1999; Bowman 2001; Roy 2001; Rubenberg 2001). According to this argument, the renewed reliance on kin ties among camp dwellers is an effect of the PA's use of kinship as a tool of legitimacy and power. This argument's significant explanatory power is demonstrated by the lack of trust that camp dwellers without ties with the PA feel when the PA intervenes in cases of crime.

However, understanding the renewed role of kinship and village membership inside the camp after the establishment of the PA requires a more comprehensive analysis of how the PA's political agenda has shaped social and political relations between different Palestinian populations of the West Bank. Of particular importance are the following two trends: first, the infighting between Fatah and Hamas has penetrated the camp, paralyzed previously effective camp institutions, and roused concerns about the weakening of the camp's social fabric; second, the middle classes based in Ramallah have turned their attention to the language and practices of civil society development and cultural modernity in their redefinition of political resistance

³⁷ Khalidi and Samour (2011:8) argue that the program pursued by the PA in Ramallah "is inspired by a model of neoliberal governance increasingly widespread in the region" and that it "recalls the PA's promotion of Gaza in the mid-1990s as the next Singapore."

against the IA. In turn, this orientation towards civil society and non-violence has made it increasingly more difficult for camp dwellers to articulate for both Palestinian and international audiences the two images of political strugglers and victims in need of humanitarian help. It has also added to the resentment of camp communities where the political role of prisoners and ex-prisoners is still prominent and popular uprising against the IA is still considered the privileged form of politics.

Therefore, Village Associations are not only the direct effect of the PA's manipulations of kinship. They also respond to the camp dwellers' concerns for political factionalism. Furthermore, they offer a critical cultural discourse emphasizing the simplicity and morality of life in the past—in the villages of origin as well as in the first decades of the camp's life—that camp dwellers mobilize against the perceived moral corruption caused by the new emphasis on modern lifestyles and expensive consumption patterns among the urban middle-classes.

The growing role of Village Associations in the camp has been critiqued by some camp dwellers, especially men in their forties who participated in the First *Intifada* and among a new generation of youth who resented their lack of legitimacy within kin-based organizations because of their age. These refugees dismissed Village Associations as relying on a backward and localized form of belonging and organizing—the village of origin—rather than a larger and more modern form of belonging and organizing—the political party. To put it differently, they considered the re-gained strength of kinship and locality as a principle of social organization in the post-Oslo period and as a sign of political demobilization and a retreat from nationhood—a modern form of identity—into a pre-modern one—kinship and locality. In the words of Mahmud, a student in his early twenties:

The [Village] Associations encourage the clans more than giving new benefits to our society... So what happens is that a person who is, for example, from Nabalah's clan (*hamula*) becomes committed to the Nabalah's Association... But there is no need [for the Associations] to speak about Beit Nabalah [a village of origin for some refugees in Mahmud's camp] if I am from Beit Nabalah. We need to talk about Palestine.

Similarly, Khaled, a man in his mid-forties, contrasted the First *Intifada* as a factor that “opened people's brains [minds]” (*al-Intifada fatahat ilmohh*) with the creation of the PA as a factor that pushed people backwards towards kin-based associations.

Shifting their critique towards the political factions, other camp dwellers pointed to the interrelation between the crisis of legitimacy experienced by Fatah and Hamas and the increased role of Village Associations in the refugee camps: “People stopped trusting the political parties. That's why they started to communicate with the [Village] Associations.” They also expressed their exasperation with the paralyzing effects of the struggle between political parties on some of the camp's institutions and therefore the decreased effectiveness of services offered. This complaint was particularly evident among women who remembered how the Women's Center was more active in the past. However, in recent years, the infighting between Fatah and Hamas has negatively impacted the role of the Center:

I felt that this center helped in gathering women because we don't have a park in Jalazon or anything else for women. We were going there for a change of scenery. So we have training and the same time we met new women. But Fatah and Hamas

clashed over who would control the center. Hamas wanted the center and Fatah too. Hamas and Fatah wanted the control over the administration [of the center]. Hamas gave up; some women from Fatah took over the center. So the Agency [UNRWA] also stopped its funding and said that they didn't want to interfere in these problems. Now there are no activities in the center. There is nothing there. They only have sports session now.

Along similar lines, Amal, a college student, expressed her frustration with how political infighting paralyzed the work of different student committees when she was in high school and concluded:

It is wrong to keep saying "Hamas and Fatah." The name of the parties has spread to the point that Hamas became the state and Fatah too. This is a big mistake. We have to remember that we are Palestinians. I stopped saying I am Hamasawia or Fathawia for this reason because at the end the person will forget that he is Palestinian and his only concern will be serving his party. The parties were established to serve the Palestinians. It's better to be just Palestinians.

The infighting between Fatah and Hamas has also negatively affected the Youth Center, which had been a milestone in the political mobilization during the First Intifada.

Village Associations present themselves as an alternative group membership to the political factions whose infighting threatens to tear apart Palestinian families, which often include members belonging to different factions. In filling this role, these associations have expanded their activities dramatically. For example, instead of holding occasional gatherings for important social events like weddings or periods of mourning, they have taken on a frequent presence through after school programs and explicitly political practices such as the commemoration of clan "martyrs." They have also responded to practical needs such as holding wedding celebrations in a time of acute material scarcity. During the First Intifada, the dominant culture of political resistance and social austerity had pushed the costs of marriage down. However, with the establishment of the PA, the practice of renting out expensive halls to celebrate weddings became more popular and continued to be the standard even during the Second Intifada (Johnson, Abu Nahle, and Moors 2009). The construction of spacious halls constituted a prominent feature in the plans of many of the Village Associations as a response to the practical need to offer refugees cheaper wedding options. The importance of solving this problem was highlighted in many conversations I had with women. For example, Najua, a woman in her early thirties explained that many camp dwellers struggled to afford the cost of wedding celebrations and the Village Associations can offer a solution to this problem:

They [The Village Associations] will try to help the poor people by reducing the costs of the wedding parties by holding the parties in the association instead of paying for hall.

Najua referred to both "traditional" practices such as men's meetings and new practices such as after school programs for students initiated by some of the Village Associations:

They can also use the association for mourning ceremonies because the houses are too small for these kinds of events. It is also good for men's meetings and in helping the students in studying like what al Dawaima association does.

A similar comment was made by other camp women, as young as twenty and as old as fifty. For example, a girl expressed her enthusiasm about her Village Association with these words:

You have to pay at least 1,500 shekels to use the park³⁸ for weddings. But we can use it [al-Dawaima association] for free to hold weddings, parties, and other kinds of activities, like supporting prisoners. There are also some activities for children, like painting, listening to music, and watching movies. The most important thing [about al-Dawaima Association] is that it exists. People don't always need it, but the most important thing is that it is there when we need it.

The increased efficacy of Village Associations in cementing social cohesion and solving practical needs is the reason why those refugees coming from a village without an association have mobilized to form one. Karima described her husband's efforts to create an association for their village with these words:

My husband told them [the elderly]: "Il-Led has an association. Beit-Nabala has an association. AL-Dawaima has an association too, then why doesn't Annaba have an association? He encouraged building one; he drew a map for the land, collected donations and brought workers to build it. They stopped the construction for a while because of the lack of money. I told him [her husband]: "You have to look for donations from wealthy people who live outside the camp."

In addition to neutralizing the negative effects of political infighting, Village Associations respond to widespread concerns about "moral dissolution" around and within the camp. With the overall crisis of the Palestinian national movement in the background, refugees are preoccupied with the weakening of the camp's social fabric in moral terms. Their positive assessment of the Village Associations is symbolically connected to their desire for a return to a "simpler" way of life and for a way out of a complex reality threatening their cohesion. The new discourse of wealth, travels, and expensive consumption patterns as a marker of personal worthiness under the PA has marginalized camp dwellers who in the past were perceived and perceived themselves as political heroes standing at the front lines of the national movement. Estranged from the PA, refugees translate their cultural and political marginalization into an attack of the morality of the practices and lifestyles of the urban middle-classes. Women are particularly outspoken in terms of how the new generation is growing under conditions of moral decay and express gratefulness for the expanded role of Village Associations as a buffer against immorality. A strong nostalgia emerges from Najua's comparison of her childhood—spent outside playing the streets—and the current children of the camp dwellers:

³⁸ There is a privately owned park at the entrance of the camp.

We are living in the time of Internet and TV. The children of this generation are crude (*wiqhin*). Do you understand me? I mean sexually and the way they deal with girls. They [male children] are crude. Parents are oppressing them [girls] not because they don't want them to get educated or to go outside the home. Not all, but it is some kind of fear because we have many rapes... We have many crimes that happened in the mountains [around the camp] between the olive trees.

Najua also connects her fears about rape to the improper use of new technologies by the new generation:

Many rapes have happened. The guys gossip (*beitqso*) on the girls when they see them in the streets. They also use the mobiles and the text messages to say bad words. People should consider the internet, the TV, and the mobile phones as progress tools for a better life and not as a toy or an amusing thing. Most guys believe that the mobile phone is an entertainment tool. They put bad videos on their mobiles and they watch bad movies on their TVs. The lifestyle may change when they stop these kinds of things. Things will be good if they use these tools in a good way. Then, life will be simple like before. Maybe, I am not sure but maybe.

In her field-study of Amari refugee camp, which is located within the municipal boundaries of Ramallah, anthropologist Johnson (2007, p. 617) finds a similar sense of moral danger among refugee women. Conducting her interviews during the Second Intifada, she argues that camp dwellers mixed political and moral critiques towards the city dwellers and fears of moral dangers inside the camp:

The strong connection between political and moral corruption expressed by Sahar [one camp woman she interviewed] and other residents—and the trumping of the political by the moral in these discourses—is important to consider for its implications for the shape of Palestinian politics as well as for the lives of camp residents. Sahar herself expresses a longing for political and moral authority—on one occasion, she even mentions missing the “masked men” of the first intifada who punished moral transgressions. Amari as a moral community is perceived as under great threat: while general perceptions of moral corruption are located in the restaurants, bars, and nightclubs of the city, tales of sexual and moral deviance also come close to home.

During my staying in the camp I was never given details about specific cases of rape but rumors about rapes and sexual harassment around the camp abounded. Given the political marginalization and cultural stigmatization of camp dwellers under the PA and their continued overrepresentation among those arrested, wounded, and killed by the Israeli army, refugees have returned their attention to Village Associations as institutions that can strengthen the moral order of the camp and solve practical needs in the face of a deep national crisis.

CHAPTER 4

Mahatta Dissolution: Fear, Violence, Stigma, and Atomized Politics

From my early stint in Lod in the summer of 2007 before moving to the West Bank,¹ to my transition from the Jalazon camp back to Lod in March 2008, to my six-month fieldwork in the Mahatta district and other Palestinian segregated districts of Lod, two dominant feelings permeated my conversations about the city with both Palestinian refugees and citizens: their fear of the Israeli security agencies and their distrust of other Palestinians. These two sentiments did not disappear once I was settled in Lod; indeed, they intensified and marked most of my observations and experiences inside the city.

During the last couple of months in Jalazon, some camp dwellers gave me contact information for their relatives in Lod. At the same time, they constantly warned me about the differences between the camp and the city. During a conversation at the dinner table, Khaled, a camp dweller who had greatly helped me adapt to camp life, told to his wife in my presence: “If she goes alone, they will think that she is a spy,² it is not like here, there people are afraid” (*Hiya bitruuh lahalha ua hom bifakkru hiya jasusa, mish zeey hoon, hunnak in-nass bikhafu*). Khawla, his wife, replied by shifting the focus from my problem of obtaining the trust of Palestinians in Lod to her fear that my transition to Lod would cause problems for her husband and other people in the camp: “People here told you a lot about politics, you know a lot, will you bring this information to Lod? There are checkpoints [across the Green Line]. Will you bring your computer with you?” Despite the presence of a military base nearby and my crossing of checkpoints inside the West Bank, in the eight months I spent in Jalazon, nobody from the camp ever asked me where I stored my files and how I secured my information. By contrast, as my transition to Lod came closer and I started dealing more concretely with the logistical problems of relocating, the main feeling that the word “Il-Led” (Lod) evoked among camp dwellers was one of uneasiness about the city’s reputation as a major center for the relocation of Palestinian “collaborators” from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This feeling of uneasiness towards Lod was related to the dominant (and largely correct) perception that the Israeli security apparatus interferes with and penetrates Palestinians’ social and political lives with extreme ease. Along similar lines, the expression “I don’t want to have problems” often colored the reactions that refugees with relatives in Lod obtained from their relatives when they contacted them by phone to ask if they would help me transition to the city. In the words of refugees, like most Palestinians in Lod, their relatives “were afraid” and “didn’t want to have problems” with the Israeli authorities.

This interest in avoiding the unwanted attention of the Israeli police and security agencies increased when I actually moved to Lod. During the first month of my fieldwork, when I travelled twice back and forth between the two localities to transport some of my belongings, I received help from Salim, a young Palestinian man from Lod who came to pick me up at Ni’lin, a West Bank village just over the Green Line from Lod. Before crossing the checkpoint manned by Israeli soldiers, this man coached me about what to say and what not to say to people I would

¹ See methodological appendix for an in-depth account of the question of mobility between the two sites.

² See chapter 5 for a discussion of the use of “spies” as a component of the Israeli form of sociolegal control over Palestinians in Lod.

meet in Lod. He repeated his instructions so many times that I grew anxious and almost decided to track back to Jalazon and not to cross the checkpoint that day:

There [in Lod] it is different, you can't speak politics... I don't want problems, and you too don't want problems, forget the [popular] committee,³ forget it. There [in Lod] you don't know who is in front of you, maybe someone who works with the Jews [a "collaborator"], if today he hears you speaking about the camp in political terms, tomorrow you will have the police (*shurta*) at your door and then they will come to my place because I gave you a ride and they will also take your computer.

When I visited the camp after a few weeks in Lod, a middle-aged man shared his understanding of the similarities and differences between the camp and the city. He told me that neither the Palestinians in Jalazon nor those in Lod are free but their lack of freedom has a different connotation in the two localities: camp dwellers are physically "closed" (*munsakkariin*) due to the Israeli military presence that limits their freedom of movement while Palestinians in Lod may be able to travel due to their Israeli citizenship, but "they are not free" (*mish hurrin*) because "they are afraid to speak" (*bikhafu ihku*).

This chapter explores how social atomization, stigma, censorship, and suspicion among Palestinians in Lod are cumulative effects of overt and covert practices pursued by the Israeli police and the Israeli GSS (General Security Services), the main Israeli security agency. Specifically, I explore how the social and political lives of "minority citizens" are shaped by the following practices: 1) the pressure exercised by the GSS on residents to monitor their neighbors' attitudes towards local and national authorities; 2) the security motivations that inform police operations inside the districts even when explicitly directed to criminal activities; and 3) the state-sponsored relocation to Lod of two stigmatized populations among Palestinians: West Bank and Gaza "collaborators" and Bedouins⁴ removed from land in Southern Israel that the state confiscated to build military bases. I explore "the view from below" on the linkage between security and criminal policies: how the security apparatus of the state does not punish Palestinian residents collectively but distributes rewards and punishment individually according to each resident's perceived attitude towards the state; and how the overt presence of the police facilitates the GSS' collection of information about "the mood"⁵ of the residents towards the state, by further scrutinizing them during legitimate police interventions against drug-dealing and criminality.

In addition to the unique relationship that poor Palestinians in Lod have with the Israeli police and the GSS, I explore how the Israeli state uses space to create a unique predicament of land and housing insecurity for Palestinian residents of the district, which strengthens the individualizing effects of the above-mentioned security practices. Further, I discuss how the state discourse of Palestinians in Lod as petty criminals demoralizes them. This discourse emphasizes how the presence of Palestinians in the town is the cause for the lack of a tourism industry in Lod and for the out-of-town migration of deserving segments of the citizenry (middle-class Jewish Israelis). I draw attention to how the state discourse includes an ethnonational dimension that attaches to all Palestinians in Lod a certain degree of potential threat to state security, thus

³ When he asked me if there were sewage pipes in the camp, my answer had included a mention of the activities of the "popular committee" inside the camp.

⁴ The stigmatization of Bedouins is due to the fact that they can volunteer in "ethnic units" of the Israeli army.

⁵ This is the exact word used by the GSS: http://www.shabak.gov.il/english/history/pages/isa-history_57-67.aspx.

justifying the mechanisms of scrutiny and surveillance pursued by the security agencies to distinguish between hostile and non-hostile “minority citizens.”

I have organized this analysis of social dissolution, fear of Israeli authorities, and distancing from neighbors in three parts. First, I give an overview of the interplay between Israeli security and crime policies towards Palestinian citizens. I also discuss the spatial dimension of sociolegal control in the district: how certain security policies have spatial effects—such as the relocation of “collaborators” to Lod—and how the precarious housing conditions of residents—for example, the threat of house demolitions—deepen the dissolving effects of security practices on communal life. Second, I give a brief account of the occupational structure of Palestinian citizens in Israel and in Lod. Third, I discuss my field-materials on the effects of the sociolegal control at work in the Mahatta on the social and political lives of its residents. Chapter 5 will further explore the distinct relationship that Palestinians in Lod have with the Israeli state as the main source of their predicament of social dissolution, stigma and mutual suspicion. It will also compare the mechanisms by which security and criminal policies in the district have different outcomes than the triadic structure of authority in the camp in terms of levels of cohesion and trust, directions of violence, and forms of politics on the ground.

4.1 Security and Criminal Policies in Lod: Logics and Linkages

Security Policies

In November 2003, four former heads of the GSS⁶ held a roundtable discussion about “Israel’s present and future” facilitated and recorded by two reporters of the Israeli daily newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* (JPS 2004, pp. 177-185). The comments made by these important figures of the Israeli security apparatus during this meeting gives some insights into policies that are usually shrouded in secrecy. While the discussion centered on the Israeli military rule in the West Bank, it also has implications for the GSS’s involvement in the management of Palestinian citizens. The four men discussed how the GSS’ mission “to thwart terror” was carried out in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. They complained that, over time, the Israeli Army (IA)’s and the Israeli executive’s security practices have produced a unified front of resistance among West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. Gillon remarked that “Once thwarting terror was surgical operation... Today it is an HMO [health maintenance organization]. The business has become cheapened” and Shalom added that “And why does this increase terror? Because it carries an element of vindictiveness” and continued: “Terror is not thwarted with bombs or helicopters, but rather quietly. And the less we talk about it, the better. Believe me, if we were quieter, there would be fewer terror attacks.” Along similar lines, Peri expressed his concern about the effects of collective forms of punishment imposed on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories:

I think that our massive and nonspecific behavior, what was previous called an HMO [health maintenance organization] instead of surgery, is where the affliction lies. This totality... And you cannot convey to a soldier at a roadblock or to a woman soldier checking [Arab] women at a roadblock the precise spirit of the commander. Sometimes the fear, the lack of experience, the lack of intelligence or just a lousy

⁶ The ex-GSS heads that participated in this roundtable were: Avraham Shalom (1980-1986); Yaakov Peri (1988-1995); Carmi Gillon (1995-1996); Ami Ayalon (1996-2000).

commander are what dictate events. To this day, I don't understand why a tank driving through the streets of Ramallah has to also crush the cars parked on the side of the road."

To the journalist's question "Do we behave disgracefully in the [Gaza and West Bank] refugee camps?" Shalom replies: "It is all disgraceful. We debase the Palestinian man individual to all and sundry. And nobody can take this. We too would not take it if it were done to us. And neither do they take it, why should they suffer?" He also attacked the construction of a system of fences and walls in parts of the West Bank with these words: "Today's fence is creating a political and security reality that will become a problem. Why? Because it creates hatred..."

These comments reveal how these former GSS heads support security interventions that are "surgical," "non-vindictive," and "quiet" while they are critical of the "overt, "massive and nonspecific behavior" such as punishment inflicted on "all and sundry" that according to them have come to dominate the Israeli army's approach to the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories.

Unlike its counterpart in the Jalazon camp which fits well in the mechanisms of "nonspecific" punishment criticized by the former GSS heads and pushes camp dwellers to invest in their cohesion, the regime of sociolegal control at work in the Mahatta district in Lod serves to generate more fear than hatred of the Israeli authorities, as well as suspicion towards other Palestinians rather than an orientation towards cohesion as cultural value. Chapter 5 will address the reasons for these diverging outcomes more comprehensively. For example, it will compare the plurality of institutions involved in the sociolegal control of the camp, especially the conflictual interplay between the IA and the UNRWA and the monopoly exercised by the GSS and supported by the police in the district. Here, I draw attention to how, unlike the IA's collective treatment of the camp dwellers, the linkage between covert security practices and open criminal policies in the district follows a logic that is similar to what Brodeur (1983, pp. 513-514) defines as "high policing:"

High policing has four basic features, the first of which is the most important: 1) High policing is first of all absorbent policing. The feature itself has two traits. It aims to control by storing intelligence. This intelligence gathering is all-encompassing: it extends to any domain that may further the implementation of state policies;⁷ 2) High policing is not uniquely bound to enforce the law and regulations as they are made by an independent legislator; 3) Protecting the community from law violators is not an end in itself for high policing; crime control may also serve as a tool to generate information which can be used to maximize state coercion of any group or individual perceived as threatening the established order. Crime is thus conceived as something which lends itself to manifold exploitation. 4) High policing not only makes extensive use of undercover agents and paid informers, but it also acknowledges its willingness to do so. It strives in this way both to main a low operational visibility and to amplify the fear of denunciation. Whatever the real number of informers actually used by a high police apparatus, this apparatus always

⁷ Brodeur gives the example of Napoleon's ministry of police in France that in a letter dated 1816 wrote: "The police is a political magistracy, which, apart from its special functions, should co-operate by methods, irregular perhaps, but just, legitimate and benevolent, in augmenting the *effectiveness of every measure of government.*"

pursues a double strategy of actual infiltration (which can become quite extensive) and of maximization of insecurity among the target group by deliberately spreading rumors about the pervasive character of its deployment.

These four elements are all present in how security and criminal policies are linked together and justified by a state discourse of Palestinians in Lod as “a suspect population” (Cole and Lynch 2006) made of petty criminals that can become dangerous terrorists.

First, “intelligence gathering” has characterized the peculiar relationship between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli state since its establishment in 1948 (Cohen 2010). As documented in chapter 1, both during the military government (1948-1966) and afterwards (1966-present), state authorities have developed different techniques of control to obtain as much information as possible about political attitudes as well as layers of leadership within Arab villages and towns. The collection of information about everyday life in these localities constitutes an important pillar of state attempts to censor the expression of nationalist feelings and criticisms against the state by Palestinian citizens. These practices also neutralize challenges to the state’s differential treatment of its citizenry according to ethnoreligious criteria even when pursued with democratic means. The dominant perspective within Israeli sociology is that the state has not developed policies to measure state loyalty among Palestinian citizens. For example, sociologist Smooha (1976, p. 415, quote in Cohen 2010, p. 241) argues that “The demands made of the Arab citizens are minimal—to abide by the law and maintain public order. It is sufficient that he be an unhostile citizen and he is not pressured to be a devoted and patriotic citizen...He has the freedom to voice nationalist ideas as long as he remains within the law.” However, Cohen (2010, p. 7) contends that his study of police archives on the relationships between Palestinian citizens and the GSS in the period from 1948 to 1967 shows otherwise: “The demand to inform on work colleagues who spoke out against the state, and the demand not to mark commemorative days in the Arabs’ own national history were fundamentally loyalty demands of the most blatant type. Surveillance of school lessons and daily conversation in Arab communities... also requires a modification of the common claim that Israel did not seek to change its Arab citizens’ political consciousness.”

Second, the role of the GSS is not fully regulated by law. In their study of the GSS during the period from 1948 to 1969, criminologists Perlinger, Hasisi, and Pedahzur (2009, p. 1284) find that “because the GSS had no operative detention authority, most of its operations were carried out with the assistance of the police... This frequently led police in some Arab villages to follow the instructions of the local GSS coordinator.” To put it differently, the GSS is a “legal ghost” that is unregulated by law and that is allowed “to reside as the violent and parasitic occupant of the covert internal space created at the center of governmental architecture. It is in this space that illegal interrogations—often involving torture—can be carried out. Legal authority for the actions which are necessary for the execution of the GSS’s work—search, arrest, detention—is absorbed from the police, the prison services and the Attorney General’s office by a technique of parasitism or ‘body snatching’” Feldman (1995, pp. 85-86). Given its vagueness, the 2002 GSS Law—the first law to deal with the GSS’s activities—has not substantially changed the modus operandi of the GSS (Gordon 2008, p. 32).

The third feature of “high policing” is the manipulation of crimes for political purposes. In the case of Palestinians in Lod, police interventions against criminal activities offer opportunities for further scrutinizing the residents’ everyday life, by placing pressures on those arrested to provide information about other residents and by justifying the presence of police officers in the district.

As I will discuss below, the police look at all residents' activities, including crimes, through a political lens. Criminalization of political activities as disturbances of the public order (Zureik 1988; Korn 2000a) is matched by the police's portrayal of certain criminal activities—such as the smuggling of weapons—as potential security threats (because of the ethnonational identity of those involved) that need to be defused (Ajzenstadt 2002).

Finally, Brodeur's fourth point about the use of informers to gather information as well as to "maximize insecurity by spreading rumors" is particularly compelling in the case of Palestinians in Lod for two main reasons. First, the use of informers ("collaborators") has been a striking feature of the state's attempts to distinguish between "hostile" (or "negative") and "positive" elements among Palestinian citizens (Cohen 2010). The GSS's official website explicitly includes the collection of information "about the mood" among Palestinian citizens as one of its main tasks in the pursuit of its mission to thwart "political subversion" against the "democratic and Jewish character of the state" and to pass "threat warnings about riots and plans to carry out violent demonstrations."⁸ One of the main effects of this practice in the Mahatta district is the creation of a generalized fear of being labeled and treated as a dangerous citizen. Second, the state has decided to relocate hundreds of "collaborators" from the Palestinian Occupied Territories to Lod, thus intensifying rumors about and distrust of these newcomers among Palestinians living in Lod.

My discussion of the relationship with the state's security apparatus as the main source of social dissolution and distrust in the Mahatta resonates with the literature on covert forms of policing especially police informers, among civilian populations. This literature also points to how the use of police informers weakens communal lives of the targeted populations in both democratic regimes (Marx 1974, 1980, 1982; Rosenfeld, Jacob, and Wright 2003; Starr et al 2008; Natapoff 2009) and colonial states (Thomas 2008; Duschinski 2009).

Criminal policies: Policing security and moral threats to the state's nation-building project

Israeli authorities address issues of criminality among Palestinian citizens of Israel from a security perspective. Criminal activities such as the smuggling of weapons and drug trafficking assume a distinct security connotation when Palestinian citizens are involved. In addition to the explicit concern that Palestinian citizens might have political intents—for example, using smuggled weapons against state targets—Israeli authorities also operate on the assumption that criminality among Palestinian citizens is "natural" and can symbolically taint Jewish citizens. The few studies on criminality and ethnicity in Israel report endless quotes from members of the government, judges, and police officers expressing their preoccupation for the future of the Jewish Israeli youth when they come to contact with their Arab counterparts. For example, Cohen (1989, p. 132 quoted in Zureik 1993, p. 102) discusses how police officers portray drug-dealing among Palestinian citizens as attempts "to drug the Jewish population." Ajzenstadt (2002, pp. 596-597) shows how Palestinian citizens of Israel have historically been constructed "both as enemies whose loyalty to the Zionist cause was questionable and as an undeserving delinquent people" and she draws attention to how Israeli authorities have also accused Palestinian citizens of spreading "immorality" among Jewish Israeli youth as expressed in this quote: "We witness serious immorality among our youth. The disease of brothels was transferred to other cities by Arab youth who visit these filthy." Furthermore, she shows how, in the first

⁸ http://www.shabak.gov.il/english/history/pages/isa-history_57-67.aspx (last accessed 11-27-2011). Interestingly, the use of informers is not even mentioned in the 2002 GSS law.

three decades of the state's existence, juvenile delinquency among Jewish Israelis, but not among Palestinian citizens of Israel, was addressed through rehabilitative measures. For example, in 1960, 23% of Jewish young offenders versus 13% of Arab young offenders were sentenced to probation services. The same year, 45% of files were closed for Jewish youth compared to only 20% of files for Palestinian youth inside Israel. The same differentiated trend along ethnonational lines characterizes adult probation with 54% of Jewish offenders versus 33% of Palestinian offenders recommended to probation in the mid-1980s (Zureik 1993, p. 102). This different treatment—rather than a higher rate of committed crimes—is the main cause for the disproportionate number of Palestinian citizens in Israeli prisons (Fishman and Rattner 1998). Korn's (2003, p. 46) finds that the gap between incarceration rates for Jewish Israeli and Palestinian citizens is growing over time: "Today, Arabs make up over 35 percent of the Israeli prison population (when they are only 18 percent of the general population). The incarceration rate for Israeli Arabs rose from 158.41 in 1970 to 198.83 in 2001. This rate is twice as high as the Jewish rate, which was 86.44 in May 2001."

The nation-building project pursued by Israeli authorities has affected how the state has addressed criminality among Palestinian citizens. The state's portrayal of criminality among Palestinian citizens as a threat to both the state security and the "morality" of the Jewish Israeli citizenry is particularly striking in Lod where the presence of poor Palestinians is considered by both local authorities and dominant public opinion as the main cause of the town's problems including lack of tourism and out-of-town migration of Jewish middle-class families. The role of the Israeli police in the town is to scrutinize the behaviors of Palestinian residents in order to prevent criminal or "undesirable" practices from "spilling over" into Jewish Israeli districts or damaging the moral fabric of the Jewish citizenry. Thus, for example, in line with the quote above from an Israeli official that drug trafficking among Palestinian citizens is purposely directed against Jewish Israeli youth, residents of the Mahatta emphasize how drug consumption inside the district became a problem when hundreds of young Jewish addicts started entering the district in search of drugs. Only then did the Israeli police react by setting up checkpoints at the entrance of the district and closing down the system of "ATMs" (little holes in walls through which drug addicts insert money and an anonymous hand passes through the fix in return) that existed inside the Mahatta.

Another feature that is unique to the policing of Palestinian segregated districts is the involvement of the GSS in allegedly criminal policies. An article published in the Israeli daily newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* on October 5, 2010 reported comments made by the Minister of Public Security about the GSS' role in fighting against the smuggling of weapons "within the Arab community in Lod:"

Shabak will be joining forces with the Israel police in their war on illegal weapons in the Arab sector... Lately the police have noticed a real increase in illegal weapon use among the residents of the Arab sector. The big problem of the police is mainly in collecting evidence and collecting weapons.

While this newspaper article describes the involvement of the GSS as exceptional measure triggered by the severity of the problem (the number of illegal weapons hidden in Arab districts), in reality the blurring between crime and politics when the Israeli police deal with Palestinian citizens is systematic and thus justifies the active role of the GSS in collecting information, which often entails the use of informers (Korn 2003). The security concerns shaping criminal

policies towards Palestinians in Israel are particularly evident in Israeli “mixed” cities where Arab and Jewish Israelis live spatially segregated but at close proximity.

The high rate of murders, assaults, and burglaries that occur in Lod—which the Israeli authorities attribute to the growing presence of poor Palestinian citizens in the town—adds another layer to the local authorities’ concerns that the town will not be able to retain a Jewish majority in the near future. As documented in chapter 2, despite the mass expulsion during the 1948 war, the number of Palestinian residents of Lod has steadily grown decade after decade to reach about 30 percent of the city population today. At the same time, Israeli authorities grapple with the out-of-town migration of Jewish Israelis. On October 31st, 2010 The Israeli government held a special sitting on Lod.⁹ Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister opened the sitting with these words: “A few weeks ago I visited the city of Lod. I said that we cannot allow the city to deteriorate and become the Wild West in the heart of the country. I said we would act to make the city attract new residents, young couples, tourists...” In this meeting, the government discussed data obtained from the Israeli police that however did not include a break-down along ethnic lines. Considering number of incidents per 1,000 residents, the Israeli police reported to the government that the number of murders in Lod was 10 times higher than the national average; the number of “serious crimes”—including attempted murder and aggravated assault—was 23 times higher than the national average; the number of car thefts was 30 times higher than the national average and the number of house burglary was 66 times higher than the national average. Given these data the government expressed concern about “the personal security of the residents of the city as well as their trust in the state’s capacity to ensure their safety” and linked the decrease in the Jewish population of the town to two phenomena: criminality and illegal housing among Palestinians living in the town. In chapter 5 I will further discuss the interplay between security and criminal policies towards Palestinian citizens.

4.2 Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Occupational Structure

Control over land rather than labor exploitation has historically been central to the formulation and implementation of the Israeli state’s policies towards Palestinians. Even before the creation of the state, Jewish institutions such as the Histadrut—the Federation of Hebrew Workers—rejected Palestinian workers as equal members of the Federation, mobilized against the employment of Palestinians inside Jewish settlements and against their training for employment in skilled positions. Further it supported higher (‘civilized’) wages for Jewish workers and lower wages for Palestinian workers (Sa’di 2004: 138). Palestinian workers complained against this dual wage system. For example, in the 1930s a Palestinian labor activist commented on the question of wages with these words:

[The Arab worker] must accept half the wages of the Jews because he is an Arab. It makes him more embittered still when he is told to accept a [lower] wage because his standard of living is lower than that of the Jew, as it if were a crime to raise his standard of living! The poor must remain poor... What a queer logic in a civilized government (Mansur, 1938: 42, quoted in Said 2004, p. 138).

⁹ A copy of the report produced by the government is available with the author.

This quote is still relevant today as income among Palestinian citizens is lower than that of Jewish citizens and the rate of poverty among the former is higher than that among the latter (see below for specific data about income and poverty). The link between poverty, income, and politics which continues to be explicitly debated by the Israeli government is also clear to the eyes of Palestinian citizens. Thus, the data here reported about occupational and educational inequalities along ethnonational lines among Israeli citizens constitute important background information to make sense of the reasons why Palestinians in Lod interpret poverty as a political condition forced upon them by the state and thus interpret escaping poverty as a political action even when it is pursued through engagement in the illegal economy. Indeed, the socioeconomic development of Palestinian citizens has been read through a political (ethnonational) lens by Israeli officials since the establishment of the state. For example, in the late 1960s, Toledano, the then Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs, reflected upon a "dilemma" among Israeli policy-makers about how to address two goals that, according to him, required conflicting policies. The first goal of reducing the birth rate among Palestinian citizens required improving their educational level. By contrast, the second goal of preventing the rise of their political and ethnonational consciousness required maintaining a low level of education among Palestinian citizens. In his words:

The initiation of various measures for the liberation of [Palestinian] women, particularly the raising of their educational standards... This was done in order to decrease the Arabs' birth rate. However, high level of education is associated with nationalist consciousness, thus we had to choose between a big minority with low national consciousness, and a small minority with strong national awareness. We opted for the second alternative (quoted in Sa'di 2003: 55-56).

These three questions—the demographic, the educational (and occupational), and the political questions—and the link between them in regards to Palestinian citizens, are still central to policy discussions among Israeli officials today. Thus, a Council for Demography works to increase the childbirth of Jewish women (Sa'di 2004, p. 143) while the demographic growth of Palestinian citizens is explicitly equaled to "a threat" to the state in official venues such as the Herzliya Conference that since 2000 has brought together Israeli political and military leaders as well as academics every year to discuss present and future challenges to the "state security" (Rouhana and Sultany 2003, p. 7).

Keeping in mind how the Israeli state approaches socioeconomic and educational outcomes among Palestinian citizens from a political perspective, I briefly discuss data about inequality along ethnonational lines in the realms of employment, education, and poverty. The gap between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel is large in terms of GDP per capita, poverty, education, and employment. First of all, the GDP per capita of Palestinian citizens is a third of that of Jewish citizens and the human development index—which includes criteria such as education and health—of the Arab public in Israel ranks in 66th place out of 177 countries, 44 slots below the general ranking of the State of Israel" (Nahmias 2007).¹⁰ In terms of poverty, "53.5 % of all Arab families in Israel were classified as poor in 2009 compared to an average of 20.5 % among all families in Israel. The figure is far higher among Arab Bedouin families, at 67.2 %. While Arab citizens constitute around 20% of the total population of Israel they are over-represented in

¹⁰ The article is available at <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3354260,00.html>.

the poor population, accounting for 44.5% of such persons (members of families) in 2008” (Adalah 2011, p. 19-20).

The gap between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel extends from income and poverty to educational levels and employment opportunities. Within the Israeli segregated educational system, which reflects the high index of spatial segregation in the country, schools for Arab children receive less funding than schools for Jewish children: “State statistics published in 2004 reveal that for the academic year 2000-2001, public investment in Arab schools equaled an average of NIS 534 per Arab student, compared to NIS 1,779 per Jewish student, or three times more” (Adalah 2001, p. 40). The educational gap between Jewish and Palestinian citizens reaches its maximum in higher education and especially in rates of admission to the university, which requires an admission test that many Palestinian students fail. The occupational structure is also strikingly different for Jewish and Palestinian citizens. As Yiftachel (2009, p. 57) puts it, “Arabs are virtually excluded from Israel’s scientific or business elites comprising less than 1% of university professorship, or membership to boards of directors.” Indeed 66 % of Palestinian citizens versus 33 % of Jewish citizens work as “skilled and unskilled workers in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction” while, by contrast, 38.7 % of Jewish citizens versus 14.7% of Palestinian citizens have “academic, professional, and managerial” positions and 26.4 % of Jewish citizens versus 17% of Palestinian citizens are “clerical workers, agents, and sales workers.”¹¹ Palestinian citizens are particularly under-represented among civil servants as employment in the public administration often requires military service as a requirement.

The gap in educational levels and employment opportunities is particularly palpable among Palestinians in Lod. The great majority of Palestinians in Lod are not well educated. As a resident of the Mahatta told me:

Students here are poor. None of Al-Lod’s high school students manage to enter a university in Israel or abroad, in Romania or Russia for example. The good students can barely reach the college. Every year 4 or 5 students go to prison but no one goes to the university.

Similarly, West Bank Palestinians living in town often compare the educational achievements of West Bank Palestinians with the poor performances of Palestinian students in Lod; they also compare and the good level of university teaching in the West Bank with the low quality of schools in Lod. For example, one day I sat with Suad and Sawsan, two West Bank Palestinian women living in Lod while they were discussing the gap between levels of education among Palestinians in the West Bank and in Lod:

Suad speaking to Sawsan: Have you seen the percentage of the students who passed the high school exam (*tawjīhī*)? The percentage is very high this year. Some students in Gaza had excellent grades in spite of the circumstances there and the unhelpful environment. Few Arab guys are educated here... There are only 10 to 15 good guys

¹¹ See Adva Center of Information on Inequality and Social Justice in Israel: <http://www.adva.org/default.asp?pageid=35> It is also important note the gap between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jewish Israelis with the former over-represented among academics, professionals, and managers (50.4% of Ashkenazi Jewish Israelis hold such positions versus 29% of Mizrahi Jewish Israelis) and the latter over-represented among workers (one third of Mizrachim are workers versus 20 % of Ashkenazim).

who don't smoke hashish or drink alcohol in the whole area. Most Lod guys are drug users and dealers.

Suad: They [the Israelis] hate to see Arabs educated.

Sawsan looking towards me: Here in Lod, that's what we call the effect of the occupation (*athar al-ihtilal*).

Sawsan's remark about 'the effect of the occupation' points to her understanding that the high number of school dropouts is part of the specific predicament of marginality that Palestinians experience in Lod.¹²

The occupational structure of Palestinians in Lod is characterized by the concentration of employment in the low-paid job market. For example, according to the 2008 census conducted by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, 54.3% of male Palestinian residents of the Mahatta-Oasis of Peace-Pardes-Shanir areas were actively participating in the workforce.¹³ Of these active participants in the workforce, 90.7% were employed and 9.3% were unemployed. Of those who were employed, 83% were skilled or unskilled workers divided as follows: 45% were "skilled workers in industry, construction and other skilled workers", 24% were "unskilled workers," 13% were "sales and service workers," and 1.2% were "skilled agricultural workers." The rest included "professionals and technicians" (7%), managers (1.6%), clerical workers (7%), and "unknown" (1.3%).

During my fieldwork, many Palestinian residents also traced a decreasing trajectory of employment opportunities in two companies that are located inside their district: the Railway Company that is government-owned and the Delek oil company that is privately owned. Old residents remember how in the past there were a majority of Palestinian workers in both companies. By contrast, they complained that in the last two decades the number of workers in these two companies has gradually decreased to the point that today there are no Palestinians from the district who work in these two companies.¹⁴ One resident told me his experience of being fired from the oil company with these words:

I worked there for 10-11 years. We were 40 Arabs and 15 Jewish workers. That was until the end of the 1980s... Today all the workers there are Jews ... The Delek Company, which is a petroleum company, bought the factory... little by little they fired all the Arab workers and replaced them with Jews¹⁵... Today, most factories ask for the Bagrut certification¹⁶ to employ a person. They also ask for a security record. And as you know all the Arabs have problems [with the police or security forces]. They are not well educated and have many problems.

¹² But see below for an account of how West Bank Palestinians who live in Lod often assume a moralistic approach to everyday practices and social relations among Palestinians in Lod.

¹³ The active workforce includes those aged 15 and over who were employed or looked for employment but were unemployed. In 2008, 84.9% of Palestinian women in these districts were not part of the active workforce versus 45.7% of male residents, mainly children under 15.

¹⁴ Along these lines, it is worthwhile to mention that in early 2009 the Israeli railway company decided to introduce military service as a requirement for railway workers and to lay off 130 Palestinian railway workers. However, after the legal NGO Adalah challenged this decision in court, the firing was halted.

¹⁵ Most workers in the company now are immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union who arrived in the 1990s.

¹⁶ This is a test that high school students in Israel take in their last year of school.

He also described a similar trajectory for those residents who worked as railway workers:

There is only one worker [from the district]... His father used to worked there before. Most of the drivers of the trains were Arabs during the 1960s and the 1970s. Now, they are not employing Arabs anymore. They fired many Arabs... In general, they don't employ them now. It's very difficult.

He concluded his reflections on the employment opportunities for residents of the district with these words:

People know that there is no future here. My son finished the 12th grade and can barely find a job. When they hear his name they refuse to give him a job. He is now working in a car wash.

4.3 Social Dissolution

This section discusses how residents of the Mahatta district adapt to the unwanted attention they receive from the Israeli security apparatus on the ground. I link Palestinians' fear of the Israeli security apparatus to the mutually distrustful relations that they develop in their everyday lives and to the individualized approaches they pursue to address their most urgent problems: avoiding the demolition of their houses and securing a livable income. I also explore how these individualized practices aimed at improving their living conditions—for example, the engagement in the illegal economy—have a political dimension of protest against the state's neglect and discrimination against Palestinians living in Lod. I divide this field-account in three sections respectively addressing 1) how distrust prevails on solidarity and stigma on pride among residents of the Mahatta district; 2) how violence among neighbors is widespread but residents have different interpretations of why there is no personal safety in the district; and 3) how attempts at collective organizing often fail while, by contrast, the “simple” individual pursuit of improved material conditions of life (with whatever means) gives the residents of the Mahatta a sense of accomplishment otherwise absent in their everyday lives which are characterized by state neglect (in terms of services provided), rumors about “collaborators,” and suspicion of neighbors. In this sense, their rejection of material poverty acquires a political dimension against state institutions which perceive and treat them as both “security threat” and “petty criminals” rather than as “citizens.”

Social Fragmentation, fear of snitching and stigma

I opened chapter 3 with the story of Samia, a woman in her thirties who was born in Jalazon and moved to Lod as a result of her marriage to a Palestinian citizen of Lod. In her own words, Jalazon is a place where people “feel like one family even if they don't love each other.” By contrast, Samia perceives her Palestinian neighbors in Lod as people that she cannot fully trust and thus she does not share with them her anxiety and fear about her “illegal” conditions—something that, by contrast, she confided to me immediately after another West Bank woman also married to a Palestinian citizen introduced me as a foreigner who spent many months in the Jalazon camp. She is particularly afraid that some of her neighbors might “sell” this information

to the Israeli police in exchange for material benefits (for example, money or leniency towards their own “illegal” activities).¹⁷ As I will discuss later in the chapter, on certain issues such as drug dealing and gender relations, Samia’s ideas and perceptions reflect her status as an outsider to the dominant view among Palestinians in Lod. However, on the question of mutual distrust among Palestinians in the city, her perceptions are not exceptional. Indeed, most Palestinians in the town, from those who were born there to internal migrants to West Bank Palestinians like Samia, agree with Salim—the Palestinian citizen who gave me a ride once across the Green Line—that in Lod “you don’t know who is in front of you.”

Within this agreement about the low level of social cohesion among Palestinians in the city, different categories of Palestinians emphasize different reasons behind the feelings of distrust and suspicion that they feel. Most West Bank women (and some men) who have moved to Lod like Samia as a result of marriage, are particularly disturbed by the presence of West Bank “collaborators” in Lod. The presence of West Bank and Gaza “collaborators” unsettles these individuals’ political and moralistic image of West Bank Palestinians as more politically committed to Palestinian nationalism than Palestinian citizens (at least those that they have met in Lod). In their view, the hundreds of families that the Israeli state relocated from the Palestinian Occupied Territories to Israel during the First and then the Second Intifadas have greatly contributed to the undermining of social cohesion among Palestinians in the town.

By contrast, Palestinians coming from families who have lived in Lod from before the 1948 war that led to expulsion of almost all the town’s inhabitants often blame Palestinian “newcomers—” mainly Bedouin families from the Negev but also other internally displaced and migrant Palestinians from rural areas—for the lack of trustful relations among neighbors. In the view of many Palestinians originally from Lod, who often introduce themselves with the sentence “I am from here” (*ana min hoon*), Bedouin families understand only “the law of the strongest” that is, a law dictated by violent revenges, and are not politically “aware,” that is they lack a strong ethnonational consciousness. Interestingly, unlike those who have remained in the southern area of the Negev, many Palestinian Bedouins who have moved to Lod refuse to volunteer in the Israeli army, an option that is open to them and would secure their access to certain state benefits. However, in the view of many Palestinian “urbanites,” Bedouin families are not to be trusted:

They [Palestinian Bedouins] became more aware (*wai*). But they can snitch to the police. This is normal for them and they don’t feel ashamed about it. That’s why people don’t feel secure with them. They are not only Bedouins but also spies.

Both of these two positions—the one emphasizing the settling of West Bank “collaborators” in the town and the one focusing on the settling of Palestinian Bedouins and other “non-urbanites” in the town—point to Israeli policies of population management via forced removal and resettlement of Palestinians. While many “newcomers” highlight how they have arrived to Lod by choice to improve their lives and to look for construction and service jobs in the town or more often in the nearby Tel Aviv, their stories are also full of references to state interventions in their

¹⁷ In this chapter I discuss the presence of “collaborators” as one of the sources of mutual distrust and stigma among Palestinians in Lod. In chapter 5 I will provide a more in-depth account of “collaboration” as part of the sociolegal matrix of Israeli control over Palestinians in the city. Chapter 5 will also discuss the different logics of “collaboration” in the Occupied Territories and in Israel as well as the different types of “collaborators” in the Palestinian-Israeli context.

lives. For example, Palestinians who still refer to themselves—and are called by other Palestinians— as “fellahin” (peasants) are often internal refugees who moved to the town in the years after 1948 as a result of a process of re-adaptation to a life of displacement from their villages which were destroyed by the Israeli army in the war. There are also families who moved to Lod as an outcome of a land swap with the state that wanted their privately owned land in other parts of the country. This was the case, for example, of a resident of Pardes-Shanir who told me that in the early 1960s—when direct military rule over Palestinian citizens was still in force—his grandfather was given land in Shanir in exchange of his privately owned land in Jaffa. Ironically, the land that he was given was (and still is) zoned as agricultural land and, while his grandfather did not know about this designation or did not care about it because he only wanted to be left in peace with a piece of land to cultivate; the house that he built on the land is currently at risk of demolition. Similarly, the settling of Palestinian Bedouins in Lod cannot be severed from Israeli policies in the Southern desert areas which have aimed to “concentrate” Bedouins in seven all-Bedouin towns in the South and use large sections of desert land for the construction of military bases.

The question of not knowing “who is in front of you” is also related to the precarious living conditions of Palestinians in Lod ranging from “illegal” housing to engagement in the illegal and informal economies. There is a generalized fear that precarious forms of life might lead neighbors and friends to strike a deal by “selling information” to the Israeli police at the expense of other Palestinians. In this sense, unlike Samia whose focus is on relocated West Bank and Gaza “collaborators,” Palestinian residents of the Mahatta district are not particularly concerned about West Bank and Gaza families of “collaborators” because these “collaborators” are known. Indeed, West Bank and Gaza families who live in Lod may only have been placed there as a result of state intervention. There is no other way that entire families of noncitizens can live inside Israel.¹⁸ By contrast, Palestinian residents of the Mahatta express their anxiety about “collaborators from within.” Conversations among Palestinians in Lod, especially about informal activities run without municipal licenses or illegal building activities, often touch upon the question of “collaboration.” For example, Fadi, a Palestinian man who was born in Lod complained to a friend that he could not obtain a license for selling second-hand clothes and thus decided to sell them informally from his garage. Fadi identified “collaboration” as a potential way for him to obtain a license:

People I am afraid of are not those who come from outside, from Gaza, we know them, but those from the inside (*mish illi bīju min barra, min ghazza, bin'raf mīn humme bass illi mīn juwwa*), people like me... For example, if I were to go to the police station right now, they would give me the license, I have to become a spy if I want to open a shop.

Below I will discuss how this fear that residents might decide to approach the police to solve their individual problems at the expense of other neighbors affects the political lives of Palestinians living in segregated districts. Here I want to draw attention to another source of social fragmentation among residents of the Mahatta district: the physical destruction of

¹⁸ Interestingly, the new ban on “mixed marriages” is likely to extend suspicion about “collaboration” to those Gaza and West Bank Palestinians who married Palestinian citizens. This is mainly because the ban bars them from living legally in Israel and therefore makes them more vulnerable to state pressures about informing on other Palestinians as an alternative to expulsion back to the Occupied Territories.

communal institutions. In the words of Salem, a resident of the district in his early sixties, the demolition of a cultural and sport club (“*naadi*”), which had been built during the British Mandate—when the district was prosperous and well-served—was a turning point in the trajectory of the district:

One Saturday I remember it was Saturday we woke up and we found that there was no club anymore. The club was big; it was from here to that building [he is pointing to an empty space in between buildings]. It was about 50 meters. It was like a big hall. People sometimes celebrated their weddings there...

In addition to mentioning the demolition of this building occurred in the same period that many Bedouin families moving into the district from the Negev—another disturbance of social life according to him—Salem also linked the demolition of the club to the dispersion of the soccer team that used to train at the club and more broadly to the use of drugs among teenagers in the mid-1960s:

We started doing drugs because we had nothing else to do. There was no playground or gym... Most young people on the team started to do drugs. They destroyed us.

This episode from forty years ago is not an isolated case. The state policy of demolition of buildings built on officially scheduled state-owned land or agricultural land does not only threaten houses but also buildings used for cultural and religious activities. For example, the two mosques in Pardes-Shanir and the Mahatta are also under threat of demolition. From another perspective, there are also cases of destruction of communal institutions such as coffee shops and sports clubs where the reasons for and authors of the destruction (usually through arson) remain unknown. This is the case of a sports club in another district of Lod and used almost exclusively by Palestinians, which was totally burned down in the early 2000s in a case of arson that remains unsolved.¹⁹ As revealed in Salem’s opinion that when he was young he became a drug-addict as a consequence of the disbanding of his soccer team, many residents identify the precariousness of communal institutions—which can be either physically removed by the state or caught in cycles of violence related to control over the territory by “clans” or “gangs” active in the city—as a factor leading to drug consumption among the residents of the district. In turn, drug consumption is considered to be an element that strengthens mutual suspicion as drug addicts figure prominently among those considered the most vulnerable to police pressure to become “collaborators.” Drug-addicts in general evoke feelings of pity among other residents who witness how, as a resident told me once pointing to a man walking unsteady visibly under the influence of some substance asking for money from drivers at a traffic light near downtown Lod, “the police squeeze them as an orange and then they discard them.”

In Search Of a Shared Narrative

The social fragmentation experienced by Palestinians in the Mahatta district (and more broadly in Lod) enhances the difficulties that the different segments of Palestinians—Palestinians “from in Lod,” internally displaced Palestinians from rural areas, Palestinian Bedouins, West Bank and Gaza Palestinians married to Palestinian citizens, and West Bank and Gaza families of

¹⁹ See the next section 4.4 for a discussion of interpersonal (criminal) violence among Palestinians in Lod.

“collaborators” relocated by the state to Lod—face in developing a joint and shared historical narrative. Indeed, the question of who belongs to the Palestinian “community” in Lod, or more accurately, who is recognized as a positive contributor to the creation of a community among Palestinians in Lod remains open and subject to misunderstanding or discussion in everyday conversations. Indeed, different segments of Palestinians can see other segments also living in the city as “outsiders.” For example, to my question about foreigners (*ajaneb*) that have spent time in the Mahatta, a young Bedouin man who was born in the district, told me: “There are workers from Hebron, there are spies from Gaza and there is you, journalist” (*fii ummal min il-khalil, fii jauasis min ghaza ua inti sahafia*).²⁰

In another occasion, I commented on a book that I found on the bookshelf of the room of Fatmeh, a young woman of 18 years old who had invited me to spend the afternoon with her at her place. A heated discussion immediately erupted between Fatmeh and Amal, one of her friends who had also come to visit her that afternoon.²¹ The book was a first-hand witness story of Lod before, during, and after the war written by a Palestinian resident of the town who was among the few who were not expelled by the Israeli army in 1948. The book ends with an appendix listing the names of the families originally from Lod. When we went over the list of families, Amal, who belongs to one of the biggest and most prominent Bedouin families in the town, was surprised not to see the name of her family in the list at the end of the book. Fatmeh, who belongs to one of the few families in the district who have lived in the Mahatta from before the war, explained to Amal that this was the list of families who were in Lod already, meaning before 1948. However, Amal insisted that the book should update the list and include her family name: “My family is important, how can you write a book on Lod without speaking about us?” While the book’s goal was to highlight the historical forced transformation of the city via mass expulsion of its inhabitants, the conversation between Fatmeh and Amal points to the challenge of weaving together different stories of dispossession into a unified narrative. This is particularly evident in the Mahatta district. Those families who were able to remain in the district after 1948, such as Fatmeh’s family, situate the deterioration of the district within a history of both state neglect and state-relocation of Bedouins in the district. They mainly refer to state neglect and state-relocation of Bedouins in the 1960s. In this sense, memories of the 1950s—before the relocation of the Bedouin families—are memories of harmonious relations with neighbors including Muslim, Christian, and Jewish families. These memories surprised me at first since all the oldest members of these families witnessed the mass expulsion of Palestinians during the war and thus I expected those who witnessed the war to trace the deterioration of the district back to the mass displacement of its inhabitants and to resent the settling of Jewish families in the district—a resettlement that did not last long as the Jewish families soon left for other parts of the town. Despite the trauma of mass displacement and the demographic upheaval experienced in 1948, families “originally from Lod” tend to remember the 1950s as a prosperous period in light of the trajectory of the district since the mid-1960s when better-off families started to leave; first the Jewish families, and then most of Christian families and some Muslim families. Thus, memories of the 1950s are opposed to memories of the decline of state services extended to the district that had become “an Arab enclave” with mainly poor families and the settling in the district of other poor Bedouin families.

²⁰ Residents often thought that I was a journalist and even those who knew that I was a student often continued to call me journalist.

²¹ The book was Isbir Munayyir’s *Lydda during the Mandate and the Occupation Periods*.

By contrast, Palestinian Bedouins who have now lived in the district for about thirty years resent the narrative popular among those from Lod that their presence in the district has contributed to the downhill trajectory of social life there. They also often reject their portrayal as victims of a state policy of taking lands in the Negev and moving them to Lod and by contrast emphasize how they have improved their lives and taken advantage of opportunities offered by Lod and especially the nearby Tel Aviv. They also refer to a process of emancipation from the Israeli army as many of them do not volunteer anymore in the army.

This difficulty in creating a unified narrative that takes into consideration both the power of the state to displace and relocate Palestinians and the diverging memories and perceptions of different segments of Palestinians, does not mean that residents of the Mahatta do not recognize the state as the main actor in shaping the terrain on which they negotiate their everyday life. By contrast, references to the precarious condition of all Palestinian citizens including past expulsions, possible future trajectories of displacement and further marginalization, and the wide gap separating Palestinian and Jewish citizens color everyday discussions and actions including the most banal ones. For example, during a sunny summer weekend in 2008 I was invited to join several families, which included both Bedouin and non-Bedouin Palestinians as a result of at least three marriages across this ethnic divide, to a picnic in a public green area nearby Lod, which is popular among both Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. We spent the day playing soccer and volleyball, cooking food, and relaxing like hundreds of other people around us. When it was time to leave, men, women, and children collected the trash and gathered all of our things, including foldable chairs and picnic tables, coolers, and blankets. As we were walking towards the parking lot each one carrying something, one woman said out loud: “We are migrants” (*mhaajriin*) but her brother corrected her: “We are refugees” (*lajjin*) and a third brother added: “Yes, the right of return” (*haq alawda*) and everybody kept laughing as we reached our cars.

Along similar lines, many stories of experiencing police harassment or being perceived as sub-human or inferior by Jewish Israelis work to create a common predicament of marginality among all residents of the district. This is evident in the many stories and complaints (literally in the hundreds) that I heard from residents of the district about police brutality, about state discrimination, and about dehumanization against Palestinian citizens within the dominant Jewish Israeli society. Three examples of how all residents perceive that the state does not value their lives and that the Jewish majority does not consider them as equal human beings will suffice:

They [Israeli officials] think that when the 1948 Arabs [Palestinian citizens] are united and educated there will be danger [for the state].

They [Israeli officials] want him [pointing to a friend] to stay a drug addict. They don't want him to become a clean human being... They don't want a good community here... Arabs are wronged here. There is no future here... The racism is very obvious and not hidden... The police used to forbid Jews from entering the district when people started selling drugs here. They let Arabs enter and buy drugs but not Jews... They used to get mad when they would see the [Jewish Israeli] soldiers here. They were afraid that the soldiers might sell their guns [in exchange for drugs].

They [Jewish Israelis] don't respect us. Sometimes we change our names to Jewish names when we go to work with Jews in order to not let them know that we are Arabs. He [the employer] feels happy after we finish his work and gives us a tip. But if he knows that we are Arabs, he will tell us that he didn't like our work

The situation is terrible and it gets worse day after day. There was an article in the newspaper that said that the Arabs who work in the restaurants want to poison the Jews. Most of the restaurants workers and owners are Arabs. They don't want people to go and have food in Arabs restaurants. They want the Jews to boycott the Arabs... It is political propaganda... They don't want to say good things about us. They usually say that Arabs do this and that. They usually mention the term Arab next to the name of a person who did something wrong.

In their relations with the external and often hostile world, residents also assert their strength by highlighting their superior survival skills in their encounters with Jewish Israelis. Thus, for example, when a young man from the district told me about his "adventure" the day before when he went to a pub in Tel Aviv to watch a soccer game with some friends, his story was full of references to two interrelated things: first, the fear that they generated among Jewish Israelis that they met and second, how they proved themselves to be better (more courageous and stronger) than the Jewish Israelis that they met:

We entered the snooker [a pub with billiards] which is owned by Russians. They asked us what they wanted to drink. My friends had Absolut [Vodka] and I had a mulberry juice²²... People in the Snooker were scared and stared at us... While we were there, a Jewish man asked us if any of us was able to open a [locked] car, we asked why and he told us that he had forgotten his keys inside the car... So we took a screwdriver and opened the car in 5 minutes, he said Thank you, I told him: Give us \$100 and my friends said: forget about it... On our way back [to Lod] we saw a car stuck in the sand, my friend asked me to turn around and go back in order to help the man... We went back and helped him... He was Jewish... He told us: Why did you return back? We said: We came to help you... We told him: We [Arabs] are better than you [Jewish Israelis]... There were other people trying to help but they did not know how to tie a rope... I told him: Your problem is that you are too soft and not like us...

Morality and Awareness Talks

Facing everyday problems, however, residents often distance themselves from their neighbors in an effort to maintain their sense of worth and dignity. What I call "morality and awareness talks" often emerge from how residents relate to the most immediate problems of the district such as trash accumulation, sewage, overcrowded classrooms, and housing demolition. "Morality and awareness talks" operate to categorize and divide residents according to their putative level of "moral worth" and "political awareness." Take the presence of mice, cockroaches, and insects respectively attracted by accumulated trash and pools of stagnant sewage water. A resident, who hires a private exterminator every year to treat her houses and the surrounding areas, emphasized

²² He used to drink but had decided to stop.

in a conversation with other family members that other residents who live further inside the district (“juwwa al-Mahatta”) do not keep pests under control and, as a result, their children develop skin rashes and infections because of the pests’ bites. When I intervened to say that maybe they cannot afford private exterminators, she looked at me directly in my eyes and she emphatically told me: They find the money for other things, for example for a new television but they are not interested in pest control.”

This process of distancing from other residents also marks how many residents of the Pardes-Shanir area relate to residents of the Mahatta area and the “Oasis of Peace” housing project. From an outsider’s perspective these areas are quite similar as most families are poor, the streets are unpaved, and drug-dealing is present in them. However, even if Pardes-Shanir is definitely not a middle-class district, it has a higher percentage of families who have stable jobs and are better educated. By contrast, families living in the Mahatta and in the Oasis of Peace housing project—mainly Bedouin families—are poorer and have a higher percentage of illiterate and unemployed members. Sentences like “In reality they are Gypsies, they do not know how to live in houses,”²³ and “Everything is new in the Oasis of Peace but everything seems old because they destroy everything” were common among residents of Pardes-Shanir. Along similar lines, the question of residential segregation, which is mainly due to state policies, also acquires a certain moralistic tone among those Palestinians who live outside the under-serviced “Arab enclaves.” While stories about Palestinian families who attempted and failed to buy houses in districts with a Jewish majority abound, some Palestinians who actually succeeded in moving out the Mahatta and the Pardes-Shanir areas adopt a morally superior stance over their ex-neighbors. For example, Amani, a woman who after several years of trying was finally able to move to a middle-class district, explained to me:

He [The Jewish man who sold his house to them] wanted his house to be owned by an educated Arab and not any barbarians (*arabei mothakaf, mish ai wahad barbarei*)... Not just anyone can buy a house there. So she [the woman who works in the real estate office] told him about my job and my husband’s job.

Amani’s description of the minority of Palestinians living in her new district mixes moral superiority and stronger awareness to differentiate these Palestinians from those living in the Mahatta and Pardes-Shanir districts:

Most of its inhabitants are Jews. There are a few Arab families there. Most these families are intellectual and educated. Those people are good people. They are aware. They knew why they came to this district. They have goals in their life and they are not living to eat, drink, and sleep. They have jobs and have responsibilities. And because they wanted a different life they went to live in the district where I live now. This district will attract more Arabs. But which Arabs? The Arabs who are aware and woke up from their sleep (*Al-Arab illi weio wsehio ala halhom w-estaikazo men nomhom*)

This quote, as the rest of the conversation with Amani, did not really clarify why she thinks that the Palestinians who live in middle-class districts are more “aware” than those who live in under-

²³ This is referred to Bedouins. Interestingly there are Bedouins who make a difference between those Bedouins who have become “modern” and those who have remained “gypsies” in their way of thinking and acting.

serviced and segregated districts. What is clear is that she considers the lives of the former more meaningful and full of projects than the lives of the latter which are mainly marked according to her by the fundamental needs of “eating, drinking, and sleeping. She also mixes her pride of belonging to Palestinians who are more educated and “aware” and markers of middle-class life in the new district where “everyone has privacy” and lives in “homes with a private garden” and where “when you wake up in the morning you see something nice.”

Another sector of Palestinians who is deeply engaged in a process of moral distancing from other Palestinians in town are West Bank Palestinian women (and some men) who live with their spouses who have Israeli citizenship in the Mahatta, Pardes-Shanir, and Ramat-Eskhol districts. These West Bank Palestinians reverse the stigma that they suffer from for not knowing Hebrew and the Jewish Israeli society by affirming their moral superiority over their neighbors in political, cultural, and religious terms.²⁴ The main complaint that these West Bank Palestinians is about what they perceive as an excessively individualistic behaviors of their in-laws and neighbors. For example, speaking about her husband, a Palestinian citizen, Sawsan, a young woman from a West Bank refugee camp proudly stated:

He likes the behavior of people from the West Bank because they treat one another better than people do here [in Lod] and because there are more social relations in the West Bank. In Lod, social relations are not strong and are too materialistic even within the family.

Then with a lower tone of voice she looked at me and added:

But he is an exception; here people consider the West Bank a bad thing. For example, when kids are fighting they curse one another by using the expression: ‘Hey you, West Banker’ (*Ya, Duffawii*).

In addition to rejecting the stigma attached to “being a West Banker” and proudly evoking the ethos of communal solidarity that she experienced growing up in a West Bank refugee camp, Sawsan also expresses a certain feeling of cultural superiority over other Palestinian women who were born in the district where she moved to after her marriage. She thinks, for example, that women in her district do not have a thorough knowledge of prayers and other religious practices:

When I go to the mosque, I tell women to remove the nail polish with nail remover before they go to pray. Some women accept what I say and others are bothered by me.

There is a correct way to prostrate yourself (sujud) before God while you are praying. In this position you have to have your forehead, nose, both hands, knees, and all toes touching the ground together. So when we go prostrate we should not be in a shape like a dog, but in a different shape by not resting our arms on the ground but only the palm of the hand. So when I try to advise them they get upset with me instead of feeling happy.

²⁴ I will focus on cultural and religious superiority here and I will discuss morality talks in political terms in the section 4.4 below.

Some residents of the Mahatta resist the stigmatization imposed not only by Jewish Israelis and state officials, but also other segments of Palestinians. They point to the low quality of the Oasis of Peace housing project with ongoing problems of rain infiltration and sewage flooding especially in the winter, to the lack of a public yard (which according to many had been promised exactly in the place where the police station was built) and the lack of public transportation and other services. Some families showed me the tiny gardens that they created in between their houses and the struggle that they did to make the plants survive in a soiled ground:

We tried to grow different kinds of fruit trees but it didn't work because the sand was mixed with the oil which they used to dispose here from the trains. So we bought red sand to help the plants... I would love to have a garden bigger than this one ...

Residents of the housing project—most of them Bedouins—also emphasized how they had improved their small houses by adding verandas “to stop the rain from entering the house through the door” and building “walls around the houses for our privacy.” Some of them also emphatically state that the decision of their sons not to serve in the army is a clear demonstration that the accusations that Bedouins are not (politically) “aware” are not well-founded and they argue that these accusations mainly reflect a prejudicial attitude among other Palestinians against them.

However, stigmatization at times emerges from how Palestinians speak about themselves especially in relation to the outside Jewish Israeli society. A Palestinian woman living in Ramat-Eskhol and working as many other of her friends from the district as sanitation cleaner in a nearby all-Jewish town described to me the town where she commutes every day to work in a gym as spotless clean and opposed it to the dirt characterizing her district. In her description the quality of the two localities (clean versus dirty) also extended to the people living there:

Here [in the all-Jewish town] it is forbidden to the Arabs, they do not want Arabs here because the Arabs destroy everything, they [Arabs] don't like clean things; everything is dirty in the Arab districts.

In this sense, external stigma at times affects how residents of the Mahatta district think of themselves as when a young Bedouin woman told me:

I am not proud to say that I am Bedouin... When people say that you are a Bedouin they mean that you are a bad person and not civilized.

Further, the stigma that this woman feels and pushes her to distance herself from other Bedouins in Lod also generates in her confusion about the kind of relationship that she wants with the Israeli state. On the one hand, when I asked her if she wanted her sons to serve in the army, she stared at me surprised and she categorically told me: “Oh my God, no, I am not crazy.” On the other hand, however, she also stated that she is proud of how Bedouins live in the South of the country and not in Lod and in the same sentence she describes the Bedouins who live in the Negev as both “aware of their interests” and serving in the Israeli army:

If I lived in al-Naqab (Negev) I'd be happy to be Bedouin and I would be proud of myself. The Bedouin there became a big deal... They are completely opposite of the Bedouins here who are backward (*motaakehrein*) and involved in drugs...

They [Bedouins living in the Negev] became aware of their interests. They have beautiful houses and they have cars... They have good relations with the government because they serve in the army... I think there is a common interest between them... That's why they [the state] give them financial aid...

In the next section I will discuss how mutual distrust, the difficulties in creating a joint narrative of dispossession coherently directed against the state, and morality and awareness talks distancing different segments of Palestinians from one another, are all elements affecting how Palestinians in Lod interpret and address the question of internal conflict in their segregated districts.

4.4 Residents Debating the Sources of Interpersonal Violence in the Mahatta District: Criminology, Ethnic Culture, or the Police?

In April 2004, the Israeli police enforced a several months-long “closure” of three Palestinian districts in Lod including the Mahatta district as part of the local “war on drugs.” While drug-dealing exists in other parts of the town as well, the Palestinian districts were the only one targeted. ACRI (Association for Civil Rights in Israel), an Israeli NGO, submitted a petition against the Israeli police on behalf of 5 Palestinian residents of these districts. The petition describes the “closure” of the districts as follows: “The neighborhoods are completely surrounded by police roadblocks, mounds of dirt or cement blocks that block off any alternative access points. To enter or exit the city, one must negotiate police roadblocks; suffer delays, interrogations, and aggressive searches that are often accompanied by maltreatment and humiliation. Non-residents of the neighborhoods are not allowed to enter.”

Four years later, in April 2008, the metal bars that were used to make a police checkpoint at one of the entrances of the Mahatta district still remained on the ground just next to the eight train tracks separating the district from the rest of the town. In the meanwhile, there were rumors among the residents that other police operations were on the way. While most residents recognized that drug-dealing had become less visible in the streets of the district, they also expressed concerns for the mainly punitive approach pursued by the police, especially the use of checkpoints at the entrance of their districts. The distrust that most residents of the Mahatta feel towards the police is demonstrated by their protests against the establishment of a police station inside the district. It took several years for the police station to find its current and apparently stable location at the entrance of the Oasis of Peace housing project. This location, however, remains a source of discontent among the residents. The discontent is not as strong as when in 2000 the police station was located inside the school of the project. In that case, the entire building was damaged by arson that, according to most residents, was aimed at the rooms occupied by the police inside the school. Yet, the current location, next to the school and on the main street of the project, gives to the residents a constant feeling of “being watched.” Further, many residents told me that they were promised the construction of a playground for the children exactly where the police station was located.

This distrust towards the Israeli police co-exists with a heightened need for the delivery of personal safety in the district. Like Palestinians in other segregated districts in the town, residents of the Mahatta are concerned with the lack of personal safety; yet, they doubt that state officials and particularly police officers, who openly approach them as an aggregation of “dangerous individuals” rather than legitimate citizens, are motivated by an intention to provide them with personal safety. The police officers who stopped me once during the afternoon while I was walking inside the Oasis of Peace district displayed a clear understanding of the district as an unworthy place of danger. Speaking in English I told them that I was working for an Italian NGO and I was interested in running after-school summer programs for the district’s children in the local school. They were in disbelief repeatedly making comments, rather than questions, such as: “This school!?” and “This neighborhood!?” At the same time, speaking to one another in Hebrew they doubted my version of why I was there: “If she wants to visit the school, why is walking here [about 400 meters from the school]?” and “Yes, and she is walking alone?” Then they asked me directly why I was alone and why I was not inside the school accompanied by some of the teachers. I told them that for the project I needed to see with my eyes where people lived and where the children played. While they returned my passport to me and they let me go, they sat in their car and waited to see where I was going so I headed towards the school which however was closed. Standing in front of the school, I received a phone call from one of the residents who asked me if I had any problems because he had seen from the window of his house that I had been stopped by the police. Another day, after I was again stopped by police officers driving their car, a man that I did not know well also approaching me by car smiling told me that if I told him a little more about my project with the children he could intercede with the police on my behalf. After few minutes, another resident called me and told me not to speak with that man because “he works with the police.” These two stories illustrate how the police are not a state institution enjoying legitimacy among the residents and that on their part police officers who work in the district do not feel empathy towards the people of the district.²⁵

The lack of personal safety and the number of violent confrontations resulting into deaths are major concerns of Palestinians in Lod. During my fieldwork, I documented and discussed with residents several episodes of interpersonal violence resulting into deaths or major injuries. For example, a Palestinian man, who was active in a nationalist political party (Balad), was killed by unknown shooters while he was sitting inside his grocery store. According to some Palestinian informants, this man was killed as part of a fight between different “clans” (extended families) involved in drug-dealing. Other Palestinians suspected that somehow his political activism also played a part in his killing. Another case, which remains unsolved, is the death of a young boy sleeping in a shed just at the entrance of the Mahatta district. In this case, an Israeli newspaper article states that his death might be related to a “domestic dispute.” A third case that shocked residents of Pardes Shanir in the summer 2008 was the bombing of a coffee place as part of a fight involving members of two families. Speaking about this case just the day after it occurred in June 23, 2008, Suad, a young woman living in Pardes Shanir told me:

Yesterday, a young boy was driving the car very fast, a woman told him to stop because there were children in the street, he mocked her and she spat on him and told him: “aren’t you ashamed?” He didn’t say anything but he went to speak with his older brothers, they decided to beat the woman’s son who didn’t know anything

²⁵ It is also important to note that the police force in Lod does not include any Palestinians even if Palestinians comprise about 30% of the town’s population.

about it... Now the first family burned a coffee and shisha shop of the second [family]. The second family threw a bomb and shot at the first family. Now one person [a 15 years old boy] was shot in his spinal column.

Faced with these and other episodes of interpersonal violence, Palestinians in Lod do not agree about the main factors leading to violence in the district. Ethnic culture and the state (mainly the police) are the two factors that they mainly identify in their conversations about where violence comes from and what to do about it. In her comments about the violence between the two families that she witnessed, Suad repeatedly emphasized how what she sees as an initially trivial confrontation escalated into deadly forms of violence:

Sometimes I laugh on the silly reason for the problem. And sometimes I feel like I want to cry. I say to myself: “How long will we stay in this situation? How long will this stamp of shame stay on us?” This makes you upset (*bieghhar*) and angry. Look how we lose our young boys [*shababna*], just because so and so calls so and so with bad words. The reasons are so silly and stupid and don’t deserve attention.

In her attempt to make sense of these escalations from supposedly trivial tensions to violent and at times deadly clashes, Suad develops a folk theory centered on the role of “the clan code” (*al-asabeiah al-kabaleiah*) in the culture of Bedouin families living in the district. Like other Palestinian residents, both Bedouins and non-Bedouins, Suad identifies ethnic culture as the main factor of violence in their social lives:

They [Bedouin residents] still hold onto their clan code, for example [they think] “I am from X family and you are from Y family, you and I are enemies.”

Suad’s reference to the “culture” of the Palestinian Bedouin residents of the district—their use of the “clan code”—is reminiscent of the explanation about violence given by a Palestinian man “originally from Lod” who told me that the Palestinian Bedouins who settled in the district brought with me their belief in and application of “the law of the strongest” and everybody else had to adapt and adopt the same lifestyles to show their strength in order not to be dominated by the “newcomers.”

A different line of thinking identifies the police as the main factor leading to forms of interpersonal violence, including drug-related and other forms of “criminal” violence, that occur in the district. This politicized approach verges on a full-fledged conspiracy theory that sees the police intentionally sowing dissension among neighbors. As a resident commented during a conversation with two other friends:

It’s not exactly violence [correcting another resident who was complaining about violence among residents]. The violence comes from the police. The police have a hand in what is happening. They set up the clashes so that the people will fight. Most people who use violence are close to the police or supported by them.

This politicized view extends to drug-dealing and other “criminal” activities in the district.²⁶ A young man told me that the police know that he is dealing with drugs and guns and that once they arrested him they warned him explicitly about the line dividing “criminality” and “state security.”

Do whatever you want to do... but don't touch the country's security (*ma tiduq bi-amin al-duwla*)

He also added that:

Today the people who run drugs and poisons are working with the police too. One hand shakes the other hand. No one works with poisons without the support of the police.

Along similar lines, showing to me the photos of when his friends and he were young and remembering how most of his friends killed one another in drug-related fights, a middle-aged man also blamed “the government:”

They were friends. But how did they become separate? The government ruined them with weapons, money, and power. They started killing each other in order to gain control... If they were united, then the government would study how to deal with them before doing anything. But they separated them [from one another].

He also added that the state relates with the residents mainly through the use of coercion:

Today power is the law. I call the police the mafia. They govern like the mafia. They can imprison, release, and kill. Today the police can do all these things. They have the power. They are a government of power (*hakuma quwa*).

Both folk theories—the ethnocultural and the political conspiracy theories—trace linear causal chains linking respectively the residents’ “clan culture” and the police’s purposive actions to interpersonal violence on the ground. Both theories also build on the residents’ perceptions that the district is governed through “the law of the strongest.” Thus, residents blame for the violence marking their social lives those that they perceive as “the strongest” be they certain families (especially those extended families with a high number of members) or the state and especially the police.

The ethnocultural perspective does not fully grasp the complex dynamics linking the state matrix of sociolegal control, group formation, politics, and violence on the ground. With its focus on a stigmatized section of Palestinians—the Bedouins—the theory reflects the lack of social cohesion among the residents. Indeed, clan-based customary laws could potentially be a resource for, rather than an obstacle to, conflict-resolution preventing deadly revenges among residents. Comparing the Mahatta district with the Jalazon camp, it is clear is that the layered mechanisms of negotiation and mediation which work inside the camp (the “clan-based regulations”) as a reflection of the camp dwellers’ “harmony ideology” do not work well in the

²⁶ See following section for a discussion of how residents relate to drug-dealing from a political rather than a moralistic point of view in terms of how drug-dealing can (and to a certain extent did) empower them.

district. It is also worthwhile reminding how, when a Bedouin man visited the refugee camp to help conciliate two families on a case of alleged thievery between a camp boy and a Bedouin boy, Nasser, a refugee, shared with me the excellent impression that he had about the Bedouin man and his admiration for the deep knowledge that Bedouins have about “the clan law.” In the district, the longer time that negotiations and mediations require is not respected. As many residents put it people “do not wait a long time for revenge, they go directly and take their revenge; sometimes there are reconciliations but the two sides don’t always accept it.”²⁷

By contrast, the politicized approach correctly shifts attention from the residents to the state. Conspiracy-like comments about conscious attempts to generate violence among residents might input too much linear intentionality to the police. However, together with other divisive practices—for example, the distribution of different sociolegal statuses to different segments of Palestinians as expressed in land and property tenure²⁸—the open and covert activities of different security bodies inside the district do play a major role in fragmenting Palestinian residents and creating mutual distrust among them.²⁹ In the next chapter, I will expand on the role of state institutional discourses and practices in creating mutual distrust thus obstructing the application of informal rules of conflict resolution, which require trust among the parts involved as a fundamental ingredient for their efficacy. Here I give a brief insight into how criminality, hidden weapons, security, and terrorism are all elements informing the state approach to Palestinians in Lod. In the fall 2010, after a string of unsolved violent deaths among Palestinians in Lod, state officials started to speak about Lod as “the Wild West” and announced the stepping up of measures of physical closure and surveillance and the involvement of elite security units of the IDF in the policing of the city with particular attention to the Palestinian districts. The Minister of public security released a series of announcements³⁰ with the same tone:

September 21, 2010:

Security cameras will be placed all over the city of Lod. We shall carry out a siege on the criminals of Lod. The city will be surrounded by checkpoints at all entries and exists. Magav force³¹ and a special political patrol unit will enter the city ...

October 12, 2010:

We shall not leave Lod until we bring back law and order and the feeling of security to the residents. Permanent checkpoints at the entries to the city, observation balloon above Lod, strengthening Magav forces, helicopters patrols and hundreds of cameras

²⁷ Informal dispute resolutions are widespread among marginalized populations in both the Global South and the Global North. For example, see Venkatesh (2000) on how residents of public housing projects in Chicago deal with dispute resolutions and also attempt to control and set limits to gang activities in the projects. With a focus on my two cases, both populations are familiar with the same set of non-written regulations to solve disputes but while in the city there is a quicker or more widespread use of violence rather than negotiation in dispute resolution.

²⁸ As I explained in chapter 2, the residents range from “squatters” on state-owned land, to owners who have “illegally” built on “agricultural land,” to residents of housing projects, to owners living in the old British houses which are the only completely legal constructions remained predating the 1948 war inside the Mahatta area.

²⁹ See next chapter for a discussion of the state institutional policies in Lod in comparison to Jalazon.

³⁰ The two announcements below can be found on the website of the Lod’s municipality. Copies translated in English are available with the author.

³¹ MAGAV is the Hebrew acronym for the Israeli border police, which usually operate in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

on top of utility poles: this is how the police plan to bring back security to the residents ... We will use ‘*mista’arvim*’ [Israeli soldiers disguised as Arabs in order to carry out military operations or to gather intelligence] and Yamam forces [counter-terrorism elite unit of the IDF].

The inclusion of the Magav force, a force which is usually active in Jerusalem and the West Bank, already points to measures directed to Palestinians, who, after all constitute the only “internal border” that the state polices as a potential security threat. The use of “*mista’arvim*” and counter-terrorism special forces clearly highlights the collective identification of Palestinians as both “criminals” and “enemies” even more explicitly. The identification of Palestinians as not only “criminals” but potential “terrorists” also emerges from newspaper articles about the issue of crimes in Lod:

October 5, 2010

Shabak will be joining forces with the Israeli police in their war on illegal weapons in the Arab sector. Ynet³² learned that in the last days the Minister of Public Security, Yitzhak Aharonovitch met with Shabak director, Yuval Diskin and that the two agreed to cooperate. That is following the recent murder incidents in Lod... According to official estimations most stolen weapons are in the hands of criminal elements in the Arab sector and are hidden until being used...

Far from reassuring residents of the Mahatta district, these announcements contribute to their sense of vulnerability and insecurity and also renew fears about collective punishment, physical closures, and further displacement.

4.5 Politics: Fear of “Speaking Politics,” Attempts at Collective Organizing, and Political Interpretation of Poverty and Illegal Activities

Speaking about the checkpoints that the police had established in the Mahatta district in 2004, Salma, a Palestinian woman in her early forties living in the Oasis of Peace housing project, expressed her skepticism that the checkpoints were aimed at the drug addicts coming to the district to buy drugs:

I saw the addicts run away from the checkpoints. The police didn’t arrest them. That’s why we didn’t think that the checkpoints were for drugs. If they were for the addicts, they would ask the addicts for their IDs just like they asked us.

Salma also commented on her experience of being stopped at the police checkpoints several times:

³² Ynet is the electronic edition of the Israeli daily newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*. A copy of this article—“Following the Murder Incidents: Yasam and Magav forces in the City”—translated in English is available with the author.

I got upset the first time but then I ignored them. Later they [the police] removed the checkpoints. Maybe if people had [done] strikes against them, things would be worse and we would have more police.

While she doubted that protests against checkpoints would have generated any desirable outcome for the residents of the district, she also expressed her desire that on other problems—especially the lack of proper services and the open sewage—the residents would be more organized in protesting against the treatment received by the Israeli authorities:

If there was a [district] committee the sewage wouldn't fill the alley... I think that if I fought more, I would convince other women [to form a committee]... They [the authorities] promised us that they would build a park for the kids but they put a police center instead... If there was a committee we would know our rights and stop them [the authorities].

Salma's reflections upon the question of if and how protest against state institutions highlight two opposite desires informing political life in the district: the desire to avoid any further attention from the authorities and the consequential (political) decision to ignore the concrete manifestations of the state's interventions in the district and focus on the improvement of individual lives; and the desire to pursue more collective forms of politics in order to address common concerns from the lack of public gardens, to the sewage flooding, to police checkpoints. In this section my aim is to discuss three elements characterizing the residents' oscillation and hesitation between the desire for withdrawing from the public sphere and the desire for a direct engagement with the state through collective mobilization: 1) dilemmas about "speaking politics" given the state policy of collecting information about activities inside the district; 2) reflections about the attempts to organize collectively and why they often fail; and 3) perceptions of residents' poverty as a political phenomenon and discussions about illegal activities (for example, stealing of cars and drug-dealing) in political rather than criminal terms.

Fear of "Speaking Politics"

In the introduction of this study I quoted a young resident of the Mahatta district who told me that to his lips I was "hot tea" and that speaking with me "could burn his mouth." In the same conversation, this man connected his distrust to me to what he referred to as the "*Shabak* education" that all Palestinian youth in Lod receive. This "education" taught by the security apparatus sets the limits of political discourse and warns Palestinians of the negative repercussions for those who step beyond these limits. Another resident summarizes his understanding of what are the limits of the political discourse for Palestinians in Lod (and in the state):

Do you know what they want from us? They want us to make good Foul, Falafel, and Hummus, and to keep silent.

Residents' concerns about "speaking politics" become deeper in light of stories about friends who were "spies" and informed the *Shabak* about some of their friends who had expressed the

intention of “doing something against the state” or spoke in support of Palestinian leaders and factions (in Gaza and the West Bank) that the Israeli state considers as terrorists. The anxiety about not knowing “who is in front of you” emerges from many stories that I collected during my fieldwork. An example of these stories is the following:

There was a group of friends, they were 18 or 19 years old... Among them my brother... They were going out to drink and smoke hashish... They [the security agencies] sent someone to join them and to spy on them. They thought he was just another normal guy. But then he made them speak of politics and they started saying that they had to do this and that [they were planning attacks]. So they all got arrested, about 20 people, some were imprisoned for 2 years, some for 3 years... They were just speaking but words can have consequences here... They [the Israeli...] set them up (*‘omlohom khadeia*) and imprisoned them... They lured them by words (*waq’uhum bil-kalam*).

After telling this story to me, Ahmed, a middle-aged man living in the Ramat-Eskhol district, linked the use of “spies” among friends and family members to the fear that Palestinians have to speak politics. In his words:

There are many stories similar to this. That’s why people are afraid to say anything. They [the Israeli security agencies] lure people to drive them to make mistakes in order to capture them. This is their way and plan to make people afraid of them. This is why people are afraid to say anything. They see everything in front of them but they are afraid to say anything. People don’t know what to do. They just might surrender to the reality...

Among the residents of the Oasis of Peace project, the feeling of being exposed to the eyes and the ears of the security agencies even when they are with their friends—a feeling that they share with residents of the Mahatta and the Pardes-Shanir—co-exist with another concern, this time related to their spatial concentration in the housing project and to the presence of the police station next to their houses. Those who live in the project feel that they are particularly visible to and “manageable” by the police that in the past, when they lived in the Mahatta as “squatters:”

They don’t give these apartments for people as a right because they are citizens. They don’t do this for the benefit of the people. They always place the Arabs in one space in order to besiege us if something happens as they do in the West Bank and Gaza.³³

By contrast, when they were “squatting” in the Mahatta area, they felt more “protected” as they lived in areas not immediately reachable by car or because they had created sorts of fenced “courtyard” including the houses inhabited by different members of an extended family and their spouses and children and a common area in the middle of the houses.

³³ See chapter 5 for a discussion of how local authorities presented this housing project as a way to show to “extreme elements” among the Palestinians that they are wrong and that relationships between “Arabs and the Lod municipality” are good.

Attempts at Collective Organizing: Failure and Blame

Like Amani, the woman who moved from the Pardes-Shanir area to a predominantly Jewish middle-class district, many residents who continue to live in segregated districts used the sentence “I want a life that is not only made of eating, drinking, and sleeping” to emphasize their desire to improve their living conditions. At times this desire for improvement takes the form of collective organizing. This is the case of Nisreen, a woman living in the housing project who had tried to convince other friends from the project to join together and hold regular meetings to pressure the municipal authorities to solve the problem of the sewage waters that fill the project’s streets especially in the winter. Remembering her efforts a couple of years before I conducted my fieldwork, she expressed frustration at herself as well as the other women living in the project because they were not enough determined to build on the initial momentum to give regularity to their meetings. She said that one by one many women withdrew from the meetings giving a variety of reasons from their husbands’ opposition to their participation, to their lack of time due to work and house responsibilities, to their anxiety about becoming visible “public” figures in the project. This latter problem is according to Nisreen the most serious and difficult problem to deal with. In this regards, her reflection was the following:

Even if we start to establish a new committee again we will face the same obstacles that we had before. People are still as they were before ... They don’t like to be on the summit, or in the first level, they want to be on the second level.

Given the mutual distrust among different segments of Palestinian residents, those who obtain “visibility” via direct involvement in initiatives such as holding meetings and trying to create committees often face the skepticism of other residents who question their motivations. The relationship between “taking the lead” in public initiatives and being subject to scrutiny by other residents emerges from the story of Yusuf, another resident of the district, explained to me his failed attempt to set up a local committee (*lajne al-hai*) in terms of suspicion that his initiative generated among other residents. He complained that out of jealousy for his initiative, three neighbors had circulated rumors about him, telling people that he wanted to establish this local committee just because the police had asked him to do that. He actually accused the three neighbors to be police informers commenting that these three neighbors were “spies” and that “the spies (*jawāsīs*) think that all people are spies like them.”

However, after complaining about these rumors that according to him were unjustified, Yusuf explained how he had actually been contacted by an Israeli security official and that he had accepted the support of this security agent for an after-school summer program that he was running outside the district. Yusuf described how he went with the security agent to speak with a potential donor for Yusuf’s summer program and he added that this donor, another Palestinian living in Lod was also a renowned “spy/police informer” (in Yusuf’s words “everybody knew that he [the donor] worked with the police”). Thus, while Yusuf renounced the idea of setting up a local committee, he defended his decision to act upon his contact with an Israeli security agent to secure funding for another project he was involved within. Sure of his good intentions (“my goal is to help children”), he drew a line between “collaborators” (those who actively give information to the police) and his acceptance of support from a renowned “collaborator.”

My point is that episodes of actual contact with the Israeli police or security agencies as the one experienced by Yusuf generate a broader mechanism by which rumors and gossips are circulated about those individuals who have assumed a more prominent role in the district's public life.

Speaking about a public meeting, which was held in April 2008 in the Mahatta district in the aftermath of a house demolition and which attracted Palestinian public figures from outside the district and outside the city, a young resident told me that with some other residents they decided to meet regularly in the attempt to make a list of requests to the municipality with the goal of at least knowing more about the authorities' intentions in terms of further demolition (for example: which houses, where, and when). Half seriously and half laughing, he shared with me the suggestion that he made to the other participants—a committee without leaders and without hierarchy—in order to diffuse both the attempts at co-optation by the Israeli authorities and the residents' attention to specific names:

I noticed that there was one of those [“collaborators”]. We don't discuss military secrets. We just want to organize ourselves and ask the government, the municipality, and the land department to find a solution [to the housing situation]... We are searching from some good and clean guys to help the people. We want to help ourselves and others. I told them that we don't need a head [of the committee] and that we [should] stay at the same level. I asked them [the other participants] to give their opinions... [a committee] without a leader... A leader will bring us problems [*al-raisa rah tjebelna mshakel*].

According to him, his idea was not well-received and during the meeting he participated in the other participants had mainly discussed and disagreed on the question of “who would be the head of the committee” even before discussing the goals and the actions of the committee.

While visible political practices such as the organization of a local committee face the obstacle of a terrain characterized by generalized suspicion, the next section discusses how practices of survival aimed at improving individual material conditions, starting from engagement in illegal activities, also carry in the eyes of many residents a political dimension against the state.

Poverty and Politics: “If Poverty is a Political Thing, Becoming Wealthy is also a Political Thing”

One of the first things that surprised me when I started my fieldwork in the Mahatta district was the opposition between two interpretations of drug-dealing: a moralistic view expressed by West Bank Palestinians (mainly women but also some men) living in poor segregated districts and a politicized view expressed with different intensity but not different logic by the majority of the residents of these districts. Both perspectives center on the importance of material goods and wealth but from two opposite views.

West Bank women firmly condemn criminality and drug dealing as immoral practices. They also situate these illegal activities within their broader condemnation of the importance of wealth among other residents of the district. For example, Najua, a West Bank woman from a rural village, underlined a distinction between women from the West Bank and Palestinian women in the district where she lives:

Girls here are materialistic. They don't mind being married to a drug dealer if he is rich. For example, my husband's cousin married a drug dealer because he had a lot of money.

West Bank women strongly condemned drug dealers as paradigmatic examples of selfish, materialistic individuals. They also understand drug consumption among Palestinians as a problem of morality or better lack thereof. This understanding emerges from Najua's comment about the drug addiction of husband of Sawsan, another West Bank woman:

Her husband is affectionate (*hanon*) but his friends wanted to go out every night, to drink and to smoke. Then he started to steal to buy drugs. He is lucky that he found Sawsan.

By contrast, many residents who were born in Lod strongly believed that Israeli authorities do not perceive drug consumption among Palestinians as a problem to solve but as a tool of social control. Further, they expressed a certain acceptance of drug dealing as a practice of survival that strengthens one's material wealth and symbolic status. Their interpretation of drug dealing cannot be understood without an understanding of their broader critique against the Israeli authorities' lack of interest in the wellbeing of the Palestinians in Lod. For example, Salha, a young woman who was born in the district, once told me:

For years they [the Israeli authorities] let the Arabs fight and kill one another in the Mahatta because of the 'poisons' (*sumum*) [drugs], but then they started noticing that those who came to buy the drugs were not only Arabs but also Jews. They want us [Arabs] to be destroyed but hundreds of Jewish young boys and girls were coming every night to the Mahatta in search of drugs. And then the drugs in the Mahatta became a problem to solve.

In addition to the authorities' preoccupation with drug addiction among Jewish citizens, Salha identified the improvement of material conditions via drug dealing among Palestinian citizens as a target of the police's operations in the district:

They [the Israeli police] saw that the Arabs were making good money, some of them [Arabs] had bought a shop or built a big house and they were surprised, they didn't like it.

To a certain extent, despite the negative repercussions in terms of drug-related violence and drug addiction within the district, many residents also consider drug dealing and other illegal activities as one of the few tools available to them to attempt to escape poverty. This does not mean that everybody is engaged in illegal activities. On the contrary, only a minority of residents are directly involved in the illegal economy for protracted periods of time. However, most residents understand drug dealing as a problem of politics—as an attempt to escape the material deprivation and symbolic negation imposed from above—and not as a problem of morality.

A similar opposition between Palestinian citizens and West Bank Palestinians living in the same poor districts in Lod marks their opposite understandings of the importance of material

wealth. West Bank Palestinians, who have grown up in an environment where criminality is considered as a factor that morally corrupt Palestinians thus undermining their political struggle,³⁴ reject the pursuit of material wealth by Palestinian in Lod as a sign of lack of political commitment to the Palestinian national movement. In the words of a West Bank woman who moved to Lod from the Balata refugee camp in the West Bank:

The Arabs who live here should have dignity. They have to have dignity. What is the meaning of money and a good life? For me, I experienced both lives. For me, I think that money and a good life are not better than dignity. If I lived in Balata refugee camp, I could express myself in strikes and demonstrations. But I can't do this here. To live in a good living situation here, they don't express themselves. They don't want to talk.

This harsh comment does not take into consideration the widespread fear that many residents feel about expressing themselves in political terms as I discussed above. Nor does it grasp how many residents, even those who have never been involved in illegal activities, find a certain level of (political) satisfaction when they see or speak about displays of material wealth among other Palestinians (if they are not “renowned collaborators.”) This was evident from how residents spoke with admiration about the beautiful two-story houses that according to them had been built in different parts of Lod with “drug money.” Some of them also shared with me some videos that they had recorded on their cellular phones from crime movies in which amidst car explosions and shootings you could see powerful criminals with expensive cars and beautiful houses. This does not mean that they have developed an “oppositional culture” as they still aspire to better school and better employment opportunities as well as political freedom. However, given the constraints imposed on them by the state, they see criminality and drug dealing as a problem of politics and state control and not as a problem of morality.

The individual pursuit of improvement of material conditions, however politicized his meaning can be among the residents of the Mahatta, does not mount to what Bayat (1997, 2009) defines as “quiet encroachment:” a form of politics based on micro individual steps by “squatters” from hooking up one’s house to the public electric grid to adding an extra room whose cumulative effects are directed against the state. In the case of Palestinians in Lod, these individual steps often occur at the expenses of other residents’ wellbeing and reproduces the extremely uneven power relations that residents have with state and local authorities. Thus, for example, one day in July 2008 a resident of the Mahatta showed me an empty plot of land next to his house and told me that a Palestinian family from another district had asked him how much he would want for that parcel of land. Both his house and the empty plot of land next to it are on state-owned land but within the informal “housing market” of the district, he could “sell” the empty plot to the family if he wanted to. However, he told me that he rejected the offer and explained his rejection with these words:

³⁴ Like Fanon ([1968] 2004) showed in the case of colonial Algeria, petty criminality and drug dealing are often condemned by anti-colonial movements as elements that weaken the social fabric of the colonized population thus undermining their anti-colonial struggle. This is also the case within Palestinian society in the Palestinian Occupied Territories where drug addicts are considered as among those most vulnerable to recruitment as “collaborators” by the Israeli security apparatus.

It looks good with the municipality that I do not allow anybody to build on this vacant lot.

With “it looks good with the municipality,” he meant that it looked good *for him*: he thought that if someone started building on the vacant lot, the house demolition authorities would be more likely to notify a demolition order for his house as well. Thus, he assumes a role of informal monitor against other “squatters” in the hope of preventing the demolition of his house.

I conclude this section on politics among Palestinian residents of the Mahatta with some insights on how the residents compare their predicament of marginality versus the predicament of oppression experienced by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Some residents, mainly young men, feel frustration for what they define as “lack of action” in the city in comparison for example to West Bank villages that have been holding weekly protests against the sections of “separation wall/fence” that has isolated most of the village agricultural lands. Some of these young men have worked as drivers for Jewish Israeli activists joining West Bank Palestinians in their weekly protests and commented on this experience with sentences such as “at least there is action (fii action) in the West Bank.” Many other residents, however, consider Palestinians in the Occupied Territories as well as in Jordan and in Lebanon as people who are less lucky (“*maskaniin*”) than Palestinians in Lod both in terms of material deprivation and physical oppression.

CHAPTER 5

Comparing Two Regimes of Sociolegal Control: Discourses, Practices, and Space

The findings discussed in chapters 3 and 4 contrast two distinct social morphologies: internal cohesion in the Jalazon camp and atomization in the Mahatta district. They also highlight the opposition between feelings of trust and pride in the camp and feelings of distrust and shame in the district. Both localities have internal lines of division. In the camp, there are divisions on the basis of place of origin, clan membership and political affiliation. In the urban district, there are divisions on the basis of ethnicity and oldtimer/newcomer status. Yet, Jalazon camp dwellers actively work to deactivate potentially paralyzing fractures, to develop and preserve internal solidarity, prevent or quench camp infighting, and pursue collective actions while symbolically investing in the camp as a source of dignity and pride. By contrast, in the Mahatta district, residents experience social fragmentation, mutual distrust, and routine violence and blame one another for their failed attempts at collective organizing. At the same time, they impart political meaning to their everyday attempts to improve their material conditions and escape poverty with whatever means available to them including engagement in the illegal economy.

My argument in this chapter is that these different profiles of group solidarity, violence, and politics are explained by the fact that refugee camp dwellers face a regime of sociolegal control in their everyday life that has collectivizing effects while urban residents of the Mahatta face a regime of sociolegal control that has individualizing effects. Here I compare the logics of these two regimes of sociolegal control. This analysis of the institutional practices and discourses from above at work in the two locales complements my discussion in chapters 3 and 4 of the conditions and modalities of group formation from the ground up and points to the theoretical and methodological implications of this study, which I elaborate in the next chapter.

This study aims to shift the focus from state systems of categorization to forms of sociolegal control as factors shaping group formation and politics among dispossessed populations. Legal statuses—and especially statelessness and state citizenship—are central to prominent theories of how people make sense of the world around them, form social groups, and voice political claims (Arendt 1979; Marshall 1950). The state's power to categorize people is also the primary prism of recent theorizing on group formation (Brubaker 2004, Loveman 2005).¹

By shifting analytic attention from legal categorization to sociolegal control, this study contributes to the theorization of the productive power of the state penal apparatus (Wacquant 2009a, 2009b, 2010a) and to the study of the effects of different forms of punishment on social relations among marginalized populations (Zinoman 2001; Comfort 2008, Alice Goffman 2009). It brings together marginalized populations with state citizenship and those with refugee status and compares the logics and effects of different forms of sociolegal control across the citizen-noncitizen divide. This focus on forms of sociolegal control allows me to relate trajectories of group formation to the state and other ruling agencies beyond their structure of official categories. In particular, it allows me to study how the state uses different strategies including different forms of coercion in its attempts to manage marginalized populations. It also allows me to bring together and compare strategies used by state rulers over specific segments of their citizens and strategies used by humanitarian agencies in their management of refugee

¹ These approaches build on Bourdieu's theory of the state as a "group-maker" and his theorization of the symbolic power of the state as the main factor in the formation of social groups.

populations. By doing so, I also engage Agier's (2011, p. 200) argument that there are "functional" similarities between humanitarian interventions and state policing in their approaches to "undesirable" populations. Extending Bourdieu's model from the national to the international level, Agier defines the humanitarian agencies at work in many parts of the Global South as "the left hand of the Empire: [the humanitarian apparatus] acquires its meaning at the global and multi-local level in so far as it closely follows and attenuates the devastation of military intervention – a police operation that acts simultaneously at different points on the globe. There is a hand that strikes and a hand that heals." The present study draws attention to how the interactions between humanitarian and military interventions can have different effects on the social and political lives of those who are subject to them. It contributes to theorizing the productive powers of institutional practices ranging from policing and surveillance to humanitarian interventions as they combine to build distinct forms of sociolegal control. It also aims to specify the conditions under which forms of intrusion by penal agencies generate different outcomes in terms of group solidarity. Thus, for example, I explain how, when combined within the UNRWA's daily management of marginality, the explicit and intermittent military attacks by the Israeli army in the refugee camp facilitate group formation, while the monopoly that the Israeli state's security apparatus exercises over sociolegal control in the district creates the conditions for the individualizing effects of the covert and continuous interferences by Israeli security agents. Lacking an alternative set of discourses and practices such as those of the UNRWA in the camp, residents of the Mahatta adapt to the state distribution of rewards and punishment individually by withdrawing from public forms of contestation and by imparting political meaning to individual strategies of exit.

5.1 Sociolegal Control and Space

In the introduction, I discussed my use of the concept of sociolegal control with particular attention to the number and type of ruling agencies involved and how the practices and discourses of these agencies affect access to material and symbolic resources from below. Before delving into the comparison between the two forms of sociolegal control at work in the camp and the district, I want to briefly discuss some insights on the interaction between sociolegal control and space that emerge from the present study.

I draw attention to how forms of sociolegal control interact with space in two interrelated ways: first, spatial factors can facilitate or prevent the implementation of certain techniques of formal control, and, second, ruling agencies can use space in their attempts to manage marginalized populations. Thus, for example, the high level of land and housing tenure insecurity, which many Palestinian residents of the Mahatta district experience, makes them more vulnerable to the state pressure to inform on their neighbors and to the state's threat to punish vocal dissenters. From another perspective, this land tenure insecurity is an effect of past state security policies, as is the resettlement of "collaborators" from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Lod, which is yet another factor that strengthens residents' general fear of expressing their ideas in public. The interaction between sociolegal control and space in the camp is different. Within the UNRWA-defined boundaries of the camp, refugees' housing practices are not subject to the same punitive measures that target the Mahatta district residents; this is true even in cases where the residents' building activities go beyond the UNRWA's allowances, such as the building of a third floor. Furthermore, the presence of the UNRWA offers a layer of protection in the camp regarding dwellers' uses of the public space that does not exist in the

district where local and state authorities have the exclusive power to define certain buildings as illegal and then demolish them.

The literature on “institutions of socio-spatial confinement” shows that these institutions are much more than a straightforward implementation of planning and blueprints from above. This argument emerges from works on the combination of Apartheid cities and “national homelands” in South Africa (Western 1996; Evans, 1997), on the Native American rural reservations in the United States (Cornell 1990); the urban ghettos in Venice (Sennett, 1994) and the United States (Wacquant 2004, 2008a), refugee camps in Africa (Malkki 1995; Agier 2002), and “frontier zones” and “ghetto-like zones” in Israel-Palestine and Serbia-Bosnia (Ron 2003). With my focus on place-specific forms of sociolegal control, I aim to contribute to a better theorizing of how both the rulers and the subject populations can use space in their struggles. I also give theoretical relevance to the interventions of “street level bureaucrats” ranging from humanitarian personnel to soldiers and police officers as they interact with the ruled populations.

5.2 Sociolegal Control in the Jalazon Camp: The Israeli army (IA) and the UNRWA

The Israeli army and the UNRWA are the two main institutional actors at work in the Jalazon refugee camp. The former polices the boundaries of the camp—starting with its presence in the military base and Jewish settlement opposite to the camp—and, intermittently but frequently, penetrates the camp mainly to conduct arrests. The latter is a de-facto welfare institution which provides camp dwellers with basic services ranging from health services to education, to (limited) employment. It also provides (limited) political representation for camp dwellers in various international arenas. While explicitly pursuing opposite goals—the security of the Israeli state against “political enemies” and the wellbeing of the refugees as “humanitarian subjects”—the workings of the Israeli army and the UNRWA reinforce one another in a movement that “glues” camp dwellers together. In this section I discuss the mechanisms by which the Israeli army and the UNRWA create sharp external boundaries and strong internal unity among camp dwellers.

Conceiving the regime of sociolegal control at work in the camp as encompassing both the Israeli army and the UNRWA is a crucial step towards understanding two important dynamics. First, it reveals why, while dealing with a humanitarian agency for more than sixty years, Palestinian refugees have adamantly rejected their status as “humanitarian subjects” and have insisted upon humanitarian aid as a right that complements but does not stand in for their political struggle. The answer to why the UNRWA has not depoliticized camp dwellers’ predicament of oppression lies in the presence of the Israeli army. A focus on both the practices of the Israeli army and those of the UNRWA allows me to address the conditions under which humanitarian interventions work to pacify and depoliticize people’s claims—as it is argued in most of the critical literature on humanitarianism in the Global South (Malkki 1996, Hyndman 2000, Agier 2011; Fassin 2011)—and, by contrast, the conditions under which it becomes a tool used by dispossessed populations within their political struggles. Second, my use of the concept of sociolegal control recognizes changes in time through both the strategies of rule and the challenges from below and the composition of the ruling agencies that might overlap in the management of a certain locality.

The Israeli army disproportionately targets refugee camps relative to other localities in the West Bank. As Johnson (2005, p. 92) puts it, “That this finding might have been anticipated only underlines the ‘taken for granted’ fact that camps and camp residents are special targets of Israeli repression.” Her comparison between Amari refugee camp inside the city of Ramallah and two

of Ramallah's neighborhoods reveals that camp dwellers and city dwellers had different experiences of Israeli military rule during the Second Intifada (2000-2004): 28 % of camp dwellers versus about 10 % of city dwellers had at least one member of their family injured at least once; 15 % of camp refugees versus 3 % urban residents² had at least one member of the family or relatives killed; 30 % of camp refugees versus about 15% of urban residents had at least one member of their family arrested; and 70 % of camp refugees versus 44 % of urban residents³ had at least one member of their family temporarily detained. Along similar lines, in the Jalazon camp, people often evoke in their conversations—and even more so in conversations with foreign delegations and volunteers—the 43-day long curfew that the Israeli army imposed on them during the First Intifada, which also entailed shutting down the main water supply and electricity. As documented in chapter 3, young male camp dwellers also emphasized how they were over-represented among those who protested at Israeli checkpoints during the Second Intifada and among those in Israeli prisons.

In a vivid ethnographic piece, based on observations collected during the Second Intifada, Doumani (2004, pp. 42-43) finds the same pattern of differential treatment of camp and city dwellers in the area of Nablus, a city in the Northern West Bank, which during the Second Intifada was completely closed via physical obstacles except for two entrance points monitored by the Israeli army. He describes what he calls “the two-act show” experienced daily by camp and city dwellers in Nablus with the first act uniting camp and city dwellers and the second act dividing them in these terms:

Starting at dusk, Nablus comes together as a single social arena, as people from every neighborhood of the city and camps congregate around the new American-style mall⁴... Later, in the eerie silence of summer night after the crowds have gone home, the nightly show's second act begins as Israeli forces under cover of darkness descend from the hills... to raid this or that neighborhood... The nightly raids are limited in space and duration... Such operations are meant to drive a double wedge to divide the people of Nablus: the first wedge between the “militants” and the civilian population; the second between the “troublesome” and the ‘quiet’ neighborhoods... As for the wedge between neighborhoods, it is true that none has been spared... Still, the overwhelming majority of raids target the Old City and the refugee camps where the poor, the young, and the marginalized are concentrated.

It is important to note that certain Palestinian cities are also special targets of the Israeli army. Thus, Taraki and Giacaman (2006, p. 46) report that “Hebron city spent a quarter of its time under curfew in a three-year period from 2002 to 2005, compared to 20 percent in Nablus and a mere 11 percent in Ramallah.”

The Israeli army's targeting of camp dwellers operates as a constant reminder for refugees that the army considers the refugee camps to be centers of political resistance and “terrorism.”

² This is the lowest percentage in the middle-class district of Ramallah while the working-class district had 10 % of members with at least a family member killed.

³ In this case the working class district had a percentage of 39 % versus 44 % of the middle-class district.

⁴ This “first act” of unity between camp and city dwellers is less present in the city of Ramallah. Speaking about Ramallah, Taraki and Giacaman (2006, p. 50) state: “Even though by day the city appears to be taken over by rural bodies and rural inflections, by night and, after the last Ford service has dispatched its passengers at their rural destinations, Ramallah wakes up to another life and to other pursuits.” This also holds true for the Jalazon camp which is connected to the nearby city by services [shared taxis] during the day but not at night.

Indeed, in the 1970s and the 1980s, that is, during the first two decades of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli government developed plans to demolish the camps in the Gaza Strip after “resettling” the refugees outside them. In the early 1970s, the Israeli army forced refugees living in certain sections within three Gaza camps—Jabalia, Shati, and Rafah—to move out of the camps and demolished their houses. The changes, which the Israeli army made to the three camps, were driven by the goal of making the camps more visible and manageable:

- 1) “The clearing of a security perimeter around the camp that would effectively isolate the built-up area from its surroundings and render it impossible for anyone to enter or leave the camp without being noticed.
- 2) The division of the large camps into smaller units or quarters, each of which could be entered and searched with relative ease.
- 3) The paving of roads in the camps to enable the security forces to enter the camps in their vehicles, travel rapidly, and without fear of land-mines.
- 4) The introduction of street-lighting to facilitate control of the camps after dark” (Hazboun 1996, p. 22)

The families evacuated against their will were scattered in different parts of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai.⁵ The resettlement projects also included “voluntary” relocation of camp dwellers in exchange for housing units outside the camps. A precondition of relocation was the demolition of camp shelters. In the words of then Israeli Defense Ministry: “Of course we demolish them. The whole point of the project is to get rid of the refugee camps.” Responding to UNRWA’s protests against this strategy of relocation of refugees and demolition of shelters inside the camps, the then Israeli army spokesman for the West Bank, Commander Major Hassin remarked:

If we had done nothing to rehabilitate the refugees or build new houses, wouldn’t the housing shortage in the camps be even more intense? Has the UNRWA allocated any funds to solve the housing problems? (Hazboun 1996, p. 31).

While these early attempts to dismantle the camps mixed a discourse of security and terrorism and a discourse of rehabilitation, the political logic of both forced and “voluntary” resettlements projects was clearly detected by camp dwellers; in a 1991 survey, they overwhelmingly argued that the Israeli state’s resettlement projects had political rather than humanitarian or economic goals (Hazboun 1996, p. 27). The camp dwellers’ resistance and the UNRWA’s protests ultimately limited the scope of these resettlements projects.

The Israeli state’s inability to “empty” the camps led to its deployment of a full-fledged security discourse defining the camps as centers of terrorism, accusing UNRWA of “ignoring terrorism in Palestinian refugee camps,”⁶ and justifying its military operations against the camps on security grounds. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the UNRWA website’s “official statements” page gives one vivid sense of the defensive stance that the UNRWA takes on a weekly basis in reaction to statements made by Israeli officials or about newspaper articles based on “IDF sources,” claiming that UNRWA allows or even supports “terrorist activities” in the

⁵ Israel occupied the Sinai in 1967 and returned it to Egypt in 1982.

⁶ This is the title of an article published during the Second Intifada in the Israeli daily newspaper, *Haaretz*: “Israel accuses UNRWA of ignoring terrorism in Palestinian refugee camps” (Guttman 2002).

camps. For example, on April 1st 2011 UNRWA released a statement criticizing a newspaper article—with the title “Defund UNRWA”—published in *The Wall Street Journal* claiming that the UNRWA had supported a sporting event inside a refugee camp named after a “terrorist.” By mobilizing a discourse of “humanitarian neutrality” the UNRWA rejected the accusation and concluded that “To defund UNRWA is to deprive Palestinians of education, health care, and aid for those in poverty.” In another release dated October 25, 2010, UNRWA reacted to an article published in the *Jerusalem Post* quoting anonymous “Israeli military sources” to explain why the Israeli army had forbidden UNRWA from building two schools in a residential area of Gaza City. The article claimed that the site where UNRWA wanted to build the schools was a “ Hamas base.” In its response, UNRWA attached photos to show how in a previous military bombardment the Israeli army had completely destroyed the “ Hamas base” and that the area was not “completely residential” and in need of schools: “There are over 5,000 children seeking an UNRWA education in the area of Gaza in question and because of the unavailability of land and building materials there is no a single UNRWA school there.”

When combined, the military attacks by the Israeli army justified by its discourse of “terrorism” and the humanitarian practices of the UNRWA justified by its discourse of “humanitarian rehabilitation” shape a terrain in which refugees’ activities as well as external interventions targeting the built-in environment of the camps often become the object of political controversies. Embedded in an everyday reality marked by the Israeli army’s recurrent attacks and arrests inside the camps, the health, educational, and employment services run by UNRWA in the camps are considered by camp dwellers as fundamental resources in their collective struggle for political recognition and everyday survival. Thus, far from being passive observers of the struggle over the definition and the treatment of refugee camps between the Israeli army and the UNRWA, camp dwellers have engaged for decades with UNRWA to deepen the agency’s accountability towards the refugees.

As documented in chapter 2, the UNRWA’s early decades were characterized by camp dwellers’ refusal of the categorization of “refugees” and their definition of UNRWA as a “narcotics castle” and its services like “a shot of morphine” (Rempel 2010, p. 418). Unlike other humanitarian agencies, however, the UNRWA was not impermeable to the demands of the refugees especially as it hired thousands of them to work in its bureaucratic apparatus, its schools, and its social service departments. As anthropologist Farah (2010, p. 391) puts it, “One of the features that distinguishes UNRWA from many other international humanitarian organizations...is the fact that the vast majority of its employees are local Palestinians and refugees. They are the glue that binds refugees to the organization and they blur the boundary between benefactor and beneficiary.” Camp dwellers perceive UNRWA as an institution that, despite all of its limits, is responsive to the collective pressure that they can exercise from below. There is an unbridgeable gap between the “foreigners” (*al-ajaneb*)—mostly Europeans and Americans—who hold the top positions within the UNRWA bureaucratic apparatus and the Palestinian employees in the lower ranks, with foreign officials holding much of the decision-making power and at the same time living at a distance from the refugees. Yet, while camp dwellers cannot reach the headquarters of UNRWA in Jerusalem⁷ where many of the UNRWA foreign officials live, they are aware that their collective protests can draw the attention of UNRWA’s executive branch.

⁷ During the protests against UNRWA in 2007-2008 many camp dwellers made jokes about asking for an Israeli entry permit to go to protest in Jerusalem against the UNRWA.

After a negotiation between the camp popular committee and UNRWA officials about some of the service cuts to the Jalazon camp, a member of the committee summarized his perspective on how the UNRWA worked:

Of course they [UNRWA] did not give anything definite (*ma qadamuw aii kalam 'amalii*). For example when we talk to the head of the UNRWA's office he said: "We will look at your request, we will consider your request, we will review your request, we will consider your request, we will talk to the responsible person for your request and we will contact you later." The Agency [UNRWA] operates under the principles of prevarication and procrastination (*al-wikala tata'mal bimadbd'a al-mumatala wa al-taswiif*). Part of their approach is emotional and the other is based on a military approach [they give orders] but they also negotiate ... Their approach is also linked to that of foreign government. They have problems because the donor countries reduced their funding.

This quote encapsulates the role played by the UNRWA inside refugee camps. With its combination of "military," "emotional," and "negotiating" dimensions and through its refugee and local employees, the UNRWA is deeply involved in the management of everyday lives in the camp. In their relations with the UNRWA, camp dwellers are pushed to discuss and assert their collective rights. Indeed, the UNRWA often deals with each camp as a collective unit and vice versa, camp dwellers discuss their behaviors and demands in comparison or rather in opposition to other camps. Take the protests against the cuts in UNRWA's services that took place in 2007-2008 in the Jalazon camp as well as other West Bank camps discussed in chapter 3. The members of the popular committee argued that the UNRWA entered into separate negotiations with other camps because "they [the UNRWA] knew that al-Jalazone is the catalyst [of the protests] for the whole West Bank. That's why they [the UNRWA] want to leave al-Jalazone alone."

While camp dwellers express frustration at the UNRWA's tendency toward procrastination, the sustained negotiations that they conduct with the UNRWA also contribute to their feelings of collective empowerment. This was evident to me during a meeting between some of the members of the camp committee and the European official in charge of the UNRWA's Job Creation Program who had decided to visit the camp due to the protests against the supposedly low number of positions given by the UNRWA to the Jalazon camp. Every time that the committee members did not like the words and or demeanors of the European official, they reminded him that "he was a guest there." When he protested about my presence in the room mentioning the UNRWA's regulations about granting permission to researchers to interview UNRWA officials, they dismissed his concerns with a simple: "She is a guest too, and we know that she is on our side so there is no problem and she can write down everything we say in this room."

The heated discussion between some members of the camp's popular committee and the European coordinator of the JCP program is revealing of how camp dwellers' reliance on humanitarian aid does not obfuscate their view of the complex political terrain on which they move and the powerful forces that aim to silence them. A similar argument animates Petee's (2005: 82) historical and ethnographic study of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon:

The Palestinian case underscores the cross-cultural, historical and political variability of the meaning and effects of aid. Palestinian voices were disqualified and marginalized less by aid regimes and more by the silencing impulses of the U.S. and Israeli diplomatic and scholarly communities.

The Palestinian case draws attention to how military, diplomatic, humanitarian (and scholarly) interventions interact within broader political projects of domination. While, among others, Malkki (1986: 378) contends that humanitarian interventions transform political actors into “mute victims,” my field-materials draw attention to how camp dwellers have recognized the threat of pacification via humanitarian aid and have succeeded in transforming the UNRWA from a tool used by international (especially Western) states to depoliticize the roots of their dispossession into an institutional arena in which they have articulated and defended their collective demands for political recognition (Al-Husseini 2000, pp. 53-54; Petet 2005, pp. 64-65).

The collective logic of the interplay between the workings of the Israeli army and the UNRWA within Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank also includes a spatial dimension. On the one hand, despite some attempts to shape the spatial structure of camps through selected demolitions, the Israeli army polices the boundaries of the camps and intermittently enters them to conduct arrests, but it does not control how camp dwellers use space inside the camp. On the other hand, the UNRWA does not punish camp dwellers’ housing practices even when they build in violation of some of the UNRWA’s regulations. In this sense, unlike urban residents in the Mahatta district, camp dwellers are not divided into different categories with different building and housing rights.

5.3 Sociolegal Control in the Mahatta District: GSS/Police

Unlike its counterpart in the Jalazon camp, the regime of sociolegal control at work in the Mahatta urban district has an individualizing effect on urban residents. This form of sociolegal control is characterized by the monopoly by the Israeli GSS and police of the practices and discourses deployed for the management of the district. These activities include: 1) the state relocation of two stigmatized populations to Lod: “collaborators” from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and Bedouin families removed from land in Southern Israel that the state confiscated to build military bases; 2) the continuous and often covert interference by the GSS pressuring individual residents to monitor and detect signs of hostility against the state among their neighbors; 3) the demolition of houses and communal institutions; 4) the distribution of different housing and building rights to different subcategories of Palestinians inside the district; and 5) the role of the police as an additional actor that scrutinizes the residents’ behaviors through the prism of state security in order to detect “troublemakers” that can threaten the state or its Jewish Israeli citizens; justified by a public discourse of criminalization of Palestinians in Lod perceived by the Israeli authorities and the dominant public opinion as both petty criminals and potential terrorists. Let me start with a discussion of this last element: the discourse of criminalization-cum-security characterizing the state approach towards Palestinians in Israel and especially in Lod.

Discourses: Criminalization, Security Threat, and Culture of Violence

In her interviews with Israeli police officers, Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2004, p. 183) identifies the Israeli police’s dominant approach to Palestinian citizens as “the national security priority

model.” These are some of the quotes she uses to highlight how most police officers deal with Palestinian citizens through the lens of state security:

[In] in the areas where Arabs and Jews live together... One needs to be very careful... These are the areas where there is a much greater likelihood of conflicts and fights, we need to protect our community.

You should remember that all terrorists are Arabs, although not all Arabs are terrorists... But we need to keep an eye on them.

The police’s role is to prevent any violation of the law of the State of Israel. Of course dealing with Arabs is something that we are mostly trained for.

Sometimes I fear going to their neighborhoods... It is risky these days.

This police perspective on Palestinian citizens as potential security threat especially in those areas, like the “mixed” cities, where they live “together” with Jewish citizens, colors how police officers interpret crimes committed by Palestinian citizens against Jewish citizens. The blurring between “crime” and “politics” also runs in the opposite direction: reducing any signs of political protests among Palestinians to a disturbance of public order. As Korn (2000a, p. 580) puts it, the line between “crime” and “politics” among Palestinian citizens is blurred in two ways:

On the one hand, acts of protests and political opposition are signified in non-political terms as threats to the law and public order, and political activists are perceived as being more willing to advocate and employ illegal tactics. On the other hand, ‘ordinary’ crime is perceived as politically motivated: often political (‘nationalist’) motives are attributed to certain types of crime in which Arabs are involved, particularly grave crimes, such as brutal murders, kidnapping or sexual assault of a child.

While Palestinians are constructed as “dangerous” for both the security of the state and the safety of Jewish citizens, their communal lives in segregated areas of the country—from all-Arab villages to all-Palestinian minority districts inside cities with a Jewish majority—are perceived through a culturalist or racialist lens, which emphasizes their “violent tendencies.” This lens is also used by academics to explain violence among Palestinian citizens:

The Arabs, bearing a cultural heritage allowing for the resolution of conflict through violence, produce a criminal population inclined towards violent crimes. The Jews, with a long history of survival by matching wits with a hostile world, produce criminals with predatory tendency (Cohen p. 138 quoted in Zureik 1988, p. 432).

While one might think that the discourse of criminalization-cum-security and the discourse of a “culture of violence” among Palestinian citizens lump all Palestinians together, in reality these two discourses shape the ground for practices of sociolegal control that have a divisive tendency. Still at the level of discourse, the ethnoreligious categories in which Palestinian citizens are placed work to differentiate both their level of “security threat” and their degree of “cultural

backwardness.” “Muslims” are considered the most dangerous in terms of state security and “Bedouins” those with a long and stubborn cultural tradition of “violence.” More broadly, Israeli state officials have historically divided Palestinian citizens into “positive” and “negative” elements. This language can be found in official documents from the 1960s as often as in current official statements. Zureik (1988, p. 429) discusses what he defines as an official “policy of divide and rule” as it emerges from the statements released by Toledano, the then Advisor for Arab affairs, in the early 1970s:

In 1973, Shmuel Toledano, a member of Israel’s parliament, suggested that the government undertake an “effort to minimize the influence of extreme *hostile* elements among the Arabs in Israel” by establishing a policy under which: (1) “Personal benefits are given to *positive* elements and denied to the *negative* ones,” (2) “Certain [Arab] leaders, at various level, are encouraged by the transmission of personal benefits through their mediation,” and (3) “Preferential treatment is given to certain communities, such as the Druze, Circassians, and Christians, or certain *positive* villages ,” and (4) “*negative* groups and individuals are punished by denying them benefits” [emphasis added].

The same language of “negative” versus “positive” forces among Palestinian citizens was used in September 2000 by the then Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer when he inaugurated the Oasis of Peace Housing Project in the Mahatta district:

These days, when the *extremists* in the Arab sector seek to inflame hostility towards the state and its institutions, I am happy to inaugurate the Neve Shalom [Oasis of Peace] neighborhood in Lod, built to replace the Rakevet [Mahatta] neighborhood, known for many years as a center of crime and drugs (quoted in Yacobi 2009, p. 95 emphasis added).

Along similar lines, during a parliamentary hearing about the use of police checkpoints in Lod in 2004, a resident of the Pardes-Shanir area complained against the use of checkpoints by using the term “negative elements” to refer to drug-dealers rather than political activists:

We must not ‘impose a stain’ on the Arab population. They are negative elements that must be handled.⁸

These quotes illustrate how “extremism,” “negativity” and “hostility” are attached to Palestinian citizens in ambiguous ways, blurring the line between crime and politics. In Lod, the official discourse mixes not only “crime” and “politics” but also “security” and “demographics.” According to the local authorities, Palestinian residents of the Mahatta do not have anything positive to offer to the city: they are constructed as a weak population made of petty criminals with a culture of violence; their presence is also considered to be the main cause of Lod’s high rate of Jewish families leaving the city. For example, during a City Council meeting which was held in October 6th 2010, Abu-Matir, a Palestinian council member complained that after five years of serving he had not seen any improvement in the Palestinian districts of the city. In response, Baruch Akfeld, a Jewish member of the City Council pointed how the phenomenon of

⁸ Copy of the Knesset announcement to the press from June 1st 2004 is available with the author.

“illegal building” in the city is “a plague that causes damage to the whole public” and then he moved on to another factor undermining the image of Lod among Jewish Israelis:

There is a very important issue, *Shabachim* [the Hebrew word for Palestinians mainly from the West Bank who stay in Israel “illegally”]... I would like to inform you that there are 6-7% *Shabachim* that aren’t registered anywhere... the problem today... is a national program... I had a chance to leave the city, my kids have left but I hope to do my best to improve the situation... that is my personal Zionism and I hope that [others] will join me.⁹

The question of Jewish citizens leaving Lod troubles local officials and also the national government. The latter dedicated a special government sitting about “the situation” in Lod on October 31st, 2010. The dominant theme of the sitting was to turn Lod into “a settlement worth living in” and reverse the out-migration of “strong population” from the city. The document produced by the government defined Lod as “an anomaly: a settlement in the center of the country where apartment prices are relatively cheap and its [Jewish] population escapes it.” It also explicitly articulates the problem in demographic terms using the expressions “strong populations” which include all Jewish citizens and “weak populations” which include all Palestinians:

Strong populations and businesses abandoned the city for other settlements in the area... while weak populations, including unregistered residents living in the city, have remained there or have migrated to it... In addition there are entire neighborhoods of illegally built houses in the city (according to popular estimations, approximately 1,600 housing units).

Along similar lines, the municipality’s announcements oscillate between the promotion of new housing projects to attract “strong populations” to the city and the promise of interventions by the security apparatus in support of the regular Israeli police in dealing with issues of violence, illegal housing, illegal weapons, and drug dealing in “the Arab sector.” This brings me to the blurred line between the Israeli police and security agencies in their overt and covert intrusions into the social and political lives of Palestinian residents of the Mahatta.

Practices: The workings of a Powerful “Legal Ghost” among Palestinians in Lod

With the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, those Palestinians who were not expelled were given formal citizenship. However, legal citizenship did not protect them from the intrusive measures by the state security apparatus, which were introduced in the first two decades of direct military rule and which have continued to shape the state approach to them after the abolition of the military government in 1966. As Esmeir (2004:7) puts it, “Ever since they came to be the ‘Arab citizens of Israel,’ their lives have been regulated, even constituted, by the exceptional legalities of emergency powers.”

In addition to emergency regulations which the government has continued to enforce over Palestinian citizens even after the abolition of the military government, a powerful “legal ghost” has deeply penetrated the social and political lives of Palestinians in Israel: the General Security Services (the GSS), also known with its Hebrew acronyms of Shabak and Shin-Bet. The GSS is

⁹ Copy of the transcripts of this city council meeting is available with the author.

the most important security agency of the Israeli state. Until 2002, the existence and workings of the GSS were not recognized or regulated by law: “Like the state itself, the GSS enjoys a natural status similar to a being or element that belongs to the world of natural phenomena—like birds, wind, and water—rather than to the normative, artificial world of the law. According to the law, the head of the GSS has less authority than a meter maid in Tel Aviv” (Feldman 1995: 85). The 2002 GSS law was the first legislative act to recognize the existence of the GSS and to oversee its workings. However, “the law’s wording is vague and formulated in such a way that the secret organization actually continues to maintain its vast powers” (Gordon 2008: 32). Feldman’s (1995: 86-87) analysis of the workings of the “technique of ‘body snatching’” as the main modus operandi of the GSS is still valid:

The total absence of any legal authority has not weakened the GSS. On the contrary, it has allowed it to reside as the violent and parasitic occupant of the covert internal space created at the centre of governmental architecture... Legal authority for the actions which are necessary for the execution of the GSS’s work—search, arrest, detention—is absorbed from the police, the prison services and the Attorney General’s office by a technique of parasitism or ‘body snatching’... When a GSS interrogator needs someone arrested, he approaches a police officer and asks them to make the arrest. In most cases the officer does not think twice about the request, nor do they ask for evidence justifying the arrest... GSS interrogators... maintain interrogation and arrest wings in legitimate prisons and detention centres... When a GSS officer requires the extension of a detainee’s arrest, a police officer is dispatched to the court. The police officer has played no role in the investigation and possesses no knowledge of any of its details. The GSS officer provides them with a sealed document that is delivered to the judge, containing the details of the suspected offence and the evidence.

While the GSS is also at work in the Occupied Territories, in the case of Palestinian noncitizens, punishment mainly has a collectivizing logic, which has the unintended consequence of generating collective experiences of suffering ranging from the forced immobility imposed through military curfews over whole localities to the experience of arrests, interrogations, and detention shared by the majority of the Palestinian population under military rule.¹⁰

By contrast, in the case of Palestinian citizens, the “Shabak education”—an expression used by some of the residents of the Mahatta district in their reflections about their fear of organizing meetings or speaking in public—often has the (intended) consequence of stifling expressions of political ideas and policing the boundaries of political activities among Palestinian citizens. This logic is evident in the targeting of “negative” or “extremist” forces among Palestinian citizens. Even more accurately, the GSS works to create—rather than just identify—“negative” elements. Indeed, everyday forms of “collaboration” operate in murky waters in which “collaborators” are asked to detect feelings of hostility towards the state in daily conversations among peers, family members, and friends; to see the first seeds of hostility in early actions and statements. As in the

¹⁰ As I discussed in chapter 1, about half a million (out of the 4 million) Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, including children from the age of twelve, have been arrested and prosecuted in Israeli military courts since 1967. “Although not all Palestinians who are arrested are prosecuted in the military court system (some are released, other are administratively detained without trial), of those who are charged, approximately 90 to 95 per cent are convicted. Of the convictions, approximately 97 percent are the result of plea bargains” (Hajjar 2005, p. 3).

case of young Palestinians in Lod arrested after a “collaborator” encouraged them to speak about their desire to conduct violent attacks against local targets (see chapter 4), “collaboration” operates as a creative force that at times transforms Palestinians who need to vent their frustration at the state into “terrorists.”

The fundamental difference between the two forms of sociolegal control in the camp and the city emerges from how the two populations react to the question of “collaboration” with the Israeli authorities. “Collaboration” is a phenomenon which is widespread among populations under colonial or foreign rule (Thomas 2007). “Collaboration” with the colonial rulers can take different shapes and its definition shifts according to point of view and political position. Information and intelligence collection are often central to efforts by rulers to prevent or cope with anti-colonial nationalist movements. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, “collaboration” precedes the establishment of the Israeli state (Cohen 2008). Palestinians under Israeli rule recognize at least four categories of “collaborators:” 1) the “land dealer” (*al-samsar*) sells land to Jewish individuals or to the Israeli state; 2) the “fake prisoner” (*al-‘asfor*, bird) pretends to be an inmate and attempts to extract information from other prisoners; 3) the “intermediary” (*al-wasit*) mediates between the authorities and the colonized populations; and 4) the “spies” (*al-jawasiis*) work for and provide information to the Israeli GSS in exchange for access to basic resources (Abdel-Jawad 1994, pp. 57-76; Rigby 1997; Kelly 2010, pp. 155-156; Cohen 2010).

According to Kelly (2010, p. 154) the killing of suspected “collaborators” in the Palestinian Occupied Territories “is a powerful device for making claims to speak in the name of the Palestinian people and for defining its moral limits. The figure of the collaborator defines the boundaries of the Palestinian collective subject but also reveals its very weaknesses.” Building on this remark, I draw attention to how in the case of stateless Palestinians the figure of the “collaborator” constitutes a threat to and becomes an utter outsider of a political and moral community. For example, much of the boundary-work done by camp dwellers of the Jalazon camp is directed to the formation of a political and moral community against a powerful external actor (the Israeli army). In this view, while camp dwellers speak about “collaborators” in abstract terms, unlike residents of the Mahatta district, they do not share stories about other camp dwellers as “collaborators”¹¹ nor do they speak about their own contacts with “collaborators.” Furthermore, the dominant form of gossip in the camp—gossip about perceived immoral behaviors such as extra-marital sex and alcohol and drug consumption—works as a form of informal social control to keep individuals inside the moral community and prevent them from becoming weak and therefore easy targets of the Israeli GSS.

By contrast, the dominant form of gossip among Palestinian residents of the Mahatta district comprises rumors about “collaboration” with the Israeli police or GSS. In the district, “collaboration” is embedded in a form of sociolegal control that systematically builds ambiguity and suspicion in the relationships between neighbors and family members. My field-materials highlight how residents think that there are no “safe” spaces where they might speak about politics or even such local problems as the lack of services to the district or the overcrowding in schools. The fear of attracting unwanted attention from the GSS and being singled out as “a subversive” or “negative” element is widespread and is much more palpable than the fear of being defined as a “collaborator” by other residents. Residents’ living conditions—especially for those who have built their houses on state-owned land or on “agricultural” land and for those who are involved in or have family members involved in the informal or illegal economy—make

¹¹ The only accusations about “collaboration” I heard in the refugee camp were embedded into political opinions about the PA as an institution “collaborating” with the Israeli authorities.

them more vulnerable to possible punitive actions by the Israeli authorities. Thus, their main concern is to avoid being labeled as a “negative element” by the state, rather than being considered a “collaborator” by other residents. In this sense the criminalizing discourse against the residents contributes to the divisive effects of “collaboration.”

Another component of the specific form of sociolegal control at work in the district working against the convergence of residents towards the formation of a solid social group is the overt presence of the Israeli police. Unlike the camp dwellers of Jalazon, who face an unequivocally hostile entity—the Israeli army—these city residents have an ambiguous relationship with the police. On the one hand, they resent the presence of a police station in their district as “an occupying force” (Hasisi and Weitzer 2007, p. 737). On the other hand, they often face distinct dilemmas in their relationships with the Israeli police. For example, all the families who moved to the Oasis of Peace housing project received a formal invitation to participate in the ceremony of inauguration of the local police station. As with almost all other aspects of their everyday life, residents were aware that their decision about participating or not in the ceremony would be read through the prism of the divide between “positive” and “negative” elements. My point is that residents feel they are under constant scrutiny in terms of their level of hostility towards the state.

State authorities’ concerns about “security” strengthen residents’ anxieties about their behaviors, particularly those in the public sphere. For example, a young man told me that when he was a teenager he dated a Jewish girl for several years. When she started her military service, they decided to break up. However, while she was still serving in the army, this young woman asked him if they could meet up during a three-day break from her service. They spent two days in Bat Yam, a coastal city near Tel Aviv but the third day he wanted to attend the wedding of a friend inside the district. The visit of this Israeli “soldier” to the district triggered a chain of reactions of fear and alarm among both the residents and the Israeli police. First he described how some of his friends panicked when they saw her:

I took her there [to the Mahatta district] at night because no one could recognize us... So when we were there I met some of my friends... They all escaped... They were afraid of the *Shabak*, they also asked me if I was crazy and if I had kidnapped her. I told them that she was my friend.

Then someone called the police telling them that “there is a soldier in the Mahatta with a guy” and that the police searched for them inside the district. Finally, he concluded his story with these words:

I told her “Look you are bringing troubles”... She told me: “OK let’s go to Bat Yam.” We left the Mahatta to Bat Yam.

The discourse of criminalization of Palestinians in Lod mixes with the security-based interpretation of Palestinians’ actions in the city and with the presence of suspicious fellow Palestinians (relocated “collaborators”) to push residents to distance themselves from both “troubles” and “troublemakers.”

Spatial Dimension of Sociolegal Control in the Mahatta District

The divide-and-rule policies towards Palestinian citizens have both overt and covert dimensions. Moreover, the divisive logic of state control has a spatial component. First, while all Palestinians in Lod are citizens, their sociolegal status of Palestinians in Lod as expressed in land and property tenure is differentiated. The main divide is between those who live in state-owned land as “squatters” (residents of the Mahatta), those who privately own land but their houses are nevertheless “illegal” because the land is zoned as “agricultural land” (residents of the Pardes-Shanir area) and those who live in state-sponsored housing projects (residents of the Oasis of Peace project). This differentiated regime of land and property rights further fragments Palestinian residents in their options for promotion and dignity. Thus, for example, while some residents eagerly participate in gestures of solidarity—such as donations to help rebuild a demolished house—other residents, especially those whose houses are not subject to demolition, do not feel solidarity for those families who have re-built their demolished houses to receive another demolition order.

Second, territorial stigmatization also contributes to generate individualized attempts to escape the stigma attached to the Mahatta district as a place of neglect and worthlessness. The official discourse of “strong” and “weak” populations demoralizes residents who witness how local authorities attempt to attract “strong populations”—mainly Jewish Israelis—by promoting new residential projects for them while at the same time they identify Palestinians in the town as both “weak” and “violent” populations that damage the city’s public image. As I mentioned above, typical announcements by the Lod municipality can be grouped into two categories with opposite contents. On the one hand, these announcements focus on the creation of new residential areas for “strong populations.” On the other hand, they report about the demolitions of houses in Palestinian areas as well as about attempts to address complaints among Jewish Israeli residents about “criminal activities” originating from Palestinian areas. This is evident, for example, from these three announcements of the Lod municipality:

July 22, 2009

Lod municipality has demolished an illegal building that had been demolished and rebuilt... in the Ramat-Eskhol neighborhood. In January this year the municipality demolished it, but it seems that the owners of the land thought that the municipality would not demolish the building once again, had they rebuilt it. However, as mentioned, this week the house was demolished for the second time in less than six months.

August 26, 2009

Lod will have 15,000 new residents! This is a festive occasion for Lod. 1,300 out of 3,000 housing units in the Achisemech project were purchased by the Orthodox religious population... 500 ground units [are] for those who serve in the security forces... [This] will strengthen the city with a wealthy and quality population and [it] will improve the city’s image significantly.

June 30, 2010

Recently officials from the Ministry of Public Security and the police, headed by Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch and the Police Inspector Dudi Cohen, paid a visit to the city. They heard police summaries about crime rates and met with the residents of the Ganei Aviv neighborhood [new district opposite to the Pardes-Shanir area] who complained about the penetration of criminal activities in their neighborhood and about the sharp decline in their quality of life.

Unlike camp dwellers of Jalazon who are stateless but deal with an external ruling agency—the Israeli army—that punishes them collectively (and often more harshly than other Palestinians outside the camps) and with another ruling agency—the UNRWA—that often negotiates with the camp as a single unit by engaging the camp popular committee, Palestinians living in segregated districts in Lod are citizens but they face a form of sociolegal control whose different components conjointly and often intentionally distribute individualized punishments and rewards according to their level of perceived “hostility” towards the state and its policies.

CONCLUSION

Sociolegal Control and Group Solidarity: Lessons from Two Palestinian Enclaves

Analytic Overview of Findings and Arguments

This study has sought to specify the mechanisms by which sociolegal control affects group solidarity in two localities of urban marginality in Israel-Palestine: the Mahatta, a segregated Palestinian district in Lod, an Israeli “mixed” city, and the Jalazon refugee camp in the West Bank, only 20 miles from Lod. I have defined sociolegal control as the dominant practices and discourses grounded in the law-enforcement arm of the state or other ruling agencies. In my comparison of the two forms of sociolegal control at work in the refugee camp and the urban district, I have given particular attention to the number and the type of ruling agencies, their degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the subordinate populations, and their supportive or conflictual relationships in the management of marginality.

I have argued that the triadic structure of authority in the refugee camp—involving the Israeli army (IA), the UNRWA, and the Palestinian Authority (PA)—has pushed camp dwellers to valorize their group solidarity not only as a matter of practical necessity but also as a cultural value. I have also proposed that the importance that camp dwellers give to their social cohesion affect how they solve their internal disputes, whether and how they use violence, and the ways in which they engage in politics. The informal processes of dispute resolution inside the camp—including collective forms of punishment towards those that violate shared standards of correct behaviors—works to quench internal dissent in order to present a unified front against the Israeli army, an external and hostile force. The daily engagement of camp dwellers with the UNRWA—often collectively through the camp popular committee—reinforces their individual investment in the preservation of social cohesion. The sustained negotiations that they conduct with the UNRWA regarding its services to the camp contribute to their feelings of collective empowerment and to their engagement in collective forms of politics. Further, the Palestinian Authority’s powerlessness, its orientation towards the urban middle-classes and its stigmatization of poverty have reinforced the external boundary of the camp already created by the Israeli army’s punitive interventions and the UNRWA’s daily management of poverty within the camp.

I have shown that, unlike camp dwellers, residents of the Mahatta district negotiate their existence against a unified structure of authority that combines visible forms of policing and invisible interferences by the security apparatus within a cohesive logic aimed at distributing rewards and punishment according to each resident’s real or presumed level of hostility towards state authorities. Escaping the state-imposed label of “dangerous” citizens and distancing oneself from those whom state authorities have identified as “hostile” citizens are central components of the residents’ everyday practices of adaptation to marginality. At the same time, in response to the state discourse of criminalization, the people of Mahatta have also developed a political interpretation of the individual strategies of exit—including their engagement in the illegal economy—that they use to improve their material conditions.

In addition to legal status—refugees versus citizens—this comparison of social cohesion, politics, and violence among two poor Palestinian populations under Israeli rule has focused on class and place as axes of differentiation of sociolegal control. On this front, I have shown how camp dwellers relate to other West Bank Palestinians, especially city dwellers in the nearby city

of Ramallah. I have pursued this line of inquiry by studying how the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994 has introduced class and moral cleavages between West Bank camp dwellers and city dwellers. I have also uncovered the uneasy relationship that residents of the Mahatta district have with associationism and court-based forms of mobilization pursued by middle-class Palestinian citizens inside Israel. While they aspire to know more about “what the law says” about, for example, land tenure and house rights, they also express their sense of powerlessness in face of authorities that explicitly distribute spatial rights according to ethnonational membership.

The case of the Palestinians under Israeli rule is a propitious case to study the role of the state penal apparatus and that of humanitarian organizations in the creation of social groups and the pursuit of political actions among dispossessed populations. Indeed, the legal and spatial fragmentation that the Israeli state has imposed on Palestinians has been redoubled by the presence of different ruling agencies. As a result, different Palestinian populations have historically adapted to distinct structures of authority, as evidenced by the conflictual interplay between the Israeli army and the UNRWA in the Jalazon camp and the pervasive, covert presence of the Israeli GSS (General Security Services) supported by the Israeli police in Lod.

Specifically, the case of Jalazon detailed in chapter 3 spotlights how the presence of humanitarian agencies can provide a shield for dwellers of refugee camps when combined with ongoing military attacks by an external and hostile sovereign force. Instead of constituting a disempowering and depoliticizing force as argued by a new wave of critical studies of humanitarianism (Agier 2011; Fassin 2011), the UNRWA’s practices and discourses of “humanitarian need” have provided camp dwellers with material and symbolic resources in their collective struggle against the IA that portrays and treats them as “terrorists.” On this front, an interesting line of inquiry briefly discussed in chapter 3 and in need of further investigation is the comparison between the role UNRWA has played over the decades as catalyst of collective forms of political mobilization in West Bank refugee camps and the role of the massive humanitarian aid channeled by international organizations and foreign NGOs towards the PA in demobilizing Palestinians of the Occupied Territories after the First *Intifada* (Challand 2009). In addition, this study of the tense relationship between the Israeli army and the UNRWA in the management of the refugees calls for more empirical work on the relationship between humanitarian agencies and policing apparatus especially in the Global South where growing number of displaced and dispossessed populations negotiate their existence in relation to both policing and humanitarian agencies.

By contrast, the case of Palestinians in Lod dissected in chapter 4 points to the group unmaking effects of invisible security practices such as the use of informers in the control of stigmatized populations that are perceived by state authorities as potentially dangerous for the state and its “deserving” citizens. I discussed how the subterranean but intense relationships between Palestinians in Lod and the Israeli security apparatus fit well in Brodeur’s model of “high policing” (1983, pp. 513-514; 2010) as the form of sociolegal control at work in the district includes the four main components of this type of policing. First, it “aims to control by storing intelligence” on the social relations and political mood among members of a population that is considered a threat to the state. Second, “high policing” is not fully regulated by the law. Third, “crime control serves as a tool to generate information which can be used to maximize state coercion of any group or individual perceived as threatening the established order.” Fourth, “high policing not only makes extensive use of undercover agents and paid informers, but it also acknowledges its willingness to do so.” The linkage between Israeli security and criminal

policies—a form of “high policing”—in the management of the Palestinian residents of the Mahatta illustrates how states can (and do) use illiberal forms of rule when it comes to the management of “suspect” populations (Cole and Lynch 2006). In line with my broader attempt to problematize the opposition between democratic and illiberal forms of state, this study of the predicament of marginality foisted upon the Palestinians of Lod contributes to works on the use of informers and undercover agents among civilian populations in democratic regimes (Marx 1974, 1980, 1982; Wheeler 1989; Rosenfeld, Jacob, and Wright 2003; Starr et al 2008; Natapoff 2009) as well as by colonial and foreign rulers (Thomas 2008; Duschinski 2009). It shows how these security practices undermine social cohesion among subordinate populations.

The comparison between the daily tensions between the IA and the UNRWA in the camp and the linkage between Israeli security and criminal practices in the district has offered an original perspective on group solidarity as an intermediate mechanism whereby sociolegal control from above affects morality, dispute resolution, and politics on the ground. The recruitment of “collaborators” (informers) by the General Security Services (GSS) constitutes an excellent example of how the regime of sociolegal control in the camp works differently from that in the district. After the military occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the GSS recruited thousands of informers among stateless West Bank Palestinians. However, while in the case of Palestinian citizens the GSS’ interventions in their everyday lives have generated widespread fear and withdrawal from public life, in the case of West Bank refugees, the GSS’ interrogations have become a “rite of passage” for Palestinian prisoners in their collective elaboration of a counter-discourse of heroism. This different outcome is due to the fact that in the West Bank the attempted recruitment takes place within the Israeli military prisons, which are primary sites for the development of group solidarity among West Bank Palestinians in their collective struggle against the Israeli army (Nashif 2008).

On this front, the practices of the General Security Services are embedded within the Israeli army’s punitive apparatus. Thus, for example, the hatred that camp dwellers feel for the Israeli army pushes them to police each other’s moral conduct within a shared understanding that their political strength depends on their individual respect of collective moral norms of conduct. While the Israeli army’s snatching of individual bodies from the community reinforces rather than undermining the refugees’ social cohesion and facilitates collective political mobilization, camp dwellers are concerned that “immoral” behaviors—from the unfair distribution of material resources inside the camp to the use of drugs or alcohol—might make them more politically vulnerable to other, more insidious and invisible forms of penetration such as the use of “collaborators.” By contrast, “collaboration” with the Israeli GSS and police in the Mahatta district is embedded in a form of sociolegal control that systematically builds in suspicion and distrust among the residents. Unlike camp dwellers who engage the UNRWA for access to fundamental material resources, Palestinians in Lod experience a high level of legal insecurity—including highly precarious housing conditions—which makes them politically vulnerable to pressures from above. For them, contacts with Israeli police officers or security agents must be negotiated and rationalized in their everyday lives rather than resisted in the specific moment of interrogation in an Israeli military prison. Historian Hillel Cohen (2010, p. 231) concludes his study of police archives on the relationships between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli GSS in the period from 1948 to 1966 with these words: “The lives of Israel’s Arab citizens—a national minority in a Jewish state—have involved the dilemma of how to relate to the state of Israel and its institutions, a dilemma that still faces each one of them... Should I accept an intelligence officer’s request to provide information on strangers who have appeared in my village? Should I

tell my children what happened in the Galilee during the 1948 war? Should I encourage them to engage in oppositional political activity? Should I curry favor with [Israeli] officials... in order to obtain a teaching job?" This study has argued that these dilemmas are still relevant, indeed pressing for Palestinian citizens today, especially for poor Palestinians in Lod and their counterparts in the segregated and stigmatized enclaves of the "mixed cities" who do not have an alternative set of discourses and practices that they can mobilize in their adaptation to material scarcity and symbolic marginalization.

The Making and Unmaking of Dispossessed Social Groups

This study has adopted Bourdieu's non-groupist perspective on the social world to explain the different levels and mechanisms of group solidarity in the camp and the district. Bourdieu (1989; 1991) proposes that social groups emerge from struggles over the dominant principles of social vision and division. Building on this approach, I have brought in localities of urban marginality as a terrain for the study of group-making at the ground level in order to develop a more comprehensive theory of group formation, which (1) analytically differentiates between ethnic identification and group formation, (2) captures the interactions between state and non-state actors, and (3) recognizes the group un-making effects of state practices other than naming and categorizing.

Without engaging the theoretical literature on group formation, studies on Palestinians under Israeli rule have documented empirically the impact of the Israeli state's coercive policies on the political practices among Palestinian citizens (Zureik 1979; Lustick 1980; Cohen 2010) and non-citizens (Hajjar 2005; Nashif 2008). This study contributes to this literature by developing a comparative framework that can be used to specify how and the extent to which different penal and military policies affect group solidarity among different Palestinian populations across legal status and place. In order to do this, I have built on and extended recent theorizing about the productive powers of the state's penal apparatus (Wacquant 2008b, 2010a, 2011). Three main points emerge from my engagement with this theoretical and empirical literature.

First, I propose that a given state can distribute different techniques of control towards different segments of a population cast or kept outside of the sphere of official or full membership. This focus on the state's distribution of forms of sociolegal control towards subcategories within an "unwanted" population helps us understand the formation of internal cleavages among people that otherwise recognize nationhood as a principle of membership. For example, the Israeli army's differential treatment of camp and city dwellers in the area of Ramallah plays an important role in intensifying the class and moral cleavages between poor camp dwellers and urban middle-class Palestinians.

Second, I have highlighted the interplay between the state's coercive and categorizing practicing. The literature on ethnic group formation focuses on the state's power to categorize people (Mamdani 1996; Brubaker 2004, 2009; Loveman 2005). Bringing in the state's penal practices gives us a better handle on processes of group formation at ground level. Indeed, the relationship between penal and categorizing practices is a complex one. For example, I argued that the GSS's security practices have trumped state's ethnic categorization in the Mahatta. While the state has divided Palestinians into "Arabs" and "Bedouins" as part of its effort to prevent them from pursuing nationhood as a principle of collective self-identification and organization, the GSS' security practices have produced social dissolution across and within these ethnic categorizations. To put it differently, the GSS' security practices have further

deepened the fragmentation among Palestinians of Lod not only along ethnic lines but also within each ethnoreligious category.

A third implication of this study is that forms of sociolegal control can be stable in time but can also change under pressure of challenges from below. The “high policing” model at work in the Mahatta district has been strikingly stable over time from 1948 to the present. While scholars do not have access to police and GSS files to study the development of current security policies towards Palestinian citizens, my field-study points at the continuous role of the state’s security apparatus in the lives of Palestinians inside Israel. By contrast, the form of sociolegal control in the refugee camp has grown unstable due to the participation of camp dwellers to the collective uprising of Gaza and West Bank Palestinians in the period from 1987 to 1993. In reaction to the uprising, the Israeli army has further differentiated its treatment of different parts of the West Bank. The establishment of the PA has further complicated the interplay between the UNRWA and the Israeli army while the gradual decrease in the UNRWA’s budget might lead to a weakened role of this humanitarian agency in the lives of the camp dwellers with important consequences for their group solidarity.

Sociolegal Control, Space, and Group Solidarity

This study highlights how authorities can use space and target the built-in environment in their development and implementation of techniques of sociolegal control. As documented in chapter 2, the Israeli state is the “designer” of “socio-spatial seclusion” both positive for Jewish Israelis and negative for Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. In this regard, the Israeli state approaches the South African regime’s “spatialization of domination” (Wacquant 2010b, p. 169). To put it differently, I draw attention to the spatial dimension of processes of group solidarity. My focus on the interaction between sociolegal control and space speaks to the literature on the role of space in group solidarity (Agier 2002; Wacquant 2007, 2008a). My contribution here is to show how forms of sociolegal control both target and work through space. Forms of sociolegal control interact with space in two interrelated ways: first, spatial factors can facilitate or prevent the implementation of certain techniques of state control, and, second, ruling agencies can use space in their attempts to manage marginalized populations. Thus, for example, the high level of land and housing tenure insecurity, experienced by most Palestinian residents of Mahatta, makes them more vulnerable to the state pressure to inform on their neighbors and to the state’s threat to punish vocal dissenters. From another perspective, this land tenure insecurity is an effect of past state security policies, as is the resettlement of “collaborators” from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Lod, which is yet another factor that strengthens residents’ reticence to express their ideas in public. The interaction between sociolegal control and space in the camp is different. Within the UNRWA-defined boundaries of the camp, refugees’ housing practices are not subject to the same punitive measures that target Mahatta residents; this is true even in cases where the residents’ building activities go beyond the UNRWA’s allowances, such as the erection of a third floor on two-floor structures. Furthermore, the presence of the UNRWA offers a layer of protection in the camp regarding dwellers’ uses of the public space in the camp that does not exist in the district where local and state authorities have the exclusive power to define certain buildings as illegal and then demolish them.

Focusing on the interplay between sociolegal control and space undermines Agier’s (2002) argument that refugee camps are spatial formations that tend to generate social cohesion among the camp dwellers. Indeed, my field study of the Jalazon camp points to a decrease of group solidarity among camp dwellers over the last two decades due to the creation of the PA that has

activated political factionalism within the camp. Along similar lines, my study suggests that the removal of the UNRWA from the camp would undermine group solidarity among the refugees. It also resonates with the model of “urban ethnocracies,” which Yacobi and Yiftachel (2004) have developed to theorize how the Israeli state’s distribution of spatial rights and restrictions along ethnonational lines translates at the urban level with the creation of ethnic districts with unequal access to resources and different relationships with local authorities within the same city.

An intriguing line of inquiry emerges from my comparison: the study of how practices targeting the built-in environment affect the creation of political interests on the ground. For example, camp dwellers have historically been suspicious of “development projects” initiated by foreign donors to improve the infrastructure of the camp. They have interpreted these projects as political strategies to transform West Bank refugee camps from spatial symbols of political dispossession to “normal” localities of urban poverty. This emphasis on the interaction between state rule and space also highlights how the creation and the management of marginality is a political phenomenon; a thesis that comes both from the literature on urban marginality under colonial rule (Mamdani 1996, 2001) and the study of “advanced urban marginality” in the post-industrial North (Wacquant 2008a).

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Methodological Appendix

Identity, Mobility, & Marginality: Conducting Comparative Ethnography across the Green Line

Beyond the Twin Trap of Heroism and Terrorism

Reflecting upon his experience as an ethnographer in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Ted Swedenburg identifies two dangers of doing fieldwork among Palestinians: i) “the first is that a sensational or heroic aura might, without justification, become attached to me because I have worked in treacherous, frontline field sites;” and ii) the other danger is that by doing fieldwork among Palestinians, “by some contagious magic, one is contaminated with their ‘terrorist’ or ‘anti-Semitic’ reputation” (Swedenburg [1992] 2004: 410). Swedenburg’s reaction to these two dangers is to mobilize the writings of “a non-professional ethnographer” – French writer Jean Genet – on his encounters with Palestinians, especially Palestinian *fedayeen* (fighters):

Perhaps in trying to avoid getting caught up in either the heroic or the terrorist image associated with the Palestinians, I have neglected my own dangerous ethnography. I have mentioned my own investments and experiences, but I have spoken more of Genet – maybe because Genet’s text provides a vehicle for me to address issues that are still difficult for academics. After all, the outlaw Genet did not face all the constraints that professional ethnographers usually encounter. He visits the guerrillas at their invitation, openly declaring his partisanship, fearlessly affiliating with “terrorists.” (Our affiliations are usually with the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Social Science Research Council). Moreover, Genet’s overt solidarity permits him the paradoxical freedom to be devastatingly critical (while we have to be cultural relativists). He also speaks of investments – desire, pleasure, anger – which the academy avoids. And he is concerned principally not with analysis or interpretation but with producing images, images with hoped-for future political and aesthetic value (Swedenburg 2004 [1992]: 415).

I chose to open my methodological appendix to this comparative ethnography across the Green Line with this long quote, because, while I agree that these two tropes – heroism and terrorism – constitute a major obstacle for scholars conducting fieldwork among Palestinians, I do not accept Swedenburg’s opposition between academic ethnographies and non-academic writings as an adequate strategy to address the images that readers might project onto scholars writing about Palestinians. Swedenburg misses the opportunity to relate the challenges that scholars face in conducting fieldwork among Palestinian populations to the dilemmas that other ethnographers face in their studies of other poor and stigmatized populations outside the Israeli-Palestinian context.

Strikingly, Swedenburg’s article is the only contribution on Palestinians in a very engaging anthology on violence edited by two prominent ethnographers of social marginality, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillip Bourgois, who, in their own works, are very attentive to the politics of living among and writing about poor and stigmatized populations. For example, in reflecting upon his fieldwork among crack dealers in East Harlem, Bourgois (2000: 189) argues that “one is made to feel bizarre, loony and perhaps even unethical – or at least irresponsible – when one insists on taking the [American] inner-city seriously enough to conduct participant-observation

in it.” As the inner-cities in the American context, the two localities of urban marginality where I conducted fieldwork – the Jalazon camp and the Mahatta district – offer important insights into the broader socio-spatial order of which they constitute the lowest ranks. “Taking seriously” these localities of social marginality and the people who inhabit them is a goal that animates urban ethnographers conducting fieldwork across tiers of the global order from the post-industrial cities of the Global North to the shantytowns of the Global South. Thus, by giving a detailed account of the parameters of my fieldwork among two poor Palestinian populations, I aim to put my ethnographic study in dialogue with other ethnographies of the social structures and the experiences of urban marginality outside the Israeli-Palestinian context. Through this dialogue, I seek to problematize the exceptionalism surrounding the Palestinian-Israeli context while, at the same time, I seek to address the specific challenges (foreign)¹ ethnographers face when conducting fieldwork among Palestinians.

In this appendix, I provide an extended account of how I obtained access to Palestinian refugees of Jalazon and minority residents of the Mahatta. I give particular attention to how I solved practical questions ranging from obtaining a visa from Israeli authorities to entering and staying in Israel and the West Bank for over a year, to how I moved back and forth between the two sites. While the two sites are only about 30 miles apart, they are located on opposite sides of the Green Line.² By highlighting how the most mundane elements of social life in the Palestinian-Israeli context are suffused with politics, from the color of the t-shirt one wears³ to which bus one takes,⁴ I also reflect upon instances where I manipulated the truth or omitted information in my social relationships with different people. A reflexive account of how I negotiated the politics of identity as I moved between the two sites complements my discussion

¹ More accurately, this methodological account refers to both the limits and privileges that a European researcher without ties to the Israeli state faces. For example, unlike me, Palestinian scholars from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are barred from conducting research inside Israel. Further, my Italian passport would not have protected me from further limitations imposed by Israeli authorities if I had Palestinian relatives.

² As I will explain in the section on “mobility,” while the direct distance between the two sites is about 30 miles, today there is no direct road going from Lod to Jalazon. While in 1948 Palestinian refugees who were expelled from Lydda – renamed Lod in the new Israeli state – walked their ways through the West Bank hills to reach the UNRWA-established Jalazon camp, since 1967 the Israeli legal regime of rule outlined in chapter 1 has affected how one person can move between Lod and Jalazon according to his or her legal status. In the section on “mobility” I will provide a brief account of the combinations of roads that I used to move between the two sites when I was traveling alone and when I was traveling with Israeli citizens.

³ One day, in early spring 2008, I was walking in downtown Lod with a short-sleeved orange t-shirt layered on a long-sleeved white t-shirt. When I stopped at a traffic light, two young girls stared at me and one girl said in Arabic: “look, another settler.” I was puzzled and looked around me to see if I could identify someone as a “settler” but the markers of “a settler” that could apply to the West Bank context did not apply to Lod (for example, certain West Bank crossroads are popular places for young settlers to hitchhike). After crossing the street I realized that it was my orange t-shirt that had triggered the girl’s comment: orange was the color adopted by Israelis who were against the removal of settlements from Gaza. On the other side of the street, a dozen of individuals wearing orange t-shirts were distributing fliers protesting against their uprooting from the Gaza Strip.

⁴ In summer 2004, while traveling between two Palestinian villages in the West Bank, I was told to get off and get another a *service* (Palestinian collective taxi) at a major crossroad just next to an Israeli military checkpoint and a Jewish settlement. The crossroad was also used by settler hitchhikers. For about fifteen minutes I stood next to an armed young settler who was on the phone with someone and waiting for them. When I failed to catch a ride from two Palestinian drivers who would look at us – me and the settler – and then keep driving, I understood that my spatial proximity to the settler (about 5 meters) was a source of anxiety for both the settler and the Palestinian drivers. The former had already heard me speak Arabic on the phone and then saw me try to get onto a Palestinian means of transportation. The Palestinian drivers saw me next to this young and armed settler and did not want to stop. Thus, I decided to walk uphill for about a quarter mile and then I was able to stop a *service* on the road.

in chapters 3 and 4 of how refugees of Jalazon and minority residents of the Mahatta navigate their proximate surroundings and relate to the Israeli state.

Mobility and identity operate as connective threads of my discussion here. In the first part of this appendix, I focus on the theme of mobility through the following questions: how did I secure my privilege of mobility in a context characterized by ever increasing restrictions on the movement on both Palestinians of the Occupied Territories and foreign scholars working in the Territories? How did I manage this privilege once I obtained it? How did I move between the two sites? And, finally, how did that movement (which required crossing the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank) become a key methodological component to my research? In answering these questions I also address how my gender shaped social relations in the field.

In the second part, I discuss the complexity of conducting fieldwork within the Israeli-Palestinian context as a non-Jewish Italian scholar and I give particular attention to the meanings attached to my non-Jewish identity, which was often translated into ethnoreligious membership – as a non-Jewish person often labeled as “Christian” by both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians - in a context where the Jewish-non-Jewish divide plays a crucial role in the Israeli state policies of inclusion and exclusion as well as the formation of public opinion among the Israeli citizenry. I also explore how my ethnonational identity affected my interactions with Palestinians in the Jalazon camp and Lod and I discuss how spending eight months in the West Bank facilitated my subsequent fieldwork in Lod. Before discussing these two questions of mobility and identity, I give a short overview of the ten-year engagement with the Palestinian-Israeli field, which preceded and prepared me for my fieldwork in 2007-2008.

Preclude: Getting to Know the Israeli-Palestinian Terrain: Two Views (1998-2007)

An Overseas Student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1998-2000)

In July 1998 I landed for the first time at the Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel. At that time, I did not know that ten years later I would conduct fieldwork among Palestinian minorities living in that area - the airport is just a few miles away from Lod – and among the Palestinians who were originally from that area but had been expelled in 1948 and had become refugees in the Jalazon camp.⁵ In the late 1990s, as a young college graduate in political science in Italy, I had become interested in two important world events: the transition to post-Apartheid in South Africa and the Oslo peace process in Israel-Palestine. This second interest concretized into my enrollment in a two year master’s program in “Israeli society and politics” offered by the Rothberg School for Overseas Students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. While the classes were taught in English, in summer 1998 I also enrolled in the first of many subsequent intensive *ulpanim* (Hebrew language courses), which are specifically designed to provide *holim hadashim* (Jewish migrants who settle in Israel) with fluency in Hebrew (with an emphasis in spoken Hebrew) in a relatively short period of time. The Rothberg School offered me a unique perspective on how *holim hadashim* – at that time especially migrants from the Ex-Soviet Union⁶ – adapted to their new Israeli life. It also exposed me to how all of the young Jewish American students who enroll into the school’s programs – a good majority of students enrolled in the

⁵ Most refugees in Jalazon come from Lod and about thirty-six villages around Lod. The land on which the airport was built used to belong to these villages.

⁶ About one million people have migrated from the ex-Soviet Union to Israel since the early 1990s.

Rothberg School are Jewish college students from the United States – deepen their sense of attachment to Israel through the many programs run by the Rothberg school, from hikes in the desert to visits to archeological sites in Jerusalem.

Another unique site for my exposure to the (Jewish) Israeli society was my dorm room. For two years I lived in the university's *meonot* (dorms) sharing the room with Ana, *hola hadasha* from a small rural village in Uzbekistan. Hebrew was the language that Ana and I used in common and we developed a sense of complicity when we became able to express our concerns in Hebrew to the four other girls with whom we shared the apartment. The apartment consisted of three double rooms for a total of six students. In addition to me and Ana, there were two girls from Tel Aviv who studied art at the Hebrew University, a new migrant from Russia who after a few months told me and Ana that she was not Jewish, and another Jewish Israeli student of Yemeni origins who was the first to remind me in several occasions of my exceptional status there: "You are not Jewish, why are you here? Why do you want to learn Hebrew? Do you want to live here?" She always kept her distance from me and was never convinced by my awkward replies such as "I want to understand Israeli society and contribute to improving the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians."

Despite my complicity with Ana, I never convinced her to come with me to the Old City of Jerusalem because, according to her, in the Old City there were "too many Muslims" and "Muslims are dangerous." Unlike the other girls in the apartment, Ana was, however, interested in knowing about my whereabouts even just because she was concerned for my personal safety when I went to places that in her mind were particularly dangerous because there were "Arabs" or "Muslims." While, immersed in the microcosm of the Rothberg School and in my friendship with Ana, my (personal more than academic) interest shifted from international relations and diplomacy – "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" – to the question of identity formation among Jewish newcomers, during the two years at the Hebrew University, I was also exposed, albeit to a lesser degree, to the predicament of marginality of the Palestinians.

While Palestinian students on campus and in the dorms often shared with me their frustration at their marginalized position within Israeli society, their feelings of being unwanted and their status of being discriminated against, as well as their discomfort with my immersion into that society. After all, I was studying Hebrew and not Arabic, and I was spending most of my time with Ana. However, what struck me most during that period was my relationship with Aaisha. Aaisha was a small, middle-aged Palestinian woman, a service-worker at one of the university's restaurants. Serving me food, first with gestures and then in Hebrew, Aaisha often made jokes about my thinness. Aaisha lived in Issawiya, an East Jerusalem Palestinian village of about 12,000 people, which is located at the foot of the Hebrew University Campus and which was occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967. Invited for a "real lunch" at her place, I went once to Issawiya with Aaisha and experienced for the first time the spatial constraints that Palestinians under Israeli rule are subjected to. I learned that "French Hill," the "neighborhood" where I lived, was actually built on lands that belonged to Issawiya and had been confiscated after 1967. Practically, "French Hill" was West Bank territory until 1967 and had been annexed as part of East Jerusalem by the Israeli state. While Palestinians of Issawiya had permanent residency cards, they expressed their feelings of living under siege. Other village lands had been confiscated to create a network of roads connecting Israeli settlements in the West Bank to East and West Jerusalem. Further, certain areas around the village had been designed as "green areas" where building was not permitted. While these "green areas" remained bare, surrounded by roads and two military outposts, Issawiya was an over-crowded, dusty, and under-serviced

village, just a mile down a steep road from the university, but separated from it symbolically and socially.

Back at the Rothberg School with its big windows overlooking Issawiya, I gazed at the landscape and saw it as part of a larger mental map I was building; a map that – for the first time – included Issawiya. This experience prompted me to begin learning Arabic, first from Aisha, then through a private teacher in East Jerusalem. I also became more attuned to the presence of Palestinians around me at the university and in the streets, while I still was going to all my master’s classes and my Hebrew classes. I also started visiting West Bank towns such as Bethlehem, Hebron, and Ramallah.

When the Second *Intifada* (Palestinian uprising against the Israeli military occupation) started in October 2000, I had already finished all my MA requirements, received the *ptor* (the final certificate of fluency in Hebrew) from the Hebrew University, and started a research collaboration with the State University of Milano in Italy. However, missing in my two-year experience was a fuller understanding of the view from marginalized places such as Issawiya. The view from the big windows of the Hebrew University was not enough.

The View from the Palestinian Occupied Territories and Palestinian Districts in Lod (2001-2006)

For most of 2001 and the winter of 2002, I lived in the West Bank and during the spring and summer of 2002 I lived in the Gaza Strip. It was the peak of the Second Intifada with the Israeli invasion of all major West Bank towns. I resided in villages under curfew and joined the activities of various international and Israeli human rights organizations, and I participated in activities such as demonstrations against curfews, delivery of food to villages and camps under curfew, and provision of support to farmers who tried to reach and cultivate their lands. My goal was to connect with ordinary Palestinians in villages and refugee camps and to listen to their stories during a difficult period of military repression.

The four months that I spent in the Gaza Strip in the spring of 2002 were a particularly important period. I lived in Gaza city but also visited the Rafah and Khan Younis refugee camps in the South of the Strip with their webs of narrow and dusty alleyways and their ruins of demolished buildings. In Gaza city I was saddened to learn that fishermen could not go beyond a ten-nautical mile limit from the shores⁷ and often went back home with empty hands. I befriended a former fisherman who worked as guardian in the building where I had rented an apartment with other foreigners (mainly freelance journalists and activists). He also became another of my informal Arabic language instructors.

After starting my Ph.D. program at the University of California at Berkeley, I continued to visit the West Bank each summer in 2003, 2004, and 2005. During these visits I improved my Arabic both informally and through classes at Birzeit University, a Palestinian university near Ramallah. I also studied Arabic for five years while at Berkeley. Further, I continued to build my network of friends and acquaintances in the West Bank. I also witnessed the development of checkpoints such as Qalandia at the southern outskirts of Ramallah, which began as some simple cement blocks and progressed into a full-fledged “terminal” equipped with offices and military

⁷ Since January 2009, the Israeli army has reduced this limit to three nautical miles from the coast.

towers.⁸ A particularly important experience was living for two months in the village of Biddu, only five miles from Jerusalem, but separated from it by a ring of Israeli settlements, roadblocks, checkpoints, and by-pass roads for Israeli citizens only and by the “separation fence” that now encircles it. Living in Biddu and commuting to Birzeit, about 10 miles away, with mini-buses through the hills – and at times walking for a while before catching another *service* (collective taxi), often defying curfews - gave me a feeling for moving with the awareness that the very act of moving is considered illegal and that if need be it is necessary to quickly change the direction towards which you are moving or the pace at which you are moving.

Studying at Birzeit provided an occasion to know Palestinians from different areas of the West Bank and even from the Gaza Strip. However, by the summer of 2003, the first time I studied Arabic at Birzeit, there were only a few remaining students from Gaza, most of them at the end of their program. These students, who if found by the Israeli army would be deported back to the Strip, used to say that there was no stone, tree, house, or street of Birzeit that was unfamiliar to them. Most of them lived just outside the Birzeit campus in constant fear of an immediate expulsion to the Gaza Strip.

In the summer of 2004, I would make my first visit to the Mahatta district that became my fieldwork site in 2008. On the way back from a day-long farming activity in a West Bank village, I joined three Jewish Israeli activists with the Israeli organization *Taayush* (“Co-existence” in Arabic) who wanted to see the police checkpoints that the Israeli police had established at the entrance of several Arab districts in the Israeli city of Lod. These are fieldnotes that I wrote that summer evening:

[Writing while in a car] We are driving towards the checkpoint, I feel as if I were in the West Bank [stop writing before the checkpoint]... [writing again once I crossed the checkpoint] ten minutes ago we stopped at the checkpoint, now we are driving inside the neighborhood, there is nobody in the street, faces at the windows, is there a curfew? They wanted to know why we wanted to pass, one of the activists said that we were free citizens in a free country and we could go anywhere we wanted...now that we are inside, the activists don't feel safe, they say that we should coordinate another visit with the Palestinians of Lod, we drive back to the checkpoints, the young policeman asks us if we enjoyed the visit, we remain silent and leave.

July 18, 2004

This experience raised many questions in my mind. There we were: four women, three Israeli Jewish activists and I, a “foreign researcher,” approaching, crossing a checkpoint, and driving within an Arab neighborhood of the Israeli city of Lod. Different understandings of “inside-r” and “outside-r” informed our sense of place and safety. I felt confused and unsafe as we drove towards the checkpoint: why does this happen outside the West Bank? Are these soldiers or police officers? Is this a closed military zone? Will they stop me because I am a foreigner? By contrast, the activists firmly claimed their right to unrestricted movement (“we are free citizens”) as we crossed the checkpoint but they felt unsafe once we were driving inside the Arab neighborhood. In the summer 2004 I did not have a chance to ask Palestinians in Lod what they thought of the presence of police checkpoints at the entrance of their neighborhoods. But, four

⁸ Qalandia is the name of a West Bank village, North of Jerusalem. While located deep in the West Bank, Qalandia checkpoint operates as “a border crossing point” that West Bankers cannot cross unless they have an “entry permit” into Jerusalem or Israel.

years later, the crossing of this police checkpoint in Lod as well as the traveling from Biddu to Birzeit in West Bank were important experiences that guided me through my fieldwork in the Jalazon camp and the Mahatta district.

Mobility (June 2007- September 2008)

Where to start? How to Move Around?

In this section, I discuss how I secured the privilege of mobility as well as the growing difficulties of moving across the Green Line and within the Palestinian Occupied Territories. While some places in the Occupied Territories have become unreachable, the very setup of my ethnography work, which entailed not only a comparison between two sites across the Green Line but also moving back and forth between these two sites, was a challenge to the policies of spatial divisions and legal segmentation that Israel implements in the Occupied Territories. I also show how the question of mobility became intertwined with other considerations and concerns in the initial stage of my fieldwork, when I had to decide where to start my fieldwork, in Jalazon camp or in Lod.

When I returned to Israel-Palestine for my fieldwork in late June 2007, I was not sure if the network of roads and means of transportation that I had become familiar with in my past travels across Jerusalem and the West Bank, were still in use. Past experience had taught me that each summer I visited the West Bank I had to learn my way around once again. Staying at a friend's place in Tel Aviv, I did two things. First, I posted a question on a website mainly used by foreigners living and working in the Occupied Territories, asking what I needed to know in order to cross Qalandia checkpoint,⁹ the main point of entrance into the West Bank town of Ramallah, north of Jerusalem and five miles away from Jalazon camp. Second, I called the family that had given me hospitality in Biddu in the previous summers asking them how the construction of the "separation fence" around the village had affected their movement and if there was any way for me to reach them directly from Jerusalem. The information that I gathered included the following: the bus from East Jerusalem to Ramallah that I used to take was still running but it had changed route to accommodate the concrete wall that had split the Palestinian urban area of A-Ram leading to Qalandia; in the direction towards Ramallah, Israeli soldiers usually did not check IDs or ask passengers to get off the bus; but on the route out of Ramallah, Palestinians are required to get off the bus and walk through the internal area of the checkpoint and reboard the bus on the other side; meanwhile, foreigners can stay on the bus and show their passports to the soldiers who board the bus in the external area and then wait on the bus for the other passengers. Furthermore, the three-month tourist visa that I had received when I landed at Ben Gurion Airport would probably be accepted by soldiers on route out of Qalandia; there was no longer direct access to the Biddu village through the roadblock that I had previously walked through after getting off a bus riding on an adjacent Israeli highway; and now the only way into the village was a winding, bumping, unpaved road from Ramallah.

Despite the reassuring information that a tourist visa would probably allow me to cross both Qalandia and other checkpoints, rumors about upcoming changes in the system of Israeli permits released to foreigners oriented me at first towards starting my fieldwork in Lod without crossing

⁹ Over the years the Qalandia checkpoint has evolved into a big "terminal" with an external area with several lanes for cars crossing and an internal area for passengers. The external area has two military towers. The internal area has a system of metal bars to let me people in one by one.

into the West Bank. As journalist Cook (2009) summarizes it, “in an echo of restrictions already firmly in place in Gaza, Israel has begun barring movement between Israel and the West Bank for those holding a foreign passport...the new policy is designed to force foreign citizens, mainly from North America and Europe, to choose between visiting Israel – including East Jerusalem, which Israel has annexed illegally – and the West Bank”.¹⁰ Cook discusses recent cases at the Allenby Bridge (the crossing point between Jordan and the West Bank, which is managed by the Israeli army) and at Ben Gurion Airport (the Israeli international airport) in which foreigners were issued a visa for “the Palestinian Authority only” forbidding them from entering Israel or East Jerusalem. I was concerned by this new policy for two main reasons. First, the wording of the new visa stamp was itself quite ambiguous: what did “the Palestinian Authority” refer to? After all, this self-governing body has formal control over a deeply fragmented territory (mainly the West Bank cities) while the rest of the West Bank remains under direct Israeli control. Indeed, Jalazon camp falls into “Area B” under “joint PA-Israeli control” because of its spatial proximity to the Beit-El settlement. Second, the implementation of this policy would deeply complicate the setup of my comparative fieldwork by forcing me to secure two different visa statuses from the Israeli authorities and to conduct fieldwork at the two sites in two different periods of time.

As this account of my initial preoccupation with visa status and mobility highlights, foreign researchers who want to conduct fieldwork in the West Bank (not to mention the Gaza Strip) are progressively subject to more restrictive Israeli policies together with many other categories of people: foreign spouses of Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, all people of Palestinian origins holding a foreign passport, and foreign humanitarian aid workers. While, as analyzed in chapter 1, since the early 1990s, Israeli policies have restricted the freedom of movement of Gaza and West Bank Palestinians both within the Territories and across the Green Line, the construction of physical obstacles, which accompanied these new restrictions, has also continued to transform entire areas of the West Bank into “closed” areas that can be reached only by the Palestinian residents of the villages located in those areas.¹¹ Thus, these areas become unreachable for scholars as well.

My concerns about crossing the Green Line into the West Bank were also driven by two other sets of concerns, one linked to Israeli policies and the other linked to Palestinian political infighting in the Territories. First, I was concerned about how to extend my three-month tourist visa. In the months before my travel I had obtained a formal affiliation as visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I knew that eventually I had to do an interview at the Israeli ministry of Interior and secure a one-year student visa. My initial plan was to conduct fieldwork inside Israel, get my student visa and then move to the West Bank. I was concerned that my prolonged presence in a refugee camp in the West Bank would jeopardize my application for a student visa. I was afraid that I would be questioned about where I was staying and preoccupied about speaking about the research that I was supposedly conducting at the Hebrew University when I was actually living and conducting research in Jalazon.

Second, I thought that it would be wise to wait and see what would happen in the West Bank in the aftermath of Hamas’ takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007. Thus, for two main reasons

¹⁰ Cook, J. “U.S. turns blind eye to Israel’s new separation policy.” *The Palestine Chronicle* (08/17/2009). http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view_article_details.php?id=15367 (last accessed April 7, 2011).

¹¹ This is particularly true for the West Bank villages located between the Green Line and the newly built “separation fence,” which in some parts, winds deep into West Bank territory. The Palestinian residents of these villages have special permits that allow them to leave and enter their houses.

(anxiety over the Israeli visa and uncertainty about the political stability of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank) I had initially decided to start my fieldwork in Lod.

However, as I mentioned in the introduction, other considerations stemming from the place-specific dynamics and logics in Jalazon and Lod pushed me to immerse myself in the everyday life of Jalazon camp for a couple of months before visiting Lod. Of course, the question of visa renewal acquired growing urgency with the passing of time. But let me first explain what brought me to start my fieldwork in Jalazon and address the question of visa renewal in the next section.

First, my social network was stronger in the West Bank than in Israel. More accurately, my contacts in Israel – both educated Palestinians and Jewish Israeli scholars and activists - doubted that I could actually live or even spend significant time in one of the Palestinian districts in Lod. Practically, I was aware that as all my trusted contacts in Israel, I lacked “a sense of the game” (Bourdieu 1990) that would allow me to operate inside these districts. Of course, the goal of an extensive fieldwork is to understand and acquire (at least to a certain extent) the practical knowledge necessary to operate within a certain context but the challenge in Lod was initially too daunting. During my first visit to Lod I repeatedly felt “in danger” without being able to define “danger” for myself. While eventually during my fieldwork in Lod I understood the sources and dynamics of this perceived danger, initially this sense of uneasiness blocked me. This anxiety remained strong despite an initial lucky encounter with Marwan, a Palestinian driver whom I met on a bus going from Tel Aviv to Lod. Marwan, a tall, extremely thin man in his early thirties, with rotten teeth and a belt squeezed around his waist to keep his pants from falling down, offered to give me “a tour” of Lod starting from Samet Het, another segregated Palestinian district in Northern Lod, where he had relatives.¹² Before going for “the tour,” Marwan introduced me to the owner of a kiosk in downtown Lod, a large and tall man in his late fifties telling him: “she is a foreign student from Italy, she wants to know about 1948, can I give her your number?” I tried to add “not only the 1948 but also life now” but the man did not seem interested in me and just said his phone number quickly while Marwan was already walking out of the store and without recoding the phone number I clumsily followed him. Walking fast, Marwan pointed to a nearby mosque and told me: “there was a massacre here...in 1948” (*hoon kaan fii majzara...fii 48*) and then added:

But Abu Tahsiin¹³ [the shop owner] will tell you everything about it, there is no need to live here among people like me, I don't know anything, people here are worthless, they will just cheat you (*bighallabuki*)¹⁴, he is an exception, he is from *hizb al-tajammu'a* [a new Palestinian nationalist party in Israel], he is not afraid to speak, he already gave you his number, you can interview him to understand the political problems here and you can go back to Italy.

¹² See chapter 2 for a description of the three areas of Lod in which most Palestinians live: Samet Het in the North, the Mahatta in the east, and around the old city of the town.

¹³ This man was killed a couple of months after our brief encounter. When I met Marwan again after several months, this was the first news he gave me about things that had happened in Lod while I was in the West Bank. See chapter 4 for a discussion of this killing within the broader interplay between interpersonal and criminal violence among Palestinians in Lod.

¹⁴ This is an expression that people in Lod used a lot to express their concern for my safety or wellbeing or just to express their idea that my efforts were just a waste of time and nothing good could come out from my presence there.

During our visit to Samet Het, the Palestinian district where his parents and sisters lived, Marwan was evidently amused by my presence there and continued looking at me while we walked on the dusty streets of the district under the extremely hot sun and saying “do you need to sweat and breathe dusty air to write your paper for school?” While walking passed some emaciated young people who, according to him, were looking for drugs, he told me:

OK, so I’ll tell you what I know about this place: here everything is illegal, buildings, shops, even the mosque, everything is illegal (*kul ishi gheir qanuni*). I don’t know why but people like it that way, Arabs here like problems.

While Marwan also showed me the Mahatta district, he did not want us to step outside his car because he did not know people well there. He explained that people living the Mahatta were similar to those living in his district and therefore he knew that our unannounced presence could raise suspicion, and he did not want to have problems with the inhabitants and/or the Israeli police. In the days after this visit, while keeping in touch with Marwan, I was also invited to volunteer for a local NGO that promoted social and cultural activities in Lod.

Despite these initial contacts and the volatile political situation in the West Bank, I decided to begin my fieldwork in the West Bank. Several factors influenced this decision: Marwan’s and the kiosk owner’s skepticism about my staying in Lod; the skepticism that my research interest in Lod generated among friends in the West Bank who considered Lod a place “good only for drugs;” and my own intuition that going back to Lod after an extensive stay in the West Bank would increase my ability to gain the trust of Palestinian residents of Lod as well as my ability to conduct fieldwork in Arabic.¹⁵

My first visit of Jalazon camp in early July 2007 convinced me that my past experiences in the West Bank had prepared me for my fieldwork in Jalazon much more than my two years of living in Israel had prepared me to understand the predicament of marginality of Palestinians in Lod. Several refugees – both educated and uneducated individuals - expressed enthusiasm about the idea of my staying in the camp for several months. My two initial contacts in the camp introduced me to a wide range of people. Friends from the village of Biddu, whom I had met at Birzeit University in 2003, introduced me to a young student from Jalazon while a Palestinian scholar living in Jerusalem introduced me to a friend of his who was born in Jalazon and while living in Ramallah, still had family and friends in the camp. This man drove me to the camp for the first time in a sunny Friday morning, introduced me to several families, and came up with the idea of me living with different families in rotation because “families are big but houses are small” in Jalazon. My confidence in my decision about starting my fieldwork in Jalazon was reconfirmed eight months later when I entered the Mahatta district through my contacts in Jalazon. Indeed, many camp dwellers in Jalazon have relatives and acquaintances in Lod. Some refugees did not share their contacts with me, telling me that the people that they knew were “troublemakers” or that, despite their firm assurance that I was a good person, their relatives were “afraid” (*khaiyin*) that I would bring problems to them. However, other refugees made a lot of phone calls for me and helped me transition to the Mahatta district while at the same time warning me that unlike in Jalazon “there is no safety” (*fiish amn*) in Lod.

¹⁵ Palestinians in Lod often mixes Arabic and Hebrew when speaking while beginning my fieldwork in the West Bank would expose me to a society where everybody speaks in Arabic. In particular, I was afraid that spending a long period of time in Lod before going to the West Bank would prevent me from speaking a fluent Arabic without using Hebrew words in my conversations.

Interview at the Israeli Ministry of Interior: Securing a One-year Student Visa

What a nerve-racking day, first the misunderstanding about the address that I gave them [the Israeli Ministry of Interior] and then speaking about the bus n. 9 or 4 aleph that I take every day from downtown Jerusalem to the [Hebrew] university or about where I eat at the university. It was uncomfortable. I didn't expect these questions and I don't know how I remembered this information from my life almost ten years ago [when I studied at the Hebrew University].

Fieldnotes, September 14, 2007

On my way back from Jerusalem to Jalazon camp with a new one-year student visa in my passport, sitting in a bus going towards Qalandia checkpoint I could not prevent nervous tears coming down my face while I repeated in my mind the conversation that I had with an immigration officer at the Israeli Ministry of Interior. The officer was friendly and not particularly suspicious. After all, I had an official copy of the letter of invitation from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the university's student ID as "visiting research fellow."¹⁶ Yet, after spending almost three months living in Jalazon camp and mainly traveling in the West Bank, the interview was a disorienting experience.

In particular, the first question of the interview took me completely off guard. I had given the Jerusalem address of a Jewish Israeli friend living in downtown West Jerusalem, an area that I knew well. The immigration officer looked at the address and then she asked me: "are you sure you live there?" I just mumbled: "yes, I rented a room." The officer again showed her surprise and asked me: "so do you know Orit?" Again, I was totally confused but a little bit more relaxed because at first I was afraid that she knew about my whereabouts in the West Bank. After a pause, I replied: "no, I share the apartment with Yuval, another student. I don't know Orit." The officer insisted: "wait, you can't live there, did you have an interview with Orit?" I am not sure if out of frustration or despair but I had the sudden (and correct) intuition that we might be speaking of two different places. I took a map of Jerusalem that I had brought with me, marked with a finger the street that I had written down as my address in the application and said the name of the street out loud. The officer turned the map towards her and told me laughing: "Why didn't you tell me that you live in downtown?" Then, I followed her finger making its way on the map from downtown Jerusalem, across the Green Line, to a very similar street name in one of the "Jewish neighborhoods" – settlements – very close to Biddu. I did not ask her if Orit was the head of the selection committee that screens applicants who want to live in her "neighborhood." However, during the interview, I kept thinking about the symbolic and physical boundaries separating the woman in front of me and her friend Orit and my friends in the Palestinian village of Biddu. This thought made me feel dizzy for the rest of the interview. While I apparently did a good job of walking the interviewer through my typical day at the Hebrew University - which bus I took to reach the campus, where I studied, what kind of research I was doing, and where I ate – I kept imagining what would happen if I told her about how Orit's neighbors in Biddu cannot use the nearby highway which is for Israeli citizens only, or if I told her about my experience of crossing the checkpoint of Qalandia to reach Jerusalem. The interview lasted for

¹⁶ Before traveling to Israel I applied for the status of "visiting research fellow" at the Hebrew University. The application required a letter of support from a faculty at the Hebrew University and the payment of a fee of about \$1,500.

about twenty minutes and resulted in my receipt of a new one-year student visa on my passport. The first thing that I did when I left the building was to check whether the visa indicated any specific areas such as “Israel only” but it did not have any territorial restrictions.

This story illustrates the rapidly shifting terrain that I had to adapt to during my fieldwork. While most Gaza and West Bank Palestinians have been deprived of the right of movement across the Green Line (as well as between Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem), this story illustrates that mobility within the Territories and across the Green Line is a privilege that foreign scholars, foreign human rights and NGO personnel, as well as foreign spouses of Palestinians of the Territories, can often obtain only by manipulating the truth or omitting information.¹⁷

Doing ethnography in the West Bank and especially moving across the Green Line requires knowledge of and adaptation to a changing and progressively more restrictive spatial-legal regime. *Crossing the Green Line* is the actual title of an ethnographic study of Palestinian daily laborers from the West Bank seeking jobs in central Israel (Bornstein 2002). If this study was to be conducted today and not in the 1990s, the fieldworker would face many more dangers in walking or taking rides across the Green Line with Palestinian workers. He or she would also have to secure access to the networks of “workers smugglers” (*muharribin ‘ummal*), which have considerably expanded in the last decade as a result of the increased number of workers crossing without a legal permits and the stricter controls by the Israeli Border Police. My point is that the very space of maneuver for an ethnographer¹⁸ who wants to conduct multi-sited fieldwork among Palestinians under Israeli rule, especially in the Territories, is becoming much more restricted.¹⁹

Managing the Privilege of Mobility

Once I obtained a one-year student visa from the Israeli authorities, with no specific information about the areas that I could or could not enter, I then faced the question of what this privilege meant in terms of my relations with the camp dwellers in the West Bank during the first part of my fieldwork. Even before securing the one-year visa from the Israeli authorities, my mobility as a foreigner with Italian passport was already a privilege that camp dwellers systematically commented on, by speaking about their last visits to cities and regions inside Israel or to the Mediterranean sea, and by complaining about their current immobility and their resulting feeling of claustrophobia. In the second part of my fieldwork, during my stay in Lod, my Italian passport and lack of family and identity connections with Israel were important elements in highlighting my outsiderhood to the dominant Jewish Israeli society but, obviously, did not elicit much interest in terms of being a privileged tool of mobility. After all, Palestinians in Lod have Israeli

¹⁷ For example, I never had a student status when I studied at Birzeit University in the West Bank. I just entered Israel as a tourist and then crossed the Green Line.

¹⁸ This discussion is valid for scholars who have a foreign passport. Palestinian scholars from Gaza would not be able to conduct fieldwork in the West Bank or Israel. Along similar line, West Bank Palestinians would not be able to conduct fieldwork in Gaza or Israel. A Jewish Israeli scholar has produced an ethnography of a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank, based on her fieldwork in the 1990s (Rosenfeld 2004) and she has an interesting account of the ethical and power issues that she faced in the field.

¹⁹ My initial prospectus included a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip but, while in 2002 I could still enter the Strip with a tourist visa, the Strip has become increasingly inaccessible without special permits that are released only to a handful of humanitarian workers and visitors.

citizenship and can legally move both within the Israeli side of the Green Line and on the Israeli by-pass roads in the West Bank that are forbidden to West Bank Palestinians.²⁰

Thus, while staying in Jalazon, I mainly moved within the West Bank, often following camp dwellers or UNRWA personnel in their travels for work or family visits, and I rarely crossed the Green Line into Jerusalem or Israel, mainly out of a sense of shame towards the refugees who were forbidden from reaching these places. For instance, in October 2007, during Ramadan, several men in their thirties and forties were sitting outside the local UNRWA office, a major site of sociability inside the camp, and discussing whether it was worthwhile to try to walk through the hills to reach Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City. While they were sharing stories from the previous years – both “success” stories about reaching the Old City and spending a great day in the mosque compound and terrible stories about being chased and often arrested by the Israeli border police – one of them turned towards me and said: “and then there is Silvia here who comes from Italy and can go to Jerusalem whenever she wants!” I remained silent because I did not know what I could possibly add to the man's statement. Another man replied laughing: “so, Silvia, do you want to come with us tonight?” While I actually wanted to go with them, I knew that it was not a viable possibility because it would put them in the position of having “to take care of me” while they were already in a very vulnerable position – moving illegally across the Green Line.²¹

Interestingly, while Palestinians in Lod do not suffer from this forced immobility because they hold Israeli passports, I soon realized that many of my informants in the Mahatta district were highly sensitive to the possibility that their actions – including traveling in the Territories – would draw the unwanted attention of the Israeli security apparatus in terms of questions about their intentions and wanderings about. This not to say that there are not Palestinian citizens of Israel who cross the Green Line for work (for example, drivers) and family relations (for example, visit to relatives).²² But close informants in the Mahatta district, especially those who had a criminal record or had received an order for house demolition, expressed their mixed feelings about coming with me to Jalazon or other places in the West Bank. On the one hand, they eagerly discussed plans to visit the West Bank and, on the other hand, they were concerned that meeting West Bank Palestinians or traveling in the West Bank “without a reason”²³ would just bring “more problems” and worsen their “security profile” in the eyes of the Israeli police.

This discussion highlights how the researcher's mobility in a context where entire populations are denied the freedom of movement and are obliged to enter illegal arrangements in order to move raises the question of how and when the privilege of mobility can be used. For instance, in his ethnography of political violence in Northern Ireland, Feldman (1991: 12) says that in the

²⁰ In Lod I also met West Bank women and men married to Palestinian citizens but unable to obtain a legal permit and therefore living illegally. Further, I met several Palestinians who had illegally crossed the Green line to work as construction workers in Israel.

²¹ I was also afraid that if I was caught with them crossing into Jerusalem illegally I would run the risk of being deported from the country. However, if they had seriously asked me to go with them, I would have probably accepted while I am sure that some of my closest informants in the camp would have tried to discourage me from going.

²² Palestinian citizens of Israel also cross the Green Line for buying cheaper goods in nearby West Bank villages just on the other side of the Green Line.

²³ Unlike residents of the Mahatta who were married to West Bank Palestinians and therefore had the obvious reason of visiting relatives in the West Bank, these residents, who expressed the desire of traveling together with me to the West Bank, were preoccupied with attracting the Israeli police's attention if they changed their routine and started traveling more across the Green Line.

Northern Irish context, mobility had an evident political dimension that pushed him to limit his movements:

Too much mobility between adversarial spaces, which my nationality facilitated, also proved to be subjectively disturbing. As I became familiar with the topography of confessional communities, I realized that the only other people who were publicly moving back and forth in such a manner were the police and the army (1991: 12).

Feldman's point is that mobility across the "Protestant" and "Catholic" areas in Belfast – politically "adversarial spaces" – could undermine his status among the politically divided populations of Northern Ireland because it would lump him as an ethnographer with the police and the army, the other two social actors who move across these spaces. Along similar lines, a multi-sited ethnography of Jalazon camp and Beit El, the Jewish settlement overlooking the camp would raise a similar question. After all, the Israeli army is the only social actor moving across these two places with the opposite goals of defending the settlement and policing the refugee camp.

However, while I was concerned about my privilege of mobility, moving between Jalazon and Lod was an important methodological device in developing the sociological imagination that is necessary to see what has become more hidden and forbidden both in practice and in discourse: the familial relations and social interconnections among West Bank Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel; the long chain that links people and places across the Israeli state-imposed citizen-noncitizen divide among Palestinians under Israeli rule.

Thus, for instance, the first time that I visited Lod, I traveled from Jalazon to Lod with Taghriid, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, who was married to a man from Jalazon and lived in the camp. She was enthusiastic about traveling together to Lod and visiting some of her friends in the town. She was clearly proud of her ability to navigate her way through the Green Line and into Lod (see below for a short description of the two ways that I used to cross the Green Line during my fieldwork). The round-trip to Lod was not only a source of complicity between Taghriid and me but also an occasion to connect the camp and the town through phone calls that we made to Taghriid's husband and other people in the camp while we were in Lod. The same symbolic connection was enacted several times during my stay in Lod when residents got to know that I had spent eight months in Jalazon and suggested calling their relatives there – including residents who, several months earlier, had refused to give me their contact information when their relatives in Jalazon had called them to tell them about me and my research.

Mobility and the Art of Transformation

Once in the summer of 2004, Majid, a Palestinian friend from the West Bank village of Beit-Iqsa, a couple of miles from Jerusalem, told me: "I didn't know that I walked as a West Banker!" He referred to a traumatic experience that he had while walking in East Jerusalem. Without an entry permit, he had made his way into East Jerusalem through one of the many winding routes through the hills that Palestinians used to cross the Green Line. He had a job interview with an international NGO, which, while inviting him for an interview in Jerusalem, had not been able to provide him with a one-day entry permit. Dressed with a suit and a tie, he thought that he would easily blend in among the many Palestinian professionals who walked the streets of East Jerusalem. However, when he looked for a taxi, he discovered that the (Palestinian) taxi drivers

suspected that he was from the West Bank and asked him to show his ID.²⁴ Majid told me that, outraged by this reaction, he had yelled at them “You are not the [Israeli] police, just give me a ride” and finally convinced one of them to take him to his interview.

Majid was not sure if the taxi drivers recognized him as a West Banker by his accent, his demeanor, his dress, or his nervousness. He also underlined that, while as a young boy he used to spend a lot of time in Jerusalem – buying groceries with his grandmother or going to the bank with his father - the new context of physical isolation of his village, had prevented him from maintaining familiarity with the streets of East Jerusalem. Thus, another explanation he used to explain this was that he had been waiting for a taxi in an unusual place. But he also commented that there were many people – including foreigners - walking around East Jerusalem and he could not understand why the taxi drivers had identified him as a West Banker.

Majid’s story supports the argument that forced mobility weakens the skills that moving across distinct socio-spatial configurations requires and, as a result, it undermines the self-confidence of those moving “illegally.” By contrast, with her Israeli ID, Taghriid often visits Jerusalem and Israel and, as the Lod travel that we did together documents, she knows her way around and she displays a solid understanding of what can be called “the art of transformation” that moving across the Green Line entails, from shifting from Arabic to Hebrew to knowing when it is proper to negotiate a price or a route with a bus driver.

While like Majid and Taghriid I also moved between different socio-spatial configurations across the Green Line, in my case “the art of transformation” entailed the embodiment of different types of stranger, ranging from Arabic-speaking foreign activist or humanitarian worker in the West Bank to English-speaking foreign tourist in Jerusalem. In my case, Lod represented the most difficult experience in terms of fitting into a fixed category and my presence often raised a mix of curiosity and diffidence. As I will discuss below, I conducted my fieldwork in Arabic but I understand and can hold a conversation in Hebrew. Because I was securing access to Lod with the help of camp dwellers, my informants tended to assume that I did not know Hebrew. I also wished to further emphasize my outsiderhood to Israeli society by intentionally not using Hebrew while in Lod. While speaking an heavily accented Arabic with informants from the district and appearing more as a Jewish Israeli young woman than a Palestinian woman, I was often scrutinized by people in the streets and shops of the town. Thus, for example, when I accompanied Samera, a woman from the Mahatta, to her workplace, a gym in a nearby Jewish town, where she worked as sanitation cleaner, a Jewish Israeli teacher from the adjacent school was very curious about me. She heard us speaking and asked Samera about me and when Samera told her “[she is] my friend” (*havera sheli* in Hebrew), the school teacher could not believe it and called another teacher with her cellular phone and in front of us she said: “there is something cool here, one of the Arab workers brought a foreigner who speaks colloquial Arabic! It is so cool (*eiza keita*)!” Moving between the two sites also involved using two different cellular phones and changing dress code (long-sleeved shirts at knee-length in the camp and short-sleeved and shorter shirts in the district).

Crossing the Green Line: Lod-Jalazon Round-Trips

Unlike the nearby settlement of Beit-El and all other Jewish settlements in the West Bank, Jalazon camp is not directly connected to the Israeli territory. Therefore, a Lod-Jalazon round-

²⁴ The Israeli police can fine and also withdraw the license from an Israeli taxi driver who carries a West Bank Palestinian.

trip requires some creativity, especially if one uses public transportation. The main route I used to move between Jalazon and Lod entailed the use of two Palestinian *services* (ford transits that sit about 8 passengers), two Israeli *sherutim* (collective taxis), and a 15 minute-walk. The first two mini-buses would take me respectively from Jalazon to Ramallah and from Ramallah to the checkpoint of Qalandia. After crossing Qalandia checkpoint, the Palestinian mini-bus would reach its final destination in a parking lot in East Jerusalem. From there, I would walk for about 15 minutes to West Jerusalem and take an Israeli *sherut* (collective taxi in Hebrew) to Tel Aviv's main bus station and from there I would take another *sherut* to Lod.²⁵

Commuting with an Israeli yellow-plate car facilitates movement between Jalazon and Lod because it allows crossing the checkpoint near the Palestinian village of Nil'in. This checkpoint, which is very close to Lod, is open only to Israeli citizens and therefore I used it when I commuted between the two sites with Palestinian citizens of Israel, who have relatives in the refugee camp.

Crossing the Green Line: My Re-Adjustment Process as an Ethnographer through the Prism of Gender Relations in the Two Sites

In this study I argue that there are two different structures of marginality in the camp and the district. While in chapters 3, 4, and 5, I investigate the logic and the effects of each structure, in this section, I give a reflexive account of my own experience of re-adaptation - as an ethnographer - to the new structure of marginality in Lod. Specifically, I analyze how my reactions to the dynamics of gender and family relations in Lod have changed during my fieldwork to emphasize the need for ethnographers to guard against the possibility of unconsciously applying some informants' moral standards of what is right and wrong.²⁶ This account both illuminates the value of ethnography as a methodology uniquely positioned to shed light on the links between structures and experiences of marginality and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the interdependence of theory and ethnographic fieldwork (Wacquant 2002; Wilson and Chadda 2009).

When, in early spring 2008, I moved from the refugee camp to the town, I instinctively gravitated towards the many women from the West Bank living in the town. I was particularly pleased to meet women from Jalazon refugee camp and other West Bank villages that I had visited. The attraction was visibly mutual. These women were at first an important emotional anchor for me because they reminded me of my daily interactions with people in the refugee camp. I enjoyed their warm welcome and immediate trust. On their side, West Bank women regularly invited me to their homes to spend the afternoon together. They often asked me rhetorical questions about the positive characteristics of social life in the West Bank with particular emphasis of mutual help among family members and neighbors. They also warned me about "the broken men" (*al-kharbānīn*) living in Lod and especially the Mahatta district. By "broken men" they mainly meant men with a past or present of drug addiction or a criminal record. This term also extended to married men who dated Israeli and Russian "girlfriends" (*haverot* in Hebrew) and went to raves (*mesibot rave* in Hebrew). After living for many months

²⁵ There is direct public transportation from Jerusalem to Lod but Jerusalem's central bus station is far from East Jerusalem and therefore it was more convenient for me to reach the place from where Israeli mini-bus depart for Tel Aviv and then take another bus to Lod.

²⁶ Of course, the first risk for an ethnographer is to import values and moral judgments from his or her own society.

in a West Bank refugee camp, I myself tended to reproduce the moralistic perspective of the women from the West Bank, with whom I was spending much of my time. This, in turn, made me initially blind to how other Palestinian women in Lod related to their “broken” husbands and neighbors.

During the first week of my fieldwork in early July 2007, my attitude towards gender relations in the town was dictated by curiosity rather than by moral judgment and I was much more oblivious of the sexual harassment I faced. During my short stint in Lod before moving to Jalazon, I spent some days with Marwan, a Palestinian driver who lived in Lod. Marwan, who eventually became a close informant, asked me if I wanted to live with him and his Russian “girlfriend” (*havera* in Hebrew). He was married to a Palestinian woman and, while regularly visiting his wife and children, he was also sharing an apartment with a Russian woman. At the time, I thought his offer was bizarre, but while declining it, I did not feel particularly offended by it. During the couple of days that I spent in Lod conversing with this man, many of his comments contained sexual connotations. For instance, he commented on how “Russian women” went around with tiny shorts and small revealing t-shirts. He also asked if I was not afraid that my boyfriend back in the United States would cheat on me and when I told him that I trusted my boyfriend, he categorically informed me that “it is a biological need for a man to have sex at least once a week.” Then, he added laughing: “I hope you are good in math, so once a week for six months, how many times?” I paused and then told him: “24 times.” He replied: “You are here to write a paper and he makes sex at least 24 times, is that fair?” And concluded: “But you are lucky because you met me, I already have an Arab wife, a Russian girlfriend... I can have an Italian girlfriend too!” Despite the sexual content of many of our conversations, I did not feel bothered or threatened by Marwan’s questions, comments, or jokes. By contrast, I was curious to understand what his rudeness and machismo meant in terms of his perception of me as a foreign (Western) woman.

What strikes me in reflection is that when I went back to Lod after my fieldwork in the refugee camp, sexual innuendos and jokes made by men in the town suddenly felt unbearable to me. It took me a full month to realize that I was deploying the moral understanding of “proper” gender relations that I had learned in the camp. First, I did not want to let go of the feeling of accomplishment and pride that I derived from a sort of shared assessment of my successful stay in the camp. After all, in the camp I had never become the object of rumor or gossip. Despite my close contact with men in the camp and my access to male-dominated institutions (including the evening meetings of the camp popular committee which at times lasted until 10pm), women in the camp praised me over and over again for my “proper” conduct and for the lack of “problems” connected with my presence in the camp.

Second, and more importantly, I had internalized specific expectations about gender relations and applied them to my interactions with the residents of the Mahatta district. Thus, initially, I offended several men in the district with my irritated and stiff reactions and my systematic rejection of their invitations to drive into town for a coffee or a tea. During these encounters, I was offended by what I could not help but recognize as sexual harassment. I also felt utterly defeated: no matter what I was doing I felt that both women and men in the district distrusted me.

A conversation with Rula, a young Bedouin woman living in the Mahatta, was the revealing and liberating event that helped me understand that I needed to readapt to a new context of marginalization. Rula made me understand that in transitioning from the camp to the town I had to become a different woman, a different person, a different researcher. Among many other

things, I had to remember how months earlier I had found bizarre but not personally offensive my interactions with Marwan. When I complained about “sexual harassment” with Rula, her reaction surprised me. She started smiling and telling me stories about men who had harassed her. We laughed together and gossiped for the entire afternoon about who did what to me or to her. She also told me: “You are not in that refugee camp, here you are not the only foreign woman (*al ghariba aluahida*), there are also the Jewish and the Russian girls (*al banat iudiat ua Russiat*), men go out with them, they also want to go out with you or at least to speak with you.”

After that day, I gradually normalized the presence of sexual content in my social interactions, including laughing at men’s comments on the shorts and loose, low-cut tops worn by non-Arab women during the summer and listening to their stories about dating and going to discos and raves. In stark contrast with the refugee camp, becoming more flirtatious with men and sharing stories about sexual harassment with women became normal elements of my daily routine in the district. Take the case of Marwan. Through other Palestinian women, I became acquainted with his wife and I was once invited to have dinner with them. At the dinner table husband, wife, and children were all engaged to manage family relations through my presence: the children repeatedly called me “the Italian girlfriend” with amusement; the husband wanted to speak with me in English, a language that his wife did not understand; and the wife wanted to humiliate him by showing him that I had become her friend and liked spending time with her.

These gender interactions with my informants in the two sites reveal two different logics: the strong collective moral code of Jalazon and the lack of personal investment in other people’s behaviors among residents of the Mahatta. While residents of the Mahatta did not feel personally ashamed if someone else from the district sexually harassed me, camp dwellers felt the need to be recognized as members of respectful and decent group (according to shared norms of what constitutes a decent behavior for the members of the group). Thus, refugees pushed for my explicit acknowledgment that I felt protected in the camp. They also symbolically rewarded me when they thought that my own behavior contributed to that successful outcome: my feeling of ease inside the camp rested on my ability to keep to “decent” behavior that would warrant no gossip or rumor.

The question of how my identity shaped my experience in the field is not limited to my gender. In the second part of this appendix, I will address how my ethnonational identity – as a non-Jewish Italian - was an ever-present dimension of my social relations in the field.

Ethnonational Identity and Social Relations in the Field

In the introduction of this study, I addressed the question of the relationships between informants and fieldworker by highlighting how the dominant perceptions of me as an ethnographer were strikingly differ in the two sites. Specifically, I argued that the dominant typology of information-seekers in the two sites – humanitarian workers in the camp and the Israeli police in the district – affected the ways in which refugees and urban minorities perceived and related to me. In the previous section of this appendix, I expanded on this discussion of social relations in the field by focusing on gender relations and by providing a reflexive account of how informants have shaped my modes of interactions and my dispositions, including the ways I walked, spoke, and smiled. My main point was that, during my stay in Lod, I had to unlearn the “decent” behavior and “proper” gender relations that refugees had imposed on me and I had to learn how to normalize the many forms of sexual harassment that I encountered in Lod.

In this section, I focus on another dimension – ethnonational membership – that deeply shaped the intersubjective terrain upon which I carried out this fieldwork. While, as I will discuss below, my Italian nationality was an important dimension of this intersubjective terrain, the dimension of my ethnonational membership that more powerfully shaped my social relations within the broader Israeli society was my non-Jewish identity. Indeed, in the Israeli context, the Jewish-non-Jewish divide operates as a fundamental ethnonational principle of social division as it is central to a state project of national self-determination for the Jewish population.

A first striking realization as a non-Jewish scholar conducting fieldwork in the Israeli-Palestinian context is that I was often perceived by Israeli authorities as a potential “troublemaker” or even a (conscious or unwitting) supporter of terrorist activities. This was made clear over the years by the “security” stickers that I received at Ben Gurion International airport. Every time I flew out of Israel, I was reminded that one fundamental dimension of my identity raised my potential dangerousness to the maximum level: I was not Jewish. Indeed, a couple of simple questions about what I did while in Israel would suffice for the airport security to understand that I was not Jewish and to place a purple sticker – or a level 5 sticker²⁷ – on my bags: What was the purpose of your visit? Did you come to visit family in Israel? At times I was also directly asked if I was Jewish, mainly towards the end of my two years at the Hebrew University when I was very fluent in Hebrew and I probably showed a certain “Israeli” way of interacting. My understanding is that in that period I could more easily “pass” for Jewish despite my lack of family connections to Israel. I think that in general the purpose of these initial questions is to establish if you are Jewish or otherwise you have family connections with a Jewish person. It is here worthwhile to note that the Law of Return provides that not only Jewish individuals but also the child or grandchild of a Jew as well as the spouse of a Jew are eligible for Israeli citizenship.

The purple or number 5 stickers would inevitably result in a lengthy interview and a careful analysis of the content of my bags. While these controls usually occurred in the route out of Israel, I also experienced interviews by airport security personnel just after getting off the plane. Once, I was stopped by an airport security agent just as I left the plane. I am not sure why he stopped me but he asked me what the purpose of my visit was and when I replied that I wanted to spend two months at the beach in Tel Aviv with friends, he asked me the names of my friends and I just listed five common Hebrew names such as Yuval and Yael and he let me proceed to the real passport and security check where once again I was asked about the purpose of my visit and other similar questions. In general, names - especially Arabic and Hebrew names - play an important role in establishing passengers’ identities. For example, the tourist visa document that passengers fill out on the plane before landing in Israel includes a line for the first name of one’s father. Thus, one’s presentation of self – what one says about his or her connection to Israel and the names of friends and relatives that one mentions – interplays with one’s ethnonational identity as it is revealed on legal documentation – one might have an Italian passport but if his family name and/or the first name of his father is “Mahmud” instead of “Fernando,” then he is somewhat related to “Arabness.”

Interestingly, my gender played a role in shaping Israeli authorities’ perceptions of me as a potential threat. A non-Jewish single woman traveling alone falls into the category of someone who could easily and unconsciously be used as carrier of information or explosive materials. Indeed, when in summer 2003 I showed up at the airport with a Jewish Israeli friend who told the security personnel that we had had a long-distance relationship since 1998 – a relationship

²⁷ The color system in place until mid-2007 and was then replaced by a number system.

documented by the many visa stamps in my passport – my experience was very different. With my Hebrew in a good shape and my “boyfriend” accompanying me, I was even able to go to the “Israeli passports only” line until the end and then convince them to let me through without additional security checks even if I did not have an Israeli passport.

Along similar lines, my non-Jewish identity interacted with my Italian passport and my gender to signal Israeli authorities that I was a potential danger when I was arrested at a West Bank checkpoint in summer 2003 for suspicious activities. Indeed, I was writing some field notes about the physical structure of the checkpoint and the lines of Palestinians waiting to cross it. I probably made the soldiers nervous because they took my notes away from me and called the Israeli border police. The border police officers, who took me away first to a local police office in a nearby Jewish settlement and then to the “Russian compound” in Jerusalem, a police station renowned for police interrogations of people arrested for political charges, responded to my protests by telling me with a disgusted face: “What were you doing at a checkpoint? There are terrorists who want to target our soldiers at the checkpoint, do you work for me? Did a Mohamed or Mahmud send you there?” The interrogation was a particularly stressful experience but here I want to focus on my non-Jewish identity. While officially under arrest at the checkpoint – the border police arrived about five hours after the soldiers confiscated my notes from me – I was able to give my cellular phone and my notebook with Arabic grammar exercises from my classes at Birzeit University to a friend who had come to the checkpoint with me. I was also able to send a quick text message to a Jewish Israeli friend – the same friend who that same summer came to the airport with me saying that he was my boyfriend. While driving from Tel Aviv to the police station in Jerusalem, this friend kept calling the police and saying that I was his girlfriend. During my interrogation, I was quickly defined as Christian (*nozrit* in Hebrew) after I told them that I was from Italy and I was not Jewish. My fluency in Hebrew and the phone calls made by my Jewish Israeli friend helped me frame a story in which my non-Jewish membership and my presence at the checkpoint did not entail hostility towards the Israeli state as defined by the police officers. By contrast, I was constructed as the non-Jewish “spouse” of “a Jewish good citizen,” who naively wanted to see a checkpoint with her own eyes. Before being released literally in the arms of my “boyfriend,” one of the two interrogators commented on my studies in sociology: “you study society, so study society in Tel Aviv, for example, how people your age enjoy life at the beach, don’t go to checkpoints, what kind of society you want to find there?”

As to my everyday interactions with Jewish Israelis, my Jewishness was often assumed when I asked or replied to questions in Hebrew. For instance, once, when I gave a direction to a taxi driver in Hebrew, he immediately asked me with a smile: You are a Jewish immigrant from Argentina, right (*at hola hadasha min Argentina, nachon*)?²⁸ Before I could reply, he added: “I know it may be hard for you but your children will have an amazing life in the land [of Israel] (*ba’Aretz* in Hebrew).” Another time, a money changer in Tel Aviv urged me to “make *aliyah*” (immigrate to Israel) because “there is a lot of anti-Semitism in Italy.”

Of course, this is not to say that I did not reveal my non-Jewish identity to many of my Israeli acquaintances. Actually, many Jewish Israelis considered my Italian nationhood an attractive characteristic. In the words of the neighbor of a friend in Tel Aviv: “Israelis and Italians [are] warm people” (*Israelim veItalkim amim hamim*).²⁹

²⁸ As I speak Hebrew with an Italian accent, my accented Hebrew sounds similar to the Hebrew spoken by Jewish immigrants from Argentina, a group numerically bigger than Jewish immigrants from Italy.

²⁹ In Hebrew the sound of this expression is rhythmic.

On the West Bank side of the Green Line, I often manipulated my “Christian” identity especially in my encounters with Israeli soldiers. This was particularly evident during the period I lived in the West Bank village of Biddu and I crossed a roadblock, at times surveilled by Israeli soldiers, to catch an Israeli bus into Jerusalem. Some friends from the village had suggested that I wear a cross and that I told soldiers at the roadblock that I had visited “a Christian holy site” near the village. Indeed, near Biddu there is a Franciscan church which, before the encirclement of Biddu and other nearby villages by the Israeli “separation fence,” attracted many Christian pilgrims. Thus, when stopped at the roadblock and asked about my whereabouts, I often said that I was staying at the Franciscan church and going to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Once, a soldier asked me the following question: “Aren’t you afraid to travel in this area alone?” I remember my own surprise when these words came out of my mouth: “God is with me.” I did not intentionally mean to tease the soldier or manipulate religious beliefs to that point but this was my spontaneous reply and the soldier did not add anything else so I walked through the roadblock without turning back.

I conclude this discussion of ethnonational identity with a brief account of how my non-Jewish and Italian identities shaped my social interactions with Palestinians in Jalazon and Lod.³⁰ In my encounters with Jewish Israelis within the Green Line I often emphasized my connection with Jewish Israeli society, from friendships to familiarity with Israeli popular culture. In my social relations with Palestinians of the West Bank, I emphasized my past experience in the West Bank as a volunteer with human rights organizations and as a student at Birzeit university. I also omitted to disclose my experience at the Hebrew University and my training in Hebrew. One of the reasons I started my fieldwork in Jalazon was to strengthen my credentials among Palestinians, especially in Lod. In the refugee camp, Italy had a better reputation than Britain and the United States, the two countries considered responsible respectively for the past and present predicament of political oppression of Palestinians. While foreigners visiting or volunteering in the camp include both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals, this divide was subsumed by the ranking of countries according to foreign policy issues. Jewishness was not really the focus of refugees’ interests. American volunteers were those more under pressure from refugees’ questions about the country’s foreign policy in the Middle East and particularly in Israel-Palestine. By contrast, in Lod, there were no foreign students or volunteers visiting the Mahatta district and therefore my presence caused a lot of curiosity and diffidence. I clearly represented something exceptional as I did not fit into the ethnoreligious and ethnonational categories of people recognized at the local level: Russians, Jews, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Bedouins. While Palestinians in Lod had a certain familiarity with Italy because some of them have relatives who studied in Italy, many of them expressed their disbelief that I was there to conduct research; they could not believe that I was interested in writing about Palestinians in Lod today. Thus, the most salient identity that helped me was the attachment to Jalazon developed in the previous eight months. The experience and knowledge that I carried from Jalazon to Lod helped me embed myself more into the social and symbolic ties between the two places and distance myself from my previous engagement with the dominant Jewish Israeli society. While some of the Palestinians in Lod suggested that I omit information about my stay in Jalazon when speaking with people in the town – mainly to avoid unwanted attention from the Israeli police –, I often resorted to stories about the camp and the West Bank in my social relations in the Mahatta district.

³⁰ The empirical analysis of Jalazon and Lod, developed respectively in chapters 3 and 4, includes additional discussion refugees and urban minorities’ perspectives on Italy and the Western world.

All these examples of my social interactions with Palestinians and Jewish Israelis highlight how the two phases of my past experience in the field—living in Israel from 1998 to 2000 and living in the West Bank and Gaza in 2001-2002 and the summers of 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006—gave me opportunities for chiseling the truth and omitting information. On the one side, in my social relations with Israelis, especially Israeli authorities, I emphasized my experience as a student at the Hebrew University, my intense language training in Hebrew, my familiarity with Israeli popular culture, and my friendship with many Jewish Israelis. On the other side, during my fieldwork, especially in Jalazon, I emphasized my past experiences with various aspects of life under Israeli military occupation such as living under curfew and crossing checkpoints and my past activities of support to poor Palestinians such as olive harvesting and the removal of roadblocks at the entrance of isolated West Bank villages.

I conclude this appendix with a final note on ethnonational identity in my encounters within academia outside Israel-Palestine, especially in the United States. Two episodes clearly showed me that my identity as a non-Jewish scholar affects how some people in the audience react to my presentations and that scholarship carried out in the Israeli-Palestinian space often generates emotional reactions that prevent the audience from engaging with your work in a constructive way. In summer 2006, at the end of my first presentation at the American Sociological Association, a young woman came to speak to me and with a big smile on her face she asked me: “Where are you from in Israel?” I was puzzled because I speak English with an Italian accent and I often assume that people easily recognize where I am from. When I told her that I was not from Israel but from Italy, she was evidently disappointed or, more correctly, annoyed and she simply turned her back on me and walked out of the room. On my way to another annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in summer 2010, I shared a collective taxi from the airport to one of the conference’s hotel with a couple of American academics. They asked me if I was presenting at the conference and I told them that I was presenting on a panel on “Muslim and Middle Eastern Societies,” and the woman shouted out loud: “I never go to those kinds of panels because people there are anti-Israel.” I felt lucky that I had not volunteered the information that my presentation was actually on Palestinians under Israeli rule. However, as the woman kept telling things such as “Arabs there [in Israel] are better treated than here [in the United States], they shouldn’t complain,” I tried to engage her into a conversation but she quickly grew furious at me. When I got off the taxi, another passenger, a middle-aged African-American woman, touched me on my shoulder and told me: “You have a good one here, OK?”