Framing Absence:
Visuals of the Wall and the Vanishing Landscapes in Palestine

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Abstract

This dissertation explores people's relationship to the landscapes of material, abstract, and visual borders in the context of Palestine-Israel. Since 2002, the construction of the Israeli separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has significantly transformed the way locals, particularly on the Palestinian side of the Wall see and articulate their relation to the landscape. Already living in a state of military occupation through restriction of movement, limited access to land and urban expansion on occupied territory, the Wall has considerably shifted Palestinians' relationships to the landscape. To them the landscape has become a visual field on which power dynamics and political structures are embodied and expressed. Moreover, for many Palestinians the Israeli construction of the Wall is visible evidence of the on-going process of destruction of the Palestinian landscape. But what is the view of Palestinians and Israelis living on the Israeli side of the Wall and those living in Palestine but in close proximity to the Wall? What is their engagement with the Wall? To answer these questions, this dissertation draws on more than 12 months of ethnographic research in Israel and Palestine that involved extended interviews with Palestinian and Israeli photographers and activists in Israel, as well as Palestinians whose lives were affected by the Wall's construction in proximity to their homes and for whom the Wall route brought them into direct confrontation with the Israeli military. This research also examined representations of the Wall in different visual projects. From a theoretical perspective, this dissertation asks how do visual fields facilitate the structuring of national imaginaries and what sights and future visions are offered by different readings of the landscape? To answer these questions, I employ anthropological theories of violence, borders and the visual, and propose the concept of landscapocide, a violent visual process through which landscapes are framed, and made to be seen and unseen. Through landscapocide and other anthropologically grounded theories and concepts I offer a new reading of the ways in which people in bordered contexts give meaning to what they see.

Dedication

To our land,
and it is the one surrounded with torn hills,
the ambush of a new past
To our land, and it is a prize of war,
the freedom to die from longing and burning
and our land, in its bloodied night,
is a jewel that glimmers for the far upon the far
and illuminates what's outside it ...
As for us, inside,
we suffocate more!

Acknowledgments

This dissertation is a product of years of thinking, conversing, listening, reading and writing. Without the support and help of many people in my life, I would not have been able to finish this project. I first want to thank my family: my parents Nawal and Ghassan Abu Hatoum, and my brothers Sa'ady and Shady Abu Hatoum. Their support and belief in me was a crucial force in helping me complete this work.

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Finally, I am very thankful to the Palestinians and Israelis who were my interlocutors in the field. Their insights, creativity, experiences, resistance, and vision adorn this manuscript with their hopes for liberation.

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Notes on Translation and Transliteration

During my research, I conducted conversations in Arabic and Hebrew. I translated all these conversations into English. Acknowledging the inherent inability of ever fully arriving at the most faithful translation, I nonetheless did my best to be as precise as possible in conveying not only the explicit meaning of the words but also the implicit cultural meaning. Furthermore, where translating these words was insufficient to offer the contextual and historical usage or significance of the words, I chose to use the (Palestinian Dialect) Arabic or (Modern) Hebrew words in their English transliteration. Both Arabic and Hebrew are Semitic languages and they consist of sounds that do not exist in English, like the sound of aspirated guttural vowels (such as ha, 'a (or a'), kha; and gha or qa).

Chapter One: Introduction: Landscapes of Absence and Contested Sights

> My poems do not deliver mere images and metaphors, but deliver landscapes, villages, and fields; they deliver a place. It makes that which is absent from geography, present in its form that is able to reside in the poetic text, as if residing on his land.
>
> Mahmoud Darwish[1]

> [T]he disaster of 1948 made the fate and history of Israeli Jews and Palestinians inseparable and that as long as the disaster of the "visible victim"—the Palestinian who suffered expulsion, dispossession, and destruction—is preserved unseen, those who inflicted it or their descendants—the Israeli Jews—will not recognize their own disaster. The disaster of becoming the perpetrators of the "visible victim" has been kept out of the visual field. (550)
>
> Ariella Azoulay (2013),
> *Potential History: Thinking through Violence*.

The scene of the Israeli occupied hilltops in the West Bank elicits a sense of familiar loss from me. I have seen and felt this loss with my family. Once, I was told, there used to exist a small village called Ma'aloul; early in 1950, over the course of a week, it was destroyed by occupiers, the village's families expelled, losing their right to return. Today, Ma'aloul, my maternal grandmother's village, is only few kilometres away from our home, near the city of Nazareth, and is out of our reach.

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[1] Quoted from Simone Bitton's film (1997) *Mahmoud Darwish: As the Land is the Language*.

The landscape in the West Bank, where most of my fieldwork took place, is one that is already prone to the Israeli state's confiscation. Ghalib, one of my central Palestinian subjects I talked with, pointed to a hill and said "look at all this *abandoned property* waiting for investors to build on, or for the Israeli occupation to confiscate". A few months later, during my participation in Israeli political alternative tours in the West Bank, I was informed that Israeli investors view any hilltop uninhabited by Palestinians as a potential construction site for Israeli developers. The landscape, I learned, is in a continuous process of vanishing at the hands of a hegemonic national story.

This dissertation is situated at the conceptual meeting points of visuals, landscapes, borders and violence. It narrates the current state of a shifting landscape and of expanding imagery. It explores violence at the border and bordering violence on contested geopolitical lands. To investigate such processes, I choose to shed light on the Israeli separation Wall and its visual projection on people's visions, sights, presence and futures. I also attempt to provide a critical anthropological writing on Israel/Palestine while engaging with the presence of visuals in people's lives. I explore the vanishing, absenting, and (re)presenting of landscapes in the Palestinians national imagination, as well as in the shadows of Israeli national anxieties. I also explore the multiple forms of borders assume at the centre of Palestinian reality, while locating the absenting effects borders have on the Israeli landscape. For instance, expressions of borders include divergent Palestinian and Israeli experiences with the state and military, which involve overt, as well as more subtle practices of bordering violence.

I pose the following questions to guide my journey of investigating the visual landscape in the shadow of the Israeli-constructed Wall in the West Bank: what role do visuals have in people's lives in Palestine and in the Israeli state? What role does the landscape—as a site and a scene—play in informing people's sense of familiarity and alienation? How do people who live in this context relate to the Wall, as a sight on the landscape and as in a photograph? How are borders talked about in terms of visual vocabularies? In what ways do violence and borders inform each other in the narratives of subjects of my interlocutors? Finally, how are violence and borders structurally and systematically interwoven, and what might paying close attention to their relationship disclose about the effects that visuals have on ordinary people's lives? The land is at the heart of colonial relations between Palestinians and Israelis. The landscape—the site as a sight—is continuously being articulated, shifted, destroyed, contested, poeticized, and photographed. The landscape is forever vanishing and emerging on colonized or occupied lands, in ways that require of the locals constant (re)orientation and (re)familiarization with their surroundings. Landscape in this research is a living force. Israeli state utilizing landscapes for military occupation frames people's decisions and dreams living under occupation. Landscapes shrink and expand accordingly with the vanishing points seen or spotted across the horizon. Palestinian landscape—that is, the material landscape identified as such by Palestinians living in the historic land of Palestine[2]—is shrinking constantly as militarized Israeli settler colonial practices sweep the land, expanding construction both of

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[2] In this research, I focus on Palestinian citizens of the Israeli state and Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Having said that, this research leaves out Palestinian refugees or migrants who live outside of Israel/Palestine.

military structures, like the Wall, and of urban colonies, like settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Thawaba 2011:131–132). I conceptualize this process as *landscapocide* to illuminate how, living through the killing of the landscape, as both site and sight, location and vision, people give meaning to their lives through what is made visible and invisible to them. Whatever landscape is left to them, Palestinians must make sense of it: some visualize it, some write about it, and some physically fight to maintain a viable attachment to it.

One of the main questions that drives this dissertation is how people establish or contest their relations to the visual, specifically through engaging with the material and vertical structure of the Wall on the land. Seeing and unseeing, presenting and absenting the Wall in photography is at the heart of this research. I talked with Palestinian and Israeli activists and photographers who shared with me their attempts to make sense of the visual, symbolic, and material state in which they lived.[3] In an attempt to explore the role visuals play in people's processes of making sense of their reality, in this dissertation I ask how visuals facilitate the structuring of national imaginaries, and what forms of present and future visions are offered by the different ways in which people view and attribute meaning to the landscape.

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[3] There are many international journalists, photographers and activists who arrive to Israel and Palestine to cover, report or protest the political situations. This research, however, only focuses on local Palestinian and Israeli photographers and activists in an attempt to centre the discussion on those whose lives heavily implicated by having lived in that context for most of their lives.

Journalistic Photography plays a crucial role in covering the events in Palestine and Israel. Like the land, photography too is a site of conflict, contestation and struggle. Ariella Azoulay argues that a photograph "bears the seal of the event itself" (2008:300). Deconstructing and reconstructing the events in a photograph requires that we perform a thorough reading of the photograph and the context within which it is framed. Azoulay invites us to "stop looking at the photograph and instead start watching it" (2008:14), inscribing a temporal and spatial dimension into our reading and interpretation of the photographic image. I take up Azoulay's invitation in this work, asking my readers to watch the photographs and to ask not only what photographs show, but also what they can do (Pinney 2004).

Since photography, as a visual form of communication, is at the centre of this dissertation, I shall start with an anecdote concerning a recent papal visit to Palestine which reflects the national tension that visuals, specifically, photographic images of the Wall, create in public discourses in Israel and Palestine. Upon arriving in Nazareth from Toronto for a family visit in May 2014, I noticed that everyone was talking about Pope Francis' visit to Palestine and Israel. Papal visits have always been tense, particularly because they involve potential international exposure of the conditions in which Palestinians live under Israeli occupation. This time, the Pope's visit issued a stronger message, through a scene made visible through photography to millions of people worldwide. Provoking reactions from the Israeli government and the Israeli public, the Pope's made a surprise stop he near a section of the Wall in the West Bank, which further

isolates the city of Bethlehem (Algemeiner 2014). Photographs circulating in the Palestinian, Israeli and international media showed the Pope standing near the Wall (see image 1), touching it with his right hand and appearing to be performing a prayer (Beaumont 2014). Graffiti on the Wall caught in journalists' photographs of the Pope praying at the Wall read "Pope we need some 1 to speak about justice...Pope Bethlehem look like Warsaw Ghetto" (Maan News 2014).[4] The Pope's surprise stop, followed by cameras broadcasting to the Christian world, directed strong attention to the Wall. In response to the Pope's unexpected move, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed in a press conference the importance of maintaining Israeli citizens' security, insisting that the Wall is necessary to save Israeli lives (Lazaroff 2014).

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[4] I choose not to correct the grammatical error in this quotation in order to shed the light on the locality of the message and to stay honest to the visual structure of the text as it was written on the Wall.

Image 1: Pope Francis prays near the Wall in Bethlehem. May 2014. Photograph by Kelly Lynn. Source: http://mondoweiss.net/2014/05/palestinian-refugees-separation. Used with the permission of Mondoweiss.

The Pope's posture at the Wall resembles that of Jewish worshippers praying near the Wall of the remaining Second Temple ruins, or Temple Mount, commonly referred to as the *Wailing Wall* or the *Western Wall*. The photographs circulating in local and international media manifest how one wall could visually and symbolically replace another. It was a moment of photographic citation and referencing, or what Christopher Pinney has conceptualized as 'inter-ocularity' (2004:34–35). Indeed, the photograph referenced in the one of Pope Francis at the s*eparation Wall* in Bethlehem is one taken of him during the same visit, praying at the *Western Wall* of the Second Jewish Temple, in Jerusalem (image 2).

Image 2: Pope Francis praying on the Western Wall, Jerusalem, May 2014. Source Al Bawabah News (Sadek 2014).

Different names are attributed to the Wall that reference a the multiplicity of political discourses invoked by Israelis or Palestinians: it is called, variously, *the fence*, *the barrier*, the *Wall*, *the apartheid Wall*, *the separation Wall*, *the racist Wall*, *the security fence* or *the security barrier*. Israeli hegemonic discourses describe the Wall in terms of security, minimizing the imagery of its materiality as a concrete brick Wall by referring to it as a 'fence' or 'barrier.' Palestinians, however, describe the Wall using the language of 'apartheid' and 'racism,' amplifying the imagery of a brick structure, as opposed to a transparent fence. In conversations with Palestinians and Israelis I talked with the structure was also referred in its shortened term: *al jidar* and *ha khoma*, "the Wall", in Arabic and Hebrew respectively. In this dissertation, hence, I shall refer to this structure as the "Wall". My use of the word 'Wall' and not 'fence' is an intentional one. Most people's immediate

and daily experience with this structure is in its 6 to 8 metre high concrete-brick form, since the segments of this structure that are built in close proximity to people's homes are made of bricks and look like an impermeable concrete Wall. The segments of the structure that resemble a wired fence are built in distant agricultural fields. Further, by capitalizing the first letter of the word, I intend to signify the singularity of the experience that the Wall has produced in me and in many of the people to whom I have spoken.

Through participant observation and interviews conducted over the course of a year of fieldwork in Israel and Palestine, in this dissertation I arrive at three lines of argument. First, I argue that the Wall is a material structure that is a manifestation of already existing symbolic and abstract forms of separation. In this sense, the Wall embodies a history of national and ethnic separation. It is also a structure that is lived and imagined by many Palestinians as an ongoing event, rather than a finished entity. The second line of argument is methodological: I argue that researching visuals in anthropology requires anthropologists to engage with the senses, to embody a form of mindfulness with their surroundings and with what they see or what their informants see. Researching visuals in anthropology is located in multiple locations: the physical realm, comprising material structures such as the Wall; the abstract realm, comprising the ways in which interlocutors talk about or conceptualize what they see; and the visual realm, which I conceptualize as the meeting point of both abstract and material forms, expressed through artistic expressions like photographs. Synthesizing the previous two, my third line argumentation addresses the gap existing in the literature on the anthropology of borders. I argue that

borders, whether material or abstract, have visual expressions: yet whereas some are made to be seen, others are made invisible. Hence, through this logic, visuals are utilized in the service of borders, and borders are rendered visually to augment their projection on the landscape, but also in the national imagination of a given nation-state. In the context of military occupation, as in our case here, the visual aspect of borders, expressed through specific architecture and symbolic structures to manipulate borders and enhance border efficiency, the Wall is unapologetically such a structure.

It is through my observations in the field as well as through conversations with Palestinian and Israeli interlocutors[5] that I came to explore the processes of normalization of violence at the borders and of the borders. I search for violence at locations where such violence has been visually suspended through the creation of borders. By visiting spaces and listening to people's testimonies about locations of borders that were created through past wars, I found violence at sites where Israeli military violence has been made visible through the creation of structures such as the Wall, sensor fences, checkpoints and landmines. Attending to the interconnectedness of borders and violence, I shall argue that borders are a product of violence, even though they are structured by nation-states in ways that conceal the violence they embody.

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[5] I use the term "interlocutors" to refer to people with whom I engaged in conversation during my fieldwork, whether in a structured interview setting or in brief conversations. I prefer the term "interlocutor" to "informant" as the latter further reinforces the power dynamics existing between researchers and subjects of research. "Informant" suggests that anthropologists relate to people in the field solely as a source of information rather than subjects whose lives also exist outside the research project. Amira Mittermaier (2011) offers a useful explanation for her discomfort in using the term "informants": "informant" assumes a unidirectional flow of information from research subject to anthropologist, whereas the term "interlocutor" suggests a dialogical relationship (Mittermaier 2011:2–23).

Tracing visual impositions on the landscape, I examine the production of

photographs by Israeli and Palestinian photographers, arguing that for these photographers,

photographic expressions of violent borders form an immediate way to respond to and

engage with the visuality of the Wall. In Israeli photographic work, the Wall is projected as

a response to its absence from Israeli public and political life; in Palestinian work,

however, the projection of the Wall through photography expresses the wish to detach

from its physical presence on the landscape and its repercussions on people's lives who

encounter it on a daily basis.

The questions asked and the arguments that crystallize in this dissertation are the

product of a year fieldwork conducted in Israel and Palestine. I incorporated three methods

in order to organize the richness of data that I faced in the field. Firstly, I conducted a total

of twenty-five in-depth interviews with Palestinian and Israeli activists and photographers,

sixteen of whom were Jewish Israelis and nine Palestinians. Secondly, I participated in

three Israeli political tours in the West Bank, and attended activists' talks, conferences, and

art exhibitions. Thirdly, I document my own experiences in the field through taking

photographs and fieldnotes. Since this research is centred on exploring visuals, I look at

the visual field, drawing upon conversations about it with my interlocutors; analyzing

relevant media; and documenting what I saw in the landscape.

In this introductory chapter, I shall first outline a historical frame of Israel and

Palestine. Since militarized national borders in general, and, more specifically, the Wall are

the focal point of this dissertation, the historical account I outline here is framed through the specific practices of partition, separation, and border creation on the land since 1948. Second, I will situate the Wall within this history and briefly outline its material structure and political trajectory. Third, I will identify and outline key debates in three bodies of literature within which this research aspires to be situated: visual anthropology; anthropology of violence; and anthropology of borders. By the end of this dissertation, I hope to have critically engaged these three themes by looking specifically at landscapes of borders in the shadow of the Wall under conditions of military occupation.

1. Palestine/Israel: A History of Partition and Border Formations

The separation Wall stands uncomfortably on a knotty history and topography of shifting borders. Neither its construction, its route, structure, reasoning, verticality, politics, visuals nor implications were smooth; everything in its construction process has been continually contested by Palestinians whose livelihood is affected by it, along with Israeli and international organizations and activists. The history of the Wall does not start with the first brick of concrete erected on the landscape, but rather with familiar and earlier trajectories of border creation that preceded the Wall's presence and facilitated its construction. The Wall not only stands on lands that have been historically divided and partitioned; it is also a structure that embodies histories of ethno-national fragmentations.

The establishment of the Israeli state in the year 1948 marked the beginning of a significant era of national confrontations between Palestinians who remained in Palestine

and Jewish migrants who arrived to the newly established state (Masalha 2008). For Palestinians, it was a year that marked the displacements of Palestinians and the colonization of Palestine by the European Zionist movement (Masalha 2008:123, 125), established as the Zionist Organization (ZO) in 1897 under the leadership of Theodor Herzl and later renamed the World Zionist Organization (WZO) (Gershon 1999:77). The nationalization and secularization of Jewish identity and society in Europe—particularly Eastern Europe—in the late eighteenth century signified the beginning of Zionist ideology (Pappe 2006:11). At the dawn of the twentieth century, ideological leaders of the WZO linked their movement for self-determination with the settlement of a geographical territory (Kimmerling 1983). The movement chose Palestine as the national territory of the Jewish people, linking the land with historical Jewish presence prior to the Roman Empire and the exile of the Jewish people from the region two thousand years ago (Pappe 2006:11).

As social historian Baruch Kimmerling (1983) and historian Ilan Pappe (2006: 11) argue, until the occupation of Palestine by the British in 1918, the Zionist movement consisted of a mix of nationalist ideology and colonialist practice (Gershon 1999:75).[6] During the first half of the 20th century, the Zionist movement was forming a solid lobbying presence in Europe, especially in Britain, all the while strengthening their

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[6] Scholars like Illan Pappe, Baruch Kimmerling and Benny Morris belong to the "New Historian" school (in Hebrew: ha histeryionim ha hadashiem) (Silverstein 1996; Shapira 1995). New Historians produced a "new historiography" that contested the Zionist hegemonic narrative of the Israeli state, specifically concerning the 1948 war; the establishment of the Israeli state; the displacement of Palestinians; Palestinian land confiscation; and the relation of the Israeli political establishment to Holocaust survivors (Silverstein 1996:105–106).

organizing strategies in newly colonized Palestine (Kimmerling 1983:56–57). At the same

time, waves of European Jews began migrating to Palestine, the majority of whom were

seeking a refuge from the Nazi regime's genocide of the Jewish people in Europe. By

1947, the WZO in Palestine was militarily ready to occupy the country and to fight local

and Arab armies (Pappe 2006:13–15).

The narrative which persists in the national Palestinian imagination, and the story

with which I grew up, tells of a vibrant urban and peasant Palestinian culture and society

existing prior to 1948. The Palestinian national myth also narrates peaceful relations

between Jews and Arabs who lived in Palestine that were eventually destroyed when

Palestine became a British Mandate, an antecedent that facilitated the eventual partition of

Palestine. The Palestinian story I learned in my high school in Nazareth also narrates Arab

revolts, between the years 1936 to 1939, against the colonization of Palestine by the British

and the WZO, which resulted in many deaths of both Arabs and Jews. These stories are

reaffirmed by historians who wrote about Palestine's history in the twentieth century

(Kimmerling 1983; Morris 2004; Masalha 1992; Khalidi 2005).

Between 1920 and 1942, Zionists in leadership positions, like Chaim Weizmann,

Nahum Soklove and Ze'ev Jabotinsky[7], pushed the British government to assist the WZO

in carrying out the partition of Palestine, and demanded that the greater portion of the land

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[7] Ze'ev Jabotinsky was famous for his vision of separation between Arabs and Jews living in Palestine. He
wrote an article titled "The Iron Wall" arguing for the inevitability of enforcing separation between the two
populations (Jabotinsky 1923).

be given to Jewish people (Pappe 2006). On 29 November 1947, the United Nations

General Assembly convened to vote on Resolution 181 for the partition of Palestine into

two nation-states: one for the Jews and one for Palestinian Arabs (United Nations, General

Assembly 1947; see map 1).[8] On that day, the UN granted the WZO's demands and called

for the partition of Palestine (United Nations, General Assembly 1947). The partition

resolution was widely protested by many Arabs in the region as well as by Arab

governments. The tensions between Jews and Arabs living in Palestine were heightened,

resulting in violent eruptions between the two communities (Pappe 2006). Arab countries

rejected the UN Partition Resolution and formed a military alliance under the name of

Jaish al-Inqath, "The Liberation Army" (or, "The Salvation Army"), which was sent to

fight the Zionist forces in Palestine (Pappe 2006:51; Morris 2004).

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[8] Note that according to UN Resolution 181, the old city of Jerusalem (marked in white on map 1) constituted a shared sacred space of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and was to be considered "Corpus Separatum," meaning it would be ruled neither by the Israeli nor the Palestinian state, but by an international regime. Dwellers of the Corpus Separatum would be granted a separate citizenship, that of the City of Jerusalem (United Nations, General Assembly 1947:146–150).

PALESTINE
PLAN OF PARTITION
WITH ECONOMIC UNION
PROPOSED BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION
PLAN DE PARTAGE
AVEC UNION ECONOMIQUE
PROPOSE PAR LA COMMISSION AD HOC
CHARGEE DE LA QUESTION PALESTINIENNE

Arab State — Etat arabe
Jewish State — Etat juif
City of Jerusalem — Ville de Jérusalem

Boundary proposed by UNSCOP

LEBANON
LIBAN
SYRIA
SYRIE

ACRE
SAFAD
TIBERIAS
HAIFA
BEISAN
JENIN
TULKARM
NABLUS
JAFFA
TEL AVIV
JAFFA
ARAB
ARABE
RAMALLAH
RAMLE
JERUSALEM
GAZA
HEBRON
BEERSHEBA

LAKE TIBERIAS

DEAD SEA

(FORMERLY TRANSJORDAN)
(ANTERIEUREMENT TRANSJORDANIE)
JORDAN
JORDANIE

EGYPT
EGYPTE

NEGEB

GULF OF AQABA

International Boundaries
Frontières internationales
District Boundaries
Limites de districts
Sub-District Boundaries
Limites de sous-districts
Roads
Routes
Railways
Voies ferrées

MAP NO. 103.1 (b)
FEBRUARY 1956
UNITED NATIONS

Kilometres 10   0   10   20   30   40 Kilometres
Miles 5   0   5   10   15   20   25 Miles

BASE MAP: Survey of Palestine, April 1946.
Modified.

Map 1: : Map of UN Partition Plan for Palestine, adopted 29 Nov 1947. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Partition_Plan_for_Palestine#/media/File:UN_Palestine_Partition_Versions_1947.jpg.
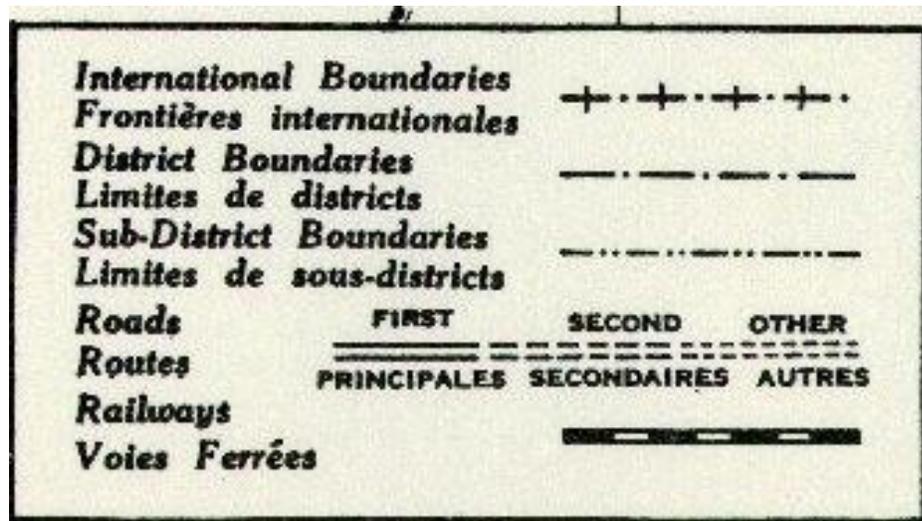
Image 3: Key for map 1

The Palestinian story also tells of the defeat of the Arab Liberation Army, followed by the Zionist forces' execution of what they called *Plan C* (or *Gimel*, in Hebrew), under the leadership of David Ben Gurion (Pappe 2006:28).[9] Plan C commanded the Zionist forces to kill the Palestinian leadership, Palestinian financial supporters, Palestinians who acted against Jews, senior Palestinian officers and officials. It also directed the destruction of Palestinian transportation and of sources of Palestinian livelihood, like water wells and mills; further, it coordinated attacks on Palestinian meeting places, like clubs or cafes (Pappe 2006:28). Plan C, however, was not sufficient to the process of taking over the land, and so was followed by *Plan D* (*Dalet*, in Hebrew) (Pappe 2006:28; Masalha

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[9] Plan A, which was drafted by Hagana commander Elimelech Avnir, suggested a guideline for the takeover of Palestine once the British administration withdrew. Plan B had been devised in 1946 and it aimed at preparing the Jewish military and community for the offensive campaign in Palestine (Pappe 2006:28).

2008:124). Under Plan D, which called for the total expulsion of Palestinians from their

homeland, even those villages that had been forced to surrender or to collaborate with the

Zionist forces were destroyed and their inhabitants displaced (Pappe 2006; Khalidi 1988).[10]

By the end of the war in 1948, an Israeli state was declared on 78% of the land of

historic Palestine (Falah 2005). Historian Benny Morris (2004) writes that after the

expulsion of Palestinians in waves and stages during the years 1948-1950, Israeli

authorities carried out a policy of clearing the borderlands of any Arabs crossing into the

newly formed state. The reason behind that, Morris claims, was military (Morris

2004:505): the borders were too long and unsecured. To secure the borders, people in all

the villages that sat on the newly formed borders of the Israeli state were ordered to be

evicted. Some were displaced internally into other Palestinian villages, while others were

pushed outside the borders of Israel into Lebanon, Syria or Jordan (Morris 2004). At the

end of the war, in July 1948, a general armistice agreement was reached between

representatives of Israel and the Arab governments, Moshe Dayan and Abdullah al-Tal

(Morris 2004:36; Hilal et al. 2013). A line was demarcated on the map and was given the

name 'The Green Line.' In 1967, the Israeli army occupied what land had been left to

Palestinians outside its borders marked by the Green Line, reaching into the West Bank

(including East Jerusalem) and The Gaza Strip, which later became known collectively as

the 'Occupied Palestinian Territories.' In addition, Israelis occupied the Syrian Jawlan (or

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[10] Text for Plan D can be reviews in "Appendix C: Text of Plan Dalet: Operational Orders to the Brigades" (1988) in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18(1): 34–37.

Golan, in Hebrew and English) Heights, and Egypt's Sinai Desert (Kimmerling 1983:147).[11] Shortly after the occupation of these territories, Israeli developers initiated the construction of infrastructure and neighbourhoods with townhouses and apartment buildings, schools, community centres, and government buildings, and rented or sold residences in these areas to Jewish Israeli citizens exclusively. These settlements, specifically in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, created new blocks of Israeli bordered zones that further divided the land accorded to the Palestinian Territories from within (Thawaba 2011:125), divisions which marked the landscape. Today, as envisaged in frameworks that promote a 'two-state solution,' a viable Palestinian state would be formed on barely 10% of historic Palestine.[12] One potential scenario predicts a state of closely surveilled Bantustans, governed by the Palestinian Authority and controlled by the Israeli Army or security apparatus (Farsakh 2005:11–12). Today, Palestinians commemorate 1948 as the year of the *Nakbah* (or *Nakba*), which literally means "catastrophe" in Arabic, referring to the mass displacement of Palestinians and the destruction of their cities and villages (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007:3–8; Masalha 2008:123–124). In the Israeli state's official narrative, the year 1948 commemorates the Israeli soldiers who were killed during the war and is a celebration of *Shehrour* and *A'tsmaaout*, Hebrew for 'liberation' and 'independence,' respectively, of the Jewish people (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2012).

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[11] The Arabic word for The Golan Heights is *Hadabat al Jawlan*, or most commonly known in Arabic as *Jawlan*.

[12] According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHAoPt), over 43% of the West Bank territory is off-limit to Palestinians and is confiscated by the Israeli state for Jewish settlement development. These lands are often patrolled or fenced and are inaccessible to Palestinians or any use they could make of these lands, such as for farming or construction purposes (UNOCHA-oPt 2012b).

In this dissertation, when I mention the 'Israeli state,' I refer to a political regime the present—and possibly the future—of which is contingent on the way the aforementioned history keeps being projected forward. For me, the 'Israeli state' refers to the structures that regulate people's lives on the land. While fully understanding that 'the state' is a messy structure, for the purposes of this dissertation, I use this term to assemble multiple practices that form part of 'the Israeli state's' organization and regulatory activities. My writing on the Israeli state will mostly concern the state's regulation of Palestinian movement; its construction of the Wall; its military practices; and the force of state ownership over the physical and symbolic spheres. Derived from the state's regulatory force of citizenship practices is the creation of the hierarchal relation of citizenship. In such a hierarchy, Israel, by definition the 'Jewish state,' prioritizes Jewish citizens over all Palestinians in the economic resources accorded to the former, the security they are provided, the political power attributed to them, and the socio-cultural superiority they are declared to have over the latter.

Today, far from any future predictions, the scenario that the present offers is a state of separation and segregation enacted by Israeli military checkpoints and the Wall's construction on the land. It is important to emphasize that the Wall was constructed on already fragmented lands, while further fragmenting these lands. Moreover, the Wall's logic of 'separation as security' is familiar to the Israeli national discourse and was marketed as such by most Israeli politicians and officials in the Ministry of Defence.[13] The

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[13] Ministry of Defence, "Israel's Security Fence": http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/purpose.htm, accessed April 5th 2015.

Israeli-constructed Wall, therefore, did not emerge in a political or geographic vacuum. It has its own logic, which corresponds to Israeli government policies and ideologies ever since the declaration of state independence. Since 1948, two main practices of Israeli governments characterize its relationship towards Palestine: first, the exclusion of the Palestinian population from the Israeli state borders (through displacement; refusal of refugees' right of return; and exclusion from full citizenship in the case of Palestinian citizens or residents of Israel); and, second, the annexation of land and water resources; fragmentation of land; control over geographically strategic areas (like hilltops); and the destruction of Palestinian landscapes, villages, and urban areas (Graham 2002; Makdisi 2010; Hanafi 2009; Parsons and Salter 2008).

In fact, much prior to the Wall's construction, Palestinians had already been introduced to the Israeli military regulating every aspect of their daily lives, including the restriction of their movement, house searches, and house demolitions. Since the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel has attempted to control Palestinians' lives by placing checkpoints with soldiers guarding the entrances and exits of Palestinian cities, villages, and agricultural lands. The checkpoints function as barriers that delay or block Palestinian movement (Tawil-Souri 2012). The words for 'military checkpoint' in Arabic and Hebrew are *hajez* and *mahsoum*, respectively, which literally translate to "barrier." From 1967 to today, nearly one hundred fixed Israeli military checkpoints have been constructed, and over 350 flying or surprise checkpoints are created and removed daily

inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Pappe 2006:201; B'Tselem 2015).[14] The checkpoint system was based on an Identity Card (ID) system that was introduced into the Occupied Palestinian Territory after its occupation (Tawil-Souri 2012). Such a system structures another form of borders imposed on Palestinians through the use of documentation (Parsons and Salter 2008).

In 1948, all Jews who were living in the Israeli state or who migrated to it afterwards were granted Israeli citizenship. Palestinians who remained in the newly formed state were also granted Israeli citizenship and, like their Jewish counterparts, they received identity cards, introduced in 1949 (Tawil-Souri 2012:4). From 1948 to 1967, Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were provided with temporary *laissez-passer* documents by Jordan and Egypt, respectively (2012:5). The Israeli Identity Card System is colour-coded. Palestinian and Jewish citizens of the Israeli state hold blue ID cards. After the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel applied the ID system to Palestinians living inside the Occupied Territories, with the exception of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, who received a blue ID card indicating that they are residents of Israel. ID cards given to Palestinians in the rest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were coloured green, red and orange (2012:5). Helga Tawil-Souri reminds us that the ID cards that Israel issued to Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories were neither travel documents, nor did they grant Palestinians any political or citizenship rights (2012:5).

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[14] Surprise or flying checkpoints are checkpoints set up for a few hours to a day. They consist of a military jeep or a few jeeps blocking traffic on a road or at a village entrance or exit, for the purposes of inspection or other security measures.

They were, rather, imposed by the Israeli military in order to survey, construct, and enforce a demographic map of the newly occupied population. They were a means utilized by the Israeli military to advance the control and surveillance of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories (Tawil-Souri 2011:78; Tawil-Souri 2012; Parsons and Salter 2008). Every Palestinian who crossed an Israeli checkpoint with a non-blue ID would have to provide a permit to pass the checkpoint into an Israeli-controlled area. Having all the documentation needed, however, does not always guarantee that the soldier in the checkpoint will allow one to make such a crossing (Tawil-Souri 2011:78). On the other hand, Israeli citizens or residents who hold the blue IDs, whether they are Palestinians or Jews, can move relatively freely through the Israeli state and the Occupied Palestinian Territories alike—despite military signs in Hebrew warning Israeli ID holders not to enter areas inhabited by Palestinians (I address this detail in Chapter Two). However, Palestinians with blue ID cards, are subjected to interrogation and security searches in Israeli military checkpoints to a greater extent than are Jewish Israelis, including Israeli-Jewish settlers who dwell in the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (who also carry blue ID cards). The identity card and checkpoint system form a hierarchy of privileges and regulate differential access in relation to the Israeli state and its institutions. Such systems further enhance the bordering and suffocation of one population while allowing another to enjoy access not only to land and resources, but also to citizenship rights. Although Palestinians who live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are administrated and regulated by the Israeli state, they nevertheless remain part of a stateless nation.

The Wall: The Current State of Fragmentations and Border Formations

Segregation Wall in the West Bank (2002 - 2009)
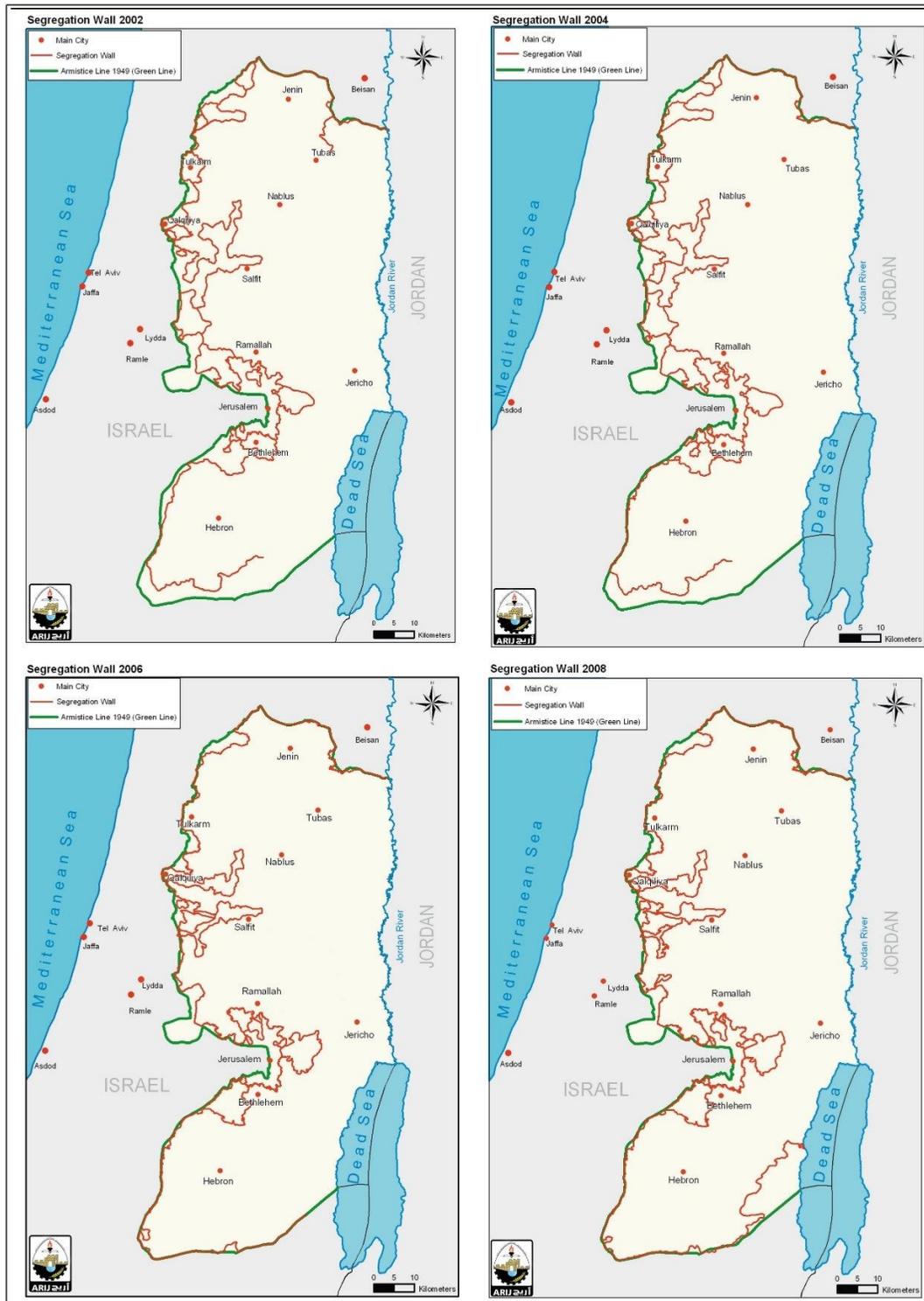
Map 2: Wall construction process in the West Bank, 2002-2009. Wall route is coloured in red and The Green Line is coloured in green. Credit: ARIJ: The Applied Research Institute. Link: http://www.ycareinternational.
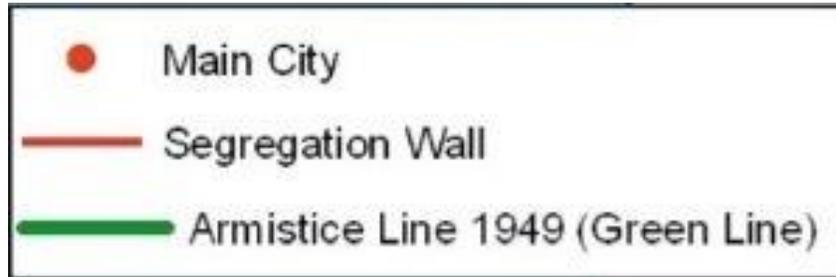
Image 4: Key to Map 2

In June 2002, the concept of "barrier" was manifested in another form, this time in the shape of a concrete wall and electric-censored fence. In that year, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, the Israeli Minster of Defence, initiated the construction of the separation Wall (Dolphin and Usher 2006:1). The Wall was named the "security fence" or "separation fence" by Elisha Efrat, former head of the National and Regional Planning Department in the Ministry of Interior, along with other Israeli politicians; later, it was widely referred to as such in Israeli media (2006:107).[15] Although it was announced by the Israeli state that the Wall would run along the Green Line by 2006, it later became clear that along 85 per cent of its route, the Wall was being built inside the West Bank (east of the Green Line), annexing almost 9.4 per cent of the West Bank territory (UNOCHA-oPt 2011; Thawaba 2011; see map 2). By July 2013, approximately 62 per cent of the Wall had been completed; currently, 10 per cent is still under construction, and 28 per cent of the planned route remains unconstructed (UNOCHA-oPt 2013). Sixty-one kilometres of the Wall,

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[15] More discussion about the naming and politics behind it can be found in Ray Dolphin's and Graham Usher's *The West Bank Wall* (2006:38–41).

cutting through urban areas such as Jerusalem, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, and Bethlehem, consist of an 8-9 metre-high concrete barrier (UNOCHA-oPt 2011). In agricultural areas, the barrier consists of wire fence, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone (UNOCHA-oPt 2011).

The Wall as planned spans a total of 810 kilometres,[16] which is twice the length of the Green Line.[17] Upon its completion, 8,557 Palestinians from the West Bank will be isolated between the Green Line and the separation Wall.[18] Those caught between the Wall and the Green Line would have to obtain permission from the Israeli army whether crossing the Wall in an easterly, or in a westerly direction. For those villages, the regulation would be strict, as they are situated west of the Wall in an area that Israel has annexed.

The Wall in Palestine is a continuation of policies concretely absenting the population: the route of the Wall has been planned on the basis of an assumption of the absence of Palestinians on the map and on the land. Construction of the Wall on the landscape transgresses temporal sequences, rendering the Wall as existing *a priori* to Palestinian infrastructures or homes. Thus, when the planned route of the Wall as it was

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[16] The numbers and facts about the Wall differ among multiple human rights reports.
[17] http://www.stoptheWall.org/the-Wall, accessed December 2, 2014.
[18] http://www.stoptheWall.org/the-Wall, accessed December 2, 2014.

plotted on maps fell upon existing homes or neighbourhoods, the Israeli army took action

to demolish these homes or neighbourhoods to make way for the Wall.[19]

On the 9th of July 2004, the Wall became a headline in Israeli, Palestinian and

international media as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague issued an

advisory opinion on the "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the

Occupied Palestinian Territory" (ICJ 2004). The ICJ called on Israel to immediately cease

the construction of the Wall and to dismantle the sections that had already been built

(Halper 2005). Israel completely ignored the ICJ ruling and the Wall construction

continued as planned.

A report published by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICHAD),

written by anthropologist and activist Jeff Halper (2005), argued that the separation Wall

violates the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is a set of laws protecting civilian

populations living under occupation. The Wall divides families, cuts community ties, and

limits or hinders the population's freedom of movement. The report (2005) indicated that

the Wall violates the prohibitions of confiscating or annexing private property; prevents

farmers from working on their lands; and harms the occupied communities' livelihood. In

sum, the report concluded that the Wall harms the communities living in proximity to it,

negatively affecting their social relations, economic growth, and physical and mental

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[19] For example, Nazlat I'ssa a marketplace zone was demolished in the West Bank to allow the Wall to pass there: http://www.stopthewall.org/2003/09/01/israeli-bulldozers-destroy-commercial-stores-demolitions-nazlat-isa-continue, accessed December 4, 2014.

health. Although it is defended by the Israeli government as a security structure that aims at preventing armed Palestinians from entering Israeli cities, the Wall actually functions as a form of collective punishment imposed on all Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Halper 2005).

Despite being so prominent in Palestinian lives, the Wall—as most Israeli anti-occupation activists I talked with asserted—is nearly unfelt in the Israeli daily experience and is rarely mentioned in the mainstream discourse. During my fieldwork, I learned that the Israeli state work of absenting the Wall as well as the military occupation behind it seemed to function in a way that creates a cloud of disinterest amongst Israeli citizens. My assumptions on the Israelis' disinterest were also reasserted by an Israeli report that surveyed the media and citizens' interest in the Wall. Published by the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies in 2007, five years after the construction of the Wall—a period of time that presumably would allow many Israelis to encounter or at least to hear about the Wall—the report indicated that the Israeli public in general does not show interest in the Wall or its political or ideological implications for their situation, let alone its effects on Palestinians (Kliot, Khamaisi, and Shmueli 2007:10). The Floersheimer study surveyed 41 Israeli Jewish subjects and 44 Palestinian citizens of Israel. It showed that between 1995 to 2004, there was a gradual increase in the percentage of Israeli citizens who agreed with a full separation between Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israelis as a means to achieve security inside Israeli cities (2007:10). The Floersheimer study compared findings from 2004 indicating that during the first years of the Wall's

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construction, almost 80% of Israelis supported this measure of separation, whereas in 1995, 67% had supported the idea of separation. The survey also indicated that only during 2002 was the national media concerned with reporting on the Wall, mostly debating its reliability, economic structures and briefly hinting at its negative effects on the Palestinian population. By 2004-2006, such concerns were no longer being discussed in Israeli media; the few heated debates in relation to the Wall were preoccupied with the question of the Wall's effectiveness in its role of providing 'security' to Israelis (2007:11).

In general, the prevalent approach in the Israeli mainstream discourse is to absent the military occupation, both visually and metaphorically. However, there are a few Israeli visual engagements that attempt to visualize what is left outside the frames of hegemonic national discursive representations. In my attempt to analyze some of these visual practices (in chapters three and five), my point of departure will be a critical examination of photographs and other images. In so doing, I emphasize the centrality of the political *frame* of the image, which I claim is as important as what the image shows.

In the next section, I highlight the historical and contextual theoretical debates that inspire my research questions. I outline the relevant debates in the anthropology of violence, of borders, and of visuals, in an attempt to show how my research in Palestine/Israel contributes to these theoretical debates.

2. Theoretical Debates in Anthropology: Visuals, Violence, and Borders
2.1 Debates and Trajectory of Visuals in Anthropology

The literature of visual anthropology covers a broad range of themes. Researchers in this visual anthropological field explore, use, or produce photography, films, tangible objects, landscapes, and human senses or imaginations. Since the landscape, as a national visual sight, is one main focus of this dissertation, I employ visual anthropological frameworks in researching the landscape of military occupation, specifically in the Palestinian Territories. Throughout this dissertation, I highlight visual relations created, lived or interpreted by people's experiences. To contextualize the analytical and theoretical exploration of the empirical data collected in my fieldwork in the chapters that follow, I shall lay out a brief history of visual anthropology that brings to the surface key discussions and debates relevant to my theoretical approach. Specifically, I discuss theoretical shifts in the field that inform two competing methodological approaches. The first methodological approach confined the visuals to methodology, while the second expanded the visual category to include both theoretical and methodological exploration. I follow the footsteps of the second approach. In this section, I hope to demonstrate that this research does not stand outside the theoretical trajectories and histories of visual anthropology. It is informed by the debates that shaped and is still shaping visual anthropological inquiry. Nonetheless, I diverge from interrogating photography as an exceptional site of visual exploration and research the landscape as a cultural and political visual site.

The history of visual anthropology has been overwhelming focused on the centrality of methodology, which has also, arguably, affected the development of theory

about the visual field. Discussions on the location and weight of theory in visual

anthropology appeared in two recent commentary interventions in the *Visual Anthropology*

Journal (Hockings et al. 2014; Piault, Silverstein, and Graham 2015). The commentary

articles focused on one question: where is the theory in visual anthropology? Reading the

commentaries, one learns that answering this question is not an easy task. There is no

agreement in the literature as to what visual anthropology *is*, what its boundaries are, or

where its origins lie (Hockings et al. 2014; (Piault, Silverstein, and Graham 2015). Sydney

Silverstein (quoted in Piault et al. 2015:173) states that some anthropologists like Jay Ruby

and Keyan Tomaselli claim that they use visuals as a methodological tool, while they draw

their theoretical framework from cultural and anthropological literature. Silverstein asserts

that other anthropologists develop concepts that are attributed to visual anthropological

theory, such as David MacDougall (2006), who elaborates the concept of "corporality,"

namely, the embodied understanding of the space through visual means (in Piault et al.

2015:173).

The boundaries of the field are also contested. Although in its early years, visual

anthropology was confined to the use of the camera as the defining factor of research

practice, today, visual anthropology is limited neither to the use of visual technology nor to

the visual as the defining sense. Visual anthropology is extending its boundaries to

exploring the senses (Bishop and Bishop 2013). For example, building on David Howes'

(1991) work and critique on the superiority of the vision in Western cultures, Sarah Pink

(2006; 2009) argues for expanding the boundaries of the field to incorporating the other

senses, what she refers to as "sensory" anthropology. Through engaging the senses, anthropologists in visual anthropology push the visual boundaries to talk about embodied experiences (as in the work of David MacDougall (2006) or in Robert Gardner's (2007) ethnographic film *Forest of Bliss*; see also Pink 2006:48; Banks and Morphy 1997:3).

In this dissertation the visual is not simply what is seen or what is captured by my camera lens; it is also what is not seen or made to be unseen. Vision is the central sense and lens through which I explore landscapes of borders in Palestine—through what my interlocutors witness or see as well as through my own observation in the field. Exploring the spectrum of what is seen and unseen necessitates an investigation of imagination and visions of those with whom I conversed during this research. Hence, I focus on the relations people develop with the landscape visually. Such relations, I argue, are constructed through social, cultural and national relations. My engagement with the visuals, namely with what people see and what they capture in an image, whether in pictorial or in imaginary form, is mediated through the social and cultural anthropological literature on violence and borders. Having said that, by using the terms *visual* and *visuals*, I refer sometimes to images or photographs and other times to sights, visible scenes, or imagination.

In my understanding, visual anthropological literature alone cannot explain how people see or do not see spaces, what forms of relations are constructed with the landscape, and why the spaces they dwell in embody meaning or symbolism to them. To explore these

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questions, I am also aware that in the context of my research, historical relations to the landscape have a living presence. Such history is largely informed by social and political relations that have played out in the region. In other words, my theoretical framework is not limited to the literature of visual anthropology—through the visual lens, I also explore social and political ways of seeing and relating to the landscape.

In this section, I shall highlight central historical phases, shifts, and concerns in visual anthropology that contributed to later research and theoretical trajectories in the field. Furthermore, the history outlined in this section has set the tone for much of the recent anthropological research in exploring people's relation to visuals in their lives. Early debates in anthropology shifted the focus in visual anthropology from utilizing visuals as methodological tools of documentation, where production of images in the field is the main premise, to exploring visuals, including those utilized or produced by anthropologists, as cultural and social constructs. Even more so, in the past thirty years, debates centred on questioning the role visuals play in anthropological research and the use of such visuals as epistemological or methodological tools. In other words, scholars asked whether visuals were only a representation of cultures, and hence a tool of exploring those cultures, or whether they were elements of culture itself, and should therefore be explored within their intrinsic context. This historical trajectory has lent current anthropological inquiries a theoretical, as well as a methodological framework through which anthropologists engage with the visual, as I shall elaborate in the following.

The history of visual anthropology has been dominated by work by anthropologists who produced or utilized ethnographic films (Banks and Ruby 2011). Fadwa El Guindi (2004) argues that from the 1900s to the 1960s, anthropologists not only wrote "field notes" as a research methodology for data collection, but they also took photographs and recorded films of what they saw in or as the field: people, performances, rituals, artefacts, objects, or landscapes (23). The field of visual anthropology, one could therefore argue, emerged through centring the technique of capturing visual scenes of "other", often colonized, cultures, by Western anthropologists. The camera was a methodological tool for witnessing and documenting rituals, performances, or social relations of mostly colonized peoples who became the subject of much of anthropological inquiry. The collected visual material facilitated and accompanied the textual data collection.

In early uses of the camera, photographs, or films collected during fieldwork were not considered significant contribution to theoretical debates in anthropological research. Anthropologists used these photographs, uncritically, as visual testifiers and documentation for the cultural practices existing in the particular society explored. Fadwa El Guindi (2004) argues that the origins of visual anthropology are in producing and archiving records and documents (2004:23) of cultures and societies. In framing these records as 'methodologically scientific,' anthropologists were, then, able to argue for research validity (El Guindi 2004:68). Reliability, verifiability, and credibility, El Guindi argues, were key factors in this process of valorization. Visual anthropology, she also reminds us, was a "shared anthropological colonial legacy" (2004:40) not only through the

act of documenting the 'other,' but also through presenting the other—the colonized—to the colonizer, which simultaneously fed the curiosity of Western readers and furthered the processes of 'othering' the anthropological subjects.

Margaret Mead, renowned for her visual work in anthropology during the first half of the twentieth century, was a vigorous advocate for the anthropologists' use of cameras during fieldwork. Her work addressing the use of visual methods in anthropology influenced conversations about visual anthropology during the second half of the 20th century (El Guindi 2004:61–88). Mead herself used motion pictures and photography in her early research; perhaps the most famous example of such visual ethnographic work is *Trance and Dance in Bali* filmed during the 1930s in collaboration with Gregory Bateson (Bateson and Mead 1951). Mead argued that through the use of visual methods and techniques, the field of anthropology can become scientifically credible (Mead 1995). She claimed that visual recordings are more truthful, authentic, and have the capacity to "refine and expand" accuracy in data collection (1995:10). Moreover, she claimed that one of the visual anthropologists' missions was to document and archive what she referred to as the "disappearing" (1995:4–6, 8) rituals of colonized peoples.

By using photographs and video recording Mead argued that visual anthropology plays a fundamental role in capturing cultures' and peoples' traditions, customs and/or behaviours. She criticized anthropologists for "clinging to verbal description" (1995:5), arguing that the mission of anthropologists is to visualize what occurs in fields, where

there are constant changes of events, practices, and landscapes due to colonization, westernization and modernization. Anthropologists are left only with *words* to describe rituals without any visual or audio representation of them. Visual recordings, she stressed, are more truthful and authentic as they have a capacity to "refine and expand" accuracy in data collection (1995:10).

To those who had questioned the objectivity of the camera, claiming that the practice of filming is selective and subjective, Mead responds that when a camera is located in one spot while recording one scene, it captures only "what did happen" (1995:9). Mead's approach to the camera as a fixed recording eye corresponds with an ideal, deterministic and objective conceptualization of ethnographic footage, which aspires to produce authenticity through the unstaged behaviour of peoples and cultures, as if the camera was a neutral medium (Walter Goldschmidt in Taylor (1994:12).

Mead's understanding of the camera's position and role invites a personification of the camera and suggests that it can be a substitute for the anthropologist's gaze. Such a suggestion fails to account for the human aspect of the gaze; the reflexivity that is intrinsic to it; further, it lacks a critical understanding of positionality and the imbrication of subjects in power structures. Mead did not leave much space for flexibility when it came to camera-gaze relations; she saw the use of visuals in anthropology as a methodology of objective data collection (Pink 2003:182) and as a means to maintaining a descriptive record of the cultures and peoples anthropologists study.

While Mead was vocal about defending the use of camera for anthropological research, she was not the first one to use such technology. The use of the camera first emerged as an anthropological method in the early twentieth century in the work of Franz Boas and Bronisław Malinowski (in Pink 2006:8), and was popularized among early- and mid-twentieth century anthropologists. During this time, the camera was perceived as "objective" and "scientific." Timothy Asch, John Marshall, and Peter Spier (1973) emphasize the importance of using the camera as a methodological tool in the field in addition to the "pad and pencil" (1973:179). Since observation is a central aspect of anthropological methods, the value of the camera, they argued, "lies in its ability to record what the human eye cannot" (179). The aim of anthropological film is to maintain, in the mind of the viewers, the sequence and order of the events it is recording as interpreted and presented by the subjects in the film (179).

Similarly to others before him, John Collier (1987) defended the use of visuals in anthropological research. He claimed that visual anthropology is a methodology that makes "responsible holistic observation" (1987:39), which otherwise would be "missing from the ethnographic record" (39). Collier emphasized the strength of photography in generating anthropological knowledge per se; he observed, however, that while photography was becoming increasingly accepted in the discipline, film research, and ethnographic films in particular, remained "controversial methodologies" (1987:45).

Moreover, Collier (1987) identified a tendency of anthropologists to avoid working with visuals and considered this a failure in the anthropological discipline (1987:38). He also argued that anthropologists' inability to work with visual material had led to the marginalization of visuals and to a lack of attention in interrogating and incorporating visuals in ethnographic writing (1987:38). Since John Collier's critique in 1987, anthropology has slowly manifested a renewed interest in engaging critically with visuals (Davey 2008). By the end of the 20th century, a clear shift has occurred in anthropology through a proliferation of interest in the visual as a conceptual and theoretical category rather than solely as a methodological one, which in turn offered a possibility to broaden anthropological conceptualizations of what visuals constitute (El Guindi 2004:83–84; Banks and Morphy 1997).

Visual anthropology became commonly defined as a sub-field of anthropology (Pink 2003:179) with diversified visual interest and technological media incorporation (Davey 2010). Centred on subjects' relation to images, visual anthropologists utilized images, both in the past and in more contemporary work, through two main approaches. The first approach is composed of those methodological practices employed by anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (1951), John Collier and Anibal Buitron (Collier and Buitron 1949), Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon (1975). As we have seen, within this approach, photographs and films are believed to be important tools for documenting cultural practices and human behaviour that cannot be 'accurately' depicted through written texts alone. Writing cannot portray the experience of voice or

movement with the same intensity and clarity that images, moving images, or voice recordings do. The pictorial medium, on this view, communicates "anthropological knowledge", as identified by Jay Ruby (in Hockings et al. 2014). In the 1950s, ethnographic films, which were attributed a quality of truthful "representation of people on film" (Taylor 1994), became a more popular anthropological tool and gained a 'scientific' quality (1994:10) to its representational premises and promises.

The second visual anthropology approach, in the footsteps of which I follow in this dissertation, emerged in the early 1990s as a critique of the first approach. Visual anthropologists shifted the scope of analysis by placing a stronger emphasis on the socio-cultural aspect of visual relations. Anthropologists such as Christopher Pinney (2004), Sarah Pink (2007), and Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy (1997) perceived images as 'living' within, and inextricable from the socio-cultural context in which they were produced; they conceptualized and used images not only as a means to comprehend or sense the field, but also as constituting *the* field itself. Their research inquiries, therefore, centre on the relationships that people have with images, what they see in images or in visual bodies and in the spaces that these visuals occupy: that is, the landscape of material, social, and political relations. I shall elaborate on the aforementioned anthropologists' work in the following pages. I will also return to their work in Chapters Two and Five.

Sarah Pink (2003) locates the transformation in visual anthropology in 1990s within the growing emphasis on the materiality and agency of the visual, as well as within

the acknowledgement of the ambiguities and the uncertainties that the images embody (2003:180). In her later work, Pink (2006) rethinks and redefines visual anthropology as a field that engages the visual through its reflexive relation to subjects' experiences, practices, material cultures and multiple forms of representation (2006:131). Visual anthropology, Pink argues, should expand the reading of visuals as an intrinsic part of the socio-cultural fabric; hence, she prefers referring to the new shift in anthropology as a conceptual turn towards an *anthropology of the visual*, rather than visual anthropology (Pink 2003). Pink also proposes a framework of visual analysis that involves notions of subjectivity and reflexivity (a shift that was referred to as "explicit reflexivity" by David MacDougall (in Hockings et al. 2014: 445). This reflexivity functions through the incorporation of critical readings of representations, an awareness of the materiality and agency that visuals hold, as well as a recognition of the ambiguity of visual meanings and relations (Pink 2003:180).

My research draws on this construal of the interdependence of visual meanings and social relations. To engage with the visuals is to engage with social relations through people's relation to their surroundings. Ignoring this, one could fall into an etic approach to anthropology (Kottak 2005), where the anthropologist's gaze and perspective are imposed onto the field and, later, onto the ethnographic analysis. Hence, I rely on the recent work of reflexive visual anthropologists, who are critical of the anthropological gaze and whose work emerges as a critique to earlier work on visual anthropology. Drawing on anthropological approaches to the visual that follow the work of Sarah Pink, Marcus Banks

and Howard Morphy, and Cristopher Pinney, I explore current visual anthropological issues that engage with the social life of images and the relationship people develop to images, arguing that images produce people as much as people produce and consume them.

Building on these transformations and shifts in visual anthropology, I ask: do visual anthropologists explore only what is visible or that which is culturally made to be seen? Can visual anthropologists explore absence? If yes, then what questions should be asked when studying the absence of structures or representations? Would articulating these questions be an act of pulling the rug from under this approach and challenging what holds it together? In other words, how can visual anthropological research expand its preoccupation with visual representations to theorize the absence of representations? By centring the focus on traces of national anxiety inscribed on the landscape, such as the Wall, this research explores structures that are made visible at times and absent at others.

My approach to visual anthropology understands visual elements not only in terms of their presence, to be seen and possibly/sometimes touched, but also in terms of their absence. Absence of visuals has a haunting capacity that could invade what is present. It has been argued that absence and presence are "inherently intertwined" (Bille, Hastrup, and Sørensen 2010:5) Building on this argument, I offer the Arabic concept of *nasab*, meaning kinship or genealogy (Hirji 2007:57), identifying the relationship between absence and presence as one of etymological kinship, as well as poetic proximity. The

presence is always a reminder of what is absent, and absence is a reminder of what is present (De Alwis 2009:379). Both terms inform and complete each other. This poetic relation fuels my perception of what I saw and what other people witnessed in Palestine; there I learnt that I could not be reconciled with the landscape and how it offers emotional attachments without allowing all other senses, like touch smell or hearing, to overwhelm me.

My relation to the visual in this dissertation is a multilayered one. Visuals form a key concept in this work; it is a concept that is present in most conversations and experiences related to and talked about here. By "visuals", I refer not only to what people see, but to the ways people make sense of what they see. Visuals in this work are manifested through the landscape, lands, photographs, bodies, structures or monuments and imaginations. They are all elements that allow us to relate to the world in an interpretative way. Additionally, what allows the space to interact with people's senses is the immediacy of encountering and reencountering what is seen and what is left invisible, or what is barely visible in the form of a trace.

Malathi De Alwis (2009) identifies the relation between absence and presence through the concept of 'trace', as mediated by the past. De Alwis claims that the present can be recognized as such through traces of a "past that once was present" (2009:381). Visuals, like violence or borders, therefore, I suggest operate through their relations to traces, which are brought to life by "lingering histories" (Napolitano 2015:48). I also

borrow Valentina Napolitano's conceptualization of the term 'trace.' For her, 'trace' is "a material reminder that embeds affective circulations" (52) of excerpts of histories that introduce "a discontinuity, a gap, a loss of meaning and a form of violence" (58). I shall explore the notion of visual trace of violence through looking at the case of a border village in Jawlan Heights in Chapter Four, and photography of the Wall, in Chapter Five.

Following Clifford Geertz (1973), my understanding and use of visuals in this dissertation relates to them not only as a *model of* the social-cultural life, but also as a *model for* it. Geertz argues that the term *model* suggests "two senses—a sense *of* and *for"* (1973:93), which are together comprehensive of the analytical meaning of *model*. Hence, I claim that visual objects are informed by historical processes that dwell through traces on the landscape. Thus, I maintain that visuals are models *of* historical socio-political relations—that is, they are a reflection of them—and simultaneously a constructive force *for* socio-political life.

David Harvey (2001) claims that landscapes are reflective of past and present economic and political relations. Landscape under capitalism, he argues, is produced in the image of capitalist relations (Harvey 2001:76). For Harvey, landscape is a construct of power dynamics, but a lesser emphasis or exploration is offered regarding the role that landscape plays as a producer of socio-political dynamics or indeed, the image-like quality that landscape holds.

Landscape, in this dissertation, first and foremost, is a scene; namely, whatever the eyes and imagination fall upon. This scene is viewed and imagined. Landscapes are sites and sights, or more precisely what W.J.T Mitchell refers to in his description of landscapes as 'sighted sites' (Mitchell 2002). In *Seeing Through Race*, Mitchell (2012) argues that landscape makes the invisibility of the visual process evident (93). The view, he continues, is the "totality of the objects in our visual field [and] the relation among them" (2012:93). The paradox of landscape materializes most evidently in walls or gates—in things that humans build that interrupt the view—which reveal that the act of seeing is dependent on the position of the viewer. Mitchell's analysis helped me articulate my use of 'landscape' and my discomfort with seeing the landscape in Palestine. I shall show not only how the Wall obfuscates the landscape in Palestine; but also how the Wall, paradoxically, becomes the landscape itself. Landscape, therefore, is a visual theme that runs through this dissertation. My use of 'landscape' resonates with the Arabic word *mashhad*, which both means 'landscape' and 'scene,' but it is also the object that the act of witnessing, *shahada*, falls upon (as I will further discuss in Chapters Two and Four). To see the landscape, to render it recognizable, is to witness it. In the context of Palestine and Israel, it is not only the land that lies at the centre of material and ideological disputes; the landscape, too, forms a crucial site of national contestations. The landscape contains people's imagination and their relation to their imagined homeland.

2.2 Sites of Violence in Anthropology

Anthropologists have long had a strong interest in researching violence by looking at conflict zones, wars, or similar events that are considered interruptions of everyday

normalcy. Historically, anthropologists studied violence through a Eurocentric and colonialist conceptualization of what they referred to as 'violent cultures' (Nagengast 1994:112; Parkin 1986). Sarah Accomazzo (2012) claims that anthropology fell behind other disciplines in developing theories on violence (Accomazzo 2012:537), since scholars often failed to unpack the historical and political colonial processes (Accomazzo 2012) that underlay violence in societies and cultures under anthropological scrutiny.

Research on violence in anthropology in general, and on nation-scale ethnographies of war zones or conflict zones specifically, have become more popular after the end of the Cold War (Dusenbery 1997:831). These post-Cold War ethnographies, as Allen Feldman argues, engage with new conceptualizations of violence and new epistemological insights (Feldman 1991:227). Carol Nagengast (1994) provides one possible explanation as to why it is only in the past twenty years that anthropology has developed a strong theoretical interest in violence: anthropology's methodological attachments to long-term fieldwork have prevented many anthropologists from conducting fieldwork or participant observation in war zones. Only when methodological boundaries within the anthropological discipline were challenged and it became possible to conduct research in multiple sites (multi-sited fieldwork) did ethnographies of violence and conflict zones grow significantly. However, Nagengast's (1994) focus on methodology as the primary obstacle to lack of research on violence in anthropology ignores the missed opportunities anthropologists had in researching structural and hegemonic state violence (such as militarism, imperialism or colonialism). Furthermore, her approach reinforces the assumption that different forms of

everyday violence, like violence that is re-lived daily in the form of memories, or that descending into gendered relations as a result of past wars, is not sufficiently analytically or theoretically rich locations for an anthropological exploration of violence.

According to Sarah Accomazzo (2012), only after the 1980s would anthropologists offer a strong critique of the ways colonial histories, imperialist wars, and capitalist globalization have inflicted violence in various societies and cultures (Accomazzo 2012). Anthropologists have also shifted their approach from associating violence with "small-scale" societies to studying violence in globalized and "large-scale" societies. Accomazzo (2012:547) attributes the development of theories on visible and invisible structural, symbolic, and colonial violence to what she refers to as the post-modernist anthropological theoretical phase. Following Accomazzo's outline of shifts in the study of violence in anthropology, in what follows, I trace how other anthropologists have ethnographically explored violence as it manifests in people's daily lives during wars or military occupation, as well as violence that is lived as memory descending into people's "ordinary" lives. In this dissertation, I build on the work of Veena Das (2007), Ivana Maček (2000), Carolyn Nordstrom (2004), and Avram Bornstein (2002), whose ethnographies engage with violence through its expressions and traces in ordinary forms—that is, as violence is lived and experienced through the normalcy of the everyday—while focusing closely on experiences of those who are further marginalized within spaces of war, conflict, or military violence, such as women and racialized communities.

My research builds on anthropological research that, to use Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi's words (2009), is heavily informed by the anthropologist's encounter with violence, as well as "the local's" experience and representation of it (2009:7). As Ghassem-Fachandi claims, anthropologists rely on moments of intimate encounter in order to introduce a reflexive analysis of violence, which is frequently lacking in non-anthropological work on violence (7). I would add that sometimes, these intimate encounters involve indirect and inherited encounters with memories and stories of violent moments. Arjun Appadurai (1998), like Ghassem-Fachandi, engages with proximity's relation to violence. Appadurai's example is of violence among neighbouring ethnic communities (Appadurai 1998). In an article titled "Dead Certainty Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization," Arjun Appadurai (1998) explores violence through the structural and political forces that inform it. He argues that ethnic violence, which involves brutal bodily practices, is associated with social processes, such as globalization or colonialism, which create or increase uncertainty in social relations and ties (225). Violence, for Appadurai, is a product of the anxiety that is generated through absence of knowledge (227). When the certainty of knowledge—which allows one to identify or locate the border between the self and the other— is challenged, it is possible for violence to erupt in its most brutal forms. Appadurai theorizes violence between two ethnic groups living in close proximity, where the lines differentiating the groups are often blurred. Violence in situations of ethnic conflict operates on the body through the 'logic' of marking the separation of one ethnic group from the other, constructing an enforced difference (Appadurai 1998:230; see also Gazit and Latham 2014:69).The strength of Appadurai's

analysis is that it suggests that ethnic violence can be understood as an act of cleansing the body or the community from an 'other' who is constructed as dangerous or impure (1998:233); yet, due to proximity, this body or community often shares a linguistic, cultural, or geographic space, with the 'other' it seeks to expel. In the context of my research, given the physical proximity between Israelis and Palestinians—both geographic and sometimes racial (many Israeli Jews are of Middle Eastern origin and could be misidentified as Palestinian), Appadurai's arguments could offer a partial explanation for the urgency of imposing a forceful separation between Israelis and Palestinians. The use of violence to separate, as articulated by Appadurai, becomes key to understanding interconnectedness and the dependence violence and separation have upon each other. Separation, I claim, cannot be achieved without acts of violence, and violence cannot be accomplished without a form of separation (physical, emotional, visual, or abstract).

Recent ethnographic work on violence—illuminating sites where violence is not only an eruption in the ordinary, but is lived through the ghostly memories of past events, or dwells in the present in absent forms—has inspired my own approach in this dissertation. In her comparative and multi-sited ethnography *Shadows of War*, Carolyn Nordstrom (2004) argues that violence during war is about the "im/possibility" of the human condition and the meaning of survival (59). She explores three localities of war: Sri-Lanka, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. Nordstrom argues that violence during and after war becomes a determining factor in the shaping of reality (60). People witness and live through natural catastrophes or die from epidemics, yet violence during war has an

additional element to it; it creates a fear of what war has made of people and of loss of

their humanity (Nordstrom 2004:60). Violence is not only used to disempower physical

bodies, she continues, but also to create political consent based on terror and fear. Taking a

close look at everyday life during war, Ivana Maček's (2000) ethnography *War Within:*

Everyday Life in Sarajevo Under Siege is a detailed account of life in Sarajevo during the

civil war (1992-1995). Maček conceptualizes violence through people's relationship to it,

as inseparable from the implications of 'localized' cultural and social settings; hence,

refusing to follow a universalist understanding of violence. Maček claims that one should

not only ask how cultural difference promotes conflict, but more importantly, how conflict

transforms cultural processes (2000:23). The violent 'distribution,' including

displacements and destruction of life (106), she also adds, can turn our sensitivities to

violence into numbness so that "sights of death become part of the everyday" (2000:46). In

Life and Words, Veena Das (2007) traces the stories of two women living in the *ghost* and

memory of the violent partition of colonial India in 1947. Following their stories of

violence during the partition, she asks how this past violence translates into the everyday

lives of women who also experience domestic violence in the present. Stories of women

suffering state repression in India are narrated through speech as well as through silence.

While the partition's violence appeared to have "disappeared into the distant past"

(2007:11), knowledge about it was also prohibited from being transmitted through

institutionalized means or families' oral histories. Thus, violence was not only experienced

in one's body, but also through the loss of a context (9). When there is a loss of context,

social relations become embedded in a temporality of the present, as if history has failed

them. These processes, Das concludes, produce a fear that is "real but not necessarily actualized in events" (2007:9); rather, it is replaced and displaced by a fear of everyday life. Das, then, demonstrates how the state marked women's violated bodies as national territories of the state, through which performances of patriarchal masculinities take place not only to discipline women's bodies and souls, but also to reconstruct the nation-state as masculine. These processes involve the marginalization of women's suffering during the partition, inscribed on their bodies, thereby enabling a masculinization of the state's memories and a degradation of women's bodies as a shameful stain on the national memory (19-24). Das, Maček and Nordstrom construct the act of seeing as witnessing—performed both by interlocutors and anthropologists themselves—as a methodological ground for their ethnographies. The act of witnessing, like participant observation, is premised on being present in the field (Ghassem-Fachandi 2009:5), all the while engaging the senses: seeing, hearing, and touching.

Although 'witnessing' violence operates through encounters with destruction, brutality, pain, force, or torture, which necessarily entail acts of seeing and visualising, the anthropological literature on violence has generally desisted from closely examining such visual processes. While witnessing violence or engaging with witnesses of violence is essential, anthropological research on violence has yet to unpack the concept of witnessing as a visualizing act. My visual anthropological approach bridges such gaps in the anthropological literature on violence. Like Maček's and Nordstrom's respective research locations, my fieldwork is located on a conflicted and contested land. Yet, similarly to

Veena Das's ethnographic approach to violence as traced in ordinary relations, my fieldwork is also situated where violence is a prolonged part of the landscape. Violence, I argue, is traced in peoples' stories of everyday encounters as well as in the structures that regulate and alienate their relation to the land (as explored in Chapters Three and Four). I therefore trace violence in spaces and times that are considered and lived through as ordinary by those mostly exposed to it. It is in the ordinary, I maintain, and through everyday practices that violence is produced and reproduced through the work of time. I also show that when experienced on occupied lands, through military presence, and on contested border-zones, violence infiltrates people's ordinary relations and daily routine. Violence on occupied lands, I also demonstrate (see Chapter Four), covers the landscape not only with destruction, abandonment, and decay, but also radiates desperation to those whose landscape is vanishing, shrinking, or suffocating, namely, Palestinians living in the West Bank.

By 'violence,' I mean the material and abstract expressions of power dynamics, which leave everlasting traces on people and the land they inhabit. I focus on the traces of violence, when violent experiences and expressions are exposed to the weight of time and left to reflections and memories. Witnessing or experiencing violence leaves a strong trace on people (Das 2007); it is often left up to the violated to collect these memories and make sense of them. In Palestine, violence has been and continues to be shaped through colonial history (Shamir 2000) and settler colonialism (Lloyd 2012; Gershon 1999; Kimmerling 1983). Land confiscation, expulsion of Palestinians from the land, and the creation of

political tensions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine during the British mandate were among the multiple forces that rendered violence as the shaping factor of political and social relations for the years following 1948 until the present day. In the following chapters, exploring life narratives, visions of landscapes, and border relations in Palestine, I follow the traces of violence through sites and sights where state and military violence shape subjects' pasts, presents, and futures. I also ask how such violence is interpreted, restructured, and disoriented by subjects whose lives are informed through it. I suggest that in violence there is a circle of relations that produces an aura of energy—to borrow from spiritual terminology—a social energy, more precisely, through which subjects reradiate the experience of structural violence into the landscape, either visually or discursively. Conceptualizing violence as circle of radiations allows for recognizing the impossibility of separating structural violence from interpersonal violence; or the effects of violence on daily ordinary events from intensified violent clashes between the military and the civilians; or, finally, the material structures of violence on the landscape from abstract forms of violence, which exist in the realm of symbolic and emotional traces.

2.3 Locations of Borders

Borders are everywhere, seen or felt in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and inside the Israeli state. Throughout my fieldwork and my lifetime in Palestine and in the Israeli state, I learnt that borders hold internal paradoxes; they are constructed to define security while projecting insecurity. In this dissertation, I pay close attention to borders as experienced by people with whom I talked. The anthropological literature on borders, as

well as that produced in other disciplines, offers a wide range of definitions of what

borders are, how they are conceptualized, and how they are lived by people who are

affected by them. In this section, I highlight the scholarship on borders that has inspired or

influenced my own conceptualization. I emphasize explorations of borders that use

structural and macro logical lenses to show, first, that borders are a visible production of

state forces, and, second, that borders are invisible yet exist through traces of past violence

projected onto the landscape. At the same time, although my research is located in highly

bordered lands, in this dissertation I talk about borders without fixating them solely on

physical or material sites. Instead, I trace borders in spaces where they are displaced,

paradoxically expected and unexpected (as discussed in Chapters Two and Three).

Conceptually, I argue, borders are not complete dividing spaces—they never fully achieve

segregation or separation; they are, nonetheless, spaces of constant negotiation and

contestation.

Despite intensified international and global connections between different parts of

the globe, sovereign states have tightened their national borders limiting all forms of

migration (Giles and Hyndman 2004:15). Wendy Brown (2010) identified the last thirty

years' phenomenon of intensifying borders as constructing new forms of "walled states."

These recent forms of walled borders, Wendy Brown claims, create insecurity rather than

security as well as shake the concept of the nation-state rather than affirm it. The irony of

recent walled states, she claims, as in the cases of Palestine-Israel, U.S-Mexico, Saudi

Arabia-Yemen, India-Pakistan, and Kashmir, is that a physical structure is constructed to

enforce an inside/outside distinction. What eventually emerges, however, is a blurring of the lines between the police (i.e., internal surveillance) and the military, corresponding to the outsiders' threat (2010:25). These walls, Brown claims, project images of sovereign, powerful states and an impression of bounded and secure nations (see also Grassiani and Swinkels (2014); however, those nation-states are in fact simultaneously destabilized by the very existence of these Walls, creating xenophobic policies that limit both insiders and outsiders to those states (Brown 2010:40).

The literature on borders with which I engage is invested in exploring borders as liminal spaces. I limit my exploration of borders to the spatiality and experience of border formation and crossings. Having said that, in this dissertation I do not engage the literature that theorizes with borders by looking at the legality or illegality of migrant movement. The logic of borders that I explore in this dissertation operates on the land and on occupied people who did not move towards borders leaving their homes behind, but on whose lands, homes and bodies militarized borders intruded. Here, I read borders through their capacities to continuously fragment, obscure and displace communities whose connection to the land is framed through national and historical ties, or through the discourse of indigeneity (Habashi 2005:780–781). The literature below offers a critical understanding of borders that inspires my exploration of the subject. However, as I will suggest, similarly to the anthropological literature on violence, what this literature on borders lacks is a *visual* exploration of borders—their visual production, reproduction or relations. I shall first

outline certain debates on borders which inspired my theoretical conceptualization, and then present my engagement with borders as filling the gap I have discerned.

The idea of a simple definition of borders is absurd, as Etienne Balibar (2002) writes in *Politics and the Other Scene.* Marking out borders is an act of defining territory while assigning a particular significance (like national identity) to that territory (76). Borders have no fixed locations, Balibar continues (2002:84). They have a tendency, however, to be politically, culturally, or economically less attached to the nation-states (2002:84) that simultaneously defined borders and were defined by them. As a result, some borders are no longer located at the internationally acknowledged or identified borderlines (2002:84), but elsewhere: inside nation-states and outside of them.

Balibar (2002) further argues that borders have strong tendencies to be anti-democratic (85) since they are the means by which states sustain internal national, racial, or class hegemonies, hierarchies, and segregation. Identifying the *inabilities* or even the *impossibility* of locating borders on the supposedly internationally or nationally acknowledged lines, I suggest, is an important and insightful realization that allows us to understand the processes through which borders are displaced deep into the social and political lives and experiences of people. Thinking of borders as displaced and displacing forces is my point of departure in this dissertation.

As Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Christina Szanton Blanc (1994) state, borders are mechanisms that produce and reproduce differences (1994:451). Borders construct binaries of identity through which people are socialized to normalize who is inside and who is outside the nation; what defines 'us' versus 'them'; who belongs to 'us' and who is the (racialized) 'other' (1994:451). As such, borders are confrontational and investigatory spaces (1994:451–452), through which we are required to 'honestly' declare our identities and 'true' facts about our lives that we left behind the borders and our intentions after crossing them. Basch et al. identify this as the power of the nation-state to discipline bodies within and sometimes outside those borders (1994:451-2). They also suggest a critical and feminist reading of borders that refuses to see borders as fixed, but rather, as "geographically and analytically dynamic" sites in which intimate relations between the local and global occur (451). A feminist reading of those intimate encounters highlights the transformative potential of border crossings; most famous is Gloria Anzaldúa's account of life through borders (1999). In her inspiring *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa recounts the formative and transformative experience of living in the U.S-Mexico borderlands, on borders that crossed the lands and lives of native communities and "where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa 1999:25). Borders, for Anzaldúa, are formative of experiences characterized by contradictory embodied identities. In the given context that Anzaldúa refers to, to be on the border means to live between the self while embodying the other, who is separated by the symbolic and material border. Drawing on Anzaldúa's work, Basch et al. also argue that borders function both as oppressive spaces and as sites of resistance (1994:195). To survive life on the borders one

has to live constantly through transcending borders; hence, as oppressive and limiting as they can be, borders are also resisted through people's constant crossing (whether through state legalized or illegalized methods). Living on borderlands or on borders is embodying the borders with their complexities and contradictions; to live them is to constantly break them. Here, I argue, lies one of the central paradoxes of borders. Borders are constructed to define the places that are safe and unsafe (Anzalúda 1999:25); they are vague and undetermined spaces created by the emotional remains of an 'unnatural boundary' (1999:25).

In her ethnography *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*, Amira Mittermaier (2011) explored the Arabic-Islamic concept of "*Barzakh*". While the context of the term *Barzakh* is not derived from nation-states or material borders formation, it is, nonetheless, a concept that offers an insightful theoretical engagement with borders as sites of ambiguity. *Barzakh* rejects those binary divisions that structural understanding of borders (of here and there, us and them) tries to establish. *Barzakh*, in Islamic eschatology, refers to "the space in which the spirits of the dead dwell until Judgment Day" (Mittermaier 2011:3). Mittermaier engages with the concept of *Barzakh* as an analytical tool that deconstructs and rejects the binary of either/or. Mittermaier argues that a '*barzakhian* perspective' invites us to think beyond the present and the visible and asks us to dwell on the in-between (2011:4). The *Barzakh*, as a concept, offers an ambiguous zone where two or three elements meet. It also provides an inspiring conceptualization of borders as *barzakhian* spaces, as borders invite us to be on those

liminal and ambiguous in-between spaces (see also Khosravi (2007); Anzaldúa (1999:101)).

A *Barzakhian* conception of space and spatiality can be linked to Edward Soja's (1996) notion of "thirdspace". Thirdspace, Soja argues, obscures the dichotomy of either/or both/and logic (1996:5). Thirdspace, according to Soja, is defined as a recombination and extension that is built on the basis of "real" material space—*firstspace*—and on the basis of the imagined representation of spatiality: the *secondspace* (1996:6). Thirdspace is a multiplicity of *real-and-imagined* in one site, and also a critical conceptual field on which constructed binarisms come together: subjectivity/objectivity, abstract/concrete, real/imagined, mind/body or everyday life/the unending history (1996:56-7). Soja also introduces what he calls a critical strategy of "thirding-as-Othering" (1996:5, 60). This concept is an attempt, similarly to *barzakh* in Mittermaier's ethnography (2011), to open up ways of thinking about binary systems at large, and spatial binary thought in particular. Soja's account allows for opening the possibility of continuous deconstruction of the concept of borders as material bodies that sit on a dichotomized line on self/other, local/foreign or nation/enemy.

My intention in this work is to show how borders are not only eventful sites but also sights. Borders are expressions of visual political relations, especially so if the context is one of military occupation. My reading of borders contextualizes borders historically. Borders are spaces that are made into sites and sights (Mitchell 2002). Borders are the

abstract idealization of the quest of those who materialize them to impose a solid sense of self vis-à-vis the other (Soja 1996:60-61). Such a self can only be constructed through, first, demarcating and, then, excluding differences (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994). Borders are made into sites where structural political events and ordinary events collide, at times in alliance and at others in conflict.

The types of borders existing on the land in Palestine/Israel can be seen in two forms. Both forms of border are arbitrary, transforming and transformative. The first is manifested through physical and material bodies, like military checkpoints, the Wall, or fences, all of which aim to locate Palestinians outside of Israeli state-defined borders. The other form borders take is the discursive and abstract form, which is not to say that it does not have material exclusionary effects on people, but, rather, that it renders itself less visible on the landscape or land. The Green Line, which I will elaborate on in the in Chapter Three, for example, forms a central paradox: it is an invisible line, yet its weight on the political maps and national imagination in the region is extremely heavy.

Having identified the three central anthropological debates that inform this research, I am, nonetheless, aware of the absence of a gender-based analytical framework. Although women's experiences, narratives and struggles formed a crucial ethnographic component of this dissertation, spelling out any differences among my interlocutors' accounts based on gender differences, I claim, is an insufficient task. Had I developed a feminist approach to this research, I would have asked not only how do state borders and

military violence affect national and gendered bodies (including queer bodies) differently, but more importantly, how are discourses about the landscape and the production of visuals informed by cultural constructions of gender and sexuality. These questions offer a possibility for new ethnographic directions that I intend to embark on in the future.

3. Map of Chapters

The theme of visuals tethers the chapters that follow conceptually to each other. I read, perceive, and represent the landscape as a visual field on which power dynamics and politics are lived and expressed. Cultural texts representing the landscape through photography are other sites of interest that I engage with in this work. What links borders, violence and photography together is the analytic emphasis on visuals, namely, on how visuals inform people's lives and their negotiation of living in a violent and bordered state. This research, nevertheless, does not analyze photographs from a photography or visual arts studies perspective. Instead, photographs, like texts or imagination, will be explored through an anthropological interrogation of the meanings that my interlocutors attribute to them, or through the classic anthropological form of questioning: What do people express they see when they look at photographs?

In the second Chapter, "Methodology in Visual Fields," I locate my research and my positioning in time and space. I argue that inquiring into the visual landscape requires close attention to the material and physical traces that visuals leave on the landscape, as well as the abstract and imaginary inventory they create in the lives of my interlocutors—

all of which informs their conception of political reading and visions. In an attempt to explore photographers' representation of the present state of affairs, I shed a strong light onto the work of Palestinian and Israeli photographers and artists, like Yazan Khalili, Samar Hazboun, Steve Sabella and Miki Kratsman. Since I display some of those photographers' and artists' work, I write about their work revealing their real names, with their permission. When invoking conversations with other photographers whose photography or art I do not display, I refer to them using pseudonyms: Osama, Jameel, Ghalib, Gili and Tamir.

The Wall, I argue, holds in its construction and structure not only an embodiment of past and present relations between Israelis and the Palestinians, but also a manifestation of possible futures. Since the Wall occupies vertical and horizontal spaces, it has a strong visual presence on the material and imaginary landscapes. Hence, in Chapter Two, I also explore the ways in which I locate my field between the visual realm and the socio-political narration, that which allows people to make sense of their landscape, its presence as well as their national story. Relatedly, in the second Chapter, I interrogate my own positionality in the field, at home. My positionality in the field, I claim, enables a specific form of questioning, theorizing, and access. As a Palestinian citizen of Israel, studying my homeland, I was intrigued by questions about my own relationship to the Israeli state, about the national construction of the landscape, about Israelis in close proximity to me, and about the measurement of distance through which national separation is carefully maintained. The "field", therefore, is inside me, channelled by my Palestinian ethno-

national position, as much as it is outside me. Drawing on my multiplicity of locations in the fieldwork, namely on violent sites of border-zones, I also acknowledge my limitations in accessing specific sites of investigation. While I hoped to talk to many Israelis who are conservative on the political map, I was able mainly to interview fifteen liberal or radical Israelis, who were living in either Jerusalem or Tel-Aviv, with an exception of one informant who lived in a small Israeli south of Haifa. One explanation I offer for the limitations on my access to Israeli interlocutors is the sensitivity, perhaps vulnerability, of conversations about the Israeli military occupation or other related security concerns. Moreover, I discuss how my Israeli interlocutors and I maintained an emotional distance. By contrast, interviewing Palestinians who live in the West Bank or in Israel was an easier mission, as the conversations that we had involved a level of intimacy and vulnerability, which quite possibly stemmed from imagined and shared national anxieties and promises.

Through joining Israeli political tours to the West Bank, like Kesharim and Tichnoun tours (which I will discuss and refer to throughout this dissertation), and through attending politicized artistic venues, such as Al Ma'amal Art Gallery or exhibitions in different cultural centres in Jerusalem and Ramallah, I was methodologically able to explore the way borders are lived and challenged by Palestinians and, to a lesser extent, Israelis. I also managed to gain insights into the mechanisms through which Israeli military violence operates in the West Bank and how Palestinian resist it. I shall return to some of the literature discussed in this introductory chapter, and introduce and expand on the methodological anthropological debates on researching borders and violent sights. In

addition, I shall further discuss methodological possibilities for researching visuals in anthropology.

In Chapter Three, titled "Landscapes of Borders", I explore horizontal, vertical, material and abstract borders in Palestine/Israel. In this chapter, I pay specific attention to the forms through which borders exist on the land, arguing for both the visible and the invisible presence of borders. Through highlighting conversations with my interlocutors, I narrate stories of crossings, suggesting that these narratives do not only represent a form of resistance but also signify the paradox of borders: they are made structurally in order to block one people's movement, while allowing that of another. The Wall, as I shall show in Chapter Three, is such a structure. Being a barrier, the Wall is a vertical border marking the landscape with anxieties and limitations. The Wall is not only widely conceived by Israelis as a national border zone, but also, as I demonstrate, through its visual structure, it constitutes an anxiety-producing zone. To explore such sentiments I turn to photographic and artistic representations of the Wall. I break down the multiple structures that were historically imposed on the land producing the "fact" of borders, a new reality Palestinians with which are faced and are forced to negotiate daily. I claim that the Wall, being the most recent form of bordering, is a materialization and a product of Israeli discourses on national insecurities and on the fear of physical proximity to the Palestinians. Following a discussion of the historical processes of border formations and the materialization of separation, I shift to talk about the abstractions such materialization entails. The Wall, as a

physical bordering body, is also a mental structure that cannot be understood without the removal of a mental screen framed through politicization of the gaze.

In Chapter Four, "*Landscapocide*, Border Sight and Daily Violence", I describe the landscape of violence that is permanent on the land. The violence that I speak about here is not necessarily abrupt, but, rather, sustained through normalizing violence and its traces on the landscape. Visuals, then, are both at the service of displacements, ruins, abandonment, and bordering, as much as they are at the service of resistance. In its first part, the fourth chapter describes the landscape of violence at the border and focuses on the northern border between the Israeli state and Syria, specifically the Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights. In the second part of the chapter, I explore violence through the military occupation in the West Bank. I specifically bring to light narratives of violent encounters between Palestinians and Israeli military. A main argument I advance through looking at visuals of violence on the landscape is that violence is sustained through the suspension of time on the borders, which renders the landscape as abandoned or left to decay. Looking at intimate forms of military violence, this chapter also suggests that violence functions through forms of circular relations, producing traces of reminders of the initial moments of the violence of colonization. Violence, then, turns into a ghost living in and through ordinary encounters between Palestinians and Israelis, resulting in a pent up or curbed intimacy that is, paradoxically, inseparable, despite all efforts of segregation.

The fifth Chapter, "Framing the Vanishing: Photography of Palestinian Landscape," situates the Israeli-constructed Wall in the site of visual production. Empirically speaking, I explore in detail the photographic work that was conducted during the past years since the construction of the Wall. I highlight the dynamics between material and abstract structuring of the Wall through the photographic frame. Drawing on Ariella Azoulay's (2011; 2013; 2008) conceptualization of photography, I examine multiple Israeli and Palestinian photographic projects in order to argue that there is a frame of politics, or a political frame, that precedes the photographic frame, which ratifies the view that photographs are ideological sentences. At the centre of this chapter is a contestation concerning the affective agency that a photograph of the Wall could have. Some of my interlocutors argued that a photograph of the Wall can convey only a singular message against its presence; others claimed that photographs are always subject to interpretation and their reading is dependent upon the viewer's ideological framework. My conversations with Palestinian photographers, in particular, highlighted the dilemma of photography of Palestine in general, and of the Wall more specifically. In this chapter, I ask, How can one visualize a landscape of disappearance and absence—a landscape of one's own absence on the land as Israeli structures are extended and expanded into the Palestinian depth?

Ultimately, this dissertation is an anthropological excavation of visual relations in Palestine in the shadow of the Israeli-constructed Wall. It is also an invitation to rethink anthropological research on borders, violence and visual relations, and an invitation to re-examine the hegemonic representation of the role of visuals in the geopolitical context at

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stake. Through tracing visual themes in discourses and speech of separation, borders and

violent encounters, I propose to abandon the microscopic methodological gaze when

looking at the Wall. Instead, I suggest we can productively diversify our methodological

gazes by looking back at history as well as forward, into the future, onto which the Wall is

politically and symbolically projected.

Chapter Two: Methodology in Visual Fields

Image 5: View from the Israeli "side"; driving on a rainy day through the Wall bordering the Israeli state from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Photograph by the author. February 2012.

On the 11ᵗʰ of February 2012, I landed in Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. I landed home, but I also landed in my fieldwork. My father picked me up from the airport and, while driving back to Nazareth, my hometown, we passed near one of the Palestinian cities *hidden* behind the Wall—Qalqiliya. Qalqiliya is located in the northwest of the West Bank. The city's western border sits on the 1967 cease-fire line (the Green Line), which, today, in that segment, is marked by the form of a concrete Wall. While driving on that rainy day, I took my first photograph of the Wall (image 5). I took the photograph with a cellphone camera. I remember asking my father to remind me which Palestinian town was behind the Wall. We tried to guess different names of towns or villages that sit behind that segment of the Wall near the highway. Our horizontal landscape was unrecognizable with the naked eye or through our direct contact with what we saw. With the help of the Global Positioning System (GPS) we clarified our doubts.

The city of Qalqiliya was behind the Wall, but all what one can see in the photograph of the landscape is a concrete Wall, not a city of fifty-thousand inhabitants (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2016). The city became a Wall, as if one could say: "you see the Wall there? That is Qalqiliya." The Wall was already visible only a few meters away from the highway; it was also high enough to hide the village's mosque minaret that was visible before the Wall's construction. The Wall in this segment, where there is close proximity between Palestinian and Israeli areas, was deliberately constructed, as Sari Hanafi argued, to remove the *visual* presence of Palestinians from the landscape (2009:107). The scene that I witnessed on the road and the photograph I took of the hidden

village were a visual prediction of a multilayered research project that I was about to

commence. There is the landscape as a scene, the photograph as another scene, the hidden

village accessed only through military checkpoints, and my positionality in the political

structures or national narratives, all of which manifested my interaction with my reality as

a visual experience.

In this photograph, one can see that the green grass and the trees closer to the

highway are blurry from the movement of the camera and the car, while the gray Wall

stands clear under the fog on the landscape. Sarah Pink (2007) argues that looking at the

first photograph one takes in the field can be a good start to familiarize oneself with the

field as well as in the process of writing ethnography (2007:64). Following Pink's

suggestion, I started exploring this photograph through my familiarity with the context as

well as my critical engagement with it. This photograph, hence, inspired the question: how

do Israeli citizens perceive or relate to the Wall? While this question was one of my

thought-through questions, this photograph also led me to ask: what is this structure that

the eye and the camera caught? Why does it appear and disappear throughout the

landscape? And, what does it mean not to be able to see what is behind it, and what and

who is hidden, obscured, and completely absented from the view? Ultimately, whose side

of the Wall has the power to see and be seen and, most importantly, dictate visual

relations?

In this chapter, I aim to highlight and explain the multiple methodologies I utilized

in conducting this research. I also intend to demonstrate that exploring people's relations to

visuals in their lives requires a multiplicity of methodological approaches through which

material, visual, or discursive aspects are apprehended. During my research, my concern,

or, rather, my anxiety, was to trace violence that the state implanted on the landscape,

asking in what ways violence transgresses borders and structures, and in what ways is it

kept outside of the visual-national realm. Empirically speaking, I was looking at the

Israeli-built Wall: the history of its construction, discourses informing it and forming

through it, as well as photographic and visual engagement or disengagement with it. To

explore these concerns methodologically, I first carried out participant observation in

frictional border sites between Israelis and Palestinians. I took fieldnotes and photographs

of what I was seeing and experiencing through my crossings between the different

occupied lands and between the different forms of the Israeli state's and its citizens'

relations to those lands. Second, I collected ephemera on the Wall produced by artists,

photographers, activists, or organizations, some of which are in print and others in digital

form. The ephemera consisted of maps, brochures, magazines, news articles, and

photographs—all of which was public information. Third, using the snowball method and

through some friends and acquaintances in the field, I was able to contact and conduct

interviews with a total of twenty-five Palestinians and Israelis, all of whom were politically

informed and active in with the goal of ending the Israeli military occupation in Palestine.

Fourth, I attended tours (of two organizations, Kesharim and Tichnoun), conferences and

exhibitions that both related to the Wall specifically or to the landscape of military

occupation in the West Bank more generally (such as tours to Israeli settlements). Through

attending these events and entering these spaces, I was able to trace, as well as map out the pertinent discourses on the Wall specifically and on the political situation at large.

The two central methodological tasks with which I became preoccupied and that constituted a challenge in my research were, first, how to study absence of representations of existing structures and dynamics? Second, as a Palestinian, how do I study my occupier, the Israeli state? Both questions involved an archaeological work of internal emotional excavation. The first concern necessitates tentative connections with the landscape, an ability to reread and rethink the space while avoiding the ordinary process of normalization. Studying absence is a challenging mission since it requires particular sensitivity to locating transformations in the field and a capacity to identify disappearance as well as a knowledge of the local national, Israeli and Palestinian, histories of the land and the landscape. The second concern necessitates attempts to face my fears of confronting Israelis with questions that are related to their position as occupiers, or their relation to the larger Israeli society as a settler colonial society (Kimmerling 1983; Lloyd 2012; Yiftachel 1999:365). The ethnographic task here is to capture the complexity of exploring political tension, borders, violence, or transformation carved on the landscape while people attempt to make sense of it or verbalize their relations to the landscape.

1. Positionality on the Borderline: Proximities and Distances

This research is inspired by my own relation to the landscape and the history I share with the people I encountered in the field, as well as by my positionality in the field, which has mainly informed my methodology. In other words, access to particular sites and

conversations with different people were made more or less possible due to my ethno-national positioning. That is, I had more access to Palestinian or Israeli leftist political spaces than I did to the Israeli military sites or personnel. In a context like Israel-Palestine, where ethnic, national, and religious identities are heavily regulated through the state's formal and informal practices (Nasser 2013) and through hegemonic discourses of secured identity borders, it becomes even more crucial to pause and recount my positionality. As an anthropologist, my positionality is neutral neither in the eyes of the Israeli state, in those of Israelis, nor of Palestinians.

I was born in Nazareth to a Palestinian-Arab family with Israeli citizenship. Nazareth is the biggest Palestinian-Arab city in the Israeli state[20]. I lived in Nazareth for eighteen years of my life before moving to live in Jerusalem in 2000. There I pursued my undergraduate education at the Hebrew University and lived in that city for four years. During my stay in Jerusalem, I became tremendously aware of the effects of the Israeli military occupation on people's lives in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, specifically in East Jerusalem, which was occupied by the Israeli Army in 1967. The Hebrew University was located in East Jerusalem, surrounded by Palestinian neighbourhoods, overlooking, to the east, Jericho and the Dead Sea, and to the west, the Old City of Jerusalem.

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[20] East Jerusalem is bigger in space and larger in the number of Palestinian Arab dwellers. However, it was occupied in 1967 and it holds a different political position in the Israeli state. For example, most of the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are not citizens of the Israeli state: they are only residents, which implies that they have different political rights and obligations than Israeli citizens.

By the end of 2002, the Israeli government initiated the construction of the

separation Wall deep inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories; Jerusalem saw the Wall

in its earliest years of construction, other people in territories in the West Bank witnessed

the Wall's construction a few months later. The Wall solidified, to a large extent, much of

the already existing separation between Israeli citizens and their spaces and Palestinians

and the spaces they inhabit. I saw the slow process of solidification of this separation

taking place in front of my eyes. The confusion caused by this radical transformation in the

space led many Palestinians and a few Israelis to organize against the Wall.[21] I, too, was

affected by the obfuscation of the space and of the city I had grown to love. I sought out an

organization that gave educational tours around the Wall in Jerusalem to gain insight into

the politics of this divide. During 2003 and 2004 I joined Israeli political tours to the Wall,

where I was first exposed to the discourse of Israeli militarism and security logic,

juxtaposed with testimonies of Palestinians with whose daily lives the Wall interfered. The

Israeli Ministry of Defence claimed[22] that the Wall was constructed to stop suicide

bombers from carrying explosives into Israeli cities; the Palestinians we talked to during

these tours explained how the Wall had blocked their movement, damaged their economy,

and confiscated their lands (see also Lee (2013)).

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[21] One of the first Palestinian organizations established in the West Bank was Stop The Wall. Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions (ICHAD) was another organization already working on the humanitarian cases of Palestinian homes' demolitions, and in 2003 was involved in education tours about the Wall and its violation of human rights.
[22] Ministry of Defence, "Israeli's Security Fence":
http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/purpose.htm, accessed April 5, 2015.

Since 1948, a cease-fire line, also known as the Green Line (Shlay and Rosen 2010:359), has divided Jerusalem into two sides: the Palestinian side—Jordanian-administered—and the side of the newly formed Israeli state. In 1967, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the same borderline was physically removed and politically burdened with new symbolism. With the removal of that line, Israel replaced the border with intensified military presence in all Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Jerusalem was annexed into the Israeli state borders while maintaining military troops patrolling people's lives, regulating Palestinian institutions and restricting urban development in Palestinian-inhabited areas of the city (Klein 2008:55–56, 59; Shlay and Rosen 2010). The Wall was the most recent structure that continues to deprive Palestinians from accessing Jerusalem or from building any material attachment to it. I left Jerusalem in 2004; for its Palestinian dwellers, a torn, fragmented, and suffocating city. Palestinian residents of Jerusalem were deprived of any geographical continuity with other surrounding Palestinian cities in the West Bank like Ramallah and Bethlehem (Thawaba 2011).

During my four years of education in Jerusalem I made a few Jewish friends based on frequent interactions in the university campus residence housing or in classes. These friendships were not based on shared political views, but more so on ordinary friendly encounters. All of the Jewish Israeli friends I made during the first years of undergraduate education held liberal or left-wing political views on most economic and social issues; but their political views on Palestine and the occupation were moulded through the Israeli security discourse. Such discourses are based on the argument that Israeli security is

always prioritized over Palestinians' human rights, and often lead to a justification of brutal military treatment of the Palestinians (Hajjar 2005; Hajjar 2011:27). My Jewish Israeli friends also strongly believed that Israel must maintain a majority Jewish ownership of the land, which also implied articulating opinions against the return of Palestinian refugees from 1948 to live inside what is now the state of Israel; or against family reunification between Palestinians from the West Bank and Palestinian Israeli citizens (Boullata 2007:36–37; Barak-Erez 2008).

I often found myself engaged in arguments about the Israeli military occupation or the situation with Palestinian citizens of Israel with my Jewish Israeli friends. These arguments would regularly end with no recognition of the Palestinian right to national self-determination, and with me realizing that my friends lacked sufficient historical knowledge to hold detailed, engaging conversations about the recent history of this land or its people. Yelling at each other was another form of communicating and engaging in conversation about the politics of this shared space and land. The conversations would always explode with worst-case scenarios to which my Jewish friends would arrive—which often envisioned the future expulsion of the Israeli Jews from this land. This fear of being denied existence on the land, I would always argue back, this feared imagined future is a lived reality for most Palestinians today. Conversations like these would often end at that impasse.

The escape to imagined past or future scenarios made me think about the discourses and mechanisms of absenting the present, the current urgent scenario, and strategies of distancing oneself from a present reality in which one lives. I thus realized that my

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fieldwork was not only going to be located in what is apparent, but also in what is hidden. In other words, my research was not only going to explore what is seen clearly or is visible on the landscape or evident in national discourses but also what is invisible. It would also be an inquiry into what is made to be unseen.

During my empirical exploration, I realized that underlying this ethnographic account is a personal and subjective chronicle of my life and the lives of people who were "othered" to me through different historical, political and social processes. Beneath the surface of the physical field, this ethnographic work is also an account of what is narrated and what is not narrated. It is also heavily informed by my personal experience; hence, the ethnographic field is located inside me as much as it is outside of me—in the landscapes I inhabited in the past or during the research period. Having said that, in the following I break down my research locations into three fields: the land and landscape, liminal spaces, and national and social proximities and positionings.

2. Locating the Field: Positionings in Occupied Land/scape

My research was carried out on three fronts, which constituted the conceptual parameters of the "field". First, it was located on contested lands, metaphorically and materially. Second, it was carried out in the visual realm, a "thirdspace" (Soja 1996), I argue, between what is visually material and visually abstract. Third, it was located on the borderline and proximities between Israeli and Palestinian societies or spaces. In this section, I elaborate on each front.

First, my fieldwork is located on a land that is historically in a constant process of undergoing often violent transformations and remappings. As stated in the introduction, this research is situated on land that has been contested historically resulting in fragmented spaces and landscapes. During almost a year from February 2012 to January 2013, and two months in the summer of 2013, I conducted my fieldwork in Palestine and Israel. My fieldwork consisted of traveling between the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Israeli cities as well as the northern borders of the Israeli state (see Maps 3 and 4 that show my central locations during the fieldwork period). Being an Israeli citizen and holding an Israeli identity card I could move between the West Bank and Israel without needing any permits. However, Palestinians who hold Palestinian identity cards (issued for Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens and who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) cannot go into Israeli state territory without a permit from the Civil Administration in the Israeli military.

I moved into and outside of sites in the West Bank that are regulated to different degrees by the Israeli military. Some areas have a tighter military surveillance—almost sealed by the Wall or electric fences; there, the entrance of people is tightly controlled. Others are known for experiencing violence by soldiers. Military checkpoints in the West Bank, for example, were visibly and physically placed as an unsurpassable obstacle to people's movements. These checkpoints were also closely monitored by the soldiers. During the day, soldiers in the West Bank often patrol roads and shut down demonstrations, and during the night they would break into homes for house searches looking for weapons or for wanted Palestinians (reports on such military practices are documented intensively, archived and published online in the United Nation Office for

Coordination of Human Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (UN OCHA-oPt)[23] or in B'tselem- The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories[24]).

I was introduced to most of my Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors through activist friends and photographers that I already knew, prior to embarking on my fieldwork. After meeting one informant, I would often ask if he or she could introduce me to more people to whom I could speak. In most cases, the interviewees would suggest names of people. I contacted five Jewish Israelis who were suggested to me by various interlocutors but I never heard back from them. I also contacted a Jewish Israeli settler group in the West Bank that, I heard, works on co-existence between Jews and Palestinians in the West Bank, but I never received a reply.

During my fieldwork, I traveled with a car that I borrowed from my family. I drove along the lines of bordered spaces and roads, militarized buffer zones, arbitrary no-man's-lands, blocked landscapes or military structures, collecting stories that speak to and about these spaces. There were a few times where I drove with my interlocutors, but often I met with them wherever they suggested we meet, which was usually in their familiar surroundings, either their homes or cafés in their cities.

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[23] Online page of archived reports of The United Nations Office for Coordination of Human Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: http://www.ochaopt.org/reports.aspx?id=104&page=1, accessed on May 14, 2015.

[24] Online page of archived Palestinians testimonies of B'tselem: http://www.btselem.org/testimonies, accessed on May 14, 2015.

In addition to conducting interviews with Israelis and Palestinians, I joined three full-day educational tours to the West Bank and Jerusalem. The tours were led by two different Israeli peace organizations and were directed at Israelis who wished to learn, visiting and seeing the conditions in which Palestinians live under the Israeli military occupation. For the purpose of this research, I shall keep the two organizations anonymous to protect the subjects who work in them, since I will present some of my conversations with the tour guides as well as details of the discussions that took place during the tours. I will refer to them with pseudonyms: I call the first organization "Kesharim" and the second "Tichnoun." Tichnoun is an Israeli not-for profit organization that was founded in the early 2000s, focusing on educational tours in Jerusalem and advocating for a city that is hospitable and accessible to both Israelis and Palestinians. Kesharim, founded in the mid-2000s, is a movement initiated by Palestinians and Israelis with the purpose of ending the ongoing violence between the two peoples. Through dialogue, negotiations, and reconciliation processes between the two sides, Kesharim believes a peaceful solution is possible. Like Tichnoun, one of Kesharim's goals is to raise awareness in the Israeli public about the importance of dialogue and peaceful solutions. Through educational tours in the West Bank for an Israeli audience, and through meeting with Palestinians in their towns and cities, both organizations emphasize the centrality of knowledge in the production of political views of most Israelis (and, to a lesser extent, Palestinians).

I was the only Palestinian to take part in the three tours that I attended. I emailed the organizations telling them I wished to participate in the tours with the intention of

collecting information about the Wall for my research. I informed the organizations'

coordinators and tour guides that I was interested in learning about the discourses about the

Wall in Israeli society. During the three tours, I mostly listened, observed, wrote notes and

recorded all the conversations during the tour with a voice recorder, and I took

photographs.

I learned a lot during my participatory observations with Tichnoun and Kesharim

tours to the West Bank. I was able to learn about the humanitarian and political crisis of

Palestinians living in the specific localities we visited. Joining these Israeli-guided tours, I

was able to see, feel, and interact with the Palestinian political landscape in the West Bank

as presented to the Israeli audience. Such political tours, I argue, are aimed at the eventual

construction of a particular national discourse on and across the borders. What these tours

did was familiarize Israelis with the Palestinian suffering; at the same time, the tours

allowed Israelis to face the reality of military occupation and to process their feelings and

encounters with Palestinians or the testimonies they heard. The tours also offered Israelis

an opportunity to construct their own image of Palestinians through encountering them and

hearing their testimonies.

In these tours, Israelis met Palestinians in their homes, agricultural lands, or their

local community. Palestinians were the hosts and the Israelis were the guests. Many

Israelis who attended these tours were faced with challenging conversations and arguments

that allowed them to interrogate their position in this conflict. These tours also offered

them, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, the opportunity to question their positions, namely their historical knowledge, analysis of the current present reality and imagining possible futures. The tours also offered them the possibility of undertaking a reflexive inquiry on their location in space, namely their relation to state and military borders as well as their reading of the West Bank landscape.

In addition to participating in these political tours, I attended conferences and talks on the Wall specifically and on the situation in Jerusalem or the West Bank in general. I attended two events organized by Al Haq[25] organization: an all-day conference in Bethlehem on the effects of the Wall in Palestine; and a photographic exhibition of the Wall in a gallery of the Al-Ma'mal Foundation[26] in Jerusalem. I also attended a photographic exhibition at the Consulate General of France, in Jerusalem. The exhibition was called Border Lines and presented the work of French photographer Alexis Cordesse[27]. I also participated in a talk by Meir Margalit – a member of the city council at Jerusalem's Municipality, who talked about the exclusionary policies of the city towards its Palestinian dwellers in East Jerusalem. Finally, I attended a four-day seminar organized by the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) titled: Jerusalem: Identity, Culture and Art[28].

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[25]Al-Haq is defined as "an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization based in Ramallah, the West Bank. Established in 1979 to protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), the organization has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council". http://www.alhaq.org/10yrs/, accessed March 19, 2015.

[26] Al-Ma'mal's website: http://www.almamalfoundation.org/, accessed March 19, 2015.

[27] http://alexiscordesse.com/photos_3_24_1_0_%3Cem%3EPortfolio-Border-Lines%3C-em%3E, accessed March 19, 2015.

[28] http://www.passia.org/seminars/2012/Jerusalem.html, accessed March 19, 2015.

Through such events, exhibitions, political tours or seminars, I collected relevant ephemera (brochures, maps, reports or fact sheets) in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, all of which engaged with the topics of borders, violence, violation of Palestinian human rights, analysis of the political scene and suggestions of possible solutions. Some of the collected material is heavily textual (such as reports or newsletters), while the other is largely visual, photographic or cartographic (such as reports with photographs used to document the Wall's structure, home demolitions, or protests in the West Bank; and maps of the route of the Wall, or locations of old and new settlements). I used this material as a guideline to help me map out the discursive and political landscapes of Israeli and Palestinian societies.

Secondly, my fieldwork is grounded in what Edward Soja (1996) refers to as the *thirdspace*: in between the material space and the abstract space, in between the tangible and the physical—like the Wall or checkpoints—and the imagined and projected—like photography or the verbalization of the acts of seeing and viewing the landscape. Empirically speaking, I used the physical landscape, the material structure, as expressed through my interlocutors' accounts, but also the landscape as an imagined scene, as they articulated it. Visuals, I argue, sit in-between the material and the abstract; photographs, for instance, are the product of material processes, the recording of light falling onto a light-sensitive surface. Visuals are also abstract, as in produced through extending the meanings they are taken to portray to associations and ideas, often inspired by historical and cultural discourses.

An anthropological approach to visual objects necessitates an engagement with two interconnected spheres. The first is an ethnographic account with the artists, media

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persons, architects, military personnel, or ordinary people, and all those whose lives are informed explicitly or implicitly by the separation Wall in Palestine as a border-functioning structure. For Palestinians, the Wall is seen as a structure that blocks their movement between towns, cuts their family ties, and blocks their vision; while for most Israelis, the Wall is framed through the security discourse of protection against Palestinian militant attacks (upon which I will elaborate in Chapter Three). The second sphere that I empirically explore is the visual representation of the Wall—namely, the photographic work. My field of research, hence, is located in between physical objects (and the experiences related to such structures and objects) and people's relation to these encounters through the production of visual objects and discursive imaginaries.

The visuals in my research constitute a thirdspace, offering material consolidation as well abstract imaginations. In other words, visuals occupy both material surroundings and imaginative possibilities. By visuals, I broadly refer to the ways in which material and abstract social realities are presented and conceptualized through photographs or other tangible objects (for instance, visual representations of the landscape in Palestine, or border-structures like the Wall); and the way Palestinian and Israeli gazes are culturally and politically constructed to envision separation and borders, or to imagine the nation's "others". More specifically, the visuals I analyze in this dissertation are, first, the ways in which Israelis and Palestinians with whom I spoke engaged with and perceived their surroundings, like the Wall or the landscape through the Wall; and, second, the work produced by six Palestinian and three Israeli photographers of the Wall's landscape. Engaging with such conversations also implied engaging with peoples' imaginations, or,

more specifically, with the images they used in their conversations to abstract their material surroundings or to materialize their imagined realities. In this sense, my research is located in the thirdspace (to borrow Soja's (1996) concept), which I define as a location between the visual and the tangible, the visible and the invisible, the presented and at the absented. In other words, this research is situated in-between what is seen and what is unseen in the material, geographic landscape and in the abstract, imagined geopolitical landscape. It is located between what is rendered visible, at times, and invisible, at others, by the dominant state. In that sense, my fieldwork also explores failures of visual structures, asking what it means for visual elements to fail at representation; and what it means to fail at producing the effects such visuals was meant to produce.

Researching visual life necessitates an engagement with the senses: one's own senses—what I see and how I see it—as well as those of others—how they see and relate to their reality. It is an investigation, then, that is located in the thirdspace, on the space in-between people's relation to the visual life and my own relation to it. Visuals, then, are located in the gap of distances in between the different perceptions of the lands, spaces, and the nation. This gap forms the background of my methodological exploration.

The following sections will draw a mental map of the places and spaces I have visited during my fieldwork, all the while carrying my liminal positionality—being internal-external to the state, landscape, and territories often gave me access to different situations that would have been inaccessible otherwise. In the following sections, I will be addressing the questions, where is my field located and what are the borders and boundaries of such a field?

The travel map covering my year-long research not only reflects the physical mapping of roads, intersections, or towns; but rather, the map I invite readers to imagine includes different points of encounters that reflects emotional, social, and political measurements of distance and proximity; familiarity and alienation from Palestinians and Israelis with whom I spoke; spaces and sites I visited; as well as spaces from which was I left out. To imagine this map, I invite readers to think of a geography that is heavily defined through ethnic and national lines, and that is administered through state-military bureaucracy. I invite the reader to walk on sites where borders are only drawn on political maps while erased from the lands, then displaced elsewhere in the form of the Wall or a checkpoint. Imagining this map, I also ask the reader to think of time as paradoxically non-concordant with space, as the distance between two cities in a militarily occupied territory will always shift in correspondence with soldiers' willingness to open, slow down the movement through, or entirely shut down the checkpoint.

This work reflects my life – as a Palestinian citizen of Israel in relation to the Israeli society that shapes the landscape in accordance with its national vision, dreams or sights. My research site is therefore situated within the Israeli society and Israeli nationalism, as much as it is informed by Palestinian society or discourses of nationalism. Early into my research, I intended to make the Israeli society as the sole focus of my fieldwork; I wanted to talk to Israelis and investigate the absence of the 'other' within their national imagined composition. In particular, I planned to interview Israeli photographers who, against the general interest of the Israeli society, were committed to photographing the Wall and to bringing it to the larger Israeli public. I wanted to explore how these photographers present

a structure that is constantly being absented from the mainstream Israeli discourse and consciousness. I was interested in my interlocutors' ways of seeing, unseeing, and imagining the Wall and the Palestinians who were kept behind it. These conversations led me to talk to my interlocutors about the separation and segregation Israelis and Palestinians live through; or, in other words, the absence of Palestinian subjects and their symbols from Israeli national spaces.

Halfway through my fieldwork, I found myself drawn to and intrigued by what Palestinian activists and artists are creating in their visual milieu. Being Palestinian, and therefore able to access a larger number of Palestinian spaces and networks, I was intrigued to talk to Palestinian activists and photographers. Talking to Palestinians enriched the material that I collected; it also changed my initial preliminary questions with which I had embarked in this research. I talked to Palestinians about their relationship to the Wall and the transformations they experience in the shadow of a military occupation, which led me to collect many stories and testimonies on events, visions, and interpretations of the conditions under which Palestinians live. I was, therefore, exposed to Palestinian enthusiasm in visualizing the material structure of the Wall as well as the landscape as occupied. This opened a new field of investigation for me. Such a field cannot be simply located on the other side of Israeli photographic encounters. Palestinian photography is not an "other" story to Israeli photography, or vice-versa, as I shall show; rather, both uses of the photographic lens centre on narrating a story of arrival at political complexities. The Israeli photographers with whom I talked capture in their frame traces of state violence.

The Palestinian photographers with whom I talked, however, capture in their frame traces of their disappearance or eviction from the landscape.

I carried out twenty-five in-depth interviews, with Palestinian and Israeli activists and photographers (art-photographers and photojournalists). Nine out of the total interviewees were women. I interviewed sixteen Jewish Israelis and nine Palestinians, two of whom were Israeli citizens and the rest were West Bank residents (including those from Jerusalem). Nine of my interviewees were photographers and the rest were activists or working in the field of human rights. I met seven of my interviewees more than one time, three of whom I met almost once a month after the first interview. Most of my interviewees were between the ages of 30-55, with the exception of one sixty-six year-old man and one twenty-one year-old man.

The Palestinians and Israelis I interviewed held different citizenships in the Israeli state: Jewish Israeli citizens, Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinian residents of Israel (Jerusalemites, non-Israeli citizens), and Palestinians with West Bank identity cards (non-Israeli citizens). The distinction in these different forms of documentation, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, is due to the history of internal processes in the Israeli governments as well as military governance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Needless to say, accessing the Gaza Strip was nearly impossible for me as the Israeli state has imposed a blockade on the Strip since roughly the year 2006. Therefore, I did not have a chance to talk to Gazan photographers or activists who also represent the Wall in Gaza in their work.

Talking to my interlocutors about the Wall specifically and borders within Israeli society in general slightly shifted my research questions. For example, a few Jewish Israeli interlocutors I spoke to talked about their sense of borders within the Israeli society itself, and not only those with the Palestinians. My fieldwork was also shifting in accordance with an abrupt bordered, militarized, and segregated reality. For example, I thought that growing up in the Israeli state would grant me easier access to talking to members of the Jewish Israeli society. I assumed that this would be the case since I spoke Hebrew fluently and had extensive knowledge about internal Israeli politics. Likewise, I thought that approaching Jewish Israelis in Hebrew would make it easier for them to talk to me. However, this was not always the case. A few times, subjects that I met through different spaces and later contacted never replied. I ended up re-visiting my comfort zone, which meant talking to the leftist activists amongst the Israelis, who already felt slightly more comfortable to express their views about Israeli policies in the West Bank. Therefore, my communication with Israelis was hardly comprehensive; it failed to include those who identify themselves with the center or rightwing politics, such as supporters of the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the Israeli state, supporters of aerial military bombing of buildings in Gaza, supporters of Israeli military presence in Palestinian cities. Such views I could only read about in mainstream Israeli media. Nevertheless, I was curious about the kind of stories that Israeli settlers in the West Bank, for example, could be open to telling me. What do they think about their relation to Palestinians living nearby? Or, with what levels of proximity to Palestinians are they comfortable or uncomfortable? And, how do they perceive their relationship to the

landscape of Palestinian towns and villages around them? These questions could possibly inform another research endeavour.

Having talked to both Israelis and Palestinians, I consciously refrained from producing my findings through writing a replica of 'two-national narratives'. The borders of the one existing state, Israel, is not static, while the other borders define a non-existing state, the future state of Palestine. Such border conditions already produce a reality that goes against two-sidedness. I belong to the Palestinian community that remained inside the newly formed state of Israel in 1948. This also means that I am considered a Palestinian-Arab according to the binary perception of the two-sided national and ethnic groupings; all the while I am a citizen of the Israeli state and belong to a politically and economically marginalized population within the state. Given the dominance of the two stories, both national and ethnic, as in Palestinian versus Israeli narratives, I asked myself the following questions: how can I portray this complexity without falling into a binary narrative? More specifically, how can I capture the contingent and crossing realities of both Palestinians and Israelis through what they visually produce and discursively imagine?

Hence, by talking to Palestinians and Israelis, I refused to categorize or rank their narratives in opposition or contrast to each other. What I propose instead is a reading against the grain, against the dominant narrative of a two-sided conflict. This enables a reading of multiple narratives meeting at an *intersection* of historical traces, current conditions, and situations, sometimes in alignment and at others in opposition. My refusal to engage with such a binary discourse emerges from the overwhelming gap between an

imposed national binarism and reality. I argue that the discourse of two sides of the same story is a dominant discourse in the media (Arabic, Israeli, or international) and in academic writing (Rotberg 2006:3). Imposing such a hegemonic narrative on a complicated reality reinforces an *a priori* dualism—as already existing prior to any further analytical intervention. Hence, the narratives of two nations and two states, or even two equal sides of the "conflict" turn into a familiar framing which is later used to justify the very creation of such two-sidedness. The Wall, for example, is a structure that reinforces a separation and a two-sidedness that is empirically impossible to achieve. If the separation intended to create a reality of Palestinians on one side and Israelis on another, the Wall sits on Palestinian lands dividing Palestinians from other Palestinians. The Wall also does not leave Israelis on the West side of it. Israelis dwell on both sides of the Wall too, in the Israeli Settlements in the West Bank, East of the Wall, and inside the borders of the Israeli state, West to the Wall. In other words, the hegemonic narrative of Israeli-Palestinian relations uses vocabularies of binaries that reinforce separate narratives of histories and futures. Instead of dualism, or binary thinking, I use vocabularies of multiplicity and intersectionality, transgressions and assemblages of narratives.

Having said that, the multiplicities of narratives on the ground are far from being singular or equal in the Israeli political spectrum. There is an official Israeli state narrative that imposes itself in the form of a national security discourse—a normalized discourse amongst most Israelis that view Palestinians as the enemy of the Israeli nation. There is also an Israeli politicized discourse that attempts to critique the state's occupation and

discriminatory regime. There is an official story told by the Palestinian Authority on how to resist the occupation or build a nation; there is also a wide range of narratives amongst Palestinians when reflecting on their realities on living under the occupation. Some of these narratives are as critical towards the Israeli occupation as they are towards the Palestinian Authority. In the following chapters, I will be presenting the different stories and testimonies told by people whose lives are shaped by the Israeli occupation as well as through their resistance to it.

Having rented a room with my Palestinian friend in an area between Jerusalem and Ramallah brought me closer to Palestinian social and political setting, increasing the likelihood of daily encounters with Palestinians. The house I stayed in sat on one of the "buffer zones" in that area, in Kufur Aqab (see Map 3, with Map 3 key in Image 6). Kufur Aqab is in the West Bank territory, east of Qalandia Checkpoint, which cuts off Ramallah and nearby villages from Jerusalem. Kufur Aqab was annexed to Israel since the 1967 Occupation of the West Bank and The Gaza Strip, and was made part of Jerusalem's Israeli municipality. Although it was occupied and annexed into Jerusalem's Israeli municipality, Qalandia military checkpoint, less than five kilometers way from the area, rendered Jerusalem incredibly inaccessible to Palestinians who lived in Kufur Aqab (NPR 2010)[29]. Ramallah, a Palestinian city under Palestinian Authority, and considered the post-Oslo Agreement economic hub (Lagerquist 2003), was attached to Kufur Aqab and was fully

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[29] Grassroot Jerusalem organization has an online archive that holds information about the situation in Palestinian's neighborhoods of Jerusalem. More information about Kufur Aqab can be found on this webpage: http://www.grassrootsalquds.net/community/kufr-aqab#fourthPage, accessed March 22, 2016.

accessible to dwellers of Kufur Aqab (or "Kufr Akab" as spelled in Map 2 and Map 3). The Ramallah city-centre was less than ten-minutes' drive from my apartment, Qalandia Refugee Camp was five-minutes' drive from my house, and Shu'fat Refugee Camp was about fifteen-minutes' drive (See Map 3 and Map 4).
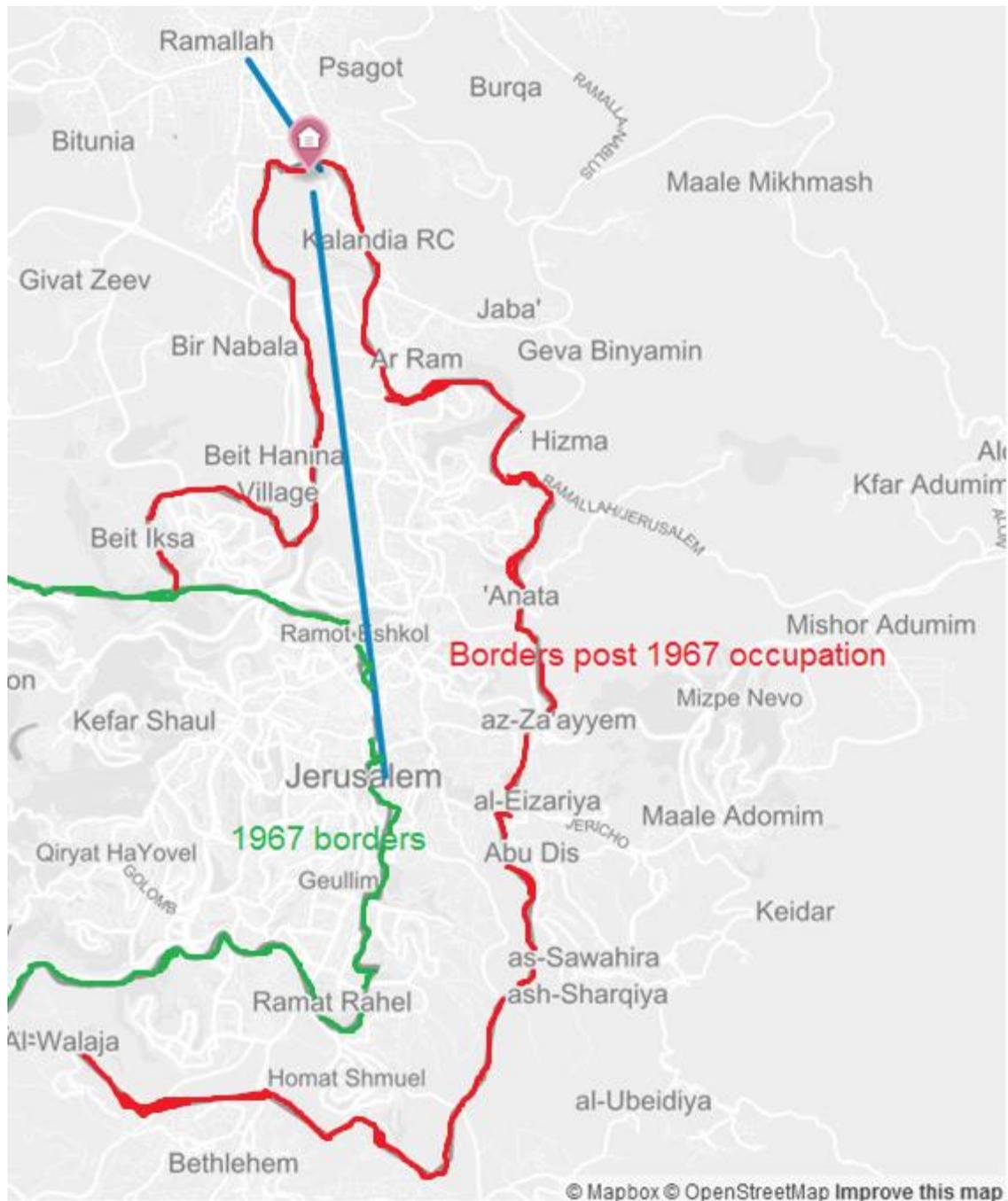
Map 3: Map of Jerusalem municipality borders. The home sign represents the location I lived in for most of my research period. According to this map, I was about ten minutes ride from Ramallah and over an average of forty minutes away from Jerusalem (depending on the flow of traffic in Qalandia, also spelled as Kalandia, Checkpoint). The two lines of borders show the 1967 borders of Jerusalem municipality (in green) and the borderline post the occupation of the West Bank (in red). Today, the Jerusalem municipality's borders expand into the depth of the West Bank (see also Thawaba 2011).

Map 4: Map of Jerusalem's Israeli municipality area. Source: OCHAoPt Humanitarian Atlas
December 2012
(http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_humaitarian_atlas_dec_2012_web.pdf).

CLOSED AND RESTRICTED AREAS

Israeli military base
Access is prohibited

Israeli closed military area
Access is prohibited

Existing and projected 'closed areas' behind the Barrier
Access is limited to permit holders

PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES

Governorate Capital

Governorate Boundry

Built-up

< 1000 Residents

1000 - 10,000

> 10,000

Israeli unilaterally declared Jerusalem boundary[1]

1. In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and unilaterally annexed to its territory 70.5 km² of the occupied area.

MOUNT SCOPUS DEMILITARIZED ZONE, 1948

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

Disputed (DMZ or West Bank)

OSLO INTERIM AGREEMENT (1995-1999)

Area A[1]

Area B[2]

Special Case (H2)[3]

Intended Nature Reserve

Area C[4]

1. Extensive delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority
2. Partial delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority; joint Israeli-Palestinian security coordination
3. Hebron Agreement
4. Very limited delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority

PHYSICAL CLOSURES

Internal Checkpoint (fully staffed)   Earthmound

Green Line Checkpoint*   Roadblock

Internal Partial Checkpoint   Tunnel/Underpass*

Road Gate normally closed   Earth Wall

Road Gate normally open   Road Barrier

Observation Tower*   Trench

ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

Settlement built-up , outer limit and municipal area

Land cultivated by settlers

Israeli Inner Settlement

Israeli Nature Reserve

WEST BANK BARRIER

Constructed   Planned Re-routing

Under Construction   Barrier Gate

Planned Route

* Not counted in the total closure figures.

ROADS

Prohibited Palestinian vehicle use

Main road

Other road

Access and closure data is as of December 2012. It is subject to change.
Cartography : OCHA Information Management unit
Map Produced: March 2013
Base data and statistics: OCHA JRC, PA-MOPIC
For comments contact <imu@ochaopt.org> or tel. +972 (0)2 582-9962
www.ochaopt.org

MAP IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE

Image 6: Key for Map 4.

Map 3 depicts two main lines of municipal divisions (the 1948-1967 cease-fire line or the Green Line, and post 1967 Israeli Occupation) as well as names of cities or villages. The straight line that I drew on the map, connecting my apartment in Kufur Aqab to Ramallah and Jerusalem is misleading as it shows an uninterrupted journey between the areas north and south of the point of my departure. In other words, map 3 only allows us to

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imagine vertical and two-dimensional landscapes. Map 4, on the other hand, is an elaborate

map of the political reality on the ground with its vertical, horizontal and three-

dimensional structures. Map 4 pinpoints the checkpoints, Israeli Settlements, land

confiscation, the Green Line, and the Wall (see map 4 key in image 6). It also locates what

is seen on the ground, like checkpoints or Israeli settlements, as well as what is unseen,

like municipal lines, the Green Line, or the consequential divisions of the Oslo Agreement.

Map 4 visualizes the political complexity of ethnic, religious and national urban

separation. It marks historical and spatial processes that conditioned the city to constant

violent eruptions, like military raids, house arrests, home demolition or interactions

between Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

My ethno-national location, namely being socialized to identify ethnically as an

Arab and nationally as a Palestinian living in the state of Israel, I embody the 'other' to the

Jewish Israeli identity and state. This position has pushed me to change some of my

fieldwork's focus. This meant that I had to acknowledge my limitation in accessing Israelis

who belong to the wider range of the political map—from the far left to far right. I was

interested in exploring the ways in which the Wall materializes Israeli visions for ethno-

national separation, and how this present materialization works through absenting what is

left outside of the ethno-national borders, which are outside of the national vision, visually

and physically. At the same time, while material and visual absenting of the national other,

the Palestinians, is at work (Makdisi 2010:527), I was asking, in what ways do visual

formations, such as art and photography, utilized by politicized Israelis or Palestinians,

attempt to re-present and re-affirm the existence of what is absented from the visual and national realm?

Being a Palestinian who holds Israeli citizenship and renting a room in an area that is military occupied by the Israeli army a few metres away from the Wall, I was residing in the borderzone. It was a borderzone in the physical and symbolic meaning of the word. It is a zone between a multiplicity of intersecting forces: bureaucratic restrictions, military surveillance, political uncertainty, and economic instability. Specifically, I was living in an area that Israel has annexed into its borders since 1967 and it was considered by the state as "Israeli" area; yet I still had to go through military checkpoints to go to other cities, inside the Israeli state's borders or inside the West Bank. This meant that the location I stayed in was on the bureaucratic gray-zone of being occupied and annexed to Israel but its population were treated as if they were outside the Israeli borders and needed permits to enter it or leave it. Since I had the Israeli ID, I could go through the checkpoints relatively more easily than Palestinians with West Bank IDs who had to provide more documentation to cross same checkpoints.

This borderzone location became my point of departure and return. It formed a reference point and a site where separation between Palestinians and Israelis took place but also where encounters or assemblages occur through encountering Israeli soldiers or other Palestinians or Jewish Israeli who are crossing these borders (just like my experience of crossing the border with Nir, on which I will elaborate in the following pages). My research was, hence, located at the site of encounters and meeting points between

Palestinians and Israelis, as well as at the crossroad of various political discourses that inform the situation on the ground.

3. Methodology in Border Sights/Sites: Visuals, Borders and Violence

Image 7: One of the widely distributed photographs of the Wall. Photograph depicting a Palestinian boy looking over his family's land which was cut by the Wall. Masha village, West Bank, Palestine. Photographer Eyal Ofer ©. Source: B'Tselem: http://www.btselem.

Visual anthropologists who use photographs in their ethnographic research often engage with them as both a means for reporting or documentation and as analytical tools. Their photographs are often a representation of people in their fieldwork (Pink 2007; Alfonso, Kurti, and Pink 2004; El Guindi 2004). In my fieldwork, by contrast, the photographs I took were representations of landscapes and events, but they did not capture my interlocutors' portraits. I was interested in the stories people shared of what they see or witness and how they see it. Therefore, I often took photographs of sights and locations to which my interviewees had related, as well as locations that I visited throughout my fieldwork.

During my research, I also took photographs in places where organized events took place, such as exhibitions in art galleries or tours; I also photographed landscape, roads, military checkpoints or the Wall, all of which would seem, in the context of Palestine, ordinary and uneventful. Structures, sites and spaces carry events too, mostly in the shape of historical remains ingrained in it. Sites-carrying-events function through memories and traces that evoke stories in people's lives. In this dissertation, I shall bring to the surface some of these stories through conversations I had with Palestinians in the field. I also present and discuss some of the photographic work of my photographer interlocutors. Some presented their visual collection during the interview, specifically that of the Wall or demonstrations against the Wall in the West Bank. Conversations with photographers in correspondence with their photographic work enabled me to reflect on what is presented in front of me and to ask detailed questions about their photographs and the stories behind them.

In addition to engaging with the photographic work of my interlocutors, I gathered different photographs, posters, maps, or other material in the media or human rights reports, virtual or in-print. The ephemera I collected are used as ethnographic material that helps support my encounters with my interlocutors. Through reading into this visual material, I engage with discursive and representational explorations of the Wall. I will be presenting such visual material throughout this dissertation. This material maps, to a large extent, the themes that are prevalent with respect to the Wall, in terms of its implications and effects on the population living in close proximity to it. The collected photographs that

I took were mostly intended for documentation—a form of visual reporting. I used these

photographs to remind myself of where I was, why I was there, what caught my eye, and

what was significant in the scene that invited me to capture it. These photographs were

also used in field note-writing, which, in addition to documenting events that happened,

consisted of reflecting on my own feelings and thoughts that my photographs provoked. I

present a collection of these photographs in this work, not only as an explanatory or

illustrative means, but also as an affective tool to engage the senses—as was my own sight

engaged when I was present in a particular site.

Paul Hockings (2014) argues that images created by the anthropologists' subjects

are distinguished from images created by anthropologists in the field. Cultural images

(2014:437), Hockings argues, whether photographic or performative, find their meaning

within the cultural context in which they are produced; they can therefore be called "emic"

images (437). Images produced by anthropologists through their research have "etic" status

(2014:437); they are produced through ethnographic research and result from the

anthropologist's gaze. The distinction between the two forms of emic and etic images, I

argue, is in the intentionality of such production: were the images produced to

commemorate a scene or a moment? Or they were created to serve as an illustration or

evidence of a sense? My images in this research were produced to commemorate a

captured scene from my home or homeland. They were also produced to archive the

memories of my journey at home. Likewise, they were created with an intention of their

possible use in this research. As such, the distinction between etic and emic visual

production is blurred, a blurring that is perhaps most likely to occur when anthropologists study their own lives at home with an intention to make sense of their own relation to home; this same home possibly informed to a large extent the anthropologist's epistemologies. Marilyn Strathern (1987) identifies this process as doing an "auto-anthropology", which she defines as: "anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it" (Strathern 1987:27). I agree with such account only if by "anthropology" Strathern refers to the singularity of the experiences of anthropologists that produced this form of "anthropology". In other words, anthropological research at home requires anthropologists to be mindful of the ways in which their lives are not peripheral to the field, methodologically, nor to the epistemological insights produced about the field.

My interest in the photography of the Wall grew from the abundance of photography of this structure during and after its construction, that mostly circulated through activist media locally and internationally (image 7). I wondered what it was about the Wall's visuality, culturally and politically, that made for its endless representation in photographic projects among Palestinians, internationals, and to some extent, Israeli anti-occupation activists. To investigate this question, I spoke with photographers and artists.

4. Methodology in Landscapes of Violence

Although media and academic literature relate to Palestine as located in a "conflict zone" or "war-zone", the form of violence or conflict that is experienced in the context of Palestine is also ingrained in the ordinary, rather than only found in eruptions, such as

clashes between military and civilians. In other words, from my own experience and from conversations I had with many Palestinians in the field, daily violence has been normalized. Palestine is a war-zone not in the sense of experiencing constant combat, but, rather, a zone where war is part of life, rather than constituting a rupture of it. Violence in the context of Palestine is inherent in the history of the formation of the State of Israel and in the Israeli state's Zionist ideology practiced on both people and lands through the militarization of their presence.

The violence I witnessed during my year of fieldwork in Palestine became an expected component of everyday life in Palestine. Border police and military soldiers were engaging daily in patrolling and controlling the Palestinian population's movements. Everything on these militarized sites was a continuation of decades-long occupation: military checkpoints, community displacements, home demolitions, and weekly anti-occupation protests. Israeli settlements in the West Bank continued to grow, as the political negotiations between the Israeli government and the Palestinian authority were as stagnant as they had been years before. Nothing seemed unusual in the threshold of violence, especially for most Palestinians who live their lives while trying to negotiate daily military interruptions (Allen 2008). Trying to develop a routine in the midst of a violent reality does not mean that the violence of the occupation is not affecting people who are exposed to it. Rather, it describes how the pain and distress of violence is overwhelmed by the necessity to make it through the daily routine of ordinary life; in other words, 'ordinary', here, refers to the ability of making life under a military occupation a livable one. During

the year I spent doing this research, the violence I experienced and witnessed living in the outskirts of Ramallah while moving between different cities in the West Bank was not unusual. The Israeli military was always present in the Palestinian territories practicing the same military routine of control of movement, slowing and sometimes blocking the livelihood of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The flow of people congregating in and out of military checkpoints continued to force itself on the ground, giving the impression that to some degree, life on this land consisted of waiting, thrusting through, confronting, protesting and crossings.

Violence in this research, therefore, is not only felt through immediate confrontation or engagements with the Israeli military, which is often a daily reality for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Violence also shapes the landscape while forcing one to confront it through the past memories ingrained in it, the present structures confining one's life and the future possibilities of further violent eruptions. I therefore define "violence" as the material and abstract expressions of power relations that have everlasting traces on people and the land they inhabit. In the context of this research, those who are most affected by this violence, namely most Palestinians, citizens or non-citizens of the Israeli state, are those who do not have the privilege to detach from it in their daily lives. The landscape, then, is engineered in a paradoxical manner, which aims at screening out violent views from those meant to be protected by it. In other words, security and protection are manipulated on the landscape; the Wall filters out the violence it simultaneously produces on the landscape, like the destruction of homes or agricultural lands. It reinforces a military or destructive view of people's environment and landscape.

For most Israelis, then, the Wall protects from that which it hides, the Palestinian militant, while for most Palestinians the Wall is a reminder of the violence the occupation imprints on their daily lives. As such, the Wall is a structure of violence that allegedly hides violence from Israelis while reproducing violence for Palestinians.

This conundrum creates a key visual paradox that I aim to explore theoretically as well as methodologically. As mentioned before, my research traces violence when it is present and when it is absented. In both scenes, different methodological inquiries are required. There are also friction points where both present and absent forms of violence are explored through the same methods, when traced on the landscape by the work of memory or through stories told by my informants. Hence, I ask: how does presence replace absence through the memory of the landscape? And how does absence replace presence through memory? Answering this question is not an easy task. One way to trace the relation that absence and presence have is through the work of storytelling and narrating what people witness, see or visualize. I shall bring such narratives in chapters three and four, where I expand on experiencing borders and violence.

In this dissertation, in my engagement with the concept of violence, I mainly refer to military state violence and the way such violence works its way into ordinary lives, visuals, and physical landscapes. I look at violence as an integral element of people's lives, not one that can easily be separated out. Violence, to follow in Veena Das's theoretical steps, is an integrated, confronted, and absented element of the 'everyday' and of ordinary life (2008). It is not unusual for anthropologists to be interested in the 'everyday' of peoples' lives. However, aside from a few inspiring anthropological works on violence

(Das 2008; Maček 2000; Bornstein 2002), it is less common to find anthropological research that looks at violence explicitly as part of the everyday, rather than as an exception of it. Through fieldwork, anthropologists often engage closely with the everyday in people's lives in their spaces. In violent sites like war, conflict zones, border zones, or even where violence resides as an invisible ghost, anthropologists are not exempt from the violence they are witnessing and writing about.

In the midst of war, some anthropologists search for the ordinary while others look for past violence leaking into the ordinary present-day as the war becomes a past. In her ethnography Ivana Maček (2000) writes about her fieldwork in Sarajevo and her experiences moving to live with a Muslim Bosnian family, during the siege of the city. Maček's methodology of exploring violence is inseparable from her theoretical conceptualizations. For Maček, the anthropology of violence is found and traced not only through decision-making politicians or military personnel, but also in people's lives and through the everyday, in what she calls the 'negotiation of normality'. Through participant observation and intimate relations with the people and spaces they inhabit, Maček argues that this approach best captures how people feel in times of war and under high threats of violence. Negotiations of violence, then, can be found in the ways people normalize it on a daily basis. In creating morbid humor and refusing full acceptance of the 'fact' of war, Sarajevans not only lived through violence but also paradoxically resisted its persistent presence in their everyday lives by living through it. Thus, methodologically capturing violence and its effects becomes an ongoing task, located in laughter and sadness,

moments of pain and pleasure, and expressed in ordinary occasions. Fieldwork during war,

Maček claims, is unique but also limited since it is informed by sensitive daily stories of

death, pain, harshness, or deprivation. In war, there are many limitations imposed by the

army, political interruptions, the police, checkpoints, and violent clashes; thus, access to

sought data can be limited (2000: 31). However, these same limitations can never be a

barrier for doing "anthropology of violence," but an invitation for the excavation of

deeper-sensibilities.

Anthropologists studying violence in a society torn by wars often witness violence

through living it or through the stories they collect at that time (Maček 2000; Khosravi

2007; Nordstrom and Robben 1995). Although many could be outsiders to these societies,

anthropologists conducting fieldwork on violence often become invested in the political

'cause', either by producing research/knowledge about violence in order to fight it

(Bourgois 2003), or by enriching the theoretical and political engagement with violence as

both an abstract and a concrete concept (Das 2007; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004;

Asad 2007; Appadurai 1998). This was the case of the anthropology of Palestine, for

example, where much of the literature manifests a strong political investment in Palestinian

self-determination (to name a few Nadia Abu El-Haj (2001), Avram Bornstein (2002),

Dan Rabinowitz (2002), Lila Abu-Lughod (2004), Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002), Rema

Hammami (2012), Julie Peteet (2005) and Randa Farah (2009)).

Being a witness to violence and being a victim of violence, I argue, are not always radically distinct experiences. We could find an already-existing connection in language when looking at the Arabic words for 'martyr' and 'witness' to violence. As I mentioned above, in Arabic the word 'witness' and 'martyr' share similar letter roots. The verb *shaahada* means "witnessed" (in the past tense) and the noun *shaheed* means "martyr." The noun *shahaada* means "testimony." This semantic proximity allows for various interpretations to be entertained. The martyr—*shaheed*—is also a witness—*shaahed*—of death(s) including his/her own, as if he/she is the last narrator of the event or the story he/she died for. Being a personal experience, witnessing violence and martyrdom share a condition of aloneness (perhaps loneliness); they are singular experiences. To witness violence is also to embody it and, inevitably, to become a sacrifice to it. Such an approach implies that witnessing violence is never a passive act of receiving but an everlasting embodiment and commitment, whether intentional or not, to memory (or a form of overwhelming or haunting memory). Through witnessing violence, one carries the traces of it in one's memory or embodies it in one's gestures, which could be identified with the subject him/herself. In other words, to borrow from Veena Das' work, past violence descends into ordinary lives in forms of gestures, speech, or silence (2007:10–11). For Das, bearing the burden of witnessing violence carries the "uniqueness of being eternal to forgetfulness"; not only through dramatic gestures of defiance, but also by inhabiting the world in a gesture of mourning (63). The eye, therefore, is not only the organ that sees, but also the one that weeps (63).

Methodologically, being a product of violent structures and histories makes me a witness of my own history of violence and that of others in my research. Being Palestinian and being familiar with the space and the political processes enables me to witness, access and engage with situations reflexively, at which others might not be able to arrive. However, such local 'access privilege' comes with multiple challenges, one of which is the researcher's inability to estimate the right measures of proximity and distance from the field and the subjects that live with and through it. In other words, an anthropological methodological challenge arises when the framework of research and intellectual curiosity both hinders and enables interactions with other people in the field.

5. Distant Intimacies: Studying my Occupier

One concern I had in mind during my fieldwork was the complexity of the occupied-occupier relations in a research setting. What is significant about such relations is the spatial and geographic proximity between the two positions. Thus, a central worry I had during my research period is how I can arrive at close proximity with my interlocutors' stories given the structural power dynamics at stake. In other words, I was constantly reminded that there are structural ethno-national boundaries between me and my Jewish-Israeli interlocutors, which meant that the conversations between us would always be marked by reticence, verging on lack of words. My encounter with Nir is a good example of such case. My conversations with Israeli anti-occupation activist Nir (pseudonym) were accompanied by such political tensions between us. I first met Nir through a common Palestinian friend and saw him several times in the presence of that friend. It was not until

I payed a visit with Nir to Bethlehem, a Palestinian city in the West Bank, that the

underlying political tensions between us began to unravel.

On July 2012, I picked Nir up from his house in West Jerusalem to drive with him

to Bethlehem. We both wanted to attend the Al Haq[30] conference in Bethlehem University,

"Annexation Wall: Lessons Learned and Future Strategy". Nir, a Jewish Israeli in his early

thirties, worked at an Israeli human rights organization; he wanted to attend the conference

as part of his job documenting and reporting on violations of Palestinians' human rights. I

wanted to attend the conference since it focused on the Wall over the past ten years. On our

way to the conference, less than a thirty-minute drive, we briefly chatted about the

situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As we got closer to the entrance of

Bethlehem, I sensed that he was slightly tense. I asked him when was the last time that he

was in Bethlehem, and he answered that it was over six years ago. We arrived at the

conference. Before the opening remarks were delivered, a man asked the attendee to stand

and pay respect to the Palestinian National Anthem. I stood, and then I looked at Nir, who

stood next to me. He had an embarrassed look on his face, as if he was caught off guard. I

tried not to make direct eye contact with him. Two weeks later, I interviewed Nir in a café

in Jerusalem. I asked him to reflect on the day we spent together in the conference in

Bethlehem. Nir told me that it was difficult for him to visit the city after such a long time. I

asked him to tell me about the previous times he was in Bethlehem. He answered that he

was there during his military service, in 1996-1997. These were calm years, he told me;

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[30] Established in 1979, Al-Haq is an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization based in Ramallah, West Bank: http://www.alhaq.org/, accessed January 30, 2015.

except one time, in 1997, he said, there was a protest in the city and he, as a soldier, was

sent to defuse the demonstration. He shot a rubber bullet at a Palestinian protestor. "It was

the first time that I shot a rubber bullet and the last time," he sighed.

"Is this why you felt tense when you entered Bethlehem?" I asked him. Nir

answered that it was hard for him to visit the city again or talk to Palestinians there. This is

why he did not engage with hardly anyone at the conference. When I asked him to tell me

why he felt that way, he said:

> Because they [Palestinians] do not like you, and it is justifiable. It does not matter
> that I work in a human rights organization and I support the Palestinians […], I am
> an Israeli, they [Palestinians] see me as *jish* [Arabic word for army]. They see me
> as the occupation, no matter what. I could refuse to serve in the army […], but I am
> still part of this system. Clearly, I would not be comfortable in Bethlehem.

Nir's honesty about his relation to the Palestinians and his reflections on the way he

thinks Palestinians in the Occupied Territories perceive him was striking to me. It was a

reminder of the contradictory reality existing as a result of the continuous political and

violent system that governs and dominates people's lives. Although this interaction did not

create hostility between Nir and me, it reminded me that, while our paths often meet at

some points of friction (Tsing 2005), they also diverge when hitting the symbolic, political

and physical barriers. After my conversation with him, I was reminded that I am

conducting research on those who are made into my occupiers by the occupying state (I

will return to this point in Chapter Four through my conversation with Omer). The critical

concern—informing both theoretical and empirical questions—is how to conduct a

research project in which power dynamics are predetermined structurally. During my

fieldwork, this question became methodologically important: as a Palestinian, I often asked myself how I would conduct research when my interlocutors belong to a national collective that occupies the national collective to which I belong.

In *Facts on the Ground*, Palestinian anthropologist Nadia Abu El-Haj (2001) conducted ethnographic research on Israeli archaeology and its relation to Israeli nationalism and nation-building. Her ethnographic encounter, however, cannot be conveyed or confined by the prevalent anthropological methodology of participant observation. Abu El-Haj is a Palestinian American anthropologist who is studying a powerful educational and national institution in Israel, archaeology. Archaeology, we learn from Abu El-Haj's ethnography, is one of the central modern Western institutions that is utilized to sustain state borders and is often recruited by governments for national and political causes, like reclaiming historical sites while practicing exclusionary measures against "others" within the nation. We also learn that being a powerful political institution in Israel, Jewish archaeological presence is rarely questioned by most Jewish Israelis. Excluded from Israeli archaeological spheres, Abu El-Haj's access to her field was determined by her national and ethnic identification, or, in other words, her positioning informed her methodology—namely, her limited access to Israeli sites and to Israeli (mostly male) archaeologists. Her positioning in the power dynamic, thus, did not facilitate an intimate, that is, proximate open relations, or close engagement with her informants. This hesitant proximity was amplified in the numerous occasions where she attempted to challenge the 'truthfulness' of the information Jewish Israeli tour-guides had told her

(2001:164-165). As a Palestinian exploring a nationally formative institution of the Israeli state, her positioning also limited the kind of data she was allowed to access and the depth of conversations she was capable of having.

Being a Palestinian questioning the Israeli society and national architecture, I found similar challenges to Abu El-Haj's. Such challenges are commonly found when "studying-up" as described by anthropologists Laura Nader (1972). "Studying up", as a theoretical and methodological concern, is a critique to western anthropological research that historically was marked by a hierarchical relation between the white, male, and middle-class (often colonial or settler-colonial) anthropologists and colonized indigenous communities. A call for "studying up" attempts to destabilize the power relations between anthropologists and their informants. Nader encourages anthropologists to perceive the state and its institutions as subjects for anthropological inquiry. This kind of research is accompanied by a major difficulty in accessing the field (Nader 1972:17), which informs, to a large extent, different anthropological methodologies (22-23), ethics (17), or knowledge that often involves a critique of states and its institutions (6), militarism, colonialism, or dominant elites in society. Following Laura Nader's (1972) "studying up", Sherry Ortner (2010) explores the difficulty in accessing spaces of powerful institutions, such as Hollywood, her fieldwork site. Since access is key in the anthropological method of participant observation, access to those who hold positions of power within institutions is often limited if not blocked. Being an extremely secretive institution, Sherry Ortner could not access the inside of Hollywood's community spaces. To negotiate the obstacle of

inside access, Ortner (2010) suggests an alternative practice of 'interface ethnography' (213). She defines 'interface ethnography' as doing participant observation in the border areas of the inaccessible community through its events or interfaces with the public (2010:213).

As stated earlier, although I had access to many Israeli and Palestinian spaces and was able to interview Israelis and Palestinians, I did not have much access to speaking with Israeli settlers in the West Bank or to centre- or right-wing affiliated groups or organizations. Since my field site was not limited to the spaces to which I did not have access, I was able to bypass such limitations by following the geopolitical map of access with which I was already acquainted, having lived in these conditions and with these limitations for most of my life. In other words, I followed the existing politicized geographies, meaning: what my Israeli identity card allows me to approach or deprives me of access. Therefore, I often found myself at the border of access, at yet another form of borderzone.

Literature in social and cultural anthropology speaks at length of intimacy and close relations that develop in the field with the anthropologists' subjects. Such intimacy has traditionally been built through long-term interactions—as in a few months to a year (LeVine 1981:277). In my research, however, and due to my internalized ghost of military occupation following me wherever I go in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, or inside Israeli cities and towns, I could not develop the closeness or intimacies (as in honest

friendships or closeness) with the Israelis that I met through my fieldwork—something that seemed much more feasible when interacting with my Palestinian interlocutors. My relationship with all my Israeli interviewees remained formal and limited to the course of this research. There was always a mental barrier that seemed to work on both sides of the imagined national divide. This created a constant quest for hesitant proximity, a form of careful and measured closeness that is ruled by unspoken words. As a result, a lot was left unspoken, such as the emotional baggage of past displacements, loss of lives, lands, or the discomfort of the suspended situation of no solution to the political reality. Based on my personal experience during my research period, I came to realize that intimacy, as in closeness and honest openness in relations, is not only culturally and politically constructed but is also constructed in the setting and space through which subjects encounter each other. Given in this political situation, where separation between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians is strong, and given my hesitations in entering Israelis' private, daily life spaces, I managed to develop "distant intimacies" with my informants. Through such "distant intimacy," I could not always achieve a full participant observation in their homes or in their everyday lives, but I managed to hear from some Jewish Israelis about their personal experiences as well as political views on the reality of the military occupation.

Israeli settlements on the land and the daily presence of Israeli soldiers in the heart of Palestinian lives, as well as the exploitative dependent relations Israelis have with Palestinians, all render a full arrival to separation an impossibility. In other words, Palestinian dwellers of the Occupied Territories and Israeli citizens are kept apart by

national and historical relation to the landscape, as well held together by geographical proximity on a relatively narrow geographical area. Meron Benvenisti (1995:82–83) argued strongly that Palestinians and Israelis live in an anonymous intimacy, where the two societies are intertwined through daily interactions. Dina Georgis (2013) identifies this form of intimacy between the occupier and the occupied, between Israelis and Palestinians, as having a history of structural forced relations—what she describes as "stubborn intimacy"—which is paradoxically made from resistance to the ties that bind the relations at stake (2013:134). This "stubborn intimacy" structured the theoretical and methodological questions that burdened much of my research hesitations. In other words, I found myself constantly measuring my socio-political relatedness and connection to Israelis who share with me the physicality of living on the same or proximate lands, landscapes, and spaces, while simultaneously living parallel lives from mine and from many Palestinians. These parallel lives would not be possible if they were not mediated by an imposing hegemonic state narrative and practice of exclusion and separation.

During my research, my routine consisted of daily crossings between checkpoints and between Palestinian towns and Israeli cities. I would leave my apartment near Ramallah, in the West Bank and pass through a suffocating military checkpoint in Qalandia to meet Israelis who agreed to talk to me, most of whom had served in the Israeli military in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This circle of events created a challenging experience for me that further crystalized this distance in the intimacy. In other words, I was faced with a reality in which I was crossing Israeli military checkpoints in order to talk to Israelis who were former soldiers in the Israeli army. Most of the Israelis that I talked

with considered themselves a part of the Israeli political left, who acknowledged that there

is an oppressive military occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and which

made it slightly more possible for me to engage with them in depth about their beliefs and

positions on the current political and social situation. This, however, did not mean that

there were no political disagreements.

A main line that can define the borders between Israeli radical left and mainstream

political beliefs is the support of a vision of a one-state or a two state-solution. The

majority of Israelis believe in a full separation between Israelis and Palestinians, and are in

favour of a two nation-state solution over one bi-national one: an Israeli state for Israelis

and another state for the Palestinians with clear borders between the two states (Barzilai

and Peleg 1994:66)[31]. However, many Israeli radical activists and Palestinians argue that

the two-state solution scenario would not be possible on the ground without a strong

enforcement of borders, separation, and segregation.[32] A small number of my Israeli

interlocutors were politically in my comfort zone, which made the political-scenario

conversation less challenging. We agreed on most of the main political lines, specifically

on the inability to keep the situation between Palestinians and Israelis suspended for years

without a just solution. Conversations with Israelis with whom I was politically in

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[31] In December 2013, the same majority approving a solution of separation was reported in a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll. The poll was conducted by Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Konard Adenauer Stifun and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah (The Harry Truman Research Institute, Konard Adenauer Stiftun, and Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research 2013). Finding can be found in the following link: http://truman.huji.ac.il/.upload/Joint_press_December_2013%20(2).pdf, accessed December 19, 2014.
[32] Israeli activist Jeff Halper explains more about the conditions and challenges to a two-state solution in a published interview with him (see Bergmeijer 2012).

disagreement were often more crucial for my analytical processing. These conversations allowed me to rethink basic and abstract questions about nationalism, identities, and power dynamics. Such conversations forced me to unravel my own taken-for-granted political views. For example, in my conversations with several Jewish Israelis, the notion of a two-state solution was brought up as the preferable solution to the current conditions: one Palestinian state on the 1967 borders side by side with the Israeli state. A full separation entails political, bureaucratic, and infrastructural autonomy for a Palestinian state. However, the quest for a division of the historic land of Palestine into two states leaves the Palestinians citizens of Israel in a position of a national and political minority in a Jewish state, and does not address the question of return of Palestinian refugees to their lands inside the Israeli state. A one state-solution, where Palestinians and Israelis live by an equal citizenry contract with the state, irrespective of race, religion, or ethnicity, would undermine the formal Zionist quest for a Jewish majority state. Yet, some of the Israelis I talked with claimed that a one-state solution is utopian; they argued that the two peoples have drifted apart enough to make co-existence without separation impossible. They also claimed that even if one state was formed to rule the two peoples, Israelis would never give up their political and military superiority. In other words, Jewish Israelis would be the elite of this future binational state. The paradox that the reality offers to people's lives suspends the political situation at an impasse: the impossibility of full integration and that of full separation. Given the expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands in the West

Bank or near Palestinians towns and cities inside Israel (Klein 2008:56), the idea of full

separation between Palestinians and Israelis has rather become an impossibility[33].

The three Israeli tours, carried by Kesharim and Tichnoun, I participated in

attracted exclusively Jewish Israeli citizens and were led by Israeli activists, some of whom

I would interview later. Upon visiting the Palestinian villages, across the Green Line,

meetings were held with Palestinian villagers, most of whom were men, except in one

case, where I met with a Palestinian woman. Palestinians were invited to talk to Israelis

and to educate them about the situation in their villages in the shadow of a military

occupation and Israeli settlers' harassment. Additionally, these tours brought attention to

the Israeli agricultural and housing construction practices in the West Bank, which serve as

a civilian extension of the military occupation. We were able to witness on the ground how

roads function as borders; how Israeli settlements' vineyards are structured to establish

future real estate developments; or how Israeli annexed lands fragment Palestinian

villages' expansion or continuity. We were also informed, for example, of how Israeli tree

plantations, which could seem like a peaceful act of preserving the environment and

natural life, is an Israeli-legalized mechanism for further land confiscations and

transformation of the dry climate landscape to resemble European forests.

In the three tours I attended, I was the only Palestinian citizen of Israel

participating. I came to know that since each tour ended with a discussion circle as the last

stage of the tour, where each of us introduced ourselves and talked about what we had

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[33] Menachem Klein (2008:60) focuses on Jerusalem as the best example of such inseparable reality between Palestinians and Israelis after Israeli's 1967 military occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

learnt or felt. These tours mainly targeted and invited Jewish Israelis to engage with the unknown across borders that are unseen to them. Palestinians in these tours were exclusively from the West Bank and were mainly informing Israeli tour participants of their situation. The Israeli tour guides introduced those Palestinians as *edi rea'ya*, in Hebrew, or "witnesses". Those Palestinians were the witnesses and storytellers of their conditions living under Israeli occupation. They functioned as local case-based tour guides, who directed the gaze of the Israeli participants to the Palestinian ordeal. Palestinian *edi rea'ya* often joined the tours after an hour or two, once the group arrived to their towns or villages in the West Bank, by which time the Israeli tour guides would have explained the general historical events and current conditions of the area to which the tour is heading.

In these tours, Israelis would often argue with the local Palestinians as they would contest the truthfulness of their stories, in addition to challenge their political views and understanding of historical events or political relations. In many of these tours, I witnessed arguments thrown back and forth between Israelis and Palestinians, making the atmosphere hostile for Palestinians partaking in those encounters. It is at those moments of contested realities and conversations that I found one of the most truthful representative dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians. Although not representative of all forms of encounters between Israelis and Palestinians, those meetings were discursive sites where multiple hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives of nationalism and resistance were at play. In other words, the conversations produced referenced hegemonic debates on the 'political situation' as presented in Israeli media or Israeli public discourses. The meeting locations between Israeli groups and Palestinian witnesses were sites that invited conversations

outside the physical geography of the place. An example imprinted in my memory is of a Palestinian woman describing how the Wall had isolated her house from the nearest town. Her story was quickly followed by an Israeli man who asked her to sympathize with the Jewish Israeli fear of facing national extermination, which, as he indicated, has its origin in Nazi Germany's genocide of Jewish people in Europe.

My interaction with the Israeli groups during the tours remained always superficial. I could not get into in-depth conversation with many of them, as the atmosphere that surrounded these tours was emotionally tense. On multiple occasions, Israelis would blame Palestinians for the failed negotiations and for resorting to violence. Beside documenting such interactions and having small talk with those who joined the tours, I could not hold in-depth conversations or follow up with the tours' participants. Nonetheless, I still managed to meet and interview two of the Israeli tour guides. My fieldwork experience taught me that one could not engage truthfully with theoretical and conceptual explorations without allowing the empirical encounters to necessitate methodological transformations. The time and space experienced through the locality as well as the power dynamics cultivated in the site and in relation to the anthropologist, all guided me to write many of the theoretical inquiries. In the next chapters, I trace the forms of violence, borders that blanket the landscape, and life amongst people in Palestine and inside the Israeli state. I argue that without an *emic* analysis of the dynamics of borders and violence in the site, one cannot engage with the earnest fears, anxieties and anticipations that the landscape holds at times and births at others.

6. Challenges in the Field

There were multiple methodological challenges in my fieldwork ingrained in places where forces of violence and borders are at the root of whatever grows on the landscape. One of the main challenges I faced was access to spaces proximate to military sites. The separation Wall or the checkpoints are military structures and are constantly patrolled by Israeli border forces. Anyone who approaches the Wall from either side can become a target for military harassment, arrest or, in rare occasions, shooting. The reality of military occupation in the West Bank consists of Israeli military presence and Israeli checkpoints, in addition to military land confiscations, which were later developed into Jewish settlements. Being a Palestinian citizen of Israel with an Israeli identification card enabled me to pass through military checkpoints inside the West Bank, in between Israeli controlled areas, and out of them. Despite the ability to go in and out of areas that are listed under the Palestinian Authority, there is an Israeli military order advising Israeli citizens (specifically Israeli-Jewish ID holders) not to enter Palestinian Authority areas. Signs written only in Hebrew were placed near most checkpoints indicating that it is dangerous for Israelis to enter the Palestinian Authority controlled areas, and that such crossings would constitute a criminal act (image 8).

Image 8: Qalandia Checkpoint, between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Sign reads: "This road leads to area A that is controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Entrance of Israelis to area A is prohibited, it is a life risk and it is considered a criminal act." Photograph by the author. June 2012.

Although I have never been interrogated at length at these checkpoints, the risk of being stopped, searched, and interrogated was always there; I hold an Israeli citizenship card and could be charged for violating military orders. Occasionally, these checkpoints would be closed or would witness clashes between Palestinian youth and the checkpoint military troops. Often, such clashes lead to Israeli soldiers shooting tear gas or to closing checkpoint passages. Given the traffic and crowdedness of the cars and the Palestinian crossings, almost everyone at the checkpoint would be inhaling the tear gas. And, depending on how violently the soldiers reacted, the flow of the checkpoint would follow

accordingly. In some cases, the army would shoot rubber bullets at the direction of the youth, who would throw stones at the soldier in return. At other times, due to such clashes, the checkpoint would be closed for a few hours. I was caught multiple times in these clashes; there was nothing to do except to stay still in the car, hoping to leave the checkpoint area as soon as possible.

I conducted my research during ordinary and violent times. There was a rhythm to violence and the flow of it. In her article, "Getting by the Occupation: How Violence Became Normal during the Second Palestinian Intifada", Lori Allen (2008) addresses the ethnographic encounters she had while living in Palestine. Her article explored spatial and social practices of Palestinian adaptation to violence. The Palestinians' capacity to 'getting used to' the occupation, she argued, is a form of *agency* many Palestinians develop in order get around their lives within such violence and unpredictable reality. Everyday life in Palestine under the Israeli occupation is partly a result of collective-production (2008:456). "Tawwudna" and "ady" (457), Arabic for "we got used to this" or "it is normal", are vocabularies that form a way to get by violent reality, while it is also a form of resistance to the occupation in maintaining an attachment in order for ordinary life to flow, despite material and political obstacles. Not only are spaces occupied, Allen continues, but 'time' preoccupies a large part of Palestinian reality and everyday conversation (2008:459). We also learn from her article that death is 'lived' through the everyday; it becomes familiar. Visualizing martyrs in public spaces, hence, is an act, she argues, to bring the dead back to life into the streets (464); these posters also normalize, in turn, the constant appearance of

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the dead. Although my Palestinian interlocutors expressed a form of speech that addressed their capacity to "get by" the occupation, in no way do they accept this present situation. I sensed a lot of disappointments, fear, and anxiety from the Palestinian interviewees, and some degree of desperation, particularly expressed by Israelis I interviewed. Since the present was embedded with unpredictable political eruptions, most of my Palestinian interlocutors stressed the absurd reality that the military occupation had inflicted on them. They took active measures in visualizing how violence and borders are in no way ordinary.

In conclusion, doing this research required me to turn inward: to be reflexive about my life history, memory, and feelings. Conducting research in politically contested locations where violence at times appears as an ordinary element of daily life, and, at others, as an eruption of the ordinary, requires great sensitivity to the surroundings. In addition, doing research in the visual field entails mindful engagement with the senses and with subjects' articulation of what they see and how they see it. Therefore, while conducting participant observation or analysis of the discourses portrayed in mainstream visual culture was necessary, it was an insufficient methodological tool. Conducting in-depth interviews with twenty-five informants was my central method in mapping out how national discourses of separation and borders are articulated through the subjects' experiences in such suspended political reality. Additionally, through these interviews, I was able to map out the subjects' articulation of their perception of the landscape and their attempts at rendering it both textually, through narratives about it, and visually, through the production of photographic work.

In a context of military occupation, as an anthropologist, I was confronted with my own discomfort at exploring my occupier's ways of seeing. In such encounters, I was aware of the cautious proximity that the history of separation between Israelis and Palestinians has imprinted on me. As a result, much was left unspoken and speculative in my conversations with Jewish Israeli informants. However, through participating in the Israeli political life or by attending lectures and events in Jewish Israeli circles, I was able to hear opinions and conversations that I could not hear through my one-on-one interviews. In other words, much of what was left unspoken and speculative in my interviews was articulated through interactions outside an interview setting, as well as through the discourses presented in the media—visuals ingrained on the landscape, or through borders drawn physically and discursively on the land and amongst its dwellers.

Chapter Three: Landscapes of Borders

<div dir="rtl">

لنا بلادٌ لا حُدُودَ لها, كفكرتنا عن
المجهول, ضيّقَةٌ وواسِعَةٌ. بلادٌ...
حين نمشي في خريطتها تضيقُ بنا

محمود درويش، "ولنا بلاد"
ديوان: لا تعتذر عمّا فعلتْ.

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> We have a country with no borders, as our idea of
> the unknown, narrow and wide. A country…
> whose map when we walk on it constrains us[34]

> Mahmoud Darwish, "And We Have a Country"
> Don't Apologize For What You've Done (2004).

Borders in Palestine have been historically inscribed by different forces, from the Ottoman Empire's (1526-1918) creation and division of different territories of governance (Doumani 1992), to the further tightening of borders by the British and French colonial border demarcation, remapping, and restructuring of the Middle East in the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 (McTague 1982). With each new demarcation, the borders gradually became slightly stricter. The creation of the Israeli state in 1948 marked the beginning of a nearly complete sealing of the borders and furthered the fragmentation amongst Palestinians living in Palestine (Pappe 2006:197–198). Palestinians in the historical land of Palestine who were now living in the newly formed Israeli state, were restricted from movement internally and across the borders of the state. In 1967, the Israeli state extended the border restriction regime to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after militarily occupying these territories. Consequently, the lands and geographic landscapes that sit

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[34] Translation by author.

between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea define the borders. They embody borders in their structure; the river became a border, the sea became a border, the mountains become borders. Israel, the Jewish State, produced itself as a fortress in the midst of Arab countries. Although enclosed in borders, sometimes these borders are nowhere to be seen on the landscape; they are, nonetheless, projected onto the landscape through a national and political framing of vision. In other words, not all borders are visible or demarcated on the land; some are meant to be seen while others are not. For example, the Green Line, on which I will elaborate in the following pages, structures a strong element in the discourse of national borders for the Israeli state and the future Palestinian state; yet the line, coloured green on maps, is nowhere to be found on the land/landscape. Those whose movement is prohibited by borders see the borders everywhere, while those whose movement is enabled by borders might not see the borders at all. Such visual conditions will be clarified in this chapter and the ones that follow.

This chapter shall explore the state of borders, past and present, in the context of Palestine and the Israeli state. It offers an overview and analysis of the multiple ways the Israeli state constructs and maintains physical and discursive borders along ethnic and national lines. Through talking with Palestinian interlocutors, I present narratives of continuous border crossings as well as border confinement. Borders, I shall show, do not only block, slow or disrupt Palestinian lives; their presence is also a reminder of their past displacements and their current state of vulnerability and insecurity. Through my participation with Kesharim's and Tichnoun's tours, I pause on the discursive implication

of cartography in the context of Palestine and Israel. While historically maps of Palestine and Israel were created for the service of colonial rule or military occupation, maps, of the West Bank specially, as I observed, were intensively used in Kesharim and Tichnoun's tours as visual imprint mirroring political borders some of which seen and other unseen on the landscape. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on the example of a Tichnoun tour in discussing the use of maps and mapping as educational tools. Following the discussion on maps, I will investigate the notion of "mental walls" to which I was introduced by a few Israelis interlocutors with whom I talked. This notion, I learned, describes an *a priori* condition of separation between them and their others—the Palestinians.

On my last day of fieldwork I got into an argument with an older family relative. The argument was about borders, border crossings and maneuvering the burden of borders. While packing my bags that I would take back to Toronto, I got into an argument with a family member about a book of photography titled *Al Quds* (Arabic for Jerusalem) by Osama Silwadi (2010). The book's photographs show Jerusalem as a torn, Walled, impoverished, militarized, and occupied city. I wanted to take the photography book with me to Toronto to add it into the photographic collection that I was accumulating. My relative asked me not to take it. He only said a few words: "you do not want to invite trouble at the airport", referring to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. I knew exactly what my relative was talking about. Based on his experience, he knew that, as part of their routine security procedure, the security guards at the airport would open my luggage and ask questions about the items in there. My relative convinced me to imagine a scenario

where airport security would find the photography book of Jerusalem and associate me with anti-occupation activism, which would possibly lead airport security to further interrogate me. Not knowing what to think, I started feeling that I might get in trouble and possibly miss my departure flight to Toronto in case of a lengthy security interrogation. Despite holding an Israeli passport, being Palestinian, I often have my luggage opened and searched by security officers when flying out of Ben Gurion Airport. Fearing a scenario of lengthy interrogation because of a photography book on Jerusalem depicting Palestinians living in a city under military occupation, I decided not to take the book.

My relative, now 66 years old, belongs to a generation that lived under the military martial law in Israel from 1949 to 1966. During these years, Palestinians who became citizens of the newly formed state had to receive permits in order to leave their towns and to visit other towns or cities. My relative's generation saw and experienced firsthand the displacement of Palestinians and destruction of their villages. His generation had to learn the new language, Hebrew, and to learn to navigate the new political structure of the Israeli state in order to be able to survive through integrating in the new state's social, health, housing, educational, and legal institutions. This generation also had to familiarize itself with the new borders. During the first twenty years after the formation of the state of Israel, Palestinians who remained in the Israeli state lived in isolation from other Arabs in the region (Rabinowitz 2001:73–74). The borders with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt had become militarized; crossing them was risky and dangerous. Likewise, crossing into any of the neighbouring Arab states had become

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accompanied with the risk of never being able to return—a majority of Palestinian families had their family ties severed by the dividing borders.

On Sunday May 15th 2011, Palestinians commemorated the displacement and disposition of the Palestinians in 1948—commonly known as the Palestinian Nakba or Nakbah (Sa'di 2002:175; Falah 1996)—by holding public demonstrations inside Israel, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and in countries of exile or diaspora. On the same day, a group of Palestinians and Syrians gathered on the borders. The forty-four year old borders on which they stood bordered the Israeli Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights and the Syrian State. Upon approaching the border-zone a dozen Palestinians—living as refugees in Syria—walked all the way to the border fence, all the while Syrians living on the other side—in Israeli Occupied Golan Heights—were shouting: "Stop! Stop! There are landmines" (Shalan 2011).[35] The young men did not stop; they proceeded to climb the fence and jumped over it, onto the other side of the border. They crossed the border hoping to continue their journey to Palestine after sixty-three years of separation and exile. Upon crossing the borders, at least ten were killed and dozens injured as the Israeli army shot the demonstrators (Sherwood 2011).

This event, which in the eyes of the world might be considered as just another eventful day of bloody clashes amongst different groups in the Middle East, was, nevertheless, a major symbolic turning point for many Palestinians and other Arabs living in the neighbouring countries. Syrians living in the Jawlan Heights, not only witnessed this

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[35] Video: "Palestinian Crossing to Majdal-Shams" link in Arabic only:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekgkuAaTjPg&feature=share (accessed on June 5, 2014).

collective crossing, but also documented it with their cameras. Videos and images of the border crossing incident were circulated all around in the Arabic and international media. This event marked a moment, or rather an alert, for Israelis: this militarized and highly securitized border-zone with Syria, rarely breached,[36] was collectively crossed in one day. Border structures, as this crossing event shows, illustrate the paradoxes or negations that they embody. Highly securitized and militarized, borders can sometimes be crossed by a simple act of climbing them; thus, paradoxically they are rendered fragile and breakable. Borders always already break and cross people's lives and homes before people cross or break them. Therefore, I ask, to what extent do borders themselves hold an internal act of crossing or breaking? Can one say, then, that borders are not fully considered borders until they are rendered crossable? When borders are crossed (whether forcefully or with state's legal permission and documentation) they symbolically and ontologically, for that moment, cease to function as borders and paradoxically turn into a gate from which entry and exit take place.

The Nakba Day events are examples of recent incidents of resistant border crossings. However, since the creation and imposition of the state borders in Palestine, people continued to cross the borders on a daily basis. There is considerable documentation of border crossing in Palestine since the formation of such borders (Bornstein 2002; Keshet 2006; Tawil-Souri 2012; Ghanim 2010). Living inside the Israeli state has meant a constant confrontation with symbolic and material borders. When

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[36] Only under strict conditions do Syrians in the Golan Heights receive permits from Israel to go study in Syria.

Palestinians in Israel were granted Israeli citizenship, they were classified as "Arabs" under the label of "nationality"—*li'oum* in Hebrew. Jewish citizens, however, were classified as "Jewish" under the label of nationality. This documented distinction marked one of the first administrative dividing lines between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel, as separated by their state-classified distinctions. Being labeled as "Arab" exposed the holder of the card to discriminatory institutional regulations. For example, being labelled as "Arabs" in their identity cards, many Palestinian citizens of Israel face tremendous difficulties in buying houses in Jewish cities or in Jewish majority neighbourhoods (Robbins 2014), due to discriminatory state housing policies (Yonah and Saporta 2002).

Being exposed to the Israeli national discourse throughout my years growing up in the Israeli state and during my fieldwork, I learnt that most Israelis could distinguish a Palestinian space from an Israeli space—inside both the West Bank and the Israeli state. Signifiers of such spaces vary: they could be poor quality roads or crumbling infrastructure; the density of houses across a confined space; or the housing structures themselves. Cities and villages strongly reflect their dwellers' identity. The ways language is used to mark the space is evident. In Israeli cities and towns, Israeli flags and Hebrew language can be immediate identifiers that their population is, in the majority, Jewish; lack of such flags and the appearance of Arabic language on the streets and stores are identifiers of a Palestinian town in Israel. Some of these identifiers are not official state borders; as ordinary markers of separation inscribed on the land, and they function as visual borders,

marking the borders not only of the Israeli nation but also of the national imagination or the landscape.

How, then, I ask, are these borders constructed? What are the discursive conditions that allow for such constructions? Who is included in such national imaginations and who is excluded? And, who guards such borders and who break them? This chapter weaves together stories across multiple borders. It explores the concept of "borders" as it bears on both the visual realm and the material realm. I build my discussion drawing on interviews I carried out with Palestinians and Israelis. In addition to interviews, I base my exploration on my participant-observation in Tichnoun (and to a lesser extend Kesharim) led educational tours to the West Bank. More specifically, I elaborate on the groups' use of maps as a social construct that Israelis utilize in order to read and familiarize themselves with the political and the geographical landscape that they have come to occupy.

As I discussed in Chapter One, the anthropological literature explores borders through three forms of existence: material, abstract, and visual. In the first instance, the literature on borders engages with the material aspect of borders, locating them either on the land or landscape, in walls, fences, or militarized zones (Brown 2010; Wilson and Donnan 2010; Dolphin and Usher 2006; Dalakoglou 2010), or on people's bodies— reflecting on the ways in which people's bodies function as material markers of nationalized borders (Konopinski 2014; Long 2006; Anzaldúa 1999; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002; Tawil-Souri 2009; Bornstein 2002). The second form of literature on

borders conceptualizes borders through their abstracted presence, namely, through their symbolic, linguistic, rhetoric, or emotional aspects. Such literature looks at the way objects are reminders or symbolic markers of borders, or how poetry and symbolism reflect bordered realities (Sandell 2010; Lavie 2011; Kun 2000; Sidaway 2005; Seibert 2013). Finally, the third literature that I draw upon examines borders as visual structures: photography, visual landscape or virtual borders (Wigoder 2010; Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga 2010; Heyman 2008). Notably, while conceptualizing borders as material and symbolic structures is the dominant approach in the study of borders, engaging with borders through their visual component or as visual structures is rarely undertaken.

Although I address the material and structural aspects of borders as well as the abstract and symbolic trajectories that borders have on people in Palestine, it is, nonetheless, the visual component that is at the centre of my analysis here. Indeed, I shall argue that the visual frame of borders sits at the crossroad of material borders and their abstraction. In other words, I explore borders as ontologically transgressive structures, located between the material/physical and the abstract/ imagined/symbolic. By developing the discussion of the location of borders at the crossroad of materiality and abstraction, and by focusing on the visual quality of borders—or, the *visual ability* of borders—in what follows, I hope to offer a visual-based conceptualization of borders. Although borders are structures that disable, block, or halt movements and streams of social, cultural, and economic relations, they also slide into sites or locations of and for resistance. On borders reside those whom the state is constantly seeking to displace and expel from its centre:

unwanted bodies, peoples, or nations. Borders thus constitute the violence that the state enacts at its core, but wants to keep outside of it, or on its borders. Hence, I argue, the case of the Wall in Palestine: it is an embodiment of that which the state is constantly seeking to displace and that through which it practices displacements.

The land and the landscape in Palestine are suffocated with borders (as illustrated in map 4 in Chapter Two). However, when I would mention my research interests in studying borders in Israel, or borders imposed by the Israeli state, some Israelis would respond with the following: "but Israel does not have borders." This answer has always intrigued me since it reaffirms the blurred distinction between Israel's state borders, produced through political processes or agreements with the Palestinians, and borders imposed on the landscape, produced through a forceful presence, such as military occupation or the separation Wall. Indeed, the Israeli state does not have mutually recognized borders, as there are multiple contested and disputed borderlands with the Palestinians as well as with Syria and Lebanon—in the Jawlan and in Sheba'a (or Shebaa) Farms (Kaufman 2002:577–578; Salem 2006). Moreover, despite the highly bordered reality imposed on the region, the Israeli state does not have fixed borders. The Israeli state's hands of sovereignty have always reached into Palestinian, Lebanese, or Syrian territories. Israel can be, hence paradoxically, described as a state that is defined through its excess of borders. This has created a situation in which there are so many borders that one cannot see the contours of the state—in resonance with the saying, "one cannot see the forest for the trees".

The "Green Line" consisting of the 1967 cease-fire borders, separating the Israeli state from the future Palestinian state, has been completely washed away or "obscured and obfuscated" through Israeli military presence on Palestinian lands (Rabinowitz 2001)—such as checkpoints or the Wall—and through civilian presence—such as the construction of whole segregated Israeli cities, roads, and industrial or agricultural zones encroaching into the Palestinian territories (Rabinowitz 2002). As a result, Israel is a state with no recognized political borders. Moreover, each political party in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) has a different vision and map of the state borders. Right wing parties, for example, believe that the state of Israel should expand its territory to annex all the Palestinian territories, which also means denying Palestinians their self-determination. The majority of Israeli left wing parties support, directly or indirectly, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as fragmentation of the latter into scattered zones of Palestinian sovereignty. Despite not having its borders internationally recognized, the Israeli state encloses Palestinian cities in the West Bank and The Gaza Strip with strict borders, through a system of checkpoints, Israeli-exclusive roads, permit systems, and the separation Wall, all of which are imposed on Palestinian bodies, land, and landscape. The borders demarcating the West Bank or the Gaza Strip are relatively invisible to Israelis, since they function as passages into and outside of their settlements. Borders on the land, both inside the Israeli state and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, were not marked to block Israeli urban or settlement expansion, but, rather, to allow greater access to material and spatial resources for Israelis, while segregating Palestinians from accessing Israeli-occupied and confiscated spaces. In this sense, borders for the Palestinians function

through separation and segregation. In other words, there is no regularity to the structure of segregation; it is seen at times and unseen at others, or fixed in one space while always shifting in another. As a result of the unpredictability of the border apparatus, there has never been a fixed map of the Israeli state's sovereign edges. Every few months the maps change in accordance with new military land confiscations, or constructions of new settlements or roads in the midst of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Building on the aforementioned context, I ask how, then, are national borders carved on the lands and on people's bodies (for instance, through the identity card system)? How are they made visible at times, absented at others, or displaced on both bodies and land? To explore these questions, I shall engage with my interlocutors' experiences as well as my own experience of seeing and unseeing borders. My aim, then, is to shift the focus of the literature of borders from mainly exploring movements at the border, crossings or blockades, to offering a closer look at the centrality of the gaze and of visuals in the process of confronting borders theoretically. In the following sections, I shall pause to engage the concept of borders—be they symbolic, visual, or material—as both *sites* and *sights.* Sites, I suggest, are the material structures on the ground, like checkpoints or the Wall, as well as social locations that are constructed through socio-political boundaries like national and ethnic borders (manifested through identity cards or permits). *Sights* are the visual structures and imagined constructs that function as bordering mechanisms. Sights of borders are manifested through the visual capacity that structures of borders hold, like the scene of the Wall or the architecture of Israeli Jewish-only

settlements or roads. Through its imposed presence on the landscape as well as its diffusion outside of the material border-zones (as in photography and other forms of artistic expression), the Wall is a site and sight of bordering: that is, of the socio-political processes of border creation.

1. Sites of Borders: Crossing, Memory, and Mourning

Often, borders have strong visual and visible structures. They have recognizable features, like signs, fences, or military or police presence. They could also have human traces that define them as such. For example, in his doctoral research on U.S-Mexico borders, David Seibert (2013) traces objects left on the desert border by Mexicans who cross the securitized border to the U.S. The scene of the border is haunting: abandoned shoes, clothes, water bottles are found every morning in the landscape (Seibert 2013). Objects that people leave behind while crossing the borders become signifiers for the shedding of livelihood that is, often literally, interwoven with the landscape. Borders, therefore, are sites that bind loss, memory and mourning.

Suggesting that borders are sites of mourning is not a new idea in the context of Palestine. Although there is hardly any academic literature offering a theorization of these connections, non-academic literature and documented testimonies do identify such relations. In her article, "Being a Border," Honaida Ghanim (2010), a Palestinian writer and academic, narrates her family story living on the border. Reading Ghanim's story, one

learns that living on the borders and surviving such a reality necessitate a constant breaking of such borders. Ghanim's family story takes place on shifting state-imposed borders. Her story of living through the memory of borders and bordered villages is an attempt to historicize and contextualize borders in Palestine and to document the continuous resistance of her family and relatives through their crossing of borders that infiltrated their lives and relationships. Through her family (his)story, Honaida Ghanim argues that by dwelling on the border, one's body becomes the border. She narrates two love stories across the 1948 borders between Israel and the West Bank (which were, until 1967, ruled by Jordanian security, when the Israeli army replaced the Jordanian administration in the West Bank). In 1948, Marjeh, Ghanim's village, was cut from its neighbouring village Dayr-al-Ghusun, on which Marjeh was entirely dependent economically and administratively. Within only a few weeks, Marjeh became an 'independent village' under the rule of the Israeli state, and Dayr-al-Ghusun was administrated under the Jordanian rule (2010:110–111). The border was guarded by both the Israeli and the Jordanian army, until 1967, when the Israeli army occupied the West Bank and The Gaza Strip. The borderline not only divided geographical locations, but also whole families and conjugal relations. Being divided for over sixty years did not deter Palestinians on either side of the divide from taking risks by crossing the borders. The first love story across borders Ghanim (2010) tells is of her grandfather. It had a good ending; the second, however, had a tragic one. The first story narrates how her grandfather married a woman from Dayr-al-Ghusun despite having to cross the border newly formed in 1948 that separated Ghanim's grandfather's family from that of his wife's family, creating an

obstacle to maintaining conjugal family relations. The second love story that Ghanim

narrates is that of a marriage between Abu 'Ali from the Jordanian side of the 1948 borders

and a woman, Su'ad, from the Israeli side of the border; both were Palestinians. For a few

years, Abu 'Ali would cross the borders "sneaking" to the Israeli side to reunite with his

wife; Su'ad would do the same in the other direction (113). Crossing the borders, Ghanim

claims, seemed to be conceptualized as a technical obstacle that constantly needed to be

overcome; it involved crude confrontations with the Jordanian guards, with threats of

detention and imprisonment. Despite the risk involved, borders were crossed constantly.

After being caught and warned by the Jordanian army a few times, Abu 'Ali was caught

again crossing the borders and sent to Jordanian jail for three months. Upon his release,

Abu 'Ali once again attempted to cross the border to Israel to see his wife; this time he was

caught again and sent to jail, while his wife, Su'ad, and their son, Ibrahim, were transferred

to an unknown place (114). After the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and

Gaza during the 1967 war, Su'ad and her son came to visit their family in Marjeh to search

for her husband, only to find out that he passed away in jail in August of 1967 (115).

Ghanim shares an insightful argument about life on the borders. She argues that the

contradictory role of the border turned it into a site of ongoing tension between indigenous

communities and colonial power. While the newly formed Israeli state was doing its best to

monitor the newly established borders, families across the divided villages kept crossing

the borders, transforming them into sites of resistance and survival. Ghanim also concludes

that borders encompass complexities and paradoxes as sites of oppression and liberation,

separation and connection, or life and death (111); and, I shall add, borders are sites of mourning—where memory collapses and revives.

In *The Locust and the Bird: My Mother's Story*; Lebanese author Hanan al-Shaykh (2010) narrates the story of her mother's neighbour in a village in South Lebanon, whose daughter had disappeared in one of the Israeli invasions of the South. The neighbour would go everyday to the borders between Lebanon and Israel and mourn the disappearance of her daughter by crying loudly and calling her name across the border (2010:195). The border became a site of daily rituals of mourning. A similar story of mourning on the border is illustrated in journalist Joe Sacco's (2010) *Footnotes in Gaza: A Graphic Novel*. Sacco conducted lengthy research on the 1956 Israeli massacre in Gaza through reading Israeli military archives as well as interviewing Palestinians in Gaza about the massacre. He documented stories he heard from people in Gaza about women who lost their beloved ones in the massacre. These women would go to the Rafah-Egypt borders to perform mourning rituals by crying, hitting themselves and throwing sand on their bodies (Sacco 2010:359).[37] Notably, women mourned the death of their family members on the borders, even though the massacre had happened far away from the borders.

The word signifying "border" and the word signifying "mourning" in Arabic share similar roots. In Arabic, the word used for border is *had*, *or hodoud* in plural, deriving from the root *h.d.d*. The verb *hadda* in Arabic holds multiple meanings depending on its

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[37] This mourning ritual is referred to in the book as 'Maltamah', "a performative form of grief" (Sacco 2010:317).

context in the sentence. *Hadda* could mean "to draw borders between one thing and another"; "to sharpen a knife"; "to mourn the death of a relative"; or "to discipline and halt someone from doing something wrong."[38] The relationship between drawing a border and disciplining bodies, minds, or visions is a compelling one; it implies two interpretations. The first suggests that disciplining is the act of drawing a border between the subject and his/her (presumably wrong) behaviour. The second implied meaning indicates that borders *are* an act of disciplining; to border someone is to discipline her/him. I suggest that the two meanings are complementary; borders are disciplining entities; on the material level, they prevent people from continuing their journeys on this land. While it is perhaps possible that the adjacent relationship between the concepts of "mourning" and "borders" is arbitrary, or a linguistic coincidence, I suggest engaging with this terminological proximity in an empirical sense, which might hint at the ways in which borders bestow emotions and memories (Abu Hatoum 2014). I shall demonstrate this point through the following story of one of my interlocutors, Salwa, aged 50, from Abu Dis, Jerusalem. Salwa's story, I argue, manifests how border-zones become sites of mourning the death of lost or absent loved ones. Salwa's home in Abu Dis, East Jerusalem, was lost to the borders/Wall; her body became the border, and she and her family were forcibly displaced. Her story, which I narrate below, demonstrates how nation-states' imposed borders operate as sites at which global and political forces weigh on the body (Mountz 2011:384).

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[38] Al-Mohiet dictionary.

2. "Becoming a Border"

Salwa looked tired. Eight years have passed since I met her for the first time. Her spirits were still high, or so it seemed. I remember her as a very strong woman—a fighter. "I carry Jerusalem's story on my back", she told me that night we reconnected during the fall of 2012. I got Salwa's contact from a Palestinian friend in Jerusalem who knew her. Over the past twenty years, Salwa had been engaged in a long fight over her house, land, and daughters; despite her life-long struggle, she could still gather some strength and retell her story to me. I first met Salwa in the summer of 2004, when I participated in educational tours with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and the Coalition of Women for Just Peace in Jerusalem. The group of people that took part in these tours mainly consisted of Israeli Jews and a few Palestinians. Salwa's house was one of the first stops where we encountered the Wall. Salwa gave us a tour that took place a few metres outside her house, where the Wall route was then expected to pass. At that time, her struggle with the Israeli occupation was centred on protesting and resisting the Wall from being built next to her home and cutting off her nuclear family from her husband's extended family, as well as blocking their access to work on the other side of the projected Wall. By 2006, the Wall had been constructed next to her house; Salwa's family had been cut off from her husband's family, her land, property, work, and the hilly view they used to wake up to every morning. I remember Salwa, in 2004, speaking of her fear of a looming, threatening future in which her family would collapse in the face of the Wall. When I met Salwa eight years later, in the fall of 2012, in an interview setting in a restaurant in East Jerusalem, her

life seemed to have taken this radical shift—the occupation had managed to ruin her life. Meeting her that evening, I wanted to know how life could have a possible future in the shadow of the Wall. I also wanted to know what had happened since our previous encounter in 2004. I soon learned that the catastrophic 'possible future' she feared in 2004 had come true. Even more so, it turned out to be more tragic than predicted. As Salwa feared, her family had been displaced due to the construction of the Wall. However, loss of life was a scenario that I had not predicted. Salwa, then in her mid-forties (in 2011), had lost her husband. "The occupation killed him", she told me. "When he could no longer handle the militarization of his home and family; he had a heart attack". She said these words with a suffocated voice, and then shed a tear. The woman who "carries Jerusalem's story on her back" now also carries a memory of a man and an abandoned home. "The Wall came to me", Salwa repeated, "I did not go to the Wall", and this is an important distinction, she said. It came to her bedroom, her house, her family, her conjugal family relations, her daughters and her husband. Salwa resisted the Wall's destructive effects on her life on a daily basis, until resistance became a daily routine. She told me how one day, in 2002, she woke up to the sound of soldiers near her house marking the new borders of the Jerusalem municipality, dividing Abu Dis neighbourhood into an Israeli side and a Palestinian one (image 9).

Image 9: A view of the Wall in Abu Dis neighbourhood in Jerusalem from the "Israeli" side. A military jeep is seen patrolling the Wall. Photograph by the author. July 2012.

Salwa's house space was split; her home was inside the newly formed 'Israeli' side, but her family property, a hotel and some land, only a couple of metres from her house walls were cut out from their reach. Salwa and her family lost this property to the Israeli military, which turned the hotel into a small military base. Salwa holds an Israeli-Jerusalemite identity card, which means that she is an Israeli resident, but not a citizen. Her late husband held a West Bank identity card (he was neither an Israeli citizen nor a resident, which also meant that he could not enter an Israeli-ruled territory without a permit from the Civil Administration of the Israeli army). When the Israeli government remapped

the borders of the Occupied Palestinian Territories after the 1967 occupation, Salwa's husband became illegal on his own land. The nightmare started when the Israeli authorities began to restricting the permit regulations; surveillance targeting Palestinians subsequently increased in these border zones. In the following translated voice-recorded interview with Salwa, she describes her life in the shadow of Israeli occupation at the site of the border/Wall:

> One day, in 2002, everything changed—just as they say in the movies: "overnight"—we saw a soldier standing at our door. Without any notice, the soldiers placed a plastic road barrier and said: "you're not allowed to leave this area; you're not allowed to go there". I would tell the soldiers "but I want to go to my school or my husband wants to go home to his family on the other side, across this plastic barrier". The soldiers would point to the plastic barrier and say: "No! This is a border and you cannot cross it". I would tell them "but my car is there", or "my husband's brother had the car yesterday and I want to go get it across the barrier". Since it was a plastic barrier, I would push it and remove it… but then the soldiers would block me from crossing. All this happened *overnight*. Then the real clashes began on a daily basis. The Wall was built a few steps away from my house. The Wall came to us as a sudden thing; it prevented us from moving. While I could stand on the street greet my neighbour across the other side, I could not visit him in his house nor could he visit me in mine. This is how bad the situation was. It was sudden and it was shocking. We were traumatized from this new reality. Then problems started, and of course, since my house is exactly on the borderline that the state decided to draw, I became a daily *confrontation front*. Within two to three days, cement bricks replaced these plastic borders— one metre tall… Since they had built a brick barrier before the Wall was built, one does not know what to do. You had to jump over the brick barrier to go to the other side, but not everyone can jump over it. So, of course I could jump, but if I wanted to climb it and jump, it

meant that someone else had to hold my girls on the other side and pass them over to me. Someone has to be on the other side to help with the girls. We entered a mess that has a starting point but no end. It started in August 2002, with the construction of the Wall, and continued with forcing me to leave my house in March 2006.

Becoming a "confrontation front", as Salwa had articulated it, also meant embodying the border and the violence of daily confrontation that comes with living on the border—becoming a border. Salwa's story also resonates with elements of Honaida Ghanim's story (2010) about her family's history with border crossing. Salwa narrated her daily border-crossing reality:

> My daily life became as follows: fight with the soldiers, go to school, come back, fight with soldiers, come home, cook, since you're hosting people for dinner, fight with soldiers, go to sleep. Then most of your life becomes fights upon fights, between each fight you have a break for some life, you go visit people, then you bring food home. It was really difficult, and today, looking back at it, I could not go back, I could not go back to live on the frontline. I felt like I was carrying Abu Dis's story, Jerusalem's story, my neighbours' story, my daughters' story on my back. My daughters were affected; my husband was affected.

Salwa remembered clearly most of the details of her life near what became that military base and the Walled border. On one occasion, the daily clashes with the military reached another unforeseen critical peak. Military officers' harassment was frequent enough to push Salwa and her family to the verge of collapse:

Every forty to fifty days the military troop changed… there were always conflicts with the military. Once, I was returning home from Jerusalem's market. I had my daughters in the car. One soldier stopped me, near my home, and told me that I tried to kill him. He told me that he was going to arrest me. I told him "do you think there is a mother who would kill herself with her daughters with her in the car?" I am Palestinian! I do not think there is a 'terrorist' who would perform an action like this with their child with her/him. My car was filled with groceries. Until midnight, that day, I was trying to get out of this situation. We got the help from Machsom Watch[39], and we told the army that we have more complaints against their soldiers – and if they do not drop the charges, we will reveal their violations. By midnight the military had dropped the charges; otherwise, I would have been in jail forever, for something that I had not done. You could see how much they tried to make me surrender.

Salwa did not surrender, but her life shifted drastically when she could not keep up with the physical and emotional violence that the regime of occupation forced her endure on a daily basis. She moved to live in Beit Hanina, another neighbourhood in Jerusalem, leaving her bordered house behind. Salwa's account resonates with that of the feminist Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) who wrote about life on the border. In her writing, Anzaldúa (1999) employed similar wording about her experience of being an indigenous Chicana whose life was an ongoing crossing of colonial borders imposed by the United States, on the Mexico-U.S border. Anzaldúa poetically writes: "to survive the Borderlands, you must live *sin fronteras*, be a crossroads" (1999:217). Salwa's embodiment of *sin*

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[39] Machsom Watch is an Israeli women's organization that opposes the Israeli occupation and documents human rights violations by Israeli soldiers at military checkpoints. Link: http://www.machsomwatch.org/en, accessed October 20, 2013.

fronteras meant that borders interfered with the smallest details of her life. By being a "crossroads" or a "border", Anzaldúa hints at the primary conditions of survival on borderlands, which are cultivated through the act of constant crossing and embodiment of the borders.

Like Salwa's, the following story, narrated by Areen, is about dislocations and endeavours of movement. However, while Salwa's story was about inevitable, continuous confrontations with the Israeli military and an excessively bordered reality, Areen's story hints at the continuous checkpoint crossings or their evasion, which many Palestinians who live in Jerusalem constantly have to negotiate (Brown 2004). In addition, Areen's description of the Wall captures a suffocating contingency of a new bordering reality. I made plans to meet with Areen in a Palestinian-owned café in Jerusalem. I had first met her over ten years ago in Jerusalem, through a research project that I had been working on. Areen is a professor of social sciences in a Palestinian university and she commutes a few times a week between her house in Jerusalem and her university in the West Bank. During my fieldwork, I attended the 2012 Qalandyia International Art festival to see an exhibition of Palestinian artists' installation work displayed inside Jerusalem's old city.[40] I had lost touch with Areen for years, until I ran into her at the festival. We reconnected again, and I told her about my research; her response was that her life had changed drastically since the construction of the Wall in Jerusalem. Since she seemed very keen on talking about the

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[40] http://www.qalandiyainternational.org/, accessed August 14, 2014.

new reality of the Wall on both a personal and a political level, I asked to meet with her to talk about it. Areen told me:

> I moved from the United States to live in Palestine in 1987. For me, the space around me and its details in my life had all changed in an unbelievable way. The way from Jerusalem to Ramallah, the road from here [Jerusalem] to Jericho, to Hebron…everything changed extremely quickly and extremely dramatically. It feels like we're living in the 18th century and we're witnessing the industrial revolution all of a sudden. Visible changes are happening very quickly. […] With these experiences *your geography shrinks*. Suddenly, everything is prohibited, but you do not know that yet. There is no explanation for where you can go and where you cannot. So, you start functioning by the logic that everything is already prohibited. You end up not going anywhere. That's really the *hajez* [Arabic for barrier or checkpoint] of the mind, more than any other material thing; it is imposed on you from the outside. You start accepting the impossibility: the fact that you cannot go wherever you want. I went through that stage…I mean the first year of the intifada [in 2000] was violent and checkpoints were everywhere, and now we have the Wall.

The use of the word 'checkpoint' to identify blocking and bordering sites is a political one. Most Palestinians I talked to referred to Israeli military checkpoints as *hajez*, which in Arabic literality means an obstacle. The Israeli state, however, refers to the same checkpoints (written on military documentations and road signs) as *maa'var*, in Hebrew, or *maa'bar* in Arabic, meaning a passageway or crossway.[41] For Palestinians, who are

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[41] The official use of "crossings" is documented in the official website of the Israeli Coordination of Government in the Territories: http://www.cogat.idf.il/1039-en/IDFG.aspx , accessed June 5, 2014.

constantly required to provide the military their permits, these same sites are checkpoints

that form obstacles rather than function as crossing pathways. Areen's journey from her

house to her workplace was a daily struggle. The commute between Jerusalem and her

university in the West Bank was becoming more and more draining and suffocating. As

she told me:

> It reached a point that between my house and the university there were five
> checkpoints… every checkpoint had a name…you sometimes have to walk the
> checkpoint by foot, you could not go through it by car. It also reached a point
> where I would sleep at my friend's house whenever one of the five checkpoints
> would be closed. But I felt that it was not pleasant to keep sleeping at my friend's
> house…that is how I was forced to find an apartment to rent near my work. This
> was my solution; I would spend half the week in the apartment near my university
> and the other half in my home in Jerusalem. I had that apartment for a year during
> 2003-2004.

Areen remembers the very moment when the Wall was constructed. She not only

remembers the details of the Wall's arrival to her neighbourhood, but also the feelings and

imagery that the Wall had left her with:

> I remember on the 22nd of May 2004, they had started to build the Wall in Qalandia
> [between Jerusalem and Ramallah]. I even remember the date. The Wall was like a
> *war* that was approaching but it had not arrived yet. It started in the north [of
> Jerusalem] and was slowly moving south and east. The Wall had arrived…Before,
> we had only heard about the Wall [...]. But it took one year or two 'til it [the Wall]
> reached the city. And, all the way… as time passed, it was becoming more and
> more present. Then you feel that it was coming closer and closer: it's coming; it's

close. It was a very horrifying feeling. It felt like one was waiting for death to come, and when the Wall arrived it did not get any better. It was completed and we were now living in a *maqbara* [cemetery], or, more precisely, in a *tabout* [coffin].

Areen's visualization of the Wall through her use of the metaphor of the 'Wall as a war' is profound. It not only connotes the idea that the Wall carries violence that resonates with the violence of a war, but it also attributes an event-like characteristic to the Wall. War is an event that happens in multiple ways: subtly, abruptly, indirectly, or directly; for a short or a long period of time. War was the closest thing to which Areen could compare the Wall. Once the Wall/war had finally arrived, it evoked for Areen the feeling of being interred in a cemetery, or of being closed up in a coffin—a wooden box that contains a dead body.

Through Salwa's and Areen's accounts, I proposed a reading of borders and explore the multiple bordering effects and traces displaced and scattered on the socio-political landscape in Palestine. Living on the borderland embodies the borders with their complexities and contradictions: to live on the borders is inevitably to live through breaking them. In the following section, I engage with the visual articulation of the Wall, shifting the focus from crossing the border, or embodying the border, to how the Wall as a bordering structure is being seen and unseen through the spectacle of political anxieties.

3. **Border Anxieties: The Projection of the Wall**

The aforementioned etymological relation between 'borders', 'mourning', and 'disciplining' is key to my understanding of borders and the ways in which people relate to them. Through the work of photographers I interviewed and through my conversations with some of my informants, I was exposed to the linkages between visual borders, anxiety, grief, and loss. Photography, I also learned, is not only a (re)presentation of the present, or of what the present ontologically *is*; photography also operates as a documentation of *was* before the Wall's construction, as expressed in the interviews I conducted with Palestinian photographers (which I shall discuss in Chapter Five).

I encountered the forms of Israeli anxiety that the Wall prompted during preliminary online research on the Wall. Amongst early Israeli visual critical commentary on the Wall was a documentary film called *Mur* (image 10), meaning "Wall" in French, directed by Simon Bitton (2005). The film documents the spirit of separation and national and material boundary-marking that the Wall promised during its first days of construction. Bitton talked to Palestinians and Israelis who live near the route of the Wall or who worked in the construction of the Wall site. Israelis with whom she talked emphasized the urgency of national and ethnic segregation between Palestinians and Israelis. This urgency for such separation was attributed to the Wall, as if the Wall perhaps held a political solution to the more than sixty-year-old national anxiety of an established state that lacks internationally accepted borders.

Image 10: A Still (5:42) from Simon Bitton's Film Mur (2005). Source:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg1HnP-aW5A, accessed December 20, 2015.

I came across another Israeli critical engagement with the Wall while searching on

the internet: an art installation by Israeli artist Shelly Federman titled "The Floating Wall"

(2009). Federman, an Israeli contemporary artist lived and worked in Tel-Aviv, created an

imitation of the Wall from styrofoam. The height of her replicated Wall structure was one

third of the average height of the state-constructed Wall in Palestine; moreover,

Federman's wall was built with only ten block-segments. On 31 August 2009, the art

installation "The Floating Wall" (see image 11 below) was put on display on one of Tel

Aviv's beaches, to be viewed by the many Israelis who visit the beach in the summer. The

artist filmed the interactions and reactions of people near the "Wall", as well as

conversations overheard around it. She later edited the filmed material and completed a

film that was screened in different local galleries (Laker 2009). I came across the

installation in *Yedi'ot Ahronot*'s website, a major Israeli newspaper. While searching for

Federman's artwork elsewhere on the internet, I found out that the art installation was

covered by Israeli as well as International news agencies. In an interview with FRANCE

24 (a French news channel), Federman explained that the piece was intended to draw

attention to the "complex realities of life in Israel" (The Observer 2009). Federman stated

that the main point of her installation was to show Israelis that the "possibility of being

able to relax on the beach comes at the price of other people's suffering" (The Observer

2009).

Image 11: Styrofoam Wall erected on the beach. "The Floating Wall", Photograph by Shelly
Federman (2009). Source: Yedi'ot Ahronot.
http://www.ynetnews.com/PicServer2/02022009/2153466/2-(1)_wa.jpg.

According to Federman, it was striking how many people could identify and recognize the Styrofoam Wall as the 'Separation Wall', which suggested to her that the Wall was relatively deeply inscribed in the Israeli "unconscious" (Laker 2009). I was introduced to the anxieties attributed to the Wall when the artist relayed the reactions she received from Jewish Israelis who were at the beach near the installation. She told Israeli newspaper *Yedi'ot Ahronot* (Laker 2009) that Jewish people were very uncomfortable to see the "Wall" exhibited on the beach. Much of the criticism directed at her work suggested that she was being anti-national or even collaborating with Israel's 'other' side simply by bringing the "Wall" to an Israeli beach. Israelis, Federman claimed, have become too comfortable with the idea that the Wall is creating a secure reality for them and, in a sense, "they just don't want to think about it too much" (Laker 2009). She also indicated that the reactions of people on the beach varied between confusion and criticism: some Jewish Israelis approached her asking if this artwork was "against us or with us"; others objected to the installation altogether (Laker 2009). Unlike in reality, the Wall in Federman's installation is a fragile and docile structure; it can be taken apart or easily destroyed. Yet the symbolism that can be extracted from the styrofoam Wall installation is a story of a nation anxiously striving for protected and secured boundaries. My encounter with this art installation online made me think about the set of initial questions I wanted to explore ethnographically, specifically with my Israeli informants; these included: why is there no Israeli debate about the Wall, and how is it possible that most Israelis do not know

anything about it, beyond being able to identify it? Moreover, why do they experience discomfort when facing the Wall (or a replica of it)?

All sixteen Israeli interviewees told me that despite the fact that many Israelis today know about the existence of the Wall, the majority of them neither want to engage with it nor explore its implications for the political situation, or its humanitarian effects on Palestinians. What many Israelis cared about was their sense of security, which most of whom believed is a direct result of the Wall's construction. As sixty-six years old Moshe, a Jewish-Israeli anti-occupation activist and an academic in Jerusalem put it in a recorder interview I conducted with him:

> Israelis have this idea that everything is secured. They only care about their *bitachon* [security]. The wall is there for their security; in fact, they think that it is a fence. But, if they *actually* saw it, if they went to Abu Dis, for example, and *actually* saw it, they would soon realize that, first of all, it is not a fence—it is a pretty big Wall. Secondly, the Wall does not separate Israelis from Palestinians, but Palestinians from Palestinians, so what security are we talking about?

Similarly, Yigal, a thirty years old Jewish-Israeli activist and a grassroots organizer in Jerusalem, articulated sentiments like Moshe's about Israelis' general disinterest in the Wall. He told me during an interview:

> The Wall it is not discussed in Israel, it is hidden, and it is intentionally hidden. It is supposed to be separating Palestinians from Israelis. This is how Israel sells it to its citizens and around the world. But, if you visit the Wall, you see that it really isn't anywhere near Israeli communities. So really, if you are an Israeli, the only way

you can get to learn about the Wall is when Palestinians or Israeli activists against the Wall are talking about it. But, Israelis are not going to listen, and Israeli media will not listen. Even if the Israeli media listens, it will write a biased report about it […] Israelis have no reason to consider the Wall…it is not a topic that comes up at the dinner table.

Israeli-constructed and controlled borders are crowded with Palestinians to whom borders are, metaphorically speaking, obstacle to livelihood. Palestinians, whether they are Israeli citizens or living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, cross military checkpoints and militarized borders with Jordan or Egypt on a daily basis. There are thousands of Palestinian university students with Israeli identity cards or West Bank identity cards, who cross back and forth to Jordan through Israeli controlled crossings on a weekly and monthly basis (Arar and Haj-Yehia 2010). Likewise, there are thousands of Palestinians who cross between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories for work, trade, or family visits on a weekly and monthly basis. Palestinian lives, one might think, reside on the borders, crossings, and blockades. Palestinian bodies became markers of the proximity to border-zones. The closer one gets to Palestinian landscapes, identified by Arabic language signs and specific architectural or agricultural signifiers, the closer one gets to border and buffer zones. The landscape of borders is, thus, Palestinianized, suggesting that not only are Palestinians living in daily bordering relations, but also that borders embody what it means to be a Palestinian living under a military occupation: decay, poverty, crowdedness, abandonment, and chaos. With the Palestinianization of Israeli borders comes a great deal of anxiety that Israeli security and military forces have to manage.

In the summer of 2013, I decided to visit a friend in Jordan. I took the bus from Nazareth to Amman, a bus line operated by a Palestinian transportation company in Nazareth. The bus dropped us at the Israeli border point for a security check before proceeding to the Jordanian border point. While waiting for the bus after my luggage was searched, I took a photograph of the bus station sign where travelers to Jordan waited. The sign read "To Amman". A few minutes later, an Israeli security guard approached me and told me not to take photographs; he then asked for my identity card, looked at it for few seconds, gave it back to me, and once more asked me not to take any more photographs. The border site felt very tense; after this exchange with one of them, I felt that I was under the security guards' scrutiny until I got into the bus and crossed over the Jordanian border. Looking at Israeli military checkpoints in Palestine, Joanna Long (2006) amplifies the various expressions of anxiety that borders create, not only for those Palestinians whose lives are severely affected by borders, but also for those military personnel protecting those vulnerable border-sites. Security anxiety in Israeli society and the fear of Palestinian suicide bombers crossing and exploding in Israeli cities, along with anxieties of racial and national boundary drawing, have all made Israeli military checkpoints into nervous sites of tension for Israeli soldiers. In her article "Border Anxiety in Palestine–Israel", Long (2006) specifically explores the way Palestinian women's bodies are read and conceptualized through, and in relation to borders. Long argues that Palestinian pregnant women and women who hide bombs beneath their clothes embody the "leaky bodily boundaries" (2006:107) that many Israelis fear. Israeli soldiers, she claims, experience anxiety near Palestinian women's bodies passing the borders. It is based on this fear that allows soldiers

to justify preventing many pregnant Palestinian women from crossing military checkpoints on the way to the hospital, which has resulted in many of these women giving birth at the checkpoint sites. Palestinian births at Israeli checkpoints, Long argues, produce the border as separation per se, but also, paradoxically, as the penetration and breakage of borders. Pregnant women's bodies, she suggests, embody the fears Israeli society has, of abject "suicide bombers" penetrating into Israel (2006:123–124). To keep these leaky bodies out (112), Long claims, Israel constructed the Wall, creating a false sense of "zero vulnerability" (110).

Being sites of insecurity and anxieties, these border-zones, which mark the separation between Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank and Jerusalem area, become sites that most Israelis avoid. The work, then, of Israeli photographers working along the borderline or inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories—as well as the efforts of Israeli educational tours inside the West Bank—gains significance, as most Israelis lack sufficient knowledge and awareness of the situation of Palestinians under military occupation. Maps, too, as I shall claim in the following section, are tools in which knowledge about the Israeli military occupation is generated and presented to the Israeli public. Maps are structured by the Israeli state to assert political hierarchy on an occupied landscape. The power used to impose borders on the landscape, I claim, is the same that imposes the lines printed on official maps. However, maps are also used by Israeli anti-occupation activists as an educational tool that visualizes the anatomy of military occupation. Maps, as I shall also show, are a visual articulation of Israelis' national attachments to borders.

4. Witnessing Landscapes, Marching with Maps

In the last week of October 2012, a few weeks before Israel attacked the Gaza Strip with airdropped bombs, I participated in Tichnoun's educational tour to the Wall and to the Israeli settlements in Jerusalem. It was a tour to the border-zone, as the ad to the tour on their website promised. In addition, the tour aimed at introducing Israelis to the urban Palestinian life in the shadow of Israeli occupation and discriminatory policies in Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhoods. The meeting point of the tour was in a park in West Jerusalem, the Israeli-Jewish side of the city. A group of Israelis gathered near a parked bus; I could also see some foreigners, European and North American, who had joined the tour. The tour guide, Yotam, arrived and introduced himself; he then proceeded to call out the participants' names (almost thirty in total) and to collect the tour fees from them. We slowly got into the bus, which we filled almost to capacity. The bus started to move; Yotam held a microphone and throughout the tour told us stories about the sites we visited and scenes we saw. The structure of the tour and the stories resembled those of commercial touristic tours, except that the discourse about the scenes in view were not celebrating the achievements of the state or the nation, as commercial tourism would; rather, the commentary suggested a critique of the state and of the hegemonic national discourse.

Speaking in Hebrew, Yotam welcomed the participants and explained to them the philosophy behind the structure of the tour on which we were embarking. We learnt that

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one of the main objectives of the tour was to educate Israelis about the situation in the settlements and the Wall in the Jerusalem area. Another objective of the tour, as Yotam explained to us, was to instil a sense of urgency in Israelis to reject and protest their state's expansive and violent policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and to advocate for a withdrawal of Israeli military from the Palestinian Territories. Eventually, this should lead, Yotam stated, to the formation of two national states, one Israeli and another Palestinian, coexisting side by side, but separated by the internationally acknowledged 1967 cease-fire line, known as the "Green Line." Through these tours, a sense of persuasive urgency is imparted, convincing participants that the situation was still reversible, that the damage of the military occupation was still redeemable, and that a two-state solution was possible. The separation ideology imposed by the Wall is confronted with the presence of geopolitical conditions that render the land and its inhabitants indivisible. When Palestinians and Israelis live on both sides of the Wall, separation becomes an absurd vision, and one would have to see it to believe it. The tension developed between witnessing the scene and narrating a story of conflicted nations is mediated through ideological frameworks that tour guides like Yotam provide. All of the tour guides I encountered claimed that although separation is challenging and a difficult task to achieve, the formation of two states, based on separate nationhood, would end the atrocities perpetrated by Israelis and the suffering inflicted upon the Palestinians; more importantly, separation would guarantee fixed borders to the Israeli state. This ideology entertains a hopeful scenario to the catastrophic future projected through the practices of the violent present.

The visual affinity constructed between the participants and the landscape is mediated through national discursive frames that are narrated by the tour guide with the help of maps. By simply prevailing in front of our eyes, the landscape does not invite a political dead-end narrative or one ideology or another; the narrative provided by the political tour guides, however, draws a dead end scenario and a future of no-return—that is, unless Israeli and Palestinian politicians proceed immediately to a two nation-state solution. Similar to Kesharim's political tours in the West Bank or Jerusalem in which I participated, Tichnoun's tour in Jerusalem had emphasized the act of being present on the land, as well as witnessing and mapping. Visiting, seeing, and witnessing sites and hearing people's testimonies provided a lens like no other to which Israelis had access, given that they are often wary of entering Palestinian Territories, largely due to Israeli military warnings directed at Israelis that advising them not to enter Palestinian-inhabited areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The bus we rode was an Israeli bus, meaning that it had an Israeli license plate, which allows for a facilitated entry and exit from the Israeli side to the Occupied Palestinian Territories without interrogation by the Israeli military in checkpoints. Such movement is even freer when remaining in areas under full Israeli military control in the West Bank— identified in official agreements between the Israeli state and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation as Area C. A successful tour guide, I learnt, will have to be alert and point to the landscape as it comes into view from the windows of the moving bus. He or she should be able to point out the imagined national borders of the Israeli state as well

as those of the Palestinian areas (defined as A, B and C in the Oslo Accords) through the different lines of borders drawn by the occupying regime, such as the borders of the Jerusalem municipality, or the borders marked by military checkpoints, the Wall, or Israeli settlements and settlement roads. Some of these borders are not marked on the land but are outlined on the maps provided by the educational tour organizers. Such borderlines and borderzones should be identified well by the tour guides and mapped on the physical landscape in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Participants, therefore, are given maps immediately upon their arrival; then, throughout the tour, they are asked to look at the map and collectively, following the guide, match the location on the landscape they are viewing with the lines and locations drawn on the map.

As the tour proceeded, we stood on a hilltop near the old city of Jerusalem—one could see the old city's walls and the Wall from afar. Yotam was confronted with a question by a Jewish Israeli participant about a different location from the one at which we stood at that moment. Yotam's answer was that the first thing he was taught when he was training to become a tour guide of such tours was "not to talk about what you cannot see". Therefore, Yotam decided to postpone answering the participant's question, promising him to address it when we had arrived at the other site, where the scene referenced in that question would be sighted and therefore could be addressed accordingly. Similarly, Yotam would only address the map when referring to a location that the group was passing by or standing on, in an attempt to locate the group simultaneously on the land and on the map. The presence of the visual element in front of our eyes, whether it was land, a landscape, a

settlement, or a part of the Wall, was an essential component of the discourse and the

national story being built through these tours. It was a story of hope for a solution, at the

verge of visual misery (image 12).

Image 12: View from the Tichnoun tour bus. A decaying and partly destroyed Palestinian house in
East Jerusalem. Photographed by the author. October 2012.

The act of seeing as witnessing is central to the construction of the political vision

that these tours offer their participants. Later, when I interviewed Vered and Tali, two

Israeli women who lead political tours with Kesharim, they articulated the same strong

attachment to the idea of seeing as an educational tool. They also told me that, in their

experience, Israelis do not see what is happening in the Palestinian inhabited areas or on

the Palestinian side—*hatsad ha-falastini*, in Hebrew—and that the Israeli media does not

cover the truth about what happens on the Palestinian side. They also said that most

Israelis are so preoccupied with their own security that they do not care about the price that

Palestinians pay to maintain Israeli citizens' and their cities' security.

In 2004, nine years before I embarked on this research, a prominent Israeli human

rights activist, who was leading many of the political tours in the Jerusalem area, had told

me that the best way to talk to Israelis about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian

Territories is to pull out a map—because maps visualize, in a rational manner, Israel's

expansionist policies in Palestine. Eight years later, in 2012, during my participation in

these Israeli political tours, I noticed that maps were crucial elements in all the tours in

which I participated. Since the lands and borders are amongst the central geopolitical

concerns at the negotiation table between the two official national delegations, distributing

maps to an audience who came to learn about the reality on the ground and how it was

divided seemed necessary. What visuals like maps could offer is a recent history of the

continuous Palestinian loss of land and Israel's land confiscation and settlements

development in these territories. Maps were, therefore, utilized as an efficacious visual tool

that narrates the chronology of military occupation; yet, they simultaneously lacked the

capacity of narrating resistance to an invasive occupation. In other words, although maps

show Israeli transgressive colonial practices, they do not depict Palestinians' resistance to

the occupation and to their loss of land.

Most Israeli organizations whose work is centred on ending the military occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, produce, disseminate, and rely on maps, all of which display the 1967 ceasefire line—the "Green Line," often coloured in green. This line highlights a turning point of the relationship between the Israeli state and a militarily occupied people, since 1967. Although prevalent on maps and in political discourses of nation-state building, the "Green Line" is nowhere to be seen on the landscape or on the land. On these maps, any Israeli structure located east of the line in green is often marked as an Israeli occupied territory (whether these structures are military bases or civilian settlements). These maps also have a highlighted multi-coloured system to distinguish Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories from Palestinian cities and villages, or areas which are fully controlled by Israeli military (designated "Area C," according to the Oslo Accords) and others under Palestinian Authority security administration (or "Area A," under full Palestinian security administration and "Area B," under Israeli and Palestinian security administration). Through such distinction and varying border lines, it becomes visually possible not only to see how Israeli settlements and military land confiscations have spread into Palestinian areas, but also to predict the Israeli state's next step in urban, industrial or agricultural future planning. When an area is confiscated by the Israeli army, it is only a matter of a few months until the first brick of civilian settlements is laid.

Image 13: Israeli Jewish participants in Kesharim tour to the Occupied West Bank, gazing into maps of the area while overlooking Palestinian landscape (Husan village). Photograph by the author. July 2012.

While Israelis use maps as a central guide to reading the landscape (image 13), most Palestinian witnesses who shared their stories of living under occupation with participants in these tours do not. Instead, they would narrate stories of the landscape while using the scene or sight in front of the group as their evidence or testimony to their stories. The reliance of Palestinian local guides or witnesses on the scenery, rather than on maps, shifted the focus of the conversations from the accuracy of line and space measurements to the landscape and the land as the leading evidence. In their testimonies, the lack of maps actually allowed for expanding a narrative that is built on shifting forms of mapping, which refuse the structuring of attachment to the lands through the science of cartography. In other words, Palestinian stories about land loss resulting from the construction of the Wall

or from the building of Israeli settlements allowed for a creation of metaphoric maps that helped the listeners' imagination to construct a subjective map that could flow with the narrated story.

Creating official state maps of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through touring the landscape and through aerial photometry was an important mission, which Israeli architects and geographers were recruited to accomplish (Weizman 2007:118). Creating maps of the Occupied Palestinian Territories was an act of dominance. Famous photographs throughout the 1960s and 1980s showed prominent Israeli military generals and political personnel reading maps in preparation for military activities or planning the construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Amongst the most famous photographs are those of Ariel Sharon (Weizman 2007:83; Weizman 2006:349), who was then Minister of Agriculture and head of the government's settlement committee, and who later became the Prime Minister of Israel. Sharon wanted to "establish an entire skeleton of the geography of occupation" (Weizman 2007:82–83, 88). Through touring the land following already existing maps (2007:83), Ariel Sharon created a cartography of colonization of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (2007:8).

Postcolonial literature suggests that there is a strong link between cartographic practices and colonialism (Stone 1988). Cartographic discourse, Graham Huggan (1989) argues, is characterized by the inconsistency between its "authoritative status and its approximative function" which results in marking out the "recognizable totality" of the

map as a manifestation of desires to control (Huggan 1989:117). Maps, Huggan asserts, are not produced to mimic or replicate a version of the world that exists out there; rather, maps are designed to empower their makers (117) and to produce power relations through the construction of navigating knowledge and universal representational ability. The knowledge represented by maps and the art and science of cartography grants authority to the European colonialists who produced them. Critiques of colonial cartography suggested that cartography was a Eurocentric practice that represented the European point of view on the colonized world (Graham 1989:118), which worked through the premises of fixity, simplicity, and coherence ascribed to the landscape and the people living on it. Critiques of maps, we also learn from debates in the literature, are not only limited to the cartographic act that produces them. Maps are about "world-making" (Haraway 1997:132) in the material, linguistic, cultural, and national senses. World-making is an exercise of knowledge production that can be presented, like other forms of presentations, visually or textually, as scientific "facts" stripped of all political intentions and predictions. For Benedict Anderson (2006) there are three institutions that shaped colonial states' dominance and self-fashioning: the census, the map and the museum. Anderson suggests that through these institutions the state could rule the nature of human beings, their geography, and the legitimacy of their claims to ancestry (Anderson 2006:163–164). The formation of maps in colonial periods as a "political-biographical narrative" was later utilized by post-colonial nation-states in the twentieth century.

All maps embody selective perspectives, Nadia Abu El-Haj reminds us (2001:44). This is the case of cartography in Palestine, she emphasizes, and particularly since maps

were drawn by European Christians who would follow details from the Jewish and Christian biblical texts. For Christian missionaries and European colonial subjects, biblical texts were the authoritative guide to Palestine (see also Matar (1999) and Eddé (1999)). Maps excite imaginations and desires, Abu El-Haj claims quoting Denis Cosgrove, as they predict the foundation for future projects (Cosgrove (1999:15) in Abu El-Haj (2001: 44)). Abu El-Haj identifies these biblical institutional investments as one of the foundations to the establishment of Israeli archaeology in Palestine (2001:26). The first partition of Palestine, as Derek Gregory (2005) argues, was conducted through what he describe as 'power-geometry' (borrowing a term that was coined by Doreen Massey (1993). 'Power-geometry' is defined as a "series of cartographic severations in Euclidean space" (Gregory 2005:124). However, in the case of Palestine, Gregory adds, the colonization of Palestine has resulted in a shift through which such a power-geometry turned into a power-topology that "wrenches lands and lives into ever more violent constellations that cannot be conveyed through any conventional cartography" (2005:124).

Maps in Palestine are not static; they constantly shift with the changes in Israeli policies on the land. Often, if those maps of the Israeli state or the Occupied Palestinian Territories are not updated annually, they lose most of their accuracy in their capacity to reflect the transformations and the political tensions on the ground. Despite its strong representational quality, however, no single map, no matter how many different borders and political zones were drawn on it, could contain or capture the political tension this situation continuously produces. Further, there is always something more to maps than the

colourful lines they reflect. Maps narrate political histories and project scenarios for the future. Yigal, whom I met through a common Palestinian friend, described this conundrum through the example of how Jerusalem is seen through the Israeli Jewish imagination of the cities' ethnic and political geography.

I met Yigal in his office in a Palestinian neighbourhood in Jerusalem. Yigal, who is an Israeli Jew, together with his friend, who is a Palestinian Israeli citizen, coordinate a grassroots project in Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhoods. I told Yigal that I wanted to know about his thoughts on the way the Wall is perceived in Israeli society and how Jerusalem had been affected by it. It did not take Yigal much time into the conversation to problematize the idea of 'East' and 'West' Jerusalem: he told me that there was a disjunction of directions when it comes to Israelis' mapping of Jerusalem. For the average Israeli person, Jerusalem is imagined and mapped differently in their national discourse from that of how it is represented geographic and cartographic mapping. For most Israelis, he told me, Jerusalem is imagined as divided between 'East' and 'West'. 'East Jerusalem', or *mizrah yirushalaiem* in Hebrew, refers to the 'Palestinian-Arab' neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The term 'East Jerusalem' contains an ethno-national distinction that already existed in the Orientalist use of the word 'East', as interchangeable with 'Arabs', however, 'West Jerusalem' or *ma'arav yirushalaiem* refers to the Jewish side of Jerusalem, meaning the Jewish Israeli neighbourhoods (which was mostly Palestinian in 1948, but after the establishment of the state of Israel, local Palestinians were displaced and it came Israeli under the rule of the new state (Klein 2008:58)).

Image 14: An aerial map of Jerusalem Region displayed in the office of the organization that Yigal works in. Photograph by the author. July 2012.

Although the 'East'/'West' distinction is widespread in the way Jerusalem's map is imagined, Yigal explained to me that it is a misleading and politicized distinction. "When you look at the map", he told me pointing to a 1.5 square meter of an aerial map of Jerusalem hung on his office wall (image 14), "the division of the two national groups is more accurately described as between northeast and southwest, not simply 'East'/'West'". The terminology becomes more confusing, he continued, when one looks at the Jewish settlement built in the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem since 1967. In other words, 'East Jerusalem', which used to refer to where most Palestinians dwell, is no longer inhabited only by Palestinians; ever since the 1967 occupation, it has become increasingly populated

with Israeli settlers. Yigal asserted to me that hegemonic Israeli maps of Jerusalem conflate

ethnic demography and physical geography in a confusing way. As he put it, in the case of

Jerusalem, the '*ethnic is geographic*'. The division of 'East'/'West' is therefore an 'ethnic'

and not geographic one, he claims. "There are a lot of Jewish settlements in the Northeast

or in the Southern outskirts of the city, like Neve Yaakov or Pisgat Ze'ev settlements", he

asserted. Thus, he explained, East Jerusalem is an ethnic-demographic term used to refer to

areas of Palestinian-inhabited concentrations, regardless of the location on the map of such

areas. Yigal's statement that in the case of Jerusalem the "ethnic is geographic" captures a

complexity which hints at the process through which demographic terminologies are

conflated with geography. To perform the impossible task of ethnic separation in

Jerusalem, Israeli national discourse resorts to the vocabulary that used to describe

Jerusalem before the 1967 occupation, when a cease-fire line divided the city, perhaps

more literally, into 'East'/'West' geographically. Yigal's statement, the "ethnic is

geographic," identifies the process through which Israeli cartography is drawn along

hegemonic national and ethnic lines, Palestinian/Israeli and Arab/Jew, respectively.

The Israeli political and discursive map's divisions which distinguish Jerusalem's

Palestinian neighbourhoods from Jewish Israeli ones by the act of assigning the

geographical cardinal directions of "East" or "West", does not necessarily contradict

Israelis' established and sophisticated relationship with maps. On the contrary, it

reaffirmed what the aforementioned literature argued—that maps are a political construct

(Anderson 2006; Abu El-Haj 2001; Huggan 1989; Stone 1988). Such politicization is also

expressed in the absenting of Palestinian villages' names from maps. For example, driving in Israel or in the Occupied Palestinian Territories using GPS or Israeli-printed maps can be tedious due to the lack of marked roads or names of Palestinian villages or towns on these maps. These maps direct their readers to Israeli towns and not Palestinian ones.

5. The Dividing Lines

As I indicated earlier, the Green Line and the Jerusalem municipality borderline are no where to be found materially on the land;[42] these lines gain significance in the discourses applied in political conversations or when addressing the political situation on maps. In both Israeli and Palestinian discourses on the political circumstances, there is an excess of references to the Green Line; in Arabic: *al khat al akhdar;* and in Hebrew *ha kav ha yarok*—or, as it is sometimes called, the borderline: *kav ha tefer.* Although one can see that there is no clear dividing line between the Israeli state and the future Palestinian state, the Wall was Israel's last stark attempt to force a border on the ground. The Wall, nonetheless, as I mentioned earlier, was not built on the Green Line route—that is, on the only internationally-recognized border between the two nations—but east of the line into the Occupied Palestinian depth, confiscating large amounts of lands from Palestinians and absorbing them into the Israeli state (Monaghan and Careccia 2012).

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[42] Artist Francis Alÿs collects eleven testimonies from Palestinians and Israelis reflecting on the visibility and invisibility of the Green Line in Jerusalem, in an artistic work titled "The Green Line" (2004). The main theme that repeats itself in these testimonies is the vanishing of the Green Line as a political or physical entity. Most of his interviewees claim that the Green line is illusive and it is nowhere to be seen on the land. http://francisalys.com/greenline/, accessed January 8, 2015.

In a lecture on October 2012 at the University of Minnesota, Architect Eyal Weizman (see Walker Art Center (2012)) narrated the story of how the "Green Line" was drawn in 1949[43] by Military Zionist commander Moshe Dayan and the Jordanian Military Governor of the Old City of Jerusalem, Abdullah at-Tal. Weizman said that the two sides came with their Jeeps to a hilltop in Jordan Valley area. The two sides placed the map on the jeep's hood and drew the cease-fire line with a green pen. The jeep's motor was hot, and with shaky hands and a dusty platform, the Green Line was demarcated, as Weizman explained. Thus, if some areas were hotter from the engine heat, Weizman continued, the line expanded a little, and if there were small stones or dust, the line would also be crooked on the map. Both sides, Weizman argued, knew that this line was just a political tactic that might suspend violence for few years but not prevent it. They knew, Weizman also claimed, that a war would break out soon and this line would quickly become irrelevant. In 1967, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the line was erased on most of the land. 65 years later, despite being illusive and materially invisible, the Green Line is still the only internationally recognized border between the Israeli state and the future Palestinian state. In the same talk, Eyal Weizman (2012) gave an example that further demonstrated the Israeli use of the illusive Green Line as a disciplining and oppressive border imposed on the Palestinians but not on Israelis. In the year 2000, he said, Palestinians initiated the construction of the Palestinian Legislative Council (the

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[43] Specifically, Eyal Weizman references historian Meron Benvenisti who documented the story (see (Walker Art Centre 2012).

Palestinian Parliament).[44] Israel, being the omnipower on the land, disapproved the construction of the Palestinian Parliament on Jerusalem's borders. Believing that Jerusalem is the capital of the future Palestinian state, Palestinians planned the building of the Parliament structure exactly to sit on the Green Line, this way the building can stand at the closest possible proximity to Jerusalem. Israel disapproved the construction of the building, claiming that the building crossed a few metres over the Green Line. Today the building still stands, abandoned and cut off from the rest of Jerusalem, politically and symbolically.

This reality has inspired Palestinian architect Sandi Hilal, Italian architect Alessandro Petti, and Israeli architect Eyal Weizman[45] to create their art installation "Lawless Line" (image 15), through which they locate the Green Line on the landscape by manipulating light on photographs taken on the border-zones, where the line passes invisibly. The results were fascinating in showing how the internationally acknowledged borderline, sixty-five years later, was actually ignored by people living in close proximity to it. In some locations the light of the border projection passed through rows of Israeli houses, and in other cases it cut through Palestinian houses.[46]

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[44] For more information about the suspension of the Palestinian Parliament construction in Jerusalem can be found in Decolonizing Architecture online resource: http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/parliament-building/,accessed July 1, 2014, and in Arena of Speculation online resource: http://arenaofspeculation.org/2011/09/12/common-assembly/,accessed July 1, 2014.

[45] Presented by Eyal Weizman's lecture *Contested Terrain*. Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z81BhPp1dms, accessed July 1, 2014.

[46] Hilal Sandi et. al. (Hilal et al. 2013) review the Lawless Line Project in an article titled "Lawless Line" which was published in the *London Review of International Law*.

Image 15: The Green Line projected through light on the land. Lawless Line. DAAR/Amina Bech, 2010. Source: http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/h.jpg).

When the architect crew, Hilal, Petti and Weizman, attempted to calculate and precisely locate the Green Line on the land, they found out that the line passed inside the Palestinian Parliament building under construction, so that a third of it lay outside the border (West of the Green Line) and two-thirds lay inside the borders (East of the Green Line, on the future Palestinian state side). Transgressing a few metres into the Green Line was the Israeli government's declared reason for the suspension of the construction of the Parliament building. Yet, it is important to state that there are massive developments of

Israeli settlements east of the Green Line,[47] violating and transgressing the internationally

recognized borders into the depth of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Hence, the

politically debated and imposed borders on the land are presented as non-negotiable reality

on the ground that Palestinians will have to live with (like the construction of the Wall or

the Jewish settlements). For Israeli officials and politicians the line's visibility is switched

on and off in the service of the government's or military interests.

The reality of Israel's manufacturing of facts that renders Palestinian livelihood and

structures as vulnerable and destructible was described as constructing "facts on the

ground" by Anthropologists Jeff Halper (2009) and Nadia Abu El-Haj (2001). Although

conceptualized differently by both anthropologists, the notion of "facts on the ground" is

commonly used to refer to the Israeli state's imposition of particular reality on the ground

that later becomes the proof for Israeli civil or military presence, or "facts" that are used at

the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation table against the Palestinians. "Facts on the ground" is a

concept that is used to describe Israel's *reading* and *writing* of material facts on the land,

on artefacts or landscapes, vertically or horizontally. Nadia Abu El-Haj (2001) uses the

concept of "facts on the ground" in relation to Israeli archaeologists' and historians'

readings of archaeological remains on the land. Abu El-Haj claims that sites or artefacts

are constructed through political processes as visible archaeological objects, which are

later instrumentalized as a proof or reaffirmation of the boundaries of the nation.

Archaeological material-artefacts found on the ground are then incorporated into

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[47] Sawsan Ramahi (2013) documents and analyzes the implication of Jerusalem Settlements in a report titled: "Israeli Settlements Policy in Occupied Jerusalem".

hegemonic narratives of the nation; they become an unquestioned extension of both

landscape and the history of the dominant nation. Through *reading* facts (or, "proofs" and,

also, "visual evidences") on the ground (2001:13–14, 27)), Zionists *created* their history

and rooted their 'nation' exclusively and uninterruptedly on the land through absenting

other histories, those unfolding before Jewish presence (two thousand years ago) and after

it (2001:17). Like Abu El-Haj (2001), Jeff Halper (2009:13-16), used the concept of "facts

on the ground" in the context of Israeli relations to the land and Palestinians inhabiting it.

Halper uses the concept specifically to describe the current Israeli practices and policies in

the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Halper 2009). Halper's concept of "facts of the

ground" is related to the physical construction of facts on the ground that politically

renders the reality and conditions for Palestinians as unliveable, non-negotiable, and

irreversible. Through the construction of Israeli material evidence on Palestinian lands,

such as Jewish settlements, by-pass roads, checkpoints, or the Wall, Israel creates an

irreversible evidence-presence in Palestine. This evidence-presence is then used to

substantiate Jewish Israeli existence on the occupied Palestinian land as if their presence

was *a priori* to that of the Palestinians.

The key to understanding the political processes of the creation of national "facts

on the ground" lies in the inevitability of producing a new reality in which these *facts* have

to be politically and socially accepted, as if these *facts* have always already existed. These

Israeli manufactured *facts* are represented in Israeli national discourses as though they

precede the existence of Palestinians and their landscape structures. Palestinian houses,

Halper reminds us (2009), are not considered "facts" existing on the ground for successive Israeli governments. For instance, the Israeli state treats the Wall's route as pre-existing Palestinian houses. Hence, in a few cases the Wall cut the existing houses in the middle or destroyed inhabited areas, as if the proposed map of the Wall has a heavier weight on constructing physical reality than an existing house on the land. One specific example that I came across is the demolishing of Palestinian houses[48] that were sitting on the *prospected* Wall route, which illustrated how the planned route on the map is a stronger living *fact* than the existence of a people and their homes on the ground. Facts on the ground, in the form of borders or structures built by the state, are constructed as naturalized elements of the landscape or as the new reality that people must live with rather than against. The question that begs attention, then, is: what are the processes through which these facts, the material evidences on the landscape and the land, become visual sites in the service of national self-fashioning? And, in what ways do such visual sites function through absenting the other?

Although the spectacle of the Wall as a material and visual structure is made strongly on the land, the celebration of its completion, on the other hand, was absented from media attention. In a small gathering of Israeli officials in May 2013, and without much media attention, a celebration took place somewhere near the Wall marking the completion of its construction, as Moshe told me in an interview with him. Surprised that I

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[48] Nazlat Issa a marketplace zone was demolished in the West Bank to allow the Wall to pass there. Stop the Wall campaign reported the specific case of Nazlat Issa on their website: http://www.stoptheWall.org/2003/09/01/israeli-bulldozers-destroy-commercial-stores-demolitions-nazlat-isa-continue, accessed December 4, 2011.

didn't know about the event, I asked Moshe if the Wall is now really completed and sealed. He replied that the Wall was not finished, and "in fact", he said, "the Wall was never meant to be completed". Moshe then explained to me why he thinks so:

Down south, near Hebron,[49] the Wall is incomplete, this is the case too in the entire east side near the Jordan Valley, where there is no Wall at all. Well, there is one section of the Wall in southern Hebron where there are unfinished parts of it, which allows Palestinians to cross it on mules or donkeys. Palestinians go to work every day in and out: it is never patrolled by the army, and so people pass it in and out freely. The whole thing on the news was useless. The army knows about that section of the unfinished Wall, and what one can realize is that Israel needs some places *to let off steam*, where Palestinians could cross. In other words, if the Wall was hermetic, and people were living in an absolute prison, you cannot but create a lot of these areas where people can cross. You see this is not about security, but the point of it is to confine Palestinians, but really… the Wall's purpose is to mark the borders of the [Palestinian] Bantustan […]. Yet, still, Israeli officials held this ceremony last week marking the completion of the Wall.

Nayrouz: why did I not hear about this ceremony?

Moshe: nobody heard about it and I do not think they made a big deal out of it. It was a kind of an internal thing happening in the Ministry of Defense. So, you know, that's the point for us here… my concern with the Wall is not only to understand what it hides behind, but also to reveal what its real purpose is. The Wall has several *real* purposes, but the main purpose of the Wall is not what the Israeli government is claiming, that is that it was built for the purpose of security. I

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[49] Hebron is a Palestinian city in the Southern West Bank.

argue that the main purpose of the Wall is actually confining Palestinians into limited spaces while demarcating borders.

Many Israelis know about the existence of a Wall in the West Bank, as one Israeli informant had told me, but most of them have not encountered it physically because, as she explained to me, "there is a level of comfort in dwelling in indifference." As I realized while in the field, and as mentioned earlier, Israelis experience anxiety when it comes to engaging with or talking about the Wall. The Wall is strongly evident and apparent on the landscape; one cannot but confront its sight, despite the fact that it is made not to be seen by those whose national security is not only defined, but also signified by it. This anxiety, I argue, is a national one; on the one hand, it is an anxiety created through the desire to be confined inside, and to be attached to nationally defined spaces; on the other, it is an anxiety that informs the boundaries of the national space. The Wall, I therefore claim, is a material structure that embodies this national anxiety; a paradox, expressed through the wilfulness to belong to a nation without confronting the violence needed to become that nation.

6. The Mental Divide

Following the concerns of "anxiety" and "insecurity" brought up by some Israelis I talked with or as illustrated in the discussion about Shelly Federman's art installation, is the theme of the "mental wall". The idea of the "mental wall" came up in my conversations with Israelis. Distinguished by its abstractive quality, the "mental wall" is a product of the dialectical relationship between the material reality of physical separation between

Palestinians and Jewish Israelis and the metaphoric or abstract one. Both forms of separation or "walling" inform as well as reinforce each other. In my conversations below with Shai, Tamir and Tali, the concept of a mental wall or screen came up highlighting the psychological processes of living in a conflicted reality. My conversation with Vered slipped from engaging with the Israeli political-educational tours to talking about Israeli trauma and political fears.

In one of my visits to see a Palestinian friend who lived and worked in Jerusalem, I was introduced to my friend's co-worker, Shai. Shai, thirty-three years old, is an Israeli Jew who grew up near Haifa and moved to study in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2000. When I met Shai he was working in an organization in East Jerusalem that supported and advocated for Palestinians workers' rights from West Bank who worked in Israeli companies. He had been working in this job for over five years. He was very opinionated and politically well-informed. On this first meeting with him, we had a lengthy conversation about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and I eventually asked him if he would like to be interviewed for my research. Shai accepted to be interviewed and few weeks later I held the interview in his apartment in Jerusalem. One remarkable point that was brought up in my conversation with him, and echoed conversations I had with other Israelis, was that despite the fact Shai lived in a walking distance from Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem, it took him almost three years before he began feeling comfortable entering their spaces. In Jerusalem, separation and

disconnection between Israelis and Palestinians were very strong prior to the Wall

constructed. This is how Shai described it:

> I remember was working on a film with other students. We were walking and
> collecting tree branches in a walking distance from the Hebrew University
> campus…then by *mistake* we entered Sheikh Jarrah. In my own consciousness
> Sheikh Jarrah did not exist as part of Jerusalem city, nor Sho'afat, nor I'ssawiyeh
> [Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem]…I remember that I lived in Ramat Ishkol
> [an Israeli neighborhood in Jerusalem] and it was very close to Sho'afat, I'ssawyieh
> and Sheikh Jarrah. I also remember that I would pass by these neighborhoods
> everyday... they were there—I remember that vividly—but I never entered these
> neighborhoods. It was very strange to think that you live close by but there is a very
> strong *disconnection*. Even for an ideological person like me…I thought that I was
> an activist against the occupation, but, for example, I could not see the nearby
> Palestinian refugee camp…I never asked what was happening in those spaces and I
> did not enter them…You can be an idealist, an activist against the occupation or
> against racism, but you are racist as long as you are living in a state of separation
> and you do not know the other, especially when the other is framed as a threat or a
> terrorist.

The psychological separation and disconnect that Shai described to me reiterated

what Israelis Tamir and Tali had articulated and described as the "mental wall". I met

Tamir in Tel-Aviv. A common Israeli friend put us in touch. Tamir, who is thirty-five

years old, is an Israeli photographer who joins Palestinian demonstrations in the West

Bank every Friday to partake in the protests and to photograph the events. In the

conversation with him we spoke about how the Wall is discussed in the Israeli society.

Tamir attributed Israelis' relationship to the Wall to their sense of insecurity and fear, but

he also claimed that there is a mental wall that Israelis have in their heads when relating to Palestinians, which, as a result, cultivates more fear from Palestinians. "Here [in Israel] there are no talks about the Wall", he told me and continued, "the Wall is a security axiom; that's about it; and for Israelis it is legitimate". "In my work as a photojournalist, and in my daily life", Tamir said, "I try to destroy Walls, physical and mental between both peoples, to erase the fear that is mostly in Israeli minds towards the Palestinians". Since most Palestinians confront the occupation and military encounters on a daily basis, he continued, only a few Palestinians have a fear of Israelis, in the same way that Israelis fear Palestinians. Israeli civilians fear encounters with Palestinians, and the construction of the Wall allows for a forceful separation; it is a physical and visual answer to this fear.

Tali, another Jewish Israeli, moved from a city in central Israel, about twenty-five kilometres south of Tel-Aviv, to Jerusalem five years ago. Tali told me that before moving to Jerusalem she never really had a close interaction with Palestinians. Only after she moved to Jerusalem did she start making Palestinian acquaintances, particularly when working in restaurants in the city. Palestinians often worked in the kitchens, at the back, and most Israeli Jews worked as waiters engaging with the customers, she told me. I met Tali through one of Kesharim's tours. She was the tour guide in Gush Etzion Settlements tour, south of Jerusalem. When the tour ended, I asked her if I could interview her for my research. We met in a café in a Jewish neighbourhood in Jerusalem. Tali told me that when she moved to live in Jerusalem, and before she turned to political activism, she never paid any attention to the Wall; she never deliberately tried to locate or spot it in her sight. Since

the Wall was built near Palestinian neighbourhoods and not Israeli ones, given that she

lived in Israeli Jewish neighbourhoods, the Wall for Tali was hardly visible. Only through

her growing interest in engaging in the politics within the city was Tali introduced to the

political discourses around the Wall in Jerusalem. Suddenly, as she told me, she started to

recognize the Wall's presence on the hills in the eastern landscape:

> I never thought about [the Wall's] meaning until I started developing political
> thinking. Then, when I would drive near Jerusalem's cinematheque,[50] and I would
> see it across the hills. I remember, for example, when my friend from Canada was
> visiting me in Jerusalem, we drove on roads where you could see the Wall from
> afar. I told her 'look far and you could see the Wall'. This is a sentence I would
> have never said before being politicized. I always passed near this same road but
> never saw the Wall. One has to remove a *mental screen* to see the Wall. I feel that
> politically you have to be in a particular *place* [*makom*] in order to see it.

Tali used the word the *makom*, in Hebrew, which directly translates as "place,"

"space," or "location." Tali used the word not to describe a physical location that would

enable seeing the Wall, but a political space of mind, a form of mental space, that would

allow viewers to see it rather than see through it or ignore it. Only after being exposed to a

framework that allows a political reading of the Wall did Tali begin to simply see the Wall

and direct other people's gaze towards it.

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[50] Jerusalem Cinematheque is closely located by Palestinians neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem.

In the last week of November 2013, in a café in Tel-Aviv I met with Vered. I first

met Vered in a political tour organized by the same group with which Tali was affiliated.

Vered was one of the Israeli tour guides of a tour to Nablus settlements in which I

participated during my fieldwork. When the tour ended, I asked her if we could meet for

further conversation. My conversation with Vered was generated many insights and helped

me explore some of my concerns and curiosity for the ways in which colonizing and

occupying people (*a'm kovesh*, as she used the word in Hebrew) relate or read their reality

and the ways they were seeing and unseeing the present. Vered, as I learned later in our

meeting, is a clinical psychologist who works with first and second-generation Holocaust

survivors. In my interview with her, our conversation about the personal and collective

psychological processes that inform the national ethos was key. Like many Israelis I talked

to, Vered acknowledged the fact that most Israelis do not know what is happening on the

other side of the Israeli-imagined national boundaries—or, literally, on the other side of the

Wall. When I asked her about the kind of conversations that developed in the tours, or the

questions that were asked by Israelis reflecting about what they were seeing or were not

seeing, Vered answered through talking about the psychological processes that occur in the

minds and hearts of many Israelis. One main feeling is 'fear', she told me. Israelis in the

tours would bring up the issue of fear in different ways, she said, but it is always around

the idea that they are under a constant threat of death: "[T]here is a lot of fear involved.

You know, Israelis would say 'Palestinians want to kill us' or 'we can only win through

using force against them." Trying to link the issue of fear with the visits to the West Bank

villages, I asked Vered to further explain the urgency in articulating fear. I asked: "when

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Israelis in the tours see in front of their eyes the power difference between stateless Palestinians and militarized Israelis, would they still be scared that the 'other' is more powerful and its main goal is to kill them or destroy their statehood?" Vered's answer led to an unexpected conversation between us. It shed some light on the social and political processes through which many Israelis form their arguments and perceive their realities. Vered, like many of the left-wing Israelis I met, realizes the urgency of finding a solution to the unresolved present state, because the repercussions of suspending the political processes will only allow the situation to deteriorate into an inevitable dead-end path. It is the fear and anxieties of possible dreadful futures that fuels present political discourses. The reality that is seen on the ground is, therefore, narrated through the burden and traces of the past experiences:

> Vered: There is a mythos in the Israeli society that we are surrounded by countries that want to destroy us; people grow up on these stories and it is difficult to unlearn them. It is also coming out of a lot of fear. It is a fear of 'another Holocaust'. You know, there is a fear, among many Israelis, of not being protected, fear that the 'neighbouring Arab countries' intention is to kill us', or fear of 'us not having a state'.

> Nayrouz: How then do you relate to the fact that on the ground and in reality the situation is radically different: the Palestinians are powerless in front of a highly militarized state?

> Vered: I think this is exactly the reason why we take people to tours to the other side [to the West Bank] so they can *see*. Still, fear is not a rational feeling. People will still say in our tours that 'it's great that Israel has an atomic bomb'… it is

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enough for one bus to explode for people to feel fear, regardless of the situation in front of their eyes. Others would say, 'if the Palestinians have a state and in Gaza there are rockets and Iran has an atomic bomb, of course we need to be afraid, everyone wants to kill us'. There is also this other idea that 'radical Islam is very territorial, it is getting stronger globally and many Muslims want to see Israel destroyed'. Some of this fear is rational and some of it is not. There is a lot of ignorance. People *do not see* Palestinians' deteriorating living conditions in the West Bank villages.

Nayrouz: Since you are a psychologist by profession, I want to ask you a question related to psychology. How can one live in a reality where one knows there is no predictable scenario for a hopeful future? Some people here say, "I thought my great grandchildren will see a Palestinian state or a return of Palestinian refugees," but here we are, third and fourth generations and the situation is still suspended. How, psychologically speaking, can one live in this situation?

Vered: It is called *denial*. You could have asked me even how come you are sitting in Tel Aviv drinking coffee in a café, while there is a mess few kilometres away [referring to the Occupied Palestinian Territory]. But, if you do not disconnect sometimes you cannot live. It is true, *there is no future*. Why, for example, in Tel Aviv people do not know much about the situation in the West Bank. My answer is, because it is comfortable, it is far and it does not affect the daily life here. The economy [in Israel] is directly related to the political situation but no one cares. It is all related, but people are comfortable here, no one is exploding buses now, the children arrive to school safely…all seems fine. But, if you want to think about the future of generations to come, Israelis are living through a vague future. The future is not clear, but there is a mechanism of survival. It is the mentality.

Nayrouz: Then when the future is unclear, how do you relate to the present?

Vered: Most people do not think of the present. There is a lot of desperation. Things are fragile; you never know what will happen next. We are living in the most [politically] right-wing reality ever. This whole country [Israel] is leaning to the right. This is why there is no time; there is no time remaining for Israelis or for Palestinians.

Nayrouz: What do you mean 'there is no time'?

Vered: There is no time to drag the political process like this anymore, especially since we're heading towards a racist right-wing state, and this will certainly lead to a war in the whole region.

I narrate the state of the border reality through moments and spaces where intersections between past and future political visions collide into a third state: the *current* state. The third state is the current or present state; it is not a state in which an ideological reconstruction of Israel or Palestine occurs, but a state of collision of both visions enforced by contradictory conditions on the ground. Dreams, desires, longings, or stories of the past and future visions, national or cultural, are all informed by the complexities of these momentary and spatial unfinished collisions between Israelis and Palestinians and their stories. I describe the *current* state through the relation to the present as a temporary state, one that is crushed by political waves. It is the present state that Vered describes as a state of "denial", which rests on the premises of seeing the present reality as if it predicts "no future" and as if it had no "past". Hence, for many Israelis, to be politicized and to see a possible future is to remain persistent in engaging with the present as a political state.

In this chapter, I brought the reality and the discourses of borders to the frontline of the discussion about the Wall in Palestine. I showed how borders are constructed discursively and physically along ethnic and national lines. I presented stories of borders narrated by Palestinians whose daily reality is stained by border-crossings and who experience violence through their embodiment of borders. Borders, as they expressed, do not only block and limit people's lives; they also leave open wounds that are a constant reminder of their displacement. The continuous enforcement of borders, in addition, is a mechanism of the enactment of violence. In the case of the Wall and soldiers protecting checkpoints, such mechanisms operate as a force to suspend any just resolution of the present injustice state. Borders, I also showed, are reproduced through the Israeli security discourse which claims that prohibiting Palestinian movement inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and inside and outside the Israeli state's territories, is key to maintaining the Israelis' security from any Palestinian violent threats. This hegemonic discourse enables a condition in which Israelis are constantly living through fear of the other, as stated by my Israeli interlocutors. Completion of national border construction, we also saw, is not only effected through the creation of physical borders, but also through the generation of mental borders that accompany the violent material reality. My next chapter shall explore this violence and its descent into the landscape.

Chapter Four: *Landscapocide*, Border Sights, and Daily Violence

My sense that the violence was visible, yet somehow obscured from our view, as if the eye was a camera lens that was being made to focus on prearranged scenery, and as if what we were witnessing was something that had just vanished from view. (12)

Veena Das (2007),
Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary.

"I decided to drive along the Lebanese-Israeli state borders to a point that overlooks Lebanon. I reached Metelleh, which was previously a Palestinian village and is now an Israeli settlement pronounced 'Mettula', right at the border with Lebanon. Fields of trees and farmland separated the Israeli settlement from Lebanese villages. From where I stood, I could see a concrete wall built at the edge of the closest Lebanese village marking the border between the two states. I also spotted one Israeli tank a few meters from me, hiding behind the trees. Soldiers were sitting on top of the tank reading newspapers. A car with three men stopped next to me. From their accent, I could tell that they were Palestinians from the Triangle Villages area, in Israel. While we all stood *viewing* Lebanon, I asked them: you also came to *see* Lebanon. They smiled and answered 'of course'. Lebanon was a *scene*."

Fieldnotes, 5 September 2012.

In the spring and through the early days of summer, the northern borderlands between the Israeli state and Lebanon wear a beautiful green, yellow, and red gown of bloom that could almost smoothly conceal any border anxiety. These borders are heavily militarized and infected with landmines that are over forty years old. In the summer of 2012, I drove to the northern Syrian and Lebanese borders with Israel. From afar, I could see the Lebanese flag drawn on the top of a tower in a village on the other side of the border. The distance between that flag and me seemed so small—*ramyet hajar* in Arabic: a stone's throw away; a fluid conceptualization and measurement of distance. As Palestinian citizens of Israel, we cannot visit Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq; Lebanese, Syrians or Iraqis cannot visit us either unless they carry European or North American passports, although even then, they could be denied entry by Israeli border securities. Trains carrying people, ideas, or goods between Beirut and Haifa, Damascus, Baghdad, or Cairo were blocked with the creation of Israel over sixty-six years ago. Since 1948, the contact between the Arab world and Palestine was interrupted through the creation of borders of the newly formed Jewish state. I stood still near the Lebanese border-zone watching cars driving on Lebanon's roads afar and imagining how only six decades ago this site was a crossing pathway for people who dwelled here.

This chapter presents the spectrum of state violence in the context of militarized and occupied landscapes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and in the Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights and Al Ghajar village on the Israel-Lebanon border. As indicated in Chapter Two, my research is situated in sites of daily and ongoing violence between

Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, in my introductory Chapter, I contextualized my research in anthropological literature that explores violence in proximate and daily encounters (Appadurai 1998; Das 2007; Maček 2000; Nordstrom 2004; Allen 2008; Bornstein 2002). The literature on violence does not agree on one definition of the term; instead, as some argue, violence can be seen as a "slippery concept" (Nordstrom and Robben 1995:4, 309; Krohn-Hansen 1997:238). It is a concept that escapes definition as it enters and weaves its way through people's lives. Ethnographic and empirical research demonstrates that the dividing lines between different forms of violence—symbolic, physical, political, personal—have become blurred (Das 2000). Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2004) argue that violence defies all fixed categorizations. Violence, they claim, can be everything and nothing: logical and strategic but simultaneously irrational; visible but also invisible; state-sponsored but also stateless (2). Defying binary categories, violence should be understood as encompassing all forms of "controlling processes"; the anthropologist's task becomes acknowledging these grey zones of violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004:22). Carol Nagengsat (1994) articulates similar sentiments, arguing that the definition of violence goes beyond the notion of the 'presence' or 'absence' or the visual recognisability of violence. Rather, violence is located within a set of practices, discourses and ideologies, which may be visible or invisible (111). Indeed, Nagengsat's work responds to a common critique of anthropological research on violence: namely, that it focuses exclusively on violence in its physical and visible forms (1994:111). Rather, she examines the multiple and diverse ways through which violence

operates upon people's relations to each other (in terms of gender, ethnicity or nationalism), to objects, and to spaces (see also Giles and Hyndman (2004)).

Building on this literature, I wish to explore the multiple ways in which violence takes shape in people's daily lives and on their landscapes. Relying on my ethnographic visual and conversational data, I wish to fill a thematic gap in the anthropological literature on violence, by introducing the notion of 'landscape' as a site on which violence is enacted and embodied. Specifically, I will explore violence that is experienced through and informed by militarized and occupied landscapes across three scales of proximity. The first scale is that of the landscapes of borders; it is the wider landscape that circles villages, towns or cities, and it is what the viewer's eyes fall on when meeting the horizon. I interrogate the first scale of landscape of violence and borders through the ethnographic details of my road visit to the Jawlan, namely, to Majdal Shams and Al Ghajar villages. The second scale of proximity is identified through the most immediate surroundings of people's lives. Specifically, it is the house, or the home, the roof of the house or the street nearby. It is the structures in which one receives protection and privacy, which also marks the divide between public and private space. I will explore this scale of visual proximity to violence through my conversations with Omer. The third scale concerns the human body— the corporeal scale. In this scale, I understand the body not only as a social or emotional organism, but also as a site that maps the contours of the landscape. At the corporeal scale, there are zero degrees of separation between the self/body and the space it occupies. In other words, the third scale concerns the human body that inhabits the landscape as well as

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forms it. My conversations with Jameel manifisted the interconnectedness of the second and third scales of violence, while Ghalib's story manifested mainly the third scale of violence. Ultimately, I explore the three scales of proximity to violence through looking at multiple localities, landscapes and experiences narrated by my interlocutors. Often, these three scales intersect to form a matrix of violence that aims at securing a control over an occupied population. This was the case with Salwa's story, which I introduced in the Chapter Three. The Wall was built on Salwa's family land and property blocking her view of Jerusalem's hills; her house became a zone of continuous conflict with Israeli soldiers; and her body turned into a "confrontation front", as she described it. All at once, Salwa's life was caught at the meeting points of the three scales of proximity: the landscape, the home and the body.

The first part of this chapter, namely, sections one and two, rests on the conceptual and empirical intersections of landscapes that are wrought through violence as well as violence that is enacted on the landscapes. In this first part, I situate the centrality of the concept of landscape in the context of military occupation, followed by an outline of the forms of violence dwelling in the landscape. I then move to explore the notion of landscape of borders, on which, I argue, old wounds of the violence of past separations rest. While landscapes at militarized borders are birthed through the promise of cease-fire between two sovereign regimes or nations, they nevertheless continuously cultivate violence by virtue of the reminder of the prohibition of crossings. This condition is even more painful when those who are left on one side of the border are cut off from their

family ties across the other side of the border and are also living under a state of occupation or colonization. In other words, borders, in our case, generate continuous reminders of separations when they are imposed on populations that they ultimately tear apart. The second part of this chapter—sections three, four and five, explores the landscape of the intimate spaces on which violence takes place, what I refer to as the second and the third scales; namely, on the spaces one inhabits, like the house, and on the body, respectively. I shall also demonstrate how they are interwoven and interconnected through Jameel's account. In these sections, I show how stories of my Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors are a continuation of the violence in the landscape and the other way around. Their stories vocalize and verbalize the landscape, and the landscape, as a sight and visual structure, inspires people's stories. Here, I frame conversations with my interlocutors through the following questions: What does it mean to be engulfed by or live in proximity to military occupation and a militarized landscape? How can we talk about daily confrontation with a reality of military occupation—through military presence, checkpoints or the Wall? Finally, what are the visuals that inspire my interlocutors' stories and what forms of visuals do my interlocutors create in an attempt to capture their landscape and articulate their reality?

I move from the wider to the narrower scale of proximity to violence, as well as from the further to the nearer visual proximity to illustrate the ways in which Israeli military violence functions through disrupting Palestinians' relations to their spaces: lands, homes or bodies. I ultimately intend to illustrate that violence is cultivated through visual

relations, or what I refer to as *visual ability*—in other words, violence functions through its potential to be made seen or unseen through its potential visuality (I shall return to this concept in Chapter Five). First, I will interrogate the notion of landscape and landscapes of borders as presented in the following section.

1. Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Landscapes of Borders

This section maps out the wider landscape of violence that encircles villages or towns. First, I shall start with interrogation of the concept of landscape. Then I will engage with the landscape of borderzones as sites where physical borders are constant reminders of the violence of the past wars. Drawing on the work of W.J.T Mitchell (2002:13), I maintain that landscapes are not a natural extension of the environment around us; rather, they are politically and socially constructed in such ways that allow for national identification as well as alienation.

In the introduction to *Landscape and Power*, W.J.T Mitchell (2002) argues that landscapes "even at their most ostensibly naturalistic—in fact are modes of political discourse that promulgate ideologies" (2002:13). Landscapes, we learn from his book, are agents of power. "Landscape," Mitchell clearly states, is a "verb and not a noun" (2002:1). This conceptualization suggests that he regards landscapes as not only representative of a history of power dynamics, where dominant forces shape the landscape in accordance with their interests, but also as forces reproductive of such dynamics. Therefore, landscapes are transformative. Mitchell also proposes that landscapes are processes through which

subjective and social identities are constructed (2002:1). To suggest that a landscape is a verb and not a noun is to move away from any understanding of landscape in a static sense. It is also a refusal to engage with the concept of landscape as a passive object. This understanding also suggests that landscape produces subjectivities as much as it is a product of social processes. Yet, what does it mean to also perceive landscape an adjective? In this chapter and the following, I present landscape as a verb sometimes, and a noun or adjective at others. To use the 'landscape as a noun' is to describe the landscape as an extension of one's scenery and dreams in a way that could operate as a reference point (to home or homeland for example). To claim that landscape operates as an adjective is to argue that landscapes describe or illustrate people's realities and relations—proximate or distant. Landscape as an adjective renders those who live in it as identifiable subjects, as belonging or bound to a landscape or another. Arguing that landscapes have multiple syntactic roles in the discourse is not to dismiss Mitchell's argument that landscape is a verb; nonetheless, it is to expand the spectrum on which landscapes operate in people's perceptions—visually and discursively, as well as their sense of belonging or (dis)comfort with a familiarity.

Barbara Bender (2002), similar to Mitchell, attributes characteristics of agency to the landscape. Bender transcends the separate distinction between time and space arguing that landscape is "[*t*]*ime materialized*" or "*time materializing*." (2002:103) Like time, she declares, landscapes "never stand still." (103) Historically, Bender continues, Western notions of landscape were and still are politically charged (105). Such notions rely on the premise of assuming distances between the observer and the observed, which renders the

observed as passive and the observer as active (105). People in different cultures may conceptualize landscapes and relate or work with them in multiple forms; hence, Bender states:

> Landscapes refuse to be disciplined; they make a mockery of the oppositions that we create between time (history) and space (geography) or between nature (science) and culture (anthropology). Academics have been slow to accept this and slow, too, to notice the volatility of landscape. (2002:106)

Thinking of the landscape as "time materializing" offers us a way of thinking about how traces of history are inscribed on the landscape, as if the landscape holds the record of time. The concept of time in Bender's argument hints at a use of time in the past tense. Can we possibly think of the future as abstracting (not materializing) the landscape? If landscape holds the past in its structure, can it anticipate possible futures? In a context of tremendous unequal power dynamics and in the shadow of a military occupation and settler colonialism, the landscape, I suggest, manifests not only the work of the time that has passed but also projects the time that remains. One example I provided in the introduction and of which I wish to remind readers was a sentence that one of my Palestinian informants, Ghalib, formed while looking at the landscape near Ramallah in the West Bank. Ghalib told me that the Israeli government relates to the uninhabited hilltops in the West Bank as "abandoned property" awaiting future construction. What Ghalib's statement made me think of was that in the context of settler colonialism and military occupation, time holds the landscape hostage to foreseen scenarios of possible loss.

Landscape is a sight on which not only histories are contested, but also future national

visions. The landscape I shall show, like the land (as I showed in the previous chapters) in

Palestine, is prone to conflicted national contestation and confiscations.

Landscape sits at the heart of the Israeli nationalism (Selwyn 1995). For early

Jewish Zionist-pioneers who immigrated to Palestine prior to the establishment of the

Israeli state, as Tom Selwyn writes, the landscape was an essential element in the

construction of Zionist national identity. One of the ideological pillars of the Zionist

movement, he argues, was the transformation of the Jewish diasporic nation to *Am Adam*; a

"human people" (1995:116). The aim of Zionism, hence, was to become established as a

people through organic connection to lands (116) by cultivating national affinity to a

geographic territory and landscapes. Through looking at the history of the Zionist

colonization and settlement of Palestine at the dawn of the twentieth century, Selwyn

emphasizes the intimate relation that national building desires have with the landscape. As

Selwyn claims, in the Zionist founders' ideology, Jewish liberation and redemption was

centred on the idea of "establishing direct partnership with the land, and more broadly,

with the landscape as a whole" (117). However, the unresolved question was what would

they do with and how would they relate to the indigenous population of the land? Selwyn

reminds us of an ambivalent relation to the Arab population of Palestine.[51] Early Zionists,

like David Ben Gurion and others, saw the native population, specifically the peasants,

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[51] A similar notion of ambivalence was expressed in the structuring of Israeli urban spaces in Palestinian cities. Mark LeVine (1999) reminds us of the contradiction in the Israeli state seeking to erase the Palestinian architecture in Jaffa, for instance, while desiring to reclaim it as part of the Israeli national urban landscape.

fellahin, and the Bedouins as the authentic inhabitants of the lands and the closest

reminders of the Hebrew life in Biblical times (118). This romanticization of Arab

Palestinian ways of living did not last long. A few years prior to the establishment of the

state of Israel, along with the violent confrontation between Arabs and Jews, Arabs slowly

came to be viewed by Zionist leaders as a threat to modernity and to the revitalization of

the land and landscape (Selwyn 1995:129–130). After the establishment of the Israeli state,

Selwyn maintains, Arabs were omitted from the national discourse of the Israeli landscape,

as evident in the produced materials or the tours conducted by the Society for the

Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) (122). Through educational 'nature tours' for schools,

tiyulim (in Hebrew), SPNI constructed an intimate relation between the landscape and

Israeli nationalism (1995:126), which also meant absenting most Palestinian and Arab

history from the landscape (see also Raja Shehadeh (2008:xvii)).

Becoming attached to an "Arabless" landscape and protecting the "biblical nature" of

the landscape, Selwyn argues, became equivalent to defending the landscape's Hebrew

culture and history. He quotes a tour guide from SPNI who articulates this strongly

produced and reproduced affinity between nation-building and the landscape for Israeli

settlers:

> The nation symbolized by the landscape must be defended because without it
> people would leave themselves open to cultural and religious *contamination*. If that
> happens, nothing but imminent destruction can follow. The contamination may
> derive both from the influences of an Arab population which will outnumber the

Jewish one in a matter of years and from increasing stocks of glitzy American consumer goods in Tel-Aviv department stores. (1995:131).

Israeli national affinity made and remade with the landscape is consequently centred on Israelizing the landscape through discursively framing it as a Hebrew-Biblical landscape, as well as through practically destroying, over six decades, Palestinian agricultural and urban ties to the landscape (Shehadeh 2008). Today one can say that Israeli military practices of destruction of the land/landscape through depriving people who live in it from accessing it or inhabiting it (Makdisi 2010:527), are manifested through multiple spatial policies (Gazit and Latham 2014). Four military practices, in particular, render the landscape abandoned. The first is a deliberate dispossession and destruction of Palestinian villages in 1948 and the abandonment of these sites (Ghanim 2010:111), which sixty-six years later turned into ghost towns (Falah 1996; Falah 1999). These practices were referred to by Zionists as the "de-Arabization" of the land or landscape and its replacement with Jewish immigrant populations—referred to as the "Judaization" of the land or landscape, as Rhoda Kanaaneh reminds us (2002:28), quoting Dov Friedlander and Calvin Goldscheider (1979:xviii) . The second military spatial policy is the state's refusal to recognize a large number of Bedouin villages in the Naqab (Negev) Desert, which means any further infrastructural and structural development of these villages is prohibited (Amara, Abu-Saad, and Yiftachel 2012). Moreover, the state continuously attempts to demolish the villages, as they are rendered illegal.[52] The third practice that leaves the

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[52] Most famous is the case of Al Araqeeb, a Bedouin village in the Naqab (Negev), which was destroyed by the Israeli authorities over forty times. Each time Israeli bulldozers destroyed the village, Al Araqeeb

landscape in destruction or decay is the house demolitions policy in Palestinian towns

(Braverman 2007) in the Occupied Territories, especially in Jerusalem, and to a lesser

extent in Palestinian towns and villages inside Israel. In the Gaza Strip, the practice of

destruction is not derived from the policy of house demolitions, but that of targeted killings

(Hajjar 2005:238; Luft 2003) of members of Palestinian political militant groups. This

policy often results in massive destruction of buildings and infrastructure. The fourth

spatial practice is Israel's refusal to allow the development of infrastructure in Palestinian

cities and villages in the West Bank, specifically in the Jerusalem area (Thawaba 2011), as

well as inside the Israeli state—and one can also include the Syrian Jawlan Heights. Sari

Hanafi (2009) refers to the Israeli state's practice of dispossession, destruction and

abandonment of the Palestinian spaces as *spacio-cide* (2009:107). He defines a policy of

s*pacio-cide* as "the potentiality of a structure of juridical-political delocalization and

dislocation aimed at transferring the Palestinian population whether internally or outside of

fluid state borders." (2009:107) *Spacio-cide* is achieved through three strategies: space

annihilation, ethnic cleansing, and creeping apartheid (2009:107-108) in which are

increasingly erected ethnic, geographic, and economic barriers between dominant and

subordinated groups competing for recognition, power, and resources (2009:108). Stephen

Graham (2002) identifies the Israeli past and present systematic destruction of Palestinian

urban life and infrastructure—such as the destruction of Jenin Refugee camp, the bombing

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inhabitants would immediately rebuild it (Amara, Abu-Saad, and Yiftachel 2012:1). See also blogpost in
Mondoweiss titled: "Israel demolishes Bedouin village al-Araqib for the 66th time" (Kate 2014).

of Gaza city, or the destruction of historic Palestinian cities like Jaffa[53] or Haifa—

as *urbicide* (see also Dan Rabinowitz (2001:66) and Mark LeVine (1999)). *Urbicide* is

accomplished through the Israeli military's continuous infrastructural and urban

warfare (Graham 2010) against the Palestinian institutions and spaces. The purpose of a

policy of *urbicide*, Graham (2002) claims, is to deprive Palestinians from their national,

collective, individual, and cultural rights to a city or urban-based life (Graham 2002:642;

Thawaba 2011:126, 128).

Through looking at displaced, destroyed and abandoned border-landscapes, in the

Occupied Palestinian Territories and in the Occupied Syrian Jawlan, and building on the

aforementioned conceptualization of the killing of Palestinian cities and spaces, I offer the

concept of *landscapocide*. By "landscapocide," literally meaning the killing of the

landscape, I refer to the gradual destruction of the material, visual, and abstract Palestinian

landscapes. The Wall is amongst multiple practices of destruction and decay that have

resulted in the killing of the landscape (image 16). Prior to the construction of the Wall,

this practice existed in other forms. Amongst these forms are the confiscations of

Palestinian lands and the construction of Israeli European-looking settlements, or the

destruction of the Palestinian villages or towns since 1948. *Landscapocide*, manifested

through multiple examples of occupied land/landscapes, is not only a radical violation of

the landscape, but also a forceful recreation of a landscape which renders the landscape

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[53] In the specific case of the *urbicide* of Jaffa, Mark LeVine (2005) describes how the processes of shifting the socio-political dynamics between local Arabs and Zionist settlers occurred with the increasing presence of British rule in Palestine soon after the First World War. A decade later, with the facilitation of the British, Jaffa as a Palestinian urban centre was slowly being suffocated economically and politically, while Tel-Aviv was growing as a political and economic centre (See also El-Eini (2006)).

unrecognizable and alienating to locals who hold ancestral and historical relations to it (Shehadeh 2008:xx). The Israeli occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights is my starting point to talking about the visual shapes that violence takes on the landscapes.

Due to the proximities found between an Israeli inhabited area and a Palestinian one, the Palestinian landscape is physically and visually intermingled or merged into Israeli-state landscapes. Landscapes of abandonment and ruins merge into the "modern," "westernized" landscape modelled and developed by Israelis. In such a landscape, roads and houses in urban spaces are organized in a symmetric manner and are distinguishable from those of the Palestinian landscape, which are based on an architecture that seems to be in a more compromising, as well as spontaneous, relation with the lands' topography (Weizman 2007:131–133; Segal, Weizman, and Tartakover 2003:80–107). Eyal Weizman (2007) reminds us, for example, that the Israeli military recommended Israeli settlement committees in order to impose the construction of red roofs on settlement houses. Through red-roofed houses, Israeli settlers as well as the Israeli army could orient themselves within the landscape, distinguishing Israeli settlements from Palestinian villages and towns (2007:127).

Israeli practices of *landscapocide*, which result in leaving the Palestinian landscape, including towns and villages partially destroyed or abandoned, further imposes an Orientalist stereotype against Palestinian people (Weizman 2007: 135-137). Such Orientalist discourse was strongly reinforced by early Zionist discourses, which, as

"modernist" European discourses, imagined Palestinians as a "primitive" and "uncivilized" people who were incapable of structuring their urban sites as modern or as orderly (Eyal 1993; Isaac 2011:154); consequently, reinforcing the argument that Palestinians were incapable of building and leading a modern, sovereign nation-state.

Image 16: The Road connecting Jerusalem with Ramallah. This photograph was taken near Qalandia Checkpoint. The Wall conceals Qalandia Refugee Camp behind it, creating a new landscape on Palestinians lands. Photograph by the author. November 2012.

2. Jawlan: Violence and Landscape of Borders

An entry point to the silent transformation of landscapes can be traced at border sites. At the borders, loss is projected on the landscape as peoples' vision collapses at the scene

where previous journeys of crossings were halted by newly formed borders. The borders of the Israeli state with Lebanon and Syria are sites where grief of a loss of familial and national ties resides. Loss, grief, and violence at the border appear and disappear reticently. In this section and the next one, I describe my two visits to Israel's northern borders, one in July and one in August of 2012. Looking at the example of two northern border villages, Majdal Shams and Al Ghajar, I shall trace the visual relation at work in landscapes of borders where violence dwells silently. I chose to look at traces of violence far from the knowable and visible form of violence where the use of military presence is an eruptive force of the daily life. The landscape of borders that this section describes takes the reader to the northern borders of the Israeli state, away from the border dispute with the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Violence at the northern borders, as I show, is manifested through suffocated histories of loss and defeat, as well as through continuous fragmentation.

As addressed in chapter two, since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the borders between the newly formed state and the Arab world were raised, sealing off the exiled Palestinians from a promise of return, as well as prohibiting other Arabs from the possibility of visiting or maintaining ties with Palestine. As a result, families were displaced and lands were fragmented. The site of the Israeli Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights is a good example of the ways in which landscapes are taken hostage by

securitized border regimes. These border regimes resulted in the interruption of family ties between Syrians in the Jawlan and their relatives living in the Syrian state.[54]

During my research period, I was tracing sights and sites of borders and violence. I was driving to locations where violence was shaking the daily reality with its abrupt presence—mostly in the West Bank. I also decided to capture intensified sites of militarized borderzones away from the daily incidents of military violence. The Jawlan Heights has been highly militarized and engulfed with barbed wires and landmine-infested borders, since its occupation by the Israeli military in 1967. In July 2012, I decided to spend one day in the Israeli Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights, on the northern borders with the Israeli state. I then revisited the borders in August 2012 in an attempt to capture more details about this bordering landscape.

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[54] In their article, Ruth Lapidoth and Ofra Freisel (2010), elaborate in details the different laws and regulations that Israel issued in relation to family unification in the occupied Syrian Heights.

Image 17: Remains of Israeli military Jeep from 1967 war in The Syrian Jawlan Heights. Photograph by the author. July 2012.

In the 1967 war, the Israeli Army occupied the Syrian Jawlan (Ziser 2002) and annexed approximately 1,157 sq. km. to its borders (Mara'i and Halabi 1992:78; Murphy and Gannon 2008:140). Prior to the war and the occupation of the heights, a population of 147,613 lived there in 163 villages (Mara'i and Halabi 1992:78). By the end of the war, the Jawlan was almost emptied of its dwellers. Only six villages remained and a population of 6,000 clustered in the northwest of the area (1992:79), the rest of the population was

displaced from the heights.[55] I have visited the Jawlan multiple times prior to this research. In 2008, I took part in a political tour in the Jawlan guided by an organization from Majdal Shams, the largest remaining village. The tour guide was linking historical events in the area with the current political situation and conditions that a population under Israeli occupation lives through. Majdal Shams and the remaining villages have a history of resistance against colonial intervention. French colonial troops were met with strong resistance in Syria (Humphries 2006:16). Majdal Shams and the nearby villages in the Jawlan fought against the French colonial troops while sacrificing their lives and homes (Bokova 1989:101–102; Mara'i and Halabi 1992). In April 1925, the French colonial army burned and destroyed Majdal Shams with other nearby villages (Mara'i and Halasbi 1992:80). Since the Israeli occupation of Jawlan in 1967, Majdal Shams has turned into a border village between the Arab Syrian Republic and the Israeli state. Today, the village literally sits on the borders.

The stories of the Jawlan with which I grew up were ones of resilience and survival by relying on agriculture, and through art and an emphasis on educational achievements. I also remember every spring a truck from Jawlan would drive south to Palestinian villages and towns in Israel selling Jawlan apples. Jawlan apples are considered amongst the finest apples in the country, cultivated in the right land, high topography, and temperature. For the longest time, as one political activist in Jawlan had told me, the Jawlan apples had a

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[55] Similar data can be found on the Jawlan Development Organization website: http://www.jawlan.org/openions/read_article.asp?catigory=38&source=8&link=338, (in Arabic), accessed, 17, December 2013.

monopoly on the Israeli apple market, until Israeli authorities started taxing rainwater from

Jawlan farmers in an attempt to defeat this agricultural resilience. "They taxed the water

from God, as if they owned the rain," were his exact words.

On a summer day in August 2012, I decided to drive to the Jawlan again after

having visited it in July. This time, I wanted to make sure to take as many photographs as

possible of the area. I was not sure what I was to "capture", but I knew I wanted to stand at

the border and sense the landscape. I left Jerusalem early in the morning. The drive to

Jawlan took about three hours. What drew me to make Jawlan my point of departure into

my discussion of violence on the landscape is my urge to trace over forty-eight years of

violence on the landscape. In Jawlan, state violence and resistance to it—in particular, non-

violent resistance to the Israeli occupation—do not receive wide local or international

coverage (Awad 1984). Violence in Jawlan remains subtle, normalized, and found in subtle

and explicit traces of destruction. Upon approaching Jawlan, I sensed a militarized

atmosphere. There were remains of old military Jeeps (image 17), remnants of partly

destroyed and rusted barbed wire, and piles of stones, overlooked by the ghost of a home.

There were also road signs, with Hebrew and English written on them, perhaps twenty

years old or older; they were mostly in poor condition. The signs meant to direct Israelis to

the Israeli settlements in Jawlan. I also passed newer commercial signs advertising the

multiple summer and winter attractions in the area. The Jawlan is the only area that gets an

annual snowfall; every winter, Israelis line up with their cars to visit the multiple winter

attractions in the Syrian mountains, while in the summer many Israelis would come for

hiking tours along the multiple water springs and falls (image 18). While driving, however, I saw no road signs that directed me to the remaining Syrian Arab villages of Jawlan. Simply put, if one follows the Israeli discourse and road signs in Jawlan, one realizes that the area is presented in Israelis' imagination as natural and pastoral. It is presented as a site that has no inhabitants; more specifically, no occupied people.

Image 18: Banias Water Falls in Jawlan. The falls attract many Israelis from all over the country. Photograph by the author. July 2012.

I wanted to arrive at Majdal Shams. The village sits at the foothill of Mount Hermon (referred to as *Jabal al Sheikh* in Arabic). In addition to the remains of military objects scattered around the fields, and signs declaring danger of explosives in the land,

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there are manned military bases across the Jawlan, as well as military jeeps and tanks

patrolling the area. The 1967 war haunts the Jawlan, with the volcanic rocks spreading on

its hills intermingling with the war's memory. The war in Jawlan and the displacement of

thousands of Jawlanis is rarely spoken of in Israeli public discourse and media. Growing

up in Israel, I was exposed to the history of displacement of thousands of Syrian

inhabitants only when I visited the remaining villages in Jawlan and heard testimonies

from a few people living there. In addition, many Jewish Israeli citizens relate to the

Jawlan Heights as Israeli lands. This serves the state's expansionist desires; namely, access

to land, natural resources, like water, and a secure frontier with the Syrian Arab Republic.

By most Israelis, the area is not perceived as militarized or occupied; rather, it is seen as an

Israeli territory that should not be returned to the Syrian Republic (Arian 1999:30).[56]

Syrians in the Jawlan live a peaceful resistance through their attachment to the land and

steadfastness (Kennedy 1984; Awad 1984). Such ordinary resistance and persistence to

survive despite living under long-term occupation are overlooked in both the international

activist community and scholarly research. Violent histories are ingrained on the landscape

and in what remains of destroyed houses and abandoned mosques and churches (image

19). This is how violence, I claim, appears as a delicate ordinary affair. It is marked by its

ability to appear through ruptures and disappear, while they remain a naturalized

continuation to the landscape.

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[56] See also "Polls: Israeli Public Opinion on the Golan and Syria" (Zellman 2011).

Image 19: Abandoned church in the Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights. Photograph by the author. August 2012.

I turned east and drove upwards to the heights on serpentine roads. There were no signs to guide me to the villages nearby. On one intersection, a surprising sign appeared on the side of the road. "Al Ghajar" the sign read. I stopped the car abruptly, as the name "Al Ghajar" resonated with me. I had heard about a village called Al Ghajar, which was occupied by the Israeli State in 1967, and became divided into north, on the Lebanese side, and south, on the Israeli side, in 1982 when Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon. Between 1967 and 2006, the village lived in a reality where barbed wires separated neighbourhoods, neighbours, and families. The village was the border, sitting on the

meeting point of three political territories: Lebanon, Syria and the Israeli State (Hof 2001:34).

Eager but somewhat hesitant, I made an abrupt decision to visit Al Ghajar. I drove back and turned left following the sign directing me to Al Ghajar. Five minutes into the drive towards the village, I felt reluctant to continue as I was aware of driving through a militarized space surveyed by both the Israeli military and possibly fighters from Hizbollah, a Lebanese Shi'ite political party, which also refers to itself as "The Islamic Resistance."[57] I drove through a narrow road fenced from both sides with long rusty fences that looked like they were over twenty years old. Along the fence, there were yellow signs with red triangles written on them in Arabic, Hebrew and English: "Danger, Mines!" I drove slowly to take photographs (image 20), and the only cars that were driving past me I could recognize as belonging to other Arabs. I could tell they were looking back at me as their cars slowed down when approaching my car. I must have looked like a stranger to them; after all, this road only led to Al Ghajar village. This road only went as far as the village. It was a dead-end road, however, as life thrived at the end of it: there stood a village that the borders could not entirely displace. The Israeli state had annexed it while keeping it under continuous military surveillance.

After fifteen minutes of driving along the bordered road, I reached an Israeli checkpoint at the entrance of the village. I stopped at the checkpoint and a soldier

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[57] The Hezbollah official website, http://www.moqawama.org, in Arabic, accessed January 26, 2015.

approached me. He appeared suspicious of me, perhaps because he had never seen me or the car that I was driving before. The soldiers at the village's entrance control the residents' as well as the outside visitors' entry to, and exit from, the village. The soldier asked me where I was going. I answered him that I would love to visit the village. He told me that I could not visit it. I then asked him: "Does this village divide Lebanon from Israel?" He answered very firmly: "No! No! It is all Israel now". I then asked: "I heard it was divided between Israel and Lebanon; there is a Lebanese side and an Israeli side?" He answered with a persisting tone, repeating his last sentence: "The village is not divided, and now it is all Israeli." An Arab man from the village stood near the checkpoint and said to the soldier: "Let her in." The soldier smiled and said to him that it was none of his business. It seemed like the Arab men near the checkpoint and the soldiers were acquainted with each other, as if they interacted with each other often during the day, hinting that perhaps the checkpoint and its isolation is part of an ordinary scene. I then said to the soldier: "The man is being hospitable; he wants me to visit the village". The soldier told me that only if I had a family, relatives, a husband, or in-laws in the village, could I enter. I replied, "So let me get this right! I am from Nazareth, I have an Israeli identity card and I am not allowed to enter Al Ghajar, which is controlled by Israel now?" He answered, "Correct, unless you had a husband or a relative here." He then asked me to turn around and leave. I turned as the soldier had ordered me to and returned to the road heading to Majdal Shams.

Image 20: Sign in yellow and red with a red triangle on the way to Al Ghajar village reads: "Danger: Mines," in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. To the left, a worn-out old road-sign with military orders in case of violent clashes next to the border. The sign is only in Hebrew, addressing Israeli citizens; the sign had bullet holes in its center. Photograph by the author. August 2012.

I finally reached Majdal Shams. I felt as if the border sat calmly at the edge of the village. I drove through the village reaching a few meters from the borderline. As I got out of the car to take photographs of the site, a man was walking by. I asked him if there were any clashes on this borderline between the Syrian Army and militant groups as a result of the revolution and the accelerating violence in Syria. The man looked slightly uncomfortable with the question. He answered me in a few words, saying that there were a few "terrorists" (referring to Islamic militant groups fighting against Bashar Al Assad's regime in Syria, who also sneaked into the Jawlan), "but the Israeli army caught them and pushed them out. So the Jawlan is calm now," he said in an affirming voice. On the borderline, a boy was riding his bicycle less than three meters from the fence that separates

the Syrian Arab Republic from the Occupied Jawlan. I stood near the border-fence to capture the border in photographs (image 21), then asked the boy if he knew what is on the other side of the border. He shyly answered, "Souriya"—the Arabic word for Syria; I then asked him if he knew where he was standing. He said "Jawlan." I then asked, so this is not Syria? He was very shy to answer and said that here is Syria too. Then the boy took off with his bicycle along the fence; the boy's playground, I realized, was on a militarized borderline strip.

Image 21: Border. Jawlan Heights. The border fence runs along the Arab Syrian Republic (to the left of the fence) and the Israeli Occupied Jawlan (to the right). There is only a few metres distance between the borderline and the houses. Photograph by the author. August 2012.

Representations of borderzones and border-landscapes, as Margaret E. Dorsey and Miguel Diaz-Barriga (2010) argue, often do not do justice to the cultural histories of the inhabitants of such spaces. Through focusing on photographs of the U.S-Mexico border, they claim that mainstream media in the United States portray the borders as desolate or decaying sites, with no people living nearby. Such photographs, they argue, resemble those

taken of the moon's landscape; they represent borders as "moonspaces" (Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga 2010:131). Agreeing with Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga's argument, I argue that inhabitants of borderzones regenerate the meaning of being (on) borders daily. They transform the landscape into a livable space by naming the lands and commemorating the lives and spirits of those who sacrificed themselves or those who were left out as the borders were created. As two such border villages, Majdal Shams and Al Ghajar are decorated with the memory of past resistance and current steadfastness. The military and security forces at work in creating an illusion of an empty and abandoned landscape on the border are met with daily resistance by communities who hold on to their lands as a source of life, while cultivating a rhetorical connection across the border through a strong national sentiment to a motherland cut from their reach. A statue stands at the heart of Madjal Shams (image 22) declaring the historical continuity between Syrians in the occupied Jawlan with Syrians across the border in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Image 22: Al Maseira: "The Continuity Statue", also known as "Sultan Basha al Atrash Statue" in Majdal Shams village in Jawlan. The statue commemorates the Syrian martyrs who fought against the French colonial troops in the 1920s. The statue is also a homage to Sultan Basha al Atrash who led the revolution against French colonialism. Photograph by the author. August 2012.

In her research on Turkish-Cypriots, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2003) argues that the partition of Cyprus into Northern Cyprus—occupied by Turkish military—and Southern—Greek inhabited—has created a reality of segregation and separation between the two peoples (Navaro-Yashin 2003:110). In 1983, Northern Cypriots declared their region as 'The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (or 'TRNC') (111). The newly formed state was not recognized by the international community, was separated from the rest of the island, and relied economically and politically solely on the Turkish state. Navaro-Yashin describes the situation of the new declared state as a "phantom state": "[a] place outside

the bounds and off the records of the international system, administered by an

unrecognized state" (110). In other words, one can think of the 'phantom state' as a state

that haunts its 'citizens' with symbolism and national sentiments but politically and

materially cannot provide fundamental administrative support. I take the concept of a

'phantom state' and read it in the context of Jawlanis living in the Heights. I argue that if

one can describe a national organization as a phantom, one could describe citizens as

'phantom citizens' in relation to states. In other words, Jawlanis are living in a suspended

state of Israeli occupation in which they are deprived of political rights from their state, the

Syrian Republic, and simultaneously experience precarious citizenship-conditions within

the Israeli state, in which they neither hold the state's passport nor receive the treatment of

any other Israeli citizen. Hence, we might say they are 'phantom citizens' caught in the gap

between past wars and suspended political geographies.

The spirit of borders hovered around this small border town that is well known for

its hospitable nature. As I was about to leave the town, there was a wedding party blocking

the narrow street. Women's voices were heard singing and calling '*zaghareet*' (ululation)

announcing a joyful day for the bride and groom's families. I then turned up another alley

in the village that took me to the farthest northern point of the village, which overlooked

the snake-like border fence that disappeared from view right after my sight hit an Israeli

watchtower in the horizon. The landscape of borderzones materializes time, to use Barbara

Bender's (2002) terms, by embodying years of violence, displacement and decay all of

which can be identified through relics and the remains of signs of war. The landscape of

borderzones also materializes the paradoxes of living at the borderzone. Jawlanis, in our case, are living their lives displaced at home where they are expected to negotiate their space between a homeland, Syria, and an occupying state, Israel (Mara'i and Halabi 1992). The reality of over forty years of separation from Syria has contributed to a solidified Jawlani identity that is resistant to processes of Israelization (Mara'i and Halabi 1992:81, 91); this identity has been informed and nurtured by the borders, or by having become the borders (Anzaldúa 1999)).

Thus far, in this chapter, I have delineated the form of violence that is inscribed on the landscape and found in structures, at the borders, and on the land. I showed that the landscape at stake is made violent through overshadowing the landscape with past and present military regulations and visual control. This form of violence operates through leaving traces on the landscape as sites of memory, sustaining any ruptures on the verge of eruption for a long time. Eruptions, however, do occur, as I shall show in the following section. Nevertheless, these eruptions paradoxically form a routine in the landscape of military violence. This specifically true in the case of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

3. **From Jawlan to the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Landscapes of Violent Eruptions**

Although the Jawlan is still a disputed territory and the people who live in the Jawlan have a conflicted relationship with the Israeli state, violence resides silently on the

landscape, which could suggest that violence ceased to exist when the 1967 war between Israel and Syria ended. Is silence, then, the right word to describe the way violence tends to embrace the border landscape? Do border towns become monuments or cemeteries for past pain and memories? Or, do border-towns, like Majdal Shams and Al Ghajar, absorb the continuous relationship of loss that the people develop towards them? I argue that to live on borders that were cut by the violence of wars is to continuously be reminded of what is unattainable and unvisitable. Processes of mourning accompany the daily contours in making sense of the loss inscribed in the landscape across the border. This does not mean that people do not celebrate life; in fact, celebration of life is what makes life livable when crossed by borders.

Both the Jawlan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been Israeli-occupied territories since 1967; however, the way violence is felt in the Jawlan is different from how it is felt in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While violence in the Jawlan is expressed through its silent blanketing of the land, through militarized borderzones and scattered landmines, violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is met through both its visual articulation on the landscape and confrontation with soldiers. In the Jawlan, the land and the landscape are suffocated with the memory of a past war and a present of militarized contested borders. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, however, the presence of hundreds of military checkpoints and continuous military activities (like arrests, house raids, and road blockades) constructs a reality in which the civilian population has to confront coercive violence, on a near daily basis. For most Palestinians, the structural

violence of the military occupation was intertwined with a normalized (Allen 2008) slow flow of life. Life and death were carried through a rhythmic colonial (dis)order as the following: a checkpoint is opened, another is closed, demonstrations take place in multiple villages against the Wall, the army confronts protestors, pockets of clashes with the military, arrests in refugee camps, or the launching of a new Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

By the first few days of November 2012, nine months into my fieldwork, one could say that there was no visible or disruptive violence that should set the Israeli state to a high security alert. There was also no intensified violence that took Palestinian lives at an alarming rate within a short period of time[58] like the 2006 and 2008/2009 Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip. To the northern borders of the Israeli state, the Syrian revolution, then roughly two years old, turned into a nightmare war in which Syria became a battleground between different internal and external political forces. Reports declared tens of thousands of civilians killed[59]. Lebanon, next to Syria and sharing borders with the Israeli state, also witnessed the leaking forces of the battle in Syria into its lands through clashes between different militant groups and the Lebanese Army. The clashes between the Syrian Arab Army (the regime's army) and the various militant groups approached Israeli state borders in July 2013, and the war inside Syria could be viewed from the Israeli-

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[58] The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA-OPT) maintains a record of weekly human rights violations that the Israeli Army perpetrates against the civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: http://www.ochaopt.org/reports.aspx?id=104&page=1, accessed January 18, 2015.

[59] United Nation confirms the death toll in Syria reached 191,000 Syrians (United Nations News Service 2014).

occupied Jawlan. Israeli news reporters went to the border to cover the news and had their

cameras pointed at the borders with the Arab Syrian Republic. Some Israelis were curious

about the militant clashes kilometres away from their settlements, so they went to the

nearest spot to watch the scene across the border. Israeli Television news covered the story

of the Israeli visitors to the site, where the war scene, viewed along the horizon, became a

spectacle on the landscape. To the southern borders of the Israeli state, in Egypt, a regime

was challenged by millions of Egyptians who took the streets and confronted the state's

army. Close to the border between Israel and Egypt, armed groups were also confronting

the Egyptian Army in the Egyptian Sinai Desert, resulting in fatalities.[60] Across the

borders, both southern and northern, political instabilities were shaking the whole region;

but instability was being contained outside the Israeli state and outside the Occupied

Palestinian Territories. In Palestine and Israel, we have our own form of violence: a

century-old violence of colonial encounters, of occupied and occupier, which continuously

infiltrates into people's lives, enabling the structure of political and racial hierarchies to

remain intact.

Amidst all the violent transformations in the Arab World, Palestine—the military

occupied lands—appeared peaceful and calm. This "calmness" did not last much longer

after Israel assassinated a Hamas leader, Ahmad al Ja'abari, in the Gaza Strip on

November 14, 2012 (Al Jazeera And Agencies 2012). Hamas, The Islamic Resistance

Movement,[61] reacted by launching rockets from the Gaza Strip to Israeli cities. Rockets

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[60] http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/egyptian-soldiers-killed-sinai, accessed July 19, 2014.
[61] Hamas online page: http://hamas.ps/ar/ accessed March 19, 2015.

sent by Hamas reached many Israeli cities including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem area. For the seven days while Hamas' rockets were being launched, and Israeli military raided and bombed the Gaza strip, I was driving a lot between Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Ramallah, and Nazareth while listening to various Israeli and Palestinian radio stations. During those seven days, Israeli radio and television were on emergency alert and narrated the events as a "war." Sirens were ringing in central cities a few times a day signalling that rockets were being launched from the Gaza Strip to Israeli cities. Each time sirens were heard, Israeli radio stations would announce the location of the expected target of the rocket and would instruct Israelis on how to stay protected in bomb shelters. Israeli media played a strong role in defending the Israeli military aggression against Palestinian targets in the Gaza Strip. The feeling was that a larger war was about to erupt and more violence was going to take place, and that perhaps such violence would spread to the West Bank. By the end of the weeklong aggression, a cease-fire was declared between the Israeli government and Hamas. In addition to the damage of infrastructure, approximately 165 Palestinians and six Israelis were killed in one week (UNOCHA-oPt 2012a:5). This did not seem unusual for Gaza or Gazans; every few years, Israel launches massive military attacks on Gaza with the objective to destroy the Hamas movement through the bombardment of the Gaza Strip, resulting in the killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians. In July 2014, Israel launched another war with the declared objective of destroying the Hamas movement, resulting in the deaths of 2,131 Palestinians (1,473 of whom were civilians) and 71 Israelis (5 of whom were civilians) (UNOCHA-oPt 2014), as well as massive destruction of infrastructure, buildings and homes in the Gaza Strip.

In the following sections (four and five), I narrow the scope of engaging with questions of violence in the context of military occupation to personal experiences of my interlocutors. Time and space are also narrowed in the following stories, which shed light on a different scale of violence and proximity to violence—one that leaves traces on the body and the psyche of the people at stake. I start with my conversation with Omer and Sheriene.

4. The House as a Site of Violence

My Palestinian friend Sheriene introduced me to Omer. She told me that he is an opinionated activist and that I should talk to him. The meeting with Omer and Sheriene coincided with the day of Yom Kippur.[62] The meeting took place in Omer's apartment in East Jerusalem, in what is internationally considered outside the Green Line, yet inside the borders of Jerusalem's municipality. Omer's apartment building compound was a popular choice for Hebrew University students since it was only fifteen minutes' walk from the University.

The conversation with Omer and Sheriene flowed smoothly: the three of us are politically informed and opinionated and ready to engage in any political conversation about the situation that affects us all. I later learned that although Omer and Sheriene had known each other for over a year then, Sheriene had heard Omer's story about his military

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[62] The Day of Atonement. It is the holiest day for the Jewish people.

service for the first time during our conversation. In an attempt to understand the relation

that Omer, a Jewish Israeli, had with Palestinians, I asked him about his first encounter

with Palestinians, and about the relationship with them near his hometown in the lower

Galilee. He told me that his first encounters with Palestinians were very superficial and

casual. He then told me that he grew up in a town near Arab villages in the north and he

used to go to the nearest Palestinian village to buy tobacco for the Shisha. He said that his

interactions with Palestinians at that time did not last longer than a few minutes. The

longer, more intimate encounters, however, took place during his service in the Israeli

military. When I asked him to tell me about his encounters with Palestinians, Sheriene and

I were not expecting to hear the following. Omer told a story that occurred during his

military service, over a period of three weeks. His first significant encounter with

Palestinians was when he was a part of a 20-soldier unit that raided a Palestinian house in

the West Bank. What he described sheds light on the violence enacted on people's lives

through transforming the space of the house—an intimate space—into a

prison, whose walls trap the family inside, instead of protecting it. The space of the house

thus came to resembled the space outside of it. In other words, the military's use of the

structure of the house and the confinement of the family living inside the house, was a

reflection of what was happening on a larger scale in the West Bank's landscape: the Wall,

Palestinians' restriction of movement, and military surveillance.

My conversation with Omer and Sheriene went as follows:

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Omer: We occupied 3 homes. One of the homes was occupied by another army unit; the family had escaped, so the army took over their house. The other unit, my unit, occupied a house where the family had stayed. It was a father, a mother, three children, one daughter, and two sons, one of them was a toddler, who would later cry often.

Nayrouz: You remember all these details!?

Omer: Yes, of course I do. We first raided the house; we later took all the mattresses in the house and put them in the living room and blocked the doors of the rest of the house. The whole house was turned into a military base. There were shootings outside the house through the windows, so the whole family was with us in the living room, and the entire unit was protecting the house inside out. We watched the doors and the roof.

Nayrouz: what year was that?

Omer: around 2001. They called this operation: *Sakein Kehheh* [Hebrew for "dull knife"], which means that it is not a shining knife—it is not sharp, so it does not cut, but it can hurt. The military told us that there were wanted people in the village and we were going to take part in a three day military operation in order to capture wanted Palestinian men. Three weeks later, we were still there in the family house. All the soldiers stayed in the house protecting the area…a few days later, the youngest child started to go a little crazy, he wanted to move and not be trapped. So, I tried to be a humanitarian [*humani*, in Hebrew] and play with him. I took out a stick-light, I wanted to turn it on, but it was broken, there was nothing to do and the child continued to cry. I stayed with the family in the living room so I got a chance to talk to the family, to the father specifically…he was watching TV and we would talk about politics without talking about politics. He was watching

Aljazeera[63] and he would say "the situation is bad, the situation is bad" without indicating what exactly was bad; somehow, this sentence seemed neutral to me. He would then say "what a mess, when will we get peace".

Sheriene: [in an angry voice interpreting Omer's story]: or maybe what he really meant was "the hell with you, get out of my home you horrible people, I want to explode on you here and now."

Omer, with what seemed to be in agreement with Sheriene's comment, nodded his head and continued:

The other house that was taken by the other army unit was turned into a complete mess. The family in the other house was expelled from, was a total chaos. The army stole all the money and the jewelry and they slept on the family's beds; it was nasty. We were told that Palestinians found pornographic videos. The soldiers were masturbating in the house. I remember once, while I was in the middle the house raid, I was protecting the roof of the house from Palestinian snipers, that I fell asleep while guarding the space; I suddenly woke up terrified from a nightmare. I dreamt that someone had come to me and started shooting at me. It was then that I began asking myself questions; what am I doing here? I asked these questions from a very selfish position: why I am risking my life. They [the military commanders] promised me 3 days here, where we will be exterminating wanted people…I would ask myself why we were there; why I was risking my life. […] During these years, I met many more Palestinians, but only during military encounters, where I was the occupier.

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[63] Middle Eastern News Television Channel based in Doha in Qatar: http://www.aljazeera.net/, accessed October 19, 2014.

The concept of the *dull knife*, a knife that does not shine of sharpness, captivated me. A sharp knife is often used in a quick manner to cut into an object, meat or vegetables, wood or thread. A *dull knife*, following Omer's words, is a slower process of hurting; it is a knife that fails to cut but manages to leave injuries that are not the typical injuries of a knife. Here, we have a military metaphor that acknowledges the failure of an object while celebrating the success of using it through its failed structure. Is it possible to think of violence in the context of prolonged military occupation, conceptualized by the military according to Omer, as the success of a failed structure?

The majority of Israeli Jews serve in the Army, for a period of two years for women and three for men.[64] After finishing the mandatory military service, men, and only a few women, are also required to serve in the reserve army on an annual basis (Lomsky-Feder, Gazit, and Ben-Ari 2008). The line between being a civilian and a soldier in Israeli society is blurred due to such close ties with the military system. It is the Israeli government and military institution that regulate the move in and out of the military service for Israeli civilians. Omer was not acting as a soldier when I talked to him, but since he is obliged to serve in the reserve army annually, it is possible that a few weeks earlier or later he was or would be serving as a soldier again. My encounter with Omer's story and Nir's, whom I had mentioned in chapter two, offered me new forms of thinking about the concept of intimacy in a context of military occupation. Since Omer was my

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[64] In fact, there are Palestinian Israeli-citizens who serve in the Israeli military; some are obligated to join it, like the Druze and the Bedouins, and others join it voluntarily, like Christians and non-Bedouin Muslims (Kanaaneh 2003).

close friend's friend, and since he hosted us in his house, the interaction was very friendly. The content of Omer's story of military service, however, was heavy and forced me to remove myself from the conversation, to be slightly distant. In other words, I felt I was pressured to perform objectivity. Omer also expressed regrets about his past military service. He told us that he left the country and went traveling hoping to stay away from this "conflict" as he expressed.

Omer's story was disturbing for Sheriene and I. Listening to his story was a reminder of the existing power dynamics between Palestinians and Israelis in relation to the Israeli state. Despite the friendship between Omer and Sheriene, there were silences and sighs of discomfort that Sheriene and I caught each other expressing. It was difficult to hear Omer's past experiences. Hearing him talk about his first long term encounter with Palestinians living under military occupation made me think about the dynamics of distant intimacy between Palestinians and Israelis. A distant intimacy, although based on the premises of shared values and experiences, is a cautious or a hesitant one. It is an intimacy that is always on the verge of collapse whenever the political situation in the region erupts into violence. It is a reminder that social, national, and political structures strongly construct the measurement of distance and closeness amongst the people who live in close proximity.

When I left the interview, I thought a lot about the story I just heard from Omer. I felt that intimacy must hold a discrepancy in its ability to contain distance as well as

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closeness. I was preoccupied with the questions: Why did Omer consider this story a valid

or an appropriate story of an encounter with Palestinians? Even though the encounter took

place in a violent and oppressive setting, he considered the story of the house arrest a story

of encounter with the other. Can one say, then, that in a violent encounter, it is possible to

form intimacy between soldiers and occupied persons, even if it is through an oppressive

setting? And if so, can one think of the concept of intimacy as consisting of an inherent

paradox? Perhaps it is a concept that already holds an a priori paradox, a form of distance

in intimacy, or perhaps an "outimacy": replacing the 'in' with an 'out' to allow for the

acknowledgement of distant proximity in forced intimacies. "Outimacy" is a reversal of

intimacy without a removal of the shared physical or emotional proximity. It is a

connection of projection outwards as if the relation should stay outside the self; as if one

has to first disassociate with oneself in order to engage with the projection one built of the

other. This can be best expressed in the Palestinian father's image in the Israeli soldier's

eyes, who saw the father as a forced host, in an intimate, and rather absurd, proximity.

These structural dynamics, which are characterized through statehood and

militarization, or lack thereof, allow for a cautious closeness or intimacy to form between

Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. It is a situation that limits one's relational landscape, as

one Palestinian friend with an Israeli citizenship had told me while recounting her inability

to form friendships with Jewish Israeli neighbours: "You feel that your neighbours are out

of your interaction scope, you are limited in the space and you feel socially trapped."

Could violence in military occupation and settler colonialism, then, form a fertile ground

for different intimacies and proximate encounters? While Arjun Appadurai (1998)

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emphasizes the efforts employed and anxieties developed in the work of separation in ethnic violence, could we suggest that similar efforts and anxieties are employed when separation is not the desired outcome, but, rather, a militarized, regulated, and surveyed proximity? In the following chapter, I shall unpack the visual anxiety informed by the relations with the landscape and the violence inscribed in it. Such visual anxiety is partially a result of the inseparability and proximity between Palestinian and Israeli spaces, in settler colonial dynamics.

5. **Corporeal Sites of Violence**

The marking of violence as a separate entity or experience is uncommon in a context where violence is inherent to ordinary lives and everyday interactions. The ordinary and the everyday, Veena Das (2007) reminds us, are sites where violence is buried (2007:11). This violence is the force that moves people's relationships (11). Violence was underlying a wide range of sentiments and vocabularies of many of my interlocutors. They used common vocabularies to describe military interactions, clashes, demonstrations or arrests; violence, therefore, was also articulated and described through the narration of events, rather than the articulating of word "violence", *a'aonf* or *aliemout*, in Arabic and Hebrew, respectively. In this sense, violence was the intimate guest or ghost of any interaction between Palestinians and Israelis; sometimes it was subtle while at others it was volatile. One can ask, then, when not addressed through identifiable vocabularies, such as the word of "violence", in what ways is violence structured and articulated in the language, gestures, narrative, or in visual representations?

It was not my intention to identify only interlocutors who had explicitly encountered military violence. It is the reality of the military occupation whereby every Palestinian living there encounters violence at close proximity. Some of the stories I trace in this dissertation are of people who use photography as a resistance tool by witnessing and documenting their lives under occupation. I also trace stories of people who live in close proximity to the Wall and who have developed a particular, material, and visual relation to it. These stories draw on strong national rhetoric as well as visual imagery that mediate life experiences through narrating the presence, time and space, as a story of a continuous daily struggle. Throughout my fieldwork, I met people who have been implicitly and explicitly exposed to the violence of military occupation. In fact, all my interviewees have had at least a few incidences when they interacted with the Israeli military. In the case of my Palestinian interlocutors, they either confronted the Israeli army, engaged with it, or were arrested by it. In the case of my Israeli interlocutors, however, their relation to the Israeli military was through serving in it; it was through military service that they had their first interactions with Palestinian civilians. The violence intrinsic to these situations is at times symbolic or material, though in most cases it is both.

Despite the Israeli state's efforts to achieve physical separation (through the checkpoint system or the Wall), Israelis and Palestinians are bound to each other in daily encounters due to their geographical proximity and the intensity of the occupation of a civilian population. In addition, due to the economic and political constraints that result from the occupation, many Palestinians (mostly men) rely on Israeli employers, while

Israeli employers rely on cheap Palestinian labour (Farsakh 2005), a situation that enables Palestinian workers to enter Israel for work and return back to their home on a daily basis (Farsakh 2005:115; Bornstein 2001). This intensified movement allows for an enhanced routine of encounters between Palestinians and Israelis, the occupied and the occupier. In the following pages, I will explore a few of my interlocutors' stories of violent encounters with the occupation. I will attempt to narrate and situate their stories of violence as existing in an intimate occupation; in other words, a situation where daily soldier-civilian proximity and encounters are common. In the following, I narrate two experiences of military violence encountered by my Palestinian interlocutors, Ghalib and Jameel. Despite the systemic form of violence that daily regulates a population under a military occupation, military violence in the following stories ruptures and infiltrates not only landscapes and borders, as I had previously showed, but also homes, bodies, and personal spaces.

I was introduced to Ghalib through a friend who lived in Ramallah, a central city in the West Bank, north of Jerusalem. Ghalib asked me to meet him in his favourite spot in the city, Café Ramallah. I found my way to the café, which sits at the heart of the city on a busy street. I entered the café and felt a suffocating cloud of smoke engulfing me. The café was full of men and almost every table had a Shisha, a waterpipe used for smoking tobacco. Ghalib, who is in his early fifties, was also smoking Shisha. In the center of the café two photographs of Palestinian leaders hung on the Wall: late Chairman Yassir Arafat and current President Mahmoud Abbas. There was a shelf of books piled up giving the café a more literary and political atmosphere. Ghalib loved this café and he kept insisting

that we meet there every time we decided to meet. Sometimes we would split the space; he would take his Shisha into the next-door café where I could talk with him without being suffocated with the smoke. Since he is a well-known poet, photographer, and a politically opinionated man, the café next door welcomed his Shisha, and soon enough they got used to us being there almost once every two weeks, the Shisha arrangement included. Ghalib told me his story on our first encounter. Ghalib began to learn more about the popular struggle against the Wall and Israeli settlements in West Bank villages when he started working in a local newspaper as a photographer, which he did for years. Through such protests he also made new ties and friendships. "I was in Bili'in one Friday," Ghalib told me and continued, "I was documenting the local protest against the Wall; the Israeli army shot a man from the village who stood only a few meters away from me. I then took a picture of him while he was lying injured on the ground. It was one of the main photographs that was circulated in the media." The injured man, Bassem Abu Rahmeh, died from his injuries shortly after he was shot.

Once, in Nabi Saleh, a village in the West Bank (where Palestinian villagers resist the confiscations of their lands and natural water resources), Ghalib told me how the soldiers arrested him while he was photographing the clashes between the demonstrators and the soldiers. The soldiers were harassing him to move away from the site, he told the soldiers that he was a journalist and showed them his journalist identity card. He explained to me that the soldiers did not care. They took him in their jeep to a faraway field and beat him up. He sustained an injury to his head. They also broke his camera and left him in the

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sun for six hours. In another demonstration in the village of Bili'in, a similar incident

happened where soldiers were trying to stop him from photographing the protests. Ghalib

showed the soldiers his journalist identity card in an attempt to avoid military arrest or

violence. As a response, the soldiers started shooting rubber bullets on his legs, from a

very short distance. Ghalib, I learnt later, had never been in a close encounter with Israeli

civilians until he was arrested during one of the demonstration in a West Bank village in

2010. He told me that he was mistaken by the army for a Jewish Israeli activist and was

taken for further interrogation in a military jeep with a group of Jewish Israeli activists. He

exchanged a few words with the activists and stayed in contact with some of them after

their release. Ghalib, like many other Palestinians, lives in a reality in which distances of

proximity and intimacy to and with civilian Israeli Jews are regulated through military

checkpoints and military orders or arrests.

Photography for Ghalib was one of the tools he could use to document the violence

that is contained in the landscape and the violence that occupies the people's lives,

interactions, and daily routines. Thinking through his besieged daily reality in the West

Bank, where he is confined by the checkpoints and the permit systems, Ghalib's work

narrates a story of loss through the Wall as a monument that accumulates stories in the

collective archive and memories of Palestinians. In one breath Ghalib linked his

photographic passion, the Wall, and his personal losses. Ghalib is also a published poet; his

poetry, as well the inspiration he takes from his surroundings, inspires his speech and

almost every conversation we had:

"I started photographing the Wall…from a sensitive position. I wanted to write the Wall story: How do I see the Wall? How do kids see the Wall? How does the army deal with what is happening near the Wall? I created many photographs. I went to Bili'in, Ni'lin, Budrus, Nabi Saleh, and the Jordan Valley near Jericho [Palestinian villages in the West Bank]. I went everywhere that there was a racist separation. You know, it is not about the Wall anymore. I do not want to be neutral, I am tired of being neutral and I am tired of politics. I spent 30 years in prisons [in two Arab countries] because I was a part of the communist party. I do not want this anymore, I do not want this *khasarah al mutarakemeh* ["accumulated loss" in Arabic]; I do not want to lose on a personal level anymore, and neither on the international level. At the end, globalization, imperialism, colonialism and capitalism, all that…in addition to oppression and violence and the violence inside us, all that pushes us to hate! But, one does not want to hate. I do not want to be pushed to hate, I want to see things through my own eyes…this gave me a good perspective. This pushed me to write better, to *see* better.

For Ghalib, writing and photography are complementary practices. They are

mechanisms through which he can relate to the violence in his bordered reality. Through

photography and poetry, Ghalib reoriented his vision and others whose lives are paves with

losses, and accumulated losses, into a sense of familiarity and growth. In Chapter Five, I

shall return to Ghalib's insight into the visual as a concept. Three weeks before I met

Ghalib, I met Jameel. Jameel is a passionate young Palestinian photographer. He is in his

early twenties, and he dearly loves his village, which sits very close to an Israeli military

checkpoint, at a hilltop that allows its dwellers to see the Mediterranean sea and Tel Aviv's

high buildings. The sea is near, less than a thirty minutes' drive. Yet, due to the existing

military checkpoint near the entrance of the village, only on rare occasions do the village

dwellers get a chance to visit the sea. On multiple occasions, Jameel boasted about his

village's proximity to the sea, while confessing his desire to visit the sea that is visible on the horizon.

I was introduced to Jameel through a common Israeli Jewish friend who used to go to Friday demonstrations against the Wall in several villages in the West Bank, including Jameel's village. Since the construction of the Wall, many villages in the West Bank that were affected directly by the Wall, formed popular resistance committees that organized weekly protests against the Wall or the Israeli settlements.[65] I called Jameel and asked him if we could meet to talk about his photography work. Jameel and I decided to meet in a café in Ramallah. He commuted from his village to Ramallah often, and it was about a twenty minutes' ride by the local public transportation. Within the following few months, I met with him three more times including one visit to his village, after he insisted that I come and see with my own eyes the location of the village and the proximity of it to an Israeli military checkpoint, the Wall and Israeli settlements. The other two times we met, Jameel showed me his photographs as he narrated the stories behind each photograph. Jameel spends most of his time at home editing photographs and videos in an occupied land with high youth unemployment.[66] He does not need to leave his village to capture state and military violence; every week the Israeli military raid his village in an attempt to supress the weekly demonstrations against the Wall in his village.

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[65] Such resistance committees include the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee and Stop The Wall (www.stoptheWall.org, accessed January 23, 2015).

[66] Youth (ages 15-29) unemployment rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is as high as 52.5% (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2013).

On my first meeting with Jameel I conducted an interview with him that lasted over an hour. I asked about his photography, which centred on demonstrations against the Wall, as well as photographs of the structure of the Wall itself in his village's farmlands. He talked to me at length about the importance of the camera as a tool for resistance in documenting Israeli military violence against peaceful civilians. When I asked him what kind of photographs he usually captures, he said that he photographs Palestinians' confrontations with the Israeli army. He also said that he captures mostly military violence in those demonstrations. His collection of photographs, as he emphasised to me during our conversation, includes numerous photos of soldiers shooting rubber bullets or tear gas. For Jameel, photography can be deployed as a tool for resistance; he explained that sometimes a photograph could be more effective than a demonstration. On our first meeting, my conversation with Jameel centred on his encounters with the Israeli military and the day they arrested him, taking him from his house in the middle of the night. He told me that he was injured many times during demonstrations, mostly in his village where demonstrations against the construction of the Wall and land confiscations happen weekly. His arm shook slightly, evident in his timid grasp of the glass of juice he was drinking during the interview. He later told me that Israeli soldiers once shot live bullets at him and he was injured in his hip. One bullet is still in his hip, he said, but it is too risky to remove it with surgery, so doctors never did. He often feels pain in his body. What followed in the conversation was a lengthy story narrating Jameel's interaction with the military occupation. For Jameel, these stories were as significant as his photographic work. It is

what holds his photographic work together. Jameel's online photographic archive is uploaded on Facebook (under his real name), and it is made accessible to the public.

On May 15, 2012, on the Nakbah commemoration day, a march was held in Jameel's village. He participated in the march too:

There was a checkpoint at the entrance of my village. A march took place in the village for the right of return (*al a'awda*) of Palestinians. Many people came from different villages and cities in Palestine to participate. I participated in the march and was filming and photographing the scene. An Israeli soldier approached me and said, what are you doing? I said I was a journalist and this was my journalist identity card. In response, he said, "you are a terrorist, you are not a photographer." Five minutes later, he showed me a photograph of me in a demonstration in 2009. The photograph was of me holding the Palestinian flag standing amongst the protestors. Then he asked me "this is you?" I told him that that was not me. He said "I want to talk to you." I refused. I did not want to talk to him, I did not want him to arrest me. That soldier is well known for being extremely vicious with demonstrators.

One week later, I was at home sleeping in my room. The military broke into my house. A soldier shook my bed. I woke up. He said "good morning." I thought it was a dream, so I went back to sleep. He then kicked me, and again said: "good morning." He asked me, while I was half asleep, what is your name: I said "Jameel." He then went to wake up all my family and asked them their names and took as many details as possible. The soldiers had two dogs, and the dogs were allowed to move around in the house. A few minutes later, the soldiers came back to my room and said, "You have 5 minutes to change your clothes. We need you for 2 hours and then we will bring you back." I said I did not want to go. He said,

"You must come with us." I refused and so they pushed me and forced me to get up. They all came into my room; there were 30 of them. They commanded me to change my clothes. I got naked hoping that they would get out of my room; they did not. While I was changing my clothes, they broke my closet and dropped all the clothes on the floor. One soldier then took a jacket, and told me wear it. 'I do not want to; it is summer; it is not cold outside' I said. He replied, 'it is cold out; you must wear it.' He then forced me to wear it. I did not know why he was doing that. Later, in the military office, an investigator took out a photograph of me wearing the same jacket. The photograph was from 2009. The investigator then told me, 'this is you and this is the jacket you are wearing; you cannot deny it'. He told me that I was a terrorist. Then they took me for a long walk in the mountains: we were thirty soldiers, two dogs and me. All the way they were asking me why I was photographing, and then they would push me around. Every so often, they would also beat me up. One soldier started cursing me and asking me to curse back. When I refused, then he said that they would throw stones on me like I threw stones on them. My eyes were blindfolded and my hands handcuffed. Two soldiers started throwing stones at me. I had injuries on my back and head. Then one soldier told me that he will break my hands and head; I answered him, do whatever you want. They kept hitting me everywhere on my body from three in the morning and until eleven in the morning. Then, they removed the bandage from my eyes, and I could only see darkness. It was very difficult. My hands were bleeding from these industrial plastic handcuffs. They then took me back to the office. They showed me my Facebook wall and told me that I was an activist and interrogated me about the photographs I posted online of clashes with soldiers in demonstrations. I was finally taken to a military court. There were a few Jewish activists who came to the courtroom in solidarity with me. I was ordered to pay 2500 NIS [$750 CAD], and ordered to be under house arrest for five months. They wanted to kill the truth. Of course, I will never shut up and I continue to post photographs showing soldiers' violence.

Unlike the violence that I described at the beginning of this chapter, that which resides on the land and landscape and lives as a ghost or a memory in people's lives and on the landscape, the violence described in Ghalib's and Jameel's stories is corporeal violence. It is violence that is aimed at the body and the safe spaces of people's homes. We also heard another testimony of violence enacted at these scales, except that it was narrated by Omer, a former soldier in the Israeli Army, who inflicted it. The ethnographic task of this chapter was to map out the ways in which violence is projected on the landscape and described through my interlocutors' narratives. In the first part, sections one and two, of this chapter, I showed how landscape of past violence is absorbed by the land through looking at the landscape in the Jawlan. For despite the landscapes' transformative attributes and ability for continuous renewals, the violence of military occupation can hold the landscape hostage to its past, as if such landscape is an archive of past events. By looking at landscapes subjected to a military occupation, I develop the concept of *landscapocide*, building on existing literature that describes other processes of visual and material destruction of the land, namely, *spacio-cide* and *urbicide* in Palestine. In the second part, sections three, four and five, of this chapter, the ethnographic task was to explore the proximate and daily forms of violence that takes place living on militarized and occupied lands. It was my intention to show that not only the landscapes embody violence, but that landscape of intimate spaces, like the house or the body, are sites on which violence is visually and materially enacted. In the next Chapter, I engage at length with the landscape as a sight and a site on which violence is both projected and contested. More

specifically, I expand my analysis of the *landscapocide* in Palestinian in the shadow of photographic work on the Wall.

Chapter Five: Framing the Vanishing: Photography of Palestinian Landscape

> We are saying, what I have heard Edward Said say so many times, that politics must engage in complex dialectical negotiations with questions of form, affect, and sensibility, with cultural formations. We are called upon, in short, to think of Palestine as a work of landscape art in progress, to ask what vision of this land can be imagined, what geographical poetry can be recited over it, to heal, repair, unite, understand, and commemorate this place. (238)

> Mitchell, W. T. J. (1999)
> "Landscape and Idolatry: Territory and Terror". In *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry*.

I started this dissertation by presenting a photograph of Pope Francis praying at Bethlehem's section of the Wall (image 1). That photograph went viral in many Palestinian, Israeli and international media outlets. The *photograph* of the Pope near the Wall triggered a political controversy in the Israeli media. The scene captured in that photograph was the political frame of the photograph that the Palestinians needed to present their case worldwide, something that a photograph of the Wall could not do standing alone. This was also a photograph that referenced another scene of the Pope praying in the same gesture near the Jewish Western Wall (image 2). This form of visual referencing that is expressed through juxtaposing the two photographs—or what Christopher Pinney termed 'inter-ocularity' (2004:34–35)—generated political anxiety amongst Israeli officials and Israeli media.

My first photograph taken in the field—captured from a moving car on the highway— depicts the Wall, and specifically the segments of the structure that conceal the city of Qalqiliya in the West Bank (image 5). My first photograph could not stand alone. The story behind the captured scene is not as eventful as the papal historic visit; yet it apprehends the urgency of the frame. Learning about the context, this photograph revealed to me how Palestinians were made absent from the landscape, while the Wall was also simultaneously absented from Israelis' sight and hegemonic discourses. The photographs with which I engage throughout this dissertation have prompted my methodological and conceptual questions about the place of visuals in the work of absenting and presenting the Wall in material and abstract landscapes.

In previous chapters, I have laid out the forms borders and violent spaces take as they exist on the landscape. I walked the reader through the disrupted landscape in politically contested lands. Although this work is inspired by the effects of the Wall on people's visions and visual conceptualization and materialization, I do not single out the Wall as the one omnipotent landmark on the landscape or the sites of borders. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated how the Wall is a material extension of already existing border violence and military apparatuses that regulate the landscape and an occupied population. I also demonstrated, in chapters Three and Four, how borders defines the landscape of violence and how the past and present violence ingrained in the landscape. The Wall, throughout, as the focus of this research, is theorized as such a structure: one that embodies

not only landscapes of violence, but also a surplus of symbols and visual dilemmas that those who live in close proximity to it have to face or refute.

Ever since the expulsion of Palestinians from the land in 1948, photography speaking of Palestine has been eventful, portraying politicized movements, like demonstrations or violent clashes, destruction, deaths or transgression of borders. Photographs of Palestinian lives sit comfortably on a hegemonic platform that amplifies, for the most part, suffering, defeat and resistance.[67] This chapter emphasizes a reading of photography in which events are narrated through a framework committed to historicizing as well as politicizing the frame of the photograph. In this chapter, I shall place the Wall at the centre of visual and discursive exploration. I claim that the Wall is both a site and a sight through which the gaze is politically oriented. In the first section of this chapter, I will shed light on the centrality of the gaze and of vision in understanding and exploring visual relations in the context of the Wall in Palestine. In the second section, I shall discuss and examine the representational politics at play in two Israeli representations of the Wall that utilize the Wall as a commercial site. In the third section, I will present my conversations with Israeli and Palestinian photographers, who display the Wall in their photography as a tool of political engagement with anti-occupation activities. In the fourth section, I present Palestinians' photographic work on the Wall that refuses to represent a replica of the Wall in a photographic setting. Instead, such photographic exploration aims

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[67] Ahmad Sa'di (2002) names photography, archival material and books like Emtiaz Diab's (1991) *Jaffa the Perfume of a City* (In Arabic) or Walid Khalidi's (1991) *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948*. Archival photography of Jerusalem is captured and collected by Issam Nassar (1997) in his *Photographing Jerusalem: The Image of the City in Nineteenth Century Photography*.

at offering a critique of the visual violence that a replica of the Wall generates amongst Palestinians.

This chapter brings together narratives of artists and photographers who were intrigued by the Wall's structure and symbolism, namely, Palestinian artists and photographers—Yazan, Samar, Osama and Steve—and Israeli photographers—Miki and Gili. Photography and artistic visual expression, as I shall demonstrate, are an immediate medium of engagement through which my interlocutors articulated political statements or established personal relations to the lands or landscapes around them. I shall draw out the complexity of demarcating a definite line between imagery—abstract and visual—and materiality, in the context of materially visualizing a landscape of occupation or colonization. The Wall, the material and symbolic structure at stake, will be explored in depth through the elements that stand out the most: its material and abstract forms. In other words, exposing my interlocutors' stories, I will unfold the Wall's story, highlighting the dynamics between its material structure, its visual structure, and its abstraction and inscription into the measurements of distance, inclusion and exclusion, in national or personal landscapes.

The Arabic word for photography is *tasweer*, deriving from the root verb *sawara*. The verb *tassawar*, which shares similar roots to *tasweer*, means to have one's photograph taken, to *imagine* or *envision*, which implies aspirations for the future. Hence, metaphorically speaking, while photography captures the present, it also captures future

visions. This renders photographs a reliable source for narrating the past and imagining a *potential history* (Azoulay 2011; Azoulay 2013), as Professor Ariella Azoulay argued during my interview with her in June 2012 in a café in Tel-Aviv. She introduced the concept of 'potential history' in the context of photography prior to 1948; she suggests possible readings that such photography produced, mainly in an attempt to re-narrate the past in a way that allows for a critique of the present oppression of the Israeli state regime. Potential history, for Azoulay (2013), is a framework and a tool that enables us to see "new forms of relations as a real possibility" (572). More specifically,

> [p]otential history … is at one and the same time an effort to create new conditions both for the appearance of things and for our appearance as its narrators, as the ones who can—at any given moment—intervene in the order of things that constituent violence has created as their natural order. I call this move history that exposes past potential and the potential created by this exposure. (2013:565)

Reflecting on Azoulay's attribution of potentiality to photography in relation to my research, it is significant that photographers with whom I spoke did not offer a reading of 'potential history'. Instead, I argue, they suggested an understanding of the present in light of a reverse reading of the past and a potential reading of the future. Put differently, the moment the Wall infiltrates photographs of Palestinian landscapes, the present can neither be narrated nor represented without juxtaposing it with a rereading of how similar conditions were different prior to the Wall or how they will forever diverge in the future. In other words, it is not the framework of 'potential history' that is utilized by my interlocutors to read a reality of borders and violence but what I would call a framework of

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'potential visuality.' The urgent questions arising when using 'potential visuality' as a tool of analysis are: How can one liberate vision from political structures? How does one look at structures of oppression without being affected by the sight? How does one see through structures without seeing within the structures? In this chapter, I shall explore these questions through conversations with my interlocutors.

'A photograph is a sentence,' Azoulay told me when I interviewed her. A photograph, then, is a text; when it is read, it narrates possibilities. Textual writing, I learned from Palestinian photographer and poet Ghalib, should be firmly built on a *roaya*, the Arabic word to describe vision, sight or dream, as well as futuristic predictions. "*Roaya* as vision or as sight?" I asked Ghalib. He answered me without hesitation that by *roaya*, he meant 'vision.' Vision, he then explained, is, however, based on sight too; it is the way in which light falls on objects, reflecting these objects in our sight. Ghalib told me that he was referring to a process that was discovered by a tenth-century Arab scientist Al-Jameel Ibn al Haytham. For Ghalib, *vision* is the process through which acts of seeing, imagining and visualizing are interwoven at heart. To him, without strong linkages between *vision* and *sight*, reading and writing texts will always be an incomplete task. Building on this visual-textual relation, I explore photographic narrations, asking, what do photographs of vanishing landscapes narrate?

My use of the concept of photography comes in two interpretive frameworks. The first framework is closest to what I intend to capture in the use of visuals, through my

conversations with photographers. In other words, in this framework, I relate to photography as a primarily visual experience that produces visual representations. In addition to talking to people about what they see when they look at the Wall as a material and a symbolic form, I engage with photographs as the most immediate way of representing what the person holding the camera sees and how she/he sees it. Having said that, I am aware of various other ways of engaging with visuals that could also be expressed textually or verbally. Hence, I talked to photographers and non-photographers in an attempt to explore the visual realm through words as well. I therefore pay close attention to the vocabularies used in capturing or bypassing the Wall. The second interpretive framework through which I explore photographs is by perceiving photographs as cultural and political products. If in my first framework, I use photography methodologically as the most immediate tool of producing visual representations, in the second framework, I perceive photographs as a fieldwork site that embodies a complexity of symbolism at the crossroads of political discourses.

1. Visuals of Occupation and the Metaphors of the Wall

After my hour-long interview with Ghalib, we went for a short walk in Ramallah's streets. Ghalib looked at the landscape of the newly constructed apartment buildings and then pointed his finger to the nearest hill covered with new construction and said: "look at the military view [*mashhad*, in Arabic, also translates into landscape], all these newly constructed buildings, all this militarized architecture – it is ugly; we cannot see the sun

anymore." Ever since Ghalib's comment, I could only see militarized landscapes across the horizon everywhere I went in the West Bank. Visually, it was not hard for me to see that, but conceptually it was difficult to accept that the view is a reminder of a history of occupation and political struggles. What Ghalib's words strongly articulated is an observation on how landscapocide operates; that is, it functions through presenting a visual conundrum so that people who live on the land struggle to see it as appealing or familiar. Building on Ghalib's observation, I argue that there are political and cultural processes at play when creating visual structures. Visual structures, as I shall show in the case of photography of the Wall in this chapter, produce particular relations and specific readings that are in themselves culturally and socially constructed. I shall also illustrate how through the case of visuals of the Wall, the landscape becomes a site onto which visual reflections are projected.

Kesharim's July 2012 tour to Israeli settlement blocks south of Bethlehem, or what Israeli officials refer to as the Gush Etzion settlements, had a strong emphasis on the Wall's landscape. The tour guide took us to multiple locations where the Wall could be seen, in panoramic view, marking its presence on the landscape. One such location was in southern Jerusalem's settlement of Gilo. The Gilo settlement's southern view overlooks Beit Jala, a Palestinian village in the West Bank ruled by the Palestinian Authority, identified as Area A according to the Oslo Agreement. During the Second Intifada in 2000, Palestinian snipers fired at apartment buildings or at passing Israeli cars in Gilo. In response, Israel shelled Beit Jala houses, claiming to target the snipers' locations. I was

living in Jerusalem then and could hear the shelling of Beit Jala echoing in the background. For the following four years, and until 2006, the city of Bethlehem, and the villages Beit Jala and Beit Sahour were under Israeli military siege. Today, when I look back at the moment I overlooked Beit Jala along with the participants in Kesharim's tour, I realize what Ghalib meant by a militarized view. It infiltrates one's vision: both one's sight and perception (image 21).

Kesharim's tour guide, Arik, gathered all twenty-five participants in one location and pointed at the southern landscape. On site, Arik narrated the story of the Second Intifada of 2000. His account of the Second Intifada was framed through the narrative of two-sidedness, the Israeli side versus the Palestinian side, which reflects a hegemonic narration of the story of the lands that we Palestinians stood on. "During the Second Intifada, Palestinians fired at the residents of Gilo…at their houses and windows," Arik said. "What the Israeli army did to ensure the security of Gilo settlement residents was placing bricks to block shooting and a tank that would bomb back at the snipers' location," he explained; "it was a bloody year for both sides." The Second Intifada, Arik asserted, "reached people's own homes." He told us that since it was very dangerous to drive from Jerusalem to the southern Israeli settlements, Israel built a barrier, as he pointed at the Wall wrapping the settlement roads in front of our sight.

The view that Gilo residents see overlooks Palestinian villages and the short fraction of the Wall built around the Israeli settlements road tunnel. The cars driving

through this tunnel are Israeli. Palestinians living above the mountain cannot access that tunnel or any of those roads without an Israeli permit. The tunnel inside the mountain, in the photograph below, is governed by the Israeli state, since it was dug through lands that the Israeli state had annexed in 1967. The mountain itself is considered part of the Palestinian territory. The border in this location, in Beit Jala, is not only horizontal on the lands but also vertical, constituting what Eyal Weizman identifies as "vertical politics of separation" (Weizman 2007:15, 117) through which the Israeli state exercises its control over an occupied population employing the architecture of walls and fences. The Israeli Military prohibits Palestinians with West Bank Identity Cards from using the road connecting Jerusalem to the southern West Bank unless they obtain a permit from the military. The scene, captured by my camera (image 23) manifests the layers of borders that exist on both visual and material levels. This scene is not static, but it is an eventful one. All photography of the Wall, I argue, holds an eventful component of both resilience and suffocation. In the following sections, I shall shed some light on the interpretability of the photograph through the conversations I had with artists and photographers.

The photograph below (image 23), however, which I took during Kesharim's tour, was not supposed to present an illustration of the structure at stake; for that would be a limiting representation. A photograph does not stand alone outside of interpretation. That specific location depicted in the photograph has a long history, yet I was only introduced to the recent history of the site that held resistance and military occupation. Nonetheless, the photograph captures a moment that took place at a specific time during my fieldwork. My

presentation of this photograph attempts to offer the reader a relatively proximate gaze into the topography of borders in Palestine. It suggests a transgressive reading into the photograph and offers an imagining of the possible stories, or visualities, behind that specific site. It is also a repeated invitation, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, to not *look* at photographs but to *watch* them (Azoulay 2008:14) as they are moving through time and space.

Image 23: South view from Gilo Settlement towards Beit Jala village. Photograph by the author. July 2012.

2. Depoliticization of Borders: The Wall as a Commercial Sight

Thus far, I have illustrated how symbolic, political or legal structures, land, borders, waters, and globalized representations of violent realities all are sites of national tension. The visual landscape, moreover, is amongst such grounds of tension. What is particular about the landscape as a site of investigation is that it is under-represented in research and unrecognized as a valid site for struggle or one onto which struggles are projected. The landscape, as a view or a scene, is taken for granted when imagining a national state presence. In this chapter, the national presence shall be contested through exploring both that which is absented from the visual realm and that which is made visible. As such, I propose the following questions to address in the following sections: What were photographers' intentions in visualizing the Wall? What is left out of the work of photographic representation? What is deliberately absented, what is forcefully presented and why?

I present the following two cultural productions of visual work, produced by two Israeli companies, Cellcom and Comme il Faut, as an illustration of the relations between political frames of analysis and visual representation. These two visual productions, I argue, demonstrate how Israeli hegemonic representations of the Wall are reinforced through absenting precisely these operative political frameworks. Moreover, I argue that these examples illustrate how visuals operate as a site on which contestations and struggles over meaning can take place. More specifically, visual representations and commodifying

usages of the structure of the Wall by Cellcom and Comme il Faut have propelled

Palestinians to contest these representations, arguing that they further legitimize the Wall's

objectives in absenting Palestinians.

In March 2004, two years after the Wall's construction, an Israeli fashion house by

the name of Comme il Faut conducted a fashion photoshoot next to the Wall in Abu Dis,

one of Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhoods (images 24 and 25). The resulting

photographic catalogue was not particularly popular; most of those who were exposed to it

were middle class Israeli women who consumed Comme il Faut fashion, as one Israeli

friend told me. The fashion photo shoot was called "women cross boundaries.*"* European

and Israeli models posed with striking, colourful outfits in front of the dull grey bricks of

the Wall. At the same time, a few photographers gathered eagerly with their cameras,

catching photos of what seemed to be a 'paradoxically' charged moment: fashion

juxtaposed against a politically-contested edifice. Sybil Goldfiner, CEO of Comme il Faut,

explained the reasoning behind bringing the fashion shoot to the Wall. In an interview she

did with the *New York Times* (Bennet 2004), Goldfiner argued that, in essence, fashion

bears "future, optimism, *and* colours" and these aspects come as a total negation to the

"ugly Wall" (Bennet 2004). Fashion and the Wall stand in contrast, we learn from this

interview: representing "exactly the mirror of life—everything is mixed up between normal

and not normal" (Bennet 2004).

As reported in a BBC report, Goldfiner argued that the idea behind the fashion

catalogue is to raise awareness among the "mostly uninterested Israeli public" (BBC 2004)

and to open up a space for Palestinians and Israelis to work together for peace. Fashion, she claimed, provides hope for women from "both sides who bring life into the world" and who "unite to stop this killing that has gone on for too long" (BBC 2004). In another interview, Goldfiner stated that "we live in a state of constant trivialization and we go back to life as normal right after each terror attack. We want to emphasize those paradoxes" (Associated Press 2004). The catalogue emphasized the "surrealism of living" in Israel, she later explained to *Palestine Report* (Vaughan 2004). In the same report, Maya Azari, a Comme il Faut fashion designer, argued that nothing can 'trivialize' the Wall; "aesthetics against this ugly Wall...is very strong…it's so powerful […]. It's different to see it, to stand next to it, compared to seeing it in magazines and newspapers." In response to a right wing Israeli critique of the fashion project, which accused the project of being an act of '*poor taste*,' Azari claimed "[w]e're doing fashion. And we're supposed to know about good taste and bad taste, and I think we're dictating good taste in this matter" (Vaughan 2004). The idea behind the so-called 'ideological advertising' came from two students in Bezalel Academy of Art and Design[68] in Jerusalem, Uri Dagan and Maayan Smoler. They named the project "Women Crossing Boundaries" to show that "we are not ignoring Palestinian suffering" (Vaughan 2004).

[68] http://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/, accessed October 21, 2014.
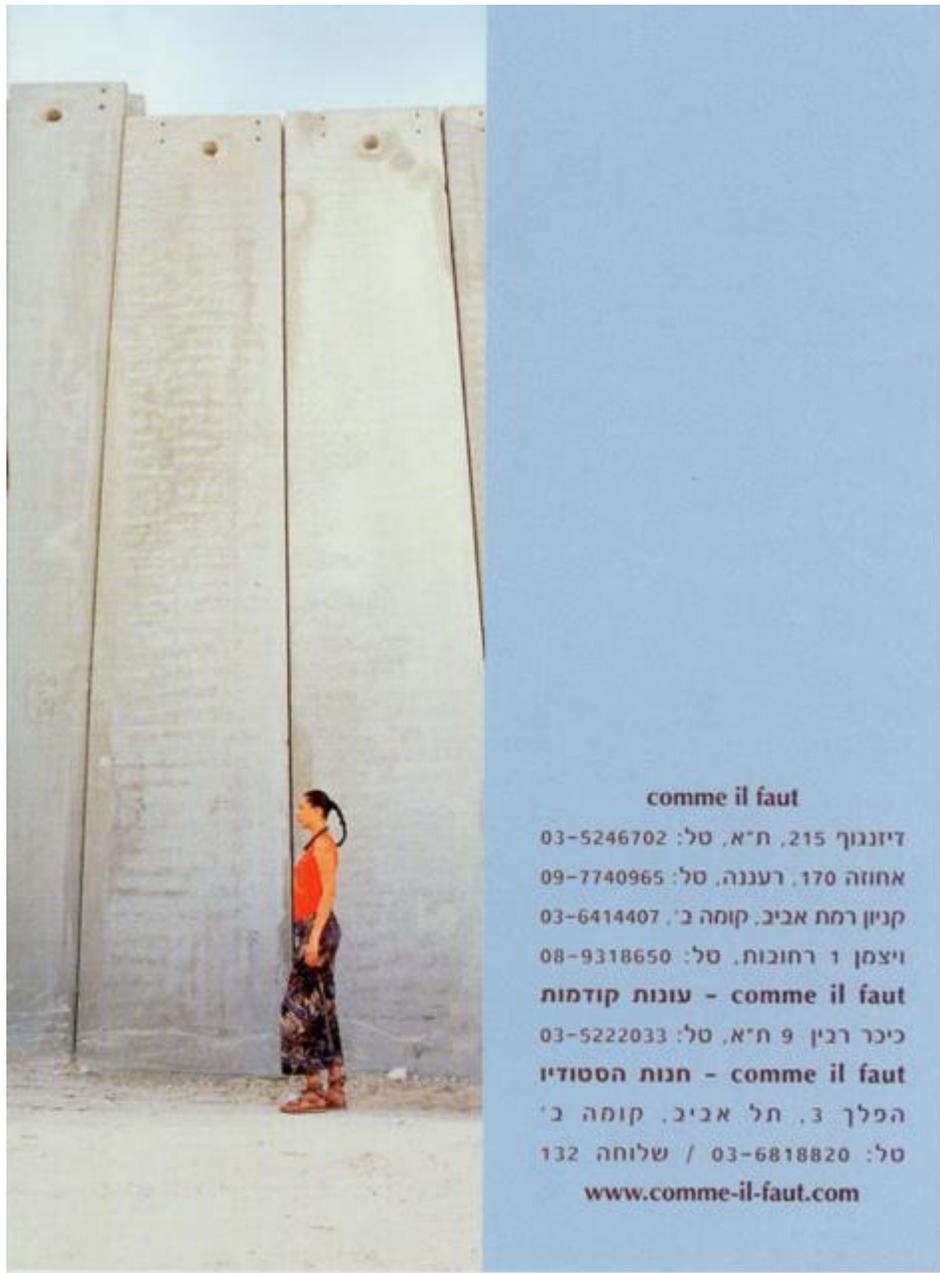
Image 24: Screenshot of Comme il Faut fashion brochure distributed in April 2004. A model is seen standing in from of the Wall in Abu Dis (Jerusalem area) wearing Comme il Faut clothes. Source: Comme il Faut online archive[69].

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[69] Link to the online Comme il Faut archive page: http://www.comme-il-faut.com/m/he/–ארכיון פרויקטים/נשים–חוצות–גבולות/, accessed January 5, 2016.

From reading media reports, it seems that the Israelis involved in this project had a very clear understanding of the objectives of the project. Their intention was to criticize the borders, create a space for dialogue, and use art as a means for political transformation. Nonetheless, they received harsh criticism from Palestinians who walked by the site during the photoshoot, as well as Palestinian artists who thought this project lead to the normalization of violence and of the power dynamics that enabled the Wall's construction in the first place. Moreover, when talking with the media about their project, none of the participants and organizers of the photoshoot mentioned the military jeep or the soldiers who, as can be seen in Comme il Faut fashion brochure,[70] were stationed at the site to 'protect' the production team and the models from possible Palestinian violence. Palestinians crossing near the site were repelled by this scene.

As the *New York Times* reported (Bennet 2004), a Palestinian woman named Umm Muhammed passed by the Wall during the photoshoot and confronted the organizers (image 25), telling them that the Wall was horrendous as it blocked her from visiting her three married daughters who live on the other side of the Wall. Expressing her dislike of the clothes being modelled, she told the journalists that fashion would not help tear down the Wall (Bennet 2004). Goldfiner agreed with her and asked if she wanted to have her picture taken near the Wall, an offer that Umm Muhammad refused, but a photograph of her was taken already (image 25). Naji Sabbagh, another Palestinian who passed near the

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[70] The military jeep and soldiers stationed near the photography shoot in Abu Dis section of the Wall can be seen in Comme il Faut brochure online: http://www.comme-il-faut.com/m/he/-ארכיון פרויקטים/נשים-חוצות-גבולות/, accessed January 5, 2016.

site, also criticized the photoshoot, arguing that Israelis only want to bring strange ideas to make more money, while Palestinians cannot make a living. These designers, he continued, only reflect their own culture and taste; we have a different culture (Bennet 2004).

Image 25: Screenshot of Comme il Faut fashion brochure distributed in April 2004. Top: Comme il Faut models standing in front of the Wall in Abu Dis. Bottom: Umm Muhammed caught on camera,

she is portrayed as part of the photography shooting although refusing to be so. Source: Comme il Faut online archive[71]

The tension between the Palestinians and Israelis in this fashion project is not only reflective of macropolitical relations; it is also an illustration of a larger political threat reproducing liberal political beliefs like those of Comme il Faut designers. On the one hand, the visual interaction with the Wall in which Comme il Faut is engaging acknowledges that the site is politically contested; yet, on the other hand, it simultaneously creates depoliticized visuals of the Wall. By 'depoliticizing,' I refer to the effects of detaching and removing the image of the Wall from the socio-political relations on the ground, and clinging, instead, to an aestheticized abstraction that does not acknowledge the political implications of the Wall, or the power dynamics at stake. Although they may well have been intended to provide a critique of the Wall, the representations of it produced by Comme il Faut actually normalized and neutralized the Wall by transforming it into a fashion background, without addressing the historical context of its emergence—all of which was evident in the Palestinians' criticisms of the fashion production. As I addressed in previous chapters, the majority of Israelis have never visited the Wall. Through their photo shoot, Comme il Faut introduced the Wall to middle-class urban Israeli women while reclaiming it as part of Israeli culture and politics; it did this by distancing the Wall from the political violence that enabled its construction and that also, incidentally, enabled the photographic shoot to take place at this militarized location (under Israeli military guard). Comme il Faut's attempts to promote peace dialogue through their choice of

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[71] Link to the online Comme il Faut archive page: http://www.comme-il-faut.com/m/he/-ארכיון פרויקטים/נשים-חוצות-גבולות/, accessed January 5, 2016.

location for the fashion shoot, however, does not stand outside the structures of politics—it was through the privileged position of the company's members (as Israeli middle class women) in relation to the Israeli state and military that enabled them to carry out this project. The irony here is that by decontextualizing the Wall from its history and politics, dialogue was foreclosed rather than facilitated, as the Palestinian critique remained unintelligible to the fashion business, which could only speak in terms of style and representation—by offering, for example, to take Umm Muhammed's photo instead of following her line of questioning concerning the use of the Wall as a backdrop for their clothing line).

Using political analysis to read visuals—photography or moving pictures—is to place them in the larger socio-political context that produces such visual relations. "[A] photograph is the product of an encounter of several protagonists, mainly photographer and photographed, camera and spectator," Ariella Azoulay (2011:11) argues. Understanding the photograph as such, she continues, enables a more sincere discussion of photographs removed from the dichotomy of 'inside and out-side'—the dichotomy of viewed/viewer, or the dichotomy between what lies inside and what lies outside the frame of the photograph. In other words, Azoulay asks what is left out when the person photographed is viewed (2011:11). Referring explicitly to photography of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation, Azoulay argues that the aforementioned dichotomies between "inside" and "out-side" have enabled the hegemonic viewing of the "disasters that befall others as if the disasters that struck 'them' were a (political) trait of theirs, as though they had not been

governed alongside the viewers of their photographic images" (2011:11). In other words, the viewer's political relation to the photograph and the photographed subjects is projected onto the reading that the former shall produced of the photograph. Subverting this structural visual relation would necessitate a reworking of the political system. I shall return to this discussion through my conversations with two Palestinian artists, Yazan Khalili and Steve Sabella.

In 2009, four years after the publication of the Comme il Faut catalogue, I came across a television commercial (Cellcom 2009)[72] by Cellcom, an Israeli cellular phone company. The company used the Wall as a site for stimulating the consumer's desire to purchase their suggested package. Given that the advertisement was broadcasted nationwide on television, Cellcom was the first to present the Wall as a visual site to a large mainstream television audience. Soon after the airing of the commercial, various Palestinian groups protested the use of the Wall as a playful commercial site and demanded an apology from the company.[73] In a response to Palestinian critique the cellular company argued that its "core value is communication between people" regardless of "religion, race, or gender."[74]

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[72] The commercial is posted on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFPopiOtPUc, accessed March 3, 2014.
[73] This commercial received a wide range of criticism from Palestinians, including a response video by Bil'in villagers who mocked the commercial by depicting a *real* setting, which resulted in *real* confrontation between Palestinians and the Israeli army (Ayyadmed 2009), link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et8VGyCDt10&feature=related, accessed December 2, 2014.
[74] Palestinians Mock "Bad Taste" Ad (BBC 2009), link: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8161004.stm, accessed November 24, 2015.

The commercial begins with a scene of a military jeep patrolling the separation Wall. A white ball from the opposite, unseen and hidden side of the Wall falls onto the jeep's hood, causing the soldiers to brake frantically. Five soldiers leap from the jeep, assuming the ball to be a weapon of some sort. One soldier gets closer to the white ball and shouts to the others: "it's a ball, it is just a ball." The viewer of the commercial will never know who was on the other side of the Wall, as that other had no name, no identification markers, and was not depicted. The video of the commercial was later uploaded on YouTube (image 26) by multiple online users; it stirred a heated political discussion online, in which a large number of the comments contested the use of the Wall as a site of play. The absence of an "other" to the Israeli soldiers—the unseen person who threw the ball—was also pointed out in the comments.

Image 26: Screenshot from Cellcom Commercial. Source Youtube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy3wvPmej2U,accessed January 6, 2016.

Online debates about the commercial addressed a familiar state practice, which I

discussed in previous chapters, of absenting Palestinians from the view or the landscape.

This commercial, like the visual impact of the Wall, mirrors larger Israeli exclusionary

policies which aim at "de-familiarizing the Palestinian presence" as Menachem Klein

claims (2008:64). The visuals of the commercial and the Wall as a material structure

reflect an exercise of inclusion of the Palestinians through the premises of visual exclusion;

they are made not to be seen. Reading the absenting mechanism in images offers us a

reading into Sol Worth's (1981) notion of "communicative meaning." This notion is

defined as a reading of "symbolic events using [readers'] knowledge that they acquire

outside themselves and from within *the symbolic event itself*" represented in the images (1981:165). According to Worth, images cannot communicate something that they do not show. This is how any reading of images, he argues, is an "attributional" one, which is informed by the personal, psychological, or social frameworks. In other words, for Worth, an image presents what the reader is projecting on it (Worth 1981:181).

The focus of the online discussions engaging with the video on YouTube[75] was largely on the political implications and signification of Palestinian absence in the commercial scenes or in the reality on the ground. Communicational readings into commercial scenes suggested mirroring relations that reflected the larger tension existing in the Israeli-Palestinian context and informed the already-existing tension and anxieties about the material Wall itself. For example, one viewer considered the commercial a success since it did not show Palestinians. Another viewer read the same scenes as a reaffirmation of the non-existence of the Palestinian people: "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people. We don't have to be nice to an enemy who wants to destroy us" (Cellcom 2009). Another comment encouraged the viewers to see this commercial as a mirror of a politically oppressive state regime: "I look at it as a conscious comment on how invisible Palestinians often are…to Israelis" (Cellcom 2009). Some attributed the Palestinian absence to a racist act and focused on the over-presence of the playful Israeli army in the commercial; as one person responded: "it's racist. The message you get from watching this ad is 'we could live in peace and even spend a good time together as long

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[75] To read the comments on the commercial see this link:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy3wvPmej2U, accessed March 3, 2014.

there is a barrier separating us and them. After all, a good Palestinian...is a caged

Palestinian'" (Cellcom 2009). The Israelis' ability to be happy and have fun during their

military service on conflicted lands and landscapes was another topic of discussion in the

long list of comments posted online. Explaining why this commercial has soldiers, one

viewer wrote, sympathizing with the images of happy soldiers: "I guess it shows soldiers

because being [a] soldier is one of the most difficult experiences most of us Israelis go

through" (Cellcom 2009). The commercial, however, is read by many protesting viewers

as being representative of a decontextualized and depoliticized Israeli military occupation

in Palestine. Supporters of the video celebrated such decontextualization by indicating the

possibility of transforming a security zone—a border line—into a playground.

     The ways in which the aforementioned Israeli companies use the Wall as a

commoditised structure in their marketing strategies led me to question the way in which

the Wall has 'infiltrated' Israeli mainstream society through depoliticized consumerist

frames. These two examples show an attempt to (re)present the Wall in the Israeli society,

where its historical or political aura is absented. These re-introduction attempts, as I

established earlier, were read by many Palestinians as a visual mechanism for normalizing

and naturalizing the Wall as if it were a natural extension of the landscape. The Comme il

Faut fashion catalogue (2004) and Cellcom's commercial (2009) were among few

commodified representations of the Wall that were presented to Israeli consumers for

visual consumption. The main concerns that this visual commodification of the Wall urges

us to examine are: Where is the Wall, visually and metaphorically, located in the Israeli

society? Why did the Wall disappear from the Israeli national discourse although it is strategically and politically framed as a successful structure that prevents militant attacks against Israelis and that functions effectively as a national border? Are the aforementioned representations of the Wall as a playful marketing tool an attempt to reduce Israelis' anxieties about its horrid presence in Palestinian lives?

While exploring these questions, I was intrigued by the efforts of visual absenting, as they appeared at the friction point of absence and presence and sparked national anxieties. Inspired by Judith Butler's (2009) *Frames of War,* I use the notion of "frames" as a concept that enables a closer look at the discursive and disciplinary forces that materially and metaphorically direct (as well as hinder) the gaze into a hegemonic reading of visuals. Through addressing the "frames" of analysis, it is possible to reveal the points of conjunctions and divergences of different political readings of visual, as I illustrated in the above discussion of the examples of Comme il Faut and Cellcom. In her book *Frames of War*, Judith Butler (2009) engages theoretically with the concept of the "frame," by which she intends both frames of analysis and frames of images. Butler interrogates the abstract concept of the "frame" through the visual metaphor. "Frames," she argues, are not only meant to "organize visual experience," but they also act to generate and produce normative subjects (2009:3). When a picture is 'framed,' Butler continues, "commenting on or extending the picture may be at stake" (9). Hence, to call the frame into question is to refuse to contain the scene and to invite the intrusion of an outside context that dialogically makes the inside recognizable.

Butler also applies the metaphor of the image frame as an analytical point of entry into discussing the ways in which the United States' imperial wars are politically framed. Photographs, she claims, are not merely visual images "awaiting interpretation"; they are themselves constantly in a process of interpreting something (2009:71). Photographs are transmissive (2009:68); they do not only present something, but also *transmit affect*. Photographs are a priori visual interpretations that operate through the containing frames. However, when hegemonic political frames are imposed upon the photograph, a subversive reading and a "disobedient act of seeing" become possible (2009:71). Butler moves between relating to the concept of 'frame of images,' on the one hand, in the concrete sense of the way pictures are confined into a structure that separates them from the background, and, on the other, the abstract concept of discursive 'framing.' In other words, the discursive framing of an image is the socio-political conceptualization of the story that the image conveys. The strength of Butler's argument lies in her reading of the 'frame' as internally paradoxical. Frames are 'there' to make the internal story 'recognizable' (Butler 2009:9), to put it differently, the story that the photograph is made to tell, it tells in virtue of its framing, which allows for its separation from the external social context. However, it becomes possible to subvert the distinction between what is internal and what is external to the image in order to reveal the concomitant political investments in the constitution of those very frames. It is, therefore, in virtue of the image's frame that political subversion becomes possible (2009:24).

Ariella Azoulay articulated a similar argument to Butler's notion of the 'frame', in my conversation with her regarding my concerns of how Israelis visualize and de-visualize the Wall. "No photograph stands outside itself; nothing stands outside the political framework," Azoulay told me. Being surrounded by an abundance of photography of violence generated by the Arab world's unfolding popular protests, wars, and revolutions against dictatorships, I asked Azoulay, during my conversation with her, how one can relate to the role that photographs play in informing people's ideologies or in fomenting their resistance. Specifically, I asked her, how, for example, it is possible that there is a richness of photographs of massacres and violence in Syria but that they do not seem to convey a coherent, informative narrative about what is actually happening on the ground. I asked, "Doesn't one photograph equal a thousand words?" as the saying goes. She answered with an assertive voice that "it is an *ideology* that 'one image stands for a thousand words'." Indeed, ideological frames, for her, are the prisms through which photographs are seen.

As established in previous chapters, photography of the Wall is missing from the Israeli consciousness; the frame, however, exists a priori to the absent photograph. Reading photographs, therefore, is an act of ideological projection. It seems that no matter how one engages with visual representations of the Israeli occupation, for instance, the frame through which the gaze is utilized is politicized and constructed through repetitive fragments of national narratives, that, in turn, assign the photograph with meaning. This

argument does not dismiss, however, subjective processes through which photography can transmit meaning or affect, which then produces different interpretative readings.

Photographers narrate stories that they could not transmit textually. If 'photographs are sentences,' as Azoulay claims, then photographers are the partial authors of these sentences, in which authorship readers of their photographs also collaborate. Through my conversations with multiple photographers, presented in the following sections, I attempted to redirect the focus of photographic relations, from the social and ideological frame, into the material and the visual. I sought to engage in conversations on the visual relatedness that photographers constructed with the landscape. I contacted people who captured the Wall in a frame, visual or political, and those who resisted the frames that captured it.

3. Frames of Presence: Photography of the Wall

In April 2012, the Consulat Général de France[76] in East Jerusalem held a photographic exhibition titled *Border Lines*, of work by photographer Alexis Cordesse. The exhibit, which took place in the consulate's space in East Jerusalem on Salah-a-Din Street, in the heart of the East Jerusalem's busy market, depicted multiple locations of border demarcations in Palestine and Israel. I attended the exhibit and was able to see most of the French photographer's work; most other viewers of the exhibit were internationals—

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[76] Consulat Général de France à Jérusalem http://www.consulfrance-jerusalem.org/Avril-a-l-Institut-Francais-de,3126, accessed December 4, 2015.

the rest were Palestinians. Each piece consisted of a photo collage composed by the artist, creating a panoramic view of a fragmented, separated and bordered landscape (image 27).
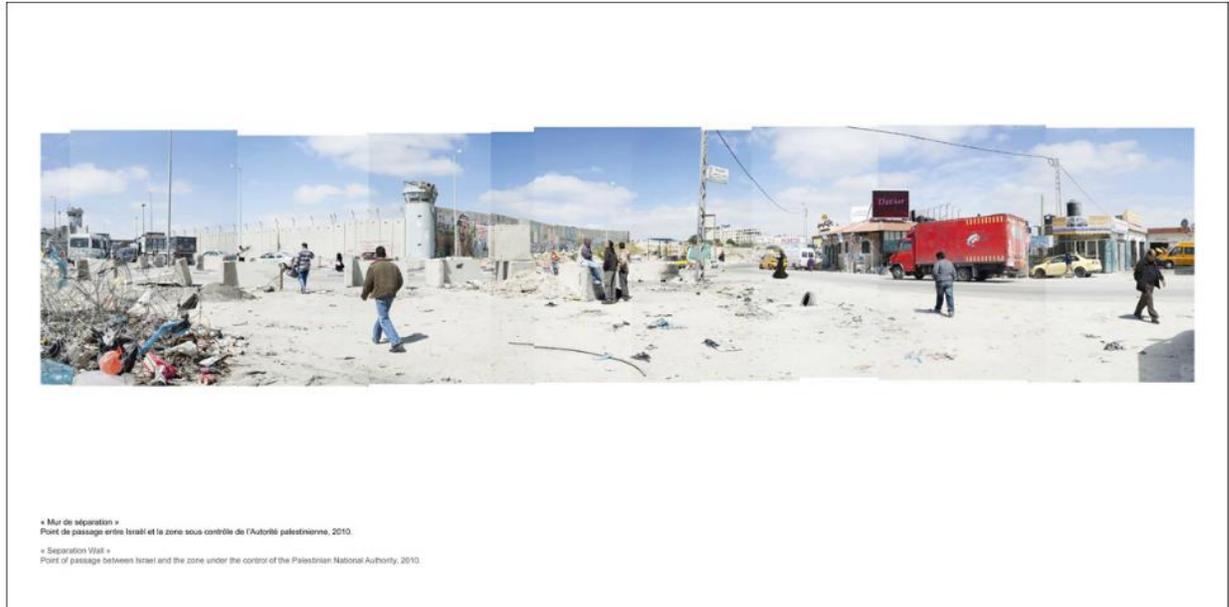

Image 27: Screenshot from artist Alexis Cordesse website. The artist titled this piece "Separation barrier" - Passage between Israel and the zone under the control of the Palestinian National Authority. Qalandiya, Palestinian Territories, 2010. © Alexis Cordesse / All Rights reserved. Used with the permission of the photographer. http://www.alexiscordesse.com/photos_1_5_2_0_%3Cem%3EBorderlines%3C-em%3E, accessed December 4, 2015.

Two months later, in June 2012, I visited the Al-Haq photography exhibition of the Wall in the Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art in Jerusalem. Al-Ma'mal is a Palestinian non-profit organization that promotes and facilitates the making of art, as indicated on their website.[77] The gallery space displayed photographs of the Wall taken by various local Palestinian and international photographers (image 28). There were about

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[77] About Al-Ma'mal: http://www.almamalfoundation.org/about/al-mamal, accessed December 2, 2015.

fifteen photographs depicting the Wall in multiple scenes. Some photographs were close ups of the Wall, others were of the landscape in the shadow of the Wall. The majority of those who attended the gallery that evening were not Palestinians, but mostly internationals, who possibly live and work in Jerusalem or in nearby cities.

Image 28: Al-Haq photography exhibition "Annexation Wall: 10 years too long" in Al-Ma'amal Foundation for Contemporary Art. Jerusalem. Photograph by the author. June 2012.

After visiting each of these two photographic exhibits of the Wall, at the Consulat Général de France and at Al-Ma'mal, I left with a feeling of discomfort and hesitation. Seeing the Wall framed in a photograph was unsettling. I asked myself, what does it mean

to exhibit a visualization of the Wall in a Palestinian gallery or in a gallery in the heart of a Palestinian neighbourhood, while Palestinians are confronted with the Wall on their landscape on a daily basis? Can one think about such displays as symbolic and subversive gestures in which the Wall is trapped and fixed in a frame? By being captured in a photograph, is the Wall rendered an object of scrutiny and, when viewed, is it thereby opened to critique? Alternately, does such framing actually serve to reinforce the Wall's presence through the production of a visual replica? Conversing with photographers, I attempted to discuss some of these concerns, sometimes successfully, while at other times not so successfully. Yet, one thing was common to all photographers with whom I talked: whether they were Palestinian or Israeli, the Wall and photographs of the Wall were equally troubling to them. The acts of intentionally photographing the Wall and of producing visuals of the Wall were always jarring or abrasive, leaving Israeli and Palestinian photographers with more questions than answers.

Since its construction twelve years ago, the Israeli-built Wall has been widely discussed and represented in local and international visual and textual material. Local and international human rights groups utilized photographs of the Wall in their reports to offer a striking portrayal of the absurd reality the occupation had imprinted on the land. While documenting and exposing Israeli violations of human rights and the military occupation of a people is an intrinsic part of the Palestinians' resistance, some photographers with whom I talked expressed their discomfort with the repetition of representations of the Wall. They argued that through the practice of continuous representation, the Wall was

made to be an integral part of the Palestinian identity and discursive landscape, rather than an external element that was imposed on them. Their fear was that the Wall will eventually grow to be more accepted as part of people's ordinary life, in similar ways that the occupation became something that Palestinians have to "get by" (see also Lori Allen (2008)). In this section, I shall explore the multiple photographic angles through which the Wall has been captured and visualized. Through talking to Palestinian and Israeli photographers, I attend to the controversy about the Wall's visualized structure in the photograph and on the landscape. A central concern I consider is the eventful aspect of the material structure attributed to the Wall. In other words, not only a photograph of the Wall but also its solid structure are not stagnant; they both move, discursively and physically, as people move them, with them, or against them.

The Wall is not an object that could stand on its own, out of context, Osama told me. Osama is a Palestinian photographer whom I knew through shared community spaces in Nazareth. Like me, he is an Israeli citizen. I was familiar with some of Osama's photographic projects and I thought it would be interesting to talk with him; and, perhaps, he could refer me to other photographers whom I could later interview. In the past, Osama had photographed the Wall, but he had never displayed the photographs in an exhibition. He told me that most photographic exhibitions about the Wall lack vision and, therefore, a concern he had was to imagine a work of photography of the Wall that is outside or away from the Wall's site and into people's lives or environments that were destroyed by the Wall. This is how one can tell a story, he stressed. Osama's photographic projects that he

exhibited in galleries explored multiple matters: Palestinian workers crossing Israeli checkpoints seeking work in Israel; the unrecognized Palestinian Bedouin villages in Israel; or the 1948 destroyed Palestinian villages. I met Osama in a café in Haifa. My first question to him was what kind of photographs he has taken of the Wall. His answer lead us to discuss the measurements of proximity and distance of the photograph of the Wall from the details preserved or lost in visual representations of it:

> When I started photographing, I mainly took pictures of visible structures, like the Wall or a house that was demolished by the army. After a while, I stopped. There were numerous projects about the Wall and most of them were photographs of the Wall in a one-on-one setting: the photographer versus an object. In this type of photography, the details get lost. […] What I have noticed about photographic works of the Wall is that they all portray people caught next to the Wall or walking in an ordinary manner near the Wall. The Wall is like an object or a background, as if there is a statement that we always are obliged to say: 'the Wall is there'. […] Today, if I wanted to photograph the Wall, I would pay attention to details and I would follow stories of people who are affected by the Wall.

An encounter with the Wall, according to Osama, should not be captured only with a confrontational photographic gesture; it can also be theatrical, or mediated through narratives. Otherwise, details of the Wall are lost. Osama told me that the Wall is not only a material object that functions as a barrier, but also a structure that holds stories of lives caught next to it; it has a capacity to contain social details inscribed into its structure by people who live near and through it. Osama told me that not many people are interested in the narratives and stories that the Wall generates. He also argued that Palestinian

photography is centred on events and not on narratives. "We have events that make up the photographs, but we do not have photographic vision with political statements," he said. He uses the world *boa'd* in Arabic, which in English translates into "implications" and "future vision," to convey the meaning of political implications inscribed in photography of the Wall. This *boa'd*, he insisted, is missing from the photographic landscape of the Wall. By contrast, a photographic project with a *boa'd* offers an abstract and material relation with the Wall's present and future:

> We [Palestinians] have events, violent confrontations, we have photographs, we have amazing valuable photographs of these events; but there are no exhibitions with real political photographic implications or vision that are related to cultural, social, or political issues. […] There are events outside the Wall, like families that the Wall left behind. There are thousands of images of the Wall, but none of them closely follow the stories of those who are left behind the Wall. The question I ask here is how to turn the Wall into a cause, into a visual and visible cause.

What Osama offers here is an engagement with the political frame of the photographs. For him, capturing the Wall in a photographic frame is one thing, but narrating a story that the Wall tells through photographs is a different kind of political work, which he, argues, Palestinian photographers overlook. The importance of the latter, according to Osama, is twofold: firstly, avoiding the danger of presenting the Wall as a beautiful structure that is also naturalized as part of the landscape; secondly, avoiding the loss of stories and details that the structure of the Wall embodies:

The Wall now became something that is used as a background on which other objects are displayed. I do not know what to say, but it seems like with time, the Wall has become a normal structure. […] This is very dangerous. On the one hand, the graffiti on the Wall is amazing, powerful, and beautiful. On the other, one could pass near the Wall and say: "this is actually beautiful." […] I think when we photograph the Wall we lack the proper research to proceed in photographing the Wall. We should focus on one issue, one detail about the Wall and go deep with it. Like the story of that woman whose laundry never dries because the Wall is blocking the sun.

For Osama, the Wall is not only a canvas or a board on which stories rest, waiting to be told; the Wall for him is a temporal structure that is not fixed on time or space, but through which—and not on—events are projected. A photograph of the Wall, he claims, should tell us the stories of those whom the Wall continuously renders physically and politically invisible. When I asked him how one could extract a narrative from photographs, he replied that time is the key to such work: one could photograph a tree next to the Wall through time, visually demonstrating how, gradually, the tree dies from lack of watering or abandonment in the summer; or from floods in the winter because the Wall blocks the drainage of rainwater.

My conversation with Osama shed light on the centrality of time in the creation of visual meaning about the Wall. Photographs of the Wall project multiplicity of past, present, and future events. In other words, Osama suggested that in order to generate meaning, a photograph of the Wall has to be built on the conditioning time, because a photograph of the Wall does not stand alone without a contextual narrative that frames it.

However, Israeli photographer Miki Kratsman has a different position to that of Osama's. A photograph "is a sentence," Miki repeated in my conversation with him, suggesting that one photograph can stand alone in generating meaning. Miki is a prominent Israeli photographer whose photographic work is richly visualizes the Israeli occupation of Palestine. He was one of the few Israeli photographers who disseminated and published photographs of the first Intifada to Israeli mainstream media. His most famous photograph of the Wall was taken in 2003 in Abu Dis (image 29). I met Miki in summer 2012 at the Hebrew University, Mount Scopus Campus, where he held a position as chair of the Photography department. Our meeting was held in his office, the windows of which overlooked the desert east of Jerusalem. On a clear day one could see the landscape of the West Bank near Jericho and the Dead Sea. The Wall, too, is visible from the department's windows; it stands conspicuous and robust. We scheduled a meeting in his office. I introduced myself and explained my interests in studying visualizations of the Wall. Upon hearing about my research interests, Miki instantly began describing his views about the Wall. "The Wall seen from the Israeli side as enabling [*me'afsheret* in Hebrew]" he insisted, "while the Wall from the Palestinian side is disabling [*lo me'afsheret* in Hebrew]". "When it disables," he argued, it is always see [*nera'e*t in Hebrew], "when it enables, it is less present or seen; therefore, there is no need to arrive to it." "We, Israelis—I am the Israeli voice now," he said in a confessional tone, "we think that it provides us with security, and that it does not bother us; we think it is there to help us."

During its first stages of construction, in 2003, Miki went to visit the construction sites. His first reaction, he told me, was that this "Wall is so beautiful, it is too beautiful"; this is why from a photographer's perspective, he continued, "the Wall is very problematic." I was both surprised and not so surprised by his statement. I was surprised by the honesty of his photographic gaze; by describing an oppressive structure as beautiful. But I was simultaneously not surprised by this description, given that, since its first days of construction, the Wall has attracted many photographers and artists—mostly among the critical Israeli left or internationals—to engage with it visually, materially, and artistically (not to mention for commercial purposes, like the aforementioned examples of Comme il Faut and Cellcom). Miki described to me in what ways the Wall inscribes a strong *textual* statement on the landscape:

> [The Wall's] architecture, look at it from the department's windows, how it moves and shifts; this is a hysterical statue. Yet, it is difficult to photograph it because it is too textual. It is a symbol, it is a super symbol; it reflects a lot, to a point that you always lose when you photograph it, because it is always stronger than you. In fact, it does not leave you space for thinking. It is very difficult to leave a space for thinking or a space for a liminal interpretation. There is only one option and one only. It is for that reason that some photographers do not photograph it.

Miki's description of the Wall as "too textual," connotes Ariella Azoulay's notion of 'the photograph as *a sentence.*' Yet, the Wall, as Miki claims, is not sentence that is open for any rereading; it is a limiting sentence— one that has very limited space for interpretation. This argument also contrast Butler's idea of frames as containing the

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possibility of their subversion. In other words, for Miki, in the case of the Wall, the frames are predetermined to a very large extent even for the photographer. Therefore, I want to offer that the sentence Miki is referring to is the antithesis of a poetic sentence, which is always hospitable to interpretation. Moreover, this is the reason, Miki added, that photographers who support the political ideology behind the Wall cannot photograph it, because, he argued, a photograph of the Wall is always equivalent to a political statement against it. Miki's account attributes a strong agency to the photograph of the Wall and to the Wall itself as a visual structure, which is different from Azoulay's affirmative statement that no photograph stands outside ideology – the framework through which photographs can be read.

Image 29: Abu Dis 2003. Photographer Miki Kratsman. Used with the permission of the
photographer.

When taking a photograph of the Wall, one writes a clear statement; Miki repeated this

sentence many times during the interview. I asked him to explain to me what the meaning

of this statement was; his reply: "it is closure, apartheid, evil and occupation." A

photograph of the Wall makes the viewer helpless, it does not leave a space for reflection,

he continued. "I have taken many photos of the Wall, but now I stopped photographing it; I

am not capable of taking it out of its context; it is winning over me. It is stronger than me,"

he told me. For Miki, as a photographer, his encounter with the Wall—as a material

structure on the land, or as a photograph—is an encounter inhibited by defeat, or, perhaps,

by a kind of reversal in relations, where the photograph—prior to its production—overpowers the photographer's agency. Today, Miki's photography is removed from the site of the Wall: it is centered on landscapes of displacement. His recent work engages with the Bedouin villages in the Naqab (Negev) Desert that the Israeli state systematically demolishes and displaces.

Since my first encounters with photographers, mention of the name 'Activestills' would recur in many conversations. It was suggested that I talk with members of the Activestills group. I contacted them through their website[78] and received a reply from Gili. A month later, in August, I met with Gili in a café in Tel Aviv. Gili described Activestills as a collective of activist photographers, who started working together in 2005. The members of the collective met during the weekly demonstrations against the Wall in Bili'n, a village in the West Bank near Ramallah. What made the consolidation of the group possible, she told me, were two interests shared in common by the four photographers who initially formed the core of Activestills. The first common interest was that each of the photographers were political activists and active protestors against the Wall and the occupation; the second shared interest was that each of them were already building their own photographic archive of protests against state oppression in Palestine and inside Israel. "Many of the photographers I know, including me, felt that we go to participate in demonstration in the West Bank, but we do not do anything with the material collected, especially because we cannot publish this in any Israeli mainstream media or any

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[78] Activestills website: http://www.activestills.org/, accessed March 10, 2014.

institutional media," Gili explained. She also added that creating a platform for people to see what was happening on the ground was an urge shared by most photographers she knew.

The lack of knowledge about what takes place in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, produces a lack of "*moda'out* [Hebrew for consciousness or awareness] in the Israeli public," Gili told me. It is a cycle, she elaborated, between lack of knowledge or awareness, on the one hand, and the way the media tells the story, on the other: the media frames the reality on the ground through the concept of 'security' [*bitachon* in Hebrew]. Gili, like Miki Kratsman, claimed that photographs are powerful. Her exact words in Hebrew were "*yish koah latmonout,*" which, in English, translate word by word as: "there is power to photographs." One possible implied meaning of this statement is that photographs are powerful; power here is an adjective. The other possible implied meaning relies on the use of power as a noun: "photographs have power." Both meanings are necessary to comprehend the relation that Gili has to photographs and to the way she conceptualizes the impact that they have on the viewer. The sentence "photographs are powerful" attributes an affective force to photographs; in other words, photographs transmit emotions (see also Butler (2009)). "Photographs have power," on the other hand, connotes the idea that photographs embody power, what Christopher Pinney (2004) referred to as a 'corpothetics' approach to the power that images hold. Both Gili's and Miki Kratsman's notion of photographs can be attributed to the approach of 'corpothetics' that Pinney conceptualized, in which photographs carry and transmit power. The

corpothetics approach suggests not only asking the question of "how images 'look,' but what they can 'do'" (2004:8). The notion of "corpothetics," which, according to Pinney, means "embodied, corporeal aesthetics" (2004:8), expands our understanding of the photograph beyond its representational aesthetics.[79] Like Christopher Pinney, Liza Bakewell (1998) attributes transformative qualities to images, relying on John Langshaw Austin's (1962:6) notion of *perlocutionary* acts (Bakewell 1998:22). According to Bakewell, images are not only descriptive of content but they are "actionary" in the sense of creating a new social reality of order for the viewer. She coins the concept of the *image act*, which resonates with Austin's concept of the speech act (Bakewell 1998:23–24).

Gili and Miki, like other photographers I talked with, related to their encounter with the Wall as an affective encounter, described through its power to transmit emotions. They claim the moment of encountering the Wall is a communicative moment: there is a lot to see, capture, and articulate. Gili, like Miki, talked about the wall as a "photogenic" structure. Gili articulated this in the following words:

> When I go to take photographs of the landscape and I see the Wall, I do not
> deliberately aim at photographing the Wall so much. I feel that the Wall is already
> widely photographed. Every international photographer that arrives here takes
> pictures of it; it seems like the Wall has become this banal object to be

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[79] Through looking at the photographic production in India, Pinney borrows the notion of *darshan* from the Hindu tradition. Darshan is "seeing and being seen by deity" (2004:9), a notion that attributes visual interactivity and a physically transformative quality to images. Interactions with images, seen through this notion, suggest an embodied practice of the visual. I am reluctant to use the notion of *darshan* as a tool of analysis in this work since such use could potentially decontextualize the Hindu spiritual practice of relating to images as godly or divine.

photographed. There are so many images of the Wall, the Wall has become the *prostitute of photography*. Here it is again, another photograph of the Wall, but we saw this already. My feeling is that is it easy to take photographs of the Wall. The Wall is very visual, it is *photogenic*, it is even perfect for photographers, even its grey shade can be used for measuring or fixing camera light.

In these words, Gili articulated one of the strongest imageries of the Wall as a photographic scene. Describing the Wall as "photogenic" and as "the prostitute of photography," Gili shed light on how the Wall is made and remade as a sight of attraction not only for politicized photographers, but also for companies that commodify the Wall and utilize it as a site for commercial purposes (as in the previously discussed example of Comme il Faut or Cellcom). The Wall becomes a structure that a priori projects a photographic imagery of itself or an abstraction of itself. As the photographers with whom I talked articulated, its power stems from its material agency, so to speak, to elicit or trigger feelings. Photographs of the Wall, for Gili, represent truths that are not debatable: they are a universal language, or constitute non-negotiable sentences, as Miki suggested. The Wall—to borrow from recent terminologies in cultural studies and psychoanalysis—is an affective structure, one that absorbs and then projects the emotions of people who are affected by it. It is a structure that embodies suffocations and silence, as much as it reflects resistance and oppression. Many people with whom I talked expressed their fear that the Wall, its presence, its political and psychological effects on people, on the land and on the landscape are everlasting. Moreover, a photograph of the Wall will preserve its image or imagery. A photograph of the Wall, as Gili articulated, is a photograph that has always already been seen: one that makes its viewers say "we've seen this already." Because it is

very visual and "in your face," in Gili's words, it is very easy to capture in a frame, or to replicate. The Wall, she emphasized, "simplifies everything to one clear image;" it leaves no space for complication or conflicting connotations, she said, resonating with Miki's observation. The situation on the ground is very complicated and politically layered. However, the Wall, she insisted, "has only one dimension, I do not know how to explain it."

Material bodies acquire agency through the work of social and political interpretation and the consequent significations that people attribute to them. Both the Wall—as a material and visual structure on the landscape—and photographs of the Wall stand as extensions of social and political relations that have enabled their construction and social meaning. Gili's difficulty in articulating the "one dimensional" aspect of the Wall suggests that the Wall has a visual agency that had been socially and politically invested in its structure and then became *the* structure itself. One interpretation one could contemplate is that the Wall has a material agency to reduce the history of the land into a singular message written on the vertical structure: the violence of separation. Miki and Gili articulated this reading and expressed their distress with this simplifying one-dimensional characteristic of the Wall. Their impression of visual representations of the Wall is that, like the Wall, they too simplify the past, present and future, leaving no gaps for reinterpretations or other possible national narrations. The Wall blocks vision and hope all at once.

To artist and photographer Samar Hazboun,[80] the Wall dictates a new form of

relations with time: past, present and future. Samar is a Palestinian artist who moves

between Bethlehem and different cities in the world. I came across Samar's work through

an online search on photography of the Wall in Palestine (image 30 and 31). What caught

my attention about Samar's work on the Wall is the pronounced contrast between hope and

desperation in a series of staged photographs. I connected with her while I was in Toronto

and she was in Peru working on a photography project. Our paths did not cross while we

both were in Palestine. "My photographs work with emotions; they have sadness but a lot

of beauty," Samar told me during a Skype interview I conducted with her. Samar

photographed the Wall in a contrastive setting: "I do not want to make the Wall look

beautiful in these photographs, but I want to affect people emotionally as they look at my

photographs," she said. Samar grew up in Bethlehem and she lived to see and experience

the transforming landscape as a result of Israeli government policies; she witnessed the

transformation of the topography of her hometown, through the building of Israeli

settlements, Israeli roads, and the Wall. Although the Wall affected Samar's life when it

suffocated her hometown, what hurt her the most was witnessing people from her town

being forced to get used to the Wall's presence in their lives, she told me. She said, "I

travel a lot in and out of the country and each time I leave for a few months and return, I

see the Wall uglier and bigger." "When I look at the Wall," she continued, "I feel that it

triggers me and incites me." As a visual artist, Samar has developed a strong affective and

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[80] Samar Hazboun's *Before the Wall*: http://samarhazboun.com/before_the_Wall, accessed October 22, 2014.

sensory relation to her landscape; in her exact words: "I became very sensitive to the ways in which visual elements leave traces in our lives."

Image 30: Samar Hazboun, Before the Wall (2012). Source: http://samarhazboun.com/before_the_wall. Used with the permission of the photographer.

"My photographic project in Al-Walajeh, near Bethlehem, showed the moment in which the Wall was still under the process of construction, but it also projected a possible future where things will never be the same," Samar said. Referring to the geographical site and the visual narration that her photographs offer, Samar continued:

Once the Wall is sealed in that area, the life of the pregnant woman in my photographs and her future newborn child will not be the same. This project, therefore, is an attempt to provide a visual documentation of an ongoing process

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captured in one moment in time, asking the viewers to imagine a possible change to this situation. […] When you see how small the child is or the baby stroller next to the mother, and how huge the Wall behind them is, you think about the size-proportion damage of the Wall. This why I called this project *Before the Wall*. By "before" I mean before it is finished and sealed completely, asking to imagine where were these children or their mothers before the Wall was finished. By "before," I also refer to the position of these people in front of the Wall.

Image 31: Samar Hazboun, Before the Wall (2012). Source: http://samarhazboun.com/before_the_wall. Used with the permission of the photographer.

The women in Samar's photographic project *Before the Wall* wore black in a gesture of mourning, as she told me, while the children wore bright colours, projecting hope and innocence onto the landscape. This series of photographs featured only women as subjects standing in front of the Wall, visualizing conditions of motherhood and childhood in a violent setting in an attempt to produce sympathy in viewer. This representational

strategy risks a slippage to hegemonic conceptions of national violence as a masculine affair, while women and children are constructed either as docile victims of violence (Giles and Hyndman 2004) or as reproducing the nation (Kanaaneh 2002). Yet, for Samar, focusing her lens on women and children reflects her life and that of other women around her, whose movement is not only restricted by domestic patriarchal control,[81] but also by imprisoning military regulations and structures.

Photographic projects like Samar's, then, utilize visuals as a means of communicating emotions. Visualizing the construction of the Wall and the landscape of military occupation through such photographic frames is a form of archiving not only what would soon be completely concealed, like Palestinians and their villages behind the Wall, but also what is remaining or present. While Palestinians encounter the Wall from a proximate distance, what does it mean to confine it to a photographic frame? In Samar's *Before the Wall*, the Wall is compartmentalized and partial; it peeks into the frame from its two edges. The Wall, as Samar also maintained, is at the background of the photographic scene both physically and symbolically. What is central in her work is the representation of women and children in the light of a suspended time, at a segment of the Wall where it was still partially constructed and incomplete. For Samar and other Palestinian artists and photographers with whom I talked, the work of capturing the Wall in visual frames is an intentionally political work. Such work, as most photographers asserted, aimed at raising the consciousness of the international community about life under a military occupation. The Wall, as a photograph, is a powerful tool to advance such goals. However, what

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[81] In another photographic project, Samar worked on domestic violence against women in Palestine.

happens when photographic engagements with the Wall cultivate a discomfort amongst Palestinian photographers? Does photographic work with the Wall subvert the politics of the gaze or does it reproduce the (history of) political struggle over visuals? Finally, what does it mean to refuse to work with the Wall?

4. Frames of Absence: Visualizing the Vanishing

Many Palestinian photographers with whom I talked were questioning how to visualize a landscape of disappearance, or how to articulate absence in all its forms. Palestinian textual and visual work on absence is informed by the reality of constant displacements, longing for lost lands, homes, or families. This work holds on to the remains of a shrinking landscape and the remaining time. Prominent Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish was known for his poetry of absence. For Darwish, absence is an extension of the self and is complementary to presence. In his poem "Now in Exile," Darwish (1995) wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

قل للغياب: نَقَصْتَني
وأَنا حضرتُ... لأكملك[82]

</div>

tell absence: You are missed
and I am present…to complete you[83]

In another book, *Present Absence* (2012), *Fi hadrat al-ghiyab*, whose Arabic title literally translates to "In the Presence of Absence," Mahmoud Darwish narrates his lifelong relation to absence, which renders life for him and for many other Palestinians, as

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[82] *Ka zahr al lawz aw ab'ad*. Beirut: Riad al-Rayyes (1995), 19.
[83] From Mahmoud Darwish's *Almond Blossom and Beyond* translation by the author.

a journey of longing on a land where familiarity is constantly leaving the realm of the real and arriving at an archive of memories. In Darwish's poetry, to live in a state of dispossession and displacement is to live life as a journey of absence.

During my fieldwork, I was introduced to the work of visualizing landscapes and the contested debates about such visual productions through my conversations with artist-photographers whose artistic visual work centred on demarcating the shifting and vanishing contours of the landscape. The photographic work of Palestinian artist Yazan Khalili spoke strongly to the predicaments of capturing the landscape of military occupation. My conversation with him centred on the politics of Palestinian artists' visual replications of the Wall in the shadow of representations and identity politics, as well as on the work of resistance. I was introduced to Yazan through common friends in Ramallah who shared the same art spaces in the city.

In November 2012, I met with Yazan in a café in Ramallah. Ten minutes into our conversation, it became clear that Yazan and I had very similar visual dilemmas that preoccupied us: how to relate, refer, see and unsee the landscape of our absence and disappearance. Yazan brought his work with him, *On Love and Other Landscapes* (2011), which consists of 90 pages of photographs accompanied by a one-line poetic sentence captioning each photo (image 32, 33, 34, 35); he asked me to view it before we started the conversation.

what can one do with the landscape of his disappearance?
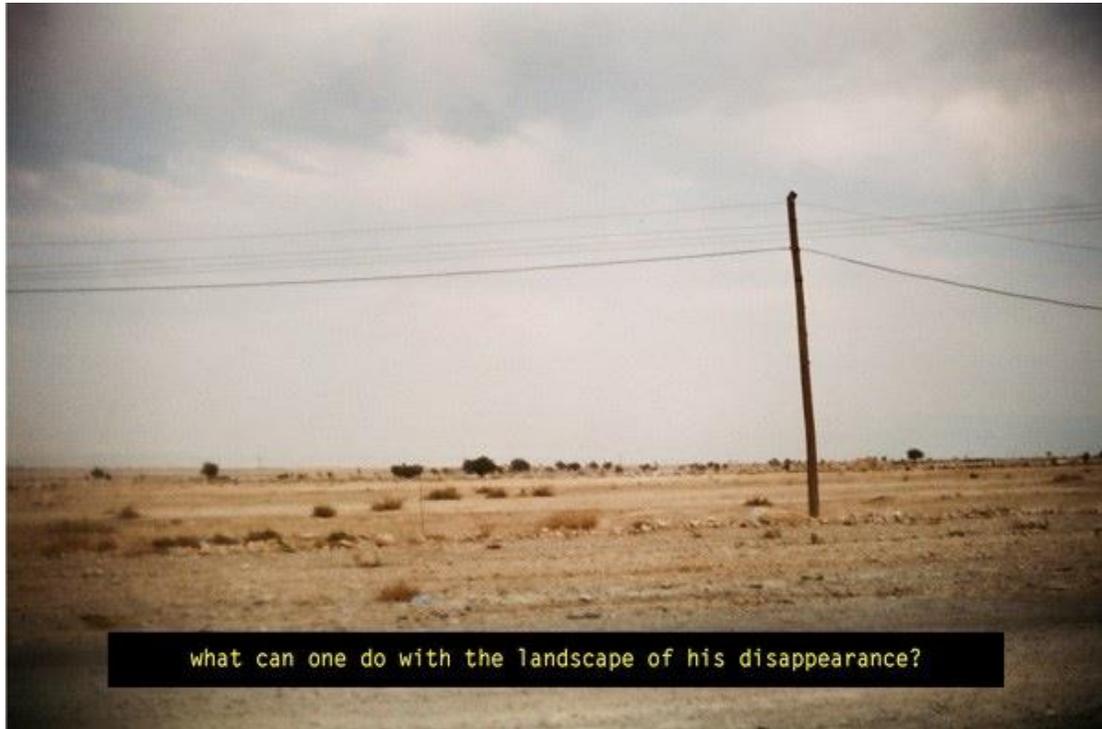
Image 32: Yazan Khalili's (2011) On Love and Other Landscapes. Book, 91 pages, 32x46 cm, 2011. Source: http://www.yazankhalili.com/index.php/project/on-love-and-other-landscapes/, accessed December 3, 2015. Used with the permission of the photographer.

In his book, Yazan Khalili narrates a story of absence and longing for a disappearing sight; he narrates a story of love and loss. The book depicts photographs exchanged with the artist's previous lover at the end of their relationship. In other words, the book is a collection of photographs his lover took during the years they were together in Palestine. If you look at this work, Yazan told me, you do not see the Wall. He told me that although he had photographed the Wall in other visual projects, in *On Love and Other Landscapes* he articulates his hesitations about confronting the material structure of the Wall, outside the photographic frame. He insisted that the moment when the photographer encounters the Wall is a charged moment. "I then ask," Yazan continued, "as a photographer, where is my role, my political role to refuse to work with the Wall…or to

refuse to deal with it as an item of representation? It is impossible for me not to photograph it, or pass in the landscape and not see it, because we see it, and it attracts us."

Nonetheless, the Wall is not absent in Yazan's work; rather, it is present through the textual narration captioning each photograph. As a result, one reads the book with anticipation of an encounter with the Wall in the photographic frame, but such an encounter never takes place. A photography book of a 'Wall-less' landscape of Palestine defies the purpose of the material presence of the Wall on the landscape—the very essence of its erection, which is to be constantly *encountered* and *seen* by those who are affected by its presence in their spaces. Yazan told me that one of his concerns in working with photographs of the Wall is to attempt to shift the Palestinian gaze inward, towards themselves, in a way that removes the catastrophe from their self-representation and self-identification.

she wanted to drive away from the wall
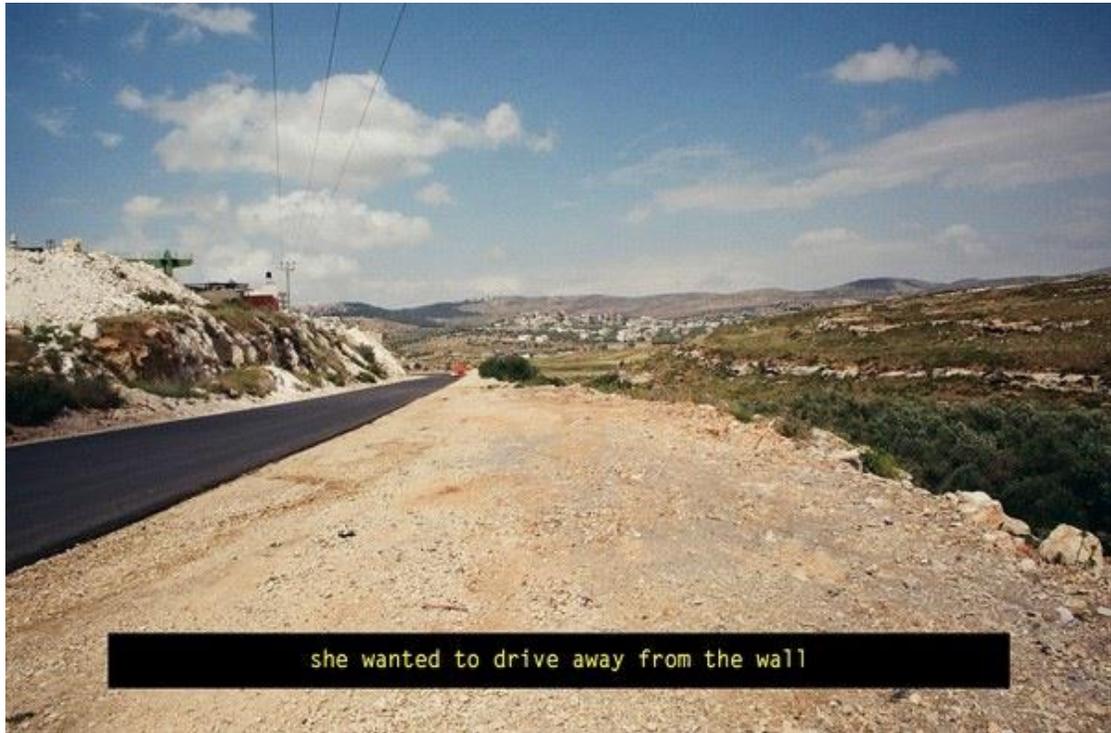
Image 33: Yazan Khalili's (2011) On Love and Other Landscapes. Book, 91 pages, 32x46 cm, 2011. http://www.yazankhalili.com/index.php/project/on-love-and-other-landscapes/, accessed December 3, 2015. Used with the permission of the photographer.

Image 34: Yazan Khalili's (2011) On Love and Other Landscapes. Book, 91 pages, 32x46 cm, 2011. http://www.yazankhalili.com/index.php/project/on-love-and-other-landscapes/, accessed December 3, 2015. Used with the permission of the photographer.
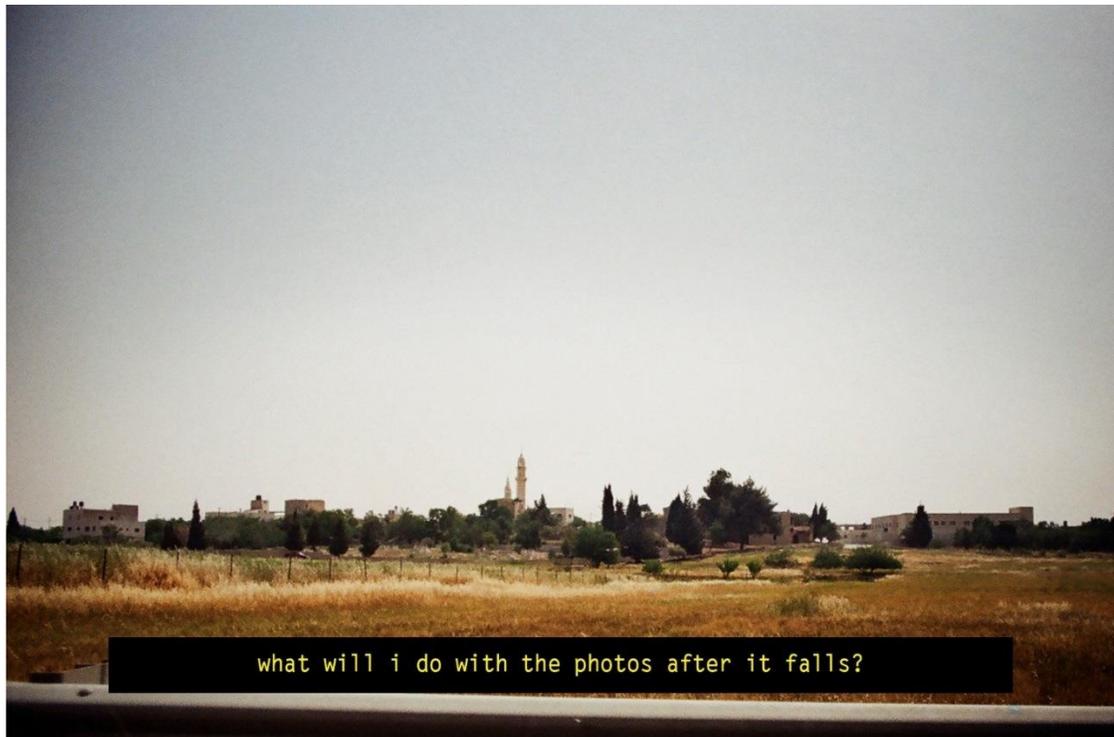
Image 35: Yazan Khalili's (2011) On Love and Other Landscapes. Book, 91 pages, 32x46 cm, 2011. http://www.yazankhalili.com/index.php/project/on-love-and-other-landscapes/, accessed December 3, 2015. Used with the permission of the photographer.

Today, the destructive and ruinous effects of the Wall dwell in the hearts and lands of most Palestinians living in Palestine. My interview with Yazan Khalili brought another repercussion to the surface that the Wall had left the Palestinians to deal with: the visual dilemma of representation and identification with a catastrophic structure, as Yazan put it. He then asked: "can we resist the Wall by photographing it, or should we resist the photograph framing it?" Understanding this conundrum, Yazan explained to me how the Wall is "our photographed tragedy:"

Israel's imposed Wall became ours, like a symbol of our tragedy and catastrophe. The Wall became us, and we then became our tragedy. The problem with

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oppression is not only that the Wall *is* in the landscape, but also that the landscape itself *becomes* the Wall. […] I do not want to engage with the Wall, but it still comes back at us… The Wall comes back and we are almost obliged to reaffirm its existence… when we [Palestinians] represent it…what do we do by representing it? The Wall is rendered a Palestinian object. It becomes a Palestinian aesthetics, like the destruction of Gaza, it became *our* aesthetics, aesthetics of destruction. We should always remain careful and call it out or name it: 'this is the aesthetics of destruction.' To reach some kind of solution should not be through the reaffirmation but the complete erasure of the Wall.

Yazan's work with the Palestinian landscape amplifies the Wall's presence through the force of its absence. For him, entertaining absence and presence in the art of representation of the Wall promotes a removal of the Wall from Palestinian imaginary landscapes and identifications. Therefore, in his work, the Wall is included in the Palestinian landscape through the premise of its exclusion, which acts to reverse the effects of the Wall's exclusionary force on the lands and landscape; or, to put it another way, to undermine the Wall's force in the process of landscapocide. Despite his confidence in his artwork, the Wall remains a source of anxiety for him. "I was afraid that the image of the Wall would turn into an event itself," Yazan told me. His fear was that the Wall "becomes the occupation and all there is to capture of the Israeli occupation, rather than the infrastructures that structured it." His concerns shed light on the slippage into the relation between representation and resistance, offering a critique of the struggle over the politics of photographic representation, where the Wall was made into a synecdoche or a metonym of the occupation. In other words, the Wall is one brick in the structure of occupation that

was later symbolically replaced by this whole structure. The "Wall," as a word, became a

dehistoricized and decontextualized word used to refer to the occupation at large.

One day, Yazan went to capture the landscape in the West Bank. He wanted to

photograph Israeli settlements next to Palestinian villages at night, hoping to capture the

contrast in the lighting, where the power structure of military occupation can be

demarcated through the deprivation of electricity in Palestinian homes and the excess of it

in Israeli settlements. The desired final product of this photographic project was to capture

the visual gap in the lighting, which for Yazan served as a metaphor of colonization. Yazan

told me how his project resulted in producing what he called "failed photographs":

> Once, I had an incident where Israeli soldiers stopped me, took my camera, and
> deleted my photographs. They deleted exactly the photographs that demonstrated
> this power structure expressed in the landscape. So, I was left with photographs of
> darkness, failed photographs, politically failed photographs, because they failed to
> show the political structures. I was left with failed photographs that had nothing
> evocative in them.

For Yazan, "failed photographs" are photographs that failed to show the structural

inequality of the occupation, which he hoped to express by visualizing the contrast

between light and darkness. Therefore, Yazan asked: "In what ways are photographs

incapable to represent oppression?" To explore this question, he told me, "I started

working with darkness as photographs that are outside the systems of representation." With

these "failed photographs" Yazan produced a collection titled *Landscapes of Darkness*

(2011), which preceded his later work *On Love and Other Landscapes* (2011). The material of "failed photographs" inspired Yazan to ask an abstract question: "what are the possibilities to liberate our vision from the sight, so our sight ceases to see?" His photographic artwork, therefore, was a reflection of such contingencies.

Metaphors and metonymic representations in art can be used as a tool of resistance. The power of art lies in making a political statement without using the exact words to refer to it, Steve Sabella, a Berlin-based Palestinian artist, told me when I asked him about art's role in resistance. "I prefer to engage with the Wall without having to depict the Wall," he told me. This is why art can be dangerous to the system: it rests on vague metaphors politicians could misinterpret and misread, Steve explained. Like Yazan's, Steve's work centred on the visual indirectness of treating the otherwise powerfully vivid Wall and the occupation in general. Unlike Yazan, Steve claims that artists should visualize the Wall. The Wall is a visual "error or a mistake," he insisted, and artists should expose this error and engage with it. When I asked Steve about the dangers in representing the Wall in Palestinian visual art spaces, he answered with the assertion that the Wall cannot inform the ways in which Palestinian identify, and it would be very problematic to think that it could. Palestinian identity, he contended, is built on a multiplicity of elements, but the Wall is not one of them.

I had heard about Steve's work from other Palestinian photographers. I contacted Steve and we set a date for a Skype interview in February 2014. He was in Berlin; I was back in Toronto. After connecting with him, I told him the reason I wanted to interview

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him was because of a photographic installation he had held near the Wall in Palestine. The photographs depicted a staged series of semi-naked men standing next to the Wall. I was curious to know the idea behind this photographic project. My first question to him was about this installation, which he titled *Settlement: Six Israelis and One Palestinian*. "I never photographed the Wall in reality," Steve answered me. I repeated my question referring to the mentioned work. Steve reaffirmed that it was not the real physical Wall that appears in the background of the photographs; instead, it was the symbolic Wall or the imagined one. "This is my point. In this work, the Wall became a meta-construct, and symbolically, people identified the grey background as the Wall in Palestine, but it is not," he explained. One does not have to photograph the Wall any more to illustrate its presence, he further elaborated. The Wall "exists in our imaginations just like it exists physically in Jerusalem, or any other location." There is a mental Wall and a physical Wall; but since most Israelis do not see the physical Wall (even though they know it exists), "they created a mental Wall in their minds," he explained. He then told me that the mental Wall was, however, the bigger problem, because the mental Wall does not allow Israelis to relate to or deal with Palestinians; it enables them to refuse to engage in any conversation with Palestinians. Hence, "in my work, I created a visual dilemma." He expanded upon this "visual dilemma," describing to me the concept behind the photographic installation:

> The exhibit was set in the space in the way that your gaze in the room is orchestrated. You have photographs on the walls that face each other, but when you look at a photograph of a Palestinian man, your back must be turned to the photograph of the Israeli man. I force you to decide who you want to look at, see,

or identify with. I created a tension, a problem. This work was a critique to the idea of being balanced. Being balanced in our reality, and in the exhibition, is absurd because you are forced to take sides. I do not think one can be balanced with a military occupation or with racism. I am proposing a conflict in the idea of balance: 'you must take sides.'

The structural violence implanted in the Wall, as an oppressive structure on the landscape, has been transferred onto the photograph representing it, thereby captivating many photographers' interest in taking photographs of it. Palestinian photographers have their reasons to refuse to photograph the Wall, while Israelis who do not want to photograph it have their own. For the Israeli photographers with whom I spoke, committing to photographing the Wall is a political and pedagogical act that aims at bringing awareness to the Israeli public about a military occupation that their state is carrying out a few kilometres away from their cities. However, for many Israelis who support the occupation, refusing to take photographs of the Wall, as Miki told me, stems from the inescapability of any photograph articulating a political statement that is against the Wall. To Palestinian photographers Yazan and Osama, Steve, and, to a lesser extent, Samar, the challenging dilemma emerges when photographs of the Wall replace the Palestinian visual landscape, recreating the painful existential reality of separation and fragmentation, rather than creating a visualized resistance. For these artists, protesting and critiquing the politics of representation of the Wall is made possible by displacing or fragmenting the Wall inside the visual frame.

The Wall is both a material and abstract structure. As shown in previous chapters, the idea of national and ethnic separation pre-existed the construction of the Wall in 2002. In this chapter, I presented the Wall in its visual composition, in particular through the work of photographers. For many photographers working in Palestine, the encounter with the Wall is a confrontational one. My conversations with both Israeli and Palestinian photographers and artists highlighted the dilemma of framing the Wall in a photographic setting. Through these conversations, I learnt that the Wall in a photographic frame or on the material landscape should be analyzed through its 'potential visuality'. A framework of potential visuality recognizes the possibilities of visuals not only to offer a commentary on the political conditions that enabled their creation, but also to circulate subversive readings. In other words, the photograph is a site of struggle over meaning (Hall 1999:512–513) where meaning is constructed, deconstructed, made to be seen and made to be unseen.

Chapter Six: Trajectories and Landscapes of Ruins; A Conclusion

1. Contours

The chapters in this dissertation are tethered together by the argument that the landscape in Palestine is a material and visual site on which political struggles are manifested and projected. The anthropological task here was to explore the landscape through people's experiences, gestures, words and visual articulations. I therefore looked at the relationship between people's location in spaces and within social and political structures, and the effects that these locations have on people's configuration of the landscape. The Wall, I argued, is a material and visual structure that manifests already existing symbolic and abstract forms of separation between Israelis and Palestinians. For Israelis, I showed, the Wall embodies a national anxiety of seeing Palestinians or being in proximity to them. For Palestinians, the Wall manifested the destruction of their material and visual landscapes along with the destruction of their cities and the obliteration of their spaces. I argued that the visualized structures of borders, which are expressed through specific architecture and symbolic structures, are constructed to further enhance borders and conceal the daily violence enforced in the making of a nation.

This dissertation, its driving ideas, thoughts, and hesitations, is not merely a product of one year of fieldwork, but of years of living, of observing, and of thinking through my own experiences and those of others with whom I grew up. The political condition and future promises or threats were rarely left undiscussed in my family's

gatherings; such conversations regularly took place amongst friends or colleagues, whether it be at school, at university, in cafés, or in the workplace. I remember how every evening at eight o'clock my family would sit in the living room in front of the television to watch the Israeli news channel. The news would often be followed up by interviews with experts, analysts, politicians, or scholars interpreting the political situation in the region. Politics and discourses on the political situation were strong elements in our daily lives. The political condition was like a threatening cloud in our skies hanging over us, at times, and like a fog that distorted our sight and vision, at others. Over the last thirty years, I have lived through many of the crucial events that marked themselves on the land, on the landscape and on the people who inhabit and view the land. I witnessed the First Intifada; the first Gulf War; the Oslo agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli state; the Peace treaty between the Israeli state and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yizhak Rabin; the Second Intifada; Israeli wars on Gaza and the invasion of Lebanon. Each event marked the beginning or the end of an era, which brought the promise of transformation or the threat of further violence and war.

While this research is informed by the aforementioned historical events, it largely draws on the empirical data collected during a year of fieldwork conducted in 2012. It is based on interviews with Palestinian and Israeli photographers, artists and activists, as well as on participant observations in Israeli political tours, conferences, and art exhibitions. The main questions that tie all chapters together are the following: what is the role of visuals in people's lives in Palestine and in Israel? What role does the landscape, as a site

and a sight, play in informing people's sense of affinity to the place? Finally, how do people engage with the Wall, as a structure on the landscape and as a representation in a photograph?

I attempted to explore people's lives and the landscapes they inhabit in a reality of military occupation. Reading the visuals of the Wall in the landscape, I was intrigued not only by what is apparent, but also by what is made hidden. I argued that the labour of hiding visual structures is a product of an inability to face the reminder of the presence, as a precarious condition. In other words, in this research, I sought absence as a visual reminder of what is there and not there in the construction of national spaces in the shadow of political unrest. I also argued that the Israeli military constructed the Wall as an aggressive architecture precisely to produce and project the effects of visual violence on those who are imprisoned by it, while at the same time removing it from the visual landscape of those whose lives are hardly affected by it at all.

It was argued in the mainstream Israeli discourse that the Wall served as a state border, even though, in reality, there are no agreed-upon borders between the Palestinian and the Israeli states, and, for that matter, there is no Palestinian state. In this dissertation, although embodying some of the echoing hegemonic discourse of being a border, the Wall was primarily discussed as a structure that triggered conversations about visual, spatial, social and political concerns on the ground. The Wall also remains a site for political disputes and military confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis. Looking at the Wall in Palestine, I was determined to speak about the violence inherent in borders and the structural agency borders have in turning spaces and landscapes into violent sights. In

other words, it is through the Wall that I speak of the tragedy of the vanishing Palestinian landscape.

Theoretically and conceptually, I was inspired by the writings of different scholars with diverse research interests and from various disciplines. Initially, it was Nadia Abu El-Haj's ethnography (2001) that intrigued me to explore the absence of Israeli discourse about the Wall as a military architectural structure. Abu El-Haj looked at the politicized absence of interest within the Israeli archaeological institution in the non-Jewish remains or sites excavated in Israel. She attributes this lack of interest to the bonds constructed between Jewish-related archaeology and Israeli nationalism. The story of the beginning of Israeli nationalism or its *ethos* (Abu El-Haj 2001:233) was constructed through the *mythos* borrowed from historical records and archaeological remains. Palestinian history and Arabic, or Islamic (and to a lesser extent Christian), archaeological relics were never bequeathed the gift (or perhaps the curse) of political and national claims to territories. In my own research, I looked at the reverse process: I asked, what if I looked at a structure that the Israeli state constructed to be present in the Palestinian landscape but absented from the Israeli landscape and discourse. Who can visually reclaim this Wall?

Like that of Abu El-Haj, the work of Eyal Weizman (2007) is centred on material structures through which national boundaries are designed. Weizman's research and writing brought me closer to my field of research: namely, the Wall. Weizman's contribution to my conceptualization of this research was directing my attention to the significance not only of military practices that lead to the domination of a population, but also to the ways in which the state designs architectural structures for the service of

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exercising population control. Weizman identifies the "vertical politics of separation" (2007:15, 117) as an important strategy in the architecture of military occupation; he examines how state control is exercised through vertical structures like walls, fences, watchtowers, and settlements on hilltops. Weizman's focus on architecture led me to look at the landscape on which such architecture is arranged, as an illustration of the *visual* politics of separation. I looked at the landscape not only as the extension of a natural scene, but also as a socially constructed and politicized scene. It was through the writings of W.J.T Mitchell (2002) that I was introduced to the agency and transformative quality of the landscape.

Mitchell's and Weizman's insights were helpful in explaining how architectural ideologies on a population; but they did not explain how Palestinians manoeuvre in surveilled and bordered spaces and how they relate to their experiences in light of their vision of the landscape. I therefore resorted to literature on borders. Specifically, I found auto-ethnographic writing of border crossings to be compelling and useful in understanding the multiple ways in which borders restrict Palestinians, but also their daily acts of crossing or breaking borders. In particular, I found useful the work of Honaida Ghanim (2010), Gloria Anzaldúa (1999), and Shahram Khosravi (2007). From these scholars, I learned that border crossings become habitual practices that cannot be divorced from the daily lives of those subjects living in a fragmented and bordered reality. The ordinariness of borders echoes the ordinariness of violence. Moreover, violence underlies the infrastructure of borders. In the context of this research, I suggested that violence was a

conditioning force upon which much of the social, economic, or political dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians were structured. Violence factored in the regulation of the excessively bordered reality; in segregation, separation, and solidification of ethnic, religious, or national differences. Helping me understand the ordinariness of past and present violence on people's lives, Veena Das' (2007) writings were influential in dictating some of the underlying premises of my understanding of violence.

Literature about landscapes, borders, or violence, however, does not comprehensively account for ways of seeing landscapes and the roles that visuals play in people's experiences, articulations, or imaginations. Therefore, I borrowed from literature that explores the role of visuals in understanding political or social processes. This literature, as well as the empirical evidence I collected during this research, centred on photography as one of the most immediate and intimate forms of material engagement with visuals. Specifically, I relied on Ariella Azoulay's and Christopher Pinney's writings as a basis for interrogating photographs. Photographs functioned in my research both as collected empirical data and as an extension to my field notes. Drawing on Azoulay's (2008) terminology, I suggested "watching" photographs instead of looking at them, hoping to invite readers of this dissertation to critically reflect on their affective responses to the photographs, and, perhaps, to witness the visuals I provided rather than simply seeing them. Echoing Azoulay, Pinney suggests that we always ask not only what images show, but more importantly, what they can do (2004:8). Looking at the position visuals hold in Hindu religious and national expressions, he argues that beyond their mere aesthetics, visuals embody power—or what he refers to as 'corpothetics' (Pinney 2004:8).

As such, people rely on the power of images in transforming their lives. Despite the affective communicativeness of photographs, Azoulay, like Judith Butler (2010), maintains that photographs never stand outside the political framework employed by the reader, who therefore reads the photograph as if it was a sentence.

After parsing these, among other, influential theoretical contributions in the first chapter, in the second chapter titled "Methodology in Visual Fields," I showed that the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians is reflected in visual constructions of the landscape. I conducted an empirical investigation of the discourses of what is seen and what is unseen and how these are projected or constructed visually. Empirically speaking, the work of photographers became central to my theoretical exploration of the visual narratives projected onto the landscape. I also argued that examining the visual landscape urges us to take a closer look at the material traces that visuals leave on the landscape, as well as the abstract traces that they leave in people's lives. I showed how, in its structure, the Wall not only embodies past and present relations between Israelis and Palestinians; it also manifests where this present state stands and where it could possibly project.

In Chapter Three, "Landscapes of Borders," I investigated the multiple dimensions of borders in the context of Israel and Palestine. I described what horizontal, vertical, material or abstract borders look like and how they offer a reading into the complex geopolitics in the region. Building my argument on the excessive existence of borders, both visible and invisible, I claim that the Wall is yet another form of border which

operates through its extensive visual and vertical structure. The Israeli-constructed Wall, I emphasized, is a materialization of the Israeli anxiety about possible threats birthed by the proximity of their occupied subjects. I have also shown that the Wall is not only a material structure, but a mental one as well. Nevertheless, this structure can only be understood by examining the lengthy history of ethnic, political, and national separations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Chapter Four, titled "*Landscapocide*, Border Sights, and Daily Violence" recounted the structures of ordinary violence found in landscapes of borders. I suggested that borders are visually constructed to intensify the effects of displacements and abandonment. By looking at the bordering locations in the Israeli Occupied Syrian Jawlan Heights, I shed light on the complexity and multiplicity of border structures and the violence they express on the landscape. In so doing, I also offer the reader an opportunity to expand their understanding of the reality of violence in military occupation, which can also be subtle, lingering, and destructive to the land and landscape in many different ways. In this chapter, I also argued that in conditions whereby Israelis and Palestinians, who live in inevitable and inseparable proximities, are constructed as enemies, violence becomes a ghost—occasionally silent and silenced, living in and through ordinary encounters between the two peoples.

In Chapter Five, "Framing the Vanishing: Photography of Palestinian Landscape," I investigated the Israeli-constructed Wall as a site of visual production. Drawing on

Azoulay's conceptualization of photography and photographic relations, I explored various Israeli and Palestinian photographic projects. I agreed with Azoulay's claim that a photograph is a sentence; I relied on this approach in reading into the visual work on the Wall. However, I diverged from her argument that photographs are always read by viewers through projection and ideological framing. Indeed, I showed how photographs of the Wall, as most Israeli photographers with whom I spoke suggested, cultivated a singular story, thereby narrowing readers' ability to construct an interpretation. My conversations with Palestinian photographers disclosed that, under a state of military occupation, in which the landscape is also militarized and occupied, they were faced with a dilemma. Since much of their landscape is blanketed with military structures, the Palestinian photographers with whom I spoke were never at ease with capturing the Wall in a photographic frame, without insisting on projecting a political reading of the tragedy it created. Their work speaks volumes about, and redirects the focus to the centrality of the visual relations people continuously imagine and reconstitute with the landscape.

Overall, my intention was to show that the anthropological literature on violence and borders underestimates the role visuals have in generating violent trajectories and bordering restrictions on people's spaces. In addition, literature that explores violence and borders in the context of Palestine and Israel often ignores how central visuals are in informing and reproducing relations of colonization and of anti-colonial resistance. By returning the gaze inward, I suggested pushing the visual range further in my analysis of violence and borders in Palestine and Israel. In highlighting the interconnectedness, both

methodologically and theoretically, amongst the concepts of violence, borders, and visuals, I contributed to the anthropological literature at large, and to the anthropology of borders, violence, visuals, and Israel-Palestine, specifically. I showed that in a state of colonialism or military occupation, the landscape is a transformative, as well as a transforming force. It infiltrates people's visions and horizons. In other words, to live in a state of military oppression or shrinking and fragmenting spaces requires constant refamiliarization with, and reconceptualization of the landscape.

This research was not exempt from limitations. Even though the landscape in Palestine is a major theme here, I used the Wall to narrow the scope through which I engaged with visuals at large. Photography, too, came to be at the centre of this research, despite my preliminary efforts not to prioritize it over other forms of representation or articulation. That became the case as I had to focus on this genre in order to engage in depth with a central form of expression. Furthermore, through conversations with my interlocutors, participant observations in political tours, and my own field notes and photographs, I looked at the multiple ways people communicated their relationship to the landscape, all of which became the primary location of visual excavation. Despite the dominance of photography in this work, my leading questions were not preoccupied solely with the variety of narratives and ties people develop in relation to photographs; rather, I was interested in how people related to photographs explicitly as an extension to the visual landscape. Although the Wall is the lens through which I explored the landscape of borders and violence in this dissertation, I, nonetheless, omitted an exploration of graffiti art

written on the Wall. Since its construction, the Wall has become a canvas for local and international artists who utilize it to disseminate political messages (Parry 2011; Hanauer 2011) against the Israeli military occupation. The graffiti on the Wall in Palestine calls for an extensive linguistic or visual anthropological examination.

Finally, this research did not aspire to represent a wide spectrum of political views from Palestinians or Israelis, nor did it strive to speak for people. Therefore, for example, voices from the Israeli far right or voices of Israeli settlers in the West Bank were not explored, nor were the opinions of Israeli soldiers who were in military service during this research period solicited. As explained in earlier chapters, these voices were not heard partly because of the limited focus and scale of this study and partly because of the difficulties in accessing these communities, as well as the risks that this could potentially pose for me as the researcher.

2. Trajectories

> Perhaps the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence, and with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality. (12)
>
> Edward Said (1999)
> "Palestine: Memory, Invention and Space". In *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry*.

In July 2014, I hosted a friend in my home in Nazareth. My friend is a Palestinian who grew up in the United Kingdom. I decided to take her to my grandmother's destroyed village, Ma'aloul, which sits less than five kilometers away from Nazareth. Ma'aloul was destroyed in early 1950 by the Israeli army. My grandmother's family fled the village and settled in Nazareth. I drove to Ma'aloul by car. I had always mistaken the entrance to the village since the village is hidden behind trees and there are no signs to direct drivers to the centre of the village, where only three buildings remained standing—two churches and one mosque. I had not visited my grandmother's village for three years and had forgotten which turn would take me to the village. I drove deep into the semi-forested field without success. The village was enclosed by trees planted only forty years ago by the state, forcing a radical change on the topography of the land and, hence, rendering it unrecognizable to locals, if recognizable to the state's vision of a landscape that is artificially forested (Long 2009).

Taking a wrong turn, I found myself near a military gate. The state built a military base on the land of the destroyed village (image 36) and none of my family knew much about this base; they knew it existed, and that it was partly built underground, but there

were many speculations as to its function. The base is not overtly apparent on the landscape; like Ma'aloul, the base was also hidden behind trees. In other words, neither Ma'aloul nor the military base are noticeable on the landscape; the first was destroyed and covered with trees, while the other is buried underneath the village's ruins. The former was deliberately destroyed by the state and its ruins were left to time; the later, a military base, reluctantly makes an appearance on the topography through the sight of checkpoints, barbed wires and signs in Hebrew, declaring the site a military zone.

Image 36: A military sign on a fence by the Israeli Air Force in Ma'aloul reads "Warning! 24 hour Video surveillance". July 2014. Photograph by the author.

I returned and drove back looking for any sign to guide me to my grandmother's village and finally found the right turn to the village. After driving for a few minutes on an unpaved road, I reached a small sign directing me to the village, or to what was left and remained standing, resisting the forces of disappearance as if it was a suspended archive.

There stood walls of a mosque and two firmly standing churches refusing to vanish, narrating a story of a landscape of abandonment (images 37 and 38). Photographs that I took of landscapes tell different histories that formed a chain of association about the landscape of memories. It is a landscape from which those who inhabited it, and wrote their stories on its material structures—on its stones and earth—were deprived. The abandoned buildings in Ma'aloul have an echoing story to tell about the abandoned buildings in the Jawlan heights; the rubble of a demolished house in East Jerusalem; or a destroyed building in Gaza. All together, they transform the landscape of Palestine into one that is on the verge of collapse.

Image 37: Ma'aloul's abandoned mosque. Sign in Hebrew reads as "Dangerous Building! Using it is prohibited! Entering this building is at your own risk!" July 2014. Photograph by the author.

In 2011, the displaced families of Ma'aloul initiated a restoration of the churches. A year later, I saw photographs of my matrilineal family's visit to Ma'aloul. The photographs showed my family feasting near the church, eating, singing, and dancing. The significance of villagers' visits to Ma'aloul, and the restoration of its remaining sites lies not only in Ma'aloul families' attachment to their past, to their ancestors' cemeteries or lands, but also in the close attention given to the ties constructed in the present among the displaced families. The presence becomes, to use Pierre Nora's concept (1989), *lieux de memoire*, that is, sites and spaces of collective memories that are not institutionalized or established the way hegemonic histories is. Through transforming the landscape into archives of memories, the work of commemoration becomes possible in re-establishing and symbolically reclaiming lands that were lost. In addition, restoration and protection of the landscape in Ma'aloul form resistance practices to the destructive attempts on the part of the state to keep the site far from its past inhabitants' reach. Restoration not only functions by replacing the scattered bricks of buildings, but also by constructing a landscape that is familiar to the village's displaced dwellers, and present and future generations of their descendants. By remembering, archiving and restoring the destroyed villages, displaced communities familiarize themselves with the landscape as well as construct and imagine a possible future conjoined with the remains of the past.

Image 38: Catholic Church of Ma'aloul cleaned and restored by Ma'aloul's families who were displaced in 1950, the last year the church served as a religious site for its dwellers before it was restored in 2011. July 2014. Photograph by the author.

Throughout these chapters, I have shown that the colonized landscape in Palestine is largely informed by visual violence, which I identified through the concept of *landscapocide*. Resistance to processes of landscapocide is possible through subverting visual relations people have to the landscape. In other words, the acts of cleaning, repairing, fixing and restoring the churches and the mosque in Ma'aloul, our specific example in this conclusion, is work against the force of destruction of the landscape. Furthermore, since the families can neither claim the lands from the state, nor return to them, since they became a confiscated property of the state on which a military base is established, restoring the familiar landscape of the village allows the displaced people of

Ma'aloul to launch the first brick in the futural process of full, perhaps juridical, reclaiming of the suspended destroyed landscape.[84]

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[84] One can read about similar other cases of legal and social reclaiming of lands and property of destroyed villages in an interview with Wakim Wakim's (2001) in *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

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