Bodies, Power, Resistance: Palestinian women’s subjectivity and resistance in the occupied territories

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Abstract:

Bodies, Power, Resistance is an examination of how Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) experience different subjectification as a result of continued Israeli occupation, and how they enact resistances to these processes of subjectification. This project starts from the argument that within the field of Critical Security Studies, insufficient attention is paid to how women’s daily lived experiences of subjectification. These daily-lived experiences can indicate how exercises of power aimed at securitising have the effect of creating subjects. Subjectification functions by creating subjects who are secure, (in this case Jewish citizens of Israel) and subjects who are (in)secure, (residents in the occupied Palestinian territories). In turn, subjects made (in)secure by these exercises of power will enact resistance to their subjectification. This project draws its theoretical foundations from Foucault’s model of power and resistance, and his theory of the dispositif, or ‘apparatus’ as well as how Butler, Delueze, and Agamben have expanded Foucault’s theories. In particular, when starting from the daily lived experiences of women, examinations of subjectification and resistance should examine how securitising practices are directed at gendered bodies to control and discipline subjects.

In the case of Palestinian women in the occupied territories, subjectifications result from multiple elements, all of which together make up the broader apparatus of the Israeli occupation. Elements of the occupation such as the separation barrier or curfews function differently upon different Palestinian women, but share the common feature of being directed at the control, regulation and de-legitimising of Palestinians with the result of forming and subjugating Palestinians as de facto subjects of Israeli power. Taking inspiration from Foucault’s view that power and resistance can always be found together, Israeli practices that result in subjectification of Palestinians will necessarily be accompanied by Palestinian resistance. Therefore, when examining Palestinian women’s experiences of subjectification it is also essential to examine Palestinian women’s daily-lived experiences of resistance to that subjectification. Research for this project was conducted in the West Bank of the oPt, wherein I conducted narrative interviews with women. These narrative interviews enhance the project’s understanding of subjectifications and resistances as embedded in daily-lived experience.

One element of the apparatus of Palestinian women’s resistance has been suicide bombing/martyrdom operations, which, I argue, demonstrate the embodied nature of resistance to an occupation aimed at corporeal control and regulation. The instances of suicide bombing/martyrdom operations form only one aspect of women’s resistance however, and should be analysed in tandem with other elements of women’s resistance. Resistances to subjectification, like exercises of power, occur on multiple different levels, through different tactics and in many locations. The project concludes by arguing that the experiences women have of subjectification and resistance illustrate most strongly that the continual insistence of traditional International Relations and Security Studies on the division between the ‘public’ worthy of inclusion in analysis and the relegation of ‘private’ to outside the realm of analysis is a fallacy at best.
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‘One repays a teacher badly if one remains always a pupil. And why do you not want to pluck at my wreath?’ - Nietzsche

Peace to the villages, war to the palaces - Rest in Power, Joel.
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Introduction – Checkpoint 300

Checkpoint 300

Standing in line waiting to cross out of the West Bank into Israel at Checkpoint 300 located between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, one is confronted with two realisations about the exercise of power. Firstly, power is exercised upon our bodies.¹ This is apparent in the maze of fences, turnstiles, gates and the concrete separation barrier, all of which dictate every movement of every body passing through the checkpoint. One is also aware of how one is under surveillance from cameras and heavily armed soldiers patrolling the catwalks above the checkpoint. Secondly, and perhaps less obviously, the exercise of power actively creates subjects. Subjectification occurs differently through different bodies, such that the bodies of foreign nationals, the elderly, men, women or children experience different exercises of power. Despite the many ways in which those passing through the checkpoint are formed as subjects, it is possible to come to an understanding of these subjectifications if one sees the checkpoint as merely one element in the apparatus of power that is the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

In starting from the examination of the different elements which compose an apparatus of power, it is possible to begin to unravel the particulars of said apparatus and come to a better understanding of how it is that apparatus came into practice. The value of such an analysis comes from an understanding that power is exercised in an infinite number of ways. It exposes elements of power that may otherwise go unnoticed,

¹ For the purpose of this project, ‘body’ refers to the biopolitical body that is the focus of exercises of power. The body is the focus of exercises of power insomuch as it is the physical site to which power and discipline can be applied.
and in doing so, it also allows for the possibility of exploring how the exercise of power is resisted. As obvious as the exercise of power is in Checkpoint 300, the resistance to it is subtle, yet enduring. Palestinians who pass through Checkpoint 300 exercise resistance to their subjectification in lots of different ways, many of them seemingly insignificant. If the exercise of power in Checkpoint 300 (or indeed any one of the checkpoints scattered throughout the occupied Palestinian territories) is aimed at de-humanising the people passing through, then resistance aimed at challenging subjectification occurs when Palestinians find ways to maintain their humanity. Through its exercise, power subjugates, but this subjectification is necessarily accompanied by resistance. One therefore cannot speak of power without also speaking of resistance (Foucault, 1980 p142).

There have recently been some excellent cross-disciplinary analyses which have been aimed at uncovering specific aspects of the Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance. (Abufarha, 2009; Weizman, 2007; Zureik, et al 2011). Weizman’s excellent analysis of the architecture of occupation examines how architecture has been used since the formation of the Israeli state to control Palestinians. Abufarha takes a critical ethnographic approach to come to an understanding of how the occupation functions to create Palestinians who willingly blow themselves in martyrdom operations/suicide bombing attacks.\(^{2}\) In an edited volume entitled *Surveillance and Control in Israel*

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\(^{2}\) For the duration of this project the term suicide bombers/martyrs will be used to refer to the women who successfully undertook attacks/operations wherein they detonated an explosive device attached to their body. I have chosen to follow the example of F. Hasso, who in her 2005 essay used the same term so as to acknowledge the multiple ways of discursively referring to the women. Referring to them as only suicide bombers’ is an undoubtedly Western-centric approach as it denies the very different way the women likely saw themselves, and the way they are referred to in their own society. Therefore, the use of suicide bomber/martyr is an attempt to discursively explain the different cultural perceptions of the women and their actions. In Arabic, there is a differentiation between someone who was killed as a result of the occupation – known as a *shahid* (martyr in English), and someone who actively sought death, such
Palestine (Zuriek, et al 2011), a range of authors investigate a wide variety of techniques used in the surveillance of Palestinians and what the impacts of these means of surveillance are. These examples demonstrate the logic of examining Israeli power and Palestinian resistance under a critical light, because many of the means of control and subjectification of Palestinians appear subtle but are in fact insidious. As a result of taking a more critical approach to aspects of the conflict, these works contribute to a much deeper understanding of how occupation and resistance function.

This project has been inspired by these three works, and it has sought to expand upon their approach by focusing on a particular segment of the Palestinian population that experience particular impacts of the occupation: women. The reason for doing so is clear: women and their experiences of occupation and resistance deserve elucidation because purporting that one’s analysis is ‘gender-blind’ does not safeguard one from reproducing a gender bias (Wadley, 2010) and assumptions about whose experiences matter in conflict often favour ‘men as warriors’ when gender goes missing from the analysis (Sylvester, 2012a). Further, there is a need to bring ‘subjects’ and their bodies into the frame of analysis in order to demonstrate the relationship between exercises of power and the physical body. This project asserts that there is a need to expand further on the works of those such as Weizman and Abufarha by fundamentally interrogating how the exercise of power in the occupied Palestinian territories occurs through the bodies of Palestinian women and how Palestinian women resist these exercises of power.

The research project

as through a martyrdom operation/suicide bombing – known as an istishhadi (roughly translates to martyrrous one) (Abufarha 2009 p10). The difference is that action is implied in the term istishhadi. This differentiation does not come through in the English translation.
‘Bodies, Power, Resistance’ is an analysis of how Palestinian women living under Israeli occupation experience and resist power through their bodies. Foucault claims that it is not power that is the focus of his inquiries, but instead ‘the subject’ (Foucault 1994b p327). This project thus aims to explain how and to what effect the construction of Palestinian women as de facto subjects of Israeli power occurs upon their bodies and how Palestinian women seek to resist their positions as subjects to Israeli power. My chosen questions will examine how occupation and resistance are experienced by women through an investigation of the elements that make up subjectification in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and the enactments of resistance that are a challenge to subjectification. The questions this project seeks to address are thus:

1) What are the practices through which Palestinian women are formed as subjects to the occupation? In other words, what is the dispositif of occupation?

2) What are the practices through which Palestinian women enact resistance to their positions as subjected to occupation? In other words, what is the dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance?

In this project I utilise Palestinian women’s daily-lived experiences of the Israeli occupation to demonstrate how the occupation exercises power through processes of security that contribute to the subjectification of Palestinian women through regulation and control. This subjectification is accompanied by Palestinian women enacting resistance to their subjectification, and these resistances are also often embedded within daily-lived experience.

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3 Here by de facto I mean that Palestinians in the occupied territories are not legal subjects of Israel, but are subjects in practice as a result of the occupation.

5 I am following the example of the UN in defining the oPt as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.

6 apparatus
The value of such an analysis is in its challenge to relegations of women’s lived experience to the outside of examinations of security, and its potency comes from the focus on the body as a site where security practices focus to control, regulate and discipline subjects. There is certainly a wide variety of literature within critical studies on security examining how subjects can be made insecure as result of processes of securitisation, much of it coming from a Feminist perspective, such as in Hansen’s work on the dilemmas of ‘speaking security’ and ‘security as silence’ (Hansen 2000), or MacKenzie (2009), who examines how female combatants’ needs are de-securitised after conflict. From other perspectives, Balzacq (2005) makes an argument for looking beyond discourse and accounting for power imbalances in the examination of securitisation, and in a 2010 contribution to the International Studies Association Compendium that draws from the work of the c.a.s.e. collective manifesto (2006), Balzacq et al (2010) argue that ‘Security is, the result of a process of (in)securitization’ (p2).

There is a need to add to these existing analyses by examining how subjects made (in)secure by processes of security engage in resistance, as the Balzacq et al article advocates (ibid, p.13), but centralising the daily-lived experiences of women is crucial. Herein is how this project makes a contribution to the Feminist and Critical studies on security literature. In highlighting women’s daily lived experiences of (in)security that result from subjectification and their enactments of resistance to these processes, I make the argument that it is narratives of women’s daily experiences of occupation and resistance that have the greatest potential to de-stabilise existing assumptions of who is being made secure and who is being made insecure during the present form of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. In her book War as Experience,
Sylvester argues that feminist scholars of security studies such as MacKenzie, 2009; Parashar, 2011a; or Stern, 2006, make a valuable contribution to the study of war that also reflects feminist theorising ‘by asking how best to present women’s experiences of war’ (Sylvester, 2012b p50). Sylvester goes on to argue that Feminist International Relations is concerned with bringing ‘ordinary women in war’ into the field, and she advocates using bodily experiences of war as a means to do so whilst opening up investigations of war to a much wider range of relationships and experiences (Sylvester, 2012b. pp61-62).

The focus on the body as the site where the exercise of power is directed adds to the literature examining how bodies are controlled in analyses of the Israeli control of the oPt (Parsons and Salter, 2008). Bodies are relevant to the project because it is through our bodies that we experience the world, and it is through the physical bodies of Palestinians that through various elements of the occupation Israel is able to exercise power and subjugate the Palestinian population. Sylvester argues that: ‘To study war as experience requires that human bodies come into focus as units that have war agency and are also prime targets of war violence and war enthusiasms’ (Sylvester, 2012b p484). For Sylvester, taking seriously the body and how bodies are sites and targets of war is an essential element of understanding how war is experienced. In a similar vein, Butler writes: ‘The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well’ (Butler, 2004a p26). Bodies are an important site where power is exercised and experiences are had, especially in times of war where the object of the fighting is to kill or injure other bodies; an object not often discussed (Scarrey, 1985, quoted in Sylvester, 2012b p66).
Bodies are the targets of power and violence, thus it is only logical that bodies should be central to any enquiry into the nature of power or violence. Increasingly, the body is being taken more seriously in International Relations, as evidenced by the work of Sylvester (2012a, 2012b), or Ericksson Baaz and Stern (2009). Butler (2004b, 2010) has long been calling for the centralisation of the body as a focal point for analysis, and the cross-disciplinary work of the New Materialists such as Coole (2005, 2007, 2010) and Braiddotti (2010) draw upon the works of Merleau-Ponty, Agamben, Deleuze and Foucault to advocate for a corporeal approach to politics. This project takes seriously these calls for a bodily focus, whilst maintaining that our bodies are not merely the targets of power and violence, but that they are also a means of resistance.

**Drawing inspiration from Foucault**

In explaining Palestinian bodily resistance vis-à-vis the way Israeli power acts upon Palestinian’s bodies, this project aims to bring to the forefront that it is not possible to investigate either Israeli power or Palestinian resistance in isolation. Each is necessary for the definition of the other. They are not opposites; they are one and the same, and herein is where this project draws its direction from Foucault. This interpretation of the relationship between power and resistance differs from the sovereign model of power which posits resistance as detached from power. The sovereign model of power is problematic because it places power and resistance as separate from one another. In such a model, resistance is too easily over-looked. Foucault reframes power and resistance as ‘conduct’ and ‘counter-conduct’ (Foucault 2007 p201). Such a re-framing is quite useful because it centralises the notion of action in both, and implies that power and resistance are reliant upon one another. Through determining that action defines both conduct and counter-conduct we can see the
importance of the body as something that can be acted upon to either formulate the subject or to enact resistance, thereby establishing the link between subjectification, the body, power and resistance.

Framing power as something that is exercised, and its exercise as productive in that it produces the subject as well as knowledge, means that there is an important implication for how we can study the exercise of power. Rather than see the exercise of power as uniform, or as a ‘pre-given’ it becomes important to understand how power functions, through what mechanisms it is exercised, and how its exercise forms the subject. As such, by taking seriously Foucault’s model of power, this project is aimed at unpacking how the occupation functions, and through which mechanisms and techniques Palestinian women are formed as subjects. Taking seriously Foucault’s model of power also means accounting much more thoroughly for how resistance relates to power, and how resistances to power are shaped and enacted.

The notion that resistance has to be centralised, organised or calculated reflects a state-centric, Western, liberal understanding of resistance. I draw from Foucault as well as Scott to argue that resistance can in fact be much more free-form and ‘everyday’. For Foucault, the possibility for resistance exists everywhere power is exercised. The forms that resistances can take are as varied as the forms the exercise of power can take (Foucault, 1978). ‘Hence, there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of rebellions or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case’ (Foucault, 1978: 95-96). I more fully engage with Foucault’s theory of resistance in Chapter Two; but his insistence that resistances are varied and located wherever power is exercised is central to this project.
Foucault is not alone in thinking about resistances as plural and varied. In his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James Scott argues that ‘everyday’ resistances are far more significant than they are often given credit for. His argument is based on a division between the ‘public’ transcripts of the dominant group and the ‘private’ transcripts of the subordinate group (Scott, 1990: 3). Within the public domain, the dominant group utilises discourse in such a way that it appears that subordinate groups are complicit in their own subservience (ibid: 4). Therefore, examining only the public domain gives the impression that there is no resistance from the subordinate group. ‘Any analysis based exclusively on the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate groups endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subordination’ (Scott, 1990: 4). He goes on to argue that the resistance tactics of the subordinate group may not seem like resistances to the dominant group, but this may be precisely the aim. ‘Spontaneity, anonymity and lack of formal organization then become the enabling modes of protest rather than a reflection of the slender political tactics of the popular classes’ (Scott, 1990:151). The range of everyday resistances engaged by the subordinate group may not fit into state-centric notions of resistance but that does not mean that they are not engaging in resistance. He introduces the term ‘infrapolitics’ to refer to these resistances.

‘For a social science attuned to the relatively open politics of liberal democracies and to loud, headline-grabbing protests, demonstrations, and rebellions, the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible, as we have seen, is in large part by design – a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power’ (Scott, 1990:183).

Scott’s notion of infrapolitics does not explain every example of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, but it does support my claim that Palestinian women’s resistances in
the occupied territories are varied, not always apparent as ‘resistance’ and often located within daily-lived experience.

**Adopting a Feminist approach to daily experiences of subjectification and resistance**

Whilst this project draws inspiration from Foucault, it is rooted centrally as a Feminist analysis to power and resistance in the occupied territories. Whilst there is no single ‘feminist’ methodology, there is broad agreement across numerous fields that a feminist project ‘fundamentally challenges the often unseen androcentric or masculine biases in the way that knowledge has traditionally been constructed in all the disciplines’ (Tickner 2006 p20). Women and their daily-lived experiences of occupation and resistance can challenge the unseen masculine biases that persist amongst existing analyses of the techniques and mechanisms of the Israeli occupation (Weizmann, 2007; Parsons and Salter, 2008, Parsons, 2011). These aforementioned projects are fantastic in that they conduct analyses of how the occupation actually functions to control, subjugate, and manage the Palestinian population, but more insight into how these practices have different impacts on different Palestinians can be gained by conducting a Feminist analysis of how women experience these exercises and mechanisms of power.

This leads to the choice of a postmodern feminist methodology for this project. Christine Sylvester encourages an approach that she calls ‘homesteading’, a process whereby known subject statuses are reconfigured and opened-up (Sylvester, 1992 p2). She goes on to write that postmodern feminism ‘looks for differences in voices and standpoints and marks the connections that may exist across the differences. It looks for new forms and mobilities of subjectivity that can replace single-subject categories, inherited homes, without denying, non-recognizing the currently existing subject’ (ibid
In other words, a postmodern feminist approach will seek to deconstruct the falsifying dichotomies of who is a victim and who is a perpetrator in instances of subjectification and resistance; it will help to reconstruct a new picture of how occupation and resistance are experienced without ignoring the multiple identities and positions in society of Palestinian women. Sylvester’s explanation of the utility of a postmodern approach to women’s involvement in political struggle when she writes: ‘It is not so much where “women” are located and which causes they espouse (or others assign to them) in this era as the ways in which their cross-cutting struggles mobilize their subjectivities and rescript aspects of their identity while contributing to a general subversion of modern expectations and rules’ (ibid p184). Whereas most mainstream approaches to women’s political violence aim to locate the women within a narrow framework of ‘terrorist’ or ‘victim of patriarchy’ a postmodern feminist approach will allow me instead to explore how their actions signal them as producers of knowledge and ‘mobilizers of subjectivities.’

Of central importance to consider when undertaking this type of Feminist analysis are questions of the researcher’s own position and researcher reflexivity. Undertaking research whilst maintaining that one’s own perspective is ‘irrelevant’ to the outcome is bound to skew the research far more than approaching the same project whilst acknowledging and accounting for one’s own bias. Understanding how one’s position as researcher has helped to determine the outcome of research will not rid the project of unseen bias, but will make that bias visible, thereby demonstrating how the researcher may have gotten their results. If traditional International Relations seeks to keep epistemology and ontology separated, then postmodern feminism seeks to join them together by claiming that the ‘researcher’ who ‘knows’ cannot be separated from
the ‘subject’ who is ‘known’ (Sylvester 1992 p61). Such a position denies that the researcher can create new knowledge from researching the subject. Instead, from this approach the ‘subject’ shares their knowledge with the researcher.

Of equal importance when undertaking research is the examination of power imbalances between the ‘researcher’ and the ‘researched’. These power imbalances often have crucial effects on the ethics of the research as well as what type of data or knowledge is gained from the research. Self-reflexivity is of critical importance when examining women’s lives as subjective, multi-faceted and relational (Ackerly et al, 2006 p7; Tickner, 2006 p28). Feminist research is also often conducted with the aim of producing lasting and significant change in the lives of the ‘subject’. Therefore, feminist researchers often approach their projects with the goal of ‘action’ not simply explanation. As a result, feminist scholars are very open about their ‘bias’ and often see themselves as engaged in political struggle as opposed to being a non-biased observer (Tickner, 2006 p29).

There is also a need to address to what degree a Feminist approach to research fits within Palestinian women’s experiences and understandings. Egyptian Anthropologist Saba Mahmood engages with the question of difference between ‘Western’ feminisms and feminisms in the Islamic world. According to Mahmood (2001), problems often arise when Western researchers claim to adopt a ‘feminist’ perspective when conducting research on the subject of women in Arab or Muslim societies. The choice to associate such research with feminism can be problematic if it tends to ascribe a specific ideal of what women should strive for by Western standards of what it means to be a liberated woman. Continued assertions that Muslim and Arab women are universally oppressed, and thus ‘need’ Western feminism to save them will fail to successfully
explain the complexity and diversity of the experiences of Muslim and Arab women. Specific to this project, preoccupancy with the ‘position’ of women within Palestinian society does not necessarily correspond to the attention Palestinian women pay to their position vis-à-vis men. As is the case with other nationalist struggles, the struggle against the Israeli occupation almost always takes precedence. As such, analyses which claim to centralise Palestinian women, as this analysis does, should give precedence to the issues women are most concerned with.

This is not to argue for condoning actions within Palestinian society that serve to subjugate, punish or subordinate women, but rather that as a Western researcher claiming a feminist approach to Palestinian women, I must start from the position that I am merely guests in lives of the women I am researching and should thus avoid prescribing desirable indicators for women’s ‘liberation’ from patriarchy. Mahmood herself makes the point that ‘in order for us to be able to judge, in a morally and politically informed way, even those practices we consider objectionable, it is important to take into consideration the desires, motivations, commitments and aspirations of the people to whom these practices are important’ (Mahmood, 2001 p225). As such, in calling this project ‘feminist’ I am cautious of making judgements or prescriptions for what Palestinian women should aspire for. One of the fieriest, strong-minded and politically active of the women I interviewed during field research told me that the West’s perception of Palestinian and other Oriental women as ‘incapable’ is a part of what justifies Western intervention in the Middle East. She argued that if people in the West were to critically analyse Palestinian women’s involvement in the national struggle, it would become clear that women in Palestine have a diversity of experiences, much like women in the West.
‘It is just as any other women in the world, there are some women smarter than others, there are better women than others, there is this woman who is smart and working and hard and active and whatever, and there are women who want to be at home. Now, if it happens in the U.S. it’s a matter of choice, if it happens in Palestine, we’re incapable’ (Interview 18, Al’Walaja, 2012).

If the aim of a feminist project is to take women’s experiences seriously, then it is important that the researcher does not push their own versions of Western feminism on to women in other places, but instead listens to how women frame their own positions.

**Contributions to Feminist and Critical Security Studies**

The focus on resistance as well as power is the aspect of this project that contributes the most to Feminist Security Studies. Through insisting that resistance takes many forms and recognising actions that would not normally be seen as ‘resistance’ in most International Relations scholarship, this project argues that Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation is far more complex and prevalent than the resistances that make the headlines, such as the launching of rockets or suicide bombers/martyrs. Such actions are surely elements of Palestinian resistance, but they are just that, two elements of a much broader apparatus of resistance. In focusing on additional elements of Palestinian women’s resistance, such as hunger strikes, encouraging children to stay in the territories, and learning traditional Palestinian crafts, it becomes clear that with every exercise of power aimed at subjugating Palestinian women, women are engaging acts of resistance.

In her book *War as Experience* Sylvester argues that what Feminist Security Studies most needs is not necessarily continued reflection on why women’s experiences are relevant to the study of security or what exactly a feminist approach entails, as there is no shortage of feminist theories of war and conflict from a wide variety of perspectives (Sylvester, 2012b p59). Instead, what is needed, Sylvester argues, are more
projects that simply forefront women’s experiences of war without having to justify why women are centralised.

‘After nearly 30 years of feminist IR research, however, one doubts that yet another clear explanation of what feminist research is all about is really necessary. It makes some sense to get to the people quickly and let the weight of that analysis carry the day rather than get bogged down within reviews of feminist literature’ (Sylvester, 2012bp59).

With this in mind, I do not set out to describe at length why I think women’s experiences are relevant or why I’ve chosen to foreground them. Instead, it will suffice to briefly explain why examining the experiences of occupation and resistance can contribute a Feminist analysis to occupation and resistance.

Foregrounding experience necessitates listening to daily-life, how it operates under the exercise of power, and how that exercise of power can be circumvented or challenged. We can take as a given that most mainstream approaches in International Relations do not take seriously the role of the individual in the international. Drawing from Sylvester’s call to move on from elucidating feminist theory and the examples where MacKenzie (2009, 2011a) and Parashar, (2011) do just that, I argue that the most sensible way to challenge the assumption that ‘ordinary’ individual Palestinian women don’t belong in International Relations is quite simply to include some of the voices of these ‘ordinary’ women, and then demonstrate through analysis how they are thoroughly embedded and processes and exercises of power and resistance, and how these ‘ordinary’ women demonstrate complex understandings of the processes which result in their subjectification. This being said, specific methodological tactics and techniques for foregrounding women’s daily-lived experiences used in the field research of this project are more thoroughly elaborated upon in Chapter Four so as to demonstrate how my data collection fits within the scope of Feminist research.
Within the field of Critical Security Studies, the postmodern sociological perspective on security advocated by the Critical Approaches to Security in Europe (c.a.s.e) Collective, argues for a cross-disciplinary approach, favours Foucault’s dispositif, examines what the process of securitization produces and calls for an examination of both discursive and non-discursive practices of security. This approach is more carefully examined in the first section of Chapter One, but the authors of an International Studies Compendium article entitled ‘Security practices’ ‘encourage researchers to take both discursive and non-discursive practices seriously, by focusing on patterns of security practices’ (Balzacq, et al 2010 p2). The authors argue that such an approach to security is advantageous because rather than search for a definition of security, security is seen as a process, which always creates insecurity. This project takes seriously the calls of the c.a.s.e. collective that security as practice research should meet three challenges: 1) ‘uncover the hierarchization and exclusion that beset the discipline and practice of IR’ 2) acknowledge how the practice of securitization creates insecurity and 3) ‘devote more time to elucidating as clearly as possible processes of resistance from those who are the target of these practices’ (ibid. p13).

Therefore, this project is built upon a critical exploration of Palestinian women’s experiences of occupation and resistance which does not privilege the state or modern liberal conceptions of the individual and security. Instead, it aims to make a contribution to Feminist and Critical Security Studies by insisting upon the importance of interrogating the formation of the subject, refusing the notion that the body is a pre-given and not worthy of exploration in International Relations, drawing upon daily lived experiences of a range of Palestinian women and always maintaining that resistance is ever-present within exercises of power.
This project does all of these in order to de-stabilise present narratives which subjugate Palestinian women at every turn, even when they undertake the ultimate act of resistance to subjectification. In doing so, the author aims to ‘rob the present of its necessity’ and present the possibility of an analysis that does not favour modernity’s limited notion of the relationship between the state, power and the individual. More importantly, an analysis of elements of the Israeli occupation and how those elements come to form Palestinians as subjects will illustrate how exercises of power that make up the occupation are aimed at collectivities of Palestinians, but that the impacts are experienced individually. In turn, the experiences individuals have of the occupation are mediated through other social relations. This demonstrates why looking at the occupation as experience is useful, and in particular, why women’s experiences of occupation is useful, because their daily-lived experiences of occupation interrupt the dominant narratives of Israel’s security practices and demonstrate the impact this type of ‘security from occupation’ has.

A problem arises when this project invokes Palestinian ‘women’ as the focal point of analysis insomuch as the category of ‘women’ is not a pre-given and is instead the effect of the exercise of power that produces gender (Butler, 1990; Stern and Zalewski, 2009). If in fact this project aims to analyse how Palestinian women are constructed and produced by exercises of power within the apparatus of occupation, then there is also a need to understand how the category of ‘woman’ comes to be produced as part of the knowledge of the field of Feminist International Relations. In other words, assuming that the category of ‘women’ in Palestine is a pre-given is as problematic as a state-centric assumption that the ‘subject’ of sovereign power is also a pre-given. This problem has been elucidated by Stern and Zalewski, particularly in
relation to militarisation, but the authors agree that Feminist IR tends to treat the relationship between sex and gender as less problematic than it actually is (Stern and Zalewski, 2009 p622). They also agree that the solution is not necessarily readily apparent, for if Feminist scholars want to continue to speak about ‘women’s experiences’ of war, conflict or peace, it is difficult to do so without evoking the category of ‘women’ – thereby implicitly making an assumption that ‘woman’ is a pre-given.

‘Our imagination of an alternative construction for bother her femininity and the subject woman, upon which this femininity acts, is glaringly bereft in relation to certain values of her potential. Our language defies us and we are unable to translate any of our fledgling deconstructions of her into sure (enough) knowledge that would somehow construct something different. And so, we ‘fail’ (ibid p624).

This ‘failure’ to adequately separate the construction of ‘women’ from the way Feminist IR describes ‘women’ is not easily resolved.

As I utilise the category of ‘Palestinian women’ I acknowledge that in fact the category is neither a fundamental pre-given, nor an unproblematic assumption. Instead, I acknowledge that construction of gender interacts with the sexed body to constitute the gendered subject (Butler, 1990). My use of ‘Palestinian women’ does not imply that I frame their subject status of ‘women’ as inherent, but rather as a complex array of relationships and interactions that brings the category into being. The categorisation itself is problematic as there is no monolithic experience of ‘The Palestinian Woman’ – this is apparent in the wide variety of subjectivities, experiences and reflections shared with me by my research participants. In one interview, when the participant took a phone call, the translator who was helping me that day, expressed how she saw the differences in experiences of different Palestinian ‘women’ – experiences of living under
occupation, of being a woman, or enacting resistance are mediated through a web of other social, religious, economic or geographical relations, all of which reconstruct the subject. The ‘subject’ is addressed in much greater detail in Chapter Three, but it is important to note that some strains of Feminist IR have grappled with how to represent ‘women.’

Chapter outline

Chapter One: Women and (In)Security, consists of a review of relevant literature. The chapter begins with an overview of the Critical Security Studies and Feminist Security Studies literature that informs this project. The Feminist contribution to Security Studies is vital because it centres its study of security on a narrative approach to how women actually experience war and conflict, and in doing so, radically challenges claims that ‘the individual’ does not belong in analyses of security (Sylvester, 2012b; MacKenzie, 2011a). This literature helps support the aim of the project to examine elements daily-lived experiences of power and resistance from a perspective that gives due attention to the gendered aspects of security and privileges the experiences of Palestinian women.

The second part of chapter one is concerned with how women’s political violence, particularly the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs has been presented and analysed. As female suicide bombing/martyrdom was the element of Palestinian women’s resistance that garnered the most international attention, it is important to examine how these instances of resistance were presented. Often, discussion of the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs has been disengaged from broader discussions of Palestinian women’s resistance (Bloom, 2005a: Victor, 2003) thus sensationalising the actions of the martyrs/bombers and analysing their actions out of
context. This section of the chapter problematises approaches to women’s political violence that separate their actions from the actions of men, as well as those analyses that examine Palestinian women’s political violence devoid of the larger context of Palestinian women’s resistance. At the end of this chapter, the notion of ‘relational autonomy’ is presented as a means of examining the actions if the ten female suicide bombers/martyrs within the context of the occupation and other forms of resistance. This supports an examination of these ten women without giving their actions over-attention. I argue this is important because over-attention to instances where Palestinian women have engaged in spectacular and staggering acts of violence detracts attention from the ways in which resistance is often much more of a daily-lived experience.

Chapter Two: Theorising Power and Resistance, is a review of Foucault’s approach to power, resistance and biopolitics. The current status quo of the occupation necessitates thinking differently about how the occupation and resistance to it function. Thinking differently about the nature of power and resistance is thereby crucial for thinking differently about the occupation, and I argue that Foucault’s model of power/resistance is an ideal way to apply a different logic to the power of the occupation and resistance to it. Reviewing Foucault’s models of power and resistance is necessary for the alternative he provides to state-centric approaches to power and resistance. Particularly because it is an often overlooked aspect of Foucault’s work, this chapter engages in a detailed analysis of Foucault’s concept of resistance, a linkage that is crucial to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the context of the Israeli occupation, resistance is inseparable from the occupation. As such, the way Foucault frames resistance is important for thinking about daily-lived experiences of
occupation and resistance because both are moved outside of the state-centric logic. The chapter also engages with Foucault’s concept of ‘biopower’ – which is equally as crucial to understanding the Israeli occupation because it provides a framing for how the occupation is directed at managing, controlling and disciplining the Palestinian population, and how Palestinian resistance is directed at challenging such controls.

Chapter Three: ‘Subject and Dispositif in the oPt’ elucidates the concepts ‘subject’ and ‘dispositif’ as they relate to this project. Chapter Three builds upon Chapter Two by presenting a framework for an analysis of the dispositif of occupation and the dispositif of resistance from a perspective of Palestinian women. In this chapter the parameters for analysis are laid out through building workable theories of ‘the subject’ and ‘dispositif’ based upon a conglomeration of theories presented by Foucault, Agamben, Deleuze, and Butler and empirical evidence from the oPt. In it I establish the theoretical framework for an analysis which seeks to extrapolate what constitutes a dispositif of subjectification and how that subjectification is challenged through the elements of a dispositif of resistance. Such an analysis is useful for situations wherein specific groups of women are subjugated with the aim of pacifying or exerting dominance over them, particularly in times of ethnic, religious or nationalist conflict, as is the case in the occupied Palestinian territories. In explaining bodily resistance vis-à-vis the way power acts upon bodies this theoretical framework centralizes the claim that it is not possible to investigate either subjectification or resistance in isolation. More so, I argue, subjectification and resistance cannot be examined effectively without an examination of how subjectification is enacted upon bodies, and how bodies can enact resistance.
In Chapter Four: Methodological Approach, the methodology used in the field research and analysis for the project is presented. Field research for this project took place over a six week period in the West Bank of the occupied Palestinian territories. During this period I conducted in-depth narrative interviews with 18 individual women and 3 NGOs. The women came from a variety of backgrounds, education levels, ages, and religious beliefs, and thus reflect some of the range of diversity of experiences of the Israeli occupation and resistance to it. In no way does the research claim to represent a homogenous view of what it means to be a Palestinian woman, but it instead aims to present differing views and experiences. In addition to conducting narrative interviews, I utilised critical ethnography in places such as checkpoints, on streets, in taxis, at a demonstration, and in the home where I was staying to come to a better understanding of how power is exercised and resisted in the occupied territories.

As the field research focused on the researcher taking a reflexive approach, a concept relatively new to International Relations, this chapter entails an in-depth analysis of why reflexivity was chosen, how it worked in practice and what was gained from it. A reflexive approach to research argues that the researcher should take her position into account, for one’s position as researcher will impact the results of the research. Reflexivity is thus not only about explaining one’s subject position, but how that subject position may have an impact on what research participants tell or don’t tell the researcher, and how experiences of field research impact one’s ability to collect and interpret data. Such reflexivity is vital to account for why field research gives you the data you come home with by acknowledging the possibility that a different researcher employing the same methodology may have come home with different data.
Chapter Five: Power and Resistance in the oPt, forms the bulk of the data analysis and research findings. In it, inspired by Foucault’s view of power and resistance as interconnected, examples of the elements which compose the apparatuses of occupation and resistance for Palestinian women are presented and analysed based on how each element contributes to the subjectification of Palestinian women or resistance to that subjectification. In keeping with Foucault’s idea of the apparatus, this section draws from diverse sources such as discourse, narratives, architecture, laws, administrative measures, maps and reports. The sections of this chapter alternate between elements of occupation and elements of resistance, and include:

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<td>Security</td>
<td>Demonstrations</td>
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<td>The separation barrier</td>
<td>Encouraging children to stay</td>
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<td>Checkpoints/permits/ID cards</td>
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<td>Access to medical care</td>
<td>Female martyrs/ suicide bombers</td>
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Finally, in the Conclusion: Back to Checkpoint 300, recommendations for further research are made. It is important to note that this study in no way claims to represent the experiences of even every Palestinian woman in the West Bank, much less every Palestinian woman. This research, to be truly indebted to Foucault, cannot claim any degree of universal generalizability or universal application. Doing so would negate the very premise of this project. Instead, what this project aims to contribute is the argument that just because occupation functions as we know it today does not mean that it was the only inevitable possibility. Through calling into the question the way in
which occupation and resistance to it is made up of many smaller elements, challenging
the occupation becomes less formidable. There are many, many exemplary individuals,
NGOs and collectives that are finding real and viable ways to chip away at the apparatus
of the occupation, such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Breaking
the Silence and Checkpoint Watch, who have an understanding that the subjugating
elements of occupation are best tackled individually, from the ground-up. As is usually
the case, academic analysis lags behind the analysis made by groups and individuals
most directly connected to subjectification.
Chapter One – Women and (in)security

In order to establish how an approach to Palestinian women and their experiences of subjectification and enactments of resistance contributes more to an understanding of the relationships between power, subjectivity and resistance than traditional state-centric models, it is necessary to explore how existing literature analyses processes of security, and women’s political violence as a means of resistance. There are several theoretical approaches within two fields that will contribute to an understanding of why this project has been conducted in the way it has.

The first half of this chapter examines traditional state-centric approaches to ‘security’ as well as the critiques to the state-centric approach from Critical Security Studies and Feminist Security Studies. The necessity of doing so arises from the dominance of ‘security’ discourse used to explain and justify the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. As the ‘security’ of the Israeli state is used as the means of legitimising the occupation and subsequent subjectification of Palestinians, it is essential to understand how traditional security studies supports the process of state-centric security, and how Critical Security Studies and Feminist Security studies can provide a basis for which to challenge it. Therefore, after explaining the premise of traditional Security Studies, this chapter will continue by examining literature within Critical Security Studies and Feminist Security Studies that supports the aims of this project to move away from the state as the dominant and omnipresent referent object. This project ultimately contributes to these fields of Security Studies because the premise of the analysis rests upon a critical approach to the state, the subject and resistance and it
draws from concepts within Critical Security Studies to support the framework for analysis.

The second section of this chapter is focused more specifically on the literature pertaining to women’s political violence. An examination of such literature is important because it demonstrates how the involvement of women in acts of political violence is often approached from a level of ‘personal’ motivations and without the context of women’s involvement in other acts of resistance. When women commit acts of extreme political violence, specifically suicide bombings/martyrdom operations, these actions are frequently analysed in very problematic ways that ultimately deny them any agency in their actions. In most mainstream approaches the women are framed as victims of patriarchy, as misled, naïve or coerced, and thus not agents of their actions (Bloom, 2005a, Victor 2003). Feminist approaches to female suicide bombers/martyrs problematise such approaches and analyse the suicide bombings/martyrdom operations as political acts. In this project I argue that the violent actions of the ten female Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs should be examined within the contexts of Palestinian women’s understanding of their political situation, their experiences of the Israeli occupation and their involvement in other means of resistance. In doing so I aim to establish the wide variety of experiences and agencies of Palestinian women and how the actions of the ten female suicide bombers/martyrs are an important aspect of Palestinian women’s resistance to Israeli occupation, but only illustrate one part of the wider resistance Palestinian women enact. Therefore, it is essential that this second section of the chapter critically analyse the wide variety of existing literatures on the Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs, as well as other global instances of women’s
political violence. Doing so will help to establish the importance of taking a more multi-dimensional approach to how women may engage in resistance to subjectification.

**Security Studies**

Understanding how ‘security’ is framed and used in discourse and practice is crucial for this project because of the role ‘security’ has in supporting the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. The next two sections will thus engage with different approaches to ‘security’ in the literature so as to situate this project and its aims. Security has long been at the core of the field of International Relations. Throughout the Cold War, Strategic Studies, or what is now known as Security Studies was seen not only as the most important aspect of IR, but also the aspect that best represented the structure of the world system. This is because the field of Traditional Security Studies (Walt, 1991, 2002; Williams 2005) holds the state as the referent object, that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state is the object of ‘security’ and the best means of ensuring this security is through the state’s military (Wibben 2010; Hayes, et al 2011). The traditional model of security remained dominant and largely unchallenged throughout the Cold War, but with the dissolution of the Soviet Union other fields of Security Studies such as the Critical Security Studies within which one can find the Copenhagen, Aberystwyth and Paris Schools (Buzan, Wæver, & deWilde 1998; Booth, 1991; Bigo, 2011 respectively). and Feminist Security Studies (Tickner, 2001a; Wibben 2010; Sjoberg 2009) have challenged the Traditional School in relation to the object of security, the definition of security, the referent object of security and the process by which an issue is made into ‘a matter of security’.

The concern for Traditional Security Studies is the security of the state, most often vis-à-vis other states. The best means of achieving security is through enhancing
military capabilities. One can see how such views of security can apply to how security is framed by the Israeli state. The threat to the Israeli state comes from all sides, because neighbouring states as well as Palestinians want ‘to push the Jewish State in to the sea’ (Ben Gurion, 1961; Ezrahi, 2000 p158-159) or ‘wipe Israel off the map’ (Jaseb and Dahl, 2008). Israeli state security is thus the only means of preserving the state, and is the ultimate responsibility of the state. Security comes from a strong, well-trained military with every conceivable technological advantage over its neighbours. The framing of ‘security’ in the state of Israel fits well within the Traditional Security framework. Responses to the Traditional framework from Critical and Feminist Security Studies are useful for analysing how practices of ‘security’ are much more far-reaching than the state, and are thus instrumental in the critique of Israeli security practices in the occupied territories. Furthermore, it is important not to take ‘the state’ as a pre-given in analysis. Traditional Security Studies relies upon an understanding of the state as an existing entity in the international system that needs no further interrogation as a concept. Campbell (1998) points out how problematic this is:

‘Specifically, I want to suggest that we can understand the state as having no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. That its status as the sovereign presence in world politics is produced by a discourse of primary and stable identity and that the identity of any particular state should be understood as tenuously constituted in time through a stylized repetition of acts and achieved not through a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition’ (ibid p10).

This radical critique of the state is invaluable in establishing the foundations for an analysis of the relationship between Israeli security as subjugating, and Palestinian resistance that does not privilege the state, nor take referent objects for granted because here Campbell argues that the state itself is a construction that has no essential reality outside that construction.
In challenging state-centric approaches to security, the first of several useful concepts for examining Israeli security as it relates to Palestinian women is the idea of ‘securitization’ as put forth by Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde (1998). Securitization is the process by which an issue or threat comes to be seen as more important than other issues and thus an issue of international security (Wæver, 1995). There are no issues that are inherently issues of ‘security’ instead only issues that have become issues of security through the process of securitization. Securitization is thus a process embedded in power, because it allows issues that are securitised to be governed by a ‘politics of exception’ (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006 p455). Securitized issues are not governed by the same ‘rules’ of ‘normal’ politics in that securitized issues allow for measures to be taken, such as torture, that would not be accepted within the scope of ‘normal’ politics.

The traditional definition of securitization, as coined by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, involves examining security as a process wherein the ‘actor’ defines an issue as an issue of security as well as the ‘referent object’ under threat. According to the Copenhagen School, the actor is usually part of the state apparatus. The process continues as the ‘audience’ must accept the issue as valid, thereafter it becomes labelled as ‘security’ and the state can, in turn, practice extraordinary measures in relation to the issue. They write:

‘In the case of security, textual analysis suggests that something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more important than other issues and should take absolute priority. This is the reason we link the issue to what might seem a fairly demanding criterion: that the issue is presented as an existential threat. If one can argue that something overflows the normal political logic of weighing issues against each other, this must be the case because it can upset the entire process of weighing as such. Thereby, the actor has claimed a right to handle the issue though extraordinary means, to break the normal political rules of the game. ‘Security is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this
practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat’ (Buzan, et al 1998, p24).

This approach to security is interesting as it allows us to view security as the result of a process rather than a concrete concept. The process of securitization can be seen throughout world politics, and is especially useful in the current climate of ‘terrorist’ threats. The way in which governments discuss and frame threats for their citizens clearly shapes the way security is conceived in national security debates. One small example of such discourse is the United States Department of Homeland Security’s use of ‘Threat Levels’. The DHS uses colour-coded levels to convey to the public the current ‘threat’ or risk of terrorist activity. The ‘threat level’ can then be used to justify extended security measures. From a perspective of the Copenhagen School it is easy to see how in this case, discourse is used to make security a ‘self-referential’ practice.

However, this approach put forth by the Copenhagen School is not without problems of its own. Balzacq et al (2010) have offered up an intriguing argument from a sociological International Relations perspective, which seeks to extend beyond the Copenhagen School’s claim that security is a discursive practice, examining not only the discourse surrounding security, but also the non-discursive practices, and articulations of security as collective and historical acts. The inclusion of the non-discursive is important for this project because it opens up many more elements of Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance to critical analysis that are non-discursive, such as the separation barrier.

In a 2005 article entitled ‘The Three Faces of Securitization’, Balzacq solidifies his qualms with securitization as simply ‘a speech act’. ‘Security as a speech act is highly problematic because it overlooks the external context, the psycho-cultural orientation
of the audience and neglects the power difference between the speaker and the
listener’ (Balzacq 2005, p174). In this notion of security as practice, the process of
securitization is inherently linked to (in)securitization. In other words, the practice of
making an issue one of ‘security’ will also produce insecurity for others. This happens as
the ‘actor’ defines a referent object. The securitization of an issue and naming of a
referent object is very much a political act because, as Balzacq point out, it
differentiates between those in need of protection and those whose threats are
‘undeserving’ of securitization as well as those who threaten the ‘security’ of the actor.

Balzacq, along with the c.a.s.e. collective (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006) argue that an
examination of securitization cannot end with discursive practice. Rather, the ‘everyday
practices of societal actors’ must be taken into account. (Balzacq et al 2010). In other
words, when examining securitization, one cannot stop with the examination of the
discourse of powerful political actors. Following Foucault’s influence, the dispositif must
be examined. The dispositif represents precisely how security is practiced and regulates
the forms such practice takes. For example, the dispositif of Israeli security policy
involves not only discourse from leaders, but institutions such as the Israeli Defence
Force (IDF), laws about where Palestinians can and cannot live/work/walk/drive,
administrative measures such as the imposition of curfews, the architectural forms of
the Separation Wall and checkpoints like Checkpoint 300, and moral and philosophical
propositions of Zionism. These are but a few examples of what makes up Israel’s
dispositif but they serve to illustrate Balzacq’s point that securitization is in no way
limited to a ‘speech act’.

Furthermore, Balzacq et al argue, that within the practice of securitization there
has been a de-differentiation between internal/external security. This de-
differentiation, the authors point out, is obvious when one examines security practices in the Post-Cold War era, wherein one government’s internal agencies are increasingly more likely to co-operate with another government’s internal agencies. They also point to the example of the occasional use of the military to ‘police’ civilians during times of unrest as well as the use of civil police in missions abroad. This de-differentiation is important to examine in the process of securitization as it demonstrates the exceptionalism of power once an issue has been securitized. Much like the Copenhagen School argues, it is the process of securitization that allows actors to justify an expansion of power. However, Balzacq et al point out that the importance of de-differentiation lies in the ambiguity that characterises the relationship between inside/outside, rather than a simple re-drawing of boundaries. Again, this is relevant to the question of Palestinian/Israeli security, as the borders of the Israeli state have not been re-drawn to incorporate security within the Palestinian territories. Rather, the inside/outside of Israel’s security has become dramatically more ambiguous, thus allowing Israel to expand securitization into territory and onto people where it did not apply before, as well as to apply different rules to Palestinians and Israelis within the same territory.

Finally, a discussion of Balzacq et al’s critique of the Copenhagen School points to the role of tools in securitization. Moving beyond the notion that securitization is a speech act, it is important to examine what tools are used in the practice of security. Balzacq et al separate tools into the categories of regulative and capacity tools. This relates directly to their claim that securitization is not just something that arises from the discursive act of ‘speaking’ security, but also from actual practices of societal actors, practices which often involve tools. They write: ‘The operational i.e. technical character of any security instrument has to be adequately linked with a specific issue that it
intends to address,’ furthermore, ‘Sometimes security instruments have limited consequences or indirect effects. It therefore becomes obvious that the function of an instrument has a major impact on securitization. This function rests, in turn, on the nature of the tool.’ (Balzacq et al 2010). Regulatory tools to serve to regulate the behaviour of target individuals, whereas capacity tools serve to expand the ability of agencies and institutions to carry out their goals. Some examples of tools in the case of Palestine/Israel securitization are the Separation Wall, border checkpoints and the varied classifications used by Israel to determine which Palestinians can and cannot move freely. (i.e. Arab-Israelis, residents of East Jerusalem, residents of the West Bank, etc.) Overall, the contribution of Balzacq et al to the securitization debate is extremely useful. Especially relevant is their call to examine not only discursive practices and the actors who utter them, but also Foucault’s dispositif which has the capability to throw light onto the myriad ways in which securitization is a process enacted throughout society which relies on the actual practices of security rather than the limited and limiting idea of securitization as a simple discursive speech act.

**Gendering Security**

There is ground for critiquing the approach of Balzacq and the c.a.s.e. collective for not examining how the process of securitization is inherently gendered. The most basic, underlying posit of Feminist Security Studies is that within International Relations ideas about state security and power have been framed in ways which associate them with ‘masculine’ traits. (Tickner, 2001a p18) This results in scholarship and policy that is implicitly gendered, wherein women and other minorities are relegated to the ‘private’ realm, and men (or women who act ‘like men’) control the ‘public’ realm and thus are
allowed to control the debates, policy formulation and execution. The ‘gendering’ of security thus rests on the dichotomies of public/private, and inside/outside, which allow dominant actors to exclude people and issues that do not fit within the ‘traditional’ notion of security as pertaining to the protection of state sovereignty. As Tickner wrote: ‘Distinctions between domestic and foreign, inside and outside, order and anarchy and centre and periphery have served as important assumptions in theory construction and as organizing principles for the way we view the world’ (ibid p19).

It is from this starting point that feminist scholars have begun to theorise the many ways in which ‘security’ is gendered, as well as the effects this gendering has on the world. As Traditional Security Studies blatantly fails to examine gender, any alternative approach to security studies should centralise gender in every analysis in order to account for how practices of security are inherently gendered. Only after gender is centralised will it be possible to move beyond definitional approaches to security so as to deconstruct the process of securitization. This cannot be achieved from ‘inside’ traditional security studies because of the unspoken gendered assumptions and constructions that have firmly established a gendered hierarchy in the ‘consciousness’ of traditional approaches. This can easily be seen in the construction of women as ‘peaceful’ as ‘life givers rather than life takers’ or as ‘victims’ in need of protection in times of conflict, whereas men are constructed as ‘warriors’ ‘the protectors’ or as intrinsically more violent than women. The relationship between gender and violence will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. Of great importance to note is how genders are constructed vis-à-vis each other. ‘Women’s roles’ stand in contrast to ‘men’s roles’ wherein each gender is meant to stick to the assumed role. This construction of women as the ‘weaker’ sex has served to entrench the political power of
men whilst relegating women, and their concerns, to the private realm. Tickner writes: ‘The association of femininity with peace lends support to an idealized masculinity that depends on constructing women as passive victims in need of protection. It also contributes to the claim that women are naïve in matters of international politics. An enriched, less militarized notion of citizenship cannot be built on such a weak foundation’ (ibid p59).

Others build upon Tickner by engaging with how women’s security is often absent from mainstream security analyses. Some exemplary studies include MacKenzie (2009, 2011a) who investigates the role of gender in post-conflict Sierra Leone, Allison (2004) who examines women’s motivations for engaging in political violence, and Stern (2006) who engages with how women in Guatemala frame their security and their identity during conflict. Feminist approaches to security de-stabilise state-centric accounts of security in that they ask critical questions about who is and who is not secured during process of ‘security’ (Sjoberg, 2009). MacKenzie argues that because women’s issues are framed within the domestic sphere, they often don’t ‘show up’ in most analyses of securitization (MacKenzie, 2009 p260). It is for this reason, she argues, it is so important to include women’s and girl’s experiences of war and conflict. ‘Real attention to women’s and girl’s experiences would produce a more complicated understanding of women (who can be both victims and aggressors/agents) and of conflict (as consuming the entire society and extending beyond the official timelines of war)’ (ibid).

Many Feminist Security Studies scholars utilise a narrative approach to security. The logic of such an approach is that studying security from the perspective of the lives of people, particularly women and other marginalised groups, will provide a better idea
of how the processes of securitization and the resulting securities/insecurities affects them.

‘Telling security narratives from the ground up and thereby adopting a bottom-up approach to security, feminist scholars pay close attention to the impact of security policies, including war, on the everyday lives of people. As such, they challenge the notion that wars are fought to protect vulnerable populations and show that civilians are often explicitly targeted. Rather than offering security for all, states often threaten their own populations, whether through direct violence or the structural violence that is reflected in its wartime priorities and embedded in its institutions (Wibben, 2010 p21).

To further illustrate this, Wibben refers to an example of a narrative project carried out by Mattingly et al conducted after the September 11th attacks. The project examines narratives from marginalised groups in order to ascertain how the attacks affected the feelings of ‘security’ for people at the margins of society. Unsurprisingly, for poor women of colour, who were well accustomed to living with some degree of insecurity and or fear, the attacks of September 11th were not necessarily significant. Whilst many Americans may have experienced what Wibben calls ‘a loss of their First Worldism’ (ibid p107) as a result of the attacks, many other marginalised groups had been living with feelings of fear and insecurity already. This was not apparent in the dominant perspectives of September 11th put forth by the mainstream media and the state, therefore, narrative projects such as the one carried out by Mattingly et al are important because they challenge the dominant narratives and put forth proof that not every American experienced the same things following the attacks.

There has also been critique of the Copenhagen School from a Feminist perspective. Most notable is Hansen, whose work ‘The Little Mermaid’s Security Dilemma and the absence of Gender from the Copenhagen School’ calls into question the way the School takes the ‘actor’ who securitizes as a given. In other words, The
Copenhagen School still sees state actors, such as ‘political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups’ (Buzan et al 1998 p40) as the legitimate actors for ‘securitizing’ an issue. This means that there will inevitably be silences wherein others cannot voice their own issues for securitization. These silences, Hansen argues, are predominantly characterised by an absence of gender from the discussion. ‘The absence of gender is not simply a matter of oversight, or of misplacing it at the level of individual security, but stems from two theoretical decisions which lead to the ‘security as silence’ and ‘subsuming security’ problems (Hansen 2000 p294).

‘Security as silence’ is essentially self-explanatory. Quite simply, it arises when threats cannot be securitized because the referent group is ‘voiceless’. As one might predict, this problem is often gendered, as women are more likely to be ‘silenced’ and unable to express the threats they face. The Copenhagen School fails to account for such a possibility, as it assumes that the securitizing actors will be able (and willing) to identify and securitize threats to referent objects within the state. This is because the Copenhagen School relies on the verbal act of speech for the process of securitization. However, as Hansen rightly points out, there are many cases where ‘the potential subject of security has no, or limited, possibility of speaking its security problem’ (ibid). Therefore, even if a group of women were under threat their threats may never be securitized because of their voicelessness. If the securitising actors fail to see the threats faced by women as a collective (or other minorities) then securitization remains an essentially gendered concept.

Furthermore, Hansen explains how ‘subsuming security’ illustrates a weakness in the Copenhagen School’s securitization. According to the Copenhagen School’s version of securitization as a process, referent objects are assumed to have one identity.
However, Hansen points out that many individuals in fact may have multiple identities, which in turn affect their positions as referent objects. For example, a woman in Palestine could identify herself in numerous ways, as a woman, as a Muslim, as a Palestinian, etc. Hansen points out that whilst identities such as religion and nationality form ‘self-reproducing political communities’ (ibid p299) there is no such political community for gender. Therefore, in terms of issues of security, gender is most often ‘subsumed’ within other identities, thus posing a problem for the securitization of women’s threats. Furthermore, there are cases where close adherence to a religious or nationalist identity could in fact come with threats to the security of women. Therefore these threats are most definitely not securitized, as doing so would be in opposition to the foundation of the religious or nationalist identity.

Hansen then claims that ‘security as silence’ and ‘subsuming security’ illustrate the shortcomings of the Copenhagen School. Her suggested solution is to take a different approach to securitization. Instead of identifying instances of securitization as the Copenhagen School does, Hansen calls into question how security discourses are produced. Such an analysis is infinitely more useful as it questions where the process of securitization comes from, and therefore will shed light onto how some issues are ‘securitized’ as collective concerns whilst others are seen as individual threats. Hansen offers two suggestions for how gendered security can be investigated involving Judith Butler’s work on bodily performance (1999; 2004a). Hansen suggests that ‘to include the body as an additional epistemological focus and to examine individualising strategies employed in keeping security problems from appearing at the collective level’ (ibid p300) will broaden the investigation of gendered security. Sjoberg, (2009) echoes Hansen’s reflections, arguing that the Copenhagen School can contribute to a Feminist
analysis with the concept of securitisation and questions of who is or is not secured, but
Feminist analysis should avoid becoming subsumed within the Copenhagen School
because of the absence of attention to gender. (Sjoberg, 2009 p209). Attention to
women’s experiences of (in)security will ultimately help to demonstrate how the
collectivisation of some threats into the realm of ‘security’ and the individualisation of
others into the ‘private’ is an explicitly gendered process.

It becomes clear how using gender as a focal point for an analysis of
securitization should be the key concern of critique in security studies. Arguably,
‘security’ and ‘gender’ have something very important in common. Starting from the
feminist posit that gender is characterised by relations of dominance and non-
dominance, one could argue that as a result of the politics intrinsic to what is an issue of
‘security’ and what isn’t, security can also be seen as relationships of dominance and
non-dominance. Securitization as practice actively determines who is secure and who is
insecure. Much like the earlier discussion of Balzacq, who argues that security and
insecurity are two sides of the same coin, Hoogensen and Stuvøy (2006) similarly argue
that ‘the interaction of power and gender speaks to relations of dominance and non-
dominance with regard to all relationships of identity, and hence security can be
conceptualized as relations of dominance and non-dominance’ (p218).

As ‘security’ is the result of a process rather than a concrete concept, the
process of securitization creates ‘secure’ and ‘insecure’ individuals. From this logic it is
easy to see how ‘secure’ individuals, especially those with some say in the process of
securitization, have dominance over ‘insecure’ individuals. This, Hoogensen and Stuvøy
argue, is because the debates surrounding ‘security’ are by and large dominated by
those who seek to limit the definition of security, thereby relegating most of the
‘threats’ experienced by people in everyday life outside of the dominant discourse. The effect of this, of course, is easy to see, and it can be seen clearly in the case of Israeli security and Palestinian (in)security. Those in positions of non-dominance are unlikely to have ‘their’ threats securitized. The process of securitization within Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories determines the difference between secure and (in)secure subjects through determining what constitutes threats to security. ‘Relations of dominance and non-dominance determine who defines norms and practices, and who must follow them; who is important and who is not; who defines the parameters of the debate and who does not; who is valuable and who is not’ (ibid p219).

The paradox of ‘security’ is thus that it creates (in)security for others (Stern, 2006a). It becomes important to examine this paradox because it forces us to think differently about security. There is an important aspect to consider in relation to this – that processes of security and the resulting (in)security are tied to identity. In order to define the subject of security, it is necessary to define who counts as the ‘we’ who are being secured in contrast to the ‘them’ who pose the threat. Stern argues that the ‘we’ as a subject of security is defined through and constructed discourses of danger and threat, thus marking and delineating who should be secured in contrast to the ‘those who are not us’ – and who can thus be made (in)secure (ibid p188). Thinking critically about the role of identity in creating subjects who can be legitimately be made (in)secure changes our understandings of security. ‘Looking at how the impossible promise (or ultimate failure) of securing identity plays out in a particular site among people whose voices are not often heard in writings on security invites reflection over failure as an opening for thinking differently about security’ (ibid p189).
Feminist Security Studies has a very important role to play in dissecting the hierarchical assumptions inherent to traditional security studies that construct the ‘secure’ and ‘insecure’. It is these constructions of secure and insecure that result from the process of securitization. This process itself is gendered, privileging ‘masculinity’ over ‘femininity’ and thereby relegating women to the margins of security. Feminist Security Studies upsets and dislodges claims that security and war-making are ‘masculine’ realms – instead insisting that such divisions have no basis in reality. Sylvester claims that ‘we must render homeless the masculine soldiers and feminine mothers and expose this commonplace nostalgia for gender place as overdrawn, lacking foundation and rife with nondemocratic impulses’ (Sylvester, 1992 p56). There are numerous other Feminist theorists who have valuable contributions to make to the field of security studies, all of whom centralise this position, that the practice of ‘security’ is gendered in the favour of ‘men’. Therefore, any future analysis of security, must take gender as a central point of analysis. Doing so will result in a fundamental challenge to those relationships of dominance/non-dominance, allowing the security debate to move beyond a definitional approach.

Examining those (in)securities traditionally pushed or relegated to outside the realm of ‘Security Studies’ is important to enhancing our understandings of both the gendered implications of processes of security as well as what ‘counts’ as ‘International Relations.’ Using the examples of the Peace Camp at Greenham Common and women’s cooperatives in Harare, Sylvester argues that (in)security can often be hidden outside of the realm of Security Studies which privileges strategic relations between states (Sylvester, 1992 p192). To make these (in)securities visible, we can examine how women’s daily-lived experiences and how women challenge the (in)securities they face.
Therefore, the most effective means of analysing security studies is not to examine the different definitions of security, but instead to examine how security discourses have individualised some threats while collectivising or ‘securitizing’ others with the effect of forming ‘secure’ and ‘(in)secure’ subjects. The role of Feminist Security Studies is thus to deconstruct the processes of securitization through a gender lens so as to sincerely challenge the dominance of traditional approaches rather than simply debating with the traditional approach as to what the word ‘security’ means on a definitional level and to whom it refers. Of utmost importance in such a project is a careful consideration of the gendered nature of the processes of securitization, as ignoring the central role of gender is a shortfall of numerous approaches to security. As many feminist scholars have argued, not mentioning gender in an analysis of security is to maintain a gender bias. Wadley writes; ‘Failing to consider gender does not make one’s theory gender-neutral, and conceptualizing the state as a generic, non-gendered actor does not make it so’ (Wadley 2010 p39).

The approach of the c.a.s.e. collective provides valuable support for examining how securitization is an inherently political process wherein decisions are made in regards to what is securitized and what is not. They take an important step in expanding upon the notion of securitization in arguing that: ‘The label “security” appears rather to work as a slogan, as a peculiar method through which a dominant group justifies and imposes a political programme by assessing who needs to be protected and who can be sacrificed, who can be designated as an object of fear, control, coercion’ (Balzacq et al 2010 p2). As such, securitization has the result of demarcating between secure and (in)secure subjects. Very often, the threats which are individualised or ignored altogether and thus relegated ‘outside’ of security studies are those threats experienced
by women and other marginalised groups, arguably making the process of securitizing an issue an intrinsically gendered process. There are many real world examples where this can be seen, but the most relevant for this project for understanding the implications of securitizing certain threats whilst relegating others to ‘outside’ of security discourse involves examining Israeli national security discourse and practice. In the context of Palestinian women’s experiences of occupation and resistance, an examination of Israeli processes of security reveals how threats to the security of Palestinians are reduced to the level of the individual. Within the broader context of Palestinian resistance to occupation some women have reacted to continual threats to the collective Palestinian (in)security by becoming suicide bombers/martyrs. These actions create threats to Israelis that are securitized and collectivised by security discourses. In other words, the (in)securities faced by Palestinians, specifically Palestinian women, are a result of Israeli processes of securitization. (In)securities include, but are not limited to the Separation Wall, Israeli checkpoints, settler violence and curfews. These (in)securities are not a part of securitized Israeli policy, thereby assigning them to the individual or private realm. However, when a Palestinian becomes a suicide bomber/martyr, her actions are immediately seen as a threat to collective Israeli security. Jacqui True argues that the gendered dichotomies of inside/outside and public/private are intrinsic to the construction of the state (True, 1996). Binaries are particularly problematic for Feminist Security Studies scholars. ‘A framing on binary terms limits, or at least influences, the response to a particular event. It impedes the recognition of similarities, continuities, and potential linkages between “us” and “them”. It fosters a tendency to underestimate the Other, not to take them seriously as political agents, or even dehumanise the enemy’ (Wibben, 2010 p108).
It is this distinction between the ‘individualised’ or private matters of Palestinian security in contrast with the ‘collectivised’ or public security of Israelis that makes security discourse and practice in Palestine/Israel a gendered practice. It is clear that the process of securitization in Palestine/Israel is gendered, wherein the security concerns of Palestinians are relegated to the private realm, whilst the security concerns of Israelis are seen as a public concern. Ironically, because the Israeli state is unconcerned with the effects such processes of securitization have on the (in)security of Palestinians, the security of Israeli citizens is compromised when Palestinians step into the ‘public’ security realm by becoming suicide bombers/martyrs. The inclusion of Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs in this project is supported by existing literature because it is the type of action that frames Palestinians as a threat to Israeli security, and thus the type of action that is used to justify Israeli security measures.

This project examines the actions of the ten female Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs through the context of lived experiences of the Israeli occupation and in conjunction with numerous other means in which Palestinian women resist the occupation. In doing so, their actions are framed not only as individual choices, but as individual choices situated within the political context of occupation and a Palestinian culture committed to multiple forms of resistance to it. It is the subject of female suicide bombers/martyrs that is the concern of the second section of this chapter. Examining female suicide bombers/martyrs is related to the field of ‘Security Studies’ and this project in that it is actions such as those carried out by female suicide bombers/martyrs that make up the security threat as framed by state-centric discourses. However, when these attacks/operations are carried out by women, the framing of their actions often changes. Through critically analysing existing literature on women’s political violence
and the female Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs more specifically, the aim of the following section is to demonstrate how mainstream analyses overwhelmingly deny the bombers/martyrs any degree of political agency and instead frame them as victims.

This contributes more broadly to this research project because women’s experiences of security and (in)security are often ignored until they carry out acts of extreme violence. Gendered divisions between public/private come through clearly in mainstream analyses (Victor, 2003, Bloom, 2005a, 2005b), with the effect of depoliticising the actions of the bombers/martyrs and rendering the Israeli occupation less visible. In contrast, feminist and other non-mainstream analyses attribute varying degrees of political agency to the bombers/martyrs, but often do so with the effect of divorcing instances of female suicide bombing/martyrdom from the wider resistances Palestinian women are engaged in.

Engaging with the actions of Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs not as isolated incidents, but instead as one element of Palestinian women’s resistance to occupation provides a much better understanding of why and how women would choose to become bomber/martyrs. It is important to consider how women’s political violence fits into the spectrum of women’s resistance because it enhances our understanding of how Palestinian women experience and resist Israeli power, however, this being said, it is also important not to centralise such violent acts of resistance. Focusing only on violent enactments of resistance is easy, especially when the violence is as attention-catching as suicide bombing/martyrdom operations. However, doing so would result in a skewed analysis that doesn’t give adequate attention to how Palestinian women’s resistance in the occupied territories is often embedded within daily-lived practices. As such, this dissertation aims to engage with the actions of the ten
Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs, but within the broader context of other resistances.

**Early theories on women’s participation in violence and resistance**

Existing research that examines how women engage in political violence is important because it demonstrates the gendered ways violent women are often portrayed. Women’s participation in war and political violence is neither a recent phenomenon, nor is it limited to the changed policy of some national militaries which allowed women to be part of active duty units fighting ‘on the front line’ (Elshtain, 1987). However, the dominant perception still exists, predominantly in The United States, that women’s participation in military combat is very recent, limited to the ‘Western’ world where women have ‘equality’ with men. Such perceptions fail to take many things into account.

Participation in violent conflict does not necessarily imply taking part in actual combat. Historically women have been very active in supporting conflict whether through manufacturing weapons and munitions, carrying weapons from one group of militants to another, hiding militants and weapons in their homes, carrying messages, following combat soldiers and other such activities. These activities, while not explicitly violent, still challenge the notion that during times of conflict, women kiss their husbands and sons good-bye and sit quietly in the home as recipients of protection while men fight. Authors such as Elshtain (1987), Fanon (1965) and Enloe, (1990, 2000) challenge the dominant discourses that portray women as totally passive during times of conflict by explaining the various ways in which women also risk their security and even their lives by actively supporting conflict.
Elshtain and Enloe both strive to explain how women are as integral to and embedded in war-making as men. Through such diverse activities as working in munitions factories, taking up the jobs of men when they go off to war and entertaining soldiers, women have always been vital to the war machine (Enloe 2000). This is truly a challenge to the labeling of women as non-combatant, because without their work during wartime, wars could not be fought. Enloe also points to the reality of how women must be militarised as well as men in order for wars to be fought, thus calling into question discourses which label women as peacemakers and men as warriors. She writes: ‘The militarization of women has been crucial for the militarization of governments and international relations. The militarization of women has been necessary for the militarization of men (Enloe 2000 p3). Similarly, Elshtain claims that that society’s perception of Just Warriors (men) and Beautiful Souls (women) is a false dichotomy that fails to account for the countless ways men and women actually experience war. This view that gender roles in conflict are not binary oppositions fits with the aim of this project to explore how Palestinian women experience violence as a result of the Israeli occupation and enact multiple forms of resistance to it.

Writing about the participation of women in the Algerian civil war, Franz Fanon (1965) challenges the assumptions that women wait idly in their homes during violent conflict, relying on men for their protection. Instead, as Fanon documents, many Algerian women were active in the civil war, carrying weapons and messages through cities and villages. These actions, while they may not seem like active conflict, were still very risky for the women who undertook them. The choice to undertake a dangerous mission such as carrying grenades on one’s person through the streets of Algiers demonstrates how Algerian women were dedicated the cause of independence, aware
of the political situation around them and willing to challenge the stereotype of the passive woman benefiting from the protection of the men around her. Fanon discusses the ‘revolutionary zeal’ of Algerian women. He writes:

‘It must be constantly borne in mind that the committed Algerian woman learns both her role as ‘a woman alone in the street’ and her revolutionary mission instinctively. The Algerian woman is not a secret agent. It is without apprenticeship, without briefing, without fuss, that she goes out in to the street with three grenades in her handbag or the activity report of an area in her bodice......It is an authentic birth in a pure state, without preliminary instruction. There is no character to imitate. On the contrary, there is an intense dramatization, a continuity between the woman and the revolutionary.’ (ibid p50.)

Fanon’s example of the multifarious actions of Algerian women’s resistance to French rule is especially useful because it demonstrates how women in Algeria were very active in the struggle for independence, which resonates with some of the experiences of Palestinian women.

Fanon’s example demonstrates a challenge to the notion that non-Western women are less politically aware and active than their Western counterparts. Western narratives of Muslim women often portray them as passive victims of patriarchy, where in fact, Muslim women have a long historical involvement in revolutionary struggle. Returning to Fanon, we can see how Algerian women utilised the Western perception that they were passive victims of their own customs and society in order to gain an advantage over the French. Interestingly, Fanon documents how the actions of Algerian women were often centred on their mode of dress (Fanon, 1965 p37). As the political situation in Algeria changed at the end of colonisation and throughout the war, women actively assisting the conflict changed their mode of dress in order to be more effective in their actions (ibid p64). In particular, the veil is generally seen by Westerners to be
indicative of the subordinate position of women in Muslim societies. However, throughout Algeria’s struggle against France, the veil was used by women as a method of resistance and involvement in armed struggle. Algerian women initially maintained the veil as way of illustrating to the French that they wanted to maintain their Algerian identity. Women who wanted to illustrate their commitment to the cause of Algerian independence from France wore the veil to highlight their identity as Muslim Algerian women in contrast to the French colonial women (ibid p49). However, this changed when they needed to carry out missions for the resistance struggle. Women involved in militant activity stopped wearing the veil to lull the French into believing that they had assimilated to the French way, whilst they simultaneously carried weapons and messages through the streets (ibid p58). Finally in the third phase of the use of the veil, as the French began to stop and question unveiled Algerian women, they returned to the wearing of the veil so as to hide weapons within it (ibid p65). Herein lies the most interesting and useful aspect of Fanon from the perspective of this project. For Algerian women, the resistance to French rule took place directly upon their bodies, wherein the clothes they wore either signalled their resistance (during the first part of the struggle) or allowed them to take part in it, either by ‘blending in’ with Western women or by providing a place to hide weapons for the resistance movement on their person. Whether they are unveiled or veiled, the effects of that choice occur directly on their body they and are able to use their mode of dress and their bodies as a means of resistance. Fanon writes: ‘The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity. As nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter, she bears witness to the depth and intensity of the struggle’ (Fanon, 1965 p66). The similarity between Palestinian women’s
resistance and Fanon’s example of Algerian women’s resistance is clear. In both cases, women experience occupation through their bodies, and are subjectified as a result of that occupation. In turn, in both cases women are able to use their bodies to resist the occupation, illustrating that the link between subjectification, resistance and the body is not limited to the case of Palestinian women. Furthermore, Fanon’s examples of Algerian women’s engagement in political violence are embedded with the broader context of the Algerian revolution, demonstrating that women’s tactics changed in relation to actions of the French forces and needs of the revolutionary forces. As such, Fanon’s work does not privilege or exceptionalise Algerian women’s participation in political violence, but instead analyses it as a changing set of practices situated within broader practices of Algerian resistance to French rule. The example of Fanon therefore demonstrates a means of analysing women’s political violence as resistance that proves useful for examining Palestinian women’s violence as embedded within a broader context of Palestinian resistance and Israeli occupation.

The most infamous Palestinian woman involved in violent conflict, Leila Khaled, situates Palestinian women’s political violence within the context of Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance and she also challenges the notion of the passive Muslim woman. For Khaled, violent participation in revolutionary activity to liberate Palestine is not limited by gender, as illustrated by her claim that: ‘As a Palestinian, I had to believe in the gun as an embodiment of my humanity and my determination to liberate myself and my fellow man. Every self-respecting Palestinian has to become a revolutionary’ (Khaled 1973). This quote demonstrates why a reading of Khaled is important for an understanding of Palestinian women’s political violence. Khaled does not dwell or elaborate on her femininity. Instead, she fiercely maintains that she engages in armed
struggle because of the political situation in Palestine and the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. She illustrates a great understanding of the complex relationships between Arab states, The Palestinian Authority, Israel, the United States and other Western states. She then carefully situates the actions of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine within this political context, explaining not only how actions were undertaken, but more importantly, why they were undertaken. This establishes a picture of Khaled as not only an active militant, but of a woman with acute awareness of the political situation around her. She maintains that the only way for the Palestinian people to be victorious in their quest to obtain national sovereignty is for every Palestinian, whether they be man or woman, a citizen of Israel, a displaced refugee or living in the occupied territories to engage in revolutionary activity. Furthermore, she continually condones the use of violence against the Israeli state. This unabashed call for the use of violence regardless of gender mirrors the actions of the ten Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs. Despite how they were portrayed in the Western media, the women themselves used similar Nationalist rhetoric to explain their actions. Surely the history of Khaled’s involvement in political violence paired with her continual calls for all Palestinians to do the same helped establish a precedent for other women to engage in political violence for the cause of the liberation of Palestine.

These theoretical foundations establish several crucial facets of the historical role of women in violent conflict. Firstly, the underlying dominant idea that women are ‘naturally’ more peaceful than men is without a factual basis considering the roles women have played in war throughout history. Secondly, there is also little value to the claim that non-Western women are more passive in times of conflict than their Western counterparts. All in all, the picture of a silent, passive woman, sitting quietly by the fire
while men defend her is without historical precedent, no matter the place in the world. As such, it is important to account for how some Palestinian women have engaged in political violence, and how that violence fits within the broader spectrum of Palestinian women’s resistance to occupation.

**Media portrayals of female suicide bombers/martyrs and the Feminist critique of them**

Just as examining the relationship between women and war in the literature is important, it is also important to examine how female suicide bombers/martyrs have been portrayed in the media. There has been a great deal of media attention given to the ten Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs, therefore in this section I will detail the ways they have been portrayed in the media, as well as how Feminist analyses have responded to these portrayals. This is relevant to the broader aims of this project because media response to female suicide bombers/martyrs creates ‘knowledge’ about Palestinian women, and this project aims to present alternative ways of understanding how women in the occupied territories experience occupation and resistance, thereby challenging much of the ‘knowledge’ produced through media accounts of female suicide bombers/martyrs.

It is interesting to note that in the case of ‘terrorism’ gender is not explicitly mentioned when a man carries out the act, but is explicitly highlighted when a woman commits the same act. While the dozens of male suicide bombers identities and life stories are hardly ever delved into, their reasons are assumed to be clear and grounded in both political and religious ideology. In contrast, a woman as a suicide bomber seems so oxymoronic that an individualized psychological explanation for the deviation must be found’ (Naaman, 2007 p936). This signals that the concept of a female terrorist is so: rare, unexpected, inexplicable or discomforting, that her gender is mentioned, but the
same action carried out by a man requires no reference to his gender, at least not in the headlines. To put it another way, if we see ‘suicide bomber’ in a headline, we presume the suicide bomber/martyr was a male, and if in fact it was a female, the headlines are sure to designate her as such. Upon hearing the term ‘terrorist’ there comes to mind an idea of what a terrorist does, this idea is limited because it reduces the actions of a diverse range of people to one notion of what it means to be a terrorist. The same could be said of the term ‘woman’ and the expectations that come along with gender.

When a ‘woman’ becomes a ‘terrorist’ the media struggles to explain this so-perceived anomaly. This results in the way in which many media outlets rely on finding a ‘personal’ motivation for the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs rather than accepting that their actions may be motivated by many of the same things as men, something which relates to the perceived divide between men/women and public/private, wherein women are not expected to break in to the public realm so violently. It is also important to examine how media representations have portrayed the actions of the ten Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs, because such representations are an intrinsic part of how International discourses shape Palestinian subjectivity.

Media representations which rely on the narrative of Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs as victims of male coercion or victims of Muslim patriarchy will fail to adequately critique the political context of the Israeli occupation that Palestinian women live under and how that political context could potentially motivate the decision to become a suicide bomber/martyr. Media stories of female suicide bombers/martyrs that deny them any agency, or focus on their physical appearance, have the effect of discursively victimising them and furthering perceptions that Palestinian women are
‘weak’ or ‘subservient’ rather than women who understood and experienced life under occupation and chose to violently resist it. The importance of understanding media discourses of female suicide bombers comes from how such discourses are one element that shapes and determines the subjectivity of Palestinian women.

In order to analyse how the media predominantly frames the motivations of female suicide bombers/martyrs, Friedman, (2008) examined 120 articles in the mainstream media. She found that the four media outlets she analysed (The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN and Newsweek) most often relied on the ‘novelty’ of a female suicide bombers/martyr. Tactical advantages of ‘using’ women were used as the explanation for why the phenomena of female suicide bombers/martyrs arose. The second most used explanation was that of the influence of men. These explanations often claimed that women who became suicide bombers were coerced or drugged. One article in The Washington Post stated ‘Many say they believe the women are coerced, drugged, sold by relatives or threatened with harm to their children’ (ibid p847). Friedman argues that these explanations for examining motivation used by the media are linked to the societal biologically-based gender ‘norms’ which see women as life-givers rather than life takers. Therefore, when a woman chooses to take a life, the media struggles to frame her actions in a way that highlights her political agency and instead tries to interpret her actions through a lens of male influence or extremely ‘gender-deviant’ behaviour.

This illustrates the inability of the mainstream media to cope with actions that defy gender norms. On the whole, the same can be said for all of the problematic portrayals of female suicide bombers/martyrs, including those of Victor (2003) and Bloom (2005a; 2005b). They rely upon and perpetuate the dominant ideas of ‘normal’
Western women, ‘oppressed’ Muslim women and ‘abnormal’, ‘deviant’ or ‘coerced’ violent women, without integrating any of the assumptions of these categories. As a result, they fail to understand the complex interactions between physical bodies/political power, victims/perpetrators and agency/society and instead focus only on the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs as falling ‘outside’ cultural and gender norms. Amongst the frameworks with which Feminist scholars take issue are the approaches of highlighting physical appearance, the process of framing female suicide bombers/martyrs as ‘the other’ in comparison to the ‘normal’ role of a woman’s body to give rather than take life, the constant search for ‘personal’ or ‘emotional’ motivations for carrying out the suicide bombing/martyrdom attack, and the way in which female suicide bombers/martyrs are described as ‘tools’ used by men.

Media representations of women’s political violence as a-political relate more broadly to portrayals of women’s participation in ‘normal’ politics. Nacos (2005) argues that the media portrays female politicians and female ‘terrorists’ in similar ways:

‘There is no evidence that male and female suicide terrorists are fundamentally different in terms of their recruitment, motivation, ideological fervour, and brutality - just as there is no evidence that male and female politicians have fundamentally different motivations for seeking political office and abilities in different policy areas. Yet, the media’s treatment of female terrorists is consistent with the patterns of societal gender stereotypes in general, and of gender biases in the news coverage of female politicians in particular’ (ibid p436).

Through paralleling female terrorists with female politicians, Nacos acknowledges that female terrorists are political actors. In equating the two together she is able to compare the similarities between how the media portraits female political actors in gendered terms, whether their actions be seen as legitimate (being elected to a political office) or illegitimate (becoming a suicide bomber/martyr). The results she uncovers are highly
informative of how the media frames women’s identity and participation in politics as belonging more to the private realm than to the public realm. She explains that in regards to both female politicians and female terrorists, the media pays more attention to the physical appearances of women (hair, clothes, figure, etc.) and her family relations than to the same characteristics of their male counterparts. She breaks down the construction of female terrorists and politicians in the media into six ‘frames’. They are: the physical appearance frame, where women’s participation in politics or political violence is framed around her physical appearance. In the case of political violence, this serves to highlight the contrast between the woman’s beauty and her violence (ibid p438).

The family connection frame perpetuates the public/private divide by claiming that women’s participation in politics or political violence can be attributed to her personal relationships (ibid p439). The women’s equality frame explains women’s political violence as a means for gender equality or a manifestation of women’s equality, as an extreme or deviant version of feminism (ibid p442). The terrorist for love frame also describes women’s motivations as personal rather than political, this time highlighting that women engage in political violence as a result of their love for a male who engages in political violence (ibid p440). The ‘tougher than men frame’ is often seen with female politicians, where a female politician is labelled as being even ‘tougher’ than her male counterparts. This is exemplified in Margaret Thatcher, often referred to as the ‘iron lady’, who adopted hyper-masculine attributes to succeed in politics (ibid p444).

Finally, and arguably the most ludicrous is the ‘bored, naïve, out-of-touch with reality’ frame where women’s participation in politics and political violence is attributed solely to their boredom. Nacos points out that all of these ways of framing female terrorists
and politicians used by the media serve to strip females of their agency and validity as political actors. Such tactics of framing female political actors are seriously in need of diffusion and de-legitimisation, and Nacos’ study is a good start in that direction.

The focus on the physical appearance of the female suicide bomber/martyr is also a predominate preoccupation of media reports of attacks/operations. ‘Her chestnut hair curled past her shoulders’ (Bennet 2002). This was the description offered by a New York Times journalist of Wafa Idris. In relation to the political situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories, the colour and style of a suicide bomber/martyr’s hair is less than irrelevant. Such simplistic approaches to highlighting the ‘femininity’ of a woman who just turned herself into a ‘living bomb’ serve to reinforce the notion that women’s bodies are simply sexualised objects rather than tools of resistance, and unfortunately, such approaches are the norm when it comes to reporting on instances of female suicide bombing/martyrdom.

The intersection between attributing importance to the physical appearance of the suicide bombers/martyrs and the dominant conceptions of the ‘role’ of a woman’s body is important here. The actions of the ten female Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs have challenged conceptions of the ‘natural’ role of the body of a woman, because ‘The discussion of women suicide bombers or martyrs implicates female bodies and their sexuality’ (Brunner 2005 p37). Within Palestinian society, there were multiple debates after the advent of the first female suicide bomber/martyr as to whether or not it was appropriate for a woman to carry out a suicide bombing/martyrdom operation (Abufarha, 2009). These debates often focused on the ‘role’ of a woman’s body, and the details of internal Palestinian discourse are discussed in greater detail at the end of Chapter Five.
Within Israeli security discourse and broader Israeli society, the female bombers/martyrs challenged Israeli perceptions that ‘female’ bodies did not pose the same threat as ‘male’ bodies. Furthermore, the trans-historical and trans-national idea of women as ‘life-givers’ was challenged when these ten women turned their bodies into weapons. ‘In addition to defying their own placement within this normative gender-sexual grid with various levels of explicitness, the women militants communicated a dramatic objection to Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land and repression of the Palestinian population. They also challenged Israeli gendered assumptions that it is Palestinian male and not female bodies that militarily threatened their racialized social order’ (Hasso 2005 p24). Therefore, the media portrayals of the physical appearance and bodies of the suicide bombers are important because rather than challenging existing dominant patriarchal perceptions of the expectations and roles of women’s bodies, they instead re-enforce traditional notions of femininity and women’s bodies.

Feminist scholars have also argued that the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs are often framed in terms of motherhood and marriage (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry, 2009). Even when the woman was un-married at the time of her attack/operation, as was the case for eight of the ten Palestinian women, she is constructed as ‘a bride of Palestine’ within Palestinian discourse. On the other end of the spectrum, Western media sources have looked at the ‘failure’ of some of the successful suicide bombers/martyrs to have children as a source of their motivation (Hermann, 2004; McKirk, 2007).

Gentry (2009) points out that the motivations and agency of Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs are often explained as a ‘deviation’ from their natural maternalism, thus relying on the perceived socio-biological of women as mothers and nurturers. This
approach has been applied to the ten Palestinian women regardless of whether or not they themselves claimed their ‘motherhood’, thereby relegating them to the private sphere (Gentry, 2009 p236). ‘When terrorism studies focus on women specifically, a relational need to belong and the participation of family and friends is emphasised. Women’s participation is seen as based solely upon belonging, familial and friendship ties and nurturing and less about her political motivations and beliefs’ (ibid p240). This type of portrayal of the female suicide bombers/martyrs is also closely linked to the continual search for personal or emotional motivations, which will be discussed later in the section. Overall, what one can take from a focus on maternalism in seeking to explain female suicide bombing/martyrdom is that the media seeks ways of portraying the women in relation to the perception that women have a ‘natural’ role as mothers. When a woman turns her womb into a bomb, the media often frames this ‘transgression’ from maternalism as a result of not being able to bear children.

An examination of mainstream accounts of female suicide bombers/martyrs also reveals a clear Orientalist bias and construction of Muslims as ‘The Other’. This occurs in multitudinous ways and situations and is extremely pervasive in the accounts of the Muslim women who become suicide bombers/martyrs. ‘Western-centric’ approaches such as focusing on physical appearance and the ‘oppression’ of Muslim women constructs the female suicide bomber/martyr as ‘the other,’ to whom ‘rational’, ‘peace-loving’ ‘nurturing’ Western women have no way to relate (Brunner 2007). Furthermore, the media constructs a one-size-fits-all model of the female suicide bomber/martyr, as if to say that all women who carry out suicide bombing/martyrdom attacks essentially fit one profile, and that profile is of a coerced, suppressed, radicalised and violent Muslim woman. In regards to the attack/operation of Idris, Naaman points out that her actions
were highlighted because: ‘Indeed the idea that a woman who heals people could turn around and kill others seemed so improbable that it could indicate to Western media and society only that something was wrong with this particular individual or else that there is something monstrous about the society that produces such a person’ (Naaman, 2007 p936).

In looking at the individual motivations that prompt a woman to become a suicide bomber/martyr Western media fails to account for the broader political, economic and social factors which contributed to creating the society from which the woman came (Brunner, 2005; 2007). This is especially relevant in the case of Palestine, wherein the mainstream media in the United States rarely explains what life is like for the average Palestinian or the complexities of the political situation brought about through Israeli occupation, but instead looks for ‘personal problems’ in the lives of Palestinian women who become suicide bombers/martyrs. When a woman who blows herself up is subsequently constructed as a woman oppressed and taken advantage of by her extremist Muslim society and pressured into becoming a suicide bomber/martyr because of personal problems in her own life (i.e. she’s childless, or divorced, or has been raped) her actions are taken out of the political and social context of occupation. Such accounts blur over the extremely volatile, difficult and humiliating political situation in which that woman may have lived and the very real political motivation she may have had for her actions. Such media portrayals need to be interrogated in order to establish how they problematically construct Palestinian women as victims of their own societies rather than victims of Israeli occupation.

Portrayals of the Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs in contrast to those of their male counterparts interact with the gendered public/private divide and
play upon the notion that violent women are somehow abnormal; therefore their violent political action cannot be examined in the same ways as the violent political actions of men. This is demonstrated by Naaman (2007), who points out that the individual motivations of male suicide bombers/martyrs are rarely questioned, nor does the Western media delve into their personal lives after they carry out their attack/operation (ibid, p936). She further explores how Western media is so obsessed with the ‘personal’ and ‘individual’ motivations of women rather than men when she writes:

‘The media treatment in the West relies on convenient stereotypes and conventional narrative frames. Those representations deny women agency and instead represent them as monsters or brides in a hegemonic framework that enables readers and viewers to maintain both the comfortable gender status quo and their preconceived notions about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict’ (ibid p952).

This fits well with the analysis provided by Brunner (2007), who takes issue with the Western media’s approach of looking at individual and personal motivations: ‘Manifest in single-case studies and in comparative analysis, such an approach uses gender, geopolitical space, religion and race to construct the other, but seldom reflects upon how these dynamics shape the researcher’s perceptions and investigations or how they operate in a global context’ (ibid p969). In another analysis of Palestinian female suicide bombers, Toles-Patkin (2004) makes a very similar argument when she writes: ‘Media coverage, especially in the West appears to actively search for alternate explanations behind women’s participation in terror in a way that does not seem paralleled in the coverage of male suicide bombers, whose official ideological statements appear to be taken at face value’ (ibid p85). This preoccupation with personal motivations is also
closely tied with the final problematic portrayal of female suicide bombers/martyrs, the
idea that their actions were the result of the influence of men.

From an analysis of the various portrayals of female suicide bombers/martyrs it
becomes clear that all of the various ways of explaining their actions and motivations
relate to one another. The construction of the women as ‘flawed’ or ‘abnormal’ in their
use of violence interacts with the broader social construction of the Muslim woman as
‘the other’ in contrast to the ‘peace-loving’ Western woman. In turn, the focus on the
physical appearance of the women highlights their bodily femininity in a way that
glosses over the fact that these women have turned their maternal ‘life-giving’ body into
a ‘life-taking’ body. Most importantly, all of these portrayals rely heavily upon the
public/private distinction between men/women (Brunner, 2005; 2007; Naaman, 2007;
Gentry, 2009; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). The actions of the female suicide
bomber/martyr are framed in such a way that the woman’s individual political agency is
diminished and her ‘emotional’ reaction is brought to the forefront. Whether the media
comes to the conclusion that their actions were motivated by coercive men, personal
problems, relationship trouble, being unable to have children, driven by revenge for the
loss of a male relative, an ‘oppressive’ Muslim society or some combination of the
above, they are constructing her motivations as driven by emotion rather than political
reason, and this distinction between emotion/reason is still the most pervasive means
of maintaining patriarchal societies. The media may see itself as doing these women a
favour by shifting their motivations for such violence to their own volatile emotions or
the men around them, but really these portrayals serve only to reinforce patriarchal
values and divorce their bombing attacks/martyrdom operations from the political
context of the occupation. It is this divorce that this project is concerned with
addressing, by examining the actions of the female Palestinian suicide bombers, but only in conjunction with a deeper examination of other Palestinian women’s’ resistance to the Israeli occupation.

**Examining women’s militarisation and political violence in other conflicts**

In order to draw a more effective conclusion of dominant perceptions of women’s political violence and feminist challenges to dominant perceptions of the relationship between women and war, this section examines how women’s political violence in other conflicts has been portrayed. Gendered portrayals of women’s political violence are not limited to the case of female Palestinian suicide bombers/martyrs, but permeate International Relations literature. Exploring this literature will provide an illustration that it is not the political violence of Palestinian women alone that deserves a critical analysis, and more importantly, it demonstrates how Feminist approaches to women and political violence have carried out their analyses whilst priviledging women’s own experiences.

An analysis of Chechen female suicide bombers/martyrs, who are often referred to as ‘Black Widows’ also signals the problems with the dominant discourse relating to their actions and motivations. An examination of how the Western media portrays female Chechen terrorists reveals that the actions of these women are portrayed as motivated by personal, not political reasons, much like their Palestinian counterparts. As a starting point, an analysis by West (2004) outlines Hooper’s notion of a ‘hegemonic femininity’ (Hooper, 2001 cited in West, 2004 p3), wherein women and their activities are relegated to the private realm. When women leave this private sphere and become political actors, their reasons for doing so are still framed as personal or private ones. This is blatantly evident in the use of the term ‘Black Widows’ as it implies that Chechen
women only become active in the nationalist struggle if their husbands or male family members are killed, leading to the media’s construction of them as ‘desperate and seeking revenge’ (West 2004 p7). Violent Chechen women are portrayed in such a way that their violence is interpreted as being driven by personal motivations or their coercion by domineering Muslim men. ‘Overall, the depiction of Chechen women terrorists is one of victimization by men, predominantly Russian soldiers, and hopelessness. The choice to inflict violence is portrayed as a non-choice; a force of circumstance. These women are acting out their personal, private turmoil’ (ibid).

Different Western media outlets portray female Chechen terrorists/martyrs as deserving of pity and sympathy because they were ‘forced’ into violence, either from the death of a loved one or through their brutalization by Chechen men. West points out that the message the media conveys is: ‘Women do not make a political choice to be terrorists; they are preyed upon by ruthless men, who are the political actors in the conflict. They are dragged from their homes (where they rightly belong) and forced into violence’ (ibid).

West argues that this type of analysis reinforces the gendered public/private divide through asserting that even if women leave their homes to engage in violence, they don’t do so by choice. ‘By maintaining the international/private divide between men and women, women engaged in ‘manly’ activities may provoke interest, but they are politically unimportant’ (ibid p9). West goes on to write that this leads to Chechen women being ‘doubly victimised’, wherein they are victims of war, but also of the political manipulation that denies their agency when they take action (ibid). This analysis is useful because it challenges the reasons cited by mainstream media for women’s participation in political violence, and thus challenges the gendered notion that
women’s political violence is not in fact motivated by politics and that women who utilise political violence should be pitied. It also clearly relates to the case of Palestinian women’s political violence in its reliance upon ‘personal’ motivation supported by Orientalist claims of how Muslim women are treated.

As the gendered application of different motivations to men/women committing the same acts is one of the most dominant faults of mainstream analyses of women’s political violence, many feminist scholars challenge this across multiple conflicts. One analysis, put forth by Ness (2005a) is aimed at ‘avoiding the tendency to assign different causal explanations to the same violent behaviour in male and female militants/terrorists’ (ibid, p350). This is precisely the type of analysis that is useful to a Feminist project as it calls upon scholars to avoid making conclusions about whether violent political women are either victims or liberated. In her analysis she attempts to avoid both extreme ends of the spectrum, one where women who utilise violence are seen as coerced, and the other end of the spectrum that sees the participation of women in violence as a sign that women have achieved equality with men. Such an approach supports the aims of this project to look at Palestinian women’s political violence within the context of Palestinian society as well as Israeli occupation. She also makes a distinction between women’s participation in ethno-nationalist conflicts and religious groups, but acknowledges that both groups use similar language to condone women’s participation (Ness 2005b p361).

This can also relate to Palestinian women’s involvement in the nationalist struggle. Ness argues that in times of conflict, women combatants are afforded a larger degree of status than they would otherwise receive in society, but that they must structure their participation in a way that still maintains some of the dominant gendered
divisions. ‘A review of the literature on women militants in traditional societies reveals a pattern whereby women combatants are viewed as equal to men in issues relating to the struggle, but not outside of it’ (Ness, 2005b p357). Evidence of this can be found within the context of Palestinian women’s resistance to Israeli occupation. This also fits with the claim of Ness that making reductionist views of women combatants as either victims or liberated perpetrators is unhelpful. The bulk of her paper focuses on the historical aspects of women’s involvement in terrorism, and it examines the organisational structures of the groups that include women, the tactical advantages of women terrorists, the rhetoric used by organisations to explain the involvement of women and the historical contexts of women’s terrorism. She concludes that whilst the women who participate in terrorism are often exercising more agency than they’re given credit for, their actions do not necessarily contribute to achieving greater gender equality (ibid p369). This approach will also contribute to an understanding of relational autonomy, to be discussed in the following section.

Parashar (2009) is another scholar who argues for the value of examining the similarities and differences between female terrorists in secular and religious organisations puts forth another argument that relates to female militants in Sri Lanka and Kashmir. Her analysis examines the militant women in these two conflicts by looking at how women’s participation in militancy differs between ethno-nationalist movements and religio-political movements. This approach is useful because it posits that women’s participation in militancy should not be seen as universally motivated by and constrained by the same things, instead calling upon scholarship to examine the countless contexts in which their participation takes place, as I propose. Parashar writes: ‘My proposition therefore, is to locate the voices of militant women as part of the
multiple narrativizations that take place in conflicts and wars and to problemitise women as ‘women’. Notions of masculine and feminine boundaries, private and public spheres, victimhood and agency, should collapse into more flexible and porous frameworks’ (ibid p 253).

Parashar’s argument also focuses on the different effects participation in militancy can have on the same woman. Rather than looking for ‘one’ answer to whether or not women’s participation in militancy has a positive impact on women’s emancipation, Parashar argues that as a result of militant activity a woman may experience both victimisation and feelings of empowerment. In relation to women who were active in the Tamil separatist group The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) Parashar observed:

‘My own field interviews corroborate the need for a middle ground that does not see the lives of these women in terms of binary constructs. The same woman who was forced to join and had no choice even when she left, was often able to realize her potential during training, gain a sense of identity and feel empowered due to her association with the LTTE’ (ibid p244).

In relation to the differences between women’s militancy in ethno-nationalist versus religio-ethnic conflicts she concludes that whilst women’s agency and motivation in religio-ethnic conflicts is complex, these movements do not offer the same possibilities for women’s emancipation as secular nationalist movements. (ibid p249). Overall, whilst Parashar is dealing with the broader topic of women’s militancy, her perspectives are extremely useful to an examination of Palestinian female suicide bombers, especially as there are undoubtedly important differences between the secular Al Aqsa Martyrs brigade sponsoring female suicide bombers/martyrs and the Islamist groups of Hamas and Islamic Jihad doing the same. Some of the organisational differences in Palestinian
militant groups and the participation of women in operations will be further discussed at the end of Chapter Five.

Along with examining how individual acts of political violence such as suicide bombing/martyrdom have been portrayed, an examination of how women’s political violence inside more collectivised militant structures is informative of how even within more ‘accepted’ organisational structures, women’s political violence is still problematically constructed. Alison (2004) and Sjoberg (2007) are two authors who have examined women as agents of political violence within the context of traditional militaries in the case of Sjoberg and within nationalist militancy movements in the case of Alison. Both Feminist scholars challenge the way mainstream accounts of women’s political violence limit the agency of violent women in numerous ways. In her paper Alison argues that women who utilise political violence, in this case women in the ethno-nationalist militant groups in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, are not necessarily more peaceful than men. In her case studies she observes the trend that women who are less constrained in their actions are more likely to be included in the full range of an organisation’s activities in the case of non-state ethno-nationalist separatist organisations than in loyalist paramilitary organisations. She raises the point that this may be due to the desire of the separatist organisations to gain support from their members by privileging a model of the community based on equality and inclusion (Alison, 2004 p453). This being said, Alison also acknowledges that in times of national struggle, the goals and priorities of the nation will take precedence over the goal of gender equality (ibid p455). This same point is argued by numerous other scholars.

In her article examining militarised femininity in the United States army in the context of the Iraq war, Sjoberg raises several similar and equally important points.
‘Stories about women’s role as soldiers are told on the basis of their gender. Women soldiers were not soldiers but women soldiers; their gender marked their identity on the battlefield’ (Sjoberg 2007 p83). Sjoberg goes on to describe how the integration of women combatants into the United States army necessitated a new social construction, spearheaded by the media and the military, which created the notion that women combatants were ‘feminine, but militarised’ (Enloe, cited in Sjoberg p84). Sjoberg uses several examples from women in the war in Iraq to illustrate how discourses have constructed an ideal version of the ‘militarised woman’ in contrast to other women in the war who were abhorrent versions of militarised femininity. The example Sjoberg cites as the ‘idealised’ woman soldier is that of Jessica Lynch, a soldier captured in battle during the early days of the war. The media and U.S. military’s narratives about Lynch served to construct an idealised version of women soldiers, as brave, but vulnerable. The elaborate plan initiated by the military to retrieve Lynch from an Iraqi hospital was framed so as to maintain that she ‘was at once presented as a glorified war hero and an innocent woman’ (ibid p86). Lynch herself maintains that she was just another soldier, and the elaborate rescue and media spotlight were unnecessary, especially in light of the fact that another woman captured along with her, an African American named Shoshana Johnson received almost no attention, and no elaborate rescue plan, despite being injured as well. Sjoberg argues that Lynch was used by the military with the help of the media to construct the ideal military woman as a brave fighter, but also an innocent victim in need of protection. This particular framing of women soldiers is remarkably similar to the way women who use political violence outside of state-militaries are framed, wherein their victim-hood is highlighted so as to limit their agency.
Sjoberg also cites examples of how the media and military frame the actions of women who do not fit the idealised militarised femininity, citing the examples of the women implicated in the sexual abuse of male prisoners in Abu Ghraib and the female general in charge of the prison. Sjoberg contends that, Janet Karpinski, the general in charge of the prison where the sexual abuse took place is framed as an aberrant woman, ‘less of a woman, less pure and therefore less female because she coordinated prisoner abuse’ (ibid p89). Other narratives focus on her gender as a way of illustrating that women have no place in war. In light of the fact that three of the alleged abusers were also women, the media and military had to account for their role in the abuse. Sjoberg points out that the dominant tactic by the military and the media was to ignore the gender of the abusers. The tendency has also been to deny that they had agency in their actions, but rather that they were simply falling into line with the orders given to them. Their gender was ignored, Sjoberg claims, because ‘Instead, the media, the USA and a world full of socially constructed and reinforced gender stereotypes were not ready for the reality of women sexual abusers’ (ibid p 90).

Finally, it is important to note that there is further value in interrogating the distinction often made in International Relations literature that denotes a strict delimitation between combatant/non-combatant. If we call into question where this division occurs and how the terms are defined, it becomes clear that the strict dichotomy is largely perceived, and is an important element of how Palestinian women are often perceived contrasts with how their lived reality may demonstrate a blurring of the distinction. Nordstrom (2005), contests that in times of conflict the combatant/non-combatant dichotomy is not always useful. She does so by looking at conflict in Mozambique. Through examining the activities of various women in a village in
Mozambique, along with an aid worker, a commander, and a civilian, Nordstrom contends that the tradition notion of combatant fails to take into account how conflict today necessitates that everyone in the war zone is a combatant in some sense. This analysis follows many of the contentions by Enloe that women are embedded in militarisation rather than just subject to it. ‘In war, women are serving whether they are in a recognised military unit or not’ (ibid p402). She thus problematizes how we have defined ‘fighting’, through questioning whether or not a civilian who has rebuilt their home and re-tilled their fields countless times after raids by militants should be conceived as ‘fighting the war’. She writes:

‘Literature, movies and media have created an image of war as ‘fighting.’ Only fighting. It is easy to forget in the adrenaline rush of a two-hour movie or media sound bite on exploding bodies and weapons that people live their lives amid these explosions. They must eat, sleep, find food and clothing, work, care for loved ones and craft resistance. What, in this context is a female soldier?’ (ibid p 404)

This type of analysis is extremely useful because it denies that there is a distinct delimitation between combatant/non-combatant, instead claiming that we must reconceptualise how we define ‘fighting’ in wars to include more than just battles. This will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Five wherein Palestinian women’s diverse means of enacting resistance to the occupation are explored.

Nordstrom goes on to contend that in times of conflict, women who re-build their homes, or those who are able to defend their homes with a weapon they’ve acquired, or teachers who hold classes for children outside after the schools have been destroyed or women who set up community banks are participating in acts of ‘military resistance and courage’ (ibid p406). These actions, she contends, represent the realities of war, and women who engage in them can be seen as combatants because they are
actively combating the war. She raises the question ‘If non-combatant women comprise such a large section of today’s war’s frontline actors, if their actions are crucial to the nature, manifestation and outcome of war – why are they deleted from the majority of English publications available on war?’ (ibid p408). In challenging the prevailing notion of who is a combatant and who is a non-combatant, and what constitutes fighting Nordstrom makes an important move to de-stabilise the idea that wars produce distinct categories of victim/perpetrator.

Existing mainstream academic and media accounts of women’s political violence and involvement in war-making does not reflect the lived reality of women engaged in the political use of violence or active duty combat. As such greater attention needs to be paid to analyses that critique the assumption that women’s political violence always has a personal or gender subservient motivation. Reliance on falsifying dichotomies such as public/private or victim/perpetrator serves deny political agency to the women carrying out the actions, and to also relegate women’s political violence to the margins of International Relations. In order to move forward beyond the troublesome dichotomies of victim/perpetrator and public/private I will propose an approach called ‘relational autonomy’ (Hirschmann, 1989; Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2000; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007) which shares many characteristics with some of the feminist critiques of women’s political violence in mainstream academic literature and the media, as it seeks to explain how a woman’s decision to use political violence can be both limited by gendered norms and an act of political resistance at the same time. Such an approach is extremely valuable for this project, as it allows for an understanding of how gendered expectations can shape and limit Palestinian women’s decision making when they decide to engage in resistance.
Relational Autonomy

Relational autonomy can be easily summed up as follows: ‘In its simplest form, relational autonomy is the recognition that freedom of action is defined and limited by social relationships’ (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007 p194). Relational autonomy means that decisions to act are never undertaken without some sort of restraint on the actor, but also that an ability to make the decision to act is never entirely absent (ibid). This is a much better way of explaining women’s political violence than the opposing views of a total denial of agency as illustrated in the bulk of mainstream analyses as well as the contention that women who used political violence had complete, unrestrained freedom to make the rational choices to use violence. This model more closely represents the reality of how people, both men and women, make decisions to utilise political violence. If applied to the context of Palestinian women’s political violence, one can see how Palestinian women are inevitably constrained in their actions but they are also not completely prevented from making decisions and taking action. Chapter Five will demonstrate how the Israeli occupation as well as norms and expectations in Palestinian society, and broader discourses of ‘resistance’ within Palestinian society, shape and form the ways in which Palestinian women can undertake political action, but it will also demonstrate how the Israeli occupation is what galvanises Palestinian women to undertake acts of resistance, varying from hunger strikes to suicide attacks/martyrdom operations. Relational autonomy is useful because it attributes political agency without denying the limitations and constraints of that agency.

The concept of relational autonomy can be found throughout various works on agency and autonomy undertaken by various feminist scholars throughout the past several decades. The examination of autonomy from a feminist perspective stems from
a need to understand how the gender bias affects the ability of actors to make and carry out actions. Relational autonomy provides a much-needed critique of liberalism’s approach to autonomy, wherein the individual is seen to be ‘fully free’. This concept of the individual and the assumed total freedom they have to act arose out of Modernity, which posits that the individual can always employ rationality in order to exercise their individual autonomy. Feminists have long challenged this concept of individual autonomy, claiming that the gender bias limits the ability of women to make a decision as a ‘fully free’ individual (Benson, 1990). Through developing the concept of relational autonomy it is possible to explain how the gender bias functions to limit the capacity of women to make ‘fully free’ choices. Instead, relational autonomy allows for a better understanding of how political relationships actually function (Sylvester 1990). Interdependence is crucial to the notion of relational autonomy because it explains how social structures function to limit the possibilities for individuals to act as well as how individuals are able to maintain some degree of personal identity. ‘Relational autonomy preserves identity independence for oneself while recognizing the interdependence of self and other and the political and social relationships one has with others’ (Sylvester, 2002 p119).

Hirschmann contends that relational autonomy is associated with choice and obligation. She argues that the liberal version of ‘obligation’ entails that taking up an obligation is in fact a choice. ‘In the modern liberal state and the liberal doctrines that theorize it, it is fairly well established that obligation is a concept based on voluntarist principles; that is, an obligation is a limitation on behaviour, a requirement for action or non-action, that the actor or non-actor has agreed to’ (Hirschmann 1989 p1227). This arises from social contract theory’s concept of the individual as being limited only by
their ‘self’. Hirschmann points out that any critiques of this voluntarist conception of 
obligation fail to understand the reasons why voluntarist obligation is so problematic 
and suggests that the problem lies with gender bias. As a result, women are unable to 
‘consent’ to their obligations.

‘By declaring that all obligations, to be such, must be taken on voluntarily, 
consent theory ignores or denies what women’s experience reveals, namely, 
that obligations do in fact exist that are not chosen but stem from the 
history and character of human relationships. A fully consistent consent 
theory would have to include the recognition that not all obligations are self- 
assumed’ (ibid p1229).

In this way Hirschmann provides the foundation for a view of autonomy as relational to 
one’s social environment, because the obligations upon a person may not have all been 
a matter of choice but instead socially constructed and imposed.

Mackenzie further develops the theoretical framework of relational autonomy, 
claiming that:

‘Relational values are premised on a socially embedded conception of agency 
and argue that an adequate theory of autonomy must be based on recognition 
of the ways in which, as agents, our practical identities and value commitments 
are constituted in and by our interpersonal relationships and social 
environment. The second claim is that autonomy is itself a socially constituted 
capacity, and because of this its development and exercise can be impaired by 
abusive or oppressive interpersonal relationships and by social and political 
environments characterized by oppression, injustice and inequality’ 
(Mackenzie, 2008 p519).

This establishes a new theory of ‘autonomy’ which allows for some freedom in decision 
making for the individual, but also establishes that personal relationships, political 
situations and social surroundings will change how, where and when individuals can act 
as well as what types of action they can take. This challenges the Liberal conceptions of 
the individual as able to determine his (or her) own degree of freedom. Furthermore, 
relational autonomy addresses the troublesome binary of ‘autonomous/not
autonomous’ by contending that autonomy functions in very different ways for different people, that one’s degree of autonomy can fluctuate. Autonomy and non-autonomy cannot be seen as binary oppositions, but instead as a matter of degree (ibid p523).

This type of approach to autonomy is especially useful when looking at violent and or resisting women in conflict. The discourses which deny the agency of women who use political violence by explaining their actions as the result of the coercive men around them or the personal trauma they experienced is certainly most unhelpful from a Feminist project, but there is a useful aspect in this argument. Without a doubt, gender roles and divisions exist within the societies from which these women come. If a woman then chooses to utilise political violence, her decision will indisputably be ‘defined and limited’ by the society she comes from and the gendered expectations imposed on her.

Furthermore, it is entirely possible that women who engage in political violence have been subjected to some sort of trauma or personal hardship as a result of violence at some point. However, examining personal motivations from only a perspective of women denies the glaringly obvious, that men in the same societies who use political violence have very likely also experienced personal trauma. The examples of Chechens and Palestinians are especially pertinent here. Some of the Chechen and Palestinian women who became suicide bombers/martyrs probably did experience personal loss, but in Chechen and Palestinian society, it would be difficult to find anyone, man or woman, ‘civilian’ or ‘militant’ who has not experienced the death of a close relative or friend. Therefore, when examining the agency of people, both men and women, who engage in political violence one should start from the Feminist posit that ‘the personal is political’ and the claim of relational autonomy that our personal relationships, social surrounding and political environment will shape, constrain and limit how, where and
when we can act. Women who utilise political violence are surely shaped and constrained by their gender, the society they come from and their personal lives, but we can also say the same of men. Relational autonomy provides the best lens for an examination of the agency of politically violent women because it is merely a framework for analysis of how different factors in different situations contribute to or detract from agency rather than a definitive conclusion to whether a woman is wholly autonomous or wholly oppressed.

In regards to female suicide bombers/martyrs it provides a means to seek an explanation for how women choose to become suicide bombers/martyrs, and how their actions fit into the spectrum of resistance to occupation in Palestine. However, as previously mentioned, it is important not to attribute too much attention to Palestinian women’s participation in political violence, as acts of violence encompass only one aspect of resistance. One should not examine Palestinian women’s resistance without accounting for women who choose to engage in violence, but looking only at women’s violent resistance unjustly overlooks the wide range of women’s resistances. It is for this reason that drawing inspiration from Foucault’s concepts of power and resistance being exercised through apparatuses is so useful for this project, as it will allow for an investigation that includes but does not privilege Palestinian women’s political violence, by examining it as a part of a range of resistances responding to a range of subjectifications.

In the next chapter I introduce how Michel Foucault conceptualises power, biopower and resistance. The theories of Foucault will provide a theoretical foundation for approaching the subjectification and resistance of Palestinian women from an angle that does not privilege the state. Foucault argues for examining exercises of power from
the point of particular occurrences rather than grand theories. In doing so he argues that one should question how a particular occurrence came to be, rather than why, leading to a more full understanding of how power actually operates to produce the subject, and how subjects are continually engaged in resistances to that power. As such, in order to move beyond the existing literatures outlined here in Chapter One, towards a non-state model of power and resistance that critically engages with the constraints and limitations imposed on Palestinian women as subjects and how they resist, it will first be essential to more thoroughly explain the theories Foucault puts forth to engage with the concepts of power, biopower and resistance. In doing so I will demonstrate why this project is so concerned with examining Palestinian women from the perspective of power, bodies and resistance.
Chapter Two – Theorising Power and Resistance

Why Foucault?

This project has been constructed as an analysis of how Israeli power forms Palestinian women as subjects, and how women in turn reject or resist that subjectification, at times violently. Such a framing has a clear lineage that can be attributed to Michel Foucault. The proposal is that in approaching Palestinian women’s resistance to Israeli occupation from a bottom-up, non-state approach will result in a more full understanding of how Palestinian women come to be engaged in multiple acts of resistance.

The Israeli occupation demonstrates clearly how power is exercised through multiple relationships and multiple sites, and how that exercise of power is directed at specific subjects – Palestinians. The occupation also demonstrates that power is not uniform in its application, and that different exercises of power are applied to different people within the same territory. Mostly, the Palestinian response to the occupation demonstrates that responses to occupation are as diverse and flexible as the power of occupation. It is precisely these factors that make Foucault’s model of power and resistance a useful means of examining the occupation and resistance. The openness of what ‘counts’ as power or resistance for Foucault means that starting from his often abstract ideas can in fact demonstrate with great clarity the ways power and resistance function in the occupied territories.

Foucault’s theories of power and resistance provide a means of examining power from a different perspective, an undertaking supported by Feminist research. Enloe, (1996) argues that it is not logical to only study power form its centre, because to do so
ignores the multiplicity of power relationships throughout society and how they function together.

‘There is, I think, a serious flaw in this analytical economy, and in the research strategy that flows from it. It presumes, a priori that margins, silences, and bottom rungs are so naturally so marginal, silent, and far from power that exactly how they are kept there could not possibly be of interest to the reasoning, reasonable explainer’ (Enloe, 1996 p188).

Here, Enloe provides an excellent argument for examining power differently in International Relations, and Foucault provides a means of seeing power very differently indeed.

In the previous chapter I outlined how existing state-centric analyses of security and women’s political violence will fail to adequately account for the complexity and multiplicity of Palestinian women’s experiences of (in)security and acts of political violence. In this chapter I will present the theories of Foucault in order to build the first element of a theoretical foundation that challenges traditional models of power and resistance. The theories of Foucault have found their way into countless fields of study, including International Relations (Kiersey and Stokes, eds. 2010). This chapter aims to synthesise some of Foucault’s most often misunderstood, and misjudged concepts, concepts that are crucial to a re-conceptualisation of power and resistance in the context of Palestinian women.

While much of Foucault’s work appears to be directed at exploring and explaining how power functions, power itself was not his primary focus. When describing the nature of his work he claimed that ‘Therefore it is not power, but the subject that constitutes the general theme of my investigations’ (Foucault 1994b p327). Instead of examining power from a perspective of those who hold it, Foucault is concerned with the effects of power on subject formation. It is for this reason that
Foucault is central to this analysis of Palestinian women’s experiences of subjectification and resistance. An analysis that draws from the tradition of Foucault will allow me to explore how Palestinian women are constructed as subjects, how power affects and acts upon their bodies and how resistance to that power is structured. For Foucault, exploring power from the perspective of the subject was more useful because it allowed for an understanding of how individuals came to be constructed by the operations of power on them.

‘Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and un-interrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.’ (ibid p 97).

A Foucault-inspired analysis of Palestinian women’s experiences of subjectification and resistance will thus not focus on finding the individual motivations for Palestinian women engaged in acts of resistance, including the instances of the women who became suicide bombers/martyrs, nor will it seek out the motivations for actions of the Israeli state against Palestinians. Instead, it will seek to explain how and to what effect the construction of Palestinian women as de facto subjects of Israel has occurred upon their bodies, and how some Palestinian women have sought to resist their positions as subjects of Israeli power.

This chapter will be divided into four sections. Firstly, before explaining Foucault’s conception of biopower, it is important to have an understanding of how

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8 Here by de facto I mean that Palestinians in the occupied territories are not legal subjects of Israel, but are subjects in practice as a result of the occupation.
Foucault perceives power, as his perception of power is crucial to understanding how he perceives subject formation and resistance and furthermore relates directly to how bodies are a target of power. Without an understanding of this model of power, it is not possible to understand Foucault’s model of resistance and the notion of biopower because they are all linked together. The first section will explain the model of power Foucault proposes as a challenge to Liberalism’s model of power as being ‘held’ by the sovereign state. Once Foucault’s approach to power is explained, it will be possible to outline how he presented the concept of biopower. Whilst ‘biopower’ is a word that often appears in reference to Foucault, he himself was unable to write a conclusive definition of the concept before his death. He does however repeatedly reference bodies as a location where power operates, and an object of institutional control. Instead of a concrete definition, biopower is instead a loose and adaptable concept. Therefore, section two will utilise the work of Foucault along with the works of other scholars to establish how biopower can be seen in relation to the subjectification and resistance of Palestinian women. The third section provides an explanation of how Foucault makes a connection between power and resistance to power, which he saw as a ‘creative process’. The fourth section will explore the uneasy relationship between Foucault and feminists. Since there has been much critique of Foucault from numerous feminist perspectives it will be crucial to explain why I have chosen to write from a Foucault-inspired Feminist perspective, and why I think the two are more compatible than incompatible. In the conclusion, I will briefly explain how Foucault’s theory of biopower can be deployed as an analytical and methodological tool. These themes will be further explained in the next chapter, wherein I move beyond Foucault alone to
establish a broader theoretical foundation for examining Palestinian women’s experiences of subjectification and resistance.

‘The head of the king’: Foucault’s model of power

In critiquing the dominant conceptions of state power, Foucault argues: ‘In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king. Hence the importance the theory of power gives to the problem of right and violence, law and illegality, freedom and will and especially the state and sovereignty’ (Foucault, 1978 p89). The model of power which perceives it firstly as a pre-given in analysis and secondly, as something that is possessed by the state or more particularly the head of the state, is an incorrect model of power according to Foucault. This is because such a model of power fails to account for how power is not like a ladder, but instead more like a web or a capillary. For Foucault, power is everywhere, in every relationship, and it is exercised, not possessed.

‘Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application’ (Foucault 1980 p98).

This illustrates the main contention of Foucault’s model of power extremely well through the analogy that individuals are vehicles of power. In such a model of power, the implications for the individual are twofold: the individual is constituted through the very process of the exercise of power in that she/he is an effect of power as well as being capable of exercising power themselves, and secondly, individuals regulate their own actions. This is a dramatically different model of power than the model that assumes the sovereignty of the state as the legitimate locus of power.
Foucault’s discussion of power can be found throughout his entire corpus, and while the context of the discussion changes, one factor remains unchanged, and that is the notion of power as a two-way system. As such, investigations of power should in fact be investigations of power relations not just power alone (Lazzarato, 2002 p107). Power operates through and upon individuals to create subjects, but every individual is capable of resisting the operation of power. The notion of resistance will be discussed in the third section, but it must be re-iterated that Foucault continually insists upon the productive capabilities of power.

Deleuze recapitulates Foucault’s model of power as threefold in character: ‘1) power is not essentially oppressive (since it ‘incites, it induces, it seduces’) 2) it is practiced before it is possessed (since it is possessed only in a determinable form, that of class and a determined form, that of state) and 3) it passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters (since it passes through every related force’ (Deleuze, 1988 p60). As a result, Deleuze concludes, that when investigating power, ‘We should not ask “What is power and where does it come from?”, but, “How is it practised?” (ibid). It is from this line of questioning that the examination of Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance can arise. Let us explore Foucault’s model of power further.

One of the most thorough explanations of Foucault’s model of power can be found in *The History of Sexuality Volume One*, wherein Foucault makes five ‘propositions’ about the nature of power. One: power is not something that one either possesses or does not possess. It cannot be taken, or held onto, or acquired, but instead it is exercised from a multitude of points through relations. These relations can be non-egalitarian, thus producing power imbalances (Foucault 1978 p94). Two: power relations
are part of every other type of relationship. Power relations are the effect of inequalities and divisions of other types of imbalanced relations as well as being productive within these relationships (ibid). Three: the opposition and imbalance of power between rulers and the ruled is not a given, but rather a result of a series of complex relationships throughout the entire social body. Domination of the ruled results not from an intrinsic characteristic of power but instead from the convergence of various relationships between groups, institutions, families, etc. Therefore the state is not the sole source of domination and oppression, but instead is the result of a whole series of complex and inter-twined relationships throughout society (ibid). Four: the exercise of power results from aims and objectives and calculation. However, this does not necessarily reflect the choice of an individual subject, but instead results from tactics that are connected to one another through comprehensive systems. In other words, the exercise of power cannot always be traced to its origin, but that origin is always rooted in a particular aim, and exercised through tactics (ibid p94-95). Finally, where there is power, there is resistance. Again, this will be more thoroughly explored in the third section, but suffice to say that because of the relational character of power, resistance is never exterior to power, but intrinsically part of it (ibid p95). As such, the resistance of Palestinian women to the Israeli occupation should be examined as an intrinsic part of the subjectification of Palestinian women through the occupation.

As a result of conceptualizing power as a net rather than as a ladder, Foucault’s model of power theorises the exercise of power as something cyclical and reciprocal rather than as something which differentiates between those who have power and those who do not (Foucault 1980 p98). Foucault is not arguing that power is extremely well distributed however. For this reason, he argues, it is essential to make an ascending
analysis of power from its origins, at what he refers to as its ‘infinitesimal mechanisms’ (ibid p99). This conception of power as originating at very small scales on the level of the lives of individuals is antithetical to the notion that power originates with the sovereign state and moves downwards. However, the methodological approach of Foucault, which involves examining what he refers to as ‘genealogies’ illustrates how throughout history, systems for controlling individuals have tended to start operating at the small scale and move slowly upwards. Through profuse examples, from the prison, to the mental institution to sex, Foucault explains how changes in the nature of power have started at the level of the individual and moved upwards, throughout society, and may eventually reach the level of the state, but they do not originate at the level of the state and move down as traditional notions of the sovereign state claim. This genealogical approach will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Four.

In a series of lectures given at the Collège de France from 1976-1979 Foucault outlines a rough theory of how the nature of state power has changed. In particular, during the 1977-1978 series of lectures, entitled ‘Security, Territory, Population’ Foucault explores what he refers to as ‘pastoral power’ a manner of exercising power modelled on the church and the relationship between the pastor and the pastorate. This particular genealogy of power is interesting because it illustrates one of the ways in which the state modified and adapted a particular means of exercising power from a non-state institution and thereby applied such an exercise of power to the broader population. Prior to outlining this shift, it is essential to point out that Foucault did not conceptualise history as being separated into different epochs where one mechanism of power completely abolishes and makes obsolete other mechanisms of power, but rather, he maintained that history should instead be examined as a series of ‘over-
lapping techniques’ (Foucault 2007 p8). In other words, certain techniques of power, in this case, ‘pastoral power’ can be seen in various times throughout history. Therefore, there is no one time period that can be characterised by pastoral power; however it is possible to examine the technique of pastoral power throughout history to see how its application has changed.

Pastoral power is reflected in the notion that within a territory, it is possible to govern subjects and that the ruler is referred to as a shepherd in some sense, thereby to rule is to lead his ‘flock’ of subjects.

‘The theme of the king, god, or chief as a shepherd (berger) of men, who are like his flock, is frequently found throughout the Mediterranean East. It is found in Egypt, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and above all, in the Hebrews. In Egypt for example, but also in Assyria and Babylonian monarchies the king is actually designated, in a completely ritual way, as the shepherd (berger) of men’ (Foucault 2007 p123).

He goes on to argue that in particular, the Christian West is the most obvious and blatant example of how pastoral power was infiltrated into the operation of power over populations (ibid p130). This is reflected in the sentiment that kings in Europe were perceived to rule by ‘divine’ right, and more importantly, that kings ruled over populations rather than territories. This idea became more and more nuanced throughout the eighteenth century with the advent of the ‘sovereign state’ and the rise of industrial capitalism. That particular shift will be further discussed in the proceeding biopower section, as Foucault claims that the shift in techniques of pastoral power in the eighteenth century were increasingly directed at the bodies of the population. This further illustrates Foucault’s argument that techniques of power are not confined to a certain age, and thereby they should be studied as ‘over-lapping’ techniques. Insofar as this relates to the examination of Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance,
rather than assume that certain techniques of power operate over Palestinian women as a result of Israeli state power, this project will examine how different techniques for exercising power are intermingled.

Foucault contributes the adaptation of a particular form of pastoral power in the modern Western state to the pastoral power of Christian institutions (Foucault 2000 p333). He characterises Christian pastoral power by four aspects. Firstly, the aim of pastoral power is the ‘salvation’ of the flock, with the goal of keeping the flock healthy, i.e. to lead the flock to pasture and ensure their sustenance (ibid). Secondly, in pastoral power, the shepherd must be willing to sacrifice himself for the flock (ibid). Thirdly, is the individualisation of the subject. This can be traced to the notion within Christianity that it is the duty of the religious leader to look after each and every ‘sheep’ in his flock, and that he must always be willing to sacrifice the entire flock to save one sheep. ‘That is to say it is true that the shepherd directs the whole flock, but he can really only direct insofar as not a single sheep escapes him’ (Foucault 2007 p128). Finally, and relating back to Foucault’s wider conceptualisation of power, pastoral power can operate only by knowing the conscience of the subjects and being able to bring each individual to a point of self-regulation (Foucault 1994 p333).

A modern version of pastoral power has been adopted by the modern state. Instead of salvation the goal becomes the maintenance of a ‘healthy’ and ‘secure’ population (ibid p 334). Simultaneously, the number of people and institutions exercising power increased. Here Foucault references the police, an institution which had a number of very different tasks and responsibilities at their formation in the eighteenth century, including responsibility for public hygiene and health standards. In addition to new institutions, ‘old’ institutions such as the family were increasingly
endowed with techniques of pastoral power (ibid). Finally, this new pastoral power was concerned with the production of two fields of knowledge, one to analyse the individual and one aimed at quantifying the population (ibid p335).

Foucault is not dismissing the role of the state in power relations outright, but instead critiquing approaches which assume the sovereign-state model of power. Models of power which centralise the state overlook what Foucault refers to as the ‘minute, everyday level.’ Through examining pastoral power, Foucault reveals how the exercise of power can originate in myriad locations outside the sovereign state, such as within the church or the field of medicine. Consequently, he is critical of any model of ‘revolution’ which assumes a sovereign state model of power. These revolutions (specifically referencing the Soviet revolution) cannot succeed because they will fail to recognise and change those mechanisms of power which are ‘minute and everyday’, and outside the state, but extremely pervasive (Foucault 1980 p60).

The example of sexualities as explored by Foucault is a very good explanation of such ‘minute and everyday’ mechanisms of power operation. In The History of Sexuality Volume One Foucault undertakes a ‘genealogy’ of sexualities. He focuses on the Victorian era as the location where a major shift in the exercise of power over sexualities occurred. Maintaining that the change started at the level of the bourgeoisie as a code of conduct designed to regulate the reproduction practices of the upper class, Foucault illustrates how sex became more and more regulated in the Victorian age. He argues that the control over sex began at the level of language, not law, wherein within bourgeois society it became more and more difficult to ‘speak’ of sex directly. Norms and standards about where, when and with whom one could speak about sex became more stringent. However, Foucault points out, this did not result in sex becoming absent
in discourse, instead it became more frequent, more regulated and codified (Foucault, 1978, p18). As this normalisation of discourse expanded, the standards and norms were no longer applied only to the bourgeois, but also to ‘every good Christian’. This illustrates the net-like notion of Foucault’s model of power, wherein norms, regulations and discourses can spread throughout society and do not necessarily originate from the sovereign state. Foucault goes on to argue that such regulations and standards may have remained in the realm of the Church, but other institutions and mechanisms began to utilise the same standards and discourses regarding the definition of ‘appropriate’ sexual behaviour (ibid p 23).

In particular, he references how the advancement of industrial capitalism necessitated that the working class population be ‘productive’. If the working class were continually engaged in ‘inappropriate’ sexual behaviours, they would be less productive as workers. Therefore, it became necessary to expand the reach of power over sexual behaviour beyond the bourgeois and the Church into the bedrooms of the ordinary working class public, who until the advent of industrial capitalism, experienced very few restrictions and normalisations of their sexual conduct (ibid p 114). This regulation and normalisation of sex also expanded to the field of medicine, and to education of children. With these expansions Foucault argues, came the expansion of the power over sex into politics, where for the first time, governments became concerned with ‘population’ and the health of that population (ibid p25). The link between the exercise of power and bodies as a location where that exercise takes place will be more fully discussed in the ‘biopower’ section.

The example of the power over sex illustrates how Foucault’s model of power is centred not on the state as the origin of power, but instead on various segments of
society, for example institutions of medicine or religion and the manner in which power is exercised through these ‘mechanisms’ to regulate and ‘normalise’ the behaviour of subjects. Foucault’s best explanation of how subjects come to regulate themselves can be found in *Discipline and Punish*, a book which explores the manner in which the penal system has changed to incorporate a model of self-regulation for prisoners. Foucault contends that these tactics for ensuring that prisoners regulate themselves can be found in other institutions, exemplified by hospitals, factories and schools (Foucault, 1977a p228).

Self-regulation, according to Foucault, can be illustrated by the architectural model of the Panopticon, a prison system designed by Bentham. The Panopticon is characterised by a central watchtower, surrounded by a building divided into cells. Each cell has two windows, one opening to the outside, and one facing the central tower. The ensuing effect of backlighting prevents the prisoners from seeing or communicating with one another, but more importantly, they are unable to ascertain if and when the guard is watching them at any given time. ‘He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication’ (ibid p200). The result is a prisoner, never knowing for certain when he is being observed, begins to police his own behaviour. For Bentham, the goal of such an architectural form is that power should be ‘visible and unverifiable’ in that the prisoner can see the central tower, but cannot be sure by looking at it that he is being watched (ibid p201).

‘Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should render its actual exercise unnecessary; that its architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that
the inmates should be caught up in a power situation where they are themselves the bearers’ (ibid).

The Panopticon makes the exercise of power more efficient because it increases the number of subjects who can be observed whilst decreasing the number of observers, it allows for the possibility of intervention before wrongdoing occurs, its presence is constant thereby limiting the need for intervention and it acts directly upon individuals giving ‘power of mind over mind’ (ibid p206). The panopticon as an architectural form has been used extensively in the occupied territories to regulate and conduct surveillance over the Palestinian population. The most obvious examples are the watchtowers dispersed along sections of the separation barrier. These towers are visible symbols of Israeli surveillance over the Palestinian population, and like the panopticon, it is not possible to tell if a soldier is inside at any given time. The architecture of occupation as an element of subjectification will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Also essential for understanding Foucault’s model of power is the nature of ‘the subject’ in relation to power. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, Foucault claims that it is not power, but the subject that is the theme of his research (Foucault 1994b p327). Foucault highlights that as power does not exist in and of itself, but is only constituted through relations, power does not operate directly upon the individual subject, but rather the actions of the subject (ibid p 340). This can be seen in reference to the example of the Panopticon, wherein it is the actions (or non-actions) of the prisoner that are regulated by the gaze of the central tower, and also in the shift towards the regulation of sex through the example of the increased focus on self-regulation within the confessional. Priests began to demand that their congregations
reveal more and more of their sexual practices in confession, thereby establishing an increased operation of power over the actions of individuals and increasing self-regulation of practices (Foucault 1978 p21). Furthermore, this creates ‘divided’ subjects. Subjects are either ‘divided’ from other subjects by such dichotomies as sane/insane or criminal/obedient subject, or the subject is divided within himself, as an effect of self-regulation (Foucault, 1994 p326). The subject is a cornerstone of this research project, therefore in Chapter Three I will more fully engage with a definition of the subject that will be used to analyse Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance. Foucault’s approach to the subject will be the foundation for the definition, but it will necessarily be supplemented with theories put forth by Butler (1995; 1999).

**Biopower: ‘A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved’**

Throughout his corpus, Foucault reiterates the importance of the body as a location where power is exercised. The techniques of power which operate upon the body vary widely and include the control of sexualities, the delineations made between the bodies of the sick/healthy and the sane/insane in hospitals and mental institutions and the disciplining of prisoners, schoolchildren and soldiers, amongst others. Using these examples, Foucault formulates his idea of ‘biopower’ upon the contention that it is one’s body that is the object of power.

As previously mentioned, there is no one text in particular where Foucault explicitly states a definitive designation of biopower. To date scholars of Foucault’s work often disagree in regards to the precise application and definition of the term. The contention and continuing engagement with the concept means that biopower can be interpreted in different ways and brought into many diverse analyses. One should view biopower not as a fixed idea, but rather as a flexible tactic that can be used as a lens
through which to view exercises of power that occur through and upon physical bodies as a means of shaping, controlling or making them useful. Therefore, biopower does not belong to any particular field, but instead represents the many ways in which our bodies are a conduit for the exercise of power and resistance to it. Cementing the term into fixity would be detrimental and counter to the flexibility with which Foucault endowed it. As such, one can ‘use’ biopower to contribute to a better understanding of how power is exercised over Palestinian women to subjugate them.

Near the end of his life Foucault often mentioned during interviews and lectures that he intended to focus more on his concept of biopower, but due to his early death he was unable to do so. Therefore, it is the contention this project that biopower and bodies deserve further investigation, examination and most importantly practical application in order to determine their utility as a means of analysing power relations. This section will start with paying attention to Foucault’s own references to the body, found within his books, interviews and a series of lectures given between 1977-1979 entitled ‘Security, Territory, Population’ and ‘The Birth of Biopolitics’. The second half of the section will be dedicated to how other scholars have interpreted, expanded upon and used the foundational ideas put forth by Foucault.

In *The History of Sexuality Volume One*, Foucault explains two ways in which power operates upon the bodies of subjects. The first is what he refers to as an ‘anatomo-politics of the human body’ (Foucault 1978, p139). This technique of power focuses on the productive capabilities of the body, or the body as a ‘machine’ and it exercises power upon the body through disciplinary practices which aim to make the body more productive, more docile and more integrated into institutions and systems of control (ibid). Foucault sees the anatomo-politics of the body as the first technique that
came to operate upon the body. In his lecture series he expands upon the historical
genealogy of how this type of power came to operate. In particular, he cites the rise of
mercantilism and later industrial capitalism as an impetus for the rise in techniques
exercised over the anatomo-political body. ‘The population as the source of wealth, as a
productive force, and disciplinary supervision are all a piece within the thought, project
and political practice of the mercantilists’ (Foucault 2007 p69). The techniques of control
with the aim of making the population more productive and docile come in the form of
laws, disciplinary procedures and the establishment of institutions to ensure the former
directed at such goals as: to limit the seasonal movement of populations, reduce
vagrancy, ensure greater health and hygiene and reduce emigration. (ibid) In short, the
techniques of power over the anatomo-politics of the body were aimed at ensuring that
the population ‘will work properly, in the right place, and on the right objects’ (ibid).
These techniques of power aim to increase the utility of the bodies of subjects.

Disciplining the body is another goal of the anatomo-politics of the body. Techni
cues of discipline aim to make bodies more docile. Foucault takes this case up
particularly in Discipline and Punish. Techniques of power operate through institutions
such as schools, hospitals and the military to regulate and normalise the bodies of
subjects (Foucault 1977 p136). Such disciplinary techniques aim to control the operation
of bodies to suit the needs of efficiency, strength, utility, or docility. Furthermore,
Foucault argues, while discipline may have the effect of increasing the economic utility
of the body by making it more efficient, discipline also seeks to increase the subjection
of the body (ibid p138). ‘Let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the
constraining link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination’ (ibid).
The increased disciplinary techniques operating on the body cannot be traced to one specific moment in history, but instead developed on minute scales and across various locations, and gradually increased in breadth and scope. For example, Foucault points out, discipline in schools originated in secondary schools, and then gradually spread to primary schools. Most importantly, each successive expansion of the techniques of discipline upon the body came about as a response to something else, such a new technological advancement or the outbreak of a new infectious disease (ibid). ‘What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it’ (Foucault 1977a p138). Techniques of power aimed at disciplining bodies are thus directed ‘at the level of the mechanism itself’ wherein ‘mechanism’ refers to the actual body. The docile body is a result of the exercise of power directly upon the body, affecting the way bodies move or don’t move, the way bodies look, the capability or non-capability of bodies and the degree to which actual bodies are malleable by operations of power.

Returning to The History of Sexuality, the second form of power which operates upon the body is referred to as ‘a biopolitics of population’ (Foucault 1978 p139). This form of biopower is focused on the ‘species body’ and was formed later than the anatomo-politics of the body. The object of the biopolitics of population is ‘the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary’ (ibid). The biopolitics of population and its emergence as a concern is thus closely related to the rise of the modern state.
Referring back to the earlier discussion of the rise in perception of population as a source of wealth during the age of mercantilism, one can see how and why the biological health of the population became a concern of state. In order to ensure the maintenance of a healthy and productive population, observation and documentation of statistics in relation to public health, birth rates, death rates, migration rates, the outbreak of disease and the production of food all became concerns of the state. This increased observation and documentation led to ensuing regulation. Regulations came into effect that sought to regulate and enforce such aspects of life as standards of health and hygiene, rates of internal migration, the production and sale of food, all of which linked back to the aim of maintaining a healthy and productive population, and therefore necessitated greater observation, documentation and regulation of the bodies of that population.

Regulation and normalisation were crucial to the function and expansion of capitalism and therefore to the rise of the modern state.

‘The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and differential allocation of profit, were in made possible in part by the exercise of biopower in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorization and the distributive management of its forces were at the time indispensable’ (Foucault 1978 p141).

Regulation took one form in the regulation of sexualities, whereby starting with the bourgeoisie and expanding through the institutions of church and school, heterosexual matrimonial sexuality was normalised, thereby encouraging only those sexualities which contributed to the furtherance of a ‘productive’ population (Foucault 1978 p140). The notion of the population as an object of government requires that it be seen as ‘a set of processes to be managed at the level and on the basis of what is natural in these
processes’ (Foucault 2007 p70). This implies that population is subject to certain variables which cannot be controlled such as climate material surroundings or with the means of subsistence as well as variables related to power relations, such as laws, administrative measures, religious and social customs, and the circulation of wealth. Techniques of power increased over the body through modifying those variables that could be modified (i.e. marriage law, ethical-religious values, taxes) and monitoring and recording the effect of variables that cannot be modified (climate, material surroundings, etc.) (ibid). In these ways, it becomes possible to exercise biopower over ‘populations’ to facilitate productivity. Paired with discipline, the first form of biopower, Foucault has illustrated the historical development and deployment of biopower as a means of controlling, regulating, disciplining and ensuring the productivity of a population.

Foucault’s foundational work on biopower has inspired considerable further scholarship on the subject. Whilst Foucault’s approach was predominately historical and genealogical, numerous scholars have sought to apply and expand biopower as an analytical tool. Some have applied biopower to Foucault’s favoured fields such as medical practice and sexuality (Jones and Porter, eds. 1994; Rose, 2001; Sawicki, 1999), others to additional power relations such as race and gender (Selmeczi, 2010; Rabinow and Rose, 2006). The wide variety of problems to which the notion of biopower has been applied demonstrates its flexibility as a concept. As such, this project aims to draw from the idea of biopower to support the analysis of the subjectification and resistance of Palestinian women through an approach wherein the body is the focus of exercises of power. In order to do so, it will first be important to investigate the works of other
scholars who have drawn from Foucault’s biopower for their own projects, thereby adding their own interpretations of the concept itself.

Rabinow, one of the most renowned Foucauldian scholars emphasises the utility of biopower as an analytical concept, and makes a distinction between the severe application of biopower in absolutist governments, and the biopower operating in contemporary democracies through the techniques of race, population/reproduction and genomic medicine (Rabinow and Rose, 2006). The concept of biopower, for the purpose of this 2006 article in BioSocieties, is very well summarised through the following explanation:

‘At its most general, then, the concept of biopower serves to bring into view a field comprised of more or less rationalized attempts to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence. The vital characteristics of human beings, as living creatures who are born, mature, inhabit a body that can be trained and augmented and then sicken and die. And the vital characteristics of collectivities and populations composed of such living beings’ (ibid pp196-197).

Such a definition of biopower emphasises its value first and foremost as a means of evaluating and analysing the complexities of how is power is exercised through the body.

Likewise, the definition of biopower put forth by Lazzarato (2002) demonstrates a Foucault-inspired genealogical means of examining how power has been exercised historically and how a focus on the body is a tactic of power. Using the terms ‘zoe’ and ‘bios’ Lazzarato explains how Foucault conceptualised the insertion of ‘zoe’ or ‘natural life’ into the ‘bios’ or ‘political life’ makes the two indistinguishable and is thus the ‘decisive event of modernity’ (Lazzarato 2002 p101). This event is significant because it establishes ‘man’ as a political subject, resulting in not only in natural life becoming an object of power, but opening the possibilities for resistance to that power. He
investigates the move from biopower to ‘biopolitics’ what he refers to as: ‘a
government-population-political economy relationship, refers to a dynamic of forces
that establishes a new relationship between ontology and politics’ (ibid p102). He goes
on to argue that ‘Foucault needs a new political theory and a new ontology to describe
the new power relations expressed in the political economy of forces’ (ibid p103). This
argument by Lazzarato demonstrates a clear understanding of how Foucault approached
problems and how he conceived the fluctuating relationship between power and the
body. The notion of change and adaptation is important here in expanding Foucault’s
concept of biopower beyond the original application.

The work by Rabinow and Rose also opens up new possibilities for an expansion
of Foucault’s original idea of biopower. In particular, the working definition of biopower
which they put forth can be applied to modern examples of the functionings of
biopower such as genomics and race. In order to expand the concept of biopower in a
way that allows for it to be applied to other occurrences, the authors establish a
definition of it which allows for it be used as a means of analysis. They do so by making
several distinctions in the exercise of biopower. One distinction is located between the
exercise of biopower as seen in absolutist dictatorships and the exercise of biopower as
seen in ‘contemporary democratic states’ where the exercise of biopower occurs
through more subtle strategies of governing life (Rabinow and Rose 2006 p195). The
distinction between the two types of state lies in the aims of either ‘making die and
letting die’ or ‘making live’ (ibid p203). While this particular differentiation is interesting
and adds value to their research, their analysis is largely focused on the latter, whereas
the exercise of power through Palestinian bodies in the occupied territories is not
conducted through subtle strategies that govern life. As such, the value of their approach to biopower for the purpose of this project is limited.

Rabinow and Rose further point out another distinction between the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ exercises of biopower, which loosely coincides with the differentiation Foucault makes between ‘anatomo-politics’ and ‘biopolitics of population’ (Rabinow and Rose 2006 p204). These distinctions expand the possibilities of where biopower can be analysed, by positing the possibility of moving biopower away from Foucault’s favoured topics of sexuality, discipline and medicine in the 17th and 18th centuries. The authors illustrate this by differentiating between an example of modern ‘macro’ biopower as seen in the expansion of supranational institutions representing ‘new collective formations’ and ‘micro’ biopower as seen in the expansion of genome projects which further individualise concepts such as ‘associated rights to health, life, liberty and the pursuit of a form of happiness that is increasingly seen in corporeal and vital terms’ (ibid p204). Here again, it is their proposed tactic of opening the definition of biopower that provides the most value for this project, as their own analysis is embedded in Western liberal democracies and removed from instances of occupation and conflict.

A special issue of *Theory, Culture and Society* (2009) explored how best to apply Foucault’s biopower as a tool of analysis and also pointed out some of the internal distinctions within Foucault’s different writings on biopower and the implications these distinctions have on the concept as a whole. Of primary importance is the attention Collier (2009) draws to differences between the earlier (1975-1976) work of Foucault in biopower, exemplified in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality Volume One* and his later (1977-1979) work on biopower as seen in the three years of lectures; ‘Society Must be Defended’ (delivered in 1977) ‘Security, Territory, Population’
(delivered in 1978) and ‘The Birth of Biopolitics’ (delivered in 1979). Collier illustrates how Foucault’s earlier engagements with biopower characterised it as more totalising in its effects and more aimed at discipline, whereas his engagements with biopower during the 1977-1979 lecture series characterised biopolitics as ‘a problem space in which diverse topologies of power may be observed’ (Collier 2009 p80). Relating back to the distinctions made by Rabinow and Rose between ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ biopolitics, Collier argues that from 1975-1976, the focus of biopower is on ‘micro-politics of the body’ and disciplinary techniques. The focus of the 1977-1979 period is thus the ‘biopolitics of population’ and ‘macro’ biopolitics, exemplified through his in-depth analysis of famine, scarcity and grain in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Foucault contends that for the first time, during this period, the prevention of scarcity and famine became a real concern of the state, and the measures undertaken represented one of the early examples of the ‘biopolitics of population’ (Collier 2009 p86). Collier therefore, sees the distinction between Foucault’s earlier ‘micro’ and later ‘macro’ focuses as important, arguing that Foucault’s latter work on biopower as represented by the lecture series is often misunderstood and under-appreciated. To establish a useful definition of biopower from an analytical perspective will necessitate understanding the differences and shifts in Foucault’s own approaches to biopower.

Another important perspective on the range of Foucault’s work on biopower comes from the same special issue of *Theory, Culture and Society*. Macey (2009) points out the language used by Foucault, especially in the series of lectures, which highlights how Foucault himself seems reluctant or hesitant to establish one cemented definition of biopower. Specifically, Macey cites the 1979 series of lectures. Despite the title of the lecture series, ‘The Birth of Biopolitics’ one can only find 5 references to ‘biopower’ in
the index. Furthermore, Macey argues, during the three years of lectures in which biopower was implied as a dominant theme, Foucault often used language such as ‘what I would call’ or ‘I would like to begin with something that I have called, somewhat vaguely, bio-power’ (Foucault 2007 cited in Macey 2009 p188). Paired with these examples of hesitancy in word choice is the placement of biopower into inverted commas in many of the manuscripts accompanying Foucauld’s lectures (ibid). Such observations by Macey are important because they signal Foucault’s own grappling with the concept of biopower. This highlights the fluidity of the concept, even for Foucault, who was consistently refining its definition and more importantly his approach to biopower. The fluid nature of the concept of biopower as pointed out by Collier and Macey increases its utility as an analytical tool, allowing for its reinterpretation and application to numerous situations where power is exercised through bodies.

Macey makes two further points of interest, the first related to how power changes and adapts tactics over time, writing that: ‘Whereas sovereignty once wielded power over life and death, the biopolitical state must own death’ (ibid p200). He also makes another interesting posit regarding the relationship between race and biopower. He summarises Foucault’s view of the relationship between race and biopower by writing: ‘Far from being a homogeneous body, the population that is regulated and controlled by biopower is divided into human groups known as races’ (Macey 2009 p189). Pointing out that in the lecture series ‘Society Must Be Defended’ Foucault conceptualises race as a means of fragmenting the effects of biopower, Macey contends that what Foucault puts forth in the lecture series could be conceived as a ‘pre-archaeology’ of race, albeit describing the undertaking as a ‘rash enterprise’ (ibid p190). Whilst Macey may perceive Foucault’s analysis of race to be overly ambitious, he does
recognise the importance of examining the relationship between race and biopower. ‘A metonymic chain has emerged that links the norm to genetics, culture and civilization as well as to medico-biological discourse of healthy bodies and healthy, and thus strong, nation or race’ (ibid p196). Specifically, as the concept of race serves the function of subdividing a population, biopower can be exercised differently on different groups of people. This is of utmost relevance to this project’s examination of Palestinian women’s experiences of subjectification and resistance, as the different exercises of power and practices of security and (in)security are based on a differentiation between Jewish Israelis and non-Jewish Palestinians. The link between biopower and race is crucial element to how the exercise of power within the occupied territories will be analysed in Chapter Five.

Rabinow and Rose also discuss the relationship between race and biopower, arguing that ‘Race, together with health and in variable relations with it, has been one of the central poles in the genealogy of biopower’ (ibid 2006 p205). Moving beyond historical discourses of the biological understanding of race utilised to justify the superiority of one ‘race’ over another, the authors point out that modern DNA sequencing has largely delegitimised such claims of intra-group biological difference, but the resulting recognition of how widely varied individual genomes are has resulted in the recognition of difference between individuals at a molecular level. This thereby opens up different possibilities for the exercise of biopower, especially on a ‘micro’ scale.

The above examples represent only a percentage of the existing interpretations and applications of biopower. What is most valuable about these particular examples is the diversity of applications and interpretations of Foucault that they demonstrate. None of them in particular is closely related to how this project conceives of and intends
to view biopower, but the open nature of the concept as demonstrated above is indicative of how relevant biopower is to multiple exercises of power. It is a concept rather limited within the corpus of Foucault, so it will be necessary to turn to other theorists, some hugely indebted to Foucault, (Butler, 1995; 1999; Agamben, 2009; Deleuze, 2001) in order to more fully develop the importance of bodies in the processes of subjectification and resistance. The foundation of biopower explained here is more fully theorised and developed in regards to the subject and the dispositif, specifically in relation to Palestinian women, at the end of the chapter.

‘Is one right to revolt, or not? Let us leave the question open.’

Central to both Foucault and to this projects focus is the claim that power is not absolute, because the possibility of resistance always exists. In one of the essays Foucault wrote for the French newspaper Le Monde during the time leading up to the overthrow of the Shah and the subsequent Islamic Revolution in Iran, Foucault made one of his most refreshing and hopeful comments on the possibilities and utility of revolt, proclaiming that not only is resistance possible, but it is always possible wherever power is exercised.

‘If societies persist and live it is because behind all the submissions and coercions, beyond the threats, the violence and the intimidations, there is the possibility of that moment when life can no longer be bought, when the authorities can no longer do anything, and, when facing the gallows and the machine guns, people revolt’ (Foucault, 1994a pp449-450).

While not always included in ‘typical’ Foucault reading lists, the essays written during the time preceding the Iranian revolution demonstrate some of Foucault’s strongest views on the ever-present possibility of resisting power and subjectification. For Foucault, there is no such thing as an exercise of power that makes resistance entirely impossible. Where there is power, there is resistance to it. The view of power as always
accompanied by a possibility for resistance forms the cornerstone of this project and how it frames the relationship between the subjectification of Palestinian women and their resistance. One cannot expect to exercise power over a population without resistance to it.

Whilst the preceding descriptions of power relations may have given the perception that power is inescapable, Foucault is adamant that power is not strictly negative. Opportunities to resist power always exist at sites of oppression. This is derived from his contention that power is productive.

‘Because power would be a fragile thing if its only function was to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of the great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong that is because it produces effects from the level of desire and also at the level of knowledge’ (Foucault 1980 p59).

If power is something that is exercised, and if power relations are more like a web than a ladder, then the implications are that anyone can exercise power in some way. If that exercise of power is contradictory to the dominant power relations, then that exercise of power is in fact an act of resistance. The critical point made here by Foucault establishes his idea of the possibilities for resistance.

‘There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies’ (ibid p142).

This view of resistances at located at the site of power is reflected in how a project examining the many sites of Palestinian women’s subjectification will also necessarily examine Palestinian women’s many resistances to that subjectification.

The multiple possibilities for resistance were discussed in more detail in The History of Sexuality: Volume One. In elaborating on the continual possibilities for
resistance Foucault lists the innumerable points of resistance that are conceivable, denying that there is ‘one’ model of resistance and instead claiming that some are solitary and some are spontaneous while others are concerted, that resistance can be possible or improbable, violent or savage or necessary (Foucault, 1978 p96). The form they take, he claims, cannot be absolutely defined due to their transitory and changing nature but the enduring characteristic of resistances is that they are intricately connected to exercises of power as their antithesis (ibid).

The adaptation of resistances to their corresponding power relations is partly what makes resistance possible, as can be illustrated by Palestinian women’s resistance to Israeli occupation. As resistances transform, reorder, and re-organise they cross individual and societal boundaries that previously had seemed fixed (ibid). ‘More often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves’ (ibid). In the analysis in Chapter Five, this will be demonstrated through the ways in which Palestinian women’s resistance to Israeli occupation can challenge perceived gendered boundaries, such as women’s involvement in marching at the front of demonstrations and confronting Israeli soldiers or women’s political violence in the form of suicide bombing/martyrdom operations.

In one of his earliest works, an essay entitled ‘A Preface to Transgression’ (1977b), Foucault outlined how he conceived the relationship between ‘limit’ and ‘transgression’. Transgression and limit are inherently coupled, corresponding to the power/resistance coupling he makes in later works. He contends that limit (which we could exchange with ‘power’) cannot exist without transgression (which we could exchange with resistance) to define it. Limit is most clearly defined when transgression
crosses it, similarly one could say that power is most clearly defined when resistance challenges it (Foucault 1977b p34). ‘The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it was absolutely un-crossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows (ibid). Conceptualising resistance (or transgression) as part of power (or limit) contributes to a very different understanding of the resistance act from how it is seen by sovereign state models of power. Foucault is not arguing that resistance is the negative of power, but that it is necessary for a definition of power (Oksala 2004 pp107-108). Sovereign state models of power see resistance to power as something divorced from power, not as a necessary for its definition.

Interestingly, Foucault seems to struggle throughout his corpus to settle on one word to describe ‘resistance’. In some texts he does use ‘resistance’ but in others he utilises other words such as ‘refusal’ ‘revolt’ ‘dissidence’ or ‘counter-conduct’ (Foucault 2007 pp201-202). The struggle occurs, Foucault claims, because he needs a word that implies that the resistance to power involves action (hence he prefers ‘counter-conduct) and that also does not substantify (as does the word ‘dissidence’). ‘Counter-conduct’ has the advantage, he proclaims, because it does not ‘give sacred status to this or that person as a dissident’ therefore, ‘we can no doubt analyse the components in the way in which someone actually acts in the very general field of politics or in the very general field of power relations’ (ibid p202). The importance of Foucault’s struggle to decide upon word-usage in one particular lecture given at the Collège de France in March 1978 may seem insignificant, however it actually has important implications for his conceptions of power and resistance (or, as the case may be, counter-conduct). This brief discussion of word-choice illustrates extremely well how Foucault views resistance.
Resistance, like power, is first and foremost action. By referring to resistance as ‘counter-conduct’ he reiterates his two key contentions about power and resistance. Power and resistance are reliant upon each other, and both are defined through action. Where a population is subject to certain expectations of ‘conduct’ there will always be ‘counter-conduct’ or resistance to the techniques and mechanisms enforcing that conduct. As a result, one cannot examine power without examining resistance, and more importantly, one cannot exercise power without expecting that in some form, resistance will follow.

It is for this reason that Palestinian women’s resistance to the Israeli occupation and the exercises of power that make up the Israeli occupation cannot be examined in isolation and instead must be examined in tandem. The countless enactments of resistance employed by Palestinian women are necessary for the definition of Palestinian women’s subjectification. The seemingly endless exercises of power upon Palestinian women that result in their subjectification are necessary for the definition of their resistance. Why is this important? The answer is quite simple: for as long as there is an occupation, Palestinian women will be engaged in acts of resistance.

**Troubled engagements: Foucault and Feminism**

In the way that a feminist critique of traditional security studies is based upon the lack of attention to gender as a unit of analysis, resulting in a gender biased security (Hansen, 2000; Wibben, 2010), then Foucault is critiqued by many feminist scholars for the same reasons (Bartky, 1988; Deveaux, 1994; Bordo 1989; McNay 1991). The lack of explicit attention paid to gender, specifically the implications of not examining how power operates differently upon different gendered bodies within Foucault’s work means that there is widespread critique of Foucault’s work within feminism. As this
project takes both a feminist and Foucault-inspired approach to Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance, it is necessary to understand how and why some feminist scholars have critiqued Foucault for being at best unhelpful and at worst detrimental to feminist projects. There are several strains of scholarship which merit discussion. One strain wholly rejects Foucault. Furthermore, as there is considerable disagreement in regards to Foucault amongst feminist scholars, some of the most stringent critiques are not directed at the writings of Foucault, but rather at feminists who choose to utilise Foucault, therefore, these critiques will also be discussed. The second strain of literature points out some of the shortfalls of Foucault from a feminist perspective, but also seeks to find ways to integrate the most useful aspects of his theories into a feminist approach. Finally, at the other end of the spectrum are the feminist scholars who advocate an even more thorough adoption of Foucault into feminist theories, and who demonstrate a clear lineage to Foucault in their theoretical approaches.

The most likely charge levied against Foucault by Feminist scholars cites his lack of explicit reference to women and sees this as ‘gender silence’ and thus gender bias, and therefore finds his work counterproductive from a feminist perspective. Bartky (1988) whilst appreciative of Foucault’s work on power, explains that as a result of his not making explicit reference to the different exercises of power on the bodies of men and the bodies of women, Foucault’s analysis of sexuality is incomplete. Specifically, she argues that Foucault’s perception of the body is gender neutral or of an undifferentiated gender.

‘To overlook the forms of subjection that engender the feminine body is to perpetuate the silence and powerlessness of those upon whom these disciplines have been imposed. Hence, even though a liberatory note is sounded in Foucault’s critique of power, his analysis as a whole reproduces
that sexism which is endemic throughout Western political theory’ (Bartky 1988 p65).

Deveaux (1994) goes further in her critique of Foucault than Bartky, explaining that because his theories lack attention to the specific experiences of women, the value of Foucault to a feminist project should not be overestimated. Deveaux goes on to critique Bartky for being ‘needlessly reductionist’ when conceiving the interactions between women and their bodies and for Bartky’s claim that the most pervasive forms of power exercised over women are also the most subtle (Deveaux 1994 p226). Deveaux explains that the fundamental trouble with the adoption of Foucault’s theory on discipline and the body, found not only in Bartky, but also in Bordo (1989), is that Foucault’s theory of ‘docile bodies’ gives too little agency to individuals. ‘Foucault’s extreme reluctance to attribute specific agency to subjects in this early account of power results in a portrayal of individuals as passive bodies, constituted by power and immobilized in a society of discipline’ (Deveaux 1994 p228). This sentiment is echoed in other feminist critiques regarding Foucault’s lack of agency and non-gender approach to bodies.

McNay (1991) also critiques Foucault for not specifically investigating or concerning himself with the gendered character of the body and also for his portrayal of the body as passive. ‘This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project to rediscover and reevaluate the experience of women’ (McNay 1991 p125). However, unlike Bartky and Deveaux, McNay points out that examining the ways in which the bodies of women and the bodies men are disciplined differently has the effect of falsely polarising men’s and women’s experiences. ‘This is not to deny the difference in the ways in which male and female
bodies are constructed, but to accept that female bodies are worked upon in socially and historically specific ways rather than in terms of an eternal and undifferentiated difference between the sexes’ (ibid p133). Therefore, analyses which claim that Foucault has ignored the difference between men’s and women’s bodies are themselves ignoring the intrinsic relationship between men’s and women’s bodies. Therefore, McNay’s analysis of Foucault is that his theories are plagued by a more benign lacuna of gender in contrast to arguments put forth by Deveaux that Foucault is theoretically inadequate for feminist scholarship.

However, McNay does argue that the absence of gender is not the biggest disadvantage of a Foucauldian approach for feminists. Similar to other scholars, (Deveaux, Bartky) McNay argues that Foucault’s model of power attributes too little agency to individuals, thereby undermining feminist projects which aim to attribute agency to women. Like Deveaux, her critique is addressed at Foucault’s model of disciplinary power, claiming that Foucault fails to elaborate when he claims that resistance is always possible and specifically that he fails to explain the relationship between resistance and the body (McNay 1991 p134). This echoes Deveaux, who raises the point of a woman’s own perception of her empowerment, claiming that Foucault’s model of power is inadequate for taking this into account (Deveaux 1994 p234).

The feminist critique of Foucault for his perceived failure to attribute agency to subjects is almost entirely constructed upon the conceptions of power put forth in Discipline and Punish and The History of Sexuality Volume One. This is exemplified in the repeated references to ‘docile bodies’ found in both McNay and Deveaux who conceptualise a ‘docile body’ as bodies that are acted upon, inscribed, disciplined, shaped and formed, but not active. One could argue that this perception of Foucault is
understandable for time at which these arguments were written (1991 and 1988 respectively). At the time, the series of lectures, in which Foucault explains a different approach to his model of power, had not yet been published.

Not all feminist scholars share these critiques of Foucault. One of the most notable and well-known adoptions of a Foucault-inspired feminist approach comes from Judith Butler, who positively echoes Foucault when she writes:

‘The institution of a compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term, and this differentiation is accomplished through the practices of heterosexual desire. The act of differentiating the two oppositional moments of the binary results in a consolidation of each term, the respective coherence of sex, gender and desire’ (Butler 1999 p31).

The theories of Butler, specifically in relation to and the subject and the body will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter Three, however a brief discussion of the theoretical influence of Foucault on her work is crucial for illustrating that those feminist scholars who draw from Foucault do so largely due to his rejection of absolute models of sex, gender and the body. In Gender Trouble, Butler goes on to argue that the normalising procedures of power produce the subject, ‘In other words, the “unity” of gender is the effect of a regulatory practice that seeks to render gender identity uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality’ (ibid p43). However, in keeping with Foucault’s notion of resistance, Butler maintains that at times those procedures deviate from their own norms and open up possibilities for the subject to subvert and expand the boundaries of ‘normal’ behaviour. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Also arguing in favour of amalgamating feminism and Foucault is Oksala, whose 2004 article in Hypatia is a response to the 1991 article by McNay. Oksala firstly
acknowledges that there are several possible practices of reading and interpreting Foucault, arguing that whilst some interpretations and applications of Foucault are not useful from a feminist perspective, it is possible to perceive Foucault and his method as being ‘genuine efforts to try and understand the relationships between experience, body, discourse and power’ (Oksala 2004 p99). Oksala challenges the claim made by McNay that Foucault pays too little attention to ‘experience’. Taking the example of The History of Sexuality Volume One, Oksala argues that it should be read as a history of the experience of sexuality. ‘Foucault does not explicitly mention experience in this work, but he makes a claim about bodies and pleasure, which in my view presupposes an understanding of the experiential body in so far as pleasure can only be understood as an experience of pleasure, not solely as a concept or practice’ (ibid p101). This argument made by Oksala is extremely important because it provides a critical analysis of the criticisms brought forward against Foucault by other feminist scholars.

Oksala continues by examining the claims of numerous feminist scholars, amongst them McNay, that Foucault fails to elaborate on his claim that resistance manifests itself through the body. The reading of Foucault presented by Oksala seeks to rectify the perceived shortcomings of Foucault by presenting a possible ‘fourth reading’ of Foucault’s conceptualisation of the body (ibid p106). The premise of such a reading is an understanding of how Foucault conceptualises the relationship between power and resistance. Therefore, the ‘experiential body’ must be the starting point, rather than the ‘docile’ body. Linking the experiential body to a notion of transgression, then the body can be seen as capable of transgressing ‘the limit between the normal and abnormal’ (ibid p108). Another important argument is made when Oksala highlights Foucault’s own claim that discourse alone does not constitute experience, reminding readers of the
importance Foucault placed on the *dispositif*. Returning to the question of experience, Oksala argues that Foucault’s claims of the linking of bodies and resistance should not be read as an ontology of the body, but rather an ontology of ‘the event’ or the experience (ibid p112).

‘The experiential body materializes in power/knowledge networks, but the limits of its experiences can never be firmly set because they can never be fully defined and articulated. It can multiply, distort and overflow the meanings, definitions, and classifications attached to experiences, and in this sense it is capable of discursively undefined and unintelligible pleasures. The experiential body is the permanent contestation of discursive definitions, values and normative practices’ (ibid).

With this proposition for a different way of reading and drawing from Foucault, Oksala opens up new possibilities for a Foucault-influenced feminism, refuting the claims that Foucault’s conceptualisation of the body is too ‘docile’ to be utilised in a feminist project by re-establishing the link between bodies and experience that can be difficult to extrapolate from Foucault. Based upon the successful melding of Foucault and feminism as demonstrated by Oksala and Butler, this project moves forward in its assertion that the approach most informative for understanding power and resistance in the occupied Palestinian territories is one that brings together the call of feminist security studies to centralise the lived experiences of women and the model of power and resistance argued for by Foucault in order to come to a fuller understanding of how subjectification, gendered bodies and resistance are interrelated.

In the preface for Delueze and Guattri’s book *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault summarises what he interprets as seven points found in the book for ‘living counter to...

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9 Foucault describes the *dispositif* as: ‘A Thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions; in short, the said as much as the unsaid’ (Foucault 1980 p194). This is explained in much greater detail later in the chapter.
all forms of fascism’ (Delueze and Guattari 1983 pxii). The final point he makes in the
preface is that in order to avoid all forms of fascism, one must ‘not become enamoured
of power’ (ibid). This preface is a way of summarising the spirit of Foucault because
within it he very clearly entrusts individuals with the task of being vigilant against the
tendency to have fascism in their own heads, relating back to his recurring theme of the
exercise of power being self-regulatory. Therefore, resistance to the exercise of power
must originate within the individual. The ‘real enemy’ he claims, is ‘the fascism in us all,
in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to
desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us’ (ibid). Power is exercised upon the
individual, specifically through bringing the individual to self-regulate their behaviour,
but the possibility for resistance to this exercise of power is also within the individual.

Foucault therefore brings some of the most important theoretical foundations
to this project, but it is essential to move beyond him as well. In the following sections
the terms and means of conducting an analysis of Palestinian women’s subjectification
and resistance will be established through the definition and use of ‘subject’ and
‘dispositif’ in the context of this particular project. Doing so will require the ideas of
Agamben, Butler, Deleuze, and Merleu-Ponty, with underpinnings of Foucault.
Chapter Three – Subject and \textit{Dispositif} in the oPt

Practices and ‘eventualization’

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and resistance to it are not unitary entities defined by a strict set of rules or logic. Instead, both can be seen as made up of many smaller elements. These elements that make up the occupation and the elements that make up resistance are directed at turning Palestinians into subjects and to resisting subjectification, respectively. As such, rather than examine the occupation as one thing, it is more informative to examine the elements that constitute it, and for the purpose of this project, the elements that constitute it in relation to Palestinian women. Furthermore, as explained in the introduction, women’s daily-lived experiences of occupation and resistance are a most enlightening means of examining these elements, because they can demonstrate how insidious the occupation is, and how resistance to it is equally multifarious. To understand how the occupation and resistance to it are directed at ‘the subject’ and made up of myriad elements, the concept of \textit{dispositif} becomes very useful.

The aim of this chapter is to explain the use of ‘subject’ and ‘\textit{dispositif}’ in relation to this project and the ways in which Palestinian women experience subjectification and how they challenge that subjectification. The central questions this project seeks to answer are:

1) What are the practices through which Palestinian women are formed as subjects to the occupation? In other words, what is the \textit{dispositif}\textsuperscript{10} of occupation?

\textsuperscript{10} apparatus
2) What are the practices through which Palestinian women enact resistance to their positions as subjected to occupation? In other words, what is the dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance?

In the following sections I will define the parameters of how these questions are answered in Chapter Five. The definition of the terms subject, and dispositif and the modes of analysis used to conduct the subsequent analysis draws from concepts put forth by Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Agamben, Butler and Foucault, so their theories are referenced and explained in this chapter in order to support the use of such an analytical framework. As outlined in the previous chapter, Foucault fundamentally inspires this type of approach. This chapter will establish the empirical and theoretical framework for analysis and outline techniques for how one could go about examining the formation of Palestinian women as de facto subjects to Israeli power. Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) are not legal subjects of the state of Israel, but since 1967 their bodies have been acted upon by Israeli power, thus making them subject to the state of Israel, albeit, very different subjects than the Israelis living in settlements in the occupied territories.

I contend that drawing upon references to daily lived reality in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and the support of theories put forth by Merleau-Ponty, Agamben, Deleuze and Butler will allow for an investigation of how Palestinian women in the oPt are formed as subjects to Israeli power and how they enact resistance to that subjectification. There is no one universal form taken by subjectification and resistance within the occupied Palestinian territories. In part, this diversification of strategies applied differently to different Palestinians is an aspect of what makes the occupation so

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11 This refers to the land Israel has occupied since the 1967 war, and includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.
ubiquitous. Palestinian women in different parts of the occupied territories experience very different elements of the occupation, women living in the seam zone\textsuperscript{12} are treated differently and experience different subjugating processes than women living in refugee camps, women living in large urban areas, women living in the divided city of Hebron or than women living as Jerusalem residents but not Israeli citizens in East Jerusalem. Since there is no universal process of subjectification through occupation, there is a need to identify and examine individual elements of the occupation, such as the separation barrier and the permit system. Further to this, a multi-faceted occupation will naturally entail a multi-faceted resistance. Palestinian women employ a diverse range of tactics and practices to resist the occupation. The complexity of subjectification means that the definition of ‘subject’ will need to be broad but still firm in its contention that that one’s subject position results from processes of power.

Foucault maintained that his methods were aimed at uncovering practices\textsuperscript{13} which were not self-evident, but which emerged as just one of multiple possibilities. Furthermore, Foucault’s approach is concerned with how that particular practice emerged through the power/knowledge nexus. ‘To analyze regimes of practices means to analyze programs of conduct which have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done (effects of jurisdiction) and codifying effects of regarding what is to be known (effects of veridiction)’ (Foucault 1991a p75). Foucault goes on to argue that this process could be referred to as ‘eventualization’. He describes eventualization as the process of examining practices by taking the following as points of analysis, and each point has a

\textsuperscript{12} The ‘seam zone’ is the territory located between the separation barrier and the 1949 armistice line.

\textsuperscript{13} Foucault’s interest in practices comes from their ‘interplay between a ‘code’ which rules ways of doing things and a production of true discourses which serve to found, justify and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things’ (Foucault 1991a p79) – in other words, practices function through power/knowledge.
clear relation to the framework of this project: 1) Practices are not self-evident, so the starting point of analysis is to stop constructing them as such. The occupation of the territories is not the only conceivable way to address the security concerns of Israel. It should not be viewed as such. 2) The next point should be to discover how the process came to appear as self-evident through connections, encounters, strategies, etc. There are multiple strategies that have been used to explain the occupation as an inevitable outcome based on Israel’s historical experience. This makes the occupation appear self-evident, and it is these processes that need interrogation. 3) Using ‘causal multiplication’ which involves the analysis of an event or practice through the multiple processes which constitute it. In order to understand how the occupation is constructed it is essential to understand the elements that make it up, and finally, 4) In such an analysis, as practices come to be broken down further and further, it is essential to examine them in regards to their ‘external relations of intelligibility’ or in other words, how the practice in question is more broadly related and intelligible to other practices (ibid pp76-77). In examining elements of how occupation is practiced and how Palestinian women’s resistance to occupation are practiced, Foucault’s process of eventualization will serve as a reminder to interrogate the relationships between the diverse elements using diverse tactics.

This chapter, likewise, will employ myriad tactics to extrapolate what might broadly be conceived of as a ‘method’ for investigating the dispositifs of occupation and resistance. The first necessary steps are to formulate definitions of ‘subject’ and ‘dispositif’ in relation to the bodies of Palestinian women and based on empirical evidence in the oPt and a melding of definitions put forth by Butler, Agamben and Deleuze, but clearly indebted intellectually to Foucault.
The Subject

‘Subject’ is a term far too often taken as a pre-given in International Relations without adequate interrogation. In the context of Palestinian women living in the occupied territories, the complexity of legal jurisdictions of control and the ways that these jurisdictions are interpreted or interrupted in a very *ad hoc* way means that we cannot take the category of ‘subject’ for granted in an investigation of Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance. Even outside the context of the occupied Palestinian territories there are countless ways in which one can become a ‘subject’ of power. Since it is easiest to explain this diversity of subject positions in a relatable context, one illustration of the multiplicity of subject positions we occupy occurs when we examine the contents of our wallets. Identification cards illustrate what states we are subjects of, drivers licenses show which road jurisdictions we can drive in, and thus what rules of the road we are subject to, visas or green cards tell of our temporary permission to reside in ‘other’ states, while maintaining that our positions in these states are precarious, insurance cards tell of our subject status in the medical field, credit cards provide proof that we are subjects of capitalism, even our ‘coffee loyalty’ cards can tell us about our relationship to our caffeine addiction. We are not ‘simple’ subjects of one kingdom or another, nor mere citizens of a particular nation-state. Instead, we inhabit multiple positions of subjectivity; these positions become visible depending on which way one casts one’s gaze. The subject positions we occupy are not mutually exclusive, one can be subjectified by capitalism, the Republic of Ireland and Starbucks coffee at the same time, though these different subjectifications occur in and through different apparatuses. Taking the subject as a ‘pre-given’ in political analysis and failing to
interrogate how one is formed as a subject is a failure to understand that the process of subjectification is inherently political (Butler 1995 p13).

This is particularly true in the case of Palestinian women in the occupied territories. After the 1993 Oslo accords when the West Bank and East Jerusalem were divided up to give different jurisdictional authorities to different areas, Palestinians living in some areas were subject to different laws and jurisdictions than Palestinians living in others. Area ‘A’ is made up of areas under Palestinian civil and military control. Area ‘B’ is under Palestinian civil control, but Israeli military control and Area ‘C’ is under full Israeli control. East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip are subject to different laws entirely, and any Israeli living in any part of the West Bank or East Jerusalem is subject only to a different Israeli civil law. Even amidst the complexity of this jurisdictional division, in times of ‘emergency’ or whenever the Israeli military deems necessary, all Palestinians become subject to Israeli military power. The sheer numbers of legal statuses Palestinians can have are only one aspect of differing subjectifications experienced by Palestinian women.

This project thus starts with an interrogation of ‘the subject’. For Foucault: ‘There is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. The subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation’ (Foucault 1988 p50). Herein lies one of the most important and liberating views of the subject as found in Foucault. While much of his writing can be seen as proposing a very negative view of the capability of the subject to ‘resist’ subjectification, this outlines that subjects, for Foucault, are not as ‘docile’ as they may appear in works such as Discipline and Punish. Indeed, we are all exposed to multiple sites of subjectification, but acts of resistance can and do occur. This being said,
because he argues that all manners of power/knowledge form the subject, in Foucault’s view, acts of liberation form us as subjects as well, albeit differently, through different practices and with different outcomes (Foucault, 1994b). Subjects are not inactive because power is not applied to them; instead, subjects are that which though power is transmitted or exercised (Foucault 2003 p29). This view in fact imbues ‘the subject’ with far greater possibility of resistance than a sovereign state model which claims that power is ‘applied’ to a subject. As power and resistance are interlinked and resistance is always possible; ‘Power does not take life as its objective without revealing or giving rise to a life that resists power’ (Deleuze, 1999 p78).

In The Use of Pleasure Foucault describes the subject in relation to itself. The subject is not only she who is subject to the control of someone else, but also she who is ‘tied to her own identity and self-knowledge’ (Foucault 1994b p331). Both are the result of the formation of the subject through power. There is no such possibility of a sovereign founding subject. In this way, Foucault rejects the modern liberal concept of ‘the individual’ as preceding society. Instead, the ‘individual’ is only formed through relations of power. Subjectivity comes into being through the process of subjectification, ‘The Self is neither knowledge or power’ (Deleuze, 1992 p161). In his writing on Foucault and subjectification, Deleuze explains that the ‘new’ dimension of the subject in relation to themselves can be understood as a ‘fold’. ‘The relation to oneself will be understood in terms of power-relations and relations of knowledge. It will be reintegrated into the systems from which it was derived’ (Deleuze, 1999 p85).

The subject’s relation to herself is also not independent of all social contexts, instead, the subject is ‘folded’ back on that through which the subject is formed. The subject’s understanding of herself is mediated through power/knowledge and the
apparatus of subjectification. This is not as dismal as it may first appear, as there is always the possibility of resistance. The subject’s relation to herself always encompasses the ‘communication’ between codifying power and that ‘which resists codes and power’ (ibid). ‘Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn, elsewhere and otherwise’ (ibid p86). In the context of Palestinian women, such a conception of the subject as ‘folded’ is evident in the social constructs of gender and the culture of resistance to occupation prevalent in Palestinian society as well as the occupation that continually forms the Palestinian as subjectified.

Butler’s understanding of the subject is also informed by Foucault. She argues that there is no such thing as a ‘subject before the law’ and that instead, the law forms the subject as a means of justifying its legitimacy (Butler, 1999 p4). Calling the subject into question is not aimed at denying the existence of the subject, but rather the existence of a non-contingent, pre-discursive subject (Butler 1995 p9). The positions which constitute ‘I’ are constitutive of the ‘I’– in other words, ‘I’ may make choices, but those choices are mediated by the positions which establish me. ‘No subject is its own point of departure; and the fantasy that it is one can only disavow its constitutive relations by recasting them as the domain of a countervailing externality’ (ibid). She argues that the notion of an individual who gives their consent to be governed is useful as a means of justifying the social order and the ‘performance’ of declaring a free individual helps to constitute the subject. ‘The performative invocation of a non-historical ‘before’ becomes the foundational premise that guarantees a pre-social ontology of persons who freely consent to be governed and, thereby, constitute the legitimacy of the social contract’ (Butler 1999 p4). Thus, subjection for Butler is both the formation of the subject, and the subsuming of the subject to power (Mills, 2003 p259).
Expanding on this, it is through subjection the subject emerges, but the process continues through the normalisation of the subject. This can be see through the way in which Butler theorises gender, as something that is both performative and normalising. One is both formed by one’s gender and continually in the process of re-articulation, all of which are enmeshed in relations of power. Butler argues that the performance of gender ‘congeals’ over time ‘to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being’ (Butler 1999 p45). This does not mean that the process of subjectification stops when the subject is constituted. On the contrary, the subject is never fully constituted, but ‘produced time and again’ (Butler 1995 p13). The practice of domination of subjects works through their regulation and production (ibid p14). One cannot dominate subjects without first producing them. This is also clearly evident in the case of Palestinian women, wherein elements of the occupation had to define and delimit different subjectifications for different Palestinian women before dominating them as subjects.

For Butler, the subject is gendered as well as gendering, illustrating an obvious heritage of Foucault’s subject, who is constituted by power and simultaneously immersed in the exercise of power. For Butler as much as Foucault, this by no means implies that the boundaries of ‘the subject’ are fixed. Instead, the bounds of acceptability of gender (in the case of Butler) are re-negotiated and shifting.

‘Hence, the sexuality that emerges within the matrix of power relations is not a simple replication or copy of the law itself, a uniform repetition of a masculinist economy of identity. The productions swerve from their original purposes and inadvertently mobilize possibilities of ‘subjects’ that do not merely exceed the bounds of cultural intelligibility, but effectively expand the boundaries of what is, in fact, culturally intelligible’ (Butler, 1999 p40).

Subsequently, because the subject is not determined by subjectification, but instead formed through the repetition of performance of subjectification, the possibility exists of
changing the repetition of performance as a means of changing ones subjectivity (ibid p198).

One of the most fundamental claims driving this project is that bodies matter and bodies are gendered. The body of the subject must be taken into consideration when thinking about how subjects are formed and how they resist subjectification. Foucault’s theory of biopower and the way Butler theorises the relationship between gender, the body and subjectivity help to explain why bodies are so important. This project sees the bodies of Palestinian women as a site where subjectification and resistance occur. This subject-centred and ‘bodily’ approach differs from state-centric analyses of occupation or resistance in Palestine which take the body for granted, as a pre-given, or as an irrelevant element. The most primary argument to be made for centralising the body is that our material bodies are the conduit through which we experience the world. Our material bodies directly come into contact with operations of power and it is through this contact that we become subjects.

The requirements of our material bodies for food, shelter, water and security more often than not, surpass any other need or requirement, and for most people in the world, our daily lives are dedicated to meeting the needs of our material bodies. Our bodies matter, but rarely are they the starting point for analysis, because the formation of bodies is generally taken as a pre-given that lies outside the realm of political analysis. For authors such as Butler (1999), neglecting to analyse the body neglects the very real political processes that occur to shape and form the subject through their body. Diana Coole argues that in politics the body is ‘paradoxically, the most visible and its most invisible component’ (Coole, 2007 p413). Our bodies are easily seen, but are generally invisible to analysis.
In this project I intend to bring the bodies of Palestinian women into the centre of the analysis of how subjectification and resistance are experienced and enacted. Upon examining elements of the occupation such as the separation barrier, checkpoints, settler violence, curfews, house incursions or imprisonment it becomes clear that these elements function through the regulation and control of bodies. Likewise, enactments of resistance such as hunger strikes or suicide bombings/martyrdom operations can be seen as re-asserting control over one’s own body in resistance to occupation.

Palestinian women living in the occupied territories experience multiple threats to their bodies. Many of these threats occur outside the home, as women travel through Israeli military checkpoints, attend demonstrations or walk their children to school. Some of the threats occur in the home, especially in regards to house demolitions or night-time raids. More indirect threats come from economic circumstances incurred as a result of decades of occupation or imprisonment of family members. A dispositif of occupation will more thoroughly explore the relationships between these elements and how they function to subjugate Palestinian women through their bodies by regulating, controlling and limiting where Palestinian bodies can or cannot go, through the use of barriers, checkpoints, closures, curfews and id cards, how they have to travel through the use of settler only roads, gates and checkpoints, or whether or not they can access medical care, through the use of checkpoints and curfews to stop or impede ambulances. There are only some of the ways that subjectification occurs through women’s bodies in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Coole’s analysis of corporeality is based on a reading of Merleau-Ponty, who, as a phenomenologist argued that it is through our physical bodies that we experience and therefore come to an understanding of the world. Bodies are not the same as objects in
that bodies inhabit space. ‘It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object….for us the body is much more than an instrument or a means; it is our expression in the world the visible form of our intentions’ (Merleau-Ponty 1964 p5). Furthermore, the body has a ‘double function’ of modelling itself on the outside world and turning back on the world to signify it (ibid p7). This supports the claim of Merleau-Ponty that the body is both a subject and an object (Merleau-Ponty 1968 p141).

The easiest way of illustrating this is to touch your right hand to your left. Your right hand acts as a subject in touching the left, but also as an object touched by the left. Our material bodies are thus both acted upon and able to act as well as perceived and able to perceive. Furthermore, the body as both subject and object can tell us something about the wider relationships between subjects and objects. Specifically, the relationship between subject and object can be described as the ‘obverse and the reverse’ (ibid p138). ‘My body as a visible thing is contained within the full spectacle. But my seeing body subtends this visible body, and all the visibles with it. There is reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other’ (ibid). The contribution of Merleau-Ponty is extremely valuable because it posits the body at the fore of an investigation into how we experience the world rather than seeing the body as a ‘given’ which does not warrant attention. Additionally, his discussion of the relationship that is revealed between subject and object is particularly effective in an exploration of the Palestinian subject in relation to occupation and resistance, because it supports the conclusion that the bodies of Palestinian women are acted upon to subjugate them, but in turn their bodies can act to resist.
Butler clearly drew heavily from Foucault when she developed her theories of bodily performance and the importance of understanding bodies in relation to subjectification. In her seminal 1999 work, *Gender Trouble*, Butler contends that one’s gender is performed and performative such that the ‘internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body’ (Butler 1999 pxv). The performances one is expected to enact are based on the body one inhabits, and in turn, the repeated performances stylise the body.

Therefore, if society deems that the purpose of a woman’s body is reproduction it relies on the claim that the maternal body is pre-discursive (ibid p125). If we challenge this claim on the basis of Butler’s theory of bodily performativity it becomes clear that the maternal body is ‘an effect or consequence of a system of sexuality in which the female body is required to assume maternity as the essence of itself and the law of its desire’ (ibid). This stems from Foucault’s argument that the body is not sexed prior to discourse. Here it becomes exceptionally clear how important the body is if one wants to conduct a serious analysis of subjectification. The performances one is expected to enact and the gender one performs are entirely dependent on one’s body. The female body is expected to be a maternal body and this expectation is all the more powerful because it is framed as natural and pre-discursive. One cannot, therefore undergo an examination of how Palestinian women are formed as subjects to Israeli power without starting from how their bodies are constructed through the gendered bodily performances which they are expected to enact in relation to social constructions within Palestinian society that determine certain ideals for the role of women, as well as broader social constructions of the maternal female body.
This brings an important point about the nature of bodies, one that Butler reflected on in regards to her own work. One may argue that there is no such thing as a pre-discursive body, however the materiality of bodies can only be discussed through the discursive. While bodies may be inherently constructed from matter, when we discuss bodies we have to use language. Butler saw this contradiction in her own work when she wrote ‘I confess, however, that I am not a very good materialist. Every time I try to write about the body, the writing ends up being about language’ (Butler 2004b p198). This does not mean we should forget about the possibility of an investigation of the materiality of bodies, but instead serves as a reminder to take care in how we investigate bodies. One way to move away from a strict focus on discourse can come from an examination of how the one trait that all of our corporeal bodies have in common is their vulnerability. This is certainly not to say that every body is equally vulnerable, but rather, our bodies are all at risk of harm (Butler 2004a). ‘A body is both dependent upon others and subject to violation by another, by others’ (Chambers and Carver, 2008 p52). The body can thus be examined in material terms based on its actual, physical vulnerability, the one aspect common to all bodies. This will certainly be important when exploring the subjectification of Palestinian women, as the Israeli occupation heightens the physical vulnerability of Palestinians and leaves women at risk of bodily harm or death and also at risk of losing a loved one because of Israeli state or settler violence. The theme of martyrdom is obvious in every corner of the occupied territories, reminding Palestinians not only of their loved ones who have been killed, but also of their mutual and probable shared physical vulnerability as Palestinians.
The constructed nature of our bodies through performativity is in part due to the fact that our bodies are never quite only our own. Our bodies exist in a social context which shapes and forms them as we interact with others.

‘Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has an invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is mine and not mine. Given over from the start to the world of others, bearing their imprint, formed within the crucible of social life, my body is only later, and with some uncertainty, that to which I lay claim as my own’ (Butler 2004b p21).

One’s body relates one to others and claiming that one has ‘autonomy’ from others denies the very real ways in which our positions in society are determined by our bodies. In part, this stems from the fact that our bodily experiences are related back to a norm, whether that norm be an example of our own bodily experience or to another’s bodily experience (ibid p28). Butler goes on to raise the question of whether we can acknowledge the ways in which we are dependent on one another and yet striving for autonomy in other ways. She argues that transgendered, transsexual, butch and drag illustrate the possibility of the transformation of the norm, thus calling into question the naturalness of the norm through differential embodiment. The body, then, is a site of possible resistance, not just of normalising practices.

This is complimented by Coole, whose reading of phenomenology argues that one’s ability to act should not be seen in binary terms of free subject/constituted subject. Instead, capacities for agency should be seen as a ‘chiaroscuro’ that do not unfold in a uniform manner but instead are as varied as the corporeal world (Coole 2005, p126). She goes on to identify three qualities of agency which can be identified at a corporeal level. Firstly, the corporeal body has an innate way of knowing; deducing meaning from diverse forms. Secondly, because of bodily knowing, the body is able to
make ‘stylistic improvisations’. Finally, the body acts deliberately in its environment (ibid p129). The corporeal body is thus not merely a site of discipline and subjectification, but also a site imbued with a degree of agency, provided, of course, that we are not defining agency in the dualism of free agent/subjugated non-agent. The significance of the body is clear here, in that bodies, even when subjugated, in their very materiality demonstrate a level of agency in determining their place in the world. The significance for Palestinian women’s resistance to occupation is clear as well, in that despite the subjectification of the occupation that regulates and controls the movement of bodies within the occupied territories as well as constraints imposed by Palestinian society relating to gender norms and values, women are able to act to resist the occupation in multiple ways. Some of those resistances, such as suicide bombing/martyrdom operations or involvement in other militant action also challenge societal conceptions of the role of women. A more detailed analysis of the internal Palestinian debate regarding the acceptability of women’s participation in suicide bombing/ martyrdom operations can be found in Chapter Five.

There are also explicit concomitants of the body in relation to politics. The body is a site upon which politics can act (Butler 2004b; Coole, 2005) Politics can make one’s body more secure or less secure, more nourished or more malnourished. The body is what situates subjects in relation to one another and in relation to power. The exteriority of the body is what enables the formation of the subject. One cannot speak of the body’s capacity for agency without simultaneously acknowledging that one’s physical body is precisely what makes one vulnerable to violence, power and subjectification. ‘For the body situates them firmly within the material and affective
worlds, where economic and emotional structures mediate the satisfaction of somatic needs and violence assaults the flesh with raw immediacy’ (Coole 2005 p129).

It is perhaps Butler’s notion of gendered performativity that best destabilises the claim that bodies have a natural role and best supports some of the forms that Palestinian women’s resistance has taken. Gendered performativity is advantageous because it argues that challenges to the norm are not merely a choice one can make in order to make life more gratifying, but instead illustrative that the performance of gender is malleable and therefore cannot be taken as a given that operates in the binary of female/male which claims the naturalness of the maternal female body. ‘To say however that gender is performative is not simply to insist on a right to produce a pleasurable and subversive spectacle, but to allegorize the spectacular and consequential ways in which reality is both produced and contested’ (Butler 2004b p30).

Bodily practices which challenge the normalising performances of gender elucidate that other performances of gender are possible, and thus negate the notion that the purpose of a woman’s body is to produce children. Clearly, bodies matter.

Butler’s idea of gendered performativity is of utmost relevance to an examination of the subjectifications and resistance of Palestinian women. There is no culture without gendered divisions derived from bodies, so this is in no way to make the argument that women in Palestine are further subjugated only because of their particular culture. Instead, I argue that as in all societies, gendered divisions do exist in Palestinian culture. Those divisions are based on gendered bodies and particular notions of what the purpose of a woman’s body is, and they are performed in multiple ways. In turn, many acts of resistance against occupation also have an effect of challenging those divisions by enacting different performances of gender. This is most clearly evident in
the case of the female suicide bombers/martyrs, who through their resistance to the
Israeli occupation, whether knowingly or not, perform a radical alternative to the idea
that the purpose of a woman’s body is that of reproduction, not destruction. This will be
discussed in much further detail in the following chapter. By no means is the example of
female suicide bombers/martyrs the sole example of how the norms of gendered
performativity are challenged by Palestinian women, it is merely the most provocative.
Palestinian women perform challenges to gendered norms in multifaceted sites. Common to all of gendered perfomativity is of course the corporeal body.

Insomuch as bodies matter, it is necessary to take bodies into account in an
examination of how Palestinian women are formed as subjects to Israeli power. It is just
as essential to take bodies into account in an approach to how Palestinian women come
to resist their formation as subjects. Such an approach lends to a better understanding
of the complexity of agency in that material bodies are acted upon to form the subject,
but material bodies are also always enacting, even on the micro-level, resistances of
their own. Accounting for bodies is also essential in that it brings to the fore the
extremely vulnerable nature of our material bodies. This vulnerability is highly visible in
the occupied Palestinian territories, and the physical bodies of Palestinian women are
always at risk. Multitudinous elements in everyday life under occupation make
Palestinian women acutely aware of their vulnerability. This awareness of vulnerability
has a whole host of consequences for how Palestinian women respond to their
subjectification.

To summarise, accounting for bodies in the context of this project is critical
because it allows for a more thorough analysis of how Palestinian women come to be
subjected and how they enact resistance to that subjectification primarily through their
bodies. It is their bodies that make them vulnerable, which relate them to others around them, which determine how they are treated and how they are expected to act. Their bodies are the means through which they are subjected to oppression as a result of occupation, exposed to operations of power, and simultaneously the means by which they are able to resist. In short, their bodies are the conduits for how they experience the world. Therefore, no thorough examination of the dispositifs of occupation and resistance for Palestinian women could gloss over or ignore bodies. As a result, material bodies are central to my analysis.

Drawing upon the above engagements with ‘the subject’ allows for the formation of a working definition of ‘the subject’ that can be utilised in an analysis of Palestinian women’s experiences of the dispositifs of occupation and resistance. Before proceeding with the definition it is of utmost importance to re-iterate that this in no way signals the existence of a universal ‘Palestinian woman’. Palestinian women occupy countless subject positions. Bedouin women in the West Bank occupy different subject positions than women with Jerusalem ID cards living in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, individual women in Bedouin communities or East Jerusalem or living in refugee camps are differently subjectified amongst one another. There is no one ‘Palestinian Woman’. The inherent problem of using the identity categories of ‘Palestinian’ and ‘woman’ is the normative and exclusionary nature of identity categories. As a result of the normative and exclusionary nature of referring to ‘Palestinian women’ in the occupied Palestinian territories, I propose a definition of ‘subject’ that allows for a degree of malleability and is not fixed to certain experiences of occupation, but instead allows for a complex array of subjectifications and resistances to emerge.
For the purpose of this project, and drawing from Deleuze and Butler, I propose that ‘the subject’ is: she who becomes subjectified through practices which occur upon and through her body. The domination of the Palestinian woman would not be possible without producing her as a subject. The on-going process of subjectification both produces her as subject as well as enabling her to perform that subject position or destabilise it. The subject reinstates or subverts her subjectification through conduct and counter-conduct, and this conduct and counter-conduct can occur at precisely the same moment. She thus not entrenched in the binary opposition of being either an ‘obedient’ subject or a ‘disobedient’ resister. In relation to bodies, subjectification relies on the physical body of the subject as a point to direct the exercise of power and resistance can in turn take place through the corporeal body by challenging the subjectification of the body.

Dispositif

‘Dispositif’ can be translated from French as ‘apparatus’. Knowing this we can clearly see how the manner in which Foucault conducts investigations of power and subjects is often precipitated through an exploration of dispositif. Foucault most clearly elucidated his definition of dispositif in an interview entitled ‘Confessions of the Flesh’ wherein he defined it as

‘a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions, in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements’ (Foucault, 1980 p194).

To summarise, the dispositif is first and foremost multifarious. The commonality of the diverse elements is the desired outcome of the apparatus, specifically in relation to how
the elements work together, enmeshed in power relations to form the subject. An analysis of a dispositif should aim to uncover how the various elements contribute to the formation of the subject. The apparatus can be seen as part of the process of governing – it is a network of various elements whose strategic function is to govern through creating the subject (Agamben 2009). Subjects are the result of living beings passing through apparatuses according to Agamben’s interpretation of the apparatus.

Agamben (2009) focuses on the definition given by Foucault in his essay ‘What is an apparatus?’ Agamben argues that the dispositif can be seen as a means of investigation, one that can be found throughout Foucault’s corpus, regardless of whether or not he explicitly used the term dispositif. The way in which Foucault examines the world is by starting from particular occurrences and operations and moving forward to the larger ‘universal’ – this is opposed to seeing a universal as a starting point for investigation (i.e. – crime) and moving downward through the various particulars that come to constitute it. ‘Instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices, I would like to start with the concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through the grid of these practices’ (Foucault 2008 p 3).

The dispositif itself can be seen as the network including virtually anything which itself has a strategic function imbedded in power relations (Agamben 2009 p3). Agamben later goes on to propose his own definition of apparatus, which greatly expands the possible number of what can be seen as an ‘apparatus’. For Agamben, an apparatus can be seen as ‘literally anything that has in some way the ability to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours,
opinions or discourses of living beings’ (2009 p14). Therefore, he contends, apparatus not only include what we consider to be very evidently imbued with power, but also

‘the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones, and – why not – language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses – one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realising the consequences that he was about to face........The boundless growth of apparatuses in our time corresponds to the equally extreme proliferation in processes of subjectification’ (ibid pp14-15).

In the context of Israeli occupation and Palestinian women’s resistance, drawing upon Agamben’s extended definition of the dispositif allows for us to greatly expand the categories and occurrences we investigate to include such elements as the use of Biblical names in Israeli settlements, the architecture of the separation barrier and checkpoints or the ‘everyday’ utterances of Palestinian mothers encouraging their children to stay in the occupied territories. However, one could argue that Agamben’s interpretation of the apparatus could be seen as overly focused on the subjectifying apparatus, thereby paying inadequate attention to the potential for resistance to subjectification. I propose that that one might examine an apparatus of subjectification as well as another apparatus of resistance to that subjectification.

Similarly to Agamben, Deleuze conceptualises the dispositif as multifaceted, and as being composed of cross-cutting dimensions. ‘In the first instance the dispositif is a tangle, a multi-linear ensemble. It is composed of lines, each having a different nature. And these lines in the apparatus do not outline or surround systems which are homogenous in their own right’ (Deleuze 1992 p159). The aspects of the apparatus do not always act in harmony, but can distance themselves from one another or change in nature. Therefore, power, knowledge and subjectivity are in constant flux, never
stagnant, these elements may sediment, but may also just as likely fracture (ibid). As such, the notion of the *dispositif* is a useful means of approaching an examination of the occupation of the Palestinian territories because the elements that constitute the occupation are also in constant flux. Checkpoints open and close with a great deal of variability, a journey that takes 20 minutes one day could take 4 hours the next, there is no reliable way to predict whether or not a town or village will be subject to closure, or whether an ambulance will be allowed through a checkpoint (Abufarha, 2009). The application of elements of the occupation also varies widely amongst the Palestinian population. There is certainly logic to such an occupation. The unpredictability of day to day life under occupation can be seen as a valuable tool for managing and controlling the Palestinian population (Parsons and Salter, 2008). The sheer variability of occupation means that the examination of occupation should not take it as a universal, instead that the intersecting elements that make up the occupation should be examined individually. Similarly, the Palestinian responses to occupation in the form of resistance and highly variable, and should not be examined as a homogenous practice. Instead, treating Palestinian women’s resistances to occupation as individual elements of a broader apparatus of resistance allows taking this variability into account.

The visibility of the aspects of the apparatus, for example, the visibility of the aspects of punishment, is sometimes blurred or dispersed, obscuring its origins, thus, ‘Visibility cannot be traced back to a general source of light which could be said to fall on pre-existing objects, it is made of lines of light which form variable shapes inseparable from the apparatus in question’ (ibid p160). Objects of the apparatus may appear to have a ‘pre-existing’ nature, but that is merely a means of making the apparatus seem more ‘solid’ than it in fact is.
There is a definite relationship between the biopolitical body and the *dispositif*. The *dispositif* is that which brings the body under the control of the political, and that which creates the subject through that control. However, this theorisation of the *dispositif* would be incomplete without examining how an apparatus can also be comprised of resistances that challenge biopolitical subjectification. Furthermore, the body is a critical aspect of the *dispositifs* of subjectification and resistance because of the differentiation amongst different Palestinian bodies. There is not one way to describe how Palestinian bodies are acted upon in the oPt, because different bodies are acted upon differently (Parsons and Salter, 2008). Examining bodies within the *dispositifs* of subjectification and resistance allows for examining the differences in how bodies experience exercises of power to form different subjects, and how different bodies enact different resistances. It would be a mistake to claim that all Palestinian bodies are objects of power in the same way, or even that all Palestinian women’s bodies are objects of power in the same way, thus *dispositif* is valuable to examine the differences. Differences in the bodily subjectifications and resistances of different Palestinian women will be explored in Chapter Five as an intrinsic element of the *dispositifs* of subjectification and resistance.

The *dispositif* is most useful because it calls for a refutation of concept of the universal, thereby allowing for alternative understandings to emerge. In the case of this project, examining the *dispositif* of occupation will aim to draw out another way of viewing how occupation functions by starting from the examination of how the occupation forms Palestinian women as subjects. Drawing from Foucault, Deleuze and Agamben, for the purpose of this project the dispositif can be seen as the linkage which emerges from a diverse set of practices which are aimed at a certain manner of
subjectification or the linkage that emerges from a diverse set of practices aimed at a certain manner of resistance to subjectification. In order to understand the dispositif of occupation as it pertains to the bodies of Palestinian women, it is necessary to investigate multiple practices aimed at the subjectification of their bodies. In order to understand the dispositif of resistance it will be necessary to explore how Palestinian women enacting elements of resistance challenge this subjectification.

**The subject and dispositif in relation to the occupied Palestinian territories**

In the context of the occupied Palestinian territories, the power exercised by Israelis operates with a very specific design, that of enacting the strictest possible control over the Palestinian population through the control and regulation of their bodies. Despite the specificity of this operation of power, the tactics employed are manifold and divergent. The bodies of Palestinians are the sites upon which this power is exercised and the conduit through which the elements of the apparatus function. The occupation of the Palestinian territories is extremely potent in that it effectively subjugates the Palestinian population through controlling their physical bodies without making them legal subjects of Israel. Were the Palestinians to become subjects of the Israeli state, the state would no longer be able to draw such distinctions in the differential treatment of ‘Jewish’ and ‘Palestinian’ subjects if international (read: U.S.) support were to continue. Furthermore, making Palestinians legal subjects of Israel would radically alter the demographics of the Jewish state. Instead, the elaborate apparatus of occupation allows for Israeli subjectification of Palestinians without the aforementioned ‘problems’. Palestinians are thus de facto subjects in that they are subject to the apparatus of occupation, thereby forming their subject position.
Undeniably, Palestinians have been continuously contesting their subjectification, with tactics that are equally as divergent as the tactics employed in their subjectification. While their resistance has not had the desired effect of the end to the occupation and a fully independent Palestinian state, acts of resistance also shape and change Palestinians as subjects. Some forms and acts of resistance have altered the way the bodies of Palestinians experience power. Even under occupation, an extreme example of subjectification in every sense of the word, resistance occurs and radically alters those who exercise it.

This project focuses on the women of the occupied Palestinian territories not because of a Western-centric notion that women in Arab societies are victims. If we start from an assumption that Palestinian women have often experienced marginalisation because of their gender, then focusing particularly on women in this project will provide a unique perspective. This decision to focus on women is in no way claiming that all women in Palestine are worse off than their male counterparts, nor that women are the only or most marginalised in Palestinian society. Using gender as a starting point is only one of many possible ways to examine the dispositifs of occupation and resistance in the Palestinian territories. If one were to make broad and sweeping generalisations it could be said that Palestinian women experience different effects of power than men, consequent to their gendered bodies, for example, women have different healthcare needs, especially during vulnerable times during pregnancy and after giving birth. If this project is to take bodies seriously, one cannot deny that Palestinian bodies are gendered.¹⁴ This is not solely attributed to gendered divisions within Palestinian or Arab

¹⁴ It should be clear from the above section on corporeality that all bodies are gendered, again, this is not meant as a specific comment on the bodies of ‘Arab’ women.
society, but also largely to perceptions and reinforcements of those gendered divisions from outside Palestinian society. With this in mind, this project aims to present a small selection of stories from Palestinian women as a means of challenging the notion that there is merely one version of how women in Palestine experience and respond to power.

Hence, my starting point for analysis is the Palestinian woman as subject. To extrapolate an understanding of the operation in the occupied territories and come to an understanding of how Palestinian women are subjugated, I will start from an analysis of the diverse elements of the dispositif of occupation. Rather than start from the point of ‘occupation’ it will be the strands which constitute the functioning of occupation that are my concern. In brief, I am concerned with how this particular operation of occupation came to be and how specific elements of occupation contribute to the formation of the subject. Sovereign state models of power which might posit that occupation can be investigated from a top-down approach are ineffective because they fail to explain how the starting point of analysis has to the be the very subject at which occupation is directed at forming. The elements that so effectively subjugate are by no means solely attributed to the state and a top-down analysis will invariably miss out on numerous elements of utmost importance. It is for this reason that this analysis is galvanised by Foucault. His approach to power gives full attention to the subject and their formation through multiple elements rather than merely examining the state as that which holds the power over its subjects. More importantly, in arguing that resistance is an intrinsic part of the operation of power, Foucault provides the impetus for an alternative analysis of how power functions and how we might come to resist it.
Such an analysis is useful for the potential that is opened up when we cease to view Israeli power and Palestinian resistance as separable phenomena and instead view them as radically inseparable. This analysis will be taken up in Chapter Five, using a variety of sources, both discursive and non-discursive. As this chapter has outlined my definition of subject, *dispositif* in relation to physical bodies based on readings of Agamben, Butler, Delueze and Merleau-Ponty, as well as demonstrated some of Foucault’s techniques for analysis, Chapter Five can delve directly into data analysis informed by this theoretical background. Prior to this analysis it is necessary to explain the methodology I employed in my field research and analysis.
Chapter Four – Methodological Approach

Centralising women’s experiences

Women have been participating in acts of political violence and resistance throughout history. However, this participation has most often been marginalised in discourses, analyses, and narratives, thereby relegating their actions to the shadows and side-lines and perpetuating the notion that during times of conflict, it is men who are warriors, and women in need of protection from ‘the enemy’. It was not until more recently that scholars began to challenge this dominant distinction between fighting men and peaceful women, and as they did so they have revealed the intricate, complicated and embedded nature of women’s participation in violent conflict throughout history (Enloe, 1990; Elshtain, 1987; Tickner, 1992). Such texts are of great importance because they begin the task of deconstructing the myth that men fight in wars to protect vulnerable, non-combatant women. Thinking seriously about women in conflict and how constructions of gender shape, or limit women’s action and re-framing the concept of ‘security’ to include the gendered aspects of it will allow for us to think about security in less hierarchal ways (Tickner, 1992 p53).

Critical Ethnography as Method

According to the approach of critical ethnography, the boundary between theory and method can be quite fine insomuch as in critical ethnography, the theory that informs the research is employed as method (Madison, 2012 p14). As such the method of analysing how Palestinian women come to be formed as subjects through the Israeli occupation and how women resist that subjectification is informed by Foucault’s theory of power and the analysis itself is operationalised through Foucault’s own ‘methods’ of
‘archaeology’ and ‘genealogy’. I employed critical ethnography as a method in my field research insofar as Madison defines critical ethnography as ‘an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain’ (ibid. p5). In relation to this project, wherein my field research was embedded in daily life, my commitment to understanding and challenging the daily conditions of life under occupation represents this definition of critical ethnography. I utilised several ethnographic techniques in my field research, namely the use of narrative interviews and participant observation (Hoggart, et al 2002). The choice to utilise narrative interviews was informed more broadly by feminist security studies, and is explained in greater detail in the second half of this chapter.

For the duration of my time in the field I was engaged in one form of participant observation or another, including but not limited to observing social performance in women’s groups meetings, during the Christmas celebrations living with my Palestinian host family in Bethlehem, passing through checkpoints as I travelled throughout the West Bank or between the West Bank and Jerusalem and at one of the Friday demonstrations in the village of Nabi Saleh where IDF soldiers used various techniques to disperse demonstrators. I recorded the many interactions I observed in my reflexive field journal, but more generally, my experiences of living in the West Bank and my own day to day life there informed my impressions of the occupation and of Palestinian resistance. Sylvester argues that for a feminist research methodology engaged in researching daily-lived experiences:

‘Experience is no longer seen as a compass pointing toward any true meaning of events of feelings and more as a methodology that enables research to focus on ordinary people and ways that international relations affects them and is affected by their actions. It is an empirical approach open to many of the surprises a researcher finds in the field about herself, her own
standpoints, and those of people she interviews and observes’ (Sylvester, 2012b p48).

My research methodology which is informed by feminism and centralises lived experience by utilising the tools of critical ethnography such as participant observation, reflexivity and narrative interviews centralises daily-lived experiences not to present them as the only possible truth, but to explore how women’s daily-lived experiences adds to our understanding of the nature of women’s subjectivity and resistance in the oPt. At the end of this chapter I reflect in greater detail how my experiences as a researcher observing and participating in everyday life have impacted my interpretation and analysis of my research findings.

**Radical Geography**

An aspect of the participant observation method I utilised in my participant observation involved observing the complex relationships between Palestinians and their surrounding space and architecture. This method can be described as ‘the participant as observer’ (Hoggart, et al 2002 p257). In this method of participant observation the researcher is not removed from the daily life of her participants, but makes observations about social interaction and how participants live within their social and physical environment. The actual recording of observations may take place at another time when the researcher is away from participants so as to make less of an impact on the participant’s behaviour (ibid). I utilised this method of observation extensively throughout my field research, particularly as I was living with a Palestinian family and using the same modes of transportation as Palestinians to travel throughout the West Bank. Many times I was the only non-Palestinian in the shared-taxi (servee) as I travelled to and from interviews.
The themes of space, bodies and architecture as a means of exercising power can be seen throughout my analysis in Chapter Five. Moving though the West Bank, mostly in the popular Palestinian mode of transportation, the ‘servee’\textsuperscript{15} and crossing checkpoints gave me an opportunity to observe and understand how different populations live in and move through differentiated spaces and territories. One also comes to understand a great deal about Palestinian practices of memorialisation and resistance when moving through Palestinian public space. One cannot help but notice the means of memorialising martyrs (posters, murals), The Nakba (statues, keys), or popular struggle (murals, flags, prisoner’s posters). In this case, the methodology of critical ethnography is practiced by observing what is given prominence in public spaces. Particular themes emerge throughout many of these practices; these themes will become evident in the analysis in Chapter Five. As I moved through spaces and architectures in Jerusalem and the West Bank I kept notes documenting how the architecture of checkpoints, walls, and barriers were designed to control the movement of people. The architecture of control also utilised the natural geography of the West Bank, such as placing walls, settlements, and watchtowers on hills overlooking the Palestinian villages in valleys. The following is an example from my reflexive field research journal:

\textsuperscript{15} The role of the servee as an element of how Palestinians negotiate daily life under occupation could be the focus of in-depth analysis. Drivers negotiate a maze of checkpoints and detours to bring their passengers to destinations throughout the West Bank. Narratives collected from Human Rights organisations such as B’Tselem document abuses by Israeli Security Forces and how passengers collectively cope with when their journey is interrupted and passengers are individually or collectively humiliated. In terms of participant observation, travelling by servee is the ideal way to see the ways the West Bank has been divided and segmented, and the role architecture plays in conjunction with physical geography to separate Palestinians from Jewish settlers and from other Palestinians. One uses a servee by going to a lot that is in the centre of most cities and towns, and walking around until you hear a driver call out the name of your destination. The servee leaves whenever it is full.
All of these measures are accomplishing a lot of what they aim, that is to drive the Palestinian population from the Jordan Valley by making daily life impossible. One of the most absurd things we saw was an ‘agricultural’ gate. It’s open three days a week, for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. It’s a pretty simple metal gate blocking a road to a very small village. To the right of the gate is a high, rocky hill. To the left of the gate is one of the ‘earth mounds’ that runs for a good 10 miles down the road, the mound is about 4 feet high and on the other side is a ditch of about the same depth, making it impossible to cross in a car. The ‘security’ purpose of the gate is not at all apparent. There is no one manning it, it is simply a mechanism of control, determining that no one can access the village by car, nor can cars from the village leave, except at the designated times. The earth mound (and subsequent gate) is a demarcation between ‘Area A’ and ‘Area C’ which are also based in nothing but a mechanism of control. Everywhere I go in the West Bank, the same message is repeated over and over and over. ‘We control your lives.’ (Ryan, 27 December 2011, Appendix 2)

This excerpt demonstrates how I used critical ethnography and looked through the lens of architecture and geography to think about the situation in the West Bank.

Architecture in areas where there were Palestinian and Israeli settler populations living in close proximity demonstrated high levels of the control over Palestinians. In particular, the city of Hebron was a space where people’s movement was strictly controlled.\textsuperscript{16} After spending an afternoon in the city centre of Hebron, a space that has

\textsuperscript{16} The 1994 Hebron protocol divided Hebron into H1 – which is under Palestinian civil administrative control and Israeli military control, and H2, which is under full Israeli civil and military control. Over 30,000
been divided in ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Jewish’ sections, I made rough sketches of how security checkpoints constructed out of modular trailers were combined with concrete dividers, turnstiles, fences, and netting to keep Palestinians and Jewish Settlers separate.

I noted in my reflexive journal that the irony of returning to Bethlehem that evening was that even with the separation barrier surrounding two side of the city, it felt liberating because of the lack of turnstiles and metal detectors in the city.

Archaeology

It is debatable to what degree Foucault employed a specific methodology in his work. One could argue instead that he employs several techniques of investigation, all of which are informed by his drive to better understand how the subject comes to be formed, but that he rejected a formulated methodology. For Foucault, and subsequently for this project, what is most crucial is not how questions are answered, but rather, what questions are asked. This being said, broadly speaking it is possible to see common threads amidst how Foucault conducts his investigations, if we were to give name to them, one possibility is that Foucault employs what he refers to as ‘archaeology’ and ‘genealogy’. To understand how Foucault employs the concept of ‘archaeology’ as an approach, it is first essential to define what he meant by archaeology. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault defines archaeology as ‘describing discourses as practices specified in the archive’ (1989 p148). A particular practice is thus seen to arise from a discourse in the archive. This definition is in need of further extrapolation, as ‘archive’ has a very specific meaning in this context as well. For Foucault, the archive is not a specific place, nor is it a totalising discourse, nor can it be fully described. Instead,
he defines archive as: ‘the general system of the formation and transformation of statements’ (ibid, p146).

The archive is thus the manner in which certain statements come to be formulated, and how those statements in turn alter practices. This is clearly an example of how Foucault conceptualises power/knowledge as heterogeneous yet entirely intertwined. The archive formulates knowledge about an event, and in turn, that knowledge functions through power to shape and alter the exercise of power over subjects. In ‘statement’ it is important to note that Foucault is not referring only to what is said, but also to the unsaid and the visible. The crucial aspects of archaeology can be listed as follows: 1) statements in the archive must be seen as one possible outcome, not an inevitable outcome, 2) there is a determinate relationship between ‘words’ and ‘things’ 3) relationships between statements are contingent, 4) statements establish a relationship between subjects.

Critical to archaeology is the idea that just because something is a discourse in the archive, does not mean that it was inevitably the only possibility. If one takes as a starting point that what comes to be considered as the archive is one particular emergence rather than an inevitable end point that is both generalizable and pre-determined, then the questions that arise are related to why this particular occurrence emerged rather than other potential occurrences. In relation to Palestinian women’s subjectification, the particular form that occupation has taken is the result of various practices and tactics that have been deployed, often in ad hoc or arbitrary ways and by

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17 Here, it is important to note that Foucault makes a distinction between two kinds of ‘knowledge’ the distinction is clearly demarcated in French, but when translated into English is lost. Foucault distinguishes between _connaissance_, a particular corpus of knowledge such as biology) and _savoir_, the condition by which an object becomes part of the ‘_connaissance_’ (Foucault, 1989 p16).
many different actors, including the Israeli military, municipal planners, Israeli settlers, politicians, religious leaders and security strategists. The ‘application’ of the elements of occupation have not been uniform, and as such the form that occupation has taken cannot be seen as the only inevitable outcome. What this tells us is that it is important to examine particular elements of the occupation in order to understand how this present occurrence came to be.

The relationship between the sayable and the visible is reliant on how Foucault perceives the determinate relationship between words and things. Within Foucault’s own work, this can be seen clearly in *Discipline and Punish*, wherein he argues that the discursive distinction between ‘the criminal’ and the ‘law-abiding citizen’ functions in a dependent relationship with the architecture of the prison, where the prisoner regulates his own behaviour because the physical form the prison takes makes it impossible for him to know with certainty whether or not a guard is watching him at any given time. As such, the visible (prison) and the sayable (criminal vs. law abiding) function together. Here it is easy to see why the relationship between the sayable and the visible is and important aspect of Palestinian women’s subjectification and resistance. As pointed out in the introduction to this project, visible elements of the occupation are vividly visible throughout the occupied territories (Weizman, 2007). These visible elements and the contribution they make to the subjectification of Palestinian women will be a dominant focus of Chapter Five.

The relationships between statements is also easily seen in Foucault’s concept of statements as contingent, not inevitable, wherein statements regulate in relation to one another and are ordered with regards to the status they are attributed. Returning to the concept of ‘eventualization’ we can see that for Foucault, an event or practice must be
examined to account for how it relates to ‘external intelligibility’. Coming back to *Discipline and Punish*, statements about the penal system are externally intelligible, or relatable to statements about schooling, or the military. Statements also become repeatable through rules, demonstrating the power/knowledge nexus. Once a statement is sufficiently repeatable, (or ‘usable’) it could be conceptualised as ‘knowledge’, making it possible to utilise that knowledge to exercise power. Again, coming back to our example of *Discipline and Punish*, we can see how repeating (using) statements about criminality, knowledge is produced of who can be defined as a ‘criminal’ and thus opening up possibilities for the exercise of power over those designated as ‘criminal’. In the context of Palestinian women here, examples of women’s different experiences of what it means to be treated ‘like a Palestinian’ are interrelated despite the different focus of exercises of power upon different women. Elements of subjectification may be repeated, such as the subjectification experienced by women passing through Israeli checkpoints, or the imprisonment of family members, and through this repetition, knowledge of the ‘acceptable’ treatment for Palestinians is formed by soldiers, settlers, politicians or the international community.

Foucault points out how the statement which distinguishes between ‘the criminal’ and the ‘law-abiding citizen’ establishes a specific relationship between these two subjects. The statement then acts differently upon the two subjects. Institutions function within established limits to how discursive objects can act. Here, prisons can be seen as places of authority, but importantly, prisons function upon those subjects designated as criminal in different ways than upon the non-criminal. Institutions are also ‘visible’ and function in specific ways to exercise power based on statements and the sayable, and through their visibility they differentiate and establish specific relationships.
between different subjects. The most obvious example within the context of Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance to cite here is the different subject statuses attributed to two groups of women living in the same territory, Israeli settler women, and Palestinian women. Through the elements of the occupation, the presence of the Israeli settlers is legitimised and supported as the legitimate inhabitants of the land and a legal subject of Israel whilst the Palestinian woman experiences severe subjugation, dispossession, and de-humanisation. The subject relationships between Israeli settler women and Palestinian women and the differing effects on corporeality are investigated in Chapter Five. From the above examples within Foucault’s work and reference to how Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance to it can be seen through a lens of archaeology, it becomes apparent how Foucault conceptualises archaeology as the process of analysing discourse as practice in the archive.

**Genealogy**

Foucault borrows the idea of genealogy from Nietzsche, but he alters Nietzsche’s concept of it quite a bit before employing it as an instrument of analysis. Foucault admitted that there were many parallels between genealogy and archaeology, and he saw the two methods as complimentary (Kendall and Wickham 1999). ‘Genealogy does not replace archaeology, so much as widen the kind of analysis to be pursued’ (Davidson, 1986 p227). Foucault articulates what he sees as the difference between the two in ‘Two Lectures’ when he writes:

‘If we were to characterise it in two terms, then “archaeology” would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and “genealogy” would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were released would be brought into play’ (Foucault 1980 p85).
Genealogy is thus the expansion of archaeology such that rather than examining a statement as singular event in the archive, it is seen as part of an on-going process enmeshed in power. Foucault claims that the question that arises is therefore ‘What are the various contrivances of power, whose operations extend to such differing levels and sectors of society and are possessed of such manifold ramifications?’ (ibid p88). As we can see from this question, the technique of genealogy is embedded in an analysis of power. As power is defined in and through action, power cannot be defined as repression alone.

Herein enters the benefit of genealogy as a means of examining statements and the centrality of power in the approach. One can conduct an analysis of power by conducting a genealogical analysis of discourse. If discourses are produced by the exercise of power, then we can work backwards from a discourse to understand how power operates in relation to it. In this way, genealogy expands the analysis made by archaeology by examining the broader processes to which the discourse is related.

Kendall and Wickham (1999) summarise genealogy as:

‘describing statements but with an emphasis on power, introducing power through a “history of the present” concerned with disreputable origins and unpalatable functions, describing statements as an on-going process rather than as a snapshot and concentrating on the strategic use of archaeology to answer problems about the present’ (ibid p34).

The aim of studying history central to the method of genealogy is tantamount for Foucault. He argues that as a result of looking for subjugated knowledges and basing his analysis on historical content he was able to launch a far more effective analysis of the

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19 Foucault’s use of history is often defined this way as it implies that his historical analysis does not stop upon reaching a certain epoch, nor does it claim that the present is a desirable alternative to the past. Instead, history for Foucault is ‘a way of diagnosing the present’ (Kendall and Wickham 1999 p4).
asylum (*Madness and Civilization*) and the prison (*Discipline and Punish*). ‘Only the historical contents allow us to rediscover the ruptural effects of conflict and struggle that the order imposed by functionalist or systematising thought is designed to mask’ (Foucault 1980 p82). Genealogies thus open the possibility to investigate ‘local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges’ and thereby challenge any theories or knowledges that claim to be unitary (ibid p83). In relation to Palestinian women’s resistance, the approach of investigating local and disqualified knowledges is important. Women’s engagement in acts of resistance are often over-looked because their actions do not fit into typical notions of what resistance looks like. However, in Chapter Five, I argue that activities such as making traditional Palestinian crafts or wearing traditional Palestinian dress are elements of resistance in the context of the occupation. Foucault challenges the hierarchy of scientific knowledge, arguing that genealogies are ‘anti-sciences’ precisely because they challenge the dominance of scientific knowledge as a means of exercising power. In utilising genealogy as a method, subjugated knowledges are emancipated. (ibid).

**The role of emotion in research**

Conducting my field research in the West Bank of the oPt was the most rewarding, engaging and enlightening aspect of this entire project. Planning the trip and thinking about ethical and methodological challenges before departing was the most stressful. In the stages of applying for ethical approval, adapting a field research methodology and thinking through logistics, I kept a reflexive journal to document aspects of the trip I was thinking through and how my feelings about my planned research had an impact on the types of plans I was making. I continued the reflexive journal for the duration of my time in the field, and it adds valuable insight to how I
encountered and approached methodological, ethical and emotional issues and how those issues may have affected the outcome of my research.

There has been recent debate within feminist IR regarding the ‘place’ of emotion on the part of the researcher conducting feminist research. A recent forum article in *International Studies Quarterly* examined how several feminist researchers experienced their own emotions whilst undertaking field research as well as how they negotiated the boundaries between acknowledging and masking those emotions in order to be perceived as ‘legitimate’ researchers in feminist IR (Sylvester *et al.*, 2011). The feminist approach of researching women’s lived experience is reflective of the adherence to the claim that ‘the personal is political.’ However, the researchers in the forum article expressed that at one time or another during the research process they felt the need to suppress their own personal feelings about research from their project. It is in some ways surprising that feminist researchers are not actively encouraged to integrate their own personal experiences with the research process into their research when feminist IR is based in the contention that ‘the personal is political.’ Surely if research participants are encouraged to share personal experiences from their daily lives in order that feminist researchers can integrate that knowledge into their research, then the feelings and experiences of those researchers should also be seen as a valid component of feminist research. In contrast, the researchers from the forum article expressed very different experiences with curtailing their own emotion in order to bestow more legitimacy on their projects (Sylvester *et al.*, 2011). The authors theorise that separating their research from their emotions, even if they are uneasy doing so, is a practice that is adhered to in order to avoid being labelled as the stereotypical ‘emotional’ woman or as a way to more closely adhere to the ‘norms’ of social science methodology.
'For young feminist scholars already concerned about being taken “seriously” by the field, it can seem that any attempts to incorporate emotions or discuss emotions as part of our research process could evoke criticism of our research objectivity, paint us as weak, or raise concerns about our capacity to do field work’ (MacKenzie, 2011b p691)

This illustrates how feminist researchers, even while challenging the norms of social science research in their chosen research topic and methodology, have difficulties in further challenging those norms by writing about their own emotions. MacKenzie goes on to critique feminist IR for many of the same reasons, particularly that feminist IR still often fails to account for how the researcher’s positionality, subjectivity and the power balances between researcher and research participant may change during and after research (ibid). This shortfall can be challenged through reflexivity, MacKenzie argues. ‘Reflexivity should place emphasis on the ways in which the consumption, exchange, and witnessing of emotions through research alters and affects the research process’ (ibid p692). Including a critical reflection on how one’s emotions affected research is a valuable technique for enhancing the methodological rigour of one’s research. In the forum article Parashar echoes this sentiment ‘Reflexivity is not self-indulgence, but reflection on how one becomes part of power structures and politics, and how that affects knowledge production’ (Parashar, 2011b p698). Parashar goes on to argue that if feminist researchers are committed to the claim that ‘the personal is political’ then we must also reflect on how our personal experiences with our research must be accounted for and represented within the research process (ibid). Precluding a reflection on the effects of emotion on my research would result in silencing and marginalising an indispensable element of my research project.
Field research

I undertook field research for this project in the West Bank of the Palestinian territories for six weeks between December 2011 and January 2012. My research goals included speaking with Palestinian women to collect narratives of experiences of subjectification and resistance, trying to understand the possible connections between the body and how occupation is experienced and asking women about their perspective of the role of Palestinian women in resistance to occupation (Ryan, 20 October 2011 Appendix 2). Various factors and elements of planning and carrying out this research in the field are discussed in this chapter, which is divided into two parts. The first part will outline the practical aspects of my field research and the second will be a reflexive account of how my research was affected by my positionality, problems that arose during research and the role of emotions throughout the process.

Section one: Logistics and basic statistics

Over the course of my field research I interviewed 18 individual Palestinian women and 3 NGOs, two of them counselling centres and one the prisoner’s rights advocate, Addameer. I also had a meeting with one of the Gender Officers at the East Jerusalem branch of the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) and went on two tours of troubled locations in the West Bank with NGOs, one to the Jordan Valley with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, and one to Hebron with the Palestinian peace centre Wi’am.

The 18 individual women I interviewed all had a variety of ‘identities’. Each individual woman can be described in numerous ways, depending upon which ‘categorisations’ are used to examine them. If one examines them through a lens of religion, 6 of the women were Christian and 12 were Muslim. If looking through the
lens of occupation, 8 worked in their own homes, and 10 were either retired or still working outside the home. Of those who worked outside the home, occupations included community activist, shop owner, teacher, UN employee, Palestinian Authority minister, lawyer and militant. However, those who worked in the home often expressed how they brought income into the house through activities such as tailoring, embroidery or other hand crafts. Many of the stories women shared with me included a discussion of how they negotiated several identities between the formal and informal economies. One could also examine the participants through a lens of age, wherein some of the women were young and even un-married, many had young children and others had grandchildren. Not all of the women lived in similar settings, some came from very small villages (less than 500 people), others came from cities or large towns and two came from refugee camps.

All of these identities were intermingled, and each of my participants were extremely unique in their circumstances, the only real commonality between them being that they all self-identified as being Palestinian. This demonstrates the importance of examining individual elements of the occupation, as women with different identities and coming from different areas have differing experiences of the occupation and subsequently different ideas about resistance to it. This is why the approach of examining subjectification and resistance though the use of dispositif is so useful, and the variety of women interviewed and their different experiences supports this. Appendix 4 illustrates the cross-cutting identities of my research participants. In no way am I attempting to use my project to construct a unifying definition of what being a ‘Palestinian Woman’ is like. Rather, as my diversity ‘research sample’ illustrates, my
aim is to explore the varied ways women in Palestine experience oppression and resistance.

I utilised a ‘snowball’ method for my sampling. At the end of each interview and with the help of my translator I asked each woman if she could suggest someone else with whom I could speak. This was advantageous in Palestinian society. The exceptionally pervasive Israeli security apparatus in Palestinian society has resulted in a need for individuals and families to be especially protective of their identities and security. Therefore, using a snowball method allowed me to tell potential participants that their friend ‘X’ had given me their contact details, thereby utilising indigenous networks and methods of communication. Furthermore, my translator was a retired school teacher who was very involved in her local community. She was able to assist with this snowball method by using her acquaintances to acquire more contacts and request interviews. She spent a significant period of time on the phone ringing relatives and friends to get phone numbers for women who had experienced events such as the death or imprisonment of a child. I also relied on the assistance of two ‘fixers’. The first was an Israeli woman who is very active in Palestinian social justice issues. I was introduced to her by a personal friend. Her position as an Israeli has given her considerable freedom of movement and association within the Palestinian resistance movement. She was positively invaluable to moving my research along, and as well as giving me the name of a woman who I later interviewed, she gave the contact details of a Palestinian man who often works closely with internationals, facilitating contact between them and local Palestinians. He introduced me to one of my participants, and after I interviewed her, she was able to help me to ‘snowball’ to a further four participants. Therefore, the Israeli woman was able to connect me to six participants
through snowball sampling. Appendix 3 illustrates how I came to interview each participant.

I undertook my field research because I wanted to include narratives from Palestinian women about their own lives. While I went to Palestine with my research questions in mind, I wanted to conduct ‘interviews’ with as little prompting and questioning from me as possible. My choice of a narrative approach to experiences of subjectification and resistance was informed by a study conducted by Stern (2006b), wherein a narrative approach to Guatemalan women’s experiences of (in)security was employed. Stern argues that: ‘The spoken story must also therefore be seen as inscribing, not only the narrative, but also the self/subject as character in the narrative, and the narrator. Furthermore, the act of narrating occurs in a particular moment which crucially informs the story told’ (ibid p184). My aim was to encourage women to speak from their own experience about anything that they thought was important for me to know about life as a woman in Palestine, how they had experienced the occupation and how they enacted resistance.

I therefore began each interview by introducing myself and explaining my project and then asking the women to tell me stories from their lives. For many of the interviews, the explanation of my project alone was sufficient to get a long narrative from the women illustrating how their lives have been impacted by the Israeli occupation and how and why they are challenging that occupation. At times this approach led them to explain things that I never would have asked about on my own but which were very interesting and helpful. There were also difficulties with this approach, which will be explored in the reflective section of this chapter. The majority (12 of 18) of the interviews were conducted in the women’s own homes. I therefore
experienced the famous Palestinian hospitality while conducting interviews. This was a unique experience that allowed me a much better understanding of Palestinian life than I would have had from interviewing women in a ‘neutral’ setting.

Before my arrival in Palestine I was in contact with a local NGO. They were extremely helpful in aiding me in my search for a translator. They arranged for me to meet a member of their women’s group, named ‘J’. ‘J’ agreed to translate for me, and she was absolutely instrumental in my field research. When I still knew no one in the West Bank she arranged for many of my interviews. She would then accompany me to the houses of the women she’d arranged to talk to and act as a translator. The issue of language is one of critical importance to my methodology. While it caused a few of the problems I encountered (discussed in the next section) I was able to effectively communicate with my participants and record their stories despite the language barriers. Of the 18 interviews, 9 were conducted exclusively in Arabic. Of these, ‘J’ translated for 5. My field research coincided with the holiday season for the Christian families in and around Bethlehem, amongst them, ‘J’. As a result, she was often very busy with her own family and so I sometimes needed to find other translators. The remaining 4 interviews were translated by 3 other people (one woman translated two interviews for me). A further 3 interviews were conducted in a mix of Arabic and English. ‘J’ was translating the Arabic in these interviews for me. The participants in these interviews knew English and wanted to practice their language skills by speaking to me in English, but they also requested that someone be there to translate if they did not know something. The final 6 interviews were conducted in English. These interviews were not conducted in Arabic because the women themselves expressed to me that there was no need for me to bring a translator.
Section two: Reflecting on this field research

Much of this section is based upon data from the reflective journal I kept during my field research. There is supporting literature (Malacrida, 2007; Mauthner and Doucet 2003) claiming that reflective journals are valuable methodological tools to help researchers document and explore the challenges faced, goals met and emotions experienced during field research and how those experiences shape and affect the methodological process. Reflexivity on my methodology and issues I encountered during field research helps me to better understand why and how I got the data I did, and how changes to my approach could have given me different data. Reflexivity also provides me with the opportunity to assess to what degree I achieved my research goals and the role that ethical considerations had on my research.

Deliberate Deceptions: Upon my arrival at the airport in Tel Aviv I had to begin a process of deliberate deception that would continue until my plane departed the same airport six weeks later. I consciously chose not to apply for a research visa from Israel. The chance of being rejected for such a visa was extremely high, and once I had applied for one and made myself known, I would have extreme difficulty arriving in the country on a tourist visa. This decision was reached after talking to two friends I had living in Jerusalem and hearing their experiences trying to enter and leave Israel through Ben Gurion airport. I thought carefully about the ethical implications of doing this when I applied for ethical approval for my research. As my research participants were Palestinian, gaining an official research visa would not have enhanced my legitimacy in their eyes, and may in fact have made me suspect. Further details of my decision not to apply for a research visa are detailed in my official ethics application, Appendix 1. Therefore, when asked by the immigration agent at Tel Aviv airport what the purpose
of my visit to Israel was, I declared that I had come ‘to see the Holy Land.’ Technically, internationals are not permitted to visit much of the West Bank, but this regulation is largely unobserved. Despite this, because I was travelling to locations that had absolutely zero ‘tourist value’ I was at risk of being questioned had I been stopped. Fortunately, this never happened. Finally, when departing from the airport upon completion of my research, I was subject to through questioning as to my whereabouts for the previous six weeks. I did not even state that I had visited Bethlehem, much less that I had lived and travelled in the West Bank for six weeks. Deliberately deceiving an Israeli agent at an airport was undoubtedly the most intense and unnerving part of my entire trip, but I saw it as necessary to being able to carry out my research.

**Communication issues:** Some of my first experiences in Palestine involved attending various ‘women’s groups’ in and around Bethlehem. Several organisations in Bethlehem host weekly meetings for women, providing the women with an opportunity to engage in cultural activities, explore issues of faith or just to socialise with one another. Attending these meetings was a valuable experience for me because it greatly enhanced my understanding of Palestinian culture. These meetings were also an opportunity for me to meet with the women whom I would later interview, allowing them to become more familiar with me. I absorbed many facets of Palestinian culture during these meetings, for example, I learned more about the social norms and expectations of women while peeling and chopping several kilos of onions and then sharing a traditional Palestinian meal with 30+ women than I ever could have from reading any book. One of the most valuable observations I made helped me to understand a difficulty I later experienced with ‘J’ my translator. Almost as soon as I set foot amidst a group of Palestinian women I observed that it is extremely rare for only
one woman to speak at once. The manner of sharing stories is far more cacophonous, with numerous women all speaking at once, over the top of one another. To me, as an outsider it seemed extremely chaotic, and my perception of these situations was that everyone wanted to be part of the conversation at the same time.

Soon after these experiences I began to perceive a possible problem with the translation during some of my interviews. I first noticed the issue during the interviews where the woman we were interviewing wanted to speak English. During the three interviews where both English and Arabic were spoken, it was almost as though ‘J’ did not have a job to do. She was also familiar with 2 of the 3 women in these situations, and these three interviews were full of intervention from ‘J’. My initial feelings were of frustration, annoyance and fear that my research process was failing. I did not know how to approach ‘J’ with the issue, as she was much older than me I was extremely unsure and worried about how to explain my critique without offending her. The more I reflected on the problem, the more I came to realise that this ‘interference’ in the interviews may have been an aspect of Palestinian culture I had not carefully considered, and that perhaps ‘J’ perceived the interviews where predominately English was being spoken as a three way conversation rather than a time for one woman to share a narrative with me. After a great deal of stress and anxiety on my part, I decided not to speak with ‘J’ about it, and these three interviews, all within close succession, were the only ones that involved a great deal of ‘interference’. Below is an excerpt from my reflective journal during the time I realised there was an issue:

I’m coming across a fairly substantial cultural difference during interviews. There is a culture here of conversations being very participatory, with lots of interrupting, adding things, etc. This is easily seen in any gathering of Palestinians...everyone talks at once, cuts over one another, etc. I’ve spent a decent amount of time amongst
groups of women, and while I can’t understand what’s being said, it’s pretty easy to understand that there are very different social norms when it comes to how many people speak at once...and it leads me to have mild concerns about to what degree ‘J’ is interpreting rather than translating...I’m just hoping that the really bad interview with the woman from WCLAC was only bad because it was in English, so ‘J’ perhaps felt like it was a conversation (Ryan, 19 December 2011 Appendix 2)

Now, upon further reflection, I realise that I should have been more direct when I met ‘J’ for the first time, focusing on how important it was to my research process that she only translate as directly as possible.

Cultural immersion as research: Overall, as well as helping me to understand the cultural differences in communication, taking part in activities with Palestinian women was a wonderful addition to my field research. As well as taking part in structured activities with organisations, I was living with a Palestinian family. The family was Christian, so I experienced the traditions and preparations for Christmas. I garnered an even better understanding of women’s roles in Palestinian society and how cooperation amongst women is central to daily life through observing and helping my Palestinian ‘host mother’ as she undertook the mammoth task of preparing food and her home for a stream of visitors that continued for three weeks. One of the most memorable experiences was preparing the Christmas cookies, a task which involved the help of no less than 8 friends and relatives. Taking part in this work helped me to understand the importance of cooperation amongst Palestinian women and further demonstrated the dynamics of communication. I would not have had these experiences and thus would have missed out on these insights had I lived alone or with other Internationals. Living with a Palestinian family in the West Bank gave me a much more engaging experience of some of the ways Palestinian women experience daily life. For
example, when the water supply was turned off and all the water in the tanks had been used, a frequent occurrence in the West Bank where water is ultimately controlled by Israel, I was able to see how my host mother managed her house without water in the taps for three days. This method of research is supported by Mies’ claim that feminist research takes part ‘directly within life’s processes’ (Mies 1991 cited in Tickner 2006 p29). By taking part directly in the living situation of Palestinians and being involved in women’s activities I feel I was able to employ participant observation as part of a critical ethnography of life under occupation.

Problems with the narrative approach: Upon reflection I can also understand some of the shortfalls of my approach to interviewing. I had purposefully chosen not to ask specific questions with the hope that by asking women to speak freely they would naturally be sharing what they say as most relevant to their own lives. At times this approach went well and women shared things that I never would have thought to ask about, but at other times leaving the interview format so open-ended and unstructured posed difficulties. While some of the women I interviewed had shared their stories before, often with Western researchers, others had never been interviewed. Generally speaking it was these women who wanted me to ask them specific questions. As a result of my desired approach to open-ended interviews, I often did have sufficient questions prepared. However, overall my reflective journal illustrates that I was generally satisfied with the content and flow of the interviews. As a result of conducting most of interviews in the homes (or offices) of the women many of the interviews were relaxed and natural, and most of the women needed very little prodding from me to share their stories. This was also enhanced by my subjectivity. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was essential for me to examine my own positionality in the research
process. I am very determined that there is a great deal of injustice, violence and humiliation directed at Palestinians, and while I would never classify myself as ‘anti-Israel’ I would classify myself as opposed to official Israeli state policy and in support of an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories as defined by the pre 1967 line. While in ‘traditional’ social science such ‘subjectivity’ may be seen as unacceptable, in feminist research, where action and social justice are seen as goals of research, it is more important that I explain and account for my own bias than to ignore it. During and after interviews the women often asked me explicitly what I thought of their situation, of the conflict, or the United States’ role in perpetuating the Israeli occupation. I was always completely forthright when I was asked of my opinion. I was also aware of how important it was that I make my own nationality clear. I was often presented or framed as an ‘Irish’ researcher because I had come to Palestine from an Irish university and I live in Ireland. However, I am a national of the United States. This information is extremely relevant to Palestinians, as the United States official government policies have almost always favoured Israel. I therefore was always careful to be explicit in telling people that I was not Irish, as I did want them to feel deceived if they found out later that they had spoken to an American woman when they thought they were speaking to an Irish woman. Upon reflection, I feel as though being explicit in my own position allowed the women I spoke to see me as a human with emotions and opinions rather than a researcher who was only interested in data. Given that my time in Palestine was limited, I hope that my approach of being open with my position helped with rapport building and resulted in more open conversations.

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20 While I was in Palestine, Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich made the statement that ‘Palestinians are an invented people.’ This comment sparked a lot of discussion with Palestinians when we talked about my national origins and the government of my country.
between myself and my participants. The below excerpt from my reflective journal illustrates how I experienced my own position after interviewing a woman whose son was killed by an Israeli settler:

‘I am so grateful to even be here in Palestine. My country is so full of ignorant people who have trampled on Palestinian rights for decades. My country has culpability in everything that has happened here, including the death of this young boy. And yet everyone welcomes me. They ask me where I’m from, and then they say ‘Welcome’ And they tell me their stories. They trust me with their stories. Honestly, I don’t feel worthy’ (Ryan, 12 December 2011 Appendix 2).

After completing my interviews I had two free days before I was due to return home. The previous week I had been to a village called Nabi Saleh to meet women and conduct interviews. This particular village have been organising weekly demonstrations to protest the annexation of their water supply by the nearby settlement for two years, and the villagers, along with Israeli and international solidarity activists have experienced severe reactions from the Israeli military. A few days after I arrived in the West Bank, a villager was killed after being hit in the head with a high-velocity tear gas canister fired from close range. At nearly every weekly demonstration at least one person is injured by rubber bullets, live ammunition, or tear gas canisters and many times people are also arrested. The demonstrations in Nabi Saleh are also unique in that the women in the village are instrumental in organising the demonstrations, and young women are almost always at the front of the crowd that marches from the mosque after Friday prayers in the direction of the annexed spring. For these reasons I felt very strongly that I wanted to be in Nabi Saleh for one of the demonstrations. After visiting the village and interviewing women on a Saturday afternoon, I began to question my own position as a ‘researcher’. While attending the demonstration would
have been incredibly useful from a research perspective, I was wary of doing so. The below excerpt from my reflective journal illustrates how I chose to approach attending the demonstration: ‘Friday I took off my ‘researcher hat’ and put on my ‘activist hat’ and went back to Nabi Saleh to take part in the weekly demonstration. I really wanted to go there out of solidarity, not as someone ‘researching’ the demonstration’ (Ryan, 14 January 2012, Appendix 2). Instead of engaging in ‘research’ when I arrived in Nabi Saleh that day, I picked up a Palestinian flag and marched alongside the women I had interviewed one week earlier. I was sprayed with ‘skunk water’, a foul smelling petrochemical used as a crowd control mechanism. I experienced inner conflict when I decided not to come to the village as a researcher, mostly because it was such an excellent example of the level of political involvement that women in Palestine are committed to. In my reflective journal there is a short story from the demonstration, as well as the conflict I felt about using that story in my research.

I don’t want to write about this story though, because I saw myself there entirely as an activist. It makes me think, even in feminist research where the line between ‘researcher’ and ‘friend’ is much more blurred and objectivity is rejected as even being a possibility, to what degree can I go to a demonstration, march with a Palestinian flag, get sprayed with the same ‘skunk water’ as my Palestinian friends and still be a researcher? I think that I can’t, and I feel like that’s because it compromises me as an activist in that moment, not because it compromises me as a researcher. I’m really not sure though (ibid).

**Role of Emotions:** Emotions affected my research far more in the preparation phases prior to my departure to Palestine than they did after I arrived. Prior to leaving I was extremely worried, particularly about the safety of my translator and research
After beginning my field research my emotions were shelved much of the time. There were certain interviews where I did experience emotional difficulty because of types of stories that were being told and I know that in those situations where women were sharing very traumatic and sad stories I was less inclined to ask them further questions. I had mentally prepared myself for hearing sad stories, so these stories were not a shock, however, I was unprepared for how angry I grew to feel every time I travelled through the West Bank and saw settlements, checkpoints and soldiers. Upon reflection, this anger greatly increased my already existing feelings that the Israeli occupation must end, and it also made me extremely receptive to almost everything that my participants said to me in regards to the occupation. Despite the sadness and anger I sometimes felt, most of my feelings were positive, and my research was certainly bolstered every time a woman (or anyone) expressed to me how much hope they had for the future. Overall, my mental state and my negotiation of emotion was not as difficult as I had anticipated, most of which I attribute to the positive mental attitude of almost very Palestinian I met.

While my methodology may not fit into the mould of ‘traditional’ International Relations methods, my research goals were to inherently challenge the dominant picture that is painted of Palestinians by such traditional methods in International Relations. By starting from my ethnographic observations of daily-lived experiences and using narrative interviews I gained insight into how the occupation is experienced by women, and how they expressed their roles in resistance. Whilst my position in regards to the issue is by no means objective, I have explicitly accounted for that

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21 See Appendix 2 to understand how I reflected on my impending field research and the development of my methodology

22 Interviews 3 and 6 were particularly difficult
position and I truly feel as though it helped me gain access to insights I never would have gotten had I placed myself as an objective International researcher. Furthermore, living with Palestinians in the West Bank enhanced my research in ways that would have been impossible to achieve had I lived anywhere else during my stay. Overall, I achieved my research goals of using a narrative interview process rooted in women’s daily-lived experienced process to contribute to an understanding of how Palestinian women experience the occupation and resistance to it. These interviews are used extensively in the following chapter to support and enhance the analysis of how subjectification and resistance in the oPt occurs in and through the body.

The narrative interviews I collected are paired with reports from human rights organisations, the United Nations, architectural plans and forms, Israeli state and civilian discourses, laws and regulations and further narratives obtained by human rights organisations operating in the oPt, much of this secondary source data I collected in the field, particularly in the interview I conducted with the Palestinian NGO ‘Addameer’ and in a meeting with a representative from UN Women at the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) office in East Jerusalem. I collected other secondary source data before and after field research and utilised Foucault’s approach to archaeology to situate and analyse the data in relation to women’s subjectification and resistance in the oPt. Altogether, these data sources along with my participant observation field notes, narrative interviews and secondary data allow me to interrogate multiple elements of the dispositif of occupation and the dispositif of resistance as experienced by Palestinian women. This interrogation is conducted through critical ethnography, as well as Foucault’s conceptions of archaeology and genealogy.
Chapter Five – Power and Resistance in the oPt

The apparatus of occupation and the apparatus of resistance

This project argues that both subjectification and resistance to it occur through the gendered body, and that in order to understand something such as the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories it is necessary to understand how women experience subjectification and enact resistance to it. In that spirit, this chapter sets out to answer several questions. What is the nature of occupation? How does it function and what supports it? How is it that the present form occupation takes has come to be? How does occupation form the Palestinian woman as a *de facto* subject? In turn, how does Palestinian women’s resistance function? How has the historical present of their resistance impacted the way resistance is conceived? How does their resistance challenge their subjectification? This chapter of my project endeavours to explore these questions in order to establish models of the inseparable apparatuses of occupation and resistance for Palestinian women. The chapter, while quite lengthy, is broken down into sub-sections that examine particular elements of the apparatuses. These elements relate to one another and function in association with each other, thus constituting the apparatuses. To explain how the two apparatuses of my concern are constituted, I will start from the point of the individual elements which constitute them, thereby answering the research questions of this project:

1) What are the practices through which Palestinian women are formed as subjects to the occupation? In other words, what is the *dispositif* of occupation?

2) What are the practices through which Palestinian women enact resistance to their positions as subjected to occupation? In other words, what is the *dispositif* of Palestinian women’s resistance?

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23 apparatus
As per my critique in Chapter One, most analyses of power and resistance in Israel/Palestine are constituted as either an analysis of the occupation or of resistance to it and predominantly they start from a state-centric notion of security. Insomuch as this project claims to be influenced by Foucault, I am determined that it maintain the indivisible relationship between occupation and resistance so as to better illustrate how the two are interconnected and thereby demonstrate that Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation should be expected. To maintain the connection between occupation and resistance, the subsections of this chapter will alternate between the apparatuses of occupation and resistance. In doing so I posit that occupation and resistance are two sides of the same coin and thus should not even be examined in the isolation that would be imposed were I to write two separate chapters. I conclude the interrogation of each element of the apparatuses of occupation and resistance by examining how that particular element pertains to the formation of Palestinian women as subjects through bodily subjectification or the rejection of that bodily subjectification. In the spirit of Deleuze, I argue that the dispositif is composed of particular elements functioning in conjunction with one another. In order to conceive how I conceptualise the relationship between the dispositif of the occupation of Palestinian women and the dispositif of the resistance of Palestinian women, you merely need to picture in your mind two aspects of a mountain slope. With that in mind, the first element of the dispositif of occupation relating to the subjectification of Palestinian women is a discursive element.

**Judea and Samaria**

From Zionist, Israeli and fundamentalist Christian perspectives, the land between the 1949 Armistice Line and the Jordan river is not the ‘occupied West Bank’ nor part of
the ‘occupied Palestinian territories’. This patch of land is instead known as the regions of Judea and Samaria (Appendix 6). These names have a long historical significance, dating back to the Torah and the New Testament of the Bible. For this reason, the use of these names carries a considerable weight in determining the political, social and cultural expropriation of the territories for Zionist settlers and the Israeli army. Firstly and most importantly, the continued use of these terms designates the territory in question as ‘rightfully’ part of the Jewish homeland (Eretz Yisreal) that God granted to the Jewish people. The description of the territory promised to the Jewish people can be found in Genesis 15:18-21, which declares:

‘On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi[a] of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.’

From 1967, several Israeli political parties and civil society groups began to reintroduce the terms ‘Judea’ and ‘Samaria’ to designate the territory which Israel occupied after the 1967 war. From the time of the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 until 1967 this territory was known as ‘The West Bank’ as it was under Jordanian rule. From the British Mandate (1917) until 1948 the territory was part of the ‘British Mandate for Palestine’. As no independent Palestinian state was created in conjunction with the state of Israel as had been proposed in the UN Partition Plan (UNGA 1947), Zionists maintain that the occupation of the West Bank after 1967 is not in fact an occupation, but rather an annexation.

It was also after the 1967 war that Israeli settlers began to establish settlements in ‘Judea and Samaria’. According to the claim that the territories were annexed, not occupied, settlers do not see the establishment of settlements as being such, but rather
merely as the inhabitation of land promised to them as God’s chosen people. After the 1967 war, General Moshe Dayan proclaimed that ‘The mountains of Samaria are ours and we will no longer leave them in the hands of any other nation’ (Makdisi, 2008 p132). Settlements are often established by hard-line Zionists who believed that all of Eretz Yisreal should be inhabited by the Jewish people and that the Israeli government has no right to impede settlement expansion in Judea and Samaria (Weizman, 2007). Most settlements are given names from the Bible, furthering the assertion that the claim on the land is rooted in scripture. After the release of an independent report in January 2013 commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council that condemned the Israeli government for settlement expansion (UNHRC 2013), Israelis in favour of continued settlement expansion and the right of the Jewish people to live in Judea and Samaria responded:

> Whether the world likes it or not, the people of Israel have returned to Judea and Samaria to stay. No power on earth can possibly uproot hundreds of thousands of Jews from dozens of communities spread throughout the area, so the UN and others would do well to focus their energies elsewhere. Israel has a moral, legal, historical and Biblical right to settle every hill and populate every valley of this ancient land. And that is exactly what we shall do (Freund, 2013).

This quote, taken from an opinion piece reflects the attitudes of Israelis who base their claim for the right to settle in Judea and Samaria on Biblical scripture and moral right.

The physical actuality of the settlements functions in conjunction with referring to the territories as Judea and Samaria. There is thus a determinate relationship between words and things, wherein the words ‘Judea and Samaria’ are established in a relationship with the actual settlements. Israeli flags fly from flagpoles in each settlement, further establishing a relationship between the settlement and the state of Israel. Furthermore, the architecture of the houses designates them as separate from
the houses in Palestinian villages and towns. ‘Legal’ settlements - settlements legitimised by the Israeli state are easily distinguishable by their red roofs and the absence of the water tanks which every Palestinian house relies upon (Weizman 2007 p127). ‘Illegitimate’ settlement outposts - settlements established without state sanction are easily distinguishable because they are largely comprised of modular trailers (ibid p2).

Multiple discourses further the use of Judea and Samaria. In particular, discourses originating from Christian Fundamentalists in the United States refer to the territories as Judea and Samaria, also turning to scripture to explain why the territories are Judea and Samaria and not The West Bank (Christian Century 2008). The relationships established between Zionist settlers and Christian Fundamentalists serves particular political and social functions within the United States to quell critiques of settlement expansion (Mearshimer and Walt, 2006). The historical present of the Judea and Samaria discourse is reliant upon the internet to propagate information about historical Judea and Samaria. The ultimate aim of such a historical approach is to establish that the Jewish claims to the land predate and thus negate any Palestinian claims to the land. Such discourses rarely refer to the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea and Samaria as ‘Palestinians’ but rather as Arabs or ‘Palestinian Arabs’. This functions to create the Palestinians as de facto subjects, who have no legitimate or unique claim to the land, and thus as merely ‘Arabs’ who can live in any other ‘Arab state’.

It is also important to note that reference to Judea and Samaria has found its way into official Israeli state discourse. A particular example is the English language public relations page of the Israeli Defence Forces, which refers to Judea and Samaria to designate the territories. This reinforces the Israeli claim that the presence of the IDF in
this area is legitimate. It aims to legitimate its presence there with the international community, Israeli citizens and the soldiers themselves. One can clearly see how the use of Judea and Samaria creates a particular knowledge about the land, which can in turn be used in the operation of power to control populations. The knowledge created has an important historicity that legitimises its present practice in multiple social, cultural, religious and political settings.

Most importantly, the terms Judea and Samaria designate the Jewish settlers living in the territories as the legitimate inhabitants in relation to the Palestinian inhabitants. Settlement of Judea and Samaria is seen as an important element in establishing a homeland for the Jewish people. This territorial designation therefore has important implications for how the Palestinian inhabitants are seen. If the Jewish people are the legitimate inhabitants, then the Palestinians are the illegitimate inhabitants. Therefore, Jewish settlers are differently constructed as subjects. Through the construction of Palestinians as not having a ‘right’ as prescribed in the Torah to inhabit the land, they are formed as de facto subjects, subjects that are subjectified because of their illegitimate presence in the legitimate Jewish homeland, subject to the actions of the Israeli army and settlers because they have chosen not to leave Judea and Samaria. Also after the 1967 war, the chairman of the Whole Land of Israel Movement, Tzvi Shiloah, argued that

‘Hundreds of thousands of Arabs are living in the liberated territory. The inclusion of a hostile population within the boundaries of the State of Israel is considered as a time bomb in the heart of the state. Leaving them in these territories endangers the state and its national Jewish character. The only solution is to organize their emigration and settlement in Arab countries abundant in land and water such as Syria and Iraq’ (Makdisi 2008 p133).
Judea and Samaria contribute to the creation of difference between the Jewish subjects and Palestinian de facto subjects inhabiting the same territory. The differentiation is based on the determination of a bodily separation between Jewish and Palestinian bodies. This profession of separateness in turn functions to re-create the subject and the de facto subject vis-à-vis each other. Furthermore, in constructing the legitimacy of the presence of two subjects differently it allows for a different application of further subjectification. The use of Judea and Samaria is thus one of the foremost operations of power in the apparatus of occupation because it establishes who has a right to live in the territory in relation to who does not have a right. It is an element of the *dispositif of the occupation* that serves a legitimising function and furthermore functions in conjunction with many other operations. The subsequent section details an element of the *dispositif* of Palestinian resistance which functions discursively to assert the right of Palestinians to live in the territory.

**Sumud**

‘Sumud’ is a word one hears frequently when speaking with Palestinian women about how they conceptualise resistance to Israeli occupation. In Arabic, sumud means ‘steadfastness’ and can also refer to ‘perseverance’ or ‘determination’. It is a word that first came into use in Palestinian society to explain the enduring resolve of the Palestinian people for the right of self-determination. ‘Sumud is more than just a personality trait. It is a powerful cultural and psycho-educational tool, and it has become a distinguishing feature of non-violent resistance in Palestine’ (van Teeffelen, 2011 p5). Sumud is described as a way of living that insists upon the rights of the Palestinian people to stay on their land or return to their land if they were forced from it, to maintain Palestinian culture and to nurture Palestinian society. Sumud is thus ‘active’ in
the sense that a person with ‘sumud’ finds ways to assert steadfastness in their daily lives. Sumud also contributes to a contrasting subject formation of Palestinian women. Whereas the occupation actively negates the dignity of Palestinian women, embedded within sumud is the reaffirmation of dignity and the quest to find ways of living one’s daily life that demonstrate dignity rather than humiliation.

Sumud thus both rejects the Israeli subjectification of Palestinian women and contributes to a different subject formation based on Palestinian identity and resistance. Women find countless ways to enact sumud, and they have a particularly important role to play in instilling a legacy of sumud in their children. ‘The Palestinian mother is also a characteristic symbol of sumud: she is said to protect the home and cultural identity while at the same time transmitting to new generations the quiet power of people’s persistence’ (van Teefeelen 2008). Perseverance in Palestinian rights to the land is a direct challenge to Zionist discourse that posits the Jewish people as the rightful inhabitants. Sumud is rooted in maintaining a physical presence on the land and living in ways that complement Palestinian culture to the best of one’s ability.

A project carried out by the Arab Education Institute, a Bethlehem based non-profit, examines how Palestinians reflect upon and conceptualise sumud. Through asking the open-ended question of ‘share a story of sumud’ the Sumud Project illustrates how diverse sumud is and how Palestinians act with sumud in multitudinous ways. For some women who shared their stories, the act of ‘simply’ staying in one’s home is sumud. This is because daily life in the occupied territories is anything but simple, so refusing to leave one’s community for ‘better’ opportunities outside of Palestine becomes an act of steadfastness.
'What could be more normal than living in one’s own home and land in an everyday setting, a setting characterised by family and friends and the taste of the olives plucked from that one tree in the back garden? But when the home itself becomes a place of oppression, even a prison, staying does become a choice, - an extraordinary choice to preserve an ordinary life’ (van Teeffelen, 2011 p51).

Sumud as ‘steadfastness’ is clearly imbued with more action than the English meaning of ‘steadfast’ which may imply more passivity. Therefore, staying in one’s home becomes an active decision rather than a passive one.

After learning about the meaning of ‘sumud’ from my translator, I began to bring the word into conversations about occupation and resistance. Upon hearing me say ‘sumud’ in my questions, my participants would smile and nod and answer with their own interpretation of what sumud means to them in their own life. As a result, I heard numerous definitions of the word and many stories of how the women acted with sumud. Perhaps the most moving came from a 77 year old woman from Bethlehem and a participant in the AEI sumud project. Her family’s livelihood had been destroyed by the construction of the wall, as its construction prevented customers from reaching their business. Whilst much of her narrative was sombre, when she spoke of sumud and what it meant to her, a light came into her eyes and she smiled at me. She told me:

‘Ahhhhh! Sumud!.......Sumud programmes support educational values and organises non-violent actions, and the most important, culture and identity. So, in this sumud house, yani, you know, women like me, yani, we write stories and ah, I have written many stories. We write stories and we paint ceramics, and we work in embroidery, so we are involved in many activities here, yani, that are related to our Palestinian heritage’. (‘M’ interview 7, 2011 Bethlehem)

When I asked a woman from Dheisheh refugee camp what sumud meant to her she replied:

‘Sumud, or resilience, to me, means defying, and power. It gives me energy to continue. I am not afraid of the Israelis. And I am not afraid of death. My family was forced to leave their village in 1948, near Jerusalem. We took
refuge in Beit Sahour, and that’s where I was born, but I feel we were deprived of our land. Now, even if they come to destroy my home, we will stay. We will put up a tent and stay’ (S interview 6, 2011 Deishah refugee camp)

This illustrates the connection between sumud, determination and maintaining a physical presence on the land.

The AEI Sumud project also focuses on relating stories of positive action and community building, not just on telling stories of hardship and oppression. This relates to the position that sumud is also about rejoicing in Palestinian culture and focusing on how culture can be transmitted through the community even during times of hardship. In sumud there is a definite link between the preserving of one’s home and family and preserving the ties of the community. In giving a narrative of what sumud means to her, a Christian Palestinian woman explains how sumud represents interconnectedness.

‘Sumud is for the dignity of every single person. And then you bring it from the person into the community. Then the community becomes larger and you connect it with international rights, which give you the right to resist’ (van Teeffelen 2011 p47).

These representations of sumud illustrate how sumud shapes the subject formation of Palestinian women. Sumud is an alternative to the Israeli imposed subjectification. Enacting sumud may not change the daily circumstances one experiences as a result of occupation, but it does provide Palestinians with an alternative way of interpreting their own position in society. To do so, sumud declares that going about one’s daily life in spite of difficulty and hardship, and maintaining one’s Palestinian identity and culture is a way to take back one’s dignity. Through interpreting ‘normal’ daily activities as sumud, one can find dignity in situations of humiliation because one outcome of occupation is to create a humiliated Palestinian subject. Bodies comes into play here in several ways, the most obvious being the continuation of a
physical presence on the land. Sumud as reclaiming dignity can also manifest in the way one carries one’s body through the occupied space. Women enacting sumud take great pride in being Palestinian, and thus can convey this dignity through body language as well as through wearing clothes that transmit Palestinian culture, for example, traditional Palestinian embroidery. Practicing Palestinian culture and transmitting that culture to younger generations can be seen as a performative action which insists upon the dignity of being Palestinian, thereby challenging practices of the occupation which seek to deny this.

Security

There is a seemly endless supply of Israeli security discourses, presented from multiple sources such as official Israeli state declarations, media, books, academia, new media, pro-Israel organisations, American politicians and lobbyists. Portrayals of the relationship between Israelis, Palestinians and ‘security’ establish a relationship between the enduring threat to Israel and Palestinian nationalism:

‘From the beginning, and even long before modern statehood in 1948, Israel’s Jews have faced war, terror, and extinction. Now, Israel faces catastrophic destruction from two principal and mutually reinforcing sources: (1) the already-constituted state of Iran; and (2) the still-aspiring state of "Palestine." Together, largely in certain ambiguous and even unimagined synergies, the interactive effects of these two primary threat sources portend a compelling reason for apprehension, and for appropriately counter-veiling remedies.’

The aim of this section is not to present multiple forms of such discourses, but instead to investigate how Israeli security discourse contributes to the formation of Palestinian women as de facto subjects by framing them as terrorists or supporters of terrorism. Such discourses are an element of the dispositif of occupation because they function to
subjugate Palestinian women by framing them as terrorists and thus not worthy of humane treatment.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website has a section of FAQ related to the building of the ‘security fence’ (aka the separation barrier/apartheid wall/annexation wall). In the FAQ is a section dedicated to ‘Palestinian Violence and Terrorism- the International War against Terrorism’ (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2002). The answers to these FAQ frame the Palestinian population of the West Bank as inherently violent terrorists who indoctrinate their children into violence. Official state discourses framed in such a way contribute to the creation of the female de facto Palestinian subject through the association of ‘Palestinian’ and ‘terrorist’ – whilst the FAQ do not explicitly state that ‘all Palestinians are terrorists’ this is implicit in the questions that are listed and how they are answered. There is a broader link between the association between Palestinians and terrorism and Israeli security doctrine, which posits Israel as eternally threatened, always on the defence and ever the victim.

In particular, it is important to note how the FAQ approaches the issue of Palestinian casualties. Language used to describe Palestinian casualties legitimises or justifies the deaths based on the violent nature of Palestinians and as a result of the continued assertions that Palestinians are terrorists or terrorist sympathisers. In the subjectification of Palestinians through the discourses of terrorism and security, their deaths are acceptable in the pursuit of Israeli security. The FAQ does not use hard

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24 In her books *Frames of War* (2010) and *Precarious Life* (2004b), Butler argues that discourse is an intrinsic element of determining whose deaths are publicly grieveable and whose deaths are publicly justified, silenced or ignored in the war on terror. She points to the non-grieveability and invisibility of Palestinian deaths in the refusal of the San Francisco Chronicle to print the obituaries or ‘in memoriams’ of two Palestinian families who were killed by Israeli soldiers because their obituaries might have been ‘offensive’ (Butler, 2004a p35).
data, but instead vague terms which claim that ‘Israeli civilians - in contrast to the
Palestinians who deliberately chose to initiate confrontations with the IDF - do not
willingly involve themselves in violence.’ The implication, further made explicit in later
sections, is that Palestinian casualties occur because Palestinians are violent, even when
they are ‘non-combatants’ while Israeli civilian casualties are ordinary citizens.
Furthermore, a Palestinian combatant is a combatant for the duration of the conflict.
This does not apply to Israelis, despite that as a result of universal and compulsory
conscription, nearly every Israeli either is, will be or has been a soldier.

The association of Palestinian and terrorist allows for a certain treatment of
Palestinians to be justified which would not be justified without citing ‘terrorism’. If one
examines the statement made by Sharon that ‘Arafat is our bin Laden’ (Whitaker, 2001),
one can clearly see how Sharon posits the conflict with Palestinians within the wider
discourse of terrorism that increased exponentially after 9/11. If Arafat is the terrorist,
then the Israeli state is clearly the victim of terrorism, and actions can be collectively
taken against the Palestinian population. Invoking the discourse of ‘terrorism’ within
Israeli security discourse forms the Palestinian as a ‘violent’ subject, imposing this
identity of ‘violent’ as an inherent part of every Palestinian. This occurs through
Palestinian women in a very particular way.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs FAQ makes particular reference to the
indoctrination of Palestinian children into a culture of violence and argues that most of
the children who were killed by Israeli forces were only killed because they were directly
participating in violence. This has a profound implicit impact on the perception of
Palestinian women as mothers. This particular FAQ represents only one example of the
descriptions of Palestinian children as indoctrinated into violence. There are countless
sources of such discourse; this example merely represents the official Israeli state
discourse on Palestinian children. Implicit in this discourse and explicitly in others is the
idea that Palestinian mothers are in some way aberrant mothers because they either
allow or participate in raising their children as violent, in contrast, the MFA claims, to
Israeli children who are raised to be peaceful. This forms the female Palestinian de facto
subject as different from other females because they encourage or allow their children
to be violent from a young age. Such a differentiation frames the Palestinian woman as a
very different sort of subject than ‘other’ women, and in turn justifies the different
treatment she receives in comparison to Israeli women.

There are other ways in which Israeli security discourse subjugates Palestinian
women. ‘Security’ is the language used to explain Israeli incursions into Palestinian homes (Breaking the Silence 2010). “Prevention of terror” is the stamp of approval
granted to any offensive IDF action in the Territories, obscuring the distinction between
the use of force against terrorists and the use of force against civilians. In this way, the
IDF is able to justify actions that intimidate and oppress the Palestinian population
overall’ (ibid p26). House incursions, more often than not, occur at night and involve
multiple soldiers entering the home, sometimes with significant force, and rounding up
all of the members of the family and holding them in one room of the house. The
soldiers then conduct a search of the house for weapons or wanted suspects (ibid). At
times, such incursions are only conducted as ‘practice’ and there is no intelligence
implicating the occupants of the house in any illegal activity. At other times, what is
known as ‘straw widow’ operations take place, wherein soldiers choose a house based
on its strategic location, and after locking the family in one room or section of the house,
the rest of the house is used by the soldiers as a temporary military base (ibid).
The home is a very important place in the lives of many Palestinian women. Traditionally, in Palestinian society, women are responsible for running the household. Great pride is taken in one’s home and the home also gives women a sense of security and privacy (WCLAC 2010a). House incursions severely undermine feelings of security and symbols of identity for Palestinian women. In instances where soldiers do not clean up after themselves, women may face an arduous clean-up process after the soldiers leave.

For women who wear the veil when in the company of anyone other than immediate family, if an incursion takes place at night a woman’s sense of honour may be challenged by male soldiers entering her home at a time when she is only expecting to be seen by her family and not veiled. In the short time that lapses between being woken by soldiers and being seen by soldiers, women may not have enough time to put on the veil and/or a long robe, thus challenging her sense of privacy, safety and honour. Women can be made to feel extremely uncomfortable and vulnerable by the presence of strange men in her home. This can increase exponentially if women are home alone or alone with young children when the soldiers enter. In several reports written by the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), women gave testimonies about their feelings during such experiences, and several reported verbal sexual harassment or fear of sexual harassment when soldiers came into their homes whilst they were alone with young children. Women also express the fear they have that their children will be arrested during these raids, proving a further sense of insecurity and a challenge to the women’s identity as they are unable to protect their children from arrest. In one testimony gathered by WCLAC, a woman explains ‘I don’t feel my house is a safe place anymore. When night falls my heart sinks and I find it hard to fall asleep; I find myself
distracted by the slightest sound outside. My biggest worry is my children and their safety’ (WCLAC 2012).

House incursions, especially when they occur at night form an important part of the subjectification of Palestinian women because women who experience raids or who hear of other women’s experiences of raids lose their sense of security in their own home. The Palestinian woman subjectified through house incursions may feel powerless to protect her children in her own home, or she may worry that her honour of the honour of her daughters is at risk by the possibility of men who are not related seeing her without a veil. Thus, subjectification through house incursions functions through establishing a climate of fear. These incursions, framed as necessary for Israel’s security are thus ‘legitimised’ through the discourse of terror and security. Therefore, a relationship is established between the discourse of security and the sudden presence of a unit of soldiers in Palestinian homes in the middle of the night.

One can argue that through the process of seeking security for Israelis, Palestinians are made insecure. Security discourse which frames Palestinians as ‘terrorists’ allows for severe treatment of Palestinians, thereby ‘securing’ Israeli bodies at the expense of Palestinian bodies. Thus ‘security’ as discourse and practice undeniably contributes to the formation of Palestinians as subjects. Palestinian women may experience particular forms of this subjectification, particularly when the practice of ‘security’ occurs within their homes.

**Demonstrations**

Palestinian demonstrations against the Israeli occupation have occurred since the 1967 war. The frequency and intensity of these demonstrations has varied throughout this period, and the First Intifada was a period when demonstrations were
commonplace and people who may not have had previous political involvement were out in the streets en masse. First Intifada era demonstrations thus represented the essence of popular struggle. There was also a high level of participation of women in these demonstrations. Today, demonstrations continue to provide a potent and tangible example of enacting resistance, and women continue to march in and organize demonstrations. One significant example of the involvement of women in demonstrations comes from the village of an-Nabi Saleh, located northwest of Ramallah.

Since the establishment of the settlement of Halamish in 1977, the people of Nabi Saleh have lost sections of their agricultural land. In 2009, after settlers took control of a spring situated on land owned by an individual from Nabi Saleh, the people of the village began weekly demonstrations in protest of the settler’s appropriation of the spring and the Israeli army’s continued practices of preventing people from Nabi Saleh from visiting the spring. These demonstrations have been met with extreme brutality from the Israeli army, documented in a 2011 report by B’Tselem. Several months after the report, a 28 year-old from the village, Mustafa Tamini, was killed after being shot in the face with a high-velocity tear gas canister fired from close range (B’Tselem, 2011c). There is an unfortunate precedence for such occurrences are in West Bank demonstrations. Nabi Saleh is by no means the only village which engages in weekly demonstrations, amongst them the villages most well-known abroad are Bil’in and Nil’in, where demonstrations against the building of the separation barrier have been on-going since 2005 and 2008 respectively. These demonstrations have also been met with high levels of army violence and resulted in deaths and serious injury, yet they also continue.
One of the aspects which makes the demonstrations in Nabi Saleh so noteworthy and of relevance to this project is the highly visible and active participation of Palestinian women in organizing and participating in the demonstrations. On any given Friday, if one attends the demonstration in Nabi Saleh this participation by women will become immediately obvious as scores of young women, both from the village and the surrounding areas, march at the front of the demonstration, leading the other demonstrators in chanting, singing songs, holding banners and waving flags. Often, these young women are the first buffer between the Israeli soldiers and the rest of the demonstrators. In visualizing this, the relationship between demonstrations and bodily subjectivity becomes evident. The body becomes one means by which Palestinian women in Nabi Saleh express that they do not consent to the presence of Israeli soldiers in the village, nor do they recognise the right of settlers to annex the spring. This applies not only to demonstrations in Nabi Saleh, but throughout the oPt. The bodies of demonstrators are visible proof that those demonstrating do not accept the subject positions imposed upon them. Furthermore, one’s presence at any demonstration in the West Bank is underscored by the understanding that this presence is putting the body at risk of injury or death. This applies not only to stone-throwing youth or those marching at the front, but virtually anyone who is present. As such, making a decision to attend a demonstration signifies a high level of commitment to ending the occupation and the acknowledgement that bodily dissent has the potential to be influential. One of the women I interviewed in Nabi Saleh echoed this sentiment when she said that to demonstrate on a Friday means ‘We put our souls in our hands and we resist, anytime we have to accept that we could be killed. If I go down to the demonstration I know that I could be injured, arrested or killed, but I don’t care, I want my rights’ (M, interview 14,
There is also a strong argument for making a particular examination of women taking part in and organising demonstrations.

In areas affected by the separation barrier, villages and popular struggle committees have been organising demonstrations since construction on the barrier began. Bil’in is one of the most well-known villages where weekly protests take place, beginning in 2005 when the construction of the barrier divided the village in half (Jawad, 2011). Women in Bil’in have taken an active role in participating in demonstrations, and one well-known Bil’in activist, Jawaher Abu Rahmah, died from tear gas inhalation at a demonstration in 2011. In a report written by the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (PGAAWC), which examines the role of women in demonstrating against the wall, Jawaher’s mother explained how she saw her role challenging the wall ‘Jawaher and I went toward the demonstration near the Wall. In general, the role of women is important in the demonstration; we are always found in the front to protect the youth and to help the injured, to remove them from the clashes. Also, we try to stop the arrest of the youth’ (PGAAWC 2011 p3). This testimony brings forth one of the ways in which women frame their participation in demonstrations as integral to their success and as protecting the youth by putting their bodies between the youth and the soldiers. On a more sombre note, the testimony of Jawaher’s mother is poignant because her daughter was killed as a result of tear gas inhalation when she used her body to protect the youth from arrest.

Bil’in was not the first village to demonstrate against the barrier, nor was it the first place where women were active in demonstrations. In the region of Salfit, a community affected by the path of the separation barrier, women formed their own committee, Women Against the Wall, after they observed infighting amongst political
parties in the area and the exclusion of women from the processes of planning demonstrations. Women Against the Wall was formed in 2002, the same year as construction on the wall began. Women often found it difficult to participate in demonstrations and have a voice in organising, so the formation of Women Against the Wall provided them with a viable platform to avoid the infighting of the political factions and open up participation to anyone who was willing to drop their political affiliations. This is reflective of how women’s participation may often be driven by the broad goal of challenging the occupation rather than increasing the influence of a particular party. Actions are thus driven by response to a particular event, such as the invasion of the village by soldiers and the aim of the action is directly targeted at redressing the grievance and including as much of the community as possible. This stands in contrast to organising by a particular party, whose highest concern may be their own power base in the community and thus does not organise in the ad hoc but arguably more effective way as the women’s group (Richter-Devroe 2012 p188).

In an article entitled ‘Defending their land, protecting their men,’ Richter-Devroe argues that the gendered aspect of popular resistance in the West Bank deserves examination because of the wider ‘social, political and cultural’ processes within which women’s participation in popular struggle occurs. (Richter-Devroe, 2012 p184). She argues that ‘Female activists, by using their bodies as sites of political engagement perform and challenge gendered norms of conventional politics. Gender identities are thus not only instrumentalized by protestors to construct collective identities, but they are also politicized and transformed through their various enactments’ (ibid). If we examine this statement it becomes clear that the author is arguing for the importance of gender as site of analysis because of the way the gender of women who participate in
popular struggle has implications for how they are perceived and how participation in popular struggle impacts identity.

One could argue that this is a direct result of notions of gender interpreted through bodies. The bodies of women are perceived differently in demonstrations. In particular, Israeli soldiers may feel less threatened by a group of women at the front of a demonstration than they might feel by a group of young men. If so, the judgement of threat is based upon corporeality and a perception that certain bodies are less of a threat. From a Palestinian perspective, the active participation of women in leading demonstrations may have different connotations, for example, the idea that women as bearers of culture make a particularly strong statement when organising popular struggle. From the perspective of the women themselves, some may see their bodies as a way of protecting the men and others may view their participation as only natural (ibid pp193). The positions of the women themselves are the best means of examining how participation in popular struggle relates to their identity. A quote from a woman given to Richter-Devroe illustrates this well: ‘We women help the national cause and our men – what should they do without us?’ (ibid).

There is a relationship between how women frame their participation and what shape their participation in demonstrations takes. Discursive accounts which claim the naturalness of women’s participation are illustrated in places like Nabi Saleh every week. When women form a wall with their bodies between soldiers and other demonstrators their physical bodies are exemplifiers of the claims of participating women that they are as strong as men. This also demonstrates that Palestinian women are determined to resist the ways in which the Israeli army subjugates them by their presence on the land of the village. The appearance of Israeli soldiers in a village demonstrates
subjectification because it posits their presence as a ‘legitimate’ act to protect settlers. If the settlements and surrounding areas are seen as rightfully part of the Israeli state, then the presence of the army in these places is seen in the same way. When the army appears, they act under the presumption that they have the authority to control the Palestinian bodies they encounter (and to a lesser degree the bodies of International and Israeli activists). Palestinians thus become *de facto* subjects to the Israeli army as soon as the army shows up. Palestinian women marching in demonstrations are overtly challenging this subject formation by turning their bodies to face the soldiers, using their arms to hoist Palestinian flags and employing their voices to chant and sing songs.

**The apartheid/separation/annexation wall**

Since construction on the separation barrier began in June 2002 there have been numerous reports, books, papers and briefs written about the impact of it on the daily lives of Palestinians. One could fill volumes with accounts from Palestinians and human rights organizations about how the construction of a separation barrier enforces collective punishment upon the Palestinian population and how it makes living a ‘normal’ life exceedingly impossible. The aim with this section is not to summarise existing arguments, but to analyse how the separation barrier contributes to the subject formation of Palestinian women. The separation barrier is an example of an element of the apparatuses of occupation that has very different ways of exercising control over different Palestinian women, depending on where they live in relation to the barrier. It is therefore not possible to outline one way in which the barrier subjugates Palestinian women, and this section will aim to examine some of the varying subjectifications experienced by women living in different relative locations to the barrier. I will conclude the section with an analysis on the commonality of these different subjectivities, that
the separation barrier is an architectural form designed for the control of Palestinian bodies.

As jarring is the sight of an 8 metre high concrete wall surrounding the city of Bethlehem, there is little that can prepare one for the view of the Anastas family home, located near Rachel’s Tomb, and a few hundred metres beyond the Bethlehem checkpoint. As a result of the path of the wall, what was once one of the main thoroughfares through Bethlehem now ends abruptly in front of the Anastas home. Claire Anastas explained to me how her three children went to school one day and returned in the afternoon to find that the Israeli army had erected the wall around three sides of their house. She told me this as I sat at her kitchen table and looked out her windows to a view of concrete wall and a watchtower. The wall was erected on three sides of her house because of the proximity of the house to Rachel’s Tomb and an Israeli military base. When planning was in the works for the section of wall around Bethlehem, it was decided to incorporate Rachel’s Tomb on the Israeli side (Weizman, 2007 p169). In order to do so, it was ‘necessary’ to build the wall around Claire’s house. The family had been living in proximity to the military base for several years prior to the construction of the wall, and the constant presence of soldiers around her house resulted in a sharp decline in her husband’s mechanic business and a corresponding decline in the family’s income. The construction of the wall around the house effectively stopped people from coming to the garage or even to visit the family. When her children returned home from school on the day that the wall was built, her son told her that he felt like he ‘was in a tomb’ (Claire, interview 8, 2011 Bethlehem).

When considering the position of Claire and her proximity to the wall it becomes clear how the surrounding of a house by the wall will form the inhabitants of the house
as subjects. Whilst one side of the house is not facing the wall, the view of the wall still dominates the view out nearly every window of the house. To get to the house one must walk or drive along the wall, there is no way one could be in the family home and forget about its presence. Furthermore, on one corner of the wall an Israeli watchtower has been constructed. As a result, one cannot help but feel as though they are being watched, meaning that the family more or less lives inside a Panopticon. Israeli soldiers can always see inside the family home, but the family cannot see their neighbours, physically isolating them from their community. The subjectification that occurs is thus based on physical surveillance and isolation, positing Claire and her family as threat to Israeli state security and imposing collective punishment upon them, on the basis merely of their proximity to the military base and Rachel’s Tomb. The Anastas family home is by no means the only example of a family or collection of families cut off from their existing social structures and communities by the path of the wall.

The category of ‘communities west of the barrier’ is also known as the ‘Seam Zone’ and the status of women in these communities warrant special attention because of the harsh measures of subjectification they experience in the simple act of leaving their homes. In the language of the Israeli state, these zones are ‘Closed Military Zones’, thus restricting access to them. Furthermore, people living in these seam zones have been designated by the IDF as ‘temporary residents’ (Wiezman, 2007 p178). These discourses have critical implications for access to and from these areas. Aspects of living under the ‘Seam Zone’ in relation to checkpoints and permits will be discussed in the ‘checkpoints/permits/ID cards section’ and aspects related to medical care will be discussed in the ‘access to health care’ section. The following tables published by B’Teslem outline the percentage of Palestinians who have been isolated by the barrier.
Table 1: Areas surrounded by the separation barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas surrounded by barrier</th>
<th>Amount of area (in dunams)</th>
<th>Percentage of West Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area west of the barrier (including East Jerusalem)</td>
<td>479,881</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area east of the barrier that are completely or partially surrounded</td>
<td>191,040</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land area affected</td>
<td>670,921</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Palestinian population affected by the barrier's route

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Palestinian population affected by the barrier's route</th>
<th>Number of Communities</th>
<th>Number of Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities west of the barrier*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities east of the barrier that are completely or partially surrounded**</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>247,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Jerusalem</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>222,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>497,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Residents of these towns and villages will require permits to live in their homes, and they will be able to leave their communities only via a gate in the barrier. The figure does not include three communities that are presently situated west of the barrier but lie east of the barrier according to the currently approved route.

** Residents of these towns and villages will not require permits or have to pass through a gate (tables adapted from B’Tselem 2011b).

The concern of this section is related to subject formation and the separation barrier itself, not the related aspects of checkpoints. Living in a community which has been encircled by or cut off by the separation barrier will subjugate Palestinian women in ways similar to those Claire Anastas endures. Life in the Seam Zone is first and foremost a life of physical separation and isolation. The illusion of imprisonment that comes from the presence of the separation barrier collectively imposes restrictions on freedom of movement on everyone living in the Seam Zone, leading women living there to describe how they feel ‘caged in’ (WCLAC 2010b). A 2010 WCLAC report relies on testimonies of women living in the Seam Zone to establish the difficulties of daily life.
There. One woman explained that her house was surrounded by fences, a settlement and a section of wall. She told WCLAC that:

‘In most of the sections near us the Wall is a metal wire fence but just in front of our house, they have built a nine foot high concrete Wall. It’s just a small section, maybe 50 metres long just next to our house. It felt like a punishment for refusing to leave, to cut us off completely from the village so we couldn’t even see our neighbours or the village anymore and force us to leave’ (WCLAC 2010b p27).

The idea of being imprisoned resonates throughout most of the testimonies in the report, as does the notion of punishment. Further to this, many women in the Seam Zone report that they avoid leaving their houses as much as possible due to the restrictiveness of access to villages outside of the Seam Zone and difficulties in returning home. This fits into Foucault’s description of how a Panopticon affects prisoners by causing them to self-regulate their behaviour. Women living in seam zones avoid the difficult process of leaving their houses as much as possible, furthering their feelings of imprisonment and punishment. The subjectification imposed upon women in the Seam Zone relies upon the physical presence of the separation barrier/wall in order to impose restrictions on physical perceptions of freedom of movement and space.

This argument is made deftly by Eyal Weizman who posits that the construction of various types of barriers, such as the separation wall, earth mounds and agricultural gates create ‘territorial islands.’ He writes: ‘By designating and constraining habitats, by physically marking out the limit of different legal jurisdictions, these barriers function mainly as administrative apparatuses of population control. More than a fortification system, they become bureaucratic-logistical devices for the creation and maintenance of a demographic separation’ (Weizman 2007 p178).
Whilst women living in seam zones are materially subjectified through the physical object of the separation wall, women living in close proximity to Israeli settlements experience a different subjectification. One could argue that the subjectification of women in the Seam Zone is based on their physical separation from other Palestinians. On the other hand, women living in close proximity to settlements are subjectified based on their physical separation from settlers. The separation barrier makes many inroads into the territory of the West Bank in order to enclose settlements on the ‘Israeli’ side of the barrier. Women living near these sections of the barrier are physically separated from the settler women on the other side of the barrier, and are thus subjectified through difference. Not all of the physical aspects of separation are part of the official separation barrier project, many of the elements of physical separation are erected by settlers. The UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that: ‘The outer limits of the Israeli settlements are physically demarcated by barbed wire, electronic fences and/or patrol roads. Some of these physical barriers were erected in recent years by settlers without any formal authorization, but with the acquiescence of the Israeli authorities’ (OCHA OPT 2011). Whilst Israeli women in settlements can easily access Israel via ‘settler only’ roads, Palestinian women living near settlements find their movement severely restricted by the barriers associated with the settlements and have difficulty accessing nearby Palestinian areas.

Palestinian women experience different processes of bodily subjectification through the separation wall based on the path of the wall in relation to their homes, or the path of settlement barriers in relation to their homes. ‘This structural fashioning of power in the landscape makes Palestinian inhabitant-viewers subject to constant domination and intimidation in their own environment’ (Abufarha, 2009 p114). The
physicality of the separation barrier takes different forms but their commonalities are
the exclusionary zones they create and the subsequent imposition of a subject-status of
prisoner enacted upon Palestinian women through their bodies.

**Encouraging children to stay**

For many of the women I interviewed, they explained how they resist Israeli
occupation by encouraging their children to stay in the occupied territories, despite the
difficulties experienced on a daily basis. When interviewing ‘L’ from Bethlehem she told
many stories about the difficulties she and her family experienced from living under
occupation, especially during the extended periods of curfew that Bethlehem endured in
2002. After telling these stories she explained that keeping hope for the future involved
encouraging her four sons and their wives to stay in Bethlehem. She said:

‘We are hoping that the new coming time is better for our children. Even my
sons, all the time are saying ‘let us leave here and escape abroad, we can
have a better life, there is nothing here.’ All the time my kids say it. But I tell
them “This is our land, this is our roots, we are from here. Our parents, our
grandparents, so why would we want to go anyplace where we know
nobody?” Who would take care of us if there was no work? Here, working for
a half salary is better than nothing’ (‘L’, interview 4, Bethlehem 2011)

When I asked ‘L’ how she saw the role of Palestinian women in resisting the occupation
she mentioned again how staying in Bethlehem was, for her, a means of resisting and
that it represented ‘sumud’. Other women made similar statements, for example ‘J’ from
Beit Sahour who told me that she and her husband are doing everything they can to
make life more appealing for her youngest son to stay in the West Bank. Her son ‘S’ is
trained as a dentist, and while he could make more money by leaving, he is being
encouraged to stay by his parents building a small dental clinic next to their garage so
that he can start his own practice. ‘J’ and her husband would also like to build a house
for him, but due to the difficulties in gaining building permits they do not know if it will
be possible. ‘J’ is still determined to help her son stay. When I asked her about the role of Palestinian women in resistance she told me:

‘Women, uh, few women are in politics, but we resist in uh, in our way of living let’s say. In our resilience. In our being here, refusing to emigrate, this one thing. Encouraging our children to stay here, and study here and work here, like I encouraged my son to study at the Arab American University in Jenin’ (‘J’ interview 2, 2011 Beit Sahour).

Both ‘J’ and ‘L’ expressed that they want the best for their children, but also that they want to encourage their children to stay in the difficult situation brought about by occupation when leaving to another place would mean not living under occupation. This is a very powerful form of resistance because it encourages younger generations to maintain a physical presence in a territory which has become extremely inhospitable and difficult to live in.

Checkpoints/permits/ID cards:

The importance of examining checkpoints, permits and ID cards as an element of the apparatus of occupation relates not only to the subjectification of Palestinian women, but notably to how different Palestinian women are subjugated differently based on the functioning of checkpoints, permits and id cards. After the 1993 Oslo Accords, the West Bank of the oPt was divided into areas A, B and C. Area A is under Palestinian Authority (PA) civil and military control, Area B is under PA civil control and Israeli military control, and area C is under Israeli civil and military control. Women living in different areas are thus differently subjugated based on these divisions. Furthermore, as a result of the separation wall and ensuing checkpoint systems women living in the Seam Zone or in a community surrounded by the separation wall are subject to different
permit systems. The functioning of these divisions as they impact women’s subjectification will be explored in this section.\(^25\)

The Jordan Valley has been known as a special security area for Israel since the 1967 war. Most of the Jordan Valley is composed of military bases, settlements, settlement agricultural areas, firing zones and nature reserves, leaving only very small pockets of land for a few Palestinian villages. Since 2002, Israel has been tightening control of who can enter the region:

‘In response to an inquiry by B’Tselem, which the organization received in January 2006, the IDF Spokesperson’s Office stated that crossing these checkpoints is allowed, in general, only to residents of the Jordan Valley whose identity cards indicate that they live in one of the villages in the valley. Other residents of the West Bank are allowed to cross only if they have a special permit issued by the Civil Administration’ (B’Tselem, 2006a).

These restrictions create many problems for Jordan valley residents, but they particularly affect women from other regions who married Jordan Valley residents but did not change their address on their ID cards. These women are unable to leave their villages for fear that they are caught by the military they won’t be able to return to their husbands (ibid). In such instances, women are subjugated through severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. Even women who do change their address face isolation as their families cannot come to visit them.

‘I have a daughter, Hiba, who is seventeen. In 2003, she married a man from Jiftlik. Since then, nobody in our family has managed to visit her, not even during the holidays, because the army doesn’t let us cross the Hamra checkpoint. Even when Hiba had her first child, I did not manage to get to see how she was and to see my first grandson’ (B’Tselem 2007a p82).

\(^{25}\) There are many more implications of the checkpoint/permit system which will not be explored here. For analysis of other aspects not covered here, see Backman, 2006; Weizman, 2007; Makdisi, 2008; Kashet, 2006.
Women in the Jordan Valley are not the only Palestinian women who face such difficulties relating to having different permits or ID cards from their husbands. There are many cases of women from the West Bank who have married men from East Jerusalem or vice versa. Similarly, some West Bank women are married to men from the Gaza Strip. Other women have married men from communities now part of the Seam Zone – perhaps before it became that, and conversely, women from Seam Zone communities may have married men from places outside the Seam Zone. It is not unusual for husbands and wives to come from different places before marriage, and in many contexts it has little impact on the couple if one person is from a place a few kilometres down the road. This is not the case for Palestinians however, and very often marriage to someone from outside of one’s immediate area results in a lifetime of difficulties in reaching one’s family or even living with one’s spouse.

The situation is particularly acute when the couple lives in East Jerusalem but one spouse has a West Bank (Green) ID and the other has an East Jerusalem (Permanent Resident Israeli) ID. They can, in theory, apply for a family reunification permit in these cases, but these applications are systematically denied in almost all cases (B’Tselem, Hamoked, 2006). When the reunification is denied the result is that both spouses end up breaking the law. The spouse who stays ‘illegally’ in East Jerusalem is at risk of arrest, and the other spouse can be arrested for ‘harbouring’ someone illegally. Families who choose not to risk the consequences of being caught in East Jerusalem find themselves separated (Backmann, 2006 pp12-13). Furthermore, East Jerusalem residents are prohibited from transporting West Bank residents in their car, even if they are married. The punishment for getting caught doing so is severe (ibid). Couples with different IDs find themselves caught in impossible situations. For West Bank women who risk living
with their husbands in East Jerusalem, the cost of such a decision generally means totally isolating oneself in the home for fear of going outside and being arrested. She is thus cut off from her family in the West Bank as well as the broader community as she is forced to stay indoors in order to keep living with her husband.

Since 2000, Israel has ceased processing family unification permits for families where one spouse holds a Palestinian ID and the other is a foreign citizen. As a result, some families are separated, with one spouse living abroad and the other in the territories (B’Tselem, Hamoked, 2006). This is a particular burden for women who are separated from their children or their husbands. It is also difficult situation for women who are foreign citizens but living ‘illegally’ with their spouses in the territories, as they are unable to return to their countries of origin to visit their families. Israel’s closure of Gaza resulted in further separation of families. Women in these situations face subjection as a result of the restriction of their physical freedom of movement. The imposition of forced separation between women and their children entails subjection because it forces the women to become non-mothering mothers, or, more accurately, mothers who can only ‘access’ their children from a phone (ibid).

Women living in seam zones also face considerable difficulties, and they are differently subjugated than women living in adjacent villages outside the seam zone. The seam zone is an artificial creation resulting from the building of the separation barrier. The path of the barrier deviates significantly from the Green Line as cuts off approximately 8.5% of the West Bank (B’Tselem, 2011b). This territory has been declared a ‘closed military zone’ thus only those Palestinians registered as living in the area and those who obtain special permits are allowed access. Other communities have been surrounded on 3 or 4 sides by the barrier, and residents of these communities also needs
special permits to access their homes. Prior to 2002 these communities were integrated into the wider West Bank, and residents passed freely between their villages and larger towns to buy and sell goods, visit relatives or access medical care and education. By declaring these communities as ‘closed’ the women in these communities became very differently subjugated than their neighbours, relatives and friends in other villages and other Palestinians throughout the West Bank. Simple tasks such as shopping became infinitely more difficult as cars are often not allowed through checkpoints, permits for relatives have to be coordinated well in advance and some villages experience daily closure if checkpoints into the village are not open 24 hours a day.

There are profuse problems which arise from living in a seam zone. In a report written by WCLAC (2010a), women gave testimony to how their daily lives had been completely upheaved since the declaration of their communities as ‘closed’. Many women report that they no longer like to leave the house in case they are delayed in returning via checkpoints, harassed by soldiers or subject to long journeys by foot. A further impact of the declaration of seam zone communities as ‘closed’ is the total restriction on obtaining building permits to expand one’s home or build a new home for one’s children. As a result, families are living in severely crowded conditions, and if a family decides to build without a permit they live under the constant threat of demolition (WCLAC, 2010a pp24-28).

Women travelling from their homes in the seam zone to shops on the other side of the barrier often face strict regulations about what they can or cannot bring through the checkpoint. One woman, from Al Khalayleh, a community near Jerusalem, who gave her testimony to WCLAC reported:
'There is no public transportation that we can use in the area that we live, and it takes about half an hour to walk to the checkpoint then another fifteen minutes on the other side of the checkpoint to get to the shops and services on the other side. It usually takes about an hour altogether to go through when I need to go shopping or go to the clinic. It’s also forbidden to bring eggs or chicken or meat through the checkpoint; they usually check out bags when we pass through the checkpoint. We also can’t take the gas cylinders we use for cooking and heating through the checkpoint, we have to coordinate in advance with the Israelis to take it through another checkpoint which is difficult and further away’ (Testimony from JD, WCLAC 2010a pp29-30).

Her testimony is echoed by other women who are unable to bring goods through checkpoints, face difficulties in getting cooking gas and face long journeys by foot when they need to leave their homes. The burden inflicted by living in the seam zone results in women in the seam zone having a very different status than women living in other parts of the West Bank and facing extreme difficulties in conducting their daily lives. This affects women in particular because of their responsibilities for cooking, cleaning and looking after the home and children. Furthermore, the social isolation imposed upon women in seam zones means that they receive only those visitors who are fortunate enough to get permits to visit. Women who gave their testimonies to WCLAC cited this as one of the most difficult aspects of living in a seam zone, as they feel completely cut-off from their families who live outside the seam zone. Their resident status in a ‘closed zone’ can be attributed only to the path of the barrier and their proximity to settlements, and thus constitutes collective punishment.

Checkpoints also create situations of subjectivity for Palestinian women. Currently, B’Tselem has counted 98 permanent checkpoints and a monthly average of 495 ‘flying’ or temporary checkpoints in the West Bank (B’Tselem 2007a). Daily life in the West Bank thus necessitates navigating oneself through the maze of checkpoints. Women crossing through checkpoints are vulnerable to harassment by soldiers, delay,
and detention. These all act upon and through their bodies. As there are many checkpoints through which cars cannot pass, women must cross the checkpoint on foot. As most Palestinian women are responsible for the upkeep of the home and care of the children, women crossing checkpoints may be transporting any number of provisions as well as children. The physical burden of waiting for hours to cross through a checkpoint should not be underestimated. There are frequent reports of checkpoints being closed with no warning, leaving women to find an alternative route to their destination. Waiting at checkpoints is an unpleasant, tiring, frustrating and humiliating experience for anyone, and is worse for women who are trying to juggle food, children and shopping. One observer from Machsom Watch reports that ‘A woman carrying bags in her right hand, a baby in her left and her two elder children before and behind her was taken out at the vehicles’ checkpoint and sent to the pedestrians’ checkpoint. She stumbled slowly towards the other side of the checkpoint- accepting the verdict submissively’ (Machsom Watch 2012). Such instances occur daily at every checkpoint throughout the West Bank.

There is also documentation of the harassment women experience at checkpoints thanks to the Israeli group Machsom Watch, a volunteer-led group of Israeli women who monitor checkpoints throughout the West Bank and B’Tselem. Sexual harassment is often not reported by women because of the stigma attached to sexual harassment in Palestinian society. Therefore, it is usually only when groups like Machsom Watch observe and document sexual harassment that it is known. In one testimony given to B’Tselem, a woman from near Jenin, reported that she had been the only woman in a taxi that was stopped at a flying checkpoint. All of the men in the taxi were ordered to strip in her presence and she was ordered to take off her head scarf, which she did only partially (B’Tselem 2010b). This incident constitutes sexual harassment as it severely
violates the social norms and values of Palestinian culture. In particular, making a woman remove her headscarf will almost surely result in humiliation for the woman. It is also an example of how subjectification occurs upon women’s bodies through de-humanising, humiliating and de-legitimizing the dignity of Palestinian women.

Overall, the above examples clearly illustrate how subjectification occurs through the control, regulation and restriction of movement of women’s bodies. Through blocking the access of women to their families, spouses, children, and necessary provisions Palestinian women are subjugated in ways similar to imprisonment. The physical burden experienced by women in walking to/from and through checkpoints affects their bodies and health, and subjects them to the constant risk of harassment, detention and delay. As a result of the extensive system of checkpoints, permits and ID cards, simple daily tasks necessary for survival are made increasingly difficult and burdensome.

**Militant Action**

While most women I interviewed explained that their own personal approach to challenging the occupation was rooted in non-violence, many of them also acknowledged that their chosen means of resistance was merely their own personal choice and they did not necessarily de-legitimise Palestinian women who chose militant resistance. Several women told me that there was no one form of resistance, but that each woman resists in her own way, depending on what she thinks is right for her and what she is able to do. I conducted only one interview with a former prisoner who had been arrested for her involvement in a martyrdom operation/suicide bombing. She had been sentenced to life in prison for helping a martyr/suicide bomber reach his target in the Israeli town of Netanya, where three people were killed and fifty-six injured. Her
involvement in this operation came about because she became part of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine during her enrolment in university in Nablus. When I asked her why she had become involved in militant action in resistance to the Israeli occupation she replied:

Yani, in 2002, in the middle of the invasions of Nablus and Tulkarem, the whole West Bank was occupied. So every day there were martyrs, every day houses were being demolished. I was going through checkpoints every day, and the suffering that we had to go through as students, as workers. One day I would see my colleagues and the next day I would ask about them and they might be dead. People were being killed at checkpoints a lot. The situation pushes you to rebel, to fight against your situation. I also think that it is an obligation for each and every Palestinian (‘D’ interview 17, Tulk Arm 2012).

When I further questioned her about why it was that women involved themselves in militant resistance, in contrast to many Western perceptions of Muslim women as ‘passive or victims’ she replied:

Yani, I think that each and every Palestinian is involved in politics. As we take milk from our mother’s breast the milk is mixed with politics. I think that any occupied country, her women would have some involvement in politics. Now we’re only in one stage, the stage of conflict will pass on (ibid.)

While the choice of ‘D’ to become involved in militant action does not represent the choices made by every Palestinian woman, her view on resistance and the role of women is illuminating in that it illustrates how resistance is seen as necessary, and women are not excluded from militant action if they choose to undertake it.

In no way does ‘D’ represent the only woman who chose to resist the Israeli occupation through militant action. Throughout the decades of struggle against Israeli occupation women have had a variety of roles in resistance, amongst them, roles in militant action. One of the most well-known examples comes from Lelia Khaled. Khaled was also active in the PFLP, predominantly during the 1960s and 1970s. She was most famous for her role in the hijacking of two passenger planes, one TWA flight from Rome
to Athens in 1969 and another El Al flight from Amsterdam to New York in 1970. Khaled’s role in the hijackings was highly publicised because of her gender, but for Khaled, her participation in armed resistance was only natural. She is famous for saying ‘As a Palestinian, I had to believe in the gun as an embodiment of my humanity and my determination to liberate myself and my fellow man. Every self-respecting Palestinian has to become a revolutionary’ (Khaled 1973). In her autobiography Khaled goes on to argue that the occupation of Palestine and the displacement of the Palestinian people necessitated a measured and strategic response rooted in ideology to meet the aim of liberating Palestinians. Before her actions in the hijackings, she underwent extensive military training and became well-versed in the ideology of the PFLP. She was not merely a ‘tool’ of the organisation, but a fully-fledged member who undertook her missions with great determination. Because of her known role in the 1969 hijacking, in order to carry out the 1970 hijacking without being caught beforehand, Khaled underwent plastic surgery to alter her appearance (ibid. p180).

The actions of ‘D’ and Khaled illustrate the connection between occupation and resistance. Both women expressed that the occupation necessitates resistance. Furthermore, both women relied upon their bodies as a means of enacting militant resistance. ‘D’ and Khaled both engaged in militant action through the reliance on stereotypes of the female body as ‘non-threatening’. There have been other instances of women accompanying martyrs/suicide bombers to their targets, helping to ‘legitimise’ the appearance of the martyr/bomber, such as the case of the 2001 Sbarro Pizzeria bombing in Jerusalem in which fifteen Israelis were killed. A twenty year old Palestinian woman escorted the martyr/bomber to the operation. She was later imprisoned for her role in the attack, but released in the 2011 prisoner exchange. There is little question of
their dedication, as militant action necessitates the complete commitment of the woman to the cause of resistance to occupation. Any Palestinian woman engaging in militant action does so fully aware of possible repercussions. Thus, Palestinian women engaging in militant action offer one of the most poignant examples of the links between occupation, resistance and bodies.

The involvement of women in militant action is celebrated in Palestinian society, further enforcing the idea that there is always ‘room’ for a woman in militant action if she decides that is the form her resistance should take. The figure to the right illustrates a campaign by the PFLP celebrating the role of Palestinian women in armed struggle in correlation with International Women’s day. Khaled is figure known to virtually every Palestinian for her role in resistance to Israeli occupation, and a large mural of her portrait adorns a section of the separation wall in Bethlehem. Posters in support of ‘D’ could be found in her hometown. These representations of women in armed struggle demonstrate a link between discourse and women’s militancy in Palestinian society.

**Imprisonment**

The Palestinian prisoners’ rights association, Addameer, published a report in 2008 detailing the specific circumstances and abuses suffered by female Palestinian prisoners. This section is concerned in particular with how various practices of the Israeli Prison Services (IPS) and the IDF subjugate female prisoners in bodily and gendered
In particular, subjectification occurs through the denial of access to healthcare, specifically for pregnant women, sexual abuse, denial of family visits and inadequate provision of food and shelter, particularly for pregnant or nursing women and their children.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has adopted guidelines for provisions which should be addressed for female prisoners, in particular these guidelines stipulate that female prisoners should be allowed to see female doctors whenever possible, especially female gynaecologists. The guidelines also make it clear that when women are pregnant in prison, special attention should be given to antenatal care and nutrition, that no woman should be transferred whilst shackled when in labour, that women who are nursing should be provided with an enhanced diet, and most importantly, that if a child is in prison with his/her mother, that child should not be treated as a prisoner (UNODC 2010). Addameer, the Palestinian NGO that concentrates on issues relating to prisoners documented several instances where these guidelines were not upheld in relation to Palestinian women (Addameer, 2008).

One case study involves the imprisonment of ‘M’ when she was pregnant. She reported to Addameer that she received very limited prenatal care, which included only one obstetric ultrasound and the inclusion of folic acid in her diet in her eighth month of pregnancy. After giving birth she was allowed 10 minutes with her baby, and after that he was brought to her for breastfeeding at six hour intervals. She received no special diet during pregnancy or breastfeeding and no special provisions or facilities were granted for her baby (Addameer, 2008 pp52-53). According to the report, there is no provision of

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26Prior to the 2011 prisoner swap, Israel was holding thirty-five Palestinian women and twenty-seven of those were released during the swap, despite original promises made during the arrangement that all of the female prisoners would be released (Addameer, 2011).
preventative gynaecology, meaning that some women have gone their entire sentences without a check-up from a gynaecologist (ibid p49). It is also difficult for women to request to see a gynaecologist when they experience problems because most Arabic-speaking medical staff are males (ibid).

Two other case studies by Addameer document how women were shackled or restrained in leg cuffs during labour, birth or immediately after giving birth. One woman, also known as ‘M’ reported that after experiencing initial labour pains she was transferred to a hospital in shackles. When the examining doctor declared that she was not ready to give birth, she was transferred back to the prison for two days. She was transferred to the hospital in shackles again, and was kept in legs cuffs until she delivered, at which point her legs were un-cuffed and tied to the bed. ‘A.M.’ made a similar report to Addameer, after she was transferred to and from the prison in shackles, and whose hand and feet were shackled to the bed until immediately before delivery and were replaced immediately after delivery (ibid pp63-63). Such practices clearly contravene the UNODC resolution on pregnant women.

These practices also have a specific role in the bodily subjectification of female Palestinian prisoners. Pregnancy, child birth and caring for new-borns are times of heightened vulnerability, stress and anxiety for women. At best, the effects of ill-treatment by the Israeli prison service at these times are the further heightening of unease. At worst, this type of ill-treatment of pregnant and breastfeeding women endangers the lives of the women and their babies. Inflicting punishment upon the bodies of pregnant women, such as the cases of women being shackled to beds or left in leg cuffs is unjustifiable from the point of security, one needs to have only a slight understanding of the process of child-birth to know that this is not a time when women
are occupied with escaping from prison personnel. Therefore, one can conclude that such practices are aimed to de-humanise and subjugate women who are in the most vulnerable stage of their lives.

Women also report experiencing sexual abuse, usually in the form of invasive strip searches. In the Palestinian cultural context, the experiences of strip searches are severely shameful, and are seen as abusive. Some women reported that if they refused to a strip search, the female guards would threaten to get a male guard to conduct the search. One woman reported that during a strip search a male soldier entered the room (UNHCR, 2004). At times, the searches are conducted in the middle of the night as a punitive measure. During initial periods of interrogation after arrest, many women also report that they have been threatened with rape or threatened with the rape of their family members if they do not confess (Addameer, 2008 p22). ‘Research has shown that Israel’s prison authorities deliberately exploit Palestinian women’s fears by playing on patriarchal norms as well as gender stereotypes within particular customs of Palestinian society’ (Addameer, 2010).

The subjectification of female Palestinian prisoners is two-fold. They are subjugated in the ways any prisoner is subjugated, through the act of incarceration. In addition, they experience additional subjectification resulting from their gendered bodies. Measures used against female prisoners increase their physical vulnerability, especially during times of pregnancy or as a result of sexual harassment. These measures are used to increase the control exercised over captive Palestinian women by targeting physical and cultural vulnerabilities to punish or coerce them. In doing so, Israeli Prison Services raise the ‘cost’ of resisting harsh practices and utilise punitive measures to further threaten, humiliate, and debilitate the prisoners. The measures described above
have lasting effects on the women who experience them, as well as upon children who are subject to them by virtue of being with their mothers in prison. As such, even after leaving prison, the women may experience severe health and mental health issues based on their time in prison. Thus, imprisonment of women and the practices used against them in detention illustrate an element of the apparatus of occupation which functions through bodily subjectification.

**Prison Organising/Hunger Strikes**

Whilst a severe subjectification results from the imprisonment of Palestinian women, imprisoned women find ways to challenge and resist this subjectification. This is best illustrated by the hunger strike of prisoner Hana Shalabi. Shalabi was re-arrested several months after being released as part of the 2011 prisoner swap for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Prior to her release she had spent 30 months in administrative detention. Upon her re-arrest, Shalabi was issued with another administrative detention order and subsequently she began a hunger strike. Her hunger strike continued for forty-three days. She decided to end her hunger strike after negotiations arranged for a conditional release which involved exile to the Gaza Strip for a period of three years. She accepted the conditions of her release despite her exile from her family and when she arrived in the Gaza Strip she stated: ‘I am very happy to be in my country with my people’ (Al Jazeera 2012). From the perspective of physical resistance to subjectification, hunger strikers illustrate extremely well how one can resist the operation of power through their physical body. The hunger striker makes use of her physical body as a means of making a political or social statement, and reasserts control over her own body. However, in doing so, she puts her body at risk of irreversible damage or death.
The consequences of undertaking a hunger strike occur upon the body of the hunger striker. According to a report by Physicians for Human Rights –Israel–, during her hunger strike, Shalabi experienced difficulty sleeping because of pain, dizziness, blurred vision, low heart-beat, low blood sugar, thyroid damage and yellowing of the eyes (PHRI 2012). In a comment piece on Al Jazeera, Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Human Rights argued that there is a deep significance in the undertaking of a hunger strike: ‘To risk life and health in this way without harming or even threatening the oppressor is to turn terrorism against the innocent on its head. It is potentially to sacrifice one’s life to make an appeal of last resort, an appeal that transcends normal law and politics, and demands our response’ (Falk, 2012).

As argued in the previous section, imprisonment, especially in the form of administrative detention necessitates an almost total subjectification of the detainee in question. A hunger striker is not able to challenge fact of their subjectification, but they are able to challenge the totality of that subjectification. This challenge necessitates the employment of the body as a means of resisting. Refusing to feed one’s body is a concrete act of defiance in which the hunger striker denies the subjectification by the prison and the justice system. The hunger striker accepts the possibility of death as preferable to their continued imprisonment and to do so exercises a staggering level of determination and persistence. This form resistance exercised through the body is unique in that it severely weakens the physical body. A hunger strike is virtually the last means of resisting subjectification available to administrative detainees (Falk 2012). The willingness of the hunger striker to sacrifice her body illustrates the severity of the subjectification exercised over her.
Furthermore, a relationship is established between the resistance of the hunger striker and the discourse of resistance in Palestinian society. During her hunger strike, posters calling for support of Shalabi’s resistance could be found throughout the West Bank and the Gaza strip. A hunger striker becomes a symbol of resistance that the broader Palestinian community can rally behind, symbolising the harshness of the occupation and the strength of the Palestinian people. If one examines the discourse of the posters supporting Shalabi in conjunction with the Hamas sponsored rally to welcome her when she reached the Gaza strip, it becomes clear that Shalabi’s resistance was a potent symbol of Palestinian resistance to subjectification.

Imprisoned Palestinian women who are not on hunger strike employ other means of prison organising to challenge subjectification. If one aim of imprisonment is to employ a subjectification which aims to hamper the spirits of the prisoners, then prison organising seeks to empower and support women so that they may resist that form of subjectification. Within prisons, women are divided into cells based on their political affiliation the factions include Fatah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Addameer 2008). Within the prison factions women cooperate to provide informal education and to petition the Israeli Prison Services for things like for improved living conditions, access to health care or better food. Women also participate in making handicrafts, jewellery and embroidering. Such activities can be seen as means of resisting subjectification. Through organising, groups of women have made some improvements to their living conditions.

‘Palestinian women detainees have consistently organized methods of resistance for the prisoner’s movement and the broader struggle for Palestinian self-determination. More specifically, Palestinian women prisoners have been raising the unfair treatment they receive and the poor
conditions of Israeli prisons since the First Intifada, using various forms of protest such as collective hunger strikes’ (Addameer, 2010 p3).

Any activity which seeks to challenge attempts by prison services to decrease morale amongst the prisoners can be seen as resistance to subjectification. Therefore, the crafts that women do to pass time can be seen as acts of resistance. Many of the crafts done by women are related to their Palestinian heritage, such as traditional Palestinian embroidery or making maps of Palestine out of cigarette boxes covered in cloth. This assertion of Palestinian identity keeps women occupied. The highest honour I experienced whilst on my field research was when a former political prisoner gave me a set of prayer beads she had made while in prison. In my conversation with this woman she talked about her time in prison and her role as the leader of her respective faction. She had a responsibility for welcoming newly imprisoned women, ensuring that they had the things that they needed and helping them adjust to their life in prison. The woman with whom I spoke, ‘D’ from Tulkarem, told me:

‘When you’re in prison and you make your enemies feel as though you have not been hurt, that you are still strong, this itself is resistance. Because I was responsible for the PFLP girls, when a new girl came I was responsible for her. If she was weak or afraid I would help her, and offer support for her. We did a lot to fight the boredom, we would do carvings, or sewing or beadwork. I would read a lot. All of the books at the front of the house were the books I read in prison’ (‘D’ Interview 17, 2012 Tulkarem)

Organising within prison illustrates that resistance takes place even within the most subjugating of circumstances. The act of resisting subjectification is as important as the potential results because through resistance women challenge their subject status. There are also examples of concrete benefits that can be achieved through prison organising. After the 1995 Oslo II agreement Israel was supposed to release all of the female Palestinian prisoners being held. When prison services tried to keep four in custody, the
women slated for release barricaded themselves in the prison cells, refusing to leave until Israeli Prison Services upheld their agreement (Schmemann, 1995). After 17 months, all of the female prisoners were released (UNISPAL 1997). ‘D’ went on to tell me that even though prison was hell, the worst thing she could have gone through, the women tried to make it into a good thing. She showed me some of the handicrafts she had made, and when I asked her if she saw these crafts as a form of resistance she replied ‘yes, it is a good, peaceful form of resistance’ (‘D’ Interview 17, 2012 Tulkarem).

House demolitions

According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD 2012b), since 1967 over 27,000 structures, including homes, schools, and structures related to livelihood such as sheds for animals, have been demolished. All Palestinian structures in areas B and C are regulated under Israeli planning departments, and thus susceptible to possible demolition. However, one of the areas most affected by demolition is East Jerusalem. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are considered ‘permanent residents’ of Israel and are thus subject to different regulations on freedom of movement than other Palestinians. They are also subject to the strict regulatory controls on building in the Jerusalem municipality. Since the annexation of the city of Jerusalem in 1967, the aim of the municipality has been to limit the growth of the Palestinian population while expanding the growth of the Jewish population.

‘Various Jerusalem municipal governments, along with the Ministry of Interior, have applied policies that aim, directly and indirectly, to maintain a Jewish majority in the city of Jerusalem. In certain cases, these demographic motivations have been expressed explicitly by public officials; in other cases these motivations are simply evidenced by the consistent and overwhelmingly telling results of the policies and practices applied to Palestinian East Jerusalem, which serve to maintain a Jewish majority. Alongside the restrictions placed on Palestinian growth, Jewish population growth is encouraged and enjoys state support, including the continuous...
expansion of Jewish neighborhoods – or settlements – in East Jerusalem’ (ICAHD, 2011 p2).

Israeli and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are thus differently subjugated under Jerusalem municipal law, and this different subjectification often results in the demolition of Palestinian homes or even the occupation of Palestinian homes by Israeli settlers. Since the 1967 annexation of Jerusalem, (re-unification in Israeli discourse) most of East Jerusalem has been expropriated for Jewish settlements (35%), ‘green areas’ (22%), and left as ‘un-zoned’ (30%). The result is that only 13% of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction. As the Palestinian population has grown from 66,000 in 1967 to 300,000 today, the small percentage of land zoned for Palestinian construction is inadequate to meet housing needs. As a result, Palestinians in East Jerusalem face a difficult decision to continue living in severely overcrowded homes, or build new houses (or extend existing ones) without a building permit. In the case of East Jerusalem, often a house is demolished for being built without a permit or because it was built in a ‘green area’ and after demolition a new Israeli house is built for a Jewish family on private Palestinian land that was the site of the demolished Palestinian house (ICAHD, 2011 p16). This demonstrates how the Jerusalem municipality actively engages in demographic practices aimed at making Jerusalem 70% Jewish and 30% Palestinian.27

Contrary to many perceptions, the demolition of Palestinian houses is generally not the result of punishment for violence against Israelis, in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank only 8.5% of all demolitions since 1967 were related to ‘terrorism’ or punitive measures (Halper, 2009 p125). In contrast, 26% of all demolitions occur because of a lack

27 A 1973 report commissioned by then Prime Minister Golda Meir concluded ‘The Gafni Commission report declared that it was imperative for the future of Jewish control over the city to maintain the 1972 demographic ratio of 73.5% Jews to 26.5% Palestinians’ (ICAHD, 2011 p13).
of proper permits, and 65.5% were demolished for ‘military reasons’ (ibid). Even where demolitions are undertaken as a form of punishment and to serve as ‘deterrence’ against terrorist attacks, such acts constitute collective punishment against innocent family members. B’Tselem found that on average, for each punitive demolition, twelve innocent Palestinians were made homeless. Often these innocent victims of demolition included children. In 47% of the punitive demolitions carried out between 2000 and 2004, the house demolished was never home to the person accused of the attack, resulting in 1,286 people becoming homeless (B’Tselem 2004a p7).

House demolitions and impending house demolitions have a demonstrable impact on Palestinian women and their bodily subjectification. Countless factors arise from the phases of living under the threat of demolition, demolition and displacement act through women’s bodies to subjugate them in different ways. The act of forcibly displacing families from their homes demonstrates the degree of control exercised over Palestinian bodies and illustrates how this particular element of occupation increases the physical vulnerability of Palestinian women. Testimonies given by East Jerusalem women to WCLAC will be used to demonstrate the impact the process of house demolition has on Palestinian women. In some cases, fear of demolition prevents families from making the decision to build without a permit. As a result, these families live in overcrowded and inadequate conditions with little or no privacy. Not only are permits not issued for new houses, but permits for extending existing houses or making improvements to existing houses are systematically denied (WCLAC 2010a p9). This policy of denying permits to Palestinians stands in sharp contrast to the permits granted to Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem (OCHA 2009 p18). It is from this housing shortage and failure of the Jerusalem municipality to address it that the issue of ‘illegal’ construction arises.
One must question to what degree such restrictive planning measures have an impact on the subject formation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, particularly women. In Palestinian culture it is typically the practice that a man only seeks to marry a woman if he can provide her with a home. Such cultural practices are being negatively impacted by difficulty in obtaining a building permit. One woman gave testimony to WCLAC that after her marriage she and her husband were living with his parents. She explained how this was not a happy situation for her: ‘I wanted to have some privacy and not be in such a crowded space. This is normal especially for an educated woman, to want my own independent home. I also wanted more space for the sake of my children’ (WLAC 2010a pp16-17). Systematic denial of building permits subjugates women in East Jerusalem by denying the reality of natural population growth in order to achieve demographic aims. Shifts in cultural practice and serious overcrowding result for families who do not build without permits, and living under a constant fear of displacement subjugates women who are living in houses or extensions built without permits. In either case, women are subjugated through the policies which explicitly state that Palestinian population growth in East Jerusalem is unacceptable.

Many women expressed how the threat of demolition caused them worry and anxiety. The threat of eviction and demolition results in women feeling unsafe in their own homes. Demolition orders do not specify when the house is due for demolition by the Israeli army, so many families live for years under the threat of demolition. Furthermore, often demolitions occur at night and residents are given little or no time to gather their possessions. One woman told WCLAC:

‘Everything that I owned was in the house, my clothes, and the girls’ clothes, school books, kitchen things, and most importantly medical records and equipment for my daughter, Hayat, who suffers from a heart condition. I
begged the soldiers to let me take my personal possessions out of the house. They refused to let me into the house (WCLAC 2010a p24).

Eventually some soldiers went into the house and threw a few things out the door. Other women report similar losses or damage to their possessions, including family records, jewellery, children’s things and furniture. Such losses make the demolition of the house more acutely devastating emotionally and financially.

The psychological burden of living under threat of demolition can have psychosomatic symptoms. ‘The sense of being unsettled, of not knowing what is going to happen, and where they will go, manifests itself in both psychological and physical symptoms. Women described anxiety, depression and pain’ (WCLAC 2010a p18). In their testimonies, women reported headaches, stomach pains, difficulty sleeping, high blood pressure, irritability, feeling ‘unable to cope’ and chest pain (ibid). As Palestinian women have traditionally been responsible for the upkeep of the home, cooking and care of the children, and thus have important cultural and emotional ties to the physical house, not knowing when the house will be demolished effectively subjugates women through taking away their security and ability to exercise control over the house. The occurrence of psychological and physical symptoms further inhibits the ability of women to carry on the tasks of their daily lives. Women also reported feeling powerless to help their children. It is well documented that children living under the threat of demolition or in periods after demolition experience difficulty sleeping, bed wetting, behavioural problems and poor performance in schools. As house demolition is something beyond the scope of control for Palestinian mothers, they report that have anxiety over their children’s reactions to demolition. After demolition many women made statements to WCLAC such as ‘I am very worried about my children’ ‘I am most worried about my
The psychological impact of post-demolition life is similar to that prior to demolition in that women express feelings of helplessness, anxiety and difficulty coping.

There are also severe economic consequences of demolition which often push families into extreme poverty, enacting further effects on the physical body. Along with the loss of the home, and often the loss of possessions, families are generally billed for the cost of the demolition by the Army. Families can be expected to pay for the cost of demolishing their home. Prior to demolition many families also have substantial legal fees from trying to prevent demolition. The result is that demolition has dire economic consequences, and women find themselves not only displaced but impoverished. The resulting subjectification imposes further hardships on conducting daily life, making it difficult for women to manage the household budget. Several women reported that their families had gone into debt to build their home and that after demolition they were left with nothing but debt and nowhere to live. One woman reported:

‘Another unbelievable thing was that we have been charged for them removing our furniture from our home. We received a bill for 13,086 shekels and the Israeli authorities told us that if we didn’t pay they would impose further fines. Our financial situation is terrible, my husband is unemployed and has health problems. We have nothing, but we survive’ (WCLAC 2010a p26).

The financial repercussions of house demolitions leave women with very limited means to care for their families and result in further uncertainty about the future.

WCLAC concludes their report with the following statement: ‘The women interviewed testified to losing much more than a place to live. They have lost their privacy and personal space, their freedom and security’ (ibid. p29). There is an apparent link between house demolitions and the subjectification of Palestinian women. Women...
who experience house demolition or who live under the threat of house demolition are subjectified through their feelings of insecurity, helplessness and anxiety as well through the actual act of physical displacement and the ensuing economic loss and hardship.

The process of displacing Palestinian families in East Jerusalem has a definitive link to demographic control and thus physical control over the Jerusalem municipality. The distinctions made between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem is a testament to how they are very different subjects in the application of laws and measures, and these differential policies make explicit that Palestinians are unwelcome in Jerusalem. The ICAHD demolition argues that the policies in East Jerusalem are unsustainable and may ultimately result in what is tantamount to forcible transfer as Palestinians in East Jerusalem find life increasingly unbearable. ‘Palestinians will be obliged to leave East Jerusalem for the West Bank and elsewhere’ (ICAHD, 2011 p42). When they leave East Jerusalem they will lose their residency status and thus their right to return to East Jerusalem, and furthering the aim of achieving a 70/30 Jewish/Palestinian split in the city. House demolitions in East Jerusalem and the denial of building permits thus represent a tool which very effectively subjugates the Palestinian population through a regulation of their physical bodies.

House re-building

After house demolition, some families choose to rebuild their homes in the same location as an act of defiance against demolition. Families are often assisted in this by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. In particular, one house located northeast of Jerusalem belonging to the Shawamreh family, has been demolished six times since 1998 (ICAHD 2012a). The house, named Beit Aribiya, or ‘House of Aribiya’ has been rebuilt five times with the support of ICAHD. Aribiya, mother of seven and the
owner of the house has remained steadfast in her determination to re-build every time
despite the risk that the house will only be demolished again. She has also opened her
home as a peace centre, where Palestinians, Israelis and other Internationals can come
to learn about tactics of popular resistance.

Re-building one’s home after demolition is an act of resistance which opens one
up to the distinct possibility of experiencing the same trauma and hardships of
demolition again. Women choosing to re-build have to take this into account, especially
in regards to the well-being of their children. However, it is an act of resistance aimed
squarely at the exercise of subjectification they experienced. If the aim of demolition is
to prevent Palestinians from building houses, re-building a house in the same place is a
concrete act of defiance and challenges the act of demolition directly. Maintaining a
physical presence on one’s land despite attempts to remove that presence represents an
element of bodily counter-action and is thus part of the dispositif of Palestinian women’s
resistance.

Water

Twice during my six-week stay in the West Bank, we ran out of water. Laws
passed after the 1967 war allocated complete control of the aquifers and surface water
in the West Bank to the Israeli state. As a result, Israel tightly controls the levels of water
allowed to Palestinians. Of the Mountain Aquifer, the only aquifer to which West Bank
Palestinians have access, 20% of the water in the aquifer is allocated to Palestinians and
80% to Israelis (Amnesty International, 2009 p20). Access to water varies amongst
different areas in the West Bank, and a large sector of the population is not connected to
any water supply. Those who are connected face strict rationing of water. The rationing
means that the water supply is ‘on’ for a certain length of time every week (B’Tselem,
In some places it could be on for as much as 48 hours, in others, as little as 12. For the period of time that it is on, Palestinians fill tanks on their roofs to last the rest of the week. When the water in these tanks is depleted, they must wait until the water is turned on again. It was living with a Palestinian family in Bethlehem that helped me to understand what shortage of water means for daily life. By all accounts, I suffered very little, as the family with whom I lived was connected to a water supply. The supply was on for 24-48 hours per week and the family had several tanks on their roof that they could fill. While staying there, we still ran out of water twice. I witnessed first-hand how this affected my Palestinian host mother and her daily life.

The family I lived with was Christian, and I was with them over the Christmas period, and the celebrations, largely centred on relatives coming to visit and my Palestinian family going to visit others. Entertaining visitors is infinitely more difficult without water. We were able to get some water from other family members living nearby, and this water was allocated to different necessities fastidiously. The first priority was drinking water and cooking water. Any water from cooking that could be reused to wash dishes was, and then after washing dishes, it was used to flush the toilet a few times a day. This went on for three days before the water was turned on again. Even when the water was ‘on’ or the tanks were full, conservation of water was the mantra of the household. My host mother had developed an elaborate system for saving and reusing water which had completely shaped the ways she went about keeping up her house. Despite this, I have never been in a cleaner house. A few kilometres away, Israeli settlers have unfettered access to all the water they can use, for which they pay a small fraction of the price paid by Palestinians (Ma’an, 2011 p5). Women looking after their houses in settlements never have to make a decision whether to have a shower or wash
their floors. In an interview in the village of Nabi Saleh, one woman told me about how the strict control of water is an important part of how the occupation makes life difficult for Palestinians: ‘Even water, we have a problem with water, we only have water 12 hours per week, so ah, for the 12 hours we have to fill the water tanks on the roofs so we can make sure there will be water for the rest of the week. The settlers are enjoying our water 24/7’ (‘M’ interview 14, Nabi Saleh 2012).

The following military orders apply to Palestinians in the West Bank. As Israeli settlers in the West bank are subject to Israeli civil law, these laws do not apply to them.

‘Military Order 92, issued on 15 August 1967, granted complete authority over all water-related issues in the OPT to the Israeli army. Military Order 158 of 19 November 1967 stipulated that Palestinians could not construct any new water installation without first obtaining a permit from the Israeli army and that any water installation or resource built without a permit would be confiscated. Military Order 291 of 19 December 1968 annulled all land and water-related arrangements which existed prior to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank’ (Amnesty International, 2009 p12).

Military orders relating to water in the West bank thus create a relationship between Palestinian and Israeli subjects, wherein Israeli subjects enjoy unfettered access to water while Palestinian subjects receive less water when it is in high demand by Israelis, particularly during summer months. The differing subjectifications in place as a result of the different application of law and control of natural resources means that Palestinian women are almost always water ‘insecure’ and they have to adopt practices of water saving and conservation which impact the ways in which they conduct their daily lives. As the bulk of housework and caring for children is allocated to women and girls, the burden of being water insecure affects them uniquely, and is an intrinsic part of their subject formation (Ma’an 2011 p1).
The subjectification is different again for women who are not connected to the water network and have to rely on purchasing water from tankers. The cost of purchasing water from tankers is often prohibitively expensive, especially in instances where Palestinians have to purchase water from tankers in nearby Israeli settlements. In order to maintain the upkeep of their homes and the care of the children women have to make difficult decisions about how much water they can afford to buy and then they must allocate that water with extreme diligence. Whereas the World Health Organisation recommends a minimum of 100 litres of water per person, per day for drinking, washing, cooking and cleaning to maintain good health and hygiene, families not connected to water supplies in the West Bank often live on as little as 20-30 litres per person per day due to the prohibitive cost of buying water from tankers. There are obvious implications for such a gap between recommended and actual consumption, and women often bear the brunt of consequences of water shortage. The shortage of water is particularly acute for Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley, where

‘The price of water tanks has increased by 101-153% since 2000 due to increased closures. Water in tankers can cost between 14 and 37 NIS per cubic meter. Bedouin families spend around 40% of household income on water while those households who completely depend on water tanks spend over half of household income on water. Comparatively, settlers in the Jordan Valley spend around 0.9% of household income on water’ (Ma’an 2011 p2).

Income inequality between Israeli settlers and Palestinians is thus exasperated by the differences in the price of water being based on whether one is Israeli or Palestinian. The table below demonstrates the disparity in water consumption between the occupied Palestinian territories, Israeli settlements and Israel.
Furthermore, in interviews most of the women to whom I spoke, particularly in Bethlehem and the village of Nabi Saleh mentioned that the tanks they use to store water are shot at by Israeli soldiers with such frequency that it could hardly be seen as collateral damage. Soldiers taking part in Breaking the Silence also give testimony to how they used Palestinian water tanks for target practice (Breaking the Silence, 2010). In situations where the water supply is often turned off, families rely on these tanks for meeting their daily needs. Aside from the cost of replacing the tanks, the additional burden of the loss of water due to gunshots adversely affected every woman who mentioned it to me. A woman from Bethlehem who lived near the town square told me about how her proximity to the square meant that her tanks had been shot frequently.

We are afraid that when we go outside we won’t be able to return to our houses. We don’t know what will happen. One time I was at my mother’s and there was shooting in this area. And they phoned me, my mother-in-law did, to tell me ‘don’t come home now, and your water is leaking on the roof.’ All my water was gone because they shot the tanks. All the water gone. For two weeks I don’t have water, until we repair them. Yani, not one time, not two
One cannot deny the role of water in the subjectification of Palestinians. The uncertainty that comes from not having a continuous supply of water results in a constant preoccupation with storing and conserving water by Palestinian women and the ensuing addition physical burden of these activities. In turn, reliance on stored water increases vulnerabilities because of well-documented instances of water tanks being shot and the family’s supply of water being lost. The subjectification is the result of the difference between Israeli and Palestinian access to water, and an awareness of the differential access to water is a way through which many women experience the daily reality of occupation. For me as a researcher, living without water for several days provided a brief glimpse into how this aspect of occupation is extremely pervasive and challenging for women struggling to carry out daily tasks.

**Access to medical care**

The separation barrier, checkpoints and closures impact Palestinian’s access to healthcare. For women, the subjectification that results from the impediment of access to healthcare has often come at a time of heightened vulnerability: during pregnancy.

‘The need for a permit is especially problematic for pregnant women, who need to get to the hospital in time to give birth. Even though the delivery date is uncertain, the permit given to women about to deliver is valid for only one or two days, as is the case for most sick persons. Therefore, women in their ninth month of pregnancy must go to the DCO every few days to renew the permit’ (B’Tselem 2010a p1).

In a special report given by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the UN General Assembly, the extent of the difficulties faced by Palestinian women in labour is explained.
‘According to the Information Health Centre of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, from 2000 to 2006, 69 cases of Palestinian pregnant women giving birth at Israeli checkpoints had been recorded. As a result of the checkpoints, 10 per cent of pregnant women who wished to give birth in a hospital had been delayed on the road between two to four hours before reaching health facilities, while 6 per cent of them had spent more than four hours for the same journey’ (UNHRC 2007a)

Aside from entailing a clear violation of human rights, the stopping and delaying of women in labour at checkpoints is a means of subjectification. Women who fear being delayed at checkpoints often make the decision to give birth at home, and often these births are not attended by qualified medical personnel, resulting in a substantial risk for the woman and her baby (UNHRC 2009). Women who choose to travel to a hospital while in labour are still at a high risk of an unattended birth if they are delayed or stopped at checkpoints. Of the sixty-nine women reported to have given birth at checkpoints, in 34 cases the babies died.

Women from the West Bank village of Azzun ‘Atma often undertake the decision to leave their village to go live with relatives in other villages during the last month of pregnancy. This is a direct result of the checkpoint system that is in place for the village, which is located in the seam zone and surrounded on all sides by the separation barrier. The village is only accessible through an Israeli controlled checkpoint, and the checkpoint is not open on a 24-hour basis. Therefore, women in their last month of pregnancy fear being stuck in the village when the time arrives for them to deliver. Rather than risk giving birth without medical attention local women leave the village to live with relatives who have direct, 24-hour access to medical care. This means the women have to leave their husbands and children behind for the month, and many women undertake the additional burden of travelling back to Azzun ‘Atma during the day to look after their families, then going back through the checkpoint before it closes every night so as to
ensure that they can give birth with medical supervision should they go into labour while the checkpoint is closed. According to a report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) between January and June 2009, thirty-three babies were born to women of Azzun ‘Atma. Of those, twenty were born to mothers who had left the village and the remaining thirteen were born in the village without the presence of a trained midwife or doctor (UNHRC 2010).

Individual testimonies gathered by B’Tselem document some of the experiences of women who were stopped or delayed at checkpoints while in labour (B’Tselem 2002a; 2002b; 2003; 2006c; 2007b; 2008). One woman, ‘N’ from near Nablus, was seven months pregnant when she started bleeding. She was experiencing severe pain so her husband and mother-in-law decided to take her to the hospital in a car driven by her brother-in-law. Upon arriving at the Huwara checkpoint the soldiers refused to let them cross the checkpoint in the car because her brother-in-law did not have a permit for the car. They told the family that they would have to cross on foot. The family rang an ambulance, but before it could arrive, ‘N’ delivered the baby. The baby was stillborn and shortly after the delivery the ambulance arrived to take ‘N’ to the hospital (B’Tselem, 2008).

In another instance, a female Red Crescent paramedic, ‘D’ gave a testimony of transporting two women in labour, one of them, ‘L’ who was a Jordanian citizen. They picked up the women and their escorts near Huwara checkpoint and were trying to pass back through the checkpoint. ‘D’ gave the soldier at the checkpoint the ID cards of the Palestinians and the Jordanian passport of ‘L’. The soldier told ‘D’ that he would not allow ‘L’ through the checkpoint because she did not have a Palestinian ID, and then made ‘L’ get out of the ambulance. ‘M,’ the driver of the ambulance, got out to speak to the soldiers and they started to beat him. ‘D’ contacted the Red Cross, who arrived to
help. ‘D’ then went with Red Cross representatives to try and find ‘J’ who had walked away from the checkpoint, but they were unable to find her (B’Tselem, 2003).

The UN Population Fund documented the story of ‘F’ who gave birth on the side of the street after three hours of driving from checkpoint to checkpoint in a taxi trying to find one that would let them through. ‘F’ talks of her experience enduring childbirth lying on a road, surrounded by people waiting to pass through the checkpoint.

‘After what I have been through, I hated my body and that of all women. I cannot look at myself in the mirror and breastfeed my own daughter, thinking she was the cause in all of this. For a long time I isolated myself fearing to face my family’s and the neighbours’ questions about the incident. I feel besieged and cannot mentally and psychologically overcome it. I need help’ (UNPFA, 2007).

Stopping and delaying women at checkpoints has a definitive link to Palestinian women’s physical subjectification through the control of their reproduction. Such subjectification warrants great concern, as it represents attempts to control population growth by putting babies and the physical maternal body at risk of death or serious complication. Women are also less likely to receive appropriate prenatal and antenatal care with the current system of checkpoints and the separation barrier. Instances of subjectification aimed at the maternal body as is the case with the delay or denial of access to medical care for pregnant women have affects beyond the women directly affected, as evidenced by the increase in women giving birth at home. The change in method for giving birth presents additional risk as well as additional stress and anxiety, all of which affect women during what is arguably the most vulnerable periods of their lives. As such, it is a particularly brutal yet effective means of subjectification, with the effect of changing how Palestinian women view and approach pregnancy, childbirth and medical care. The lasting impact of these changes on the bodies of Palestinian women is
yet to be seen, but for as long as the checkpoint, closure and barrier system is in place, pregnant women will be subjugated by it through their physical bodies.

Curfew

‘Curfew means that you can be shot just for being in the street’ ‘C’ tells me as we sit at her kitchen table and she recounts the almost continuous curfew imposed on Bethlehem in 2002. She had to leave her house during curfew, because her youngest son was very ill with a dangerously high fever. When she managed to make it to a nearby hospital, people from Bethlehem who knew that she lived near a military base were very surprised that she had managed to get past the soldiers without being shot. She was terrified to return home after getting medicine for her son, she shielded him as she passed soldiers who had their guns trained on her head. (‘C’ interview 8, Bethlehem 2011). In 2002, during the period ‘C’ told me about, the IDF imposed one hundred fifty-six days of 24-hour curfew on the city. ‘Closure of cities entails the closure of schools, shops and access roads. All forms of social and economic exchanges in the community cease; to attempt to circumvent the closure is to risk one’s life’ (Abufarha, 2009 p100). During the height of curfew in Bethlehem, people were allowed out only for a few hours at a time every ten or so days. ‘L’ explained how this impacted her ability to feed her family:

‘During the siege of the Nativity (church), we went 18 days without electricity, 18 days. Because when the tanks were coming they hit the wires of the electricity and it went. No one can come and fix for us the electricity. When we have a curfew we buy a lot of food, chicken, meat, vegetables, grape leaves, and it was okay the first and second day, but after that, it was all ruined. What do I do? We cooked as much as we could for two days, and then what can you do? So I threw everything out that was in my refrigerator. After four or five days I had nothing to cook. And nobody can come to us and we can’t go outside. For 17 days. A neighbour called me and asked for a ‘little bit of salt, a little bit of yeast, I want to make dough for my children, anything to feed them’ (‘L’ interview 4, Bethlehem, 2011).
During the Second Intifada curfews were in effect throughout the West Bank for long periods of time. The graph below illustrates the length of time curfew was implemented and the length of time it was lifted for the two month period of 16 June – 15 August 2002 (60 days, or 1,440 hours). The light section designates time spent in curfew, the darker section represents when the curfew was lifted (B’Tselem 2002c p7).

**Figure 6: Hours spent in curfew: 16 June – 15 August 2002 – Author’s Graph**

When curfews are imposed for such extended periods of time and with such frequency they constitute collective punishment for the Palestinian population subject to them. Curfews have a particular impact on women and they contribute the bodily subjectification of women by preventing or hindering their ability to carry out tasks associated with daily life as well as imposing social isolation. Childcare becomes increasingly difficult when mothers cannot let their children play outside and schools are closed. Women often report difficulties in managing the behaviour of young children who have been confined to the house for days (B’Tselem, 2002c). Existing social support structures from family and friends become inaccessible and tensions within the home can easily rise during extended curfews. There is the further pressure of not knowing
how long the curfew will last. In a 2002 report, B’Tselem documents how no clear protocols exist for initiating or ending a curfew. As a result, even if a curfew is over, many people may not know and are wary of going outside based on rumours from neighbours.

‘Communication between the DCOs is irregular; the declarations of curfew made in the streets do not reach all the residents; similarly, the television broadcasts do not reach all the citizens, and are, in any case, irrelevant during the frequent blackouts. Even when the IDF lifts a curfew, the soldiers do not always inform the residents; rather, the soldiers simply leave the area. In some instances, the soldiers decide to impose a curfew on their own initiative’ (B’Tselem 2002c p31).

A soldier’s testimony to Breaking the Silence illustrates how even amongst units down the chain of command there is mis-understanding about whether or not the area is under curfew: ‘We didn’t always know when the curfew was or was not on. Sometimes......somewhere along the line from the brigade to the battalion, to the company, to the platoon, somewhere along the line the hours always get mixed up. Something is always uncertain’ (Breaking the Silence 2011b). The variation of discourses from different army units leads to different understandings amidst the population as to whether or not curfew is on, and the action connected to that discourse can have fatal consequences for any Palestinian who believes they are not under curfew. Palestinian women are subjugated by the misunderstandings and miscommunications that occur within the army because there is no mechanism which informs them with absolute certainty that the curfew has been lifted. Thus the determinate link between army discourse and the actions of individual soldiers or platoons is tenuous. The ‘official’ end of the curfew has little meaning if one can still be shot for entering the street by a soldier who thinks the curfew is still on.
Total confinement to one’s home presents obvious logistical challenges related to supplies of food, water and cooking gas. If one is unsure of when a curfew will end, the use of limited provisions has to be very carefully planned. As was the case in the story of ‘L’, electric supplies may be down during periods of curfew, and there is no way for repairs to be carried out. Another soldier’s testimony aptly describes patrolling during curfew as ‘It is like being a prison guard, everyone in their cells’ (Breaking the Silence 2011a). The effect of curfew is enacted upon the body through dictating that people are not free to move through their space. Spaces used for selling food, educating children, gathering publicly and moving between these spaces are inhabited only by the bodies of soldiers while Palestinian bodies are confined to private spaces. Curfew is thus an extremely effective means of subjugating Palestinians, and it is a practice entirely reliant on the complete control of physical bodies. Not only is freedom of movement taken away by curfews, but the ability of women to look after their families and care for their children is severely compromised by their inability to go out and buy food, water, cooking gas or other necessities when they need them. If curfews are implemented with short notice, there is no guarantee that a mother will be able to stock her house with sufficient food that will not spoil, enough gas to cook meals, enough water to run the house and necessities for childcare such as diapers or formula. ‘One might say without exaggeration that curfews represent a theft of freedom, the freedom to control your own life in its most intimate and minute details. The effect not only on the individual but also on Palestinian society as a whole is physically, economically, socially and psychologically devastating’ (Keshet, 2006 p16).

The relationships between Palestinian and Israeli bodies are apparent during curfew, especially in the city of Hebron where Israeli settlers live in close proximity to
Palestinians. Curfews are only applied to the Palestinian population, so during times of curfew, Israeli settlers can be seen to walk about freely. Settler women do not face concerns about stockpiling food, entertaining housebound children or running out of diapers, creating a clear disparity between the bodily subjectifications of Palestinian and Israeli women.

**Women and resistance in narrative interviews**

In interviews, the Palestinian women with whom I spoke all put forth their ideas about the role of women in resisting the occupation. While their views on women and resistance varied, the common understanding underlying these views was that it was to be expected that women would find ways to resist the occupation. Many of the women explicitly stated that the roles of women in resistance would vary from woman to woman, and that there was no one specific form that resistance should take. Several women spoke about the importance of using only unarmed resistance while others included militant resistance as an intrinsic part of the mosaic of women’s resistance to occupation. Another common theme which emerged when speaking about women and resistance was that the impression of Palestinians as the belligerent party in the conflict was inaccurate and that they had very little with which they could defend themselves against Israeli aggression. In order to more fully incorporate the experiences and views of my research participants, this section will briefly examine several selections from interviews in order to come to an understanding of some of the ways women saw their roles in resistance and how a connection can be made between occupation, resistance and bodies.

These narratives illustrate how women framed Palestinian women’s resistance as necessary or to be expected:
‘Yani, I think that each and every Palestinian is involved in politics. As we take milk from our mother’s breast the milk is mixed with politics. I think that any occupied country; her women would have some involvement in politics. Now we’re only in one stage, the stage of conflict will pass on’ (‘D’ interview 17 TulkArm 2012).

‘As long as there is occupation there will be resistance. Everyone resists in their own way, there are the fighters, the people who go to demonstrations’ (‘A’ interview 10, Rural Bethlehem 2011).

‘I am defending my homeland and my land.....There is no one to look after us, or defend us, we must defend ourselves. We must look after ourselves. This is why we have to be resilient. Resistance is the correct way, and our belief that one day we will return to our land is what we stick to’ (‘S’ interview 9, Dheisheh Camp, 2011).

‘It’s important to resist because it is our right to resist, our right to take back our land. So Israel is killing us, so we have to fight for our right to exist. They don’t have to take my land for me to resist, if they took someone else’s land they will take mine in the end, so that is enough to resist. So, I am fighting for my rights now even though I have not lost anything because maybe in the future I will lose something (‘S’ interview 16, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

From these narratives we can see how women expect Palestinian women to be involved in resistance because of the impacts of the occupation. In particular, the first example illustrates how resistance to occupation is something that comes naturally with being Palestinian. It is also an interesting example because of the connection the woman giving the interview makes between the maternal body of Palestinian women as being so imbued with resistance that ‘breast milk is mixed with politics’. This view of the maternal body as not only life-giving but also as politicising is a poignant example of how resistance is connected to the physical body and the occupation.

When I asked some women about the role of Palestinian women in resistance they responded by discussing the various means of resistance that women engaged in.

‘Women, uh, few women are in politics, but we resist in uh, in our way of living let’s say. Um, staying in Palestine also, enduring all the difficulties, that we mention, the lack of freedom, the restrictions placed upon us, the wall, not going to Jerusalem, this is resilience, this is sumud, what we call sumud.
Sometimes, according to the circumstances, when there is any occasion, when they bombarded Gaza we went to uh, the Nativity Square and we hold notices and we protested against killing innocent children, against killing innocent families, against uh, demolishing homes. When anyone is killed or arrested we go and support the family, yani, we do legal things, we do non-violent resistance. We try, we try, with our will, with our resistance, we try to resist, but here we are’ (‘J’ interview 2, Beit Sahour, 2011).

‘The Palestinian woman has been resisting the occupation, even the different occupations, not just the Israeli occupations on this land. With Israeli occupation, the women have been resisting it in a very, well they had had a role in all places. The Palestinian woman resists wherever she is, whether she is supporting the non-violent action, when she goes to demonstrations, when she is being patient when her husband or her child is killed or in prison, when the injured come to her house and she gives them first aid, in all these ways, even when she is at home with her children, I think these are all forms of how the Palestinian women resist the occupation’ (‘N’ interview 13, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

‘Ah, Palestinian women, they participated in the resistance from the beginning. You can find Palestinian women martyrs, prisoners, leaders in the resistance. But I think the women here in Palestine, they suffer a lot. More than men. It’s not like I think men don’t suffer to decrease the role of men, but, ah, women, they have their own suffering from the occupation because like men they are arrested, they are injured, they are tortured, but also they have suffered men’s suffering, when her husband is killed or is in jail, or their father, the women are the ones to support the family. She is the one who should raise her children not to forget their rights, she is the one who takes all the pain, but at the same time she should hide this pain, she shouldn’t show her pain and suffering, she should suffer inside, not outside. So, this thing makes Palestinian women very strong women. Even if women are not participating directly in resistance, they are helping in other ways, in any way they can, there is different shapes of resistance, not just resisting the occupation directly, but also teaching their children is a kind of resistance, or to try to build her own career to support her family is another kind of resistance too. There are Palestinian women who have nobody in jail, but they adopt somebody who has no one else, and they go to visit him and buy things for him, even if she is not related to him. So, I think she, the Palestinian women, they should give her a medal for what she’s doing, really’ (‘M’ interview 14, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

These three accounts came from women who are very active in their communities, either in organising demonstrations, working with international media or participating in women’s peace groups. These women, as representatives of popular resistance or peace
movements are involved in ‘obvious’ resistance, but yet they are still very aware and praising of the way Palestinian women resist the occupation in their daily lives. This is very important because these women are not privileging their ‘obvious’ resistance over daily enactments of resistance and are inclusive of a much broader spectrum of Palestinian women’s resistance. Finally, when I asked the mother of one of the female suicide bombers/martyrs whether she thought there was a difference between women’s and men’s resistance she replied:

‘We are the same. We have hands, we have brains, we have intelligence. We have to resist as the men, but each in their own way, in their own thinking’ (‘A’ interview 10 Rural Bethlehem 2011).

Examining women’s narratives on the topic of women’s involvement in resistance is important because it allows for a better understanding of how resistance to occupation is embedded in daily lived experience and is framed as something that all Palestinians, men and women, have the right to engage in. This challenges dominant understandings from a state-centric perspective that frame resistance as primarily a militant activity. In starting from the daily lived experiences of Palestinian women, alternative understandings of resistance are multiple and involve a wide spectrum of Palestinian society.

Killing

Multiple discourses surround Palestinians killed by the Israeli army or Israeli settlers. Palestinians involved in national struggle, particularly if they are members of a particular faction are ‘terrorists’ in official Israeli state discourse as well as in most international media sources. Palestinian civilians killed by the army or armed settlers are enmeshed in discourse based on who they were with or what they were doing when
killed. Civilians killed during curfews, at demonstrations, in the company of militants or 
during the 2009 operation in Gaza, are framed in such a way that their status is not that 
of ‘innocent victim’ and very rarely does the Israeli state take responsibility for these 
deaths. Instead, when Palestinian civilians are killed, Israeli state discourse either ignores 
the deaths, blames those killed for being in the wrong place or the wrong company, or 
refers to Israeli civilians killed by Palestinian militants. In contrast, within Palestinian 
society, any Palestinian killed by Israelis, no matter the circumstances, are known as 
martyrs.

During the course of my field research, I spoke with three women whose children 
were martyrs. Two teenage boys died during the First Intifada, one teenage girl during 
the second. The girl was a suicide bomber/martyr who killed two Israelis in a 
supermarket, and while her mother told me that she herself did not agree with these 
type of martyrdom operations, she refused to denounce what her daughter had done. 
She told me about the afternoon that she learned what her daughter had done:

Then the news said that the girl was from Dheisheh camp! It was getting 
 nearer to us! Ayat was at school! But when they said that the girl who carried 
out the operation was from Dheisheh camp, a fire burned in my heart. I 
wanted to know where Ayat was! I went to Ayat’s friend’s houses and asked 
them where Ayat was, and one of them told me that Ayat was coming. My 
daughter asked me ‘Why are you worried?’ Something inside me was not 
okay. I put on my jacket to ask more people where Ayat was. I heard shooting 
and screaming in the streets. Then the television gave the name of the girl, it 
was another name they gave. While I was going out of the house, many 
people were coming towards our home, marching, with flags, many people, 
coming towards us. I gasped. My sons turned off the TV. I told them to turn it 
back on. I saw that one of my sons was passed out on the floor, and another 
one of my sons was hitting his own head, and my husband was screaming. I 
asked him what was wrong, and he said that he saw on the news that Ayat 
had carried out the operation. They said that two Israelis were killed, and a 
lot were injured’ (‘A’ interview 10, Rural Bethlehem, 2011).
In this case, the daughter was celebrated within Palestinian society and vilified internationally. Her death had a long-lasting impact on her family, and her mother reported to me that after her husband had been in ill health since his daughter had died. Often international discourse focuses on how Palestinian families celebrate when their children become martyrs, though this does not necessarily represent the private mourning the family goes through.

Ayat was celebrated publicly in Dheisheh camp, her portrait adorns a large wall on the main road that runs through the camp. Despite this, Ayat’s mother explained to me that she did not think people understood the sacrifice that Ayat had made. The tone of the interview mirrored the complexity of the situation for Ayat’s mother. She spoke of the sadness and suffering that came from Ayat’s death, the suffering that came from the Israeli occupation, the sacrifice of Ayat and her claim that the blood of Palestinians is seen internationally as ‘cheap’. The conversation with Ayat’s mother brings to light the complex nature of martyrdom operations/suicide bombings in contrast to the simplistic dichotomies often portrayed by Israelis, Palestinians and the international media. Ayat’s death had a lasting impact on her family and formed them as subjects in very particular ways. Ayat’s actions resulted in the demolition of the family home, the black-listing of the family in the eyes of the Israeli army and international NGOs, severe financial difficulties and the health problems mentioned by her mother. There will be a more extensive examination of female martyrs/suicide bombers in the final section of this chapter.
The mother of the first teenage boy was making a snack for her son during a curfew. Outside, the shebab were throwing stones at the cars of settlers. One settler came out of his car and started firing a gun, and one of the bullets came through the kitchen window and struck her son, killing him instantly. She told me about the difficulties her family encountered trying to bury her son later that night:

‘At 12 o’clock at night they told us we could go and have the funeral. We went in a bus, we were 40 or 50 people. When we reached Shepherd’s Field we found a jeep of soldiers blocking the road. They told us, ‘you have to go back, only 20 people can come to the funeral, only 20 close family members can go to the church.’ At first they refused to let me pass. I told them ‘I am his mom! I have to go and see him!’....The priests prayed for only 15 minutes. We took his body to the cemetery. They refused to let us ring the bell of the church, which is a tradition, so people can hear that someone has passed away and they can attend, but the soldiers refused. They came into the church to look and count to see if there were more than 20 people in the church. Some people hid under the pews in order to attend and the soldiers made them leave. When we went to the cemetery they refused to let us bring lights or candles. It was one in the morning. They refused to let us put a light on, so we buried him in darkness. Many young men were hiding around the graves to participate in his funeral. They had imposed more curfew on people. But people came, not through the main roads, but they came secretly from the country-side. They snuck in to give their condolences. I knew people cared. But I lost my son’ (‘S’ interview 3, Beit Sahour, 2011).

The loss of her only son resonated through the house almost two decades later as I sat in her living room. A large picture of her son hung on the wall. Since his death she says she has been experiencing health problems, which she attributes to the sadness and stress. She also spoke of the impact that his death has had on her husband, and how she can see how much he struggles emotionally. There was a brief period of relief for the family when the settler who shot her son was found guilty of wrongful killing, but he appealed the findings was found not guilty. Like the family of Ayat, the family faces repercussions because her son was killed. It is often the case that the families of martyrs are not given

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28 youth
permits to visit Jerusalem for fear of reprisal. As such, the family has not been able to go to Jerusalem to worship for Christmas or Easter since her son’s death. Even her daughter had great difficulty getting a permit to go to Jerusalem after her new-born baby was taken to hospital there. The continued imposition of the status of being the mother of a martyr has lasting effects on her freedom of movement, though she says she does not like to go anywhere.

The second teenage boy was well-known by the Israeli army because he attended every demonstration in Dheisheh refugee camp. One day, while he was taking part in a demonstration, he was shot in the stomach, which didn’t kill him on impact, but left him with massive internal injuries when the bullet fragmented. After travelling to the United States for medical treatment, he lived for almost two more years before he succumbed to his injuries. His mother told me about how after his return from the U.S., he would still attend demonstrations despite his poor health:

‘A girl from Dheisheh was shot in her elbow. [M] and his friends went to the hospital to donate blood, but when the nurse saw him, she kicked him out of the line because he needed blood himself, he could not donate. Whenever there were demonstrations [M] would go and the Israelis would always arrest him. So I would go to the Red Cross and tell them that [M] had been arrested and the Red Cross would go and bring him home. He managed to get his weight up, up to 65kg. But he could not run, so at demonstrations they would catch him because of this. He used to go to Jerusalem to hospital, he was going there on the day of the al-Aqsa massacre (8 October 1990), and two of his friends were killed there that day. He began to be very depressed. His lungs and his kidneys failed and on 22 October 1990 he was in hospital and bleeding internally and he died’ (‘S’ interview 9, Dheisheh camp, 2011).

The mother of this martyr showed great pride for the determination of her son to resist the occupation. Her son was very well known in the camp before he was shot, as he was always active in demonstrations. After he was shot he became even more of a hero, and she spoke with pride when she told me of how many people came to see him in the
hospital or to welcome him home from the United States. Photos of him and newspaper clippings from his trip to the U.S. adorn almost every available surface in one room of their house, and after the interview was invited into the room where she showed me all of his photos. One of the most prominent of these photos is one of her son in a hospital bed in Jerusalem, shortly after he was shot, where he is making the sign for ‘victory’. She exemplified the model of the ‘mother of the martyr’ in her pride in her son and his status of martyr. Her husband, who accompanied his son to the United States, told me that his son’s first wish was to return to Dheisheh to see his mother. It was undoubtedly very difficult for her to see him attending demonstrations again after he had been shot, but she only mentions how determined he was to continue being active in resistance.

According to B’Tselem (2009; 2012) between 2000 and 2012, there have been 6,662 Palestinians killed by the Israeli army and Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel. This means that there are 6,662 ‘mothers of the martyrs’ who are experiencing the unique subjectification that comes from having a son or daughter killed by Israel. The subjectification comes from multiple sources. In part it comes from within Palestinian society, where those who are martyred and their still living families are attributed a high status. There is also the subjectification that comes from the Israeli state denying permits to enter Israel to the families of those who were killed. Finally is the physical subjectification that often occurs through the bodies of the mothers of martyrs who report having lasting health problems or seeing health problems in their family members as a result of sadness or stress. As mentioned with the case of the mother of Ayat, being the mother of a martyr, regardless of the circumstances behind the death results in an extremely complex array of subjectifications which act in and through her physical body, restricting her movement, causing her health problems, or
exulting her as someone to be revered. The stories told to me by three ‘mothers of the martyr’ represent only the smallest of examples of how the killing of Palestinians is an element of the subjectification of women in the occupation, and thus these stories cannot be seen as the only ways in which women experience their children’s martyrdom.

Female Martyrs

In Western and Israeli discourse relating to Palestine, few actions have garnered as much attention as suicide bombers/martyrs, particularly the advent of female suicide bombers/martyrs in 2002. The actions of the ten women who carried out suicide bombings/martyrdom operations 2002-2006 have been scrutinised, analysed and condemned from almost every conceivable angle, as was shown in the literature review chapter of this project. The aim of this section is to explore how these operations are embedded within Palestinian practices of resistance to occupation, how they pose a direct bodily challenge to bodily subjectification and how the level of attention they attracted is related to their bodies and gendered performativity.

Suicide bombings/martyrdom operations have been used in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict since the First Intifada, but they were a largely marginal practice until the Second Intifada. Abufarda (2009) argues that in order to understand the practice of conducting martyrdom operations, it is essential to understand how they became a part of the Palestinian discourse of resistance to Israeli occupation. He argues that at the start of the Second Intifada, martyrdom operations began to gain more popular support, and there was no longer a need for factions to recruit carriers as there were so many volunteers. The increase of popular support pushed more factions into adopting the tactic. In turn, as more factions took up martyrdom operations, support
was further widened because operations were no longer only sponsored by Islamist groups, but also by secular groups like the PLFP. By the time the al-Aqsa Martyrs brigade (Fatah) took up martyrdom operations and began to send women, martyrdom operations were embedded as part of the discourse of Palestinian resistance. One important aspect of martyrdom operations within the Palestinian resistance movement is the aim of using them to ‘shame’ Arab states into action. By and large, most Arab states had made peace with Israel after the 1973 war, whether through official agreement or de facto restraint. As such, Fatah has made it part of their strategy to put pressure on neighbouring Arab states not to normalise relations with Israel. Three of the four female martyrs sent by Fatah between January 2002 and April 2002 all used their last messages to point out the silence of Arab states on the issue of Palestine (Abufara 2009, p135). On the afternoon of Wafa Idris’ martyrdom operation, Arafat addressed Palestinian women at a rally saying ‘You are my army of roses that will crush the Israeli tanks’ (Victor 2003 p19).

Whereas Islamic Jihad and Hamas were originally opposed to sending women for martyrdom operations, there was significant pressure on them to include women after the al-Aqsa brigade sent four women in four months. In particular, pressure increased on Hamas after they turned down Dareen Abu ‘Aissheh for an operation. Dareen was already part of Hamas, but their refusal to send her did not stop her from becoming the second female martyr. She was sponsored by al-Aqsa, but she is seen wearing a Hamas headband in her martyrdom posters. Prior to her operation, the founder of Hamas, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, had stated that women did not have a role to play in martyrdom operations, arguing that the purpose of a woman’s body was primarily maternal and the she represented ‘The second defence line in the resistance to occupation’ (Hasso 2005
p31). Interestingly, in her martyrdom video, Dareen provided a direct challenge to the statement of Yassin, saying that the role of the Palestinian woman in resistance ‘will not be confined to weeping over a son, brother or husband’ (ibid). She not only enacted resistance to the occupation, but challenged the founder of her faction. Discourse by Islamist factions began to shift as debates ensued about whether or not women seeking martyrdom could leave their houses without men, what the Prophet said about women in battle and the fatwa issued by spiritual leader of Hezbollah decreeing that female martyrs were the ‘authors of a new and glorious history for Arab and Muslim women’ (ibid p33). As discourse changed within the Islamist factions about the role of women in martyrdom operations, the fifth and sixth female martyrs, Hiba Daraghmeh and Hanadi Jaradat, were sent by Islamic Jihad, and the seventh female martyr, Reem al-Riyashi, was sent by Hamas. These utterances are important because they represent how actions are justified or supported by re-negotiations, changes and challenges in discourse. The changes in discourse also reflect how the Palestinian culture of resistance changed with the advent of martyrdom operations carried out by women. The first women to carry out operations forced a shift in discourse, which opened up possibilities for more women to carry out operations.

Abufarha is critical of Western and Israeli research which seeks to establish a profile of suicide bombers/martyrs. He argues that martyrs come from a wide variety of backgrounds and personal experiences. Instead:

‘it is the discourse of martyrdom in Palestine that blends personal experience with local knowledge and situates cultural ideas in relation to mimetic encounters with Israel and opposition to its policies: this discourse generates a poetics rich in sensory meanings and political goals that provide a system of motivation’ (Abufarha 2009 p138).
As martyrdom operations became a part of the Palestinian culture of resistance they were intelligible and thus attractive to more and more Palestinians. The operations became part of the culture of resistance because of their power to represent an extremely powerful and memorable means of resisting occupation. As martyrs are remembered publically, their martyrdom operations are extremely visible in the public sphere. Part of this visibility can be attributed to martyr’s posters which cover public spaces throughout the occupied territories. Anyone who is martyred in any circumstance is eligible for public commemoration on a martyr poster, but the posters of those who committed suicide bombings/martyrdom operations serve to remind the Palestinian public that anyone can choose to become a martyr. Abufarha argues that a discourse which melds personal experience with cultural ideas is necessary for martyrdom operations to become part of the Palestinian culture of resistance. The decision to become a martyr cannot be explained by simplified searches for motivation, as the decision is extremely personal for the potential martyr, but also mediated through the cultural intelligibility of martyrdom operations. ‘In this respect, the individual is not separate from the social analysis, and the cultural representations are not separate from first-hand experience’ (ibid p139). This approach to analysing martyrdom operations acknowledges that carrying out an operation is a choice undertaken individually, but the choice is embedded in cultural discourse that determines how the operation is intelligible to Palestinian culture and how the operation symbolises resistance to the experiences and interactions with Israel. Clearly, such an approach is a valuable starting point for analysis because it acknowledges the complexity of motivating and legitimising factors of martyrdom operations within the Palestinian discourse of resistance.
If one examines the discourses uttered by the ten Palestinian women who became suicide bombers/martyrs, as told in their martyrdom videos, as well as testimony from women who were prevented from carrying out their attack, a very clear relationship between bodily oppression and bodily resistance emerges. One woman who was apprehended before she could detonate her explosive device expressed a very clear relationship between resistance and her body: ‘I have to tell the world that if they do not defend us, then we have to defend ourselves with the only thing we have, our bodies. Our bodies are the only fighting means at our disposal’ (Zedalis 2004). Andaleeb Takafka, the fourth Palestinian suicide bomber/martyr said: ‘I’ve chosen to say with my body what Arab leaders have failed to say...My body is a barrel of gunpowder that burns the enemy’ (Hasso 2005 p29). Hanadi Jaradat said: ‘By the power of Allah, I have decided to become the sixth female martyrdom-seeker, who will turn her body in to shrapnel’ (Gentry, 2009 p244). Reem Saleh al-Riyashi used a similar way of likening her body to a weapon when she said: ‘I hope that the shredded limbs of my body would be shrapnel, tearing Zionists to pieces, knocking on heaven’s door with the skulls of Zionists’ (McGreal, 2004). These four statements illustrate the way these four women linked their own bodies to the act of resistance against the Israeli occupation.

The idea of bodies being the only means of resistance at the disposal of Palestinians can be found in other narratives. In one interview the participant brought up the subject when detailing how it is not the Palestinians who should be seen as terrorists:

They need to understand that we don’t use weapons, we don’t have weapons, we are not terrorists as Israel would like to call us, we are only defending what is our right. We don’t have anything. We don’t have planes, we don’t have a military with big weapons, that they use to kill us, to kill our
children. We only have our bodies to defend ourselves’ (‘D’ interview 17, TulkArm 2012).

When I asked her later in the interview to talk more about the relationship between bodies and resistance she replied: ‘It’s a general idea, none of us have anything else to fight with’ (ibid). If one examines the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories as similar to colonialism, it becomes easy to understand how the strict control and subjectification of Palestinian bodies and the material resources they have access to, results in Palestinians having nothing but their bodies as a viable means of resistance. In terms of technology and materials, the requirements for manufacturing an explosive belt are very simple in contrast to the complex weapons and defence systems used by Israel. Using one’s body as a means of delivering the explosive device allows for a simple device to have an especially dramatic impact.

I argue that it also represents a direct connection between bodily subjectification and bodily resistance. If the elements of the dispositif are aimed at maximising the control over the bodies of Palestinians, then suicide bombing/martyrdom operations represent a direct challenge to that physical control. Not only are the female suicide bombers/martyrs refusing to let the occupation exercise power over their bodies, they are using their physical bodies as the means by which they exercise resistance to the occupation. Returning to the argument made by Abufarha, the phenomena of suicide bombings/martyrdom operations have to be seen through the melding of individual choice and cultural intelligibility. In the case of Palestine, both of these are mediated by the experience of occupation. Therefore, one’s personal decision to become a suicide bomber/martyr is formed through one’s own experiences with occupation, all of which are individual and personal, but in the larger picture, the cultural intelligibility of
martyrdom operations is also shaped by decades of resistance to and experiences of occupation. The occupation is so thoroughly embedded in the collective experience of Palestinians that it shapes and dictates the culture of resistance to it. In no way is this to argue that every Palestinian has ambitions of resisting occupation through martyrdom operations, but rather, for a period of time, martyrdom operations were undertaken by individuals who perceived that for them, a martyrdom operation was the way they could best enact resistance to an individual and collective experience of occupation.

Suicide bombings/martyrdom operations during the Second Intifada were ‘successful’ in that they challenged Israeli perceptions of security. For Palestinian militant factions and the suicide bombers/martyrs they sent, bombing operations brought some of the insecurities experienced by Palestinians as a result of the occupation into the everyday civilian lives of Israelis. This is not to support or defend the operations, but rather to explain the logic behind them. ‘The Palestinian sacrificers who take their lives into their own hands assert agency, control, and independence. Their performance communicates control over self-destiny in the face of political domination, curfews, imprisonment, terrorizing and constant harassment and abuse that Palestinians are subject to through their encounter with Israel’ (Abufarha 2009 p185). As a result of occupation, Palestinians experience insecurity in their daily lives, whether the result of army incursions, house demolitions, arrest, imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killings, etc. These insecurities affect not only Palestinian militants, but ordinary civilians. The experiences of occupation have thus become the daily lived reality for the Palestinian population of the occupied territories. Whereas soldiers in the Israeli army may have familiarity with these insecurities and have experienced insecurities of their own as a result of serving in the occupied territories, the Israeli public overall had less perception
of how daily life under occupation resulted in insecurity for ordinary Palestinians. The advent of suicide bombings/martyrdom operations dramatically changed Israeli perceptions of insecurity in public spaces in Israel.

The spectacle of suicide bombings/martyrdom operations is powerful for the violent disruption to daily life, and it is aimed not only at inflicting as many casualties as possible, but doing so in such a way that makes the broader society feel in-secure, ill-at-ease, worried, fearful and reluctant to enter public spaces and maintain normal daily life. Previous perceptions of security in ordinary spaces such as buses, pizzerias or markets are challenged by the possibility that someone amongst you could suddenly turn their body into a bomb. The bodily performance of suicide bombing/martyrdom is precisely what makes the feelings of insecurity so intense. After the bombing/martyrdom operation of Hanadi Jaradat, the Egyptian writer Huwaidi wrote in a pan-Arab newspaper al-Hayt:

‘Hanadi passed all the barriers, lines and checkpoints to hit in the depth because she knows if you have the advantage in the power scale, she has the advantage in the scale of fear. If you have the exclusive rights to the aircraft and the tank, she has the exclusive ownership of the human bomb. No one but her owns this weapon and it is homemade, it walks in every landscape, space and all directions’ (Huwaidi 2003 in Abufarha 2009 p172).

This discourse relates both to the notion that Palestinians have little to use in resistance but their bodies in comparison to Israeli’s superior military technology, as well as to the idea that the embodied resistance of suicide bombing/martyrdom operations gives Palestinian resistance a different kind of superiority – that of instilling fear of in-security into Israeli society. From an operational perspective within militant factions, suicide bombings/martyrdom operations are effective because the inferior military equipment and training of Palestinian militants means they are not able to engage with Israeli tanks.
Sending a bomber/martyr to the target within Israeli civilian society is mimetic of the violence that is brought by the Israeli army into Palestinian civilian areas and it represents the way Palestinian militant factions can make the biggest impact. For the bomber/martyr, there is a further symbolic achievement when they are able to ‘penetrate’ into Israeli civilian life with their physical bodies. Reaching their target without being intercepted makes their mission successful for tactical as well as symbolic reasons.

Hasso argues that when examining the discourses left behind by female suicide bombers/martyrs they ‘represented their acts as explosive and embodied action, recognizing that it was more dramatic and dangerous because they are women’ (Hasso, 2005 p29). Their action as more dramatic is linked to their gendered bodies and dominant perceptions of the nature of women’s bodies. The drama is thus inherently a result of bodies. The problem is this; the suicide bombers/martyrs themselves gave reasons for their actions, but since Wafa Idris became the first woman to be a suicide bomber/martyr in Palestine/Israel, journalists, authors and scholars have been competing with each other to disprove or prove that her attack and the nine others that followed were political actions. This infatuation stems from a fundamental discomfort that we have when a woman blows herself up. This is not to say that we should be comfortable with such events. Rather it signals that we are bothered by gender of the actor and how we perceive her to be challenging our ‘knowledge’ of women’s bodies. Our total discomfort with the advent of female suicide bombers/martyrs is linked to our continual perceptions that the bodies of women have a role to play in society, and that role is not to become a ‘living bomb’. This is not meant to propose that it is ‘natural’ for a man to blow himself up, but our different reactions to men and woman suicide
bombers/martyrs is linked to physical bodies and the gendered constructs of the roles of men’s and women’s bodies. If we were not innately uncomfortable with the actions of specifically female suicide bombers/martyrs, then we would not be so preoccupied with questions of motivation and agency. The Palestinian woman who becomes a ‘living bomb’ is challenging our knowledge of women’s bodies, and it makes us so uncomfortable that we have to challenge her own messages of why she did it.

Returning to the martyrdom video of Dareen Abu ‘Aissheh, we can see a particular instance of how Palestinian women deny that the only purpose of their bodies is reproduction. Stating that —‘Let Sharon the coward know that every Palestinian woman will give birth to an army of martyrs, and her role will not only be confined to weeping over a son, brother or husband instead, she will become a martyr herself’ (Hasso, 2005 p31). With the discourse of her martyrdom operation and her martyrdom video, Dareen challenges the perceptions that a woman’s body only has a maternal role and that the role of women in resistance is related to that maternal body. Instead, her discourse represents a radical gendered performance which through its action destabilises dominant understandings of women’s bodies. Her spoken statement is a necessary part of the radical performance because she is framing her actions as a re-articulation of Palestinian women’s roles in resisting the Israeli occupation. This statement, in conjunction with her martyrdom operation contributed to the changes in dialogue of Islamist groups in relation to women’s participation in martyrdom operations. This is not to argue that women who carry out martyrdom operations are more liberated in choosing to do so, but rather, that their actions can be seen as a gender performance that provocatively challenges ideas about women’s bodies as primarily maternal bodies.
Again, the bodily nature of suicide bombings/martyrdom operations cannot be downplayed. Through utilising her body not only as the means of bringing the explosives to the target, but as the site of the explosion, Palestinian female martyrs are enacting bodily performativity - the performance of exploding one’s body is what makes suicide bombing/martyrdom so provocative. That it is a woman’s body that explodes makes an already provocative act even more so because it demonstrates in an altogether graphic way that women’s bodies are not merely maternal or the means of the reproduction of a nation, but that a woman’s physical body can be used as a weapon. If the aim of suicide bombing/martyrdom operations is to bring the realities of occupation back to Israelis and bring about feelings of insecurity into Israeli society, the radical gendered performativity of female martyrs can be seen as extremely effective because of their gendered physicality. Female suicide bombers/martyrs are less expected, and the bodies of Palestinian women are generally less suspect than the bodies of Palestinian men. If the bodies of women are perceived to be better suited to life-giving than life-taking, then the instances where women turn their bodies into bombs are more unsettling and lead to greater feelings of insecurity for Israelis. Thus the performances of female suicide bombers/martyrs are de-stabilising predominant perceptions within Israeli society about which Palestinian bodies pose the greatest threats to their security because after 2002, the previously ‘maternal’ bodies of Palestinian women have also been turned into weapons.

Here we can return to Butler’s concept of gendered performativity for support. If gendered performativity is: ‘To say however that gender is performative is not simply to insist on a right to produce a pleasurable and subversive spectacle, but to allegorize the spectacular and consequential ways in which reality is both produced and contested’
(Butler 2004b, 30). Suicide bombing/martyrdom can be seen as an instance where the expected actions of the bomber’s/martyr’s gender are spectacularly contested. It is through such challenges to bodily gender norms that these norms can be subverted and re-articulated. Again, the physical body of the bomber/martyr is important because the body is the site of expected norms (maternity) which through action (explosion) challenges perceptions about the role of the female body.

To conclude, in examining the subjectification and resistance of Palestinian women through bodies it is essential to look at the actions of the Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs. However, in doing so it is crucial not to resort to merely calling their motivations into question. Their actions have to be seen as individual choice mediated through a very specific cultural context wherein martyrdom operations have been moderated and imbued with meaning. Their actions must also be examined from a bodily perspective, as they are radical and provocative performances of resistance which resist their subjectification by Israeli power through using their physical bodies as weapons. Furthermore, this bodily performance acquires more meaning because of their gendered bodies and the challenge they enact to the expectations that the purpose of their bodies is primarily maternal. In many ways, the example of Palestinian female suicide bombers/martyrs illuminates numerous elements of the dispositifs of occupation and resistance as something that has to be examined through physical bodies.
Conclusion – Back to checkpoint 300

Assessing the aims of the project

This project set out to determine how the practices of the occupation contribute to the formation of Palestinian women as de facto subjects of Israel, as well as how counter-practices contribute to how Palestinian women resist this subjectification. This project has illustrated how Palestinian women have been formed as de facto (in)secure subjects through breaking down into individual elements the practices, processes and procedures that are part of the exercise of power in the occupied territories. It thus argues that processes of securitisation are best examined when broken down into the individual components. This project also demonstrates the countless counter-conducts, counter-practices and counter-processes that Palestinian women engage in to resist the corporeal subjectification and (in)security that results from the apparatus of occupation.

As a Feminist project, the aim was to conduct an analysis of how experiences of occupation and resistance demonstrate that the personal is international (Enloe, 1990). This project, drawing upon inspiration from Foucault and inspiration from how individual Palestinian women narrate occupation and resistance, demonstrates that practices/processes/procedures of power that formulate (in)secure subjects, will result in resistances, challenges and counters to those practices. Some of these resistances will be spectacularly violent, and some will appear as almost mundane elements of daily life, and most will be found somewhere on the spectrum between, but this project demonstrates that resistance is inseparable from the exercise of power and that both are best examined from the perspective of daily-lived experience.
In the introduction I proposed the following questions:

1. What are the practices through which Palestinian women are formed as subjects to the occupation? In other words, what is the dispositif of occupation?

2. What are the practices through which Palestinian women enact resistance to their positions as subjected to occupation? In other words, what is the dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance?

The practices of occupation and resistance examined in the preceding chapter are elements that constitute the apparatuses of occupation and resistance, and they are informative of how Palestinian women come to be formed as *de facto* subjects. The preceding chapter also uncovers the exclusions of IR by privileging women’s lives. In doing so, it examines how Palestinian women are formed as (in)secure subjects, and dedicates equal importance to enactments of resistance. Centring the project on women’s lived experience keeps the project true to its Feminist aim of uncovering how ‘the personal is international and the international is personal’ (Enloe, 1990; 2000).

Rather than examining what occupation is or what resistance is, the preceding chapter can help determine the processes/practices/procedures through which Palestinian women come to be formed as subjects through their bodies. The practices, procedures and processes of occupation work in conjunction, harmony, coalition and collusion to formulate Palestinian women as *de facto* subjects of power exercised by such actors as the Israeli state, the military complex, and settlers. The approach of this project brings the occupation and resistance to occupation outside of the sphere of the state. Instead of examining security practices from the perspective of the state, it examines the effects of those practices on the subject formation of individuals through an examination of daily-lived experiences of subjectification and resistance, thereby
demonstrating how processes of security create (in)secure subject and how processes of security are resisted.

The dispositif of occupation functions by controlling, regulating and disciplining Palestinian corporeal bodies to heighten their corporeal vulnerability and to make them (in)secure. The apparatus of occupation functions through discourse (i.e. Judea and Samaria, ‘terrorism’), architecture (the wall, checkpoints, settlements), differential application of law (civil vs. military) custody (imprisonment, exile, detention, curfew), violence (torture, extrajudicial killings, assassinations, lethal use of ‘non-lethal’ weapons), threats and intimidation (of violence, of arrest, of exile, of house demolition), and surveillance (checkpoints, house incursions, curfew). Through these processes/practices/procedures, Palestinian women experience the corporeal subjectification that forms them as the subjects who can be made (in)secure. This project thereby sheds light on the nature of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. It demonstrates through reference to daily-lived experience that the aim of the occupation is to control, discipline and regulate Palestinian life, while at the same time promoting and supporting freedom of movement and access to resources to Israeli settlers. In this sense, the occupation represents a unique form of biopolitics.

The dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance is composed of elements that aim to re-humanise and de-subjugate Palestinians. The elements of resistance work in conjunction, harmony, or sometimes dis-harmony with each other to reassert Palestinian women as subjects who can be legitimately formed as (in)secure. The dispositif of resistance functions by re-asserting territorial, architectural, cultural, historical corporeal control over the occupied territories and daily-lived experiences. Elements of the dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance insist that daily life not be made (in)secure,
they insist upon the right of a Palestinian corporeal presence in the territories, they actively enact resistance to passive consent and acceptance of the ‘normalcy’ of the occupation.

Enactments of resistance, such as Hana Shalabi’s rejoicing in the Israeli ‘concession’ to exile her to the Gaza Strip counter, challenge and resist Israeli attempts to impose punishment on her. Women march in demonstrations and put their bodies between their villages and the IDF, denying passivity and consent of the military presence in their village. Mothers encourage their children to stay in the occupied territories to endure hardship, economic limitation and limited opportunity – counter to everything we think of as ‘natural’ for parents to want for their children. In doing so they counter procedures and processes aimed at driving Palestinians abroad. Women find ways to cook dinner, wash clothes, bathe their children and make their homes immaculate with miniscule levels of water – resisting that the small allocation of water to Palestinians should change the appearance of their home or children. Women organise in their communities and amongst themselves to transmit Palestinian culture at every possible turn. In doing so, they draw strength from a culture of ‘sumud’ and in turn re-strengthen the culture of sumud. Women honour the memories of their children who have been killed, resisting that the occupation can ever fully take their children away from them. When imprisoned, women organise amongst themselves to look after each other and maintain their dignity. Sometimes, women find that the path of resistance for them is the path of political violence. They fight with tenacity and determination, or they assist other fighters. Sometimes they resist with extraordinary acts of violence that seem from the surface incomprehensible or deplorable. These are not resistances of coercion
or manipulation, but resistances of complete dedication and determination to challenge, in the way they see most fit, the violence, subjectification and (in)security of occupation.

Thinking about the actions of female suicide bombers/martyrs was important for this project because their actions offer the most fundamental representation of how women can enact resistance through their corporeal bodies. The focus on the ten suicide bombers/martyrs was not intended to argue that this is the ‘best’ form of Palestinian resistance, equally, the intention is not to argue that such actions can only be seen as deplorable for their extraordinary violence. Instead, the focus on female suicide bombers/martyrs is merely intended to illustrate how the suicide bombers/martyrs were enacting the ultimate resistance to having one’s corporeal body controlled and subjugated by the occupation, and their actions are therefore an integral element of the dispositif of Palestinian women’s resistance. In turning their bodies into weapons, these ten women radically challenged the exercise of power that had turned them into de facto subjects of Israel. Abufarha sums up the corporeal aspect of martyrdom well when he argues:

‘The bodily practice of sacrificing Palestinians’ bodies and violence applied against the ‘enemy’ in the same act mediate cultural ideas such as uprooting and rootedness, fragmentation and unity, confinement and freedom, domination and independence……Thus the performances of sacrifice and their cultural representations recreate pre-occupation Palestine, free and naturalized in its Palestinian setting and characteristics. Furthermore, the participants’ taking of their own lives further asserts agency, self-reliance and control’ (Abufarha, 2009 p227.)

Thus, the actions of the ten women deserve an analysis that roots their resistance in relation to the occupation, Palestinian identity and Palestinian history, and other enactments of resistance in order to contest existing analyses that examine the attacks/operations and the women that carried them out completely devoid of cultural,
historical and political context. As a result of the violent and provocative nature of the attacks/operations, they immediately generated enormous international attention, but they should be seen first and foremost as only one part of Palestinian women’s resistance to the occupation. When examined within the context of Palestinian women’s experiences of occupation and enactments of resistance, the attacks/operations illustrate with an undeniable clarity just how determined Palestinian women are to challenge their corporeal subjectification. Just as the elements, practices, procedures and processes of occupation are everywhere in the occupied territories, so are enactments of resistance.

Within International Relations, state-centric security discourses are used to ensure that the agenda of dominant states is centralised in discourse and practice and that ‘ordinary’ individuals are excluded or relegated to the private realm.

Centralising Palestinian women’s experiences of the occupation, the (in)security that results from it, and the resistance they utilise against it demonstrates the fallacy and danger in keeping individual women outside the realm of ‘The International.’ This realisation arises when one accepts that young Palestinian women marching at the head of demonstrations, mothers setting up tents on the sites of their demolished homes, or militant women making maps of Palestine out of empty cigarette boxes are all as much a part of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas. In fact, one can understand much more about the nature of power and resistance by starting from the positions of everyday subjectifications and resistances than one will ever understand by starting from the position of the sovereign state. This project strongly demonstrates precisely why women’s experiences of subjectification, conflict and resistance should be taken seriously and how processes of subjectification and
enactments of resistance are mediated through gender. It thus contributes greatly to Feminist and Critical Security studies by privileging excluded voices, demonstrating precisely how insecurity results from processes of security, and taking resistance seriously in all its forms. It also contributes greatly to how conflict in Israel/Palestine is understood by examining individual elements how power and resistance function, and by insisting that the two should be examined in tandem. Looking at individual elements presents the occupation and resistance to it as multi-faceted, non-uniform, unpredictable, and in flux.

**What can this project tell us?**

In thinking beyond this project, it is important to remember to exercise caution in making over-arching conclusions about the experiences amongst the diversity of Palestinian women. Bedouin women living in the E-1 area east of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Gazan women living under virtual siege, working professional women in Ramallah, women in the ‘closed military zone’ of the Jordan Valley, all have had disparate experiences of subjectification and resistance. Instead of arguing that all Palestinian women experience the occupation and enact resistance to it in the same way, this project advocates taking these disparate experiences as a starting point for analysis in order to come to a deeper understanding of how elements of the occupation function together to subjugate, and how elements of resistance function together to challenge this subjectification.

The most central contribution of this project to the fields of Critical and Feminist Security Studies is the focus on gender. This project, by its very nature of looking for experiences of subjectification and resistance in the everyday lives of Palestinian women, rejects traditionally held notions of the public/private divide. In the occupied territories,
one’s private life is continually subject to external forces. One never knows when the ‘private’ domain of one’s home will be invaded by soldiers or destroyed by bulldozers, when the next family member will become a political prisoner, or if one’s sons and daughters will make it to school and back safely. Tasks that are seemingly mundane activities, such as shopping or turning on the water taps, tasks which are directed at the upkeep of the home and family are continually impeded by checkpoints, soldiers, sanctions, limits or closures. In countless instances, there is no division between the public and private sphere. It is for this reason that starting from the lives of Palestinian women is so important. The experiences women have of subjectification and resistance illustrate most strongly that the continual insistence of traditional Security Studies on the division between the ‘public’ worthy of inclusion in analysis and the relegation of ‘private’ to outside the realm of analysis is a fallacy at best. Women and their daily-lived experiences are integral to exposing this fallacy. This is true not just of Palestinian women, but of many women in zones of conflict throughout the world, for whom the idea of a private realm unaffected by and unable to affect the ‘public’ realm of politics must seem preposterous. Additionally, a gendered approach to occupation and resistance in the oPt demonstrates much more clearly how numerous resistances are, because it relates how women see daily tasks and activities as integral to resistance. This exposure of multiple resistances is only possible in a gendered analysis of subjectification and resistance, and it contributes much to Feminist and Critical Security Studies by demonstrating just how prolific resistances can be when seen from the perspective of daily-lived experience.

In order to most effectively challenge traditional Security Studies it is important not just to start from daily-lived experiences of subjectification and resistance, but the
daily lived experiences of women. In no way is this an argument for excluding the experiences of men, or that the experiences of women in conflict can be typified, but rather a claim that women’s lives have a greater possibility to radically de-stabilise traditional IR and thus contribute to Critical Security Studies because women are often the first to be excluded from the ‘high’ politics of International Security. Their inclusion can thus illuminate facets of subjectification and resistance hitherto disregarded and can demonstrate that the personal truly is international. Experiences of the occupation and of resistance to it take place embedded within daily life. This is demonstrated by an excerpt from my field research journal, on a rainy day where I travelled to a demonstration in Nabi Saleh with a van full of young women from Ramallah:

It was really great to see a demonstration where young women were essentially leading the demo, and where the ones right up at the front. They were brilliant! I had been in a servee from Ramallah with some of them. They were all laughing at a story told by one of the girls, and she translated what was so funny for me. She said ‘I don’t tell my family that I go to demos on Fridays, because, well, they would kill me. So this morning my grandma asked if I would go to Friday prayers with her. I told her I didn’t know, but maybe, inshallah. And then she gave me her umbrella!!’ The girl holds up a flowery umbrella. Everyone was in stitches (Ryan, 14 January 2012, Appendix 2).

This young woman travelled to the demonstration in Nabi Saleh knowing the risks, she left her home that morning negotiating tricky gendered boundaries and norms, and her resistance to the occupation at demonstrations is embedded within her daily-life, such that she left the house with a flowery umbrella to go stand in front of an Israeli Armoured Personnel Carrier. Taking a flowery umbrella to a demonstration illustrates perfectly how occupation and resistance to it is lived experience wherein it is impossible to separate the personal from the international.
Centralising the body as a site/sight where power is exercised to form the subject or to resist that subject formation also contributes to framing war as something that is experienced as Sylvester advocates. For too long the body has been overlooked or ignored in terms of its importance to the exercise of power. Recent challenges to this are welcome, especially in the work of Butler (2004, 2010) and Sylvester (2012a, 2012b). Bodies deserve greater analytical focus because they have continually been the focus of the exercise of power. Power could not effectively create the subject without disciplining, threatening, forming and in some instances, harming the body. It is only when one begins to seriously consider how our bodies move through spaces such as airports, schools, international borders, CCTV areas or the workplace, that one begins to realise that the most fundamental means of exercising power occurs upon our corporeal bodies. Until we commit to centralising the corporeal body in the analysis of power, we will fail to fully understand how power creates subjects. It is not necessary to pass through complex militarised zones of international security like Checkpoint 300 or a zone of conflict to see the exercise of power on the corporeal body, an airport security point, a queue at a bank or a school classroom will suffice, because as Foucault argues, such exercises of power are everywhere. Once one can develop an understanding of how the body is so essential for the exercise of power, it will become clear why centralising the body is so important for any analysis which seeks to interrogate the exercise of power and resistance to it.

Further research could utilise a framework centered on women’s lived, corporeal experience of subjectification and resistance in zones of conflict. In particular, I would encourage using this framework to examine other sites/sights of women’s political violence in order to better contextualise women’s political violence within complex
relationships of power, subjectification and multiple resistances. Critical Security Studies will benefit from such research because it supports the calls of Critical Security Studies to de-centralise the state in analyses of security and see security as a practice. Furthermore, Feminist Security Studies can benefit from such an approach because it attributes great importance to women’s lived experiences and the implications of living in a gendered body without over-looking the wider subjectifications that come into existence through exercises of power.

The principal contribution this project makes to Feminist Security Studies comes from its focus not just on experiences of subjectification, or just experiences of resistance, but its engagement with how the two are intertwined. It is easy for analyses to get caught up in only examining one or the other, but looking at daily-lived experience in the occupied territories demonstrates just how important it is to look at subjectification and resistance simultaneously. There are projects within feminist Security Studies that deal admirably with the relationships between women’s agency and their subjugation (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007; MacKenzie, 2009; Parashar, 2011; Stern, 2006a). Where this project builds and expands upon these works is in structuring the analysis so as to posit subjectification and resistance as inherently connected and as processes that constitute the formation of the subject. Such an approach allows the project to avoid pitfalls of framing women as either victims or perpetrators, and effectively demonstrates and supports MacKenzie’s assertion that attention to women’s and girl’s experience brings a better understanding of conflict and its complicated relationship with gender (MacKenzie, 2009 p260). It also contributes to Sylvester’s calls for Feminist Security Studies to ‘move on’ from detailed reviews of Feminist literature to
‘give weight’ to actual examinations of how women experience conflict (Sylvester, 2012 p59).

The c.a.s.e. collective manifesto argued that within the field of Critical Security Studies, there is often a problematic normativity which separates security from power. Therefore, while securitization is seen as a practice that establishes a ‘politics of exception,’ there is no definition of what constitutes ‘normal’ politics. The manifesto refers to the benefits of a Foucault-inspired approach in this regard, arguing that in such an approach where normality itself is seen as the result of exclusions; ‘Security is therefore not only exceptional, but has constitutive effects upon the normal. Normality is simultaneously a field of struggle, where technologies for constituting subjects and ordering the social come up against the intransigence of political agency and the resistance of political subjects’ (c.a.s.e collective, 2006 p456). This project fits well within this particular view of security put forth by the c.a.s.e. collective.

This project also took up the call of the c.a.s.e. collective that security as practice research should meet three challenges: 1) ‘uncover the hierarchization and exclusion that beset the discipline and practice of IR’ 2) Acknowledge how the practice of securitisation creates insecurity and 3) ‘devote more time to elucidating as clearly as possible processes of resistance from those who are the target of these practices’ (c.a.s.e. 2006 p13). I make the relationship between securitisation and resistance to it clear, and I challenge the exclusion not just of IR, but Critical Security Studies by conducting a gendered analysis of how practices of securitisation creates (in)security.

It thus contributes to Critical Security Studies through expanding, critiquing and building upon existing ideas about how security functions as practice and what the results of that practice are. However, it challenges Critical Security Studies to account for
how processes of securitisation are inherently gendered. Ignoring gender in analyses of securitisation leaves Critical Security Studies with an incomplete understanding of who is made (in)secure in processes of securitisation (Hansen, 2000; Sjoberg, 2009, MacKenzie, 2009). This project demonstrates the importance of understanding securitisation as a gendered process by utilising women’s experiences of occupation and resistance to demonstrate what the absence of gender in Critical Security Studies leaves out, namely that the (in)securities experienced by women in the occupied Palestinian territories and how they respond to them, are often excluded by relegating them to the ‘private’.

In the context of Israel/Palestine, Israeli discourses of security, when examined through the lens of Critical Security Studies, can be seen as practice that enables a politics of exception and (in)security against the Palestinian population. Where this project goes further, in its Foucault-inspired approach, is in the analysis of how such politics of exclusion have become normalised, how (in)security is gendered, how the state is not the only ‘actor’ in such practices, how Palestinians are subjectified through these practices and importantly, how they resist this subjectification.

The methods and results of this project, (to whatever degree one can extract ‘results’) are aimed at the specificity of the occupation of the West Bank of the Palestinian territories. At the outset of this project I had little ability to express why this project might be important for Palestinian women living there. I am still sceptical of the degree to which real change can be catalysed by academic work, and I am still uncertain of the relevance of the theories of a French philosopher to the everyday lives of Palestinian women. However, there are two things of which I can speak with relative certainty with the completion of this research. Firstly, Feminist Security Studies is at its best when it challenges the status quo and refuses claims to objectivity. In taking my own
project seriously, and in embracing the process, I was forced to challenge my own presuppositions on many occasions. I was also forced to examine my own subject position as a researcher, as well as my beliefs of what it meant to be a woman living in a conflict zone. While I consider myself open to taking into account other positions and ideas, I cannot consider myself to be objective at the conclusion of the research. As such, it was written to deliberately challenge the status quo of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

Secondly, there is immense value in research that centralises the experiences of individual Palestinians. If one outcome of the occupation is the de-humanisation of the Palestinian population such that many Westerners take the association of ‘Palestinian’ and ‘terrorist’ for granted it is essential that this association is not accepted. In the current age, the ‘Security’ of the ‘Western’ nation state is practiced with the effect of making ‘the other’ insecure. This is a trade-off that should not be welcomed. There is grave danger in our continual association of the peoples of the Middle East with ‘terrorists’ and throughout my field research it was a theme that was constantly recurring.

This project purposefully highlighted the many ways in which Palestinian women resist the Israeli occupation in order to illustrate their creativity in multiple practices of resistance. Furthermore, the aim of the dispositif of occupation was to demonstrate the incredible hardship, violence, and loss Palestinian women are subjected to. When examined alongside the elements of occupation, the elements of resistance appear as the only logical response. This project was structured in such a way that in examining elements of the occupation in conjunction with elements of resistance, it becomes easier to see that acts of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation should not be perceived as
acts of terrorism. In other words, this project was conducted with the hope that the association of ‘Palestinian’ with ‘terrorist’ is robbed of its necessity.

Linking subjectification and resistance and demonstrating how processes of Israeli ‘security’ make Palestinians insecure should also demonstrate clearly why the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories must end. As long as the occupation shifts, and changes forms but persists, Palestinians will engage in resistance to it. The occupation of 2013 may look less innocuous or less overt than the occupation of 2003, but the reality is that it still results in the subjectification of Palestinians, it still forms Palestinians as subjects who can legitimate be made (in)secure. As long as this continues, resistance will continue. At the time of writing, isolated incidents of violence against Palestinians and by Palestinians against Israeli soldiers are becoming more frequent again. This pattern will not change for the better as long as the occupation continues, and the current round or peace talks will ultimately fail to make either Palestinians or Israelis ‘secure’ as long as the subjectification that results from occupation continues. This project has been highly critical of Israeli policy, but in doing so the aim is to demonstrate that Israeli processes of security in their current form cannot make them ‘secure’ if they make Palestinians (in)secure.

Back to Checkpoint 300

In the introduction, the exercise of power one can witness passing through Checkpoint 300 was outlined. Therefore, it is only fitting that the project concludes with how resistance can also be witnessed at Checkpoint 300. One morning in December 2011, as I waited my turn to pass through the first in a series of turnstiles, a group of Palestinian women in front of me were laughing. The cause of the laughter was a malfunctioning turnstile. It kept getting stuck after letting one woman through. The soldier
in the adjacent hut kept coming out, pushing the turnstile, and returning to his hut. One woman would pass through before it would get stuck again, and the soldier would have to come back out. By the time I arrived behind the women, 3 or 4 had passed through and a further 6 or 7 were waiting. Every time the turnstile got stuck, the women erupted into fits of laughter. Their laughter was infectious for everyone who could see what was happening. Everyone, that is of course except for the solider. As I witnessed the situation I felt lightness in my heart despite the separation wall and narrow turnstile and imposing soldier, and for that reason I argue that the women in fits of giggles were resisting the subjectification of the turnstile, in that they reasserted their humanity and allowed themselves to laugh at the absurdity. Acts of resistance to subjectification are not always grand gestures; they do not necessarily entail putting one’s life on the line (though in the occupied territories this is often the case). Resistance to subjectification, like exercises of power, occur on multiple different levels, through different tactics and in many locations.

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Appendix 1: Ethics board Application

UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
APPLICATION FORM

All applicants must complete this form and include an information sheet and consent form with their application. If you have ticked “yes” to any question on the checklist, please complete this form and the “Advanced Ethics Application Form”.

For Office Use Only: Application No.: ____________

Applicant Details:
Name: Caitlin Ryan
ID Number: 0801135
E-mail Address: Caitlin.Ryan@ul.ie
Department/Programme of Study: Department of Politics and Public Administration
Type of Project (FYP/MA/PhD/Faculty): PhD
Funding Body (where appropriate): N/A
Project: ‘Bodies, Power, Resistance: A Foucauldian Analysis of Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers’
Supervisor/Other Investigators: Dr. Swati Parashar, Dr. Owen Worth

Signature of Applicant ____________________________ Date
Signature of Supervisor/HoD ____________________________ Date

Project Details:

1. Research Plan: (100-200 words)
   I plan to travel to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) between December 2011 and January 2012 to undertake a portion of my research for my PhD dissertation. My research examines the relationships between the Israeli occupation, the physical bodies of women and how they experience the occupation with their bodies, and the advent of female suicide bombers as one form of resistance to the occupation. I plan on using focus groups to interview three different groups within Israel and the OPT. The three groups will be comprised of local Palestinian women, whom I will interview in small groups within villages and towns throughout the OPT, NGOs and other local organisations, especially those who work on women’s issues with the OPT and former Israeli Defence Force soldiers who had experience working at checkpoints within the OPT. My decision to use focus group style interviews will be outlined in the ‘methodology’ section.

2. Research Purpose (100-200 words)
   The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the various ways the Israeli occupation along with the positions of women within Palestinian society has a direct impact on the corporeal bodies of Palestinian women and to seek out any possible
connections between the power imbalances women experience on their bodies and the possibilities of resistance to that power imbalance that take the form of suicide bombing. As the ’subjects’ of a study on suicide bombers are dead (unless they were stopped before they could carry out their attack) I aim to uncover some of the ways that Palestinian women experience power on their bodies within the OPT. In doing so I hope to uncover knowledge about the effects the occupation has on the bodies of women and the ways in which Palestinian women may conceptualise resistance. Furthermore, by interviewing former IDF soldiers who have been stationed within the OPT I hope to include a multitude of perspectives on the occupation, its goals and methods. At a time where international opinion is turning against the occupation, I hope that this project will help to highlight some of the experiences and perspectives of Palestinian women.

3. Research Methodology (100-200 words)

I have chosen to utilise a Postmodern Feminist approach to this project. In doing so I hope to challenge some of the dominate notions of Palestinian women and the occupation they live under. A Postmodern Feminist approach claims that there is no one way of knowing or understanding a situation and therefore posits that the best means of investigating something is to include as many perspectives and views as possible. Furthermore, this approach pays particular attention to the position of the researcher. I am fully aware that my ‘position’ as a white Western woman will influence my project and my position within Palestinian society when I am a guest there. It is important that I understand and acknowledge any biases I may have, so that when carrying out my interviews and the subsequent transcription I can account for that bias. Therefore, one way I can address my position involves the use of focus group interviews wherever possible. My aim in doing so is to highlight the experiences of Palestinians in a setting where they can feel comfortable as a community in the hopes that this will allow for a multitude of experiences to emerge. I will also employ at least one translator for each interview, an Arabic translator for the Palestinian participants and a Hebrew translator for the Israeli participants.

Ethical Considerations for the Proposed Research:

1. Who will your informants be?
My informants will be comprised of three groups: former IDF soldiers who were stationed in the OPT, women’s groups and NGOs within the OPT and groups of individual Palestinian women from towns, villages, cities and refugee camps within the OPT.

2. How do you plan to gain access to/contact/approach your potential informants?
I plan to make contacts within the OPT and Israel through networking with NGOs as well as through networking with several contacts living in the OPT and Israel. I will use email and/or Skype to arrange for interviews and focus groups prior to my trip to the OPT/Israel.

3. What arrangements have you made for anonymity or confidentiality (if appropriate)?
I will not include any of the names of participants unless they specifically ask me to do so. Furthermore, because of the nature of the Israeli border patrol I plan to implement security measures to protect and encrypt the data I collect after I conduct my interviews and prior to my return to Ireland. I plan to encrypt files of my interview recordings after I undertake research so that I can delete the audio files and destroy any notes I have taken prior to my departure, should I be questioned by Israeli authorities as I travel through
checkpoints. Additionally, I plan to use my University of Limerick email account for making prior arrangements for interviews. Prior to arriving in the OPT/Israel I will clear any and all contact information from my email account. Therefore, if the Israeli border agents request access to my email account prior to granting me a visa I will not be putting any of my contacts at risk. This approach to confidentiality will serve to protect my informants from possible harassment from the Israeli state as well as from individuals and groups within Palestinian society.

4. What, if any, is the particular vulnerability of your informants?
My informants are vulnerable for several reasons, depending on which of the three categories they fall into. Individual Palestinian women are continually at risk of intimidation, violence, incarceration and emotional, psychological and mental strain due to the Israeli occupation. They are also often at risk of violence from Palestinian men, most frequently this risk comes from within their family units. Former IDF soldiers are vulnerable if they choose to speak out against the actions of the Israeli state, as the current situation within Israeli society results in intimidation of citizens who do not follow the official state doctrines. Vulnerability of women’s groups and NGOs within the OPT often occurs for the same reasons as the vulnerability of Palestinian women.

5. What arrangements are in place to ensure that informants know the purpose of the research and what their part in the research will be?
I will give participants copies of my project information sheet prior to their participation in any interview. The information sheet will be printed in Arabic for the Palestinian participants and in Hebrew for the Israeli participants. In the event that there are participants who are unable to read, I will ask the translator to read through the information sheet and consent form with the individuals.

6. How will you ensure that informants are aware of their right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time?
As mentioned above, I will provide each participant with an information sheet and consent form in their native language. For individuals who cannot read, the documents will be read aloud by the translator. The individuals will be given the consent forms to do with as they wish. This relates directly to their personal security, as outlined in questions 7&8.

7. What are the psychological and/or physical safety issues for the researcher and/or the informant (if any) that arise from the research, and how will you deal with them?
The security of the participants, the translators/research assistants and myself, the researcher is of utmost importance. Because of the volatile nature of the OPT and Israel I will continually assess the situation on daily basis and will not travel to areas experiencing violence. My utmost concern is that the recordings of the interviews and the names of the participants must not be given to the Israeli state. Therefore, I plan on constantly encrypting and uploading the audio interviews, exporting them to a computer outside of the OPT/Israel and deleting the original audio file. The same will be true of any notes I take during interviews, I aim to immediately convert them to electronic files, encrypt and export the files and destroy the original notes. Furthermore, the real names of participants, the addresses where focus groups take place and any other personal information will not be written down. The consent forms for participation will be given to the participants to do with as they see fit, thus eliminating the possibility that I could be stopped at a checkpoint with any documentation of the identities of participants.
8. How do you propose to **store** the information, and for how long?
I plan to store the information as encrypted electronic files. This is a result of needing to pass through Israeli security checkpoints, and the resulting need to refrain from having any paper copies containing information which could be confiscated by the Israeli state and used to harass individuals who participated in my research. These files can be stored for an indefinite period.
Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview process. Your perspective and insight are greatly appreciated and your voices and stories will contribute significantly to my project. My research project is entitled ‘Bodies, Power, Resistance’ and I am investigating the relationships between suicide bombing/martyrdom as one act of resistance by Palestinian women, the way power operates within the Occupied Palestinian Territories and how Palestinian women experience the occupation directly upon their physical bodies. To do so I am seeking insight from Palestinian women, organisations which address women’s issues in the OPT and the perspectives of former Israeli Defence Forces soldiers who were stationed within the OPT and who thus were actively exercising power over the bodies of Palestinians.

The interviews will be structured in the format of ‘focus groups’ wherein 3-10 participants will take part in interviews at one time. The choice of location of the interviews should be the choice of the participants. I will utilise a device for recording the interviews, and at least one translator will be translating the interviews aloud at all times. At no time will I ask you to give your name or any other personal information. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any time. The interviews will be recorded, but you may ask for the recording equipment to be turned off at any time. No personal details will be written down in any form, and immediately after the interview the audio file will be encrypted and uploaded to an external computer so that the original file can be deleted. This will prevent the researcher from travelling throughout the OPT with the audio files of the interview on her person. Your experiences and stories will contribute greatly to my project, but under no circumstances will your names be used.

After her return to Ireland, the researcher will be happy to share the audio files of the interviews and upon completion of the project the researcher will share the findings if requested by the participants.

Any questions you have can be directed to the researcher:
Caitlin Ryan Caitlin.Ryan@ul.ie or +353 85 2863582
or to her supervisor, Dr. Owen Worth owen.worth@ul.ie
or to the Ethics Committee at the University of Limerick: Chairperson of ULREG, c/o Anne O’Dwyer, Castletroy, Limerick. Email: Anne.ODwyer@ul.ie or phone at +353 61 202672
Thank you for your participation in this research. This information sheet is about the research of Caitlin Ryan, which focuses on the relationship between suicide and the Palestinian woman, the intersection of the two, and the organizations that were involved in the Palestinian conflict. The research was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Owen Worth.

Chairperson of ULREG at the Ethics Committee: Chairperson of ULREG, c/o Anne O'Dwyer, Castletroy, Limerick. Email: Anne.ODwyer@ul.ie or phone at +353 61 202672

Professor Caitlin Ryan, Caitlin.Ryan@ul.ie or +353 85 2863582
Supervisor: Dr. Owen Worth, owen.worth@ul.ie

Ethics Committee at the University of Limerick: Chairperson of ULREG, c/o Anne O'Dwyer, Castletroy, Limerick. Email: Anne.ODwyer@ul.ie or phone at +353 61 202672
Consent Form

Consent Section:
I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled “Bodies, Power, Resistance”.
I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed
I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study
I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason
I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details

______________________________________ __________________________
Signature of participant                                         Date
أتمارمة أو نموذج موافقة

أنا الموقع أذن infield عن استعدادي للمشاركة في البحث المعنون أجسام قوة تأثيرها، والمقاومة.

أتعهد أن أكون على اطلاع تمام على طبيعة هذه الدراسة ودوري فيه، وأعطيت الفرصة الملائمة لطرح الأسئلة قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في هذا البحث.

وقد تم شرح طبيعة مشاركتي في هذا البحث واصبح لدى المعرفة التامة كيف سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي تم جمعها.

كما أأتي على علم قد يتم تسجيل مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة (الفيديو / الصوت) وأنا أوافق على هذا.

وأنا أتعهد أن أكون على علم تمامًا بعدم إخلاء أي أثر في أي وقت أستطيع طلب إيقاف التسجيل. كما أستطيع أن أثبت جميع التسجيلات وبمجرد الانتهاء من هذه الدراسة.

أنا أفهم تماما بعدم وجود أي التزام على أن أشارك في هذه الدراسة.

وأنا أفهم تماما أنني حر في الانسحاب من هذه مشاركتي في أي وقت دون الحاجة إلى شرح أو إعطاء سبب.

وسوف تكون جميع المعلومات والتفاصيل الشخصية عن طريق مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة في موضع سرية تامة.

التاريخ

توقيع المشاركة
There are several ethical issues involved with my research. Many Palestinian women experience marginalisation, intimidation, high levels of stress and the threat of violence because of their positions as women as well as because of the unique situation raised by the Israeli occupation. Furthermore, I will be asking questions which concern the acts of suicide bombing/martyrdom. Within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, suicide bombing/martyrdom is an extremely emotive issue which is made more complex by the various cultural, political and religious perspectives of the act. As a result of suicide bombing/martyrdom being portrayed as terrorist activity, another aspect which must be accounted for are the legal implications of being associated with a successful suicide bomber/martyr. Since the perpetrator of the act is deceased, legal repercussions are often enforced against family members, despite International Laws which prohibit this kind of punishment. Therefore, when asking questions which deal with any kind of illegal activity from either side I must be especially careful to maintain the confidentiality of my participants. Another important issue which arises is related to cultural perceptions of women and their bodies. It will be crucial that when I ask questions which aim to uncover perceptions of women’s corporeal bodies in Palestine that I do so in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way. For this reason it is important that the translators I employ feel they can be open and honest with me about what questions I can and cannot ask. I plan to meet with the translators prior to the commencement of interviews to critically examine my questions for cultural insensitivity so I can adjust any questions accordingly. Prior to my departure to Palestine I will engage in pre-interviews with Palestinian women from non-governmental organisations so that I can gain an understanding about which questions are most appropriate to ask.

2. Explain why the use of human participants is essential to your research project.

The Postmodern Feminist methodology which I have adopted for my research project is based on the claim that the best way to examine a phenomenon is to start from the personal perspectives and the lives of women. The aim of this project is to challenge the dominant discourses of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the positions of women within Palestinian society and the role of women in the Palestinian resistance movement. The theoretical foundations of Postmodern Feminism aim to bring to the forefront the voices
of those who are located at the ‘margins’ of society. This is a challenge to many mainstream methods of studying politics which aim to examine people and institutions at the ‘centre’ of society. Therefore, it is very important that I be able to speak with Palestinian women so I can ground part of my project in the lives of these often ‘marginalised’ voices and thus bring their stories into the centre of my research. Here I avoid the notion that I will be ‘creating’ new knowledges, because certainly these ways of knowing already exist but are silenced. Rather, I will seek to open up the silences produced by the mainstream and seek out different ways of experiencing resistance and the (re)production of women’s bodies.

3. How will you ensure that informed consent is freely given by participants?

Arabic language copies of my information sheet and consent form will be distributed to all participant. I will then ask the translator to read through both sheets with any women who cannot read or who have any difficulties understanding the sheets. I will ask the participants to sign the consent forms in my presence, but due to security concerns, I will not be collecting these forms. I will ask the translator to make it clear to the participants that they may leave or withdraw their consent at any time. I will also go through my proposal for data storage so the participants are aware of the security measures in operation for the protection of the data. Finally, before the start of the interviews and before the recording device is turned on I will give the participants an opportunity to raise any concerns they have.

Answer the following questions where relevant to your research project (you must answer at least one):

4. How will you ensure that vulnerable research participants are protected? (Please state clearly if you abide by the Child Protection Guidelines and/or have Garda Clearance where necessary) (You must answer this question if you have ticked “yes” to any question in Part 1 of the checklist)

This question is of highest importance to me. When I enter the West Bank and East Jerusalem I will be entering one of the most securitised regions in the world. My most critical concern is that the stories and experiences shared with me by participants must remain safely in my hands throughout the duration of my stay. Primarily, I would argue that utilising the identity of the participants in the results of my research will not bestow any additional legitimacy on my project. It is far more important, given the security situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that the identities of the participants remain unknown. There are numerous security measures which I plan to enact in order to maintain confidentiality. I will not travel with the names of contacts or participants on my person, nor stored in the standard memory of my computer. Any personal details which relate to my project will be stored in an encrypted file along with the audio files of the interviews. I will not collect the consent forms so as to eliminate the risk associated with travelling through checkpoints carrying the names of the participants. This addresses a portion of the security I plan to enact, to be found in more detail in the answer to question 8.

5. How will you protect participants if your research deals with sensitive issues? (You must answer this question if you have ticked “yes” to any question in Part 2 of the checklist)

My interview questions will deal with several sensitive issues, including but not limited to: suicide bombing/martyrdom attacks, the Israeli occupation, the bodies of women and
the position of women within the Palestinian society. My choice of methodology and my choice to interview women in groups aims to approach these sensitive issues in a way that allows participants to feel comfortable while talking to me. I have chosen group interviews because this will help to limit the possibility that an individual woman may feel compelled to answer a question she is uncomfortable with. By holding interviews in a group setting I hope that the women will support one another and that if an individual woman or several women do not feel comfortable answering a specific question they may feel less pressure to give me some kind of answer. I also plan to spend time prior to my departure, and immediately after my arrival in the area to speak to Palestinian women about the interview process I plan to use. My goal is to run through the plans for conducting the interviews with as many Palestinian women as possible so as to gain multiple perspectives on the appropriateness of my questions, important differences in word usage and any potential issues with translation. I will also seek advice on my security plan. Furthermore, and most importantly, I will ensure that the translators and I have a good understanding of our plans in various emergency situations which may arise. I am very aware that I also have a responsibility for the safety of the translators as well as the participants, so I must ensure that the translators and I have a mutual understanding of what we should do in an emergency.

6. How will you protect participants if your research deals with sensitive research procedures? (You must answer this question if you have ticked “yes” to any question in Part 3 of the checklist)
Not applicable (no ‘yes’ answers to any questions in section three)

8. How will you manage data protection issues?

The software encryption programme True Crypt is a free open source, ‘on the fly’ encryption programme. The programme enables the user to create an encrypted disk drive on the computer or an encrypted volume on a USB key. The file cannot be viewed unless a series of ‘keys’ are entered. If someone tries to view the files without the key they will appear to be unreadable. I plan to utilise this software programme to encrypt a drive on my computer. After I complete an interview I will then upload the audio file onto the computer, move the file into the encrypted drive and delete the original audio files from the recording device. If I am stopped at a checkpoint and asked about the recording device it will not contain any data, and if I am asked to open my computer the files containing the sensitive data will not be readable. I can utilise the same process for any notes I have taken during interviews as well as any contact details relevant to my research. In doing so, I will be taking an effective step towards maintaining the confidentiality of the participants if any soldiers at checkpoint are curious about my recording device or computer. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, I will not be collecting the consent forms given to participants.
Appendix 2 Field Research Reflexive Journal

4 October 2011
I’m having all sorts of feelings about my upcoming trip to the oPt. It’s a place I’ve wanted to visit for a really long time. I really want to hear people’s stories and see how they live. I want them to tell me in their own words, how they have stayed so strong and determined for 63 years. I want to know how they resist the imbalance of power, how they avoid being sucked into self-deprecation. How they resist the labels put on them. All of these things make me want to go. I cannot wrap my head around concepts like checkpoints and the separation barrier without experiencing for myself just a tiny sliver of how these architectural forms affect daily life. I am also scared. If I were to rank what scares me, it would look something like this:

1) Deportation upon arrival
2) The safety of my research assistant
3) The safety of my research participants
4) Causing offence

I’m also scared of how I’ll cope with the intense daily securitisation – that waiting at checkpoints after interviews will be nerve-wracking and that someone will pick up on my nerves and detain and question me. I’m less worried about coming to bodily harm. I’m really unsure of my research methodology. Who should I talk to? Can I talk to them? What do I ask? How do I justify a semi-philosophical approach to suicide bombing in a place where people have far more immediate and pressing concerns? What is the value of my project? Not just to me, but to the people who are willing to talk to me? I hope it has value in that it aims to explore how people experience occupation upon their bodies, but what is a body? Why is it of value to understand the effects of power upon it? I think our bodies are just the conduit for how we experience the world. How do I explain and justify this approach in a culture where a discussion of physical bodies is, especially women’s bodies – is so taboo? It will be so important to build up trust, but I have very little time. It could take many, many chats with women before they freely offer information and if they don’t see the point, then why would they? I’m using a Postmodern gay Frenchman to look at martyrdom. Am I crazy?

5 October 2011
Ticket bought! Yikes! Suddenly field research is more reality than plan. It was really nerve-wracking standing at the travel agent’s counter making an un-get-out-able commitment to go. To the oPt. For six weeks. Six weeks is nothing in the scheme of things. I really think that the reality of this undertaking is starting to sink in as I look at my itinerary, which includes an 8 hour layover in Zurich. I got travel insurance as well, which in no way, shape or form covers expenses incurred as a result of political violence. So if I get hit in the head with a tear gas canister I’m not covered. Excellent. The list of things to do only gets longer now that I have a ticket.

11 October 2011
It seems my mom will be joining me for 10 days. I’m really looking forward to that. I hope it will make my arrival in Ben Gurion airport more legitimate. I’ve been thinking a lot about my potential research assistant. I was looking at a map of the West Bank, thinking about the most practical place to live. As I looked at the locations of
checkpoints I started to think about what type of ID card my RA might have. If she has a
West Bank ID, she won’t be able to travel to or through East Jerusalem, and if she has a
Jerusalem residency permit it might be difficult for her to travel in the West Bank.
Furthermore, it will be easy to play ‘the tourist’ around Bethlehem or Ramallah, but
when I want to go somewhere in the seam zone, like ‘Azzun Atma, will it be difficult to
travel there and back with my RA without raising suspicions? I suppose the possibility
exists for hiring different RAs for different places, at least for East Jerusalem vs. the West
Bank. This raises some important implications for my methodologies. My first concern
has to be the security of my RA. My passport will give me ‘privilege’ that she doesn’t
have, so I have to be certain to do anything that doesn’t put her at risk. All of these
thoughts are jumbled in my head – worry for my participants, my RA, worry about data
protection, getting in to Ben Gurion. Getting out of Ben Gurion, making myself useful
while I’m there. I can’t get my mind off it. Since buying my ticket I feel totally consumed
and preoccupied with all of these logistical questions.

20 October 2011
Time to refine and contemplate my research goals. What do I hope to get form my trip
and why does that relate to my project.

1) I can’t fully comprehend how much life is interrupted by checkpoints and the wall. If
I can experience traveling through them, I will have a slightly better idea of the role
of architecture in the system of control. I will never and can never know exactly
what Palestinians experience because of my passport. However, participant
observation will at a minimum, allow me to see some of what goes on. Therefore:
research goal #1: Gain a better understanding of how checkpoints affect bodies.

2) I am writing this goal because I would love to achieve it, but security, too little time
for trust-building, and taboo may prevent it. I want to hear from Palestinian women
what they think about the 10 female martyrs. I would like to ask something like ‘Did
the female martyrs affect how you see the role of women in resistance?’ ‘Do you
think their operations had a positive effect on other Palestinian women?’ Special
care and sensitivity would have to be exercised for these questions, but: Research
goal #2: Learn some perspectives of Palestinian women towards the female martyrs.

3) Make a connection between the body as a site where power is situated and how
that type of power affects women. I aim to approach this goal by asking women to
talk about their daily-lived experiences. I hypothesise that some of them may
mention physical aspects of subjugation. If so, I will ask follow-up questions to try
and enhance the connections between their bodies and their positions in society.
Great caution must be exercised here, as the topic of bodies is culturally sensitive.
Research goal #3: Explore connections between women’s bodies and subjugation in
Palestine

4) Not directly related to the outcome of my project, but very important and thus a
goal of my research is reciprocity. I need to devise a way that I can deliver some
form of reciprocity to my participants. There is the obvious – which I intend to do –
bring small gifts for the children of the house, but I need to sort out how to get data
back in to the oPt after I finish my PhD so I am returning women’s stories to them.
7 December 2011

I should have been writing about my first impressions before this, but since arriving things have been very busy and I’ve been so short of sleep. I still walk around in disbelief that I’m actually here, in Palestine. Some moments I feel guilty being here, because I’m American, and I can travel freely, and my country has so much responsibility for why the people I meet cannot travel freely, or earn enough money to live. Everyone has a story, and they all want to share it. The first night we met Yousef. He teaches Arabic at the high school, but he does not earn enough money to support his family, so he has to drive a Taxi every afternoon and on his days off. Like almost everyone else we’ve met since, he expressed frustration and could not understand why the American government makes it so difficult, and more importantly, why the media and Western governments paint a picture of Palestine as dangerous, and the Palestinians as terrorists. Al’addin, a local shopkeeper (he sells souvenirs) expressed something very similar. At 5pm yesterday, we were the first people to buy from his shop all day. The trouble is, guidebooks, tour guides, the US government, etc. all tell tourists not to come to the West Bank. They tell people that if they come to Bethlehem, they should go to the Nativity church and leave as quickly as possible. They say that it is ‘dangerous’ here. Let’s not kid ourselves. I feel way more unsafe around all the skobes in Limerick than here in the West Bank. I think that if people actually came to Palestine, met the people, walked the streets, listened to the stories and saw the hardship, the occupation would become unsustainable, because people would know for themselves that the situation here is not divided upon the lines of ‘Israeli Victims’ and ‘Palestinian Terrorists’. If people saw for themselves, these lies would crumble.

The view out my front door if you look to the right across the hillside, is of Har Homa, one of the largest of the Israeli settlements. You can see the barrier around it, circling a ‘settler only’ road. It makes me sick to my stomach. How can the Israeli government claim that they are for a two-state solution if they continue to build and maintain settlements? It makes the possibility of a continuous Palestinian state impossible.

On a lighter note, I witnessed the Palestinian version of an ice cream truck on my walk home from AEI this evening. A car: blasting children’s music from the speakers. Tied to the roof: a generator. In the boot: a cotton candy machine. And of course, children running behind the car. The Palestinian children are beautiful. There are lots of them playing outside, in the streets and stairways (there are stairways everywhere!) always smiling. Right now, I can hear the call to prayer. There are a few mosques around here, but I’m not sure which one this is coming from. It is bloody loud though, especially in the main town square when you’re having coffee! I met a waiter there today who expressed his disgust for the PA. He says they are even more corrupt than the Israelis. That they don’t care about their people at all. He also told me that the recent elections in Egypt make him very fearful, that the revolution there will not bring about democracy, but an Islamic state, and that the Copts will suffer. I wonder how other people here feel about Egypt?

Yesterday I met Jala, my translator. She is amazing. Her name means ‘expulsion’. She was born on Al Nakba. I met with her and Elias, one of the directors at AEI. I explained
my project in better detail, including the part about the martyrs. When I explained that I wanted to write from a Feminist methodology she expressed that ‘here, it is not like your country’ and that ‘there are different ideas about what it means to be liberated. The role of the wife and mother is different, and the women here are not seeking liberation from their roles’. Of course, I understand and respect this. It is the notion that Western feminism is not the mould for which all other women should follow. I tried to express this, but I think I did a bad job of doing so. At any rate, I so look forward to working with her, I think she will be the key to the success of my project. She is very familiar with the other women at AEI, and I think the fact that she has a rapport with them will mean that my data will be more rich and honest.

I met some of the women from AEI today. I look forward to speaking with them more. Jala is already working hard to secure interviews before everyone is busy for the Christmas season. I have my first one tomorrow. I am very nervous, but I’ll just have to do my best, and most importantly, listen well. I am being given a very special gift when people offer to share their stories, I owe them much respect and gratitude. Today at lunch I met a woman who lives near manger square. During the second Intifada she had soldiers in her front yard. I cannot imagine the stories she has for me.

One last thought for the day. People are so resourceful here. Its amazing to see all the old cars, the workshops where people fix things (imagine that! When something is broken, someone fixes it, rather than throwing it away!) At the same time, the women are running around in the most incredible shoes. They look so fancy and well presented (they must think I’m insane with my purple runners!!) But their shoes look bloody uncomfortable!!

12 December

The interview today was really difficult emotionally. It is so hard to sit in someone’s living room, and listen as she talks about watching her son be shot in front of her. She gets up from the couch and goes and stands where he was standing when he was shot. His pictures hang on the wall. I can hear the pain in her voice as she recounts the way that there was even interference at his funeral. I don’t have any words for her. I am doing everything I can to hold back tears, because she is not crying, though I can see and hear and feel how hard it is for her to talk about. I felt so selfish, and so useless and so upset. Mostly, I felt guilt. Here she is, sitting next to me, offering me fruit and tea and biscuits in the customs of society. They didn’t have much. She covers her mouth with her jumper, and plays with the sleeves, like a nervous school girl, but her face looks so old. She is probably the same age as my mom, but she looks 20 years older. The lines on people’s faces tell stories, but the lines on her face look like she’s seen enough stress and sorrow for two lifetimes. When she was standing up, showing me where he was standing when he was shot, for a moment, I almost felt like I was not in the room anymore. I was so glad the recorder was on, because it was too much for me to take in. I couldn’t digest what she was saying. That all those years ago, in this room, her son was standing just there. That he was asking for a snack. And then he was dead. The worst was definitely when she spoke about his funeral. That was when one tear slipped out of my eye. I tried so hard to stop it, I couldn’t look at her. I couldn’t look her in the eye. So I looked up at his picture, above the couch. He looked just like any other 14 year old boy.
After the interview, she made us tea, then she left for a few minutes. She came back, with a carved nativity scene and a candlestick for Jala and I that her husband had carved. He is a woodcarver. I was dumbfounded. My guilt went through the roof. Here she just told me this story. She trusted me with this story. And now she was giving me a present. I knew that this would be difficult, but I guess that since this was the first truly terrible, tragic story I heard, it really hit me.

I am so grateful to even be here in Palestine. My country is so full of people who have trampled on Palestinian rights for decades. My country has culpability in everything that has happened here, including the death of this young boy. And yet everyone welcomes me. They ask me where I’m from, and then they say ‘Welcome’ And they tell me their stories. They trust me with their stories. Honestly, I don’t feel worthy.

I got out of the taxi in Bethlehem and nearly started crying. I was a bit confused about where I was, and as is the way in Bethlehem, a group of young men who were standing there asked me if I needed a taxi. I really needed to find the elevator that went from the taxi rank up to the main street, but I didn’t want to ask for directions. I think I snapped a bit, and I feel really bad about it now, but I just needed to start walking. So I went straight down this ridiculous hill, not really knowing where I was going. I really needed to buy some groceries, and I wasn’t sure how to get back up to the main street, and I ended up walking up this really big hill, and it kept my mind off it. When I got to the top, I saw one of the bakeries I pass every day. I went and bought some fresh pita, and even though I wasn’t hungry at all, I ate one right away, just to have something to do. Even though it was just out of the oven, and warm and beautiful, I felt like it didn’t have a taste. I think I was in a daze, just marching towards home, munching this pita, and feeling really down. I think I snapped out of it a bit when I saw a piece of graffiti I hadn’t noticed before. It was like one of those ‘tow-away zone’ signs you see all the time in the States, but it was a tow truck towing a tank. It made me smile, and I felt the street under my feet again.

19 December
Serious delay since last reflective journal…..not ideal.
Important note re: transcription of interview 5…. Lots of interruption from Jala….needs to be carefully considered.
I’m coming across a fairly substantial cultural difference during interviews. There is a culture here of conversations being very participatory, with lots of interrupting, adding things, etc. This is easily seen in any gathering of Palestinians…everyone talks at once, cuts over one another, etc. I’ve spent a decent amount of time amongst groups of women, and while I can’t understand what’s being said, it’s pretty easy to understand that there are very different social norms when it comes to how many people speak at once…and it leads me to have mild concerns about to what degree Jala is interpreting rather than translating…I’m just hoping that the really bad interview with the woman from WCLAC was only bad because it was in English, so Jala perhaps felt like it was a conversation.
The trip to Hebron was really fast, and pretty intense. J & Z managed to enter the synogouge..which technically is not legal. It felt like a small but wonderful act of subversion being with them in there. We also all walked down the ‘settler’ side of the road….a great example of ‘bodily’ resistance. We also had a funny moment in Hebron. It’s pretty entertaining what happens when a mini-bus of very obvious ‘Westerners’
stops near a boys school just as school is getting out. The sight of a bunch of ‘Western’
women without headscarves sent the boys in droves towards the bus. I think I found the
whole thing more amusing than some of the others I was with…I mean, at the end of the
day, teenage boys are weird…..regardless of where they’re from.
On Saturday, we went an interviewed the mother of another martyr. His picture was
everywhere, including a giant stencil on a wall near his house. It was another sad story,
and his mother (and father) were so kind to me. It was my first time in one of the camps.
We were taken by a woman we had interviewed last week. She also took us to her home
to introduce us to her son, who spent 9 years in Israeli prisons. He talked about his time
in prison, how the Israelis tried to break the spirits of the prisoners, but also about how
they resisted, including with a hunger strike. It was really interesting to hear, I’m very
glad I got to meet him. His eyes were somehow very sad. Except for when he held his
son. Then they lit up. Every time I meet a family, and they tell me a sad story, and
there’s a young child/baby in the family, it makes me more sad somehow, because I
don’t want this new generation of Palestinians to be subject to all of the hardships and
tragedies that their parents and grandparents are telling me about. I feel the same way
when I see Israeli children. I don’t want them to grow up as fearful and militant as their
parents and grandparents. Some days I think that I can see hope and light in this whole
mess, and some days I really feel like everything is fucked. I met another family, this one
living surrounded on three sides by the wall. It’s really awful. But I met three of the kids
in the family..all teenagers at this point…and they were amazing. Their breakfast table
was all laughter, despite living in the shadow of the wall. One thing that I was not at all
ready for before coming here is all the questions I’m getting about my religious beliefs. I
never really know how to answer them. The mother of the family surrounded by the
wall has this really un-flappable faith, and in the face of what she’s seen and
experienced, I really didn’t know how to tell her that I’m not religious. I tell people ‘I was
raised Catholic’ which might not answer their questions directly, and it may be mis-
leading, but at least its not a lie.

27 December
The trip up to TulkArm was pretty hysterical in many ways. I had my first experience
with staying in a hostel where I was the only guest when I stayed the night in Nablus. I
think it somehow says a lot about the state of tourism in Palestine… granted, this is the
‘low season’ but still, I don’t think there had been anyone else there for a while. At any
rate, the owner was really nice, and I really want his to do well in his business, but the
hostel was a bit on the not-clean end of the cleanliness spectrum. The kitchen really
wasn’t great, the couch was covered in sugar (haha) and I don’t think the sheets had
been changed, nor the bathroom cleaned at all. I’m certainly not expecting much,
especially at 75NIS a night, but this was a bit much! Anyway, the next morning I went
down to get a servee to TulkArm, and I think all the drivers in the servee lot were sure I
was lost when I told them where I wanted to go! After a pretty harrowing drive we made
it to TulkArm and when I stepped out it felt really different from the other places I’ve
been in the West Bank. I knew it was going to be way harder to find someone who spoke
English, and given that all I had in the way of information was a name (stupidly, not
written in Arabic! I will account for that next time!)I needed to find someone with
enough English to help me. I figured that of all the shops in my immediate vicinity, a
pharmacy would be my best bet. So I went in and asked in Arabic (though probably crap
(Arabic) if anyone spoke English. After a while I managed to communicate to them who I was looking for... (the long period also surely related to my crap pronunciation). One of the pharmacists (who was smoking in the pharmacy) looked at my map (or scoffed, really) and told me to walk out of the pharmacy, turn right and keep walking straight, at which point I would arrive at the person’s house (how I would know it was the person’s house I was not told...) So, out the door, turn right and walk straight I did. After I had walked a good bit up the road, having no idea whatsoever what I was looking for, I stopped and asked a couple of men sitting on the sidewalk. The whole acting out an explanation of who I was looking for occurred again. One of the men, clearly confused by me, led me 10 feet down the sidewalk to the local branch of the women’s development union! Score! So I went upstairs, met the director, who spoke English and explained that the person I was looking for was just down the road, in fact, the other woman in the room at the time was her neighbour, and was headed home in a minute, so I could follow her. Seriously. Nothing but pure dumb luck on my part. After arriving at the person’s house it was quickly established that despite what I’d been told, we would definitely need a translator. So I made an arrangement to come back up in a few weeks. Haha. I suppose this is one of those things that happens on fieldwork, so the only thing I can do is take it in stride! It’s all cool though, because I need to go back to Nablus anyway because I arranged to meet another few NGOs up there. As another antidote, somewhere between Nablus and TulkArm I saw a donkey at an ATM. Almost as good as the smoking Pharmacist!

The next day, I took a trip to the Jordan Valley with ICAHD. In a word, it was depressing. I think the times when I feel most angry and frustrated at the situation are when I drive around in the West Bank. It really puts into perspective just how broken into pieces the territory is by fences, the wall, ditches, earth mounds, checkpoints, gates, closed military zones and most of all, settlements. On the way to the Jordan valley, we stopped at a Bedouin village, slated for demolition. The village consists of the tents of a few families, a lean-to, a restroom constructed by an NGO, two small water tanks and two school rooms that serve 80 children from the surrounding area. Everything is slated for demolition. They have orders to relocate to the Jerusalem municipal dump. I wish I was joking. I can’t even put into words how angry it makes me. One of the school buildings is mere feet from a water pump, but of course the villages are not allowed to use it. Instead, they have to go buy their water from a nearby settlement and store it in tanks. They are living off 20L of water a day per person. The WHO recommends that in times of crisis, people should have 100L per person per day. Less than 5 minutes down the road is a settlement. The settlers have irrigated the shit out of their common areas, growing all kinds of decorative plants. They have a fucking swimming pool. Like I said, I cannot even begin to express my outrage. The injustice seems insurmountable. One of the men from the village explained that after the Italian NGO built the school, the army demolished it. They built it again, and Israel took away the work permits of everyone who was working in Jerusalem. The message: if you are determined to educate your children, we are determined to take away your livelihoods. I wish I had pictures, but I really wasn’t comfortable taking any pictures of what their reality is. The story in the rest of the Jordan valley isn’t much different. Electrical wires run over the roofs of villages, but people are not allowed to hook their houses up. Greenhouses for settlers are built on the rubble of Palestinian houses deemed to be built ‘without permits’ (its obviously irrelevant that these houses had been built prior to Israel’s occupation of the Jordan
Valley in 1967. Electrified fencing keeps local Palestinians from accessing their farmland, instead, they must watch as Thai workers grow crops for the settlers, thereby denying them not only of their land, but at any possibility of earning a living. The army has torn up the asphalt running through their village every year for years. Water pipes run under their villages, and they aren’t allowed to use the water. Again, like the Bedouins, they have to drive to a settlement and buy water to store in tanks. It is a place of absolute contrast. All of these measures are accomplishing a lot of what they aim, that is to drive the Palestinian population from the Jordan Valley by making daily life impossible. One of the most absurd things we saw was an ‘agricultural’ gate. It’s open three days a week, for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. It’s a pretty simple metal gate blocking a road to a very small village. To the right of the gate is a high, rocky hill. To the left of the gate is one of the ‘earth mounds’ that runs for a good 10 miles down the road, the mound is about 4 feet high and on the other side is a ditch of about the same depth, making it impossible to cross in a car. The purpose of the gate is not at all apparent. There is no one manning it, it is simply a mechanism of control, determining that no one can access the village by car, nor can cars from the village leave, except at the designated times. The earth mound (and subsequent gate) is a demarcation between ‘Area A’ and ‘Area C’ which are also based in nothing but a mechanism of control. Everywhere I go in the West Bank, the same message is repeated over and over and over. ‘We control your lives.’

Today I interviewed the mother of one of the fsb/m’s. I felt like it was a really, really good interview in that she said a lot of the things that I have hypothesized about Palestinian women’s resistance, mostly, that she thinks that every Palestinian has a responsibility to resist, that the only difference is that everyone resists in his or her own way, be they man, woman or child, Muslim or Christian. She also said a lot of things about her daughter that I had already imagined.

January 5
Things are really starting to fall together! Typical….I only have 10 days left and everything is working splendidly…..This week has been really productive so far. I got some numbers for some contacts from a friend of Keith’s. She gave the numbers of some people who have turned out to be really helpful! I took a trip to Ramallah yesterday. My first meeting was with a woman who now works in the Ministry of State. Trying to find her office was a typically Palestinian experience… I got there eventually, after what was in essence a full tour of the city and all its government buildings. She was really interesting to talk to. I also learned a very valuable lesson about doing field work: carry your notebook and or recorder with you no matter what, wherever you go. We took a break from the interview to go down to breakfast. (Again, how very Palestinian!) It was a really great experience, and a great (second) breakfast. After we were finished eating, two of her male colleagues were offering insight and opinions and some really good information. It was an informal interview of sorts, but my notebook and recorder were back in my participant’s office! ARRG! Here’s what I remembered and jotted down when I got back to my notebook:

We were talking about the shahidas. One of the men was talking about how the role of Palestinian women in resistance is really varied, that women take part in lots of different activities to challenge the occupation. He talked about how militant activity is not normally the role that women have, so when they do take part in it, it is a really
exceptional situation, and it is really significant because it is something that they are essentially ‘forced’ into by the nature of the occupation, that when the occupation became really, really severe women began to take part in militant activity. I asked him what he thought about the difference between male and female martyrs, if he considered them to have equal status. He said that in his opinion, female martyrs often had a higher status, because it was not expected of them to carry out these actions in the way that is expected of men, and that when a woman does it, it carries greater significance.

I really wish I had brought a notebook or recorder to breakfast!!
I’ve now had experience with a few different people translating, and I think I don’t have to worry so much about some of my earlier concerns with Jala....I think the only problem really arose when it was a person who spoke English, because then she had no ‘job’ to do, and felt the need to participate in the conversation. I noticed with the translator I had today that she often did the same thing as Jala where she said ‘she thinks’ or ‘she says’ etc...so I won’t stress too much, as having a comparison between two people to be really helpful. Though I must say, Lucca has been the best so far! He was spot on! I will obviously need to account for having different translators in my methodology.

On another methodological note, I think (though I am not 100% sure) that my ‘narrative’ approach has been good for my results. My goal in not fixing certain questions and not really asking any questions at all was to make my research more open-ended and hopefully less reproductive of colonialism. I figure that coming into an interview with certain fixed questions implies that I am looking for certain things, things that I am more likely to find if I limit what women can tell me. I don’t want to imply that I know what’s important about these women’s lives by fixing myself on certain questions. Therefore, I have really, really limited the number of questions I ask, maybe 2 or 3 in a 30-40 minute interview. When I do ask questions it’s only after the participant has been speaking for 10 or more minutes and they seem to run out of things to say, at which point I will pose a really simple question aimed at getting them back into a narrative.

My second meeting yesterday was with a ‘fixer’ of sorts. He is a member of Combatants for Peace, and he helped massively by introducing me to a woman who is an activist in her village which has suffered a lot from settlements and the wall. She agreed to let me interview her, which I did with the help of her colleague today (hence the translator comparison). Her interview was also really good, very helpful. I am so seriously in awe of Palestinian women. This woman in particular I think really represents every preconception I had about the women here being incredibly strong, resilient, active, determined and intelligent. I also need to carefully consider a comment made by the woman translating today, when the participant took a phone call. It really reminded me that generalizations are really, really not helpful because of the huge plurality of experiences of women in Palestine and their various ways of reacting and coping with their own experiences. There is NO one Palestinian woman.

They also showed me a video of protests in Nabi Saleh. It was insane. There was one segment where the soldiers (i.e. terrorists) shot a tear gas canister into a house full of women and young children while they themselves occupied the roof. The women and children were forced up into a second floor room because of the insane amount of gas on the first floor. The children were understandably terrified as volunteers passed them down to the ground from the second floor window.
I also really enjoyed the process of getting contacts through this so-called ‘fixer’ I know Jala has been really helpful, but sometimes I felt a bit out of the loop unless we were talking directly with one woman about contacting another woman. So meeting this guy yesterday made me feel like I was doing the necessary ‘leg-work’ as well. I bumped into him again today. After my interview, I went back to the coffee shop where I’d met him the first time because the coffee and sandwiches looked really good and I wanted to have lunch in Ramallah, and I honestly can’t handle much more falafel. Anyway, I feel really good about this week, and I set myself up (with the help of my ‘fixer’ and today’s participant) for another two individual interviews. If I add these two to the one I have already arranged in Tulkarem (hahaha!) plus the UNRWA interview, plus the anticipated 4th NGO interview in Nablus and hopefully the 5th NGO interview with ICAHD, that brings me up to 16 individual interviews, 5 NGOs, and one International Organisation. Whew...I think I can be happy with that! (Right?!) Oh, and my planned participation in a protest in Nabi Saleh...I can’t leave without going there. I’ll frame it as ‘participant observation’ because I’m bound to see women actively engaged in political action, plus there’s the inevitable added bonus of being tear gassed. I also saw pictures of the participant’s cousin, who was the young man who was killed the week after I got here by a tear gas canister shot at close range to the head. By close range I mean no more than two meters.

Something that I hadn’t put much though into before coming here was the role of prison in the lives of Palestinians and the subsequent suffering it causes. I will really need to account for it more and do more research. I feel like Foucault will be applicable, but I think the goal of prison for Palestinians is different than how Foucault perceives the goal of prison to be the reform of the prisoner.

On a final note in relation to the architecture of control, there are several groves of olive trees that have been razed on the road between Bethlehem and Ramallah. The standard ‘excuse’ given by the army for cutting down olive trees is that they ‘obstruct the line of sight’ and thus are a ‘security risk’ Some of these groves however, could not possibly be obstructing the line of sight as they’re located right at the bottom of hills, so what were they obstructing?!

14 January

My last five interviews went really well. I was in Nabi Saleh for one day, and I got a lot of insight about what it’s to live in a town where the resistance to the occupation is really strong. The people of the village consequently have to face the retaliation of the army to their resistance. This is the village where a protestor was killed a few days after I arrived in the West Bank. The first woman I interviewed is one of the media spokespeople for the village and her interview went really well. The next two interviews, one with 3 (ish) women was also really good, and it went on for over an hour! In that time, in typical Palestinian fashion we were served so many beverages and snacks! I think it is a really interesting part of doing interviews here. There hasn’t been a single interview when I wasn’t offered at least one drink. In this particular house the woman made pastries for us when we came in! They were delicious! We also had two cups of tea, a cup of coffee and a glass of juice! I really needed a toilet by the time we left! The last interview really highlighted for me the need to have questions on hand in case women are not comfortable with just speaking freely. Some women have been really chatty when I ask them to speak freely about what they see as important, some have been less
comfortable with the idea and wanted me to ask questions. I could have been better prepared in that regard.

My return to Tulkarem was good. The woman was amazing. I didn’t have the recorder on at the end (ARRGGHH!) but she had told my translator about her feelings while she was dropping off a shahid for his operation. She said she felt really determined in what she was doing because ‘at some point, you have nothing left to lose, so you will do anything.’ I am really, really regretting not asking her this question during the interview. It popped into my head at some point, but I felt really strange asking her questions somehow. I felt less comfortable around her, not because of what she’d done, but because of her time in prison for it. I can’t explain it, but off all the women, I was most worried of offending her by asking her an insensitive question. I was really glad I went back, it was totally worth it. We also got to have a small adventure in Tulkarem, as John ‘lost’ his wallet we ended up spending an hour in the police station.

Finally, I had my last interview with a woman from near Bethlehem, from community that has really been affected by expanding settlements and the wall. She was also really amazing, and I’m glad I had the opportunity to meet her.

Friday I took off my ‘researcher hat’ and put on my ‘activist hat’ and went back to Nabi Saleh to take part in the weekly demonstration. I really wanted to go there out of solidarity, not as someone ‘researching’ the demonstration. It was really great to see a demonstration where young women were essentially leading the demo, and where the ones right up at the front. They were brilliant! I had been in a servee from Ramallah with some of them. They were all laughing at a story told by one of the girls, and she translated what was so funny for me. She said ‘I don’t tell my family that I go to demos on Fridays, because, well, they would kill me. So this morning my grandma asked if I would go to Friday prayers with her. I told her I didn’t know, but maybe, inshallah. And then she gave me her umbrella!’ The girl holds up a flowery umbrella. Everyone was in stitches. They continued giggling the whole way to Nabi Saleh, but when it came time for the demo, they were all front and centre, bodies on the line. Literally. I don’t want to write about this story though, because I saw myself there entirely as an activist. It makes me think, even in feminist research where the line between ‘researcher’ and ‘friend’ is much more blurred and objectivity is rejected as even being a possibility, to what degree can I go to a demonstration, march with a Palestinian flag, get sprayed with the same ‘skunk water’ as my Palestinian friends and still be a researcher? I think that I can’t, and I feel like that’s because it compromises me as an activist in that moment, not because it compromises me as a researcher. I’m really not sure though.

I visited another friend that I made today. She comes from the most conservative Muslim family I have met so far. Her father wouldn’t shake my hand, and I felt really guilty about holding my hand out to him, I should know better, but other Muslim men have shook my hand, so it was not at the front of my mind. I just hope I didn’t offend him!

I can’t believe I leave tomorrow night! I think it will take me a week or two after I get to really start to digest everything I saw and heard in the last six weeks.....
Appendix 3: Sampling Chart
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Interview Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Interviewed in person at the University campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Smith</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Interviewed via video call at her home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Brown</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Interviewed at the company office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Johnson</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Interviewed at a local coffee shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Davis</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Interviewed remotely via a virtual meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Interviews were conducted in various locations to ensure flexibility and accommodate different schedules.
Appendix 5: Interviews

Interview 1
Beit Sahour

8 December 2011
She has been married for 40 years and has five children, three girls and two boys. She was married in 1971, four years after the 1967 war. Her husband was a teacher and his salary of 22 JND was not enough for the household expenses. She needed to stay at home with the children but also needed to bring more money in to the house. She says ‘I did not lose hope or give up’ and she started working at home by doing embroidery. She started by making special embroidered yarmulkes but was not making enough money for the time she spent on them, so she started to knit and crochet. She made many things by hand such as dresses and scarves and worked at this for five years. The money she earned was important to her family and it was used to buy meat and vegetables. She still had a goal of making life better and making more money, so she sought help from the Mt. Carmel monastery, who were teaching women how to use sewing machines. She eventually bought her own big sewing machine and started making costumes, dresses, and school uniforms and she did this for ten years and only stopped when she was pregnant with her last son and the work was too much for her. At this time, her family was living in one room. She decided to start a course at the cosmetic institute in Jerusalem. She did this course for one year, but over time she took more courses there. She started to do hair and make-up for brides from her home. Women came from all over to have their hair and make-up done for their weddings, as this was a time where travel was open. As they got older, her daughters helped her, and she did this for 25 years. Sometimes she had 5-6 brides a day. The money she earned was enough to pay for her daughters to go to university, including one daughter who earned an MA in Mathematics. It was also enough to help her sons start their own business. They now own a road works business, and they have all sorts of trucks, bulldozers and tractors. The money was also enough to pay for the weddings of her sons, and to build another level on their house so her sons and their families can live upstairs. Today, her family raises sheep, chickens and pigeons in the back yard. She makes yogurt, dried yogurt, and butter from the sheep’s milk. This helps to support her family, and also enables her to share with her neighbours and friends.

The Intifadas had effects on her business and personal life. When travel became more restrictive, she often had to travel to the brides rather than them coming to her. The business of her sons was affected because before they were able to order replacement parts for their vehicles and equipment from Jerusalem. Now, they must go to Jordan to get parts, the cost is much higher (300NIS vs. 1000 JND) and it takes much more time. Also, her children have never seen Jerusalem, despite living only 10 miles or so from the city. During Ramadan, Israel grants some travel permits so Muslims can pray at Al ‘Aqsa, but only for people older than 45, and her sons are younger, so they cannot go. She undertook her studies at the cosmetic institute at a time when travel was not restricted, but her children were too young to go to Jerusalem.

How would you explain the relationship between Palestinian women and ‘Sumud’?

‘Sumud’ is crucial to Palestinian women, especially in Beit Sahour. ‘Women here have always been finding ways to work, and fighting for life to be better’. They make olive carvings, do bead work, they make rosaries, they knit and embroider. This is all to help the husband. ‘Women work together with men, co-operate hand in hand to raise the standard of living.’ The role of the wife is very important because through co-operation and working hard they can lift the family up together, for example, she established the company for her sons from nothing but her goal.

What is the most difficult part of the occupation?

‘The wall.’ The wall means that there is no security for Palestinians. If there was no wall and her sons were able to work up to the Green Line, she estimates their business would be at least twice as profitable, but they are blocked from working in many places because of the wall. They have cars, but this doesn’t give them full freedom of movement. For example, she explains how they cannot go to Ramallah at night because the road Palestinians have to use to get from Bethlehem to Ramallah is very bad, with lots of twists and turns and very dangerous.
On a side note:
My introduction to the famous ‘Arab Hospitality’ was unreal. A bowl of nuts, a plate of fancy biscuits, a plate of fruit (including mandarins, oranges, bananas, and cucumbers), two cups of tea, a cup of coffee, a thyme pastry and some sheep’s butter to take home! Whew!
Interview 2
Beit Sahour

According to my birth certificate I was born of the 15th of May, 1948. And later when I grew up, my name is Jala, Jala, during the school time children were ah, ‘what is this name, ‘Jala’? It’s not normal to have this name. There are other names similar to it in pronunciation like Najlah, Jalal, but not Jala. I asked my mother ‘why did you call me Jala? Everyone, when the teacher asks my name, they are surprised to hear this name. She told me, ‘listen, you were born on the 15th of May’ and at that time, when I grew up, I asked her ‘what does that mean?’ And she told me ‘Now we are living under the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. Here was Jordan, but when you were born there wasn’t here the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. There were problems between Palestinians and Israelis and there was the ah, British Occupation, the British mandate. And on the day you were born your father was in Jerusalem, working, and he came back, he was wounded, because there were clashes. The British troops left, leaving this part to Jordan and the rest of Palestine was taken by the Israelis. And they called it the independence day of Israel. And when I asked what does ‘Jala’ mean? ‘Jala’ means evacuation. We were upset and didn’t know what to call you the priest came, the second day, to pray, this is the custom, to pray for the newborn baby and the mother and they told him...he asked the name. The name of my mother is Leila, which is a very nice name, but why my name is Jala, he said ‘look at the newspaper you can find a nice name, ‘Jala’ the evacuation of the British troops, you can take this name.’ And they agreed and they called me Jala. So I was born on the day of the independence day of Israel. And we know that, Palestinians recognize Israel, and I hope that in the future I will not die until I see the independence day of the Palestinians as well. Because my birth means the establishment of the state of Israel and I hope to see the establishment of the state of Palestine. I grew in a big family. We are 5 sisters and 3 brothers. My mother was a housewife and she wasn’t educated, only she can read and write, but elementary education. And you know that I was the first lady who got a BA in English literature in the Bethlehem area. Ah, when I finished school I got a scholarship to study at the University of Jordan. Ah, my other family refused. ‘To send her to Jordan to study? She can study for two years in a college and become a teacher! Why send her there and she will live away from you?’ And you know, early marriages in the family for girls, that was 1965, were preferred, yani, it’s better for the girl to get married, even my mother got married at the age of 14, and she had me, I was born, at the age of 15. Yea, only 15 years the difference between me and my mother. And my aunts told her ‘you want to send her to university, you are crazy. When do you think she will come back and get married? No young man will take her as a wife.’ She said ‘no, don’t interfere, I want my daughter to get higher education because I was deprived of higher education.’ So, there was no Bethlehem University here, no Al Quds university, no university at all, only in Ramallah one college for women, to get in and to have an education to be a teacher, in a school. Ah, when I went, we were the same state. The West Bank of Jordan and the East Bank of Jordan were the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. So my father took me in his car, he had a small Volkswagen car, and we went to Jordan, we were in Amman, it was easy, there were no barriers between the two sides of Jordan, and we went to the ministry of education, and the University had been established at that time only for only two, three years, because I was the fourth year graduation. Ah, we did all the procedures, we went to the university, saw the university. We asked for a dormitory where I can stay, they said ‘still we are building a dormitory for women. We don’t have. You have to look for a place for her to stay’ Oh my mom was crazy! ‘Where to put my daughter to lodge her?!’ Then a lad suggested the YWCA, in Jaba Amman, Amman consists of several hills, called Jaba, like a mountain but a small one. They directed us to the YWCA for women, you know, and there it was full of women who work in institutions, in the broadcasting service, and another two came from Nablus, another two students, to the university of Jordan came also and lived with me. We shared a room, the three of us, and we used to take a taxi to go to university, according to the lectures, and come back and study. And the neighbour, I met the neighbor also, she was studying with us. Anyway, the first year went very well, I used to come here every weekend, ah, and spend it with my family, Saturday morning I would leave home let’s say at 7, 8, 8:30 I’d be at university, 9 the lectures begin. Very easy. But in 1967, when we were doing the final examination in June, in summertime, the six day war broke between Israel on one side and the Arab world on the other. Egypt, the Southern front, and Jordan, and you know, the university stopped teaching, yani, it was very difficult. We didn’t know what happened, but after a few days we know that the Arabs lost the war, and Israel occupied Sinai, and the Golan Heights and the West Bank. And the borders were closed. So, what to do, the university closed, we were at the time, living in the dormitory, inside the university. The office manager came and said ‘you have to leave the dormitory, we want to change it into a hospital, you have to go and live with anyone, with any family you find.’ ‘I don’t have a family of my own in Amman,
I know no one! I used to go to my family every weekend, every month, whenever I have time ‘it’s not our responsibility’ they replied. I started crying. A girl saw me, and she was leaving with her uncle, both of them were from Beit Jala they asked me ‘would you like to come with us, and see what will happen?’ ‘Okay I will go’ Both of us, me and this girl, her name was ‘Rima’ were upset and we thought that we’d never see our families again, because in 1948 when the second war with the Israelis broke out the borders were closed, cut off, and there was no connection with the Arabs that were in Jaffa, or in Haifa. So, I went with the Rima and her uncle, and stayed with them for two, three days. His wife was very upset, to see him bringing two young ladies to her home, because she wants to offer us food, and we didn’t know what to do. I couldn’t sleep at night, I was always thinking, and thinking of my family. There was no contact, no phone calls. And what to do? How to continue our studies? From where we get pocket money? What kind of work we will do? It is not easy at that time, 1967, for a young girl who doesn’t have a certificate, we have finished the first year of university, the second year is not finished. We have to finish our final examinations. And then, one day, a man came to the door asking about me. When I went to see him, there was a car with his family, with his wife and children. He was a relative of my father, a cousin, a relative, part of the family. ‘Where Jala is? I went to the university asking about you, and they told me you left with Rima.’ I don’t know how he found me, we were in a place in Amman that I haven’t visited. He took me to his home. I stayed there for two months. I slept, he had two daughters, and three sons, I slept with the daughters in a room, they had a very small room, but two rooms, and a small veranda. I slept with his daughters, the sons slept on the veranda, and he and his wife in the other room. Things became a little bit....people...many, many visitors were in Jordan at the time of the war. People started to come secretly. Cross the river Jordan in secret places, illegally. Sometimes the take a taxi, the taxi leaves them, they cross the river, some of them were lost, some of them died, then walk in the desert, in Jericho, sometimes they find dead bodies. and the wife of the cousin told me, ‘you can go like them, are you going to spend all of your life away from your mother and father?’ I told her ‘no, but I have to think. I have a scholarship. The scholarship pays the fees for me, but my father used to send me pocket money. I want to wait for another month and see what will happen.’ I refused to come back to the West Bank in this way, by crossing the river Jordan, and walking miles before reaching Jerusalem then reaching Beit Sahour. Then, one day, ah, we had, I had, a letter from my father with the Red Cross. They sent it to me by someone who was living here, with the help of the Red Cross. He told me, ‘Jala, don’t try to come illegally to home, to Beit Sahour, wait, because there is a part of the Red Cross called family reunification, wait, we are writing them, telling them that our daughter is studying in Jordan, and they will help us to get you back in a legal way, they will send you papers and maybe we’ll try to see you on the bridge, to arrange with the municipality, with the Red Cross, the municipality, and the family. We’ll try to see each other. If the university opens, go to university.’ And they sent me money, a little bit of money, Jordanian dinars, maybe 20 or so. I was very grateful for this. Then, in August, I stayed June, July, August with this cousin. The University announced that we can go back to university, to the dormitory, because they want to make the examinations that were stopped in June, so I went to my room in the dormitory and did the examinations, and started my third year, I succeeded, even though it was very difficult to concentrate on English Literature, ah. Then, my third year started. Also, after a while, my family made this visit. We visited each other on the bridge. They came from this side, I went with this cousin, we went in his car, and also some of his brothers came, and with the help of the municipality we met on the bridge. We saw each other, for a half an hour, they brought me, I remember, a box of cookies and sweets, I was very grateful to see my mother and father, I cried, he said ‘hang on, go on studying, because we are working on the family reunion. This reunion happened in December, after Christmas, during the Christmas of the Greek Orthodox. They sent me papers, and I came to the bridge, I visited them and they made me a number, and they made me an ID. So I was able to go back and come back. As if I am a resident. This solved the problem. And after I finished my mid-term examination, I came here and saw my family, my sisters and cousins, yeah, and a friend of my father took us to Nazareth, I remember, I visited Nazareth for the first time in my life. Ah, visited a family of the headmaster, my father was also a teacher of English, visited Jaffa, my mother grew up in Jaffa, my grandmother came from Jaffa, yes, and ah, then went back to university. Each summer, if I didn’t have a summer course, I used to come. After the third year I came, then my fourth year. After graduation, no one attended my graduation because they can’t leave here, it was too difficult for them to come. Because I was taught I got a scholarship, I got a scholarship form the government of Jordan, I had to work in government schools. They preferred that I work in Jordan, but I made an arrangement that I come here and work with the government schools here, because my family was here. If I stayed in Jordan I would have to pay the rent, very difficult, I will not be appointed in Amman, I know only Amman, maybe I’ll be appointed in another city, so my family preferred that I come.
back to Beit Sahour. I came to Bethlehem and I was appointed to work at the Bethlehem school for girls which is the school I graduated from, working with my teachers... [PHONE RINGS]

When I went to the ministry, to the directorate of education to show them my certificate and to apply for a post the director directly said ‘you are going to work in a secondary school because we do not have any women who have a BA in English literature. That was 1969, before you were born. And, they gave me a great responsibility, not to teach young girls, but to teach a higher grade, secondary grade, from the 10th grade, the 11th grade and the 12th grade. Especially the 12th grade and they were about 4 of 5 classes, and I taught about 25 periods a week, and to prepare those in the 12th grade to do the general examination to go to university, which was a huge responsibility really. Ah, so I started working 1969. In 1970 it was a very difficult time here because in Jordan when Nasser was killed many demonstrations erupted here and in Jordan when there were clashes between Jordanians and Palestinians, when Jordanians killed several Palestinians who were shooting. Here people protested and there were many clashes. Sometimes young men came to the school to take the girls out to make demonstrations. When they come, the Israeli soldiers come. And they throw stones at them and they throw tear gas as at us. Several times I asked myself ‘why did I choose this career?’ Once, I was trapped in a class with the girls, they run away from the soldiers, and the soldiers throw tear gas at us, breaking the glass and the tear gas was inside, and one of the girls threw it out, but we couldn’t see each other, the room was full of gas and smell and we almost suffocated, but we survived...what to do? And many times we have curfews, during that period, 1970, until 1996 I worked as a teacher, about 25 years, at first in Bethlehem, secondary school, then when they opened the school you have seen, when we were passing the tent restaurant, the secondary school for girls in Beit Sahour, I applied to come here because it’s easier for me to reach than to go to Bethlehem. At the time I got my license, after 20 years, because we couldn’t afford a car at first. I started working in Beit Sahour, which was easier. But also Beit Sahour wasn’t easy. Sometimes we had the boys, the boys school is near the girls school and they used to come and demonstrate. So teaching, young girls during the political problems wasn’t easy to draw their attention to the lesson, to the language, especially to the English language, a lot of them prefer other subjects. We find difficulty sometimes in dealing with the, they want to change the subject, they want to talk about their problems, or if a martyr was killed, someone was killed they didn’t want to stay in the class. They wanted to go out all the time, and they go from Beit Sahour to Bethlehem to the manger square and then from manger square to Rachel’s tomb because the Israelis, most of the jeeps were there, and they started throwing stones at them. But, we survived, with our will and out perseverance. Things were, at that time, the Arabs who live with Israel when we used to go on trips and meet them, we were asking them how they were living, they would tell us ‘you are living in the honeymoon with the Israelis, still there are no restrictions placed upon you, but wait, wait.’ And really that was true, because in 1987, when the first intifada broke out, when they asked us to pay taxes and they didn’t give us chances for work, and our salary was very low, and when we asked them they would say, ‘in Jordan they take the same amount’ but in Jordan is cheaper than Israel, Israel is a very high standard of living, so shy, why do you want us to have the same amount? Anyway, the intifada broke out and at that time there were no bypass roads going out. From the front of our house the Israeli settlers used to go to Herodian. This road this way is to Herodian and to Qoassa. And the young men used to hide here, in the lane, in our special road, and when they hide near the wall, the wall of our house the Israeli settlers used to go to Herodian. This road this way is to Herodian and to Qoassa. And the young men used to hide here, in the lane, in our special road, and when they hide near the wall, the wall of our home, and when they saw a car with yellow plates, that means an Israeli car, they throw stones at them, breaking the windows of his car. And what do you think the Israeli reaction would be? Shooting, they used to shoot at them and at our house. Many times they shot the tanks of the water, making the water come down yes? And they threatened...now we are building something, but there was a wall before, they threatened to put down the wall. But on the other side of the road, that way, more men, more young men used to hide because they could run that way. here, this is a dead end, they can’t run from here, they are met with blocked area, but from there they can run another way. They came after a few months and put down the wall where the young men used to hide. And also once, I remember, Samir, Samir was a few months old, 10 months old, and Khalil was holding him, I was watching TV, one of the boys broke a settler’s car, and he went to downstairs. This wasn’t here, we weren’t living upstairs yet, we built this apartment in 1990, ah, we were living downstairs. He came (a boy who had been throwing stones), knocked on the door, I opened, I asked him ‘What’s wrong’ and he said ‘please, please, let me out’ and so I let him out the other door, I didn’t know what was happening. And after a few minutes, I saw a gun breaking the window of our door...the gun, the gun coming in. The glass down on the floor, the first one and the second one. I stood up with bare feet, it was June, and I have no socks on, nothing, and the glass, and I opened the door. He started, the settler started saying bad names, ‘your son broke the window of my car! You are crazy people!’ but also in Arabic, and bad names, I told him ‘he’s not my son,
someone came here and I made him go through, I didn’t know what was going on ‘I want to kill him! I want to see him and kill him!’ My elder son was the same age as the boy who ran away. I told him ‘my son is not here!’ He said ‘He is your son!’ My son was with his grandmother, she was living down in that house. And he left and went out and shot in the air, threatening us, and went in his car saying bad names and went. The second day he came back. he came to my house, he wanted to see my son. Sari was here, my elder son, I told him, ‘this is my son, is he the one who broke your car?’ I was really afraid, my heart sank down, I was afraid he would say yes, he is. But he said no, this wasn’t the bot. So you see, this is my son, and my daughters, I have two daughters, and a young child. Then he started also scolding, and talking bad words, and saying I know, I will look for him. And then, after several months I discovered he was a neighbour of us, the one whom I took, the one I made him fly from the other door, he was the one who broke his window, but I didn’t know. Anyway, then, there was a martyr, downtown, and they made curfews means we are made to stay inside, we are not allowed to go out to the marketplace, to the shop, we couldn’t get milk, we couldn’t get bread, after three, four days, they say ‘the curfew is off for three hours, you can get what you need.’ So everyone goes out to the marketplace like crazy. A fruit truck will bring a truck from Jericho, and everyone was screaming to get some potatoes, or cauliflower, or whatever. Schools also were closed for many days, sometimes months, during this intifada. And as teachers living in this area, we did like, we made a meeting, and we said what will happen to our daughters and sons if they don’t study? We have to do something about this, so we did what we call, like uh, yani, in every area we made a school. I taught English, so the children of the area came to my home downstairs, I have a small veranda, I turned it into a classroom, but each, in a different class. I taught them communicating in English, sometimes dictation, sometimes I put the six and the fifth grade together, the ninth and the tenth together, and gave them comprehension passages, said stories in English, gave them dictation. My son used to go to another house to have Arabic lessons, to another house to have computer lessons, computer was new at that time. And that made him fond of computers, he was 15 at the time, my elder son, and a neighbour taught him and another boy and both of them became computer specialists. My sister-in-law used to teach Mathematics, and they went to her home to get lessons, and in this way we managed. We also managed to keep them busy, because to let your children locked at home doing nothing, not allowed to do anything, not allowed to walk in the street, even if they went out in the veranda to look, the jeep keeps patrolling in the street ‘Go inside or we’ll shoot! Go inside or we’ll shoot!’ And sometimes tanks used to come, because there was a camp here, near Beit Sahour, from this camp they used to come and arrest when they wanted to arrest any activists. Or, go to Bethlehem. So, the first intifada, when the young boys used to use stones was not was bad as the second intifada that started in 2000, 2001 was worse because now, they have guns and started shooting. Before talking about the second intifada, the best part of our lives was in 1995 when the Palestinian, when the peace agreement was done in Camp David and Sinai was returned back, with the peace treaty to Egypt, we thought they would do this to the West bank, and give us our rights, and give us justice and leave here, now although we have Palestinian Authority, but still, at any time they can come in, come in and arrest anyone they like. The other day as I told you, they came to our neighbour and asked him to come to their office. They suspect he is active, or they want him to collaborate with them, we don’t know. They came at 2 in the morning, and knocked at the neighbour’s house and asking for him. He went there and we don’t know what happened with him. Anyway, from 1995 to 2001, when the second intifada broke out, our life became also miserable, because they were shooting, they started shooting at Har Homa, and the Israelis shot back, and they were killing many. Because the Palestinians started using bullets, they started using bullets and tanks, many martyrs, I don’t remember, in Bethlehem alone, I think in one week, 12 or 15 were killed, like the one we’re going to visit, the young boy, but he was killed in the first intifada, 1989, he was in the kitchen, boys were throwing stones at the settler’s cars, and the settler shot, and the bullet came from the window and shot him in the head. He’s the only son for the family, she has, I think, 4 or 5 daughters, and one son, and the son was killed. But in the second intifada more, especially when Bethlehem, ah, the siege, some fighters took refuge in the Nativity Church, and, ah, the Israelis surrounded the church, and they didn’t go out, and they didn’t want to go inside the church, because it belongs to the monasteries of the Catholic and Orthodox churches. And Bethlehem and Beit Jala stayed in curfew for 40 days. I was at that time teaching, I stopped working at the ministry of education, I took my retirement because of the situation, I was 50 years old when I retired, then worked for two years with the school, and I couldn’t continue because I had headache, blood pressure, now I work with NGOs, sometimes work like this with translation, and they kept the city, they made an agreement, and the fighters surrendered to the Israeli troops, and some of them were put in jail, some of them, still now are in exile, in Gaza, in Italy, I don’t know where else, they sent them outside the West Bank. After uh, I finished work, I will tell you why I
stopped my work, I stopped working, I took early retirement according to the ministry of education after 30 years of work you can get your retirement, but if I stayed until now my salary would be better, I have a very low salary because I stopped to work. Our work needed traveling, from Bethlehem to let’s say Beit Fajar, to villages in the area, to visit the schools, to give recommendations, to do class observations, etc. And always there are checkpoints, and staying in the checkpoints, and staying in the cars. I have allergies and sometimes the streets are not paved, and dust and gas, and ay, uh, my health wasn’t that good, and also I have to go to boy’s schools, and spending form the morning till the evening in a boy’s school is not easy, you cannot find a good bathroom, a good toilet for women. Uh, I got sick, I had, I don’t know what you call it, something wrong with my kidneys, and that’s why my husband told me it’s better to leave this kind of work, and also, my work demanded that I go to Tulkarem, which is in the north of the West Bank, to type the questions for the general examination, because we made a team of three directors, three supervisors, who do the questions for the general examination in English, and we have to be there when they type it on the computer, and when they type it into papers and filling it into special packets and putting it in boxes, we have to stay there. They didn’t give us a place to sleep, I have to be there from 5:30 in the morning I have to leave home, I have to come back 9, 10 in the evening, so that was difficult. Sometimes I stayed in Ramallah, and they were shooting on the way, and more checkpoints, about 5-6 checkpoints I have to pass to reach Tulkarem, So I uh, applied for early retirement, and that’s it. now I am part of the women’s group, uh of AEI, I work with them in translation, when a group of students come we take them to visit places, near the wall, or for people whose houses have been demolished by the Israelis, especially in Al Walaja, which is to the north of Bethlehem, near Beit Jala, uh, sometimes we go to Abu Dis university, Al Quds university to do interviews, as they require, each have different stories. And that’s it, now I have a family to look after, it’s the responsibility of the mother, I have two daughters, two sons, I didn’t talk about my family much, I talked about the situation more. Uh, uh, as my daughters and sons, luckily, by the help of god, they were good in studies, I directed them towards education, to music, to computers, and not to politics. We talk politics, politics is everywhere, on TV, the internet, but not to live with politics, because if they are involved with politics that means they will not be able to get permission to go to Jerusalem or to travel. They will find difficulty in traveling. Before, we used to travel through Ben Gurion airport, we were allowed, by getting permission from the Israeli government, my daughter used to go to Germany from the airport, but now, she has to come to Jordan, although she has a German passport, but to come here. I want to tell you a story about what happened to my elder daughter, as a I told you before, before making the interview, that she was a bight student, she studied at school in Beit Jala because she had, because beside English she studied German and she did the examination, and in the general examination she was the first girl in the West Bank, so they gave her a scholarship with DAAD, institution in Germany to study there. She traveled to Germany before, when she was in school, in the 10th grade, with the help of the school, and she liked it there, and because my brother is living in Frankfurt she said, although she had a chance to study in Bethlehem University, or in Jordan, she had a chance to study medicine in Jordan, but her father preferred Germany.

[Break]

I want to tell you about an incident that happened to my elder daughter. She went to study in Germany, informatics. She went to do her 13th year, in Germany they have not 12 years of school, but 13. She entered the student college then after that the university She came the first year, then also, getting married, so she used to come with her husband through Ben Gurion airport. That lasted until 2005. After the second intifada, Sharon uh, made a decree that Palestinians are not allowed to use the airport anymore. Only for special cases, very, very special cases until now. Some people who had a passport and a Palestinian ID, a Palestinian ID with an American passport, or from European passport, some of them managed to come. In 2006, my other daughter was going to get married. And her other sister wants to come, to attend the wedding. The same year, she got her German passport. She thought that with her German passport she could come through Ben Gurion airport. We told her, ‘please ask, because maybe if you come you will find difficulty. Come through Jordan, that is better.’ Because she has a Palestinian ID, and ah, a German passport. She left her Jordanian passport, she exchanged it for the German one. She decided to come through Ben Gurion airport. She was sick, she had a stomach ache ‘I can’t come to Jordan, I don’t know Jordan, I am used to coming from here. When I arrive in Tel Aviv in hour I’ll be in Bethlehem.’ ‘Ah, okay, try.’ It was in June, the 10th of June she arrived and her son, to the airport. When they arrived in the airport she showed them her German passport, and the boy also, he was born in Germany, in 1998. And they saw his passport. They looked at the computer and told her ‘You are Palestinian. You have an ID. You can’t pass through our airport.’ She told them ‘I used to come through your airport, and now you don’t want me as a Palestinian, but I am a German, my husband got the
German passport and I got it too, so why do you have several nationalities and we are not allowed to have another nationality, so give me a visa for one month, I want to attend my sister’s wedding and then go back.’ ‘No, you are not allowed to go in, you have to go back to Germany.’ ‘But please, I bought the ticket for me and my son to go here and come back after one month, please this time let me in, and next time I’ll go to Jordan.’ She called us, one in the morning, we were upset, ‘You didn’t come in?’ ‘No, they refused, they put me in a small room, in detention with my son saying that I have to go back to Germany, after two or three days.’ It was Tuesday and they want to keep her inside this room, locked, as if in detention, until Friday, until the same plane that she came with, to go back with the same plane. We tried to call, then the telephone was cut off. She mentioned that maybe they would let her go to Jordan. We thought that if they sent her to Jordan my son or my husband would go and bring her. We tried to call her, but we couldn’t, we can’t call the airport. So we tried, we started calling lawyers, we sent a lawyer to her, we called the German embassy. The next morning. We called the German embassy telling that Carol is in detention in the airport for coming here. She has no other charges, she is not guilty of anything, and the boy, he is only 8 years old, and they need food, they need water. The German embassy interfered, and they sent a woman from the German embassy in Tel Aviv to the airport. They asked about her and they managed to find a ticket for her, a place in an airplane for the evening, about 24 she was in the airport, but not to stay for 3 or 4 days, they ah, they sent her in the evening, I think the 8 o’clock flight. And the next day, in the morning of the next day she arrived in Berlin, and she called us, crying with her husband, but anyway, she was with her husband again. Here we were preparing for the wedding of my daughter, and she will be the maid of honor for her sister. She was in a miserable condition, and she had ulcer in her stomach, she couldn’t look at a photograph of her sister after the wedding, we tried to send her photographs by email and she didn’t want to look. And she was upset to know that our niece was the maid of honor of her sister. Then, what to do, the net year, I decided to visit her, to help her, yani, cope with the situation. At that time also she was pregnant, and she lost the baby. Maybe because of the stress that she went through? It wasn’t until 2010, last year, that she decided to come. She came to Jordan with her son, and my husband Khalil went there, to Amman, and waited for her in the airport and took her to a hotel, and the next day she came. After four years she got it in her mind that we Palestinians are not allowed to come through Ben Gurion airport. She has to go to Jordan and then come. And this Christmas also the second time she will try to come with her husband. Also her husband had left 6 years ago form the airport. I don’t know what will happen when he tries to come through the bridge, if they will allow him or not? We are waiting, yani, what the Israelis do for us is unpredictable, we don’t know if they will allow him in, because he wasn’t out from the bridge, and he has to show how he left Palestine or Israel. This is our life with them. But, anyway, we find all the time, power. The power, I don’t know maybe from God, from our hearts, to cope with the situation. We feel that this is our country, that this is where we belong, this is where we grew up, where our great-grandfathers grew up. I’ve travelled to Japan, I’ve travelled to Germany, to Italy, to Greece, to the States, but, I can’t live, I have my home here. And if the Israelis come and took over my land and my home of course I will be, I will go crazy. Yani, what do you expect the people who live in the refugee camps feel? Because the Israelis have taken over. You don’t feel the situation unless you’ve lived it. It’s very difficult to take other people’s land. I have met good Israelis who feel it’s not right to build their country on the expense of others. God doesn’t want them to do that to Palestinians, to take over their land, and build settlements in it and make their state at the expense of Palestinians, there are good Israelis who believe in peace, who believe that Palestinians have the right to their own state and rights and independence as they do. We respect those people and we hope that their number will increase. I have met one of them, I think her name is [ ] she has taken a Nobel prize in peace, I met her in Ramallah, at a peace conference for women. She was very good, she was very good, even she ah, objected to other Israeli’s opinion, that this is not right to leave the settlements is not right, and so on. She said no, the Israelis have to make a choice, either you do peace in the right way or think of a solution, there must be a solution for the settlements because they are the big obstacle to peace together with the wall.

[Question] Are those the two most difficult aspects of the occupation?
Yes, the most difficult aspect of the occupation is the complete control by the Israelis over the land, over our water, as I told you they take the water from the West Bank, they get 80% of the reserve wells that we have and they give us only 20% of it, in summertime we suffer from thirst, we can’t get a shower every day, we take a shower twice a week. Everyone is trying to have a well, even with the rain we have little water. We fill the well with the water that we have from the tap. The control they have over the water, over the air, over the uh roads, this is a problem. We don’t get permission to go to Jerusalem. We feel that Jerusalem is in our hearts, because you know, many churches, many places are there. We like to go and
visit and pray there, especially in the Holy Sepulchre and the Jestimani church, I like this church very much, where Jesus Christ had his last prayer on the rock. If you see it you'll love it too. And there are very nice olive trees there, so they have the right to go there whenever they like, and we don't have this freedom. We have permission twice a year, and sometimes we don't have it, it is random. With this presence of the wall, separating people from their land, many people are separated from their own land. They lost money, they lost their land, which is full of olive trees. Our, uh, the family with whom our daughter is married, they have acres of land, near Har Homa, and they used to collect olives and make olive oil, about 12 tanks of olive, now, they buy, they buy from Nablus. We too, our olive trees because of the lack of the rain didn't make much, and uh, we bought with 700 shekels one gallon of olive oil instead of going there and collecting it from our tree. It is forbidden. They don't give permission. They give permission only to the owner, only to the one person who is registered there who owns the land. And the first year, they give permission, and the second year they say 'it's very difficult, but maybe we give you permission, and the second year they say 'it's very difficult, but maybe we give you permission. Then after ten years, they regard these lands as belonging to people who are not there. To absentee, and then they take over the land. We heard that near Rachel’s Tomb they are going to build, extend Gilo, and build like a school for religious, for religious teachings for the Jewish settlers, I don’t know. And also, whenever we find, whenever Abbas finds a way to extend his hand and make peace, they find a way to put obstacles in the way. Yes, for example, saying that Israel is for the Jewish people, but why? You say that you are against racism? There are Christians, there are Muslims, and Jewish people in the state of Israel? Why is Israel Jewish state? Why put the religion in the first place? To let, to give, maybe to give a reason for you to let the other nationalities away? This is what I think is the obstacle for peace. This government all the time puts obstacles for peace. And building settlements in the Palestinian ground. There are about 500,000 settlers living inside Palestine, inside the West Bank of the river Jordan, which is supposed to be Palestine. How to make a state of Palestine with all Jewish settlers inside? Here, in front of us is settlers. Near Bethlehem, on the way to Hebron there are 10, not 10, maybe 6, 7 settlements. The nearest one is Eliza, and Afrad, uh Daniel Nafreh, and others. I don’t remember the names, oh, Ascion, and others. And still. They start, they start with putting a few blocks of houses, then, they say other settlers come and they make it a kind of small gathering of Jewish people and then it becomes a village, then a city, full of all requirements. So the settlements are a big obstacle for peace, and now they want to enlarge Gilo. And for the villages, I have visited Al Walaja village, which is near Jerusalem, they don't give license to Arabs to build homes there. But people are increasing in number! My son, he wants to get married. We want to build him a home, if we have land nearby we will build, we want to build him a home there, they say no! You have to get the license from Beit Eil. Beit Eil is a settlement near Ramallah. Where they put the government offices there. And when they apply for license there, not form Bethlehem municipality, because you are, they say you are, very close to Jerusalem. When you apply in Beit Eil, they say no, you don’t have the right, you are very close to Jerusalem, you are not allowed to build here. And when they build without a license, they come and demolish the house. Demolish it completely. And one, I visited a small home, which was built again, to make an interview with the family, uh, I discovered that the mother was one of my students, who I taught in uh, at Bethlehem secondary school for girls, and uh, she had three sons with her husband there, her house was demolished in December, for example, in 2008, then, in October, 2009, it was demolished again. And who helped her to build? Two rooms with a bathroom?The ICAHD. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. Israeli soldiers tear it down, and Israeli peace activists help build. They bring bricks, they bring cement, they bring people, and they build the house. Ah, if you find time to visit Al Walaja that would be god for you. [Question: What do you think Palestinian women do to resist this occupation? How do Palestinian women find resilience and strength to resist? And what do they do to resist?] Women, uh, few women are in politics, but we resist in uh, in our way of living let’s say. In our resilience. In our being here, refusing to emigrate, this one thing. Encouraging our children to stay here, and study here and work here, like I encouraged my son to study at the Arab American University in Jenin, and uh, he spent 6 years studying there. He used to go there and cross 5 checkpoints on the way there, it took him four hours to reach Jenin. And every time I use the mobile to ask him whether he's in trouble. I was worried until he was safe inside his apartment. And uh, encouraging him to work here in spite of the difficulty and the little amount of money he gets. Um, staying in Palestine also, enduring all the difficulties, that we mention, the lack of freedom, the restrictions placed upon us, the wall, not going to Jerusalem, this is resilience, this is sumud, what we call sumud. Sometimes, according to the circumstances, when there is any occasion, when the bombarded Gaza we went to uh, the Nativity Square and we hold notices and we protested against killing innocent children, against killing innocent families, against uh, demolishing homes. When anyone is killed or arrested we go and support the family, yani, we do legal
things, we do non-violent resistance. When the wall, when they decided to build the wall around [ ]'s home we went there and we sat in street, all the women, of the AEI, and we held notices, and we sang, and we stayed all day, all morning, all afternoon, but, they did what they wanted. We didn’t imagine. That was a very wide street, then the wall was built in the middle of the street. You will see. A very small area was left in front of their house for them to pass. And they had two stores, for selling cutlery and objects, and this was closed, and now she sells things, souvenirs, for tourists, because people visit her. We try, we try, with our will, with our resistance, we try to resist, but here we are. And we try to talk to our friends who visit, to Internationals, we uh, get their support. We feel that this is resistance, and that makes us feel good. When we get more support, when we have more people to support us from Holland, from Ireland, from other places, when they listen to our stories this is a kind of resistance that we do. But we can’t hold a gun and go shooting, yani, no we don’t believe in killing others. But we hope that the Israelis will understand this and uh, instead of building this wall to demolish it and make bridges, bridges of understanding and bridges of hope between us. Because we can’t have peace with them without knowing each other, without knowing the customs, without knowing their religion, although we use the same bible, we know nothing about them, and also they ignore our lives. I remember when I met [ Israeli ] in Washington DC, she told me that in the plane, she talked to a young woman sitting near her, they talked, and she asked her ‘Where are you going?’ and she said I am going to participate in Partners for Peace Tour, and to talk about Israel and Palestine, and that peace is possible. The other woman, the young lady, near her, she knows nothing about the wall. She didn’t know that the wall existed, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. She doesn’t know that there is a wall dividing a school in Abu Dis, many Israelis are ignorant of this, they live their life and they don’t care of the others, although their government is causing this. They should know. Yes, if they know, this is part of our resistance, if we get people to know this knowledge.
Interview 3
Beit Sahour

She was just talking about how she has been very sick. And she can’t go to Jerusalem. All summer she had something wrong, a kind of virus in her intestines, and uh, she goes to a doctor. The association, the medical association in Beit Jala. Yeah, um.

[Question: can you please tell me anything from your life that you would like to share?]

I am from a very simple and poor family. When I was 18 years old, and in my last year in school my mom died, leaving me and my sisters and 4 brothers. My father got re-married. When my mom died she was only 38 years old. She died from breast cancer. I was the eldest of the family, and I was left with the responsibility. Of course the father can’t get married so soon. Because of that, I didn’t pass my general examination, especially the English language. When I didn’t pass I tried again, I moved to another private school in Bethlehem, and worked on the examinations more. I made the examinations in all the subjects, Arabic, Mathematics, English and then I passed. My father was poor and I couldn’t go to university. I worked in a factory that made clothes, blouses and jackets, ah, in order to have pocket money because my father wasn’t able to support all of us, it was a large family, 6 children. In 1975 I got married to my husband. Also, I got married into this family. My father in law was also poor, this house, we built it later, years after getting married. All three brothers, and all of the wives lived in the same house. We each had one room. We shared food together, shared life, shared everything. It was a great struggle. We used to do this kind of construction, covering the stones with concrete, and the men were able at that time to go to Jerusalem and work in construction. It was easy to go without looking for permission. After one year, in 1977, I had my first baby, a boy, Salaam, who is the Martyr. He was born nine months after the wedding. Salaam. We were very, very poor, and we were looking at fruit, and I couldn’t buy a kilo of pears and yani, and we brought him up in this very bad situation. I remember how I brought him up, how I brought my son up. He was very difficult to get back to sleep, he slept a little bit, and I would open the door and he would wake up and start crying. I was counting the days until he was one year old. Bringing him up was very, very difficult. I had a daughter, now she is an engineer, she works in building construction in a company, she was studying engineering in Birzeit, because there is no engineering in Bethlehem university. Her average in the general examination was 92, and we sent her to study in Ramallah, in Birzeit. Our economic situation was very bad, I had to take loans for her. My husband told me, ‘go and take money for her, here we can manage, but she is all alone, by herself.’ My husband has pride, he can’t go and ask for money from anyone. My second daughter studied at Bethlehem university and she became an accountant. She graduated with honor, she was the forth in her class. She is married in a village near Jenin. My third daughter is a social worker. She is married, she has a daughter and a son, and ah, her husband has a printing press. My daughters needed many things, our life is different from the past. Now they want to go to places, attend parties, birthday parties, be out late at night. During the first intifada, the situation here was terrible, because form this road, the settlers passed. Young men would come all the time and throw stones at them, and the settlers would shoot back. So we used to hide in the corridor. There are still holes in the house from the shooting. I really suffered from fear. I feel that the problems I now have with my health is from the fear. I feel that this pain in my intestines is from years past, and the pain I had from losing my son. I was afraid from the soldiers. They used to come at night and knock on the door, and I would start trembling, my daughters and I. Soldiers used to come up on the roof of the house. We were not afraid in the daytime, because I could get help, or go my sister-in-laws house and be together, but at night I was afraid. Sometimes they would do shit on the roof. That really upset me. I feel that the pain inside my body is because of the fear during the intifada.

[Coffee break!]

There was a checkpoint in front of our home. That gave us great trouble. Once, they put us all together in one room, me and my daughters, my brother-in-law, about ten of us. We were in the first floor locked in one room, and the soldiers came to our homes, searching and throwing everything on the floors, the telephones and TV sets. They suspected that this, [points to a press near the ceiling] ‘sida’ they thought that someone was hiding there. They found nothing. Even my daughter’s copy books, they thought there was something in them, and they opened them and put them on the floor. They thought we were the organizers of the intifada or something. Not once, but many, many times they came at night and searched the rooms, especially when the children were asleep, they made them wake up, one in the morning, two in the morning they march in and start looking inside. There was the checkpoint here. Once Israeli peace
activists came to see and watch what was going on. They interviewed my sister-in-law and the soldiers saw. When the peace activists left they went into her house and started throwing things down. Everything. All the mattresses, all the sofas, she said nothing because she was afraid they would do something to her husband. She didn’t say a word. Because here, where we live, this is a border. The settlers used to go out to the settlement here, before the bypass road. Once, my husband was coming down the road and the soldiers took his ID, he asked for it back and they wouldn’t give it to him. So I went to the mayor, because he is a relative, and after a while he got it back, he contacted someone and brought it back. Because Salaam was killed, we cannot get permission to go to Jerusalem. Even now, we still can’t get permission. No one in the family can get permission, not my daughters or my husband or me, not to go for Christmas or Easter. When one of my daughters had a baby the baby was sick, and put in hospital in Jerusalem. They refused to give her permission to go. He was a newborn and he needed to be breastfed, they refused to give her permission at first. Then her sister-in-law went and talked to the Israelis and told them ‘you should do good, you killed her brother, why don’t you give her permission?’ They finally gave her permission, but only for one day. For one day only, to go and breastfeed her baby in hospital. We have suffered a lot really.

Salaam liked to watch wrestling. At that time because we were on a curfew, during the first gulf war, I used to bring him a wrestling video cassette to pass time. His friends and cousins, 11 of them, were here watching. From the other side of the road the local boys threw stones at a settler. We heard him shooting. He was there [points to couch] and I was here [points to kitchen]. He was hungry, and I told him, eat some halva. He said no, ‘I want potatoes’ So I was frying some potatoes for him. When the settler started shooting the shot came through the kitchen window and struck him the forehead. ‘Salaam! Salaam! Salaam!’ I was shouting. He died instantly, but I didn’t know that at the time. I went to him. His father was playing cards and he heard the shooting and came home. It was such a shock. His uncles carried him (out of the house) his father couldn’t help, he was frozen. I didn’t think he had died. I though he had lost consciousness. People knew, but didn’t tell me right away. The families came, and a doctor came, and he knew. The Israelis, when a young man dies, they don’t want the people to participate in his funeral. They want to make a very quick funeral. But at first I didn’t know that he had died. When the young men knew, they took him to the hospital. The Israelis took his body to the monastery and hid it there. But I didn’t know what had happened. A doctor came and told me ‘this is our fate, as the Palestinian people, we should accept our fate.’ Then I knew he I had lost my son. My husband came and he knew that he had died. The doctor took my husband to the Israeli governor, even though there was a curfew, because the family wanted to have a respectful funeral for our son. They took some relatives with them. After the Israeli governor promised to give him a respectful funeral, but then they changed their minds. They said no, we have to take him to Tel Aviv to perform an autopsy, to see whether the bullet is the same kind as the ones in the house, or in the water tanks. My husband was angry, he told them ‘you can’t take him alone, my relative who is a doctor must accompany him.’ We were afraid they would not return his body. They took him to Tel Aviv and took the bullet out of his head. At 12 o’clock at night they told us we could go and have the funeral. We went in a bus, we were 40 or 50 people. When we reached Shepherd’s field we found a jeep of soldiers blocking the road. They told us, ‘you have to go back, only 20 people can come to the funeral, only 20 close family members can go to the church.’ At first they refused to let me pass. I told them ‘I am his mom! I have to go and see him!’ When we reached the church we found him in a plastic bag, his body was very cold and his head was still cut open. I couldn’t touch him. Even the priests started crying. There was only a white sheet over his body. Everyone was upset. The priests prayed for only 15 minutes. We took his body to the cemetery. They refused to let us ring the bell of the church, which is a tradition, so people can hear that someone has passed away and they can attend, but the soldiers refused. They came into the church to look and count to see if there were more than 20 people in the church. Some people hid under the pews in order to attend and the soldiers made them leave. When we went to the cemetery they refused to let us bring lights or candles. It was one in the morning. They refused to let us put a light on, so we buried him in darkness. Many young men were hiding around the graves to participate in his funeral. They had imposed more curfew on people. But people came, not through the main roads, but they came secretly from the country-side. They sneak in to give their condolences. I knew people cared. But I lost my son. My daughters couldn’t forget their brother, because he was the only brother they had. One of my daughters had celebrated her birthday one day before he was killed. He wasn’t fighting. He was doing nothing. He was here, enjoying himself, watching a video, he was not doing anything against the Israelis. This affected us a lot. My husband goes by car to town, and sometimes he comes back on foot, forgetting that he drove. Sometimes when he is working he forgets, and asks Salaam to hand him a nail. He says ‘Salaam, give me the nail.’ He feels his presence. Now we are xxxvi
still being punished because we cannot get permission to go to Jerusalem. We made a case in the court against the settler. At first we won the case. But then he appealed, and he won. We faced him in court and got nothing. Later I heard that after several years this settler was killed by another settler. Now, my husband doesn’t like to go anywhere, he doesn’t like to enjoy himself.
Interview 4
Bethlehem

My father refused to let me continue my studies at school. I left school at the beginning of the 11th grade. The first time they came to see me, (the family of her husband) here, they used to come and ask for your hand. At the beginning he brought his sister and his mother to see me. At that time I was studying, I had exams, I uh, I know for why they are coming, so I closed the door to my room with the key. And my mom come and say, ‘come, say hello, there are people who want to speak with you.’ I tell her ‘I don’t want to see anybody’ and I closed the room. They stayed 2 hours to see me, but they can’t so they leave the house. That night my father scolded me, he say ‘why you do this? Aye! It’s not polite to do this!’ After two weeks they returned another time, I can’t say no. So he told them ‘okay, Mabrook!’ That means you will marry. You have to stop going to school. I was 16 and 1/2. It was 1973. In one month I was engaged and married. One month. I didn’t speak with him twice. He came every night to the house, but I sit, like this. (she demonstrates how she would sit, staring at the wall) My mother would tell me ‘say something!’ and I would tell her ‘I don’t know what to say!’ I was shy, even to look at him or to speak to him. One time he brought me to his family and he told me ‘speak to them!’ and I told him ‘I don’t know what to say! If they ask me something I will answer’ I was 16 and 1/2. After that, I had my four boys. They tell me if you want to continue your studies you can now. I told them, ‘no, you didn’t let me continue before, now I don’t want to.’ Even with every son, when he had his general examination he would tell me to study with him and continue, I refused. Because I am shy to go at this age. But now it’s not. But my sons, no. They married the way that they want. Every one. The first one, 22 years, he loved this girl, the sister of his friend, and uh, he saw her, he arranged it with her. And he told his father ‘I want to marry’ We were beginning to build for him there. It was too difficult for him, he doesn’t work, the first year. He said ‘no, I want to marry, I have spoken to them and they say okay, so now, you will say no?’ His father said, ‘so what, you have no father to ask?’ Two weeks we had big problems in the house. He kept crying every night. ‘I will kill myself! I will only marry this girl!’ So I tell his father ‘it is good that he finds a good girl. Yallas, you can help him.’ So we do with all four sons the same. We help them with all of the wedding. Everything. The forth one even, he did the same. He was in university still. All of them, 22 they were engaged, 23 they marry. All of them. You see, the forth one, we said no. We keep saying ‘no, because it’s not the time.’ Two married in one year, it’s very difficult. Ten months between the two. And the previous year my husband stopped teaching. He turned 60 and he stopped. Like now, seven years he is home. He worked at Terra Santa school, a private school. And there is no retirement. He got one large sum of money for 40 years of work. He helped them with this money, he built for them, he helped them marry, but now, they help us. The four, they support us. After my children were all married I had more time. Because usually I stayed home. Once I week I go to my parents, and my mother-in-law here, we live in the same area. Before, all the big family, all the brothers of my husband live here, everyone has his own house. They are six brothers and their mother. Like a Kibbutz here. The [Z] family. My mother in-law-died. So now they big one, there is a place for them, but for their children there is no place here, so we begin to build on the other land that I showed you. Everyone has one dunam of land from his father, so they built for their sons. So after that I find that I have more time. When My sons married and everyone was in his own house, I’m restless. So I began to find these organisations. Like Wi’am center, AEI, the Lutheran church, now I am in 3 or 4 organisations. So, I find myself, so really, before I did not know people in Bethlehem. I knew nobody. But now! I know everybody! For ten years now I have been in some organisation. I took computer lessons. They brought me a computer. Yani, I begin to go here, and here, before, even when somebody died I didn’t go. But now, everywhere I go. So, even, I am better in English. Before I couldn’t speak any word, when I left school, I can’t speak any word of English. I have two sisters-in-law who are American. Here, we are international! One from Bethlehem, one form Beit Sahour, one from Beit Jala, one from Jerusalem, and two Americans. One lives here and one came only for a visit. This one, her grandfather is a Rabin. She is Jewish. But we can’t say this, you see. He went to study in California and he married there. So, but, uh, she became Christian, she worked, the two now teach in a California university. Yes, he comes every Christmas. She came twice only. She doesn’t it here. She is afraid to come, because the first time she came it was terrible, we had a lot of problems, during the first intifada. She was afraid. Really, it is too difficult. Throwing stones, bombing, gas bombs, shooting all the night. Before, there was a police center in Manger square. The Israelis took the building, and they (young boys) come up this road to throw stones at them. All the day. All the day. No school, sometime curfew, uh, they bring tyres from trucks, not cars, trucks, they

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At that time, because I am so stressed, I am afraid about my children, I have nothing to feed them, we are closed. I can’t open the door. I can’t open the window to look in the street at what happens outside. One day, I had a severe headache from the morning. Wow, I cry from the pain in my head, my eyes are red, my face is red, so, uh, I phoned the Red Cross to bring an ambulance to go to the hospital. They ask ‘where is your house?’ I say, ‘it is down by the manger square.’ They say ‘we can’t come.’ I tell them, ‘so if somebody is going to die, you leave him to die?’ They say, ‘we cannot reach the area’ 40 tanks are surrounding us, I cannot open the door. They say ‘if you find anyway around from outside we can come from this side, walk past the tanks to come and we can pick you up from down below.’ So I put something on my head, it was Easter time, it was cold at this time. It was not quickly that they came. From the morning until 1 o’clock we are phoning, phoning, it was six hours until they came. I put something on my head, and I go from behind houses. I can’t go in the street, I go from behind houses, climbing walls until I reach the ambulance. On our way, like 10 times they stopped the ambulance and made me come out from it to see if I have something, and they saw my face. Really, I want to have a heart attack. When I reach the hospital my blood pressure was too high. That is why I had a headache. I stayed in the hospital, they gave

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Church) and he’s going up the stairs to do the bells of the church, they
Because he kept bleeding he died. Uh, there’s another one who used to ring the bells of the Nativity
neighbour, they shoot him in his leg, and uh, if someone could take him to the hospital he wouldn’t die.
Because he kept bleeding he died. Uh, there’s another one who used to ring the bells of the Nativity
church) and he’s going up the stairs to do the bells of the church, they shoot him in the stairs. For
nothing. They take my house, (the soldiers) for twenty days. A group of eight came for six hours, and they
leave and another one came. And they left feces on the roof. When they went we washed the roof many
times because of the smell and the dirt, and uh, the urine. Some of the are good. One time, we have
Christmas, like now. And I cleaned, I put up the tree, I put down the carpets, the new carpets, and they
knock the door, like six of them and they say ‘we want to see the house’ I ask him what he wants to see
and he says ‘we want to see if you have guns or something’ I told him we don’t have guns. It’s
Christmas time, and we are cleaning! It was muddy outside, their boots are full of mud. And they enter, all
of them. They take the beds upside down, everything, the cupboards upside down, for one week we had
been cleaning. I tell them ‘what did you do?’ He said ‘I’m sorry. Merry Christmas, but we need to do this.’
You can’t say no. What they want they will do. And uh, I was renting a room upstairs to an accountant. He
worked in the authority (PA) and nobody knew he worked in the authority. He was from Gaza. This
happened in 2002, at Easter time. He was working as an accountant for the authority. He didn’t wear
authority clothes, nothing. He rented the apartment because he was from Gaza. And uh, at that time, I
don’t know who told them, they know everything, they know that this man is here. And that night (the
night the siege started) he told us that the tanks were entering Bethlehem. He said ‘I want to leave the
house at midnight. So I will throw the key of the apartment into the garden when I leave.’ The grass in the
garden was high. So he threw the key for us. And he left. Before the tanks entered. So when they reached
here, they knocked on the door upstairs. I told them that nobody was there. They say, uh, ‘open this
house for us.’ I told them I didn’t have the key. They said ‘you should open this apartment.’ He said ‘if we
find anything, we will kill your son.’ I told him ‘but we don’t have the key’ and he said ‘bring your son and
let him break the iron door.’ How would he break it? They go to the tanks and bring this, like big hammer
and they put a gun to his head like this, and they tell him, yallas ‘break the door.’ He kept doing, doing,
doing, like two hours, like three hours. The tanks were here, they wouldn’t let me leave. After maybe
three hours he breaks the latch. They broke all the wooden doors to the rooms in the apartment. They
don’t leave anything in the apartment. But good they find nothing. If they find anything it was a big
problem, because in this area, like 20 houses were destroyed. They put the bombs inside and bomb them.
At midnight, the house opposite to us. Yani, they were activists. So they came at night. They let their
wives, their kids outside. Without taking anything. They give them, they tell them ‘you have 10 minutes to
leave the house only’ and they blew the house up. Everything. They don’t let them take their clothes with
them. Nothing.even if they have some money, perhaps they take it quickly, or their gold, and uh, more
than 20 houses this way. And when you hear! Wow! That’s a big noise! Midnight they do it. Midnight. And
many times it is cold, they leave the kids outside. They don’t care. One time, I was at the market, and, uh I
came from the market, and I opened the door, and I put all the things on the floor. I had meat, I had fruit,
and my neighbour, I have a neighbour here, she called me, ‘come, come, see the olives I bought! I bought
black olives and they are good!’ So I put everything on the floor, and I went to her apartment, it’s just the
next door here, to see her olives. At that time, we look from the window and I say ‘Hey! The police is
outside. Like 6 or 7 had come up the stairs and they were outside. Something had happened in the area.
So I told her, ‘I want to go to my house! My door is open and everything is on the floor.’ While I am
coming towards my door he says ‘Tell me where you’re coming from.’ I told him ‘I am coming from my
neighbour’s to my house, this is my house.’ He said ‘no, return to where you were. Go back.’ I returned to
her house and tried to know what happened. There is, ah, uh, our neighbour, they want him. He’s with
Islamic Jihad, they came, they have his telephone number, we don’t know form where, some people work
with the Israelis (collaborators). He came home, because usually they don’t come home (activists) they
used to sleep outside of their houses, so, uh, when they know he was home, it was noon, so they came
and surrounded all the area. Everywhere you look is Israeli jeeps. And uh, nobody can walk, they stop
everybody in the street, nobody can move, so the begin telling him with a loudspeaker to come out and
bring his gun with him, they know he has a gun. Everything they know. He didn’t want to come out. They
keep speaking, from 12 o’clock until 7 at night, I can’t come to my house, I can’t come outside. Until 7 I am
at my neighbour’s house, with everything on the floor, my house is open. So, we hear them and she
turned on the TV and it was on the TV! So, uh, he don’t want to come, until they bring the bulldozer. They started to ruin the house. Everybody came out, except him. His father called his name ‘please come out! We don’t want the house to be ruined! Please come out!’ Until 7 at night. He came out with his gun and they take him, and they opened the area, so I can open my house. If we want to speak like this, for days we can’t finish. The problems that we have. Once they destroyed a house and people were inside. They refused to come out and they destroyed the house with them in it. They had an area for chickens, and uh, they were four brothers, and one of them was with Hamas. And he came home, and he sat with his brothers in the chicken house. A collaborator told the Israelis that they were now in this area. An airplane came and dropped a bomb on the chicken house where they were hiding and killed all four of them. It was a loud, loud noise. The four died immediately. We are afraid that when we go outside we won’t be able to return to our houses. We don’t know what will happen. One time I was at my mother’s and there was shooting in this area. And they phoned me, my mother-in-law did, to tell me ‘don’t come home now, and your water is leaking on the roof. All my water gone because they shot the tanks. All the water gone. For two weeks I don’t have water, until we repair them. Yani, not one time, not two times. Years. Twenty years here. Since I married, in this area, I tell my husband, ‘we didn’t rest at all’. It’s like a big prison. Three years ago I had a chance to go to Cyprus, uh, there is, uh, the women, uh, 1325 (UN resolution) for the women, yes, uh, we have and Israeli woman, we have from Lebanon, from Palestine, from all the area. And, you see, we are laughing, most of the time. Bu you see the Israeli women all the time, like this (makes a very straight face). They didn’t want to share with the Palestinian women, they were far from us. And one time she asks me, ‘I see that you are laughing all the time, that means you are happy, and you say that you are under occupation, but all the time you are happy and laughing. Why? I want to ask you.’ And I tell her ‘because still we have hope and we like to laugh. We don’t want to be like you, all the time far from us and like this (makes straight face again, then laughs) She became mad! We want to live! Otherwise we will die, if we keep thinking of what has happened! We will die! We say, for us, it is good. We are hoping that the new coming time is better for our children. Even my sons, all the time are saying ‘let us leave here and escape abroad, we can have a better life, there is nothing here.’ All the time my kids say it. But I tell them ‘This is our land, this is our roots, we are from here. Our parents, our grandparents, so why would we want to go anyplace where we know nobody?’ Who would take care of us if there was no work? Here, working for a half salary is better than nothing. And outside, you can’t live... You have to work a lot and put all your money for rent, for living, because we here that even outside it is hard these days.

[Question: Could you tell me, could you explain what sumud, what resilience, means for the women of Palestine?]

That we should, even if it is difficult, stay. This is our land. Where to go? We don’t know America or Australia. This is my land. I know that I from Bethlehem. I am Bethlehemian people. And my roots are here, my parents, my grandparents, so I should stay. I keep telling my children the same. Even with all these difficulties we can. But I don’t know, for my children, if they can continue or not. But we hope that it doesn’t become worse and worse. We hope. That something happens, that we have a state, that something better happens. He hope. We try to have fun when we can. Now if there is one day where I don’t go outside I feel that there is something missing. I can’t stay in the house. If there is nothing. I go to my neighbours. We have very good neighbours. When I don’t go to a group meeting they phone me and ask why I didn’t come. I am busy, busy all the time! Like a politician! When I find the time I run quickly to them. Here, my sister-in-law, she is American, I help her a lot, because her kids like Palestinian cooking, so I try to cook for them.

[Discussion ensues about whether [ J ] and I will come to Wi’am women’s group meeting that week, where [ L ] will be cooking traditional Palestinian food.]
[S] I got married at the age of 18, I had an agreement with my husband to let me continue with my studies. I studied in Algiers, and we spent 4 years there. My husband didn’t come here until I finished with my studies because he had a problem with the government of Jordan. Because if he came here they would take his passport. When I finished my university, I had a baby. I finished my school and I had a baby. I got two certificates. When we came to Jordan they took his passport and told him he couldn’t come back to Jordan. ‘It’s not allowed.’ I had studied in Algiers because he was working there. When we came together we spent about 10 days in Jordan, until they gave us, uh, gave him his passport, and they told him ‘don’t come back here to Jordan.’ He was involved in politics, yes. Because he was in, when he studied in Iraq, and uh, he was an activist, and they tried to accuse him of things. At that time it was 1984, when we came. He wanted to work here, and also I wanted to practice my paralegal skills in the Jordan Bar Association. My daughter was born in Algiers because my husband wanted us to remember our good time there. She was 6 months old when we came. At first our life was very difficult because there is no work. My husband worked in UNRWA, at first in Beit Jala, and then when the project finished he asked me what we should do, because there was no work. UNRWA called him to tell him that there was another project in Jenin if he wanted to continue with them. I told him at that time that he must go and work. It was 1986. I told him ‘you must work because we have three children now, and it is impossible to stay without work.’ I didn’t work at that time. At that time the Jordan Bar Association told lawyers in Palestine not to work, because to work in the territories at that time meant to co-operate with the Israelis. They (the Jordan Bar Association) gave us a small sum of money for 7 months. So I told him to go and work. At that time I was staying with my in-laws. My mother-in-law, and father-in-law and sister-in-law. And, uh, I stayed at home and my husband went to Jenin and he stayed there alone. When he finished the work, uh, the project the first intifada broke out. Life was very difficult at that time. But he began at that time to work as a full time permanent job in UNRWA. For us, it became better than before, our life, because now he had a good salary and uh, that time, all the time I stayed at home. But, uh, during the intifada there was uh, schools in people’s house (because of the curfews). For me, uh, the children, children in 3rd class, they came to my house and I taught them English, Arabic and Mathematics. My children were still very young, 4 years old only. She would play, and she always wanted to see the children who were studying at the house and play with the pupils. It was a nice period because you feel that you are doing something for the people. At that time also, in 1987, because my husband was very active with public committees. This committee provided wheat and sugar and rice, and put it in storage along with seeds for planting for the whole area. And uh, in 1987, the people in Beit Sahour threw away their identity cards. In the municipality, they didn’t want their identity cards. They said ‘no taxation without representation.’ That day my husband was in Jenin, he had his work there. He went through the West Bank for work. And when he came home people were throwing away their identity cards. They made a curfew in Beit Sahour and the next day it was our anniversary. The Israeli soldiers came in the afternoon, at about 4 o’clock, they came to our house and they arrested my husband. My children were surrounding him, they were very small. I remember my son asking me ‘mom, where will my father sleep? He doesn’t have pajamas.’ Around the same time they arrested 7 men around Beit Sahour. They sent them to Nakka (prison) in the Negev. Ah, for my children it was very difficult, one was 3 years old, one was 4, and 2 years. She wasn’t talking yet. All the time when she heard an airplane she was very, very afraid. At that time I went to see and advocate, a Jewish advocate, and when I uh, went outside the home my children were very worried. My son, he has a problem with speaking. He would always ask ‘where is my father?’ And still, this problem with speaking lasted 3 or 4 years. He was very afraid because he saw the soldiers take his father away. My husband spent 3 months in prison. He got less time than some other people because on the day that people threw their identity cards away he wasn’t there. For that he had only three months. At first it was 6 months, but the lawyer got it down. But all the seven who were arrested had different sentences. At that time I remember, during the intifada, the women, all the women, together we go if someone was released from prison we’d go, all the women, to tell him ‘welcome back.’ And there were always people coming to me to see if I needed help or money. I told them ‘No, I have money, because my husband had his salary, and I can manage, I don’t want any money. I only want my husband for my children and for me. And uh, uh, my first daughter finished school in 2000. During the second intifada she finished school. When she studied to take her general examination, through that it was very difficult for us because we were nearer the Jewish army camp, and
uh, the people, the fighters would come and shoot at the army camp from near our house. She couldn’t concentrate. It was very difficult for her to study. Sometimes she went to her friend’s house to study, because it was impossible to study, all the time shooting, all the time bombs, it is very, very difficult. They destroyed houses in the neighbourhood. When she finished her exams she went to Birziet and she studied there. Sometimes she couldn’t reach Birziet, there were curfews and checkpoints, and sometimes they would have to travel distances walking. One day when she was near the mountains, she climbed up and soldiers caught them and told them to go down, that they couldn’t pass. They, uh, searched their bags and told them to go home. In Birziet, she lived with four other girls, in an apartment. The apartment was next to the house of the family who was renting it out. The family had about 5 girls. One day the Israeli soldiers came and made everyone leave the house and the apartment, so my daughter and her housemates were with the girls from the family. It was in the morning, 8 o’clock in the morning, it was very cold! The soldiers made the boys (of the family) take off their clothes in front of the girls. It would have been very shameful.

The soldiers told the father ‘You have nine girls?!’ But for the children, about 200 NIS. Look? 200 NIS for the m...
certificate, they can’t get work, it’s difficult for them to live without a husband. So she shuts her mouth and doesn’t speak, even if it is difficult to live with his family. Or maybe sometimes her father and mother have died, dead, so where would she live? With her brother? It is difficult to live with her brother and his family. And for that, the life of the women is very, very difficult here. And also, the man, if he doesn’t work, if he doesn’t have the opportunity to work because of our situation, he can’t go to Israel to work, and for that, the men all the time fighting with his wife. This is one of the problems with the economic situation. If he can’t pay money, if he can’t buy the things that the woman wants, for that, uh, begins fighting and the problems. Ah, too many men are not working. Some of them don’t want to work! Especially if their wives work!

[Question: I read the WCLAC document about domestic abuse that Palestinian women face and I read about the link between the occupation and domestic abuse. Could you maybe talk a little about that?]

It has an impact, the situation on men, not being able to work or not earning enough money, not being to go somewhere, so he takes his anger out on his wife. Especially when the women are well-educated or work, and the men don’t have a certificate, he takes his frustration out on her. With WCLAC, through the workshops that we do and the different communities we go to, we are seeing now that women are having more knowledge and understanding of their situation and they demand their rights. They now know what rights they have, they ask for their rights, for justice with men. In the marriage document there are conditions, so women can ask for things before getting married. She needs to make this clear to him in the document before getting married. If he doesn’t give her the demands in this document she can go to a court and ask for a divorce. In WCLAC women first come to a social worker to see what the problems are, and then to a lawyer. There are 5 social workers in WCLAC, two in Hebron, two in Ramallah and one in Jerusalem

[Question: Explain the spirit of women in Palestinian society]

I am surprised to find a great power of defying within the women. I get the strength from my children, I have the hope that my children, my son will be a great man and he will help me and support me. If she is an educated woman she has great power. She has determination and can take what she wants.
Interview 6
Dheishah camp

This is an interview of a mother of two prisoners who are in Israeli prisons

I will begin talking about my life from 1974. I got married at the age of 18, and I have suffered from the occupation since that time. They arrested my husband and put him in jail one year after we were married, and I had one daughter at the time. He was put into prison for 8 years. Ah, I left school at the age of 15 and didn't continue my studies beyond the ninth grade. After my husband was arrested and put in jail I had to work. I found work in a Palestinian nursery school, working with children. We were building our home at the time. With the small salary I earned, I continued to have work done on the house. So he spent the 8 years in prison. After he got out of prison we continued our life and I had more children. Now, I have 4 daughters and 5 sons. Yani, my husband was the only son in his family, that is why he wanted a big family. I left my work at the nursery. A well-known merchant in Bethlehem gave me two sewing machines to work at home, because I couldn't work out of the house anymore. I made dresses and jackets and things from home. My first son, [R] was born in 1981. We called him after a well-known Palestinian writer who was assassinated. When my son was 18 years old he was arrested. He was in his last year of school when he was arrested, it was 1999. He was put into jail for 7 years. He was charged with being a member of the Popular Front, and that he helped to hide fighters, so they said he was active in resistance. After the 7 years in jail he was released. He registered at al-Quds Open University and studied for one semester, and then he was arrested again. They put him in administrative detention for 2 years. No one knew what the charges were, not even the lawyer. The charges were hidden in a secret file. They put him in administrative detention because they say he is dangerous to the state of Israel. Before he was released from prison they came and arrested one of my other sons, [M]. They came at two in the morning to arrest [M]. They pounded on the door and entered the house in a very brutal way. They came into all of the rooms of the house and took everyone in the family into one room, even my mother-in-law, who was 85 years old. She has diabetes, and from the fear she had when the soldiers entered she needed to go to the bathroom, but they locked the door and said 'no! you can't go to the bathroom.' My husband had a heart operation, and he needs to take aspirin. He said to the soldiers 'please, let my mother go to the bathroom, she is an old woman.' They said 'no' and hit him on the face. Because he takes baby aspirin it thins his blood he was bleeding a lot from the face. The officer in charge had been staying in the Jeep, but when he heard all this noise he came inside. He took [M] and put him in the jeep with the soldier who hit my husband. The rest of the soldiers were still in the house, searching it. They turned everything upside down, the wardrobes and things were all on the floor. One of them sat at the computer to see the messages on it, to see if we were hiding anything. They left my house in a big mess. They stayed from 2am until 6am, searching and putting everything on the floor. [M] was given two years and six months in prison. He was released in 2010. My son [R] is married now. He is 31 years old and is married with one son. After he was released in 2010 [M] was working in the area of Jericho. On the anniversary of al Nakba, this year (2011), when he was coming home from work, there was a checkpoint between Jericho and Bethlehem. They searched his car and arrested him again, without any charges. He was only out of prison for 5 months before he was arrested again, and he is still there now. He is also being held in administrative detention. The first time he was arrested, not only did they put him in prison for 2 1/2 years, but they took 4,000 NIS from us as a fine. Now, in January there will be court for him, it will be his second time in court, a military court. The sentence against him will be to spend 32 months in prison and to pay 2000 NIS if they find him guilty. They found nothing on him when they searched his car, but he will still be found guilty. A few weeks ago, in November, my son [H], who is 20 years old, was arrested. Tomorrow he will be in prison for one month.

On Sunday (three days ago) I went to visit my son [M] who was arrested in June, so I couldn't go to visit [H] as well. Because my husband was in jail, he is forbidden to go to prison to visit his sons, but he was able to attend the court hearing for [H], which was on the day after when I was visiting [M]. Every week they set a new court date for him to extend his detention. Two days ago there was a court date to extend [M's] detention, because they say he is dangerous to the state of Israel. We don't know the charges yet. When my husband attended court, they brought the prisoners into the court room in a kind of cage, with their hands and legs shackled. When the judge comes they un-shackle their hands. There is another door which the families can enter through. When the court ended, and my husband was leaving, he was walking past the soldiers and one of them hit him, and he fell on the ground. My son could not bear to see xlv
his father bleeding on the ground and he jumped from the cage and hit the soldier who had hit his father. The soldiers all started hitting him and now he is in solitary confinement. There is a very serious charge against him now. My husband said to the soldiers ‘Look what your Zionist forces have done to us! I have done nothing! Why did you hit me? My son could not bear the sight of it!’ So now my son is in isolation. He is in Offer prison. He has been in his cell in isolation since Monday. (two days) The other prisoners have contacted us to let us know what is going on. We have to contact Addameer to get help for him. They will send a lawyer to him.

Visiting them is very difficult because of the checkpoints. I have been to all kinds of prisons. Offer is the worst. When I come back from visiting offer I feel as though someone has hit me with a hammer. We have to stand standing at the checkpoint from early morning until noon. We have to stand outside, no matter the weather. They make us go through a body scanner, and they spread my legs and put a metal detector between my legs. They search every part of my body. I have brought my children up with great difficulty. They want to resist (the occupation). They are not criminals for wanting to resist.

When they came to arrest [H] last month they brought a very large air compressor, a hydraulic one. They put it under the door and pushed the door in. They damaged the door frame. They didn’t knock at all! They just burst in. They didn’t knock! While they were doing this, my son [R] woke up. He is not afraid of them. He spent 9 years in prison. He got up and turned the lights on and quickly opened the door before they could cause more damage. Because he came quickly out of the house the soldiers were afraid of him. They told him to turn the light off in the house! I woke up and saw about 50 soldiers surrounding my home. I woke my other children and told them to get up. I told them to get up and put their clothes on. I told my daughter to put clothes on so that when they came in to search she wouldn’t be in her pajamas. I left the door open and waited for them to come in. They came in and said ‘We want the owner of the house!’ My four sons and my daughter were all there. My son [A] is in the 10th grade, but he is very big and strong. When they that he is young and doesn’t have an ID, they let him go. They saw [M2] who is older, and working in the Intercontinental Hotel, and [H]. We told them, this is [H] who is 20 years old, and [M2] who is 24. They wanted [H], but the soldiers thought that we were lying to them, so they handcuffed both of them and took them. They took them to the outskirts of Bethlehem, on the road to Hebron. Near the gas station and there they met a police officer who knew our family, and he told the soldiers the names of my sons, so the soldiers released [M2] and sent him home. He was with his brother for three hours in the jeep. [M2] came home in a taxi, at 6 in the morning, we were awake until he came home. But why damage the walls of the house? The walls of [R’s] house! They wanted his brother, so they damaged his house. Now we need to repair the house and change the door. Yesterday, in the middle of the night they came into the camp, they come all the time.

[Question: can you explain what you think sumud means for the women of Palestine?]

Sumud, or resilience, to me, means defying, and power. It gives me energy to continue. I am not afraid of the Israelis. And I am not afraid of death. My family was forced to leave their village in 1948, near Jerusalem. We took refuge in Beit Sahour, and that’s where I was born, but I feel we were deprived of our land. Now, even if they come to destroy my home, we will stay. We will put up a tent and stay.

[In typically Palestinian style, my translator and the participant discover that the family of my translator rented a room to the family of the participant...she was born in the translator’s grandfather’s house.]
Interview 7
Bethlehem

Before, we had a drugstore of medicines. One of the bigger ones in the West Bank. I was working for UNRWA, in many different schools. I was near Hebron, and in Aida camp, and there was another school in Bethlehem, now there isn’t but before. Then, I ah, retired. I worked with my brother, who was responsible for ah, a big drugstore. So, when the intifadas broke out we closed everything, and we came home. Were connected with many, many pharmacies, in Gaza, in Tel Aviv, in Haifa, in Jaffa, everywhere, we always worked together with the Jews. But after the intifada it stopped. We had taken medicine to many of them, and they needed to pay the about 3 million NIS, but they didn’t pay. No one paid, and we can’t go there and ask. So we lost everything. Before we had 20 or 30 employees working for us, and they had families to support. So we gave them everything we had. We lost everything. We gave them compensation money because they had worked for us for so long, but it left us with nothing. We thought that we could collect money from the pharmacies who had taken medicine from us, that they would pay us back, but no one paid. We had lawyers to demand our money from them, but after we paid the lawyers we got nothing. So our lives were turned upside down. We have ah, my nephew, he is outside, in America, and he has a family to support, so he can’t support us. It’s difficult, everything is closed (because of the route of the wall [M’s] neighborhood has been devastated economically) No work, no money, because we are here, near the wall, and the wall is around our home, our business. Once, three jeeps of soldiers stopped in front of our home, and they came and knocked at the door, calling on us to open. We were afraid, we had my sister-in-law with us, and she has a Jerusalem ID, because she is originally from Jerusalem. We told her to please go and talk to them because we were afraid. The soldiers gave her a paper to sign. The paper was written in Hebrew and she told them ‘I want to read this before I sign it, but I can’t read Hebrew’ ‘No’ They told her ‘Sign first, then you can read it’ Later we learned that the paper read ‘This house belongs to the government of Israel, you will stay in it for 5 years only, then you will leave and it will be property of the Israeli government.’ The building has six apartments. The whole family is together, my brothers and their wives and families. She signed the paper after being threatened with a gun. One of my brothers knew someone in the Israeli government, the man was the mayor of Jerusalem at the time. When this happened, my brother talked to him on the telephone because he couldn’t go there. He said to the man ‘Look at what they are doing! After 5 years they want to take our home, and we are families living in these apartments! Where can we go? The street?’ So he invited the man to come and see for himself. We arranged a gathering for him to come. But still the signature of my sister-in-law was there, on the paper. We are still afraid. The five years have passed but we are afraid that they will use it one day. We think they asked for our building because it is very large and it is in a ‘strategic position’. That’s why they have chosen our home. When there were demonstrations in Bethlehem, people would walk towards Rachel’s Tomb, because the wall wasn’t completed yet. Once, my brother was coming home, and he ended up in the middle of a demonstration. When he got out of his car, the Israelis took photographs of him. Now, he is 85 years old, 85 years, and from that time, for more than 25 years, he can’t have permission to go to Jerusalem. His daughter lives in Jerusalem but he can’t visit her, because they thought he was participating in the demonstration. But he was just traveling home. I had an operation at St. John’s hospital in Jerusalem, because they were the ones who were responsible for operations on people’s eyes. Ah, I couldn’t get permission until I contacted the hospital by phone, and they sent me a paper saying that I needed to come and have an eye operation. I took this letter to the Palestinian Authority, and they sent the letter, with another form, and a fee I had to pay, to the Israeli officials. After several days, I got permission for one day, to get the operation on my eyes. Luckily I got permission for one day. After the operation, the weather was very windy, and it was cold. The doctor told me that I shouldn’t go home, that it was too bad for my health, that I should stay in the hospital. So I did, I slept in the hospital, but the next day I was worried about how I would get back, because my permission was only for the one day. I knew that I would not get permission to come to Jerusalem again because I had not gone home the night before. So I took a Taxi, and the Taxi took me on all of the back roads, the very difficult back roads, in order to avoid the checkpoints. It took over an hour to return. But later I had difficulties to return to the hospital to have the bandages removed and the stitches taken out, and have my eyes checked by the surgeon. They told me that I had my operation, so that was it, there was no need for me to go back. All the time we have suffering. Ah. People do not like to come to this neighborhood anymore. Especially in the evening. That’s why the business closed. People are afraid to come here. Now it is a dead area. Before, it was an area for the rich families of Bethlehem. But there are many stories. Many many stories. During the
curfew we couldn’t even go out onto the veranda. We had to close everything, we couldn’t go out. We imprisoned ourselves.

[Question: How would you explain the ‘sumud’ of women in Palestine?]

Sumud, is an authentic Arabic word. You know? It represents the steadfastness of the Palestinian people. And it represents also the will of keeping the community, the Palestinian community, safe. And to reduce emigration, and you know. I wrote something, where for each letter of sumud there is a word. S: saber which means patience. meim: ah...I have it here somewhere [M takes out a notebook, full of notes and writing, in both English and Arabic, and starts scrolling through it] Anyway, I had it. Here is something else I wrote. ‘Sumud programmes support educational values and organises non-violent actions, and the most important, culture and identity. So, in this sumud house, yani, you know, women like me, yani, we write stories and ah, I have written many stories. We write stories and we paint ceramics, and we work in embroidery, so we are involved in many activities here, yani, that are related to our Palestinian heritage. As for us, ah, senior ladies..‘senior ladies!’ [M laughs] AEI has given us an opportunity to develop our thinking, and it has allowed us to, to enter different paths, scientific, cultural, artistic, touristic, historical, educational, such as courses in Bethlehem University in leadership, different languages, religious knowledge, and ah, so we know that we are deprived from simple rights, masbrook, and we are trapped by a huuuuuge wall, a huge separation wall. This wall makes, yani, it has destroyed our life, our enthusiasm, our courage, yani, it affects us.

[Question: in your daily life, what affects you the most about the occupation]

Ooooo....many things, many things. We are, yani, we always ask for the help of God, but ah, we are nothing now. Before we were active, always working, we had our work, our ah, drugstore, but now, no no. I can’t say that we are good. But now, the children, my nephews I have, I am not married, but my nephews I have. But our life, yani, it goes slowly. It is not like it was before. It taught us faith and assured us that we are children of the Lord, Muslims, Jews and Christians.
Interview 8

Bethlehem

‘We used to live on the most wonderful street’ the participant tells me. The house of the family is located on what was the main biblical route between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, near Rachel’s tomb. In past times, the street was busy and lively, crowded with locals, internationals and Israelis, who came to shop in the family’s gift and fruit stores, and get their cars fixed at the family’s garage. Her husband worked in the garage, often buying cars, repairing and reselling them. This has all changed today, and she tells me that at first, it changed very slowly. During the first Intifada, the Israeli military set up adjacent to the family’s home, establishing a military camp on her aunt’s land. During the early 90s, the family was given papers declaring that their house was subject to military control, that the army could use it as base, and thus enter it at any time. Originally, the family was very co-operative with the army, and they had a relatively good relationship with them, even inviting them in for Christmas but this slowly began to change. The army began to come to the house in the middle of the night, waking the family, forcing the children out of bed, and making everyone (14 people, including 9 children) stay in a corner. The children were terrified. Slowly, the army presence on the street began to have an effect on their businesses. The street became less and less crowded, and there were fewer customers, and less business. In 2000 they built a wall near the house, blocking off the main road. There were always soldiers around the house, and this meant that Israelis, internationals, locals, and even friends and relatives of the family were not inclined to visit the family’s garage and shops. At this time, the family was essentially living in a corner with the Israeli army. The army often came to the door in the middle of the night, taking the children from their beds with guns to their heads, crowding the entire family into a corner, and using the bedroom as a military point, and shooting from the windows while the family was cornered behind them, putting them into the crossfire. The children suffered serious affects from the continual fear, often during these times they had difficulty breathing and were suffering from serious panic. At other times, as her husband brought the children home from school in the car, the soldiers stopped the car in the middle of the cross-fire of their battles. Often times they would be trapped in the car in the middle of gunfire and explosions for 20 minutes, but within sight of their house. During the 2002 siege of Bethlehem, the family was totally trapped in the house. They were under almost continual curfew. Because their property had been turned into a military base there were always dozens of soldiers, tanks and military equipment surrounding the house. This meant not only that the family was unable to leave, but also that no one came to help them and they received no support. They were unable to go buy food and were nearly starved as a result. The participant tells me that during and around this time there are many, many stories she could tell me about the problems that arose and the extreme situation they faced, and she shared two stories in particular. At one point, when soldiers were surrounding the area, a local man approached the family’s garage with a car part that needed to be repaired. He was unprepared to see so many soldiers surrounding the house and garage, and the soldiers pointed their guns at him while he approached. Her husband managed to convince the man to stay, despite his extreme fear, because the family badly needed business. However, while repairing the part, her husband badly cut his hand, severing the main vein. Luckily, he was able to pass the soldiers to go to a hospital. The medical costs for this accident were very high, making it even more difficult for the family. The participant also told me that during this time, even though the soldiers knew the family’s car, when they returned to their house, the soldiers often aimed their guns at the family, and they could see the lasers from the guns trained on each others heads as they returned home. When the military rotated teams of soldiers to and from their house it was a particularly difficult time, as the family did not know how cruel each team of soldiers might be, and it would always take time for the soldiers to know the members of the family as they came to and from the house. Another incident, this time during the 40 day curfew, one of the participant’s sons became very sick, with a very high fever. Despite being in the middle of a siege, she knew she needed to get medical attention for her son. When she reached the nearby hospital, people recognized her for where she lived and couldn’t believe that she had gotten past the soldiers. She had an extremely difficult time getting medicine for her son at the hospital. She had forgotten her purse when she came, and did not have any money to pay for antibiotics for him. She felt that she did not want to beg for help, and refused to lose her dignity, but the city was in a warzone, all of the businesses were closed and asking for help was her only option. She had never asked for help before, and did not like doing so, but her son was very sick. She received very bad treatment from the nun in charge of the hospital, who mocked her and yelled at her when she asked for the medicine. The medicine he needed cost 20NIS ($5) but when she asked if she could have it, she was told that the hospital...
could not just give medicine away to everyone. She felt the nun in charge was insulting her dignity and not doing her duty to help, as Bethlehem was in the middle of a war. Finally, after she promised to return to the hospital with the money for the medicine, the nun gave it to her. People at the hospital were asking her how she was going to return home, as they knew her house was completely surrounded by soldiers and tanks, and she responded that she didn’t know. As she returned to her house, she held her son very close to her as the soldiers all pointed their guns at her. She says that it was only a miracle that they were not killed, because ‘curfew means that you can be shot just for being in the street.’

In 2003, after the siege was over the family hoped that things would improve, that the road might reopen and life will return, however the opposite happened because then they built the segregation wall around the house (literally). ‘For months they were digging around the house, but they put the wall up in one day. The kids left for school in the morning and returned to find the wall around their house in the afternoon.’ When her oldest son saw the new ‘view’ from his bedroom he told her that ‘it is like living in a big tomb.’ And that it was like ‘being buried alive’ After this, her children thought that they would leave the family home, but she is determined to stay, because it is all that they have. She says ‘I promised them that I would do something for them.’ Since the construction of the segregation wall, she has traveled around the world making presentations on the situation her family faces. She wants to speak as a civilian woman, who is determined to make a better future for her children. She is steadfast and determined in her faith. As a Christian woman she is determined to love her enemies despite all the terrible things they have done to her and her family. Her family has opened a souvenir shop, and her husband is now working in another garage. However, their situation is still very difficult. Her husband is only given jobs by the other mechanics if they cannot fix the problem themselves, and the souvenir shop is located off the main tourist routes. The family has been hosting internationals in their home for some time, because along with the monetary benefits, there is more security for the family when there are foreigners living with them. The route of wall was planned to be even closer to their house and shops than it is now, it was only when the army dug right in front of their house that they discovered a main sewage line, forcing them to build the wall further from the house. The route of the wall still cuts the family off from as much of their land as possible.
Interview 9
Dheishah camp

Ah, all the Palestinian people have suffered, but we have suffered a lot, whether from the Israelis killing our son or from being put in jail. From the ninth grade onwards, two of my sons were always being arrested. They were always going from one jail to another. Every week they were being arrested. Now my children are in their 40s, and when I hear that the Israelis have come in the middle of the night to arrest young men I am still afraid that they will come and arrest my sons. Whenever they come at night to arrest someone I am afraid they will take them because their names are on the lists. They arrested [M’s] brother and usually held him in detention for 6 months at a time. They always kept in detention (administrative detention). They were either charged with throwing stones, or there was no charge at all, they just put them in Negev. They would always repeat the same charge. So we would go visit them in these jails. [M] felt very bad for his brothers. One of his brothers was put in jail in the Negev because the soldiers claimed that he had seen him throwing stones, but he denied that he was. He was put in jail for three years, and [M] was put in jail for 3 months because they couldn’t prove that he was throwing stones. After three months he came home. During the first intifada they treated the prisoners very badly. They put a sack over his [M’s] head for 18 days. The sack was full of dirt. Today, it is a little bit easier inside the prisons. [M’s] two brothers were in prison. He refused to go to prison like them, but the Israelis were looking for him. Every night he stayed outside of the house. He didn’t sleep here. He hid in the neighborhood because he didn’t want to go to jail again. He said he would rather stay away from the house at night than to go back to prison. The resistance in the first intifada was with slingshots, or by hand. The Israelis used to take photographs of the young boys. Resisting with stones is better, because we are not equal to the Israelis. It is better than shooting. We are not happy with resistance by shooting, with violent resistance. One night 50 soldiers came looking for [M] and asking me where he was. I told them I didn’t know and they started hitting me with a big stick. They smashed everything, and hit me on my back. When [M] heard what was going on here he came back with a lot of young men and they started to smash Israeli cars, because a road to a settlement used to go through here. He didn’t have his identity card at the time, because a soldier had taken it. But the soldiers knew all the houses, they knew everyone in the camp. Once they made me come outside with my daughters, one was 4 and one was 10 at one in the morning to remove the pro-resistance graffiti on the walls.

At that time, people were very close with one another. I used to help children run away from the soldiers when they were resisting. When the soldiers hit me, all of the young men came to ask how they could help, but I told them ‘I am okay, just go before the soldiers come and take you.’ [M] was very active. He used to help a lot of people in the camp. The Israelis found a photo of him and they used to ask young boys if they knew who he was, and they found out his name. So they decided that they needed to do something about him, and they did. His brother [R] was out of prison and people came to welcome him home. There were demonstrations near the mosque, and the soldiers shot a young man. One of the residents of the camp. Everyone ran away, but [M] and two other boys rushed to rescue him. Someone told him to run away because the soldiers were looking for him, but he didn’t run away. The soldiers were up on the roofs, they hid behind the water tanks on the roofs of houses, so he didn’t know which direction the bullets came from. One of the soldiers must have seen [M] because he changed the ammunition in his gun. He put a ‘dum-dum’ bullet into his gun. The women had warned [M] to leave, but he didn’t, and the soldier shot him with a dum-dum bullet, in the abdomen and it exploded in his abdomen. He held his stomach and ran to a house. When they looked at the gunshot wound it didn’t look so bad. They first took him to get first aid. The young men, the activists where then able to take him to a hospital in Jerusalem. I was 1988. August. He was shot in 1988, and he lived for 2 years without intestines, and he died a Martyr in 1990. A woman told me that she saw the soldier who shot him, was holding his gun up and celebrating that he had shot [M]. The soldiers were all over the camp. The house was full of women who had come to celebrate that [R] was out of prison. I had warned [M] not to do demonstrations near the house because there were visitors. The young men made a woman come to me to tell me to go to hospital because [M] had been shot in his leg. She didn’t tell me where he had really been shot. The Israeli officers imposed curfew on the area, and my husband wasn’t here, so I didn’t know what to do. So I told the young men, I thought he would be okay if he was only shot in the leg because he was young and strong. I thought they would give him first aid and hide him in one of the houses and that he would take care of himself. I told the young woman that I would see him later. I was not worried, I thought it was something simple. When I arrived at the hospital in Jerusalem, I was surprised to see so many young people from Dheishah there, young men and young women. The door was open and all of the residents were there and calling [M’s]
name. He spent 5 hours in surgery being operated on. People thought that he would die. The surgeon found that his intestines and stomach were torn to pieces. Ah, they didn’t expect him to live. No one had informed me what was wrong with him, but I saw that my husband collapsed, because the doctors told him that they thought he would die. I followed him to the Intensive Care. When I went into the Intensive Care, I did not understand why he was lying there, I still thought that he had been shot in the leg, so I was encouraging him to get up. People were surprised that I was saying this to him, but I still didn’t know what had really happened.

On the third day, the Israeli soldiers came to arrest him from the Intensive Care unit. The doctors told them there was no reason to arrest [M] because he was going to die. He had been given so much blood, but he kept bleeding internally. He was being kept alive by all the machines. Many of his friends were there, and some of them ran away, and some of them put on nurse’s clothes, but the Israelis still arrested three of his friends. For 40 days the hospital opened its doors to the people of Dheishah, some people stayed there, some people brought food, people even came from Ramallah and Bethlehem to visit him. The newspapers had written about him because he was a famous activist.

[M’s] father
I talked to one of the doctors, an international doctor, who told me that my son would die. For 40 days I didn’t shave, I didn’t change my looks. I wanted to sit with [M] because I thought he only had a few hours to live. I sat near his bed. He didn’t recognize my face because I didn’t shave. I came home and shaved and then went back, and [M] told me, ‘Now you look like my father!’ The next day was his birthday and he wanted a celebration. The doctors were all there and some of them were crying, and they agreed that he should have a birthday party. [M] invited all the doctors to attend. The young men all prepared cakes for him, there were about 40 cakes! Journalists and photographers came as well, and the doctors were there. The doctors were surprised that he was still alive. A woman named Janet from Arizona had come here to stand with the Israelis. But she read [M’s] story in the newspaper and she sympathized with him. She stayed with him all the time. She said ‘I must take [M] to the states to be treated there.’ I didn’t believe that they would allow this, but Janet had arranged everything, she contacted the embassy, and an Israeli rights group, and she stayed with him all day and all night. She arranged for a special passport for him so he could travel. We needed a photograph of him, but we couldn’t find one in the house. They sent an employee to the hospital to get his fingerprints, and then we had to go to the American embassy because they were waiting for us. Israeli security told me to go away but another American told me to come in. They gave me visas for one year, for [M], for a doctor and for me. We flew from Ben Gurion airport, to Amsterdam, and then on to New York. Janet accompanied us. When we reached New York they took us on a small plane to Boston. The doctor that welcomed us was originally from Palestine, and he said he had been waiting for us. The doctor said he could only do the operation after [M] weighed 40kg, and he also told [M] that he could put in a pipe so he could eat. The doctor asked what was [M’s] wish. [M] said ‘My first wish is to see my mother and my brothers. My second wish is put something in my mouth and chew and eat, and my third wish is to go back to Dheishah camp to resist the occupation.’ We made a film about [M’s] life with the help of Janet and other Palestinians living in the U.S. The medical care was very expensive. Janet had $100,000, and she said that it would have been enough if we were in Canada, but the United States is very expensive and we were very quickly in debt. $150,000 in debt. We even had to pay to use the T.V. in the hospital, and when we didn’t pay they cut it off. A man came to the hospital. He was wearing a black coat and was carrying a briefcase. He told me not to worry, that he would pay the hospital bill, no matter what it was. And he gave me $300 as pocket money. The doctor asked me if I knew the man, and I said no, I didn’t know him. I thought that he had paid the hospital bills. But he didn’t. The doctor told me to be wary, that he wasn’t an honest man. I was not thinking about money, only about the wellness of my son. I was thinking I wanted him to come back to Palestine. Janet arranged a vigil march to collect money for [M]. The doctor told us that the hospital belonged to Zionists, so we were not likely to get sympathy from them. One day, I received a call from a man who was a leader in Fatah. He told me that he was coming to visit [M] and I to see what he could do. When he arrived at the hospital he asked me what the problem was and I told him that we could not pay the hospital. He gave me a cheque. It didn’t cover all of the bill, but part of it. He asked me about the man who had come to visit us. I gave him the name of the man, and his phone number. He then called the man and told him not to come near me or my son again. This man told us that he thought we should put and advertisement in the papers in the United States to collect money for the rest of [M’s] medical bills. I asked him how much it would cost and he told me that it would cost $40,000. I didn’t know what to do.
There was a foundation in the U.S. that we used to collect the money. We had only paid $75,000 and we needed to pay another $75,000.

Another doctor came to talk to us. He told us that the U.S. government wanted to make a deal with us. If we agreed to let them do an experimental treatment on [M] then they would give green cards to the entire family. Some doctors made a consultation and gave us instructions about how to care for [M’s] needs. I refused the government’s offer. We preferred that [M] would die in Palestine than to live in the U.S. Then we got another offer from the doctor. A medical company that Arab countries were boycotting told us that if we could convince the Jordanians to stop the boycott then they would supply [M] with all the vitamins and supplies he needed. [M] needed a lot of medical supplies and vitamins and they were very expensive. I refused this offer as well. The doctor told me to take [M] and go home, but that if anything happened we could bring him back.

After [M’s] operation he only had about 30 cm of intestine left, so he could eat and drink almost nothing. Before we went home a lot of Arabs living in the U.S. threw us a party. Someone had brought falafel, and when [M] saw it he wanted to have some, because it reminded him of home. He ate a very small piece of falafel, but because his intestines were very weak and he had not eaten in so long, the piece of falafel made a hole in his intestines. The doctor told us not to worry, that the hole would close by itself. When we arrived at home, all the people of Dheishah made a demonstration to welcome him home. The Israelis shot a young man, [N] and martyred him, he was a friend of [M]. So they instated a curfew and we had to take [M] to a hospital because we could not enter the camp. He spent 40 days in the hospital, and his friends and family came to visit. After 40 days we brought him home and all the people welcomed him victoriously.

[M’s] Mother
He was living on an IV, without food. He finished his studies this way. He took his general examination and was successful and he also learned how to drive a car, so he could drive himself to hospital.

A girl from Dheishah was shot in her elbow. [M] and his friends went to the hospital to donate blood, but when the nurse saw him, she kicked him out of the line because he needed blood himself, he could not donate.

Whenever there were demonstrations [M] would go and the Israelis would always arrest him. So I would go to the Red Cross and tell them that [M] had been arrested and the Red Cross would go and bring him home. He managed to get his weight up, up to 65kg. But he could not run, so at demonstrations they would catch him because of this. He used to go to Jerusalem to hospital, he was going there on the day of the al-Aqsa massacre (8 October 1990), and two of his friends were killed there that day. He began to be very depressed. His lungs and his kidneys failed and on 22 October 1990 he was in hospital and bleeding internally and he died.

[Question: What does resistance mean to you as a Palestinian woman?]
I am defending my homeland and my land. There is no place for my grandchildren to play. I can go to the United States, but I can’t go to Jerusalem. There is no one to look after us, or defend us, we must defend ourselves. We must look after ourselves. This is why we have to be resilient. When the Israeli soldiers come in with their jeeps the Palestinian Authority hides. If we didn’t have the PA who made an agreement for nothing then maybe we could go back to our land. They don’t believe that it is a possibility. But we want to still believe that one day we will be able to return to our land. Resistance is the correct way, and our belief that one day we will return to our land is what we stick to. The Palestinians believed that they wanted peace, so we sat with them in the United States. But they don’t want peace. They are demolishing people’s homes, uprooting trees, they don’t want peace, they are telling lie. We offer them an olive branch and they are shooting at us. If you were in my shoes, if you were me what would you think?

Me: I also think that resistance is the only way. I have such admiration for the people of Palestine. For being so resilient. I don’t know if I would have the courage and the strength to continue for 63 years.
Interview 10
Rural Bethlehem

Ayat was going to get married. Ayat was a normal student. We were living in Dheishah camp, and she finished elementary school, preparatory school, and then she was in secondary school. We were living a very good life. I had 7 daughters and 4 sons. All of them are educated. One of them is a lawyer, one a teacher, some of them are housewives and some are employed. We were not living in poverty. One of the Arab channels said that Ayat did what she did because we were poor, but no. We were living a good life. The effect of the occupation on us was that Ayat’s brothers spent a lot of time in Israeli prisons. My son Samir was taken out of his classroom and put in prison. He was a very good student but he couldn’t finish school because he spent a great deal of time in prison. During the first intifada Ayat was very young, but she knew her brothers were not there. They were in prison. Ayat liked to take courses, like first aid and education, every course that was on in the camp she would take. Sometimes she took the course twice because every time the trainer was different or the training was different and she said every time she learned something new. In 2000 the second intifada broke out. During the second intifada Ayat became more angry. Our neighbour was killed in his doorway. Ayat went to help him because she had taken courses in first aid, but he was injured very badly. She tried to stop the bleeding, but he died. Also, when Hussein Abayat was assassinated she went to the funeral in Bethlehem. I followed her there and after the funeral I took her home. Ayat had a copy book, she used it like a diary to collect photographs or martyrs, of tanks, of Israeli assaults, different things. She kept them all in this diary. When Ayat went to Jerusalem and carried out the operation she was in the middle of preparation for the general examination. She was taking the trial examinations. When she carried out her operation her teacher was correcting one of her trial examinations. She came to the house to see if what she heard was true. Her fiancé was a tile-maker and was working with my son. He wasn’t involved in political activity. None of us were involved in any political parties, none of the family. We were all very bust working and looking after the family. People ask us how we live like this. Surviving in this life is not easy. As long as there is occupation there will be resistance. Everyone resists in their own way, there are the fighters, the people who go to demonstrations. Ayat wanted to be a journalist in order to let the world know about the Palestinian cause. She was one of the best students in her class. She didn’t like to talk much, she always spoke straight to the point. Ayat carried out her operation during the siege of Bethlehem. There was a short period when the curfew was lifted, and that’s when she snuck into Jerusalem to carry out the operation.

[Question: from your perspective, do the women of Palestine have the same responsibility to resist as the men]
We are the same. He have hands, we have brains, we have intelligence. We have to resist as the men, but each in their own way, in their own thinking.

[Is there anything else that you would like to tell me so I can write about it?]
The world should know that we are living outside our village for more than 60 years. The world knows that we are refugees. They came to our villages in historic Palestine, on the other side of the Green Line and they used their bullets to drive us out. We were made to desert our land and come live in camps. So that is why we have to resist, to tell the world that there must be justice. All the people in the world should have a conscious, that we are living like this and the world closes its eyes against our reality. The Palestinian people are suffering from injustice. We want peace. Israel doesn’t want peace, they want us to surrender. There should be peace, and we should have the right to go to Jerusalem every day to pray, as the Israelis can go every day to pray at the Wailing Wall. We are deprived of this right. They go everywhere, but we can’t go. This is our land. All the Zionists came from all over the world and they live in Palestine, but we Palestinians, we cannot go and live there. We were expelled, sent out. They blew up our homes, they put people in jail, they exile people. Israel is controlling the United States. The Arab world has also sided with the United States. They no longer care about Palestinians. I told my daughters that when Saddam was killed, when the United States occupied Iraq and Saddam was captured, that the other Arab leaders would follow. The Israelis say that they want peace but they don’t, they just want us to accept every regulation that they impose on us. Many internationals have given their lives fighting for Palestine and Israel doesn’t care if anyone is killed, they say it was an accident. I feel that the only solution will come from God, if he finds mercy on us, on the old, the young, the children, to help us survive and get our rights.

[How long was it after Ayat’s operation that the army came and destroyed your house?]
Yani, they came straight away. Ayat carried out her operation in the afternoon and the Israelis came and knocked down the house that night. On the day of her operation I was preparing lunch. We were waiting
for Ayat to come and eat lunch. Then, on the news they said that there was an operation in Jerusalem. The news said the Israelis had surrounded Bethlehem, that the person who carried out the operation was from Bethlehem, and that it was a young woman. And I was very surprised at this! A young woman! Who could it be? It was a Friday, and I had made a big lunch for the whole family, for my grandchildren and daughters and sons-in-law, so we could all have lunch together. Then the news said that the girl was from Dheishah camp! It was getting nearer to us! Ayat was at school! But when they said that the girl who carried out the operation was from Dheishah camp, a fire burned in my heart. I wanted to know where Ayat was! I went to Ayat’s friend’s houses and asked them where Ayat was, and one of them told me that Ayat was coming. My daughter asked me ‘Why are you worried?’ Something inside me was not okay. I put on my jacket to ask more people where Ayat was. I heard shooting and screaming in the streets. Then the television gave the name of the girl, it was another name they gave. While I was going out of the house, many people were coming towards our home, marching, with flags, many people, coming towards us. I gasped. My sons turned off the TV. I told them to turn it back on. I saw that one of my sons was passed out on the floor, and another one of my sons was hitting his own head, and my husband was screaming. I asked him what was wrong, and he said that he saw on the news that Ayat had carried out the operation. They said that two Israelis were killed, and a lot were injured.

The newspaper showed pictures of Ayat and the young Israeli girl who died. They conducted a survey to ask people to pick out which girl was Israeli and most people chose Ayat, they thought she was the Israeli. Not many people appreciated the sacrifice Ayat made for the Palestinian cause. Not all people understand. But maybe God will appreciate what she has done for the Palestinians. The world feels that our blood, Palestinian blood, is cheap. They have carried out so many killings and attacks against Palestinians. They have killed all kinds of people, pregnant women and children and men, and they have put many in jail. But when we use a martyrdom operation they say we are terrorists. But because they have taken our land, and killed our sons and made us refugees, this is a kind of resistance.

I believe that the Zionist movement wants to take everything from the Nile to the Euphrates. Egypt will not be as it was in the past, nor Iraq, nor Tunisia, maybe it will take them a long time to be strong again, I don’t know.

[I just want to tell everyone who is helping me that I am very, very grateful that you will share your stories with me. It means a lot to me that you are sharing with me. So, thank you so much, and I will do my best to share your story in hopes that this occupation will end.]

After Ayat died my husband had very high blood pressure. He had a heart attack and now he can’t work. And also I have diabetes. I think it is from all the pain and suffering. I tried to get help from UNRWA, but no one helped.

The mother of the girl who died in the operation said to me ‘I saw from the photographs that you are not living in a camp because you have electricity, there are cars, there are streets.’ I told her ‘You are living in Jerusalem, you came from the United States and you are living freely, you can go where you want, but I am living in a camp, there is no space for me, no space to plant even mint. My grandson cannot ride his bicycle in the camp, it is so crowded.’ The mother came to Dheishah camp saw the camp and told me that she thought it looked like a very nice neighbourhood! What did she expect? That after 60 years we would still be living in tents? Do they also want to take the air that we breathe? The mother told me to come, and put our hands together. She was a peace activist. I told her that I did not believe in martyrdom operations myself, but we have to resist you, to stop the things you do to us. I refused to join hands with her and renounce what Ayat had done.

Ayat was strong and stubborn. I told her (the other mother), you think you are living in peace and security, and you lost your daughter. As long as there is occupation there will be no security for either of us. If the occupation ends, this will end. I told her that the Israelis didn’t want peace.
Interview 11
Beit Sahour

‘Being a Palestinian you have to know about politics. It concerns our daily lives.’ ‘The Palestinian woman, compared to all of the other Arab women is the strongest you can depend on. She is a real struggler.’ You find lots of women working because their husbands cannot or have died or are in prison. Here in Palestine you find women struggling alongside men, and women who are strong and survive alone, raise their children and work to put their children through education. The younger generation in Palestine has a very hard time. It is hard to be Palestinian, compared to youth in a lot of other places. Our lives are not easy. Even simple things, like water running in a sink. When I was in Italy, people would just let water run in the sink without thinking, which is something we would never do as Palestinians. Here, there are 8-10 universities that we can go to. The choice of programmes is very limited, the courses are limited. I did accounting in 2002 at Bethlehem University. I didn’t want to do accounting, but I didn’t really have a choice. It was during the 2nd Intifada and I decided to go to Bethlehem University because I didn’t want to deal with closures and roadblocks trying to go to Ramallah or somewhere else. Even as it was, I spent ¾ of one semester studying at home because of closures. One day, I was standing by the entrance to the university. I was looking outside and suddenly tanks came from every direction and surrounded the doors. I stood there frozen, even when a soldier came and pointed his gun straight at me, I couldn’t move. People were running in all directions. Several students were arrested, one was just recently released. So, our lives are very different here, you think about things differently. It’s not easy, you have to survive every day.

During the first Intifada, I was living with my family in Kuwait. We fled during the Gulf War. We escaped by car, first through Iraq and then to Jordan. We escaped by following an Iraqi. My mom made all kinds of food. She made it into a kind of game, where we pretended we were in a restaurant. If we wanted food we had a sort of ‘menu’ and we would order from my mom in the front seat. We spent three years in Jordan then before coming to Palestine. I had no idea about the 1st Intifada really. The Israelis had occupied Beit Sahour. Once, when we were visiting family, I was walking with my cousin and we were followed by an army jeep. I was really, really scared! I didn’t know what was going on. When I got older, I started to read about it, and as I well I began listening to stories my dad told and I came to know about the 1st Intifada, specifically about everything that happened here in Beit Sahour. I faced the 2nd Intifada in Beit Sahour. Sometimes there were bulldozers around the house! Once, I wanted to stay with my cousin in her room. I wanted to stay with someone at night. Her room was SO small. I put a mattress on the floor next to her bed, and there was no space to walk! Jallas! She said ‘let us pray’ and as soon as we started to pray, they started shooting! She was pushing me, but there was nowhere to go! We dropped to the floor and snuck out of the room. I said to her ‘As soon as we pray, they start to shoot!’ It was very scary sometimes. There were curfews a lot. You cannot imagine what it’s like to not be able to leave the house. I used to really envy the cats and dogs. They were the only ones in the street! They had complete freedom of movement while all the people were stuck inside. This was during my last year of school. It should be a time that determines your future, but some of the teachers were worried that I would fail. I did not study (for the Tawjihi). I could not study. I could not. I was sure the exam would be cancelled. I could not concentrate. I took the practice exam and got the worst results of my life. The last month before the exam, I decided to study. I said to myself ‘even if the soldiers come in to my room, I will NOT stop studying! On the day of the first exam, it was in Physics, there was a curfew on. We left the house and went to a nearby village, because of the curfew, there were no exam halls open in Beit Sahour. I really liked, Physics, but when I sat down to do the exam, I couldn’t answer any questions. I was having a very serious psychological incident. I could not do it. I told my teacher, and I was very lucky because the minister of education happened to be there in this exam centre. I talked to him and told him that if I was forced to sit this exam, I would fail, because I was so panicked. They finally agreed to let me sit the exam on another day, they made an exception because of the extreme situation, I sat the Physics exam in a different session and I got only -3! I got a 94.7% overall for my exams. The last month (before exams) was a very determined month for me!

‘Oh wow, you made me remember things I had completely forgotten!’

‘For us, as Palestinians, the most important weapon we have is our education.’ ‘We have to fight the occupation with our minds, because if the population is not ignorant then they cannot be easily controlled.’ The Israelis know this, and they have targeted our education. I went to Italy for one year to get my MA in International Relations. I was the first Palestinian girl to live in the dorms in Italy. They were really so welcoming to me. In our classes, we talked about politics a lot. Sometimes I used to get really mad in class, because people were talking about Israel/Palestine without really knowing about it. This
conflict was always talked about, but people didn’t really know, they would just talk. I sued to tell them ‘Don’t speak just because you want to speak!!’ ‘I was a problem maker there!’ It made me angry because it was supposed to be a Catholic university, but people were not acting that way. They should be searching for the truth, for right and wrong. Sometimes the Americans made me very nervous. Sometimes, I would ask them questions that they could not answer. One professor, he was an American professor visiting this university, would act very superior. I asked him a question ‘Let us suggest that China occupies the United States? What would you think of that?’ and he said that it would not be acceptable. So I told him, ‘if it is not an acceptable situation for the U.S, then it should not be acceptable for anyone!’ He did not know what to say. I was always well prepared for each class, because I think being well-read is important. When I came back, I said ‘I have to do more things to feel responsible for the situation here’. Just like you also feel responsible.’ I am involved in a few organizations here. One is Sabeel. They do liberation theology. (www.sabeel.org) They welcome different international activists and do different volunteer programs. Recently I went with them to a shelter for the elderly. I became interested in them because I was really convinced by their welcome letter. I am also involved in Kairos Palestine. I think its well-known in other places in the world, but I think it’s important for the local community to know and understand it, to use the bible to help us, because the Zionists use the old testament a lot. I don’t think that Western Christians understand that we were the first Christians, here in Palestine. It is very much part of the culture. Now, I am putting a lot of energy into my new job with UNRWA (micro-financing). I think it is really helping the community. Once I said that I wanted to go abroad, now I see myself in this job, because a job isn’t just to work, it’s also to make an impact on the community. I am giving a lot more time to my work.
Interview 12
Ramallah

[Explaining interview process]

First, welcome to Palestine! I hope you will be successful in your research. Actually in Palestine there are different things here when we talk about women and the resistance movement. The resistance movement started many, many years ago, it started more than 60 years ago, against the occupation. And women, they tried to make a struggle against the occupation. They tried to prove themselves and their position. We are speaking about the Middle East, we are speaking about Arabic society, Muslim society, and we think that as women in Palestine we are many steps ahead of women in other Arab countries because we took the chance in the past, from leaders in the past, to be strong and to enter into the political side. Many sides, not just the political side, but economic, etc. We can say the first, the women who started the revolution, was during the intifada, because this time we can see that all the men were in the prison at this time. So the women then needed to play a big role. They must be the men and they must be the women, a mother and father at the same time for your kids. And this is very hard, very tough to be both at the same time when your husband is in jail, and at the same time you had to be the sister and the brother for your younger siblings, ah, the important things with the Palestinian women is that they are, until this moment, is that we take the chance to play the political position, but not a good role, from my opinion, no it’s not a good role, because actually until this moment we face the problem that we live in an Arab society, in a patriarchal society. Men’s society, and they didn’t actually allow for us to do what we want. Because you are a woman, you must stay at home, you must not play a big role. We are not the decision makers here in Palestine. Sometimes, like during the first intifada, yes they are making decisions, but they are not the big important decisions. Now, no. We are not. Even if we want to say that we want to make something against the occupation we must stop and think, if ‘I want to take the system down, I must take it in which way? I must try to use a good way’ because now everything is different, everything is changed. If I want to make intifada, or whatever, I must think about what will happen for my kids, what will happen for my husband, for my friends, etc. And actually, we have a problem for the woman, ah, I was in prison, and I realised after that, in 2006, that people did not look at me the same way, that ‘Ugh! She was in prison.’ And I went for a political reason, I went to the occupation prison, and many people did not respect this. It’s very bad that you lost, if long-term or short-term from your life, that no one will accept these things, but, at least I can say that we are educated as women in Palestine, more than other Arab countries, our neighbours here in the Middle East. But we have some problems also as women, I will say that the problem is not just with the men, it is also with us, because actually the few women who have fought to make it to the position of a decision maker, and if you come to this woman and say ‘you can be a minister in this place’ and says ‘okay, I accept’ and she doesn’t fight, and she doesn’t support other women. This is a big problem in Palestine actually. You cannot find these things with unity with women in Palestine. Even if we have a woman, it’s not good, it’s not how we think, how we believe, how we know, it’s very difficult, it’s very difficult, it’s hard for us. The first intifada, it was different, with the PA coming, President Arafat before he died he tried to give, not a big position for the women, but he give it. He lived in a men’s society so he tried, he did a lot to support the women in Palestine. The first ambassador was a woman, it’s Leila Shahid, you cannot forget that we have one woman who was taking part in the negotiations of the Oslo agreement. It’s a good example for us as Palestinian women. But did they support the women with these positions? This is the question you have to ask. Did they support women? No. They did not support. This is the problem, when you get a position and you do not support another woman. And, ah, some of the women, not all of them, they are including, or they are observation for the security service, but it’s not like they didn’t take the same position. Like one woman, she became a general, her name is Fatima, she is just one woman in this position, and after that we had the second intifada, and in the second intifada we didn’t see any role for the women. Actually, maybe because the women felt bad, felt suffering. Thinking ‘If I will do this and this and this, I will face a lot of problems, people will attack me.’ Not just here in Palestine, but in all of the Middle East, it’s easy to attack the women, because, the religion here is different, to attack the woman you can say ‘go back to your home, it is your job.’ And also, some leaders, didn’t support the women to put her in a good position. You can ask yourself, in this government, how many are women? We have 3, 4 ministers. Just 4. It’s nothing. And how many women participate in parliament? In Palestinian parliament? It’s nothing also. You can’t say we are winning. Yes, we are winning to be able to fight the occupation, but we didn’t win to fight our goals within our state because we didn’t
become decision makers in Palestine, unfortunately we are not. And if you want to do these things in
Palestine you face a problem, because a lot of men will stop you, society will stop you. But we are trying. I
hope that the new generation will fight, will say to the old generation ‘it’s good what you do, but it’s not
enough’ It’s our time now to be decision makers, that’s what we want to be, decision makers, I hope to
see a woman to be prime minister. I hope to see a woman to become president for the Palestinian state.
My dream, and I know sometimes they think that it is stupid, and they attack this dream, I would like to be
the first women to become prime minister for the Palestinian state, and I work hard for these things. Yes, I
face a lot of problems, I speak to decision makers here, and I tell them that this is my dream and they
laugh. They say ‘You? You are nothing.’ And actually I asked the prime minister why he didn’t give the
position of foreign minister to a woman, but they are not interested in giving it. But, I am sure that the
women, not just in Palestine, but around all the world, they can make many jobs. They can be a mother,
they can be a doctor at the same time and prepare everything in her home, she can do many things at the
same time. It’s amazing! You must use this power in the women. Why wouldn’t you use it? I think this is
our work. We didn’t play a role in the division between Fatah and Hamas, in the division between Gaza and
the West Bank. We didn’t play any role. A new generation, new girls from this generation try to play role
in reconciliation, if they succeed.

[What about in women’s personal lives, maybe from your own experience or from family members, how
do women find ways in the daily lives to resist the occupation]

Here in Palestine, it is always different, if you came from the North or South or Central Palestine, or if you
come from a city or from a small village or town, your way will be different to resist the occupation. Like,
ah, sometimes the women here, after the Oslo agreement, I will speak about this time, they tried to
support themselves, they tried to play a role, at least in their places in society, they tried to insert
themselves into the business, because they think, that to always to use the intifadas, we will not succeed,
we must find different things, to educate themselves, to write, we have a lot of girls who make research,
they are writers, they make political analysis, they are trying to enter things, to speak to the world. Most
of them use the internet now, they use Facebook, Twitter, to try to analyze their opinions for the world.
Now I know if I want to be in the resistance movement I must speak with the world, because the time of
violence has ended, for both sides, for us, for them. To start a new intifada, or to take stones, I will not
succeed, because they have planes, they have weapons, and they will kill me. So we must stop the blood
in this area. We must use dialogue. Dialogue we can use in many ways, their internet, speaking with your
neighbors to try and analyze your idea, but the most important, we try to send our vision, to transfer our
vision for outside. To work in these things is hard because when I meet people outside the borders to ask
them to understand me, they will understand the reality, they will understand the truth, because if I allow
them to only hear from one side, they will not know any things about Palestine. We are not bad people.
We are not terrorists, it is our right to have our state, like you. We have the same example, we have the
same experience as Ireland, we need a state! But not a small state like they are saying, we don’t need a
state without borders, we don’t need a state that is under occupation. We need a state...okay, I will not
come now and ask Israel to go to the sea. It’s unbelievable. We are born here, and there’s a new
generation born there, we have a two-state solution. We hope these things become true, a two-state
solution, but if not, and we just have one way, to speak to try to make a dialogue. Not with the Israeli side
because they will not make a dialogue with us, but at least to speak with foreigners, to speak with the
outside, outside of the borders to understand what is happening. This is what the women are doing now,
they try to teach their children, to teach your children is different from before. Ah no, you must educate
them yourself. If they want to throw stones you must tell them ‘Don’t throw stones at the Israeli settlers,
because you will die. Go to school! Learn! Because you be more educated, and if you are more educated
you can fight them, you must have a big culture to fight them in the right way, in your opinion and your
mind, to speak. And in this way, we can achieve something. And in this way I hope we can succeed.

[Would you mind telling me about your time in prison and how you ended up in prison?]

Actually, it’s a short time in my time in my life. I was in prison in 2005, at the end of 2005 and the first of
2006, and uh, it was very difficult. It was very hard. Because anything you do they arrest you. They
arrested me for a political reason, they used with me a terrible way, they put me in a chair, they used bad
things with me, they tried to see if I was lying. And this chair, I also told them I wasn’t lying, that I was
telling the truth, but they use a psychological way to make you feel that you want to die, that you are a
bad person, that you should kill yourself, but I thank God, I come from a big family and they all have experience in the prisons and they told me, my father, he spoke to me many times when I was still a child about these things and what happens. They put handcuffs on my very tightly, you can still see the marks on my wrists. They put a gun to my head and told me that I should close my eyes, they told me I had 5 minutes to live, so I should say my wishes before I died. Um, actually, this is an effective tactic, because when you hear them prepare the gun you think ‘Yes, I am going to die’ because you see all the soldiers and their weapons. And I said my wishes! I told them ‘Yes, if I will die, my soul will be alive, so you can use the weapons on me, but you will not break the peace when you use these things.’ I stayed two months there, it was a very bad two months. I was in a very small room, maybe one meter across, and the bathroom was in the same room with no doors, no curtain, sometimes you hit the toilet when you move. And sometimes they would put another girl in the cell. It’s very bad to stay, two women or three women like this. We didn’t have any space to sleep or to stand up or to walk, or do any things. I didn’t know what the time was. I didn’t know which day it was, was it Saturday? Friday? But I could understand form the food. Yes, from the food. I tried to understand on which day, I think that they arrested me on Saturday. So this day, they bring this food. So that means when this food comes, it is Saturday, when that food comes it’s Sunday. But we didn’t know the time, we didn’t see the sun, you are under the ground. So you are in an interrogation room, with officers and they ask you a lot of questions, I did no sleep for 24 hours, or 48 hours. When you start to fall asleep they come and put a light on you. They also made it freezing in the room, it was cold, and you cannot sleep, and when you feel that you are about to sleep the officers come to your small room and wake you up, saying ‘Are you okay? Are you okay?’ They don’t care if you are okay, they just want to wake you up. And, it was hard to know the time, because we did not read the paper, we did not watch TV, we didn’t hear anything. Sometimes, when anyone new came, when they arrested a new woman or a new man, they were walking past the cells and we would shout ‘Hello! What day is it? Where are you from?’ Trying to understand what is happening around us, because actually, the world is going past, because I couldn’t understand what the time was, what day it was, you feel that you are lost, that it is not you. There are no mirrors, you cannot see your face, you cannot know what has happened with you, with your body, with your eyes, and then you go to take a bath. They allow you to take a bath once a week, the bath is very dirty, with very, very hot water, without cold water, so you will not take it. You will not accept to take this bath. It’s small and they put you there with a curtain, it’s very thin. It’s very bad. So I wish no one to have this experience. It’s very bad, very terrible. Sometimes now when I sleep I dream of these things, and it makes me feel very bad. I realized, after one week, that when I sleep I make a fist out of my hand and over my eyes, even after I am released. And my father and mother they came to my room when I was sleeping, and saw what I was doing, and when anyone came into my room I would start crying, because I am scared that they are coming to take me again, because the way they took me was a surprise. I was at university, there were elections in the student’s union and I wanted to be the student union president at my university. I didn’t say thing against them, I didn’t think about them at this time, and they took me. So, it’s very bad I think, it’s very, very bad. And I wish that we here in Palestine would make something for those who are released from prison because they are released with a lot of pain, and it is a bad situation and sometimes this makes you do things. Sometimes it makes people want to make another intifada, and sometimes it makes them realize that they must not make another intifada, that they must find a third way. For me as a woman, I had to find a third way, to speak, to speak with the world, to tell them my story. And I speak about this and write about this, to tell them that we are not terrorists, that yes, they arrested me, but I will not do the same. I will take my state with dialogue, but in a good way, a diligent way, I will not allow for them to kill me and to tell the world that I am a terrorist. No. It’s not me. I use this way now, to speak with the world. I hope to succeed. And ah, sometimes I succeed, sometimes not, sometimes I face a problem with them, sometimes, I don’t know, but this experience, it’s very bad.

[What do you think the most difficult aspect of the occupation is?]

For me, they are not human. You see this picture? [points to photo above desk] It is my brother. My brother, he is 8 years in an Israeli jail. I don’t see him. And he must spend 20 more years, for a political reason. And this is very bad, when you are separated from your family. As today, today is my birthday.

[Today is your birthday?]

Yes.

Ix
And uh, my brother, he cannot say this to me, for eight years. And I cannot say the same thing to him. For me, the occupation separated us when they built the wall. I have another brother who lives inside the wall, and I cannot meet him. We can just speak by phone. The occupation stole many things from us, but it also helped us. It taught us that we must see the positive and the negative. It taught us, how to educate ourselves. When I say these things people tell me that I’m crazy. I say no, I do not support the occupation, but if we didn’t have the occupation we would be like the other Arab countries, stupid people, and poor people and we would not have tried to educate ourselves. It gave us that not because they wanted us to learn, but no, their mistake pushed us to learn. And in Palestine you have all the Palestinians learning together, lots of us have Masters degrees. You won’t find anyone who hasn’t studied. Why? Because we have an issue. If we didn’t have an issue to learn, if we didn’t have ambition, we would not do anything. Also, the occupation taught us something about the world.

It’s dependent at times. Sometimes it seems very difficult and other times it’s not as difficult for you. Now, in this situation, everything is difficult for us.
Interview 13
Nabi Saleh

I resist the occupation because it has stolen many things from me. It has stolen the lives of many close people to me, whether by death or by prison, and that’s why I resist. We have been resisting for so long now that it’s not something new, but we have turned to new approaches recently, which is non-violent action or the popular struggle. Jesus said once ‘love thy enemy and if someone does something bad to you, turn the other cheek’ and at some point maybe this enemy will understand, and feel guilt and see the wrong that they are doing. I believe that our weapon is Islam, and our hope is that with this power we can influence people in the right way and this energy will get to them. I think that people in Israel are not perfect human beings, because they see that there is no one else living in this world but them. Even the world doesn’t look at us at people, they look at Israel and look to compensate for the Holocaust, and the Israelis take advantage of this and the world compensates them without looking at us, even that we are from the 1948 borders, and even before that, ah, we’ve been killed and invaded by the Israelis. Despite the peaceful way we try to resist the occupation, the occupation is getting back at us, especially in Nabi Saleh, in a very brutal way, whether by killing or invading or by using force and violence each day. And even for two years, and more now, trying to work in this peaceful way, in my mind ah, my family and I have been violated. My husband has been in prison since March (interview occurred in January), I was imprisoned, my kids have been wounded, we live in a very dire psychological condition, and even in times of happiness, we still do not have the capacity to be happy. It’s not easy to love your enemy, especially if they hurt people close to you. When they murdered Mustafa Tamini, I was very close to him. And I was near to him when it happened, and I went with him to the hospital. [Pause] I choke when I talk about Mustafa. I live in a constant struggle, a daily struggle with raising my children because I am trying to raise them in a peaceful way and talk about the peace culture, but then we look across to the settlement where I see the settlers raising their children holding guns, and I live this struggle every day, whether I am doing the right thing teaching my son to live a peaceful way. This is something I feel every day. I think that our war now is on the media, on how to expose Israel to the world, to the people, and even to some Israelis who live without an idea of how we live and how the occupation affects us. We are trying to show this platform to the people so they can do this kind of revolution that happened in Libya and Syria, so they can come and see what the occupation is and what it does. All that I’ve seen from before the non-violent action that we’ve undertaken for the last 2 1/2 years, all I’ve seen from Israelis were the soldiers that captured me, the interrogators, the female interrogator who violently searched my body and threatened me with the soldiers, and with the soldier who killed the mother of Nassar, a person from Nabi Saleh who is long imprisoned, he is the nephew of my husband, and his mother was killed because when she was at Nassar’s trial, one of the female soldiers hit her on her head with the butt of a rifle and she fell on the floor and had an injury which she died of. Previously, this was all that I saw of the Israelis. After the popular struggle action, I have seen other Israelis, human Israelis, who were putting their bodies in front of the guns of the soldiers, and they were close when they captured my Husband in March, and I saw how they were trying to get him out of the soldiers hands, and after he was captured they came and cried on my husband that they had taken their brother. I saw how much solidarity they had, they were seeing the same things that I saw and fighting. Also, when Mustafa was murdered they were crying just like us, in really deep sorrow over what happened. This gave me the conclusion that everyone, every human has the right to live on this land peacefully, with no war, with no violence, and with no conditions. This is what I have so far.

[How do you see the role of women in resisting the occupation?]

The Palestinian woman has been resisting the occupation, even the different occupations, not just the Israeli occupations on this land. With Israeli occupation, the women have been resisting it in a very, well they had had a role in all places. The Palestinian woman resists wherever she is, whether she is supporting the non-violent action, when she goes to demonstrations, when she is being patient when her husband or her child is killed or in prison, when the injured come to her house and she gives them first aid, in all these ways, even when she is at home with her children, I think these are all forms of how the Palestinian women resist the occupation.
We have two problems. It’s a problem to say that its (the occupation) normal, because it’s not, and it shouldn’t be. At the same time it’s a problem not to say it’s normal, because if we don’t say its normal and try to live it, it will devastate us, and break us. So on both levels, it’s not okay, but, if you go this way, it’s not okay, and if you go that way, it’s the same. It’s not really easy, and if you say that it’s okay for my husband to be imprisoned for a year or a year and a half, or two years, or three years, I see it as normal, but it’s not. Even my sister, her son was in prison recently, and they were looking at 5 or 6 months, and they think it’s normal, because looking at previous experiences, Nassar, the one I told you about earlier, he was in prison for 18 years. He got in the last prisoners exchange, and he was sentenced to life, but then he was in the exchange. And he’s been in prison for 18 years, and I look at my cousin, Said, he’s been in prison since he was 20 years old, and now he’s 39. He’s imprisoned for life, and already he’s spent 19 years, so when I look at these sentences, I have to look at my husband’s case as ‘ok’ or ‘it’s normal’ because I compare it to the worst. I think I am better now with what we have. So I see it as normal when it’s not because I have to look at as ‘less worse’ situation that I am in.

I want the whole world to see, for people to see. To look at Israel and Palestine and see and measure the level of violence on both sides and see who is acting violently towards somebody else and to see who is the real victim, and to see who is the real criminal who is using the violence. I want people to see things as they are in Palestine. This popular struggle is like a seed we planted 3 or so years ago. And we’re seeing it grow as a tree And if the people, the Israelis and the Palestinians and the whole world sees it and supports this growth, we wouldn’t see as much violence from both sides, especially the Israeli side. I am trying constantly to raise my children in love and peace, and whenever my husband talks to me he tells me how to embed these seeds in my children. I am scared because I don’t want to cry over my children because they’ve been hurt. I am afraid that even because I am trying to put this peace and love in my children, my 16 year old son is seeing so much violence around him, and this might create a pressure on him, like a balloon and one day he might explode and he might be violent towards someone and try to harm someone, and I wouldn’t like to see that, and this is what I feel. If the world doesn’t see that, that it will be like someone blowing in a balloon, and this balloon will finally explode, and it will hurt the person blowing in it and everyone around.

[Translator]

It’s really interesting for us to see this because I think that even the Palestinian people are living in such a dilemma. Although it’s a very small country, and it’s very common thing that we do, It’s being practiced from the Israeli side in different shapes, and the people are living it in different shapes also in Palestine. So people living in Nabi Saleh are living in a totally different experience than people in Jenin, just like [N] and her family. For everybody in Palestine, no matter where they are, they live their own experience, in their own track. It’s really interesting to see how people think. We were talking about that for so long this week, wondering should we talk to Israelis and try to open this door of communication or normalization. And we were talking about it, and [N] was saying from her perspective that she needs to talk to them with love, because I fear for my children’s future, I want them to live in a peaceful way, I need to hear the other side, of the Israelis, that they have other people as well who want to live in peace. And I was telling her, that this is her perspective, that she is a woman, that she has been in prison, that she has lived a different occupation than me. For me, I would refuse some kind of total social normalization, because I would not accept to put them on an equal side, for me, from my perspective, yes, for us to go forward in negotiation, for us to go in peace, we must see everyone as equal, but for me, as I see it, I don’t see putting the Israelis as equal victims to us as something I can accept. But then, for her, it is a different story, she has been more affected, she fears for her children, it’s a different perspective. But I think that even in Palestinian society we have so many different views of how to look at this. I mean, we all wish for peace, yes, but for us, sometimes, the word peace is something more about humiliation, not dignity, because it means that we have to cave, have to give more, etc, etc. So even among Palestinians, among Palestinian women we think differently.

[N]

Once, I encountered a question of how Palestinian women endured and dealt with their experiences with dignity, and I said that Palestinian women were made of spiritual water, and they could deal with anything.
I believe that Palestinian women are exceptionally strong. An example is of a mother from Ramallah who has two sons who were martyrs, and four imprisoned for life. And she is an exceptional woman. She is like no other woman. My aunt’s husband, my uncle, was a martyr, and also her daughter was killed in a bombing in Beirut, in 1982, and her son has been in prison for 19 years, but when you sit with her she talks like nothing is wrong. This is something exceptional about women here. Jalas. From the Tamini family, three have been imprisoned for life. Ahmed and Nassar who were imprisoned for 18 years, and my cousin Said, who is in prison still. When they brought out the list of who would be released in the exchange and Said was not on it, it was so sad for the whole family, but his mother was still out and celebrating, and holding Said’s family, and she was so happy that the other two were released, because she thinks of them as sons. I asked her ‘how can you be so happy when your son is still there?’ and one of those released is was her daughter’s husband. And she told me ‘These are my children. Yes, I cried because Said was not released, but I have another two who came out, so I am happy for them. I cried for my son, but I am happy for the other two.’ This is a kind of strength you don’t see in so many people.

I, I ah, am absolutely in awe of Palestinian women, I just, I can’t even describe it.

No, it’s overwhelming, sometimes you see it as a cliché, or something that you hear in stories, but when you see it, and see people talking, for me, sometimes it’s overwhelming, I mean, when I talk to [N] I think it’s overwhelming.

The first, within the first week that I was here, I was crossing Gilo (checkpoint) and the first turnstile, there are two turnstiles, and the first one was not working. And there was a big group of Palestinian women in front of me, maybe 20 women. And the guard would come out of his booth, and he would push it, and it would turn, and he would go back in his booth and it would turn, and all of these women were just laughing, hysterically, bent over, in stitches, just laughing, at a situation that really isn’t that funny. But, it was just one of the first glimpses I had of this approach to life.
Interview 14
Nabi Saleh

For sure the occupation affects people’s lives, especially as it is, occupation is related to suffering and pain, and so, as the only occupied nation in the whole world, we suffer from this occupation. We look to other countries and we see them enjoying their freedom and their normal lives, and here we have nothing, just the occupation. So, this is just one of the things that we miss. Especially the children because they are missing their childhood, they can’t have normal lives as children. They just have to think like adults, thinking about being arrested, being injured, when they go to sleep they expect that at any time a soldier will come to arrest them or at least invade the house and wake them up. So, these are things that make our lives very difficult, it’s not an easy way of living. But, uh, for us, ah, the resistance is an essential thing, a very important thing, because with resistance we can prove that this is our right, this is our land, we have the right to live as any other nation in the world, at least a normal life, eh. The settlers are enjoying our sources, water, green areas, the beach, the sea, every beautiful thing in Palestine, the settlers or the Israelis enjoy it. And we as Palestinians are not allowed to do anything. We can’t go to the sea, we can’t take our children to play in the water, we can’t. Even water, we have a problem with water, we only have water 12 hours per week, so ah, for the 12 hours we have to fill the water tanks on the roofs so we can make sure there will be water for the rest of the week. The settlers are enjoying our water 24/7. This is also something that is disturbing, and it makes us, ah, it forces us to continue our resistance. For example, children here, they don’t understand the meaning of the word ‘Sea’. They know its water, but they think it is like a swimming pool or something, because they have never been in the sea. Even the Dead Sea, in the Jericho area, we are not allowed to go there. It’s closed for Palestinians and you have to get a permit to go there. So last summer we decided to take our children to Jordan, to take them to Aqaba to show them the sea. This magic thing. We took them there and we arrived around 9 at night, so it was dark. They began to play in the water then, but in the morning when we went back to the sea and they saw how big it is and they saw ships, they began to ask where they brought the water from...they thought it was like a swimming pool that someone filled. I told them it’s from God, this is the sea, no one put it there. So my youngest son, he was playing in the water and he began to yell ‘Mom! Somebody put a lot of salt in this water’ I told him that this was the water of the sea, that no one put salt in it. So they couldn’t understand what this simple thing was until we could take them to another country. We were able to take them because we had the money, but most Palestinians can’t do that, it’s very expensive to go there. So as I said before, it’s a very ugly thing to be under occupation, because you lose everything, you lose your life, you lose your dreams, you lose your future, your children’s future, you lose everything. You just live minute by minute. You don’t know what will happen in the next minute, you don’t know what will happen in the next hour. All the time you are worried about what will happen. For the children, when they hear something, like a jeep they think that the soldiers will come and throw tear gas or arrest someone. So this continuous fear makes us, how can I say it? For me to see as a mother, or as an adult, a Palestinian adult, we choose our way, we choose resistance, we choose this, we get used to this life. But, it’s very difficult to see the children have to face these things, because they didn’t choose this kind of life, they didn’t choose to lose their dream. Eh, [O] my son, who was sitting here earlier, he dreamt to study hospitality, and there is one school in Jerusalem which has this major. So he applied for that school and they accepted him, but the Israelis refused to give him a permit because he is from Nabi Saleh. So he, we tried to search for another school, there is another one in Ramallah, but it’s very expensive, very very expensive, so we can’t afford it. So now we sent him to a regular school and every morning he makes problems, because he doesn’t want to go to school. He likes computers and technology, and he’s very clever in these things, so we tried to make him study this major, and he said ‘No. I don’t want to dream another dream. The Israelis destroyed it, I don’t want anything else.’ So even if our children try to dream they destroy these dreams. So ah, I wish that they could target the older Palestinians, not children, keep children out of it, let them live their childhood, let them dream, it’s just a dream, so don’t take this dream from them.

[How do you see the role of women in resisting the occupation?]

Ah, Palestinian women, they participated in the resistance from the beginning. You can find Palestinian women martyrs, prisoners, leaders in the resistance. But I think the women here in Palestine, they suffer a lot. More than men. It’s not like I think men don’t suffer to decrease the role of men, but, ah, women, they have their own suffering from the occupation because like men they are arrested, they are injured, they are tortured, but also they have suffered men’s suffering, when her husband is killed or is in jail, or
their father, the women are the ones to support the family. She is the one who should raise her children
not to forget their rights, she is the one who takes all the pain, but at the same time she should hide this
pain, she shouldn’t show her pain and suffering, she should suffer inside, not outside. So, this thing makes
Palestinian women very strong women. Even if women are not participating directly in resistance, they are
helping in other ways, in any way they can, there is different shapes of resistance, not just resisting the
occupation directly, but also teaching their children is a kind of resistance, or to try to build her own
career to support her family is another kind of resistance too. There are Palestinian women who have
nobody in jail, but they adopt somebody who has no one else, and they go to visit him and buy things for
him, even if she is not related to him. So, I think she, the Palestinian women, they should give her a medal
for what she’s doing, really. Men, they need women, there are things they can’t do without women, they
have a very important role in resistance. But also, there are some places that you find women off to the
side, because you know, our culture, our Arabic culture, men are the leaders, they think women should
obey. So thins sometimes makes women stay aside, or to be afraid from the father or the big brother. But
anyway, when its necessary, you find women.

[What do you think the most difficult aspect of the occupation is?]

It’s occupation, so everything is difficult. You can’t say that one thing is more difficult. In everything you
suffer, everything is difficult, because the occupation is against you, against humanity, against everything
in the world, against all the beauty in the world. Just being under occupation is the most difficult thing.
But of course, losing somebody, losing your beloved, losing those who support your or give you strength,
this is a very difficult thing.

[Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know?]

(laughs, pauses) I just want to say, that we as Palestinians, the whole world portrays us as criminals, or
suicide blood-lovers, as though we are vampires or something like that. But we are somebody, we are a
nation demanding their rights. I am sure that anybody in the Western world, they say that they are
civilized, but if you are sitting in your house and somebody attacks your house, hitting your son, or tries to
harm your son, you will not just kick him away, you will kill him. This is human nature, to protect your
children. Even animals do this, they protect their young. If you look at a cat, it is a very beautiful animal,
and very peaceful, but if you try to touch her children she will attack you and scratch you. So, we are just
protecting our children, nothing else. We have no problem with the Israelis as Israelis, or the Jews as Jews,
because we believe that God sent three messengers with three religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism,
and we strongly believe in this. We respect other religions, but we are against Zionism as a movement
based on killing, vanquishing Palestinians, stealing their land, build as they say ‘a land without people for a
people without a land.’ Because No! It is a land with people, with a whole culture, everything, how do you
say there is no people? So, this is what we resist. We resist this kind of thinking that tries to send us away
to another country, that they wish to do this and have all the Palestinians disappear. But, ah, to be honest,
before our resistance, before our demonstrations started 2 years ago, I never thought I would speak with
an Israeli, because I have never had a direct connection with an Israeli. All my life I just saw Israelis as
soldiers who woke me in the middle of the night, who killed my father when I was 17 days old, who killed
my uncle, my aunt, my cousins, my nephews, there are nearly nine people form my family killed by
Israelis. I saw them as always arrested my beloved, so even if I thought ‘how could I speak with this kind of
person? A person who always steals, or who makes me lose my beloved?’ But after we began our
demonstrations and Israeli activists participated in these demos, I began to realize, that ‘Oh my God. There
is a human side to the Israelis. They are like us, like Palestinians, they are human, against what their
government does, against what their army does, they are refusing to be in the army because they don’t
want to harm Palestinians.’ So this has helped me to understand that we are not against Judaism, we are
against Zionism, and there is a huge difference between these two things. One is a religion from God,
which we should respect, and that is a terrorist movement which we should resist. There is a big
difference between these two. And now, all the Israelis who come to the village come to my house. They
are welcome anytime. They eat with us. Sometimes they come on Thursdays to sleep here because
sometimes the army doesn’t allow them to come on Fridays. And we respect them, and they respect us.
This is to show that we want to live together, and we are ready to remove the occupation from our minds,
to look towards the other, that they stop looking at us as terrorists and we stop looking at them as
occupiers, we can live together. But first we must understand that we have remove this thing from our
minds, because it’s not about ‘the other’ it’s about ourselves. If I want to think that this flower is ugly, I will eventually look at it as an ugly flower, but it’s very beautiful for other people. So we should change our way of thinking so that we can live together. We were able to remove this occupation from our minds and the Israeli activists were able to remove it, and now we are like, we consider them brother and sister, and they are the same. But, anybody who wants to harm us, or harm our children, we will defend our houses. We’ve never gone to the settlement to threaten the settlers lives, we never went to their houses to attack them or throw stones at them, but at the same time, every Friday, the Israeli army is standing in front of my house, sometimes shooting tear gas inside my house, my child was injured just because he wanted to....[H] my son, he was standing and everybody was sitting on the street singing and chanting and one of the commanders ordered the soldiers to hit him directly with a tear gas canister so that everyone would be busy looking after the child and stop singing and chanting. So they shot him which caused damage to his liver and kidney and internal bleeding. He was very lucky because this injury could have killed him. So they are ready to kill a child just because they don’t want to hear people chanting and they want to stop them. So, at this time, I don’t know how they could blame me if I went and attacked this soldier who shot my son with a tear gas canister, but the whole world always judges us. They support the Arab uprisings, they support Egypt, Syria, they support everybody, because they said they are resisting their dictatorial regimes, but okay, if you are standing with this Arab uprising then you should stand with us as Palestinians. They are fighting for their rights, for a good life, and to raise their salaries, to have good education, but we resist for our lives. We put our souls in our hands and we resist, anytime we have to accept that we could be killed. If I go down to the demonstration I know that I could be injured, arrested or killed, but I don’t care, I want my rights. So, why do you give the rights of the Arab uprising but take these rights from Palestinians. I can’t understand why, why they are doing this. If you are against injustice, you should be against injustice in the whole world, not manipulating it.

[Thank you so much]

You’re welcome!

[This is why I wanted to come to Palestine, is that I refuse to believe what my government, I’m American, and I refuse to believe what my government says, and I refuse to believe what the media says. And I am outraged by what happens here, and since coming here I have been so amazed and inspired by people and their determination. I have no words to express how amazing I find Palestinians to be.]

You know, I was on a tour in the States, for 17 days, I just came 20 days ago. When I went I thought that at least I will speak with somebody who knows what the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is, or what the meaning of it is. But when I went there I was shocked that most of the people there no nothing of what is really happening here. For example, there was a businessman who invited us for dinner. And at this dinner there were congressmen, and a judges, so very important people. We were talking, and at the end of the discussion an old woman came, and she told me that she was a judge in Cincinnati. And she asked me if Yasser Arafat was still the president of Palestine! I had a blank face. She told me that she knew what goes on in Palestine and that she usually watches the news, and I told her ‘You know nothing about what happens there. You know nothing for the last 7 years about Palestine. Otherwise you would know that Arafat died 7 years ago and Abbas is the president, so you stopped following our news 7 years ago. Maybe you followed it before that, but you nothing about it now.’ She was asking me if I was serious! I was shocked that an educated woman, a judges, I am sure she has influence on the people around her, and she knows nothing. So how can I blame regular people there?

[There is so much ignorance. I don’t even know how to begin to challenge this ignorance, I don’t know where to start.]

We try, we try to speak. There is a very good organization that brings Americans here to see. I told people who were helping me to fundraise for this trip that if I were able to change 20 people’s mentality, because if each one of them speaks to their family about what they saw and heard, and they were also able to change one mentality, then finally it will spread. I know that the journey of one thousand miles begins with one step, so we just have to begin, we shouldn’t worry that it’s 1000 miles. We should just begin and keep walking.
Interview 15
Nabi Saleh

Woman 1: The Daughter-in-law of my host, perhaps a few years younger than me
The important thing is to stay in our house, in front of the Israeli soldiers and the occupation, if we stay in
our house it says ‘we are not afraid of your guns’ We stay in our house, we live a normal life, and ah, this is
the patience under occupation, this is the important thing. And to teach our children how to live free, how
to fight, to go to school and learn, all these things, to make our children good children. All these things, to
fight the soldiers not in violent fighting like them, but in the paper, this is the fight.

Woman 2: The ‘grandmother’ she is a small, older woman who moves deftly about, bringing a near
constant stream of tea, pastries, coffee, more tea and juice. She smiles and laughs a lot, but looks at me
with very serious eyes when she talks about her hardships.
Popular resistance is very important for us. It’s our only weapon, we don’t have guns, we don’t have
missiles, we don’t have these kinds of weapons, and most important, we don’t have Obama standing with
us. So, non-violent resistance is our only way to resist. We would like to live a normal life. We want a
secure life for your children, a stable life for them. We want the whole world to stand with us and support
us in our resistance. I don’t understand why everyone is against us, why they don’t support us in our
struggle. Yani, the French, Germans, British, Dutch, consuls have come here on Fridays, and they’ve seen
what happens. They took pictures and videotaped everything that happens on Fridays, so it’s obviously for
everyone what the army is doing here and what kind of weapons they are using against us. All we are
doing is demanding our land and fighting for our rights, but they didn’t do anything. They saw what
happened, but did nothing. On Fridays, everyone in the village, the young, the adults, the small children,
everyone is living under stress and depression because they don’t know what is going to happen that day,
like one month ago when Mustafa was killed, he was killed in cold blood. He was just holding a stone in his
hand. Our demonstrations are peaceful demonstrations, we are holding flags in our hands, it is not
something that threatens their security. They close the gate and no one can come in or leave the village.
We are nearly handcuffed here. We don’t know what will happen and we can’t do anything. So the
Western community watching us, on TV or on the internet, they watch and do nothing for us. Even when
they see what is happening and hey see that we are being killed they do nothing and sometimes they even
stand against us. The settlers now, you know, the settlers are a state inside a state and they have their
own rules..

[Pause in translation as I reach for the smaller of the two remaining pastries and my host intervenes,
telling me to take the larger one. They were absolutely the best pastries I had during my time in Palestine,
still warm, handmade flat breads with oregano from her own garden]
So uh, the settlers attack Palestinian villages, they steal our land, they prevent us from reaching our lands
to cultivate. We have an olive field. They are Roman Olives. We call them that because they are from the
Roman period, and they are very, very old. They are the best olives, but the settlers cut the trees down
and planted new ones instead, just to say that the olives were theirs, that they had planted them, not the
Palestinians. So they cut the trees. In some villages they invade the village, burning cars and throwing
stones in houses, the break windows. Now everybody is terrified of the settlers. When we go to sleep at
night we expect the wars of the settlers against us, that maybe they will invade the village. We are more
afraid of the settlers than the army. I want now to talk about my family. This is a photo of my husband. He
was in an Israeli jail for five years. My son was also in jail for 3 1/2 years, and my younger son was in jail
for a few weeks, and sometimes they arrest my third son as well. Yani, two weeks ago they arrested my
youngest son. He’s 23 years old, and they put him in the same cell as some settlers, with the hopes that
the settlers would attack him. Luckily, he knew some Hebrew, and he told the settlers that he was from
Jerusalem and had been arrested for a fight, not in a demonstration against settlers. So they are terrifying
the people they arrest, to put him with settlers! They know that settlers are very violent against
Palestinians. It’s like they wanted him dead. After he told them that he was from Jerusalem and that he
was arrested for a fight he told them that he was very tired and wanted to go to sleep, because he knew
that if he spoke more with them they would discover his lies, because he only knew a little Hebrew. So he
went to sleep because he didn’t want any direct confrontation with them.
So our olive fields we cannot reach. If we want to go, we have to get a permit from the DCO and when we
go to the field the settlers attack. During the last harvest the settler children attacked us with stones. Our
fields were also full of oregano. We used to harvest it and make a lot of things with it like za’atar. Now, we
have no oil from our fields, not enough oregano to make za’tar, so it’s not just stealing land, but everything on the land, plants, trees, crops. Jalas, so even though we used to be able to plant almost everything we needed to eat, now we have nothing and we have to buy it from strangers. I can see our land from the front of my house, but I cannot reach it. Now we have nothing. We harvest our farm on Facebook. We plant and harvest crops on the computer instead of our own land. We are not against Israel as a state, we are against them stealing our rights. We are not against a border for an Israeli state, but we also need our borders. We don’t want the apartheid wall to divide the same house into two parts. We want the rights of our children to be educated, because now if they want to go to school there is the checkpoint system, even to go to the kindergarten there are checkpoints and sometimes the children can’t get through. Children now are having a lot of problems. He had to bring psychologists to talk to the children because of the stress and fear they are living in. When they go to sleep at night they expect the army to come in and arrest them. They have arrested children under the age of 15, as young as 12! A 12 year old child is arrested and made to sign a confession against his father or his brother. Then they arrest the father or brother with the child’s testimony. I don’t think there is an international law that says that this is okay, that a 12 year old is an adult. All the time they accuse us of being terrorists. What kind of terrorists are we? They should look at what the Israelis do, they are the real terrorists. On Fridays they bring the skunk water. They stop in front of the house and the skunk water car begins to spray on the roof and inside the house. They shoot tear gas canisters into the house also, they shoot the canisters at the windows and the glass breaks and then the skunk water comes inside the house. The smell is awful. Nobody can stand the smell. It stays for a long time and we have to live with the smell. They threw a tear gas canister at the front door, and it broke the glass on the door and came inside the house and burned the carpet, here and here you can see it. [Points to burn marks on the carpet] If we had not been at the house at that time it could have started the house on fire.

During the night raids they came from house to house with pictures of children they had taken during demonstrations. They were asking everyone who the children were. They brought the pictures trying to get the names. They told us that if we would not tell them who the children were that they would come back every night, that they would make our lives very difficult. Of course we will not tell them who the pictures are of, they are our brothers, our cousins, our nephews, our nieces. Most of them are children, we won’t give the soldiers their names. One night they came after midnight to my daughter’s house. She was alone with her children, her husband was staying the night in Ramallah. She has three daughters and one son. The soldiers told her to wake all of the children up and go outside. It was raining out, but they told her to go stand outside. Her youngest daughter is one year old and she was very sick. So my daughter told the soldiers that she would not wake her up to take her out into the rain. They insisted that my daughter wake her up because they wanted to take a picture of her. The one year old. My daughter was alone and very afraid. So she woke them all up and let the soldiers take pictures of them. The children are aged one year, three years, seven years and ten years. They took pictures of all of them. They wanted her to go outside. She told them they could kill her, but she was not going to take her children out into the rain in the middle of the night. So it’s not just that they are chasing the adults, but also the children. What would a one year old do against them?

[At this point I am offered a cup of coffee]

The army came one day and began to shoot tear gas. When they began to shoot it randomly I was afraid that something would happen to my granddaughter. I ran towards the stairs to see if she was okay. The soldiers saw me in the window, and they shot a canister and it hit me in the back. Because they shot the canister through the window of the stairway, the whole stairway was full of gas and we couldn’t go out. We were trapped inside the house, on the second floor. We were afraid that something would happen to my granddaughter, because she was only 2 years old. My daughter-in-law and I began shouting for someone to come and help us. Someone came with a ladder and put it up to help get the child out, but the ladder was not long enough and it did not reach all the way. My daughter-in-law was yelling for help, and we decided that we would have to drop my granddaughter from the window to someone below. Her uncle came and to catch her. My granddaughter began to shout at her mother ‘You don’t like me! You want to throw me out of the window!’ She didn’t understand what was going on. She was shouting and screaming at her mother. At this point the house was full of tear gas, we couldn’t handle the smell any more. My granddaughter was holding onto the window sill screaming and her mother had to pry her hands off the window sill and threw the girl down to her uncle. All the time she was screaming at her mother ‘You hate me! You want to kill me!’. While we were trying to get her out of the house the army
commander was standing there watching all of this. He began to instruct his soldiers to ‘Shoot more tear gas into the house and at them! I want to hear everybody crying!’ So uh, the soldiers began to shoot more tear gas in our direction. So the uncle laid down on the ground with my granddaughter because he was afraid of being hit by a tear gas canister. After that they brought her to the neighbour’s house. All that time the soldiers were firing tear gas at everyone in this area. We couldn’t go from the second floor the way my granddaughter could because nobody could catch us! So we had to go the stairway. It was full of tear gas. We fainted. We were passed out for nearly an hour. Someone came into the house with gas masks and brought us outside. This happened one year ago, but until now my granddaughter is still mad at her mother, she still thinks that her mother hates her. We can’t explain to her why we did that. She can’t understand that it was for her protection. We try to explain it, but she can’t understand. [Grandma laughs] This is the simplest story of the occupation. It’s only one story.

Another time they came and arrested my son. We followed the soldiers trying to get them to release him. I was standing there screaming at the soldiers that he had not done anything. They shot a tear gas canister between my legs.

[A third woman enters the room, the aunt of the grandmother along with her uncle. Introductions ensue, coffee is brought. I remember this woman really well. She is very old, her face lined with heavy wrinkles. There is a really determined look in her eye. Her husband, carrying a cane sits on the other side of the room, not participating at all in the conversation.]

[The granddaughter enters the room, paces around, the adults put cartoons on the TV and she sits down with a packet of biscuits]

Woman three:
The older generation always teaches the new generation. And then they can pass it on. Next Sunday, I will be 77 years old. We are always in the same position as Palestinians. Since I was born the Palestinians have been suffering. First with the Ottoman empire, which is like occupation, and then with the Balfour declaration and the British mandate a lot of Palestinians were killed during this period. The Palestinians have never rested, never been stable. We have been transferred from one occupation to another. From the Ottomans, to the British to the Israelis. The Israeli state was established and the British helped them. They transferred Palestinians from their villages and put the Jews into our houses. We were already being occupied by the British. We couldn’t resist the Jewish occupation because we were being stopped by the British. Then they declared Israel and now they occupy all of Palestine. In 1914 the first world war, we have been fighting against occupation since this. It was our land, we passed it down to our sons, and now we have nothing. Once, one officer came and I told him ‘You stole our land and your prisons are full of Palestinians and we are still suffering. This is our land.’ He told me that if I went back in history I would see that this was not our land. I told him that they were terrifying our children, putting out men in prison and killing our sons, and then after all that you tell us that we are terrorists. He told me to go tell it to someone else. The high court stands with the settlers. After Saba and Shantila we went to the high court but they stand with Israel. Every year we have a new case, but the decision always goes with Israel. The settlers are taking more and more land every year. Maybe in 15 year’s time there will be no Palestinians. Finally we will discover that our sons are not our sons, that they are settlers. All our lives we are going from one war to another war, from the Ottomans, to the British to Israeli. We haven’t rested from one war to another war, from one suffering to another suffering. So we haven’t had time or a chance our sources to build a state. We have no control over any aspect of our lives, they control everything. So, ah, there is no time to build our own state. All the time we are losing our new generation because the occupation continues and they are targeting the youth. All the time we are losing our future. We always try to bring new children. The British they brought Jews inside the 1948 border, they gave the West Bank to Jordan, and the British Prime Minister told the Jordanian King that the rest of Palestine was for the Jews and that he had to prevent the Palestinians form killing even one Jew. The Prime Minister controlled the Jordanian King until 1956. He was controlling the Jordanian King. We became very weak with the Jordanian control because they always obeyed the British. We couldn’t build our own state or control our own resources. Even the American candidate for president is saying that the Palestinians are an invented people, so he would get the support of the Israeli lobby. They just want to win votes at our expense. The candidate who is most against the Palestinians is the one who will win the election because he wins the
Israeli lobby vote. One of the Israeli Rabbis said that Palestinians were maggots and should be killed. He is the biggest Rabbi in Israel.

[Me: The Israeli lobby makes me so mad. I feel like my own country is totally controlled by the Israeli lobby, that it’s not my country, that it’s the country of the Israeli lobby. It makes me very angry.]

[M: Really they are very strong. They control the economy, that’s why the candidates are afraid of them, because if they take their investments the economy will collapse]

[Me: It is the one issue, every other issue republicans and democrats are divided, but on this issue, they are always together. You’ll never get a candidate that doesn’t support them because they wouldn’t get elected.]

[M: It would destroy a candidate in a minute if it was known that he was with the Palestinians. When I was in America, in Kentucky University, and AIPAC member asked me why I celebrated when the murderous Palestinians were released in the prisoner exchange, in spite that Shalit was kidnapped for five years and wasn’t allowed to see the Red Cross or his family, so you are supporting terrorism and you are a terrorist. I told him that the first thing Shalit said after he was released was that Hamas treated him as a human, and that when he was released he was in good health, but if you go to Israeli prisons, most of the prisoners are in very bad health, they have illness and are malnourished, the conditions in prison are not good enough for animals, they have bad medical care, bad food, and sometimes they are also prevented from seeing their families, sometimes mothers cannot visit your sons. He told me that I was still celebrating the release of killers. I told him that he should first try to understand why the Palestinians did what they did. I have a cousin who is in jail for life. he’s been in jail 18 years, he killed an Israeli settler. But he killed that settler after they killed his father, his sister, his brother-in-law, his two nephews, his uncle, his aunt and his two cousins. So he lost 9 of his family members. He was 18 years old and he decided to kill one settler. Nobody wants to lose his life to prison unless he has nothing left to lose. And this is what the Israelis make us believe. If you look at it from another side, one Israeli life, Shalit’s life, is worth 1,027 Palestinian lives. 1,500 Palestinians killed in Gaza because they tried to release Shalit. So 1,027 prisoners and 1,500 killed for Shalit. So one Israeli life is worth 1,627 Palestinian lives. This is how cheap Palestinian life is compared to Israeli life. He was shocked. I told him that if he wanted to see life for real in Palestine that he should not listen to what the United States said. I told him to come to Nabi Saleh on a Friday and he could see who is the terrorist and who is the victim. And so, at the end he came up and told me that the next summer he was coming to Israel. He asked if he could come to Nabi Saleh to support us. Would you welcome me? I told him he was welcome at any time. This is what they teach them.

Woman 3:
The excuse for the war on Gaza was in part Shalit. This morning on the news I heard that they are preparing for a new, even bigger war on Gaza very soon. They will always find a new excuse. The missiles they have can reach any Arab country, not just Gaza. They always used to justify their attacks on Gaza with Shalit, but now there is no reason to attack Gaza. This obvious evidence that they are targeting Palestinians. It doesn’t matter what we are doing, they are targeting us. They want the Palestinians to vanish from the earth. They want all the Palestinians gone. There is no stable life here in Palestine. The body cannot hold two heads, and Palestine can’t hold two states.

[After the recorder was shut off the talk turned to the number of women who are currently pregnant in the village. The women counted three, and then said that the number is usually much higher at any given time, between 10 and 12 women were normally pregnant. The women believe that the use of tear gas and skunk water on such a large scale has contributed to the declining birth rate.]
Interview 16
Nabi Saleh

[Can you tell me what you think the most difficult aspect of the occupation is?]

Yani, the lack of freedom to go where you want and do what you want, like Jerusalem, we can’t go there to pray without a permit, and they usually refuse to give us permits. The things they use against here in Nabi Saleh, we are like an experiment field, they use all kinds of weapons against us.

[Her young son comes in to tell his mother that he has been in Ramallah, and that he brought strawberries, but hid them in his room]

[What are Fridays like for you?]

Fridays are a frightening day. I am afraid of Fridays when I wake up. It’s like a horror movie.

[The little boy comes back with a box of strawberries, and shares one with me]
[Me: I see you had to put wire over your windows yes]

Yeah, they target my house a lot

[M’s phone rings and my host goes to make coffee]
[M: Her husband, my brother, was injured many times. Once by a rubber bullet to the head. At first they thought it was nothing, that it wasn’t serious, but we took him to the hospital and discovered a bone was broken above his eye. They did surgery and took part of the bone from his skull. He still has no bone there, you can see it even when he breathes. So anything, even a simple hit could cause brain damage. Another time he was standing in front of the house and he was shot with 14 rubber bullets, all over his body. When they went to the hospital they discovered it was a new kind of rubber bullet. There was a certain substance on it that burned the skin around it. He was in hospital for a while because nothing would work on the burns. So, ah, it kept spreading and they couldn’t find the right antibiotic. Even now he says he sometimes feels pain where these bullets hit. They hit him in his chest and all over his legs, everywhere. Sometimes the pain is so much that he can’t do anything. This is what she meant when she said that we are a place for experiments, because we thought it was just a rubber bullet, that it would just hurt when he was hit. We don’t know what the chemical was on the outside of it that caused the infection. They are really experimenting on people with weapons. He might feel fine and then suddenly have a fever. I think that it is because there are still chemicals in his body.]

[We move to the other side of the room and the settlement is visible from the window.]

[Why do you think that it is important for Palestinians to resist the occupation and what ways do you find to resist?]

Our only way to resist the occupation is through our strength. It is the only thing that we have. There are people who have lost everything they had, their land, everything. Especially with the wall, they divided people from their land and they can’t go to their land to work it. Palestinians who were inside ’48 and who were forced to leave their houses and the their land and go to other Arab countries because they were afraid. This is the reason we resist the occupation. It’s important to resist because it is our right to resist, our right to take back our land. So Israel is killing us, so we have to fight for our right to exist. They don’t have to take my land for me to resist, if they took someone else’s land they will take mine in the end, so that is enough to resist. So, I am fighting for my rights now even though I have not lost anything because maybe in the future I will lose something.

[M: I’ve asked her to talk about when her husband was injured and her feelings about this and when he was in jail]

The most difficult thing was when they told me he had been injured, because one minute he had been standing and talking to me and the next minute he has gone out in front of the house and was injured. At
first they said it was not serious, but they took him to the hospital for a check-up and they had to take him to Nablus hospital for immediate surgery. I was here in the house and I didn’t know what was going on until they called and told me that he was in serious condition. They were worried that his brain would hit his skull and he would die. I was in shock because I nearly lost him. That was the most difficult time for me because it happened in a minute and I understood how life is very silly. One minute you feel strong and the next you feel you are nothing. The next time when he was hit with the rubber bullets it was the same. I felt as though I nearly lost him for nothing. That both times he was standing, doing nothing. To lose a life for nothing is very difficult, so I understand why we resist, why we make these demonstrations. Either way you will lose your life, you will be a target, if you do something or not. When they came to arrest him it was after midnight. It’s not like the times he nearly lost his life, but it was the middle of the night. They began to shout, and everyone was screaming. They began to hit us. They woke up my sons. They woke up my son [S] to take a picture of him and when they arrested his father he began to scream because he wanted his father. They were very cruel and very violent, even towards the child. I felt that my son shouldn’t go through this experience as a child. Most of my worries are about my children, not my husband at these times. Even after they had taken him [S] kept screaming and shouting and crying all night.

[M: Each experience of this is a lot. That day when they came, they came twice. They came the first time after midnight, taking pictures of all the children between 10 and 15 years old. Waking all the children, they took their pictures and ID numbers, all the details about the child, his birthday, his full name. After that they came to arrest children just because they had pictures of them participating in the demonstrations. When they came the second time they woke everyone, took pictures of everyone, men, women and children in the house. So it was very difficult to get the children up, it was after midnight and raining and we had to wake them and tell them that the soldiers wanted pictures of them. So nobody can explain to the children why the soldiers are doing this, what the purpose is. The children began to feel that they are wanted, that they are very important. Even for a child to wake up after midnight and see his room full of soldiers.]

[It must make your job as a mother so much more difficult to have to deal with all of these things as well]

It’s difficult for me as a mother, but as a Palestinian, the minute a child is born he understands the meaning of suffering and pain, because this is the reality that he lives his whole life. Most of the children understand what is happening. They don’t know why, but they know that they lost their lands and their rights and that this is an occupation that targets them and makes them suffer. So sometimes I don’t need to explain why these things happen because they understand. This understanding of children means they don’t need much explanation from her. At the beginning of the demonstrations my son was always asking my husband why the army was doing this to us and he told him that this was the occupation. That they are doing this because they want to take more and more land, and that we are fighting because we want our rights. So even if he doesn’t understand what the meaning of ‘rights’ or ‘fight’ he knows that he should do something against the soldiers who are always standing in front of his house and raiding his house at night. He understands something, it’s enough to understand what is happening around him.

[Me: thank you very much]

Yani, I wish that a lot of things hadn’t happened, that I haven’t had a lot of the experiences that I’ve been through. I wish to live a normal life. I wish not to lose anybody, that we could stop having martyrs, especially after the death of Mustafa. Once, I was in the hospital and somebody had been killed in another village, from N’lín. I saw his mother screaming and crying. I knew it was very difficult, but I didn’t know how difficult until the death of Mustafa. Now I understand the meaning of pain, the meaning of losing one of my beloved. Now, when I hear the word ‘martyr’ something inside me shakes. It’s like all my pain comes again. I wish that nobody ever experiences this feeling and I don’t want to experience it again. So, the ultimate thing I wish for is freedom. Enough is enough.

[That is also my wish for you]

Inshallah. I hope that, I pray to God that the army will stay away from us. [M: I told her that they won’t stay away! They will be close all the time, next to us.]
Interview 17
Tulkarem

I was originally in jail for life. I was given three one hundred year sentences. In the end I was only in jail for 10 years. I was arrested in 2002.

[Can you tell me about when you were arrested? Why were you arrested?]

I am a member of the Popular Front. I was accused of driving a martyr to Netanya to carry out an...

[Me: Operation?]

[Translator: Yeah, an operation. It’s good that you called it an operation]

I drove him there and the result was that 3 Israelis died and 32 were injured.

[Can you tell me why you think it’s important for Palestinians to resist the occupation? Why did you choose to resist the occupation?]

Yani, in 2002, in the middle of the invasions of Nablus and Tulkarem, the whole West Bank was occupied. So every day there were martyrs, every day houses were being demolished. I was going through checkpoints every day, and the suffering that we had to go through as students, as workers. One day I would see my colleagues and the next day I would ask about them and they might be dead. People were being killed at checkpoints a lot. The situation pushes you to rebel, to fight against your situation. I also think that it is an obligation for each and every Palestinian.

[How did you become involved in the Popular Front?]

I was studying in the university in Nablus, I met some people there and joined the organisation.

[Can you tell me about the day you were arrested?]

It was 2am. The middle of the night. The Israeli forces filled the back yard, and the front yard, surrounding the house. They gathered everyone in the house and looked at everyone’s id’s and then they took me. I went to the DCO where I was until 12PM the next day. Then they took me to Kishon to be interrogated.

[Is that where you spent your prison sentence?]

I was there for 60 days. Then I went to jail, first at Hasharon and then I went to trial.

[I don’t know how to ask this next question…um…what was your treatment like when you were in prison?]

Everything is bad. There is no one thing. There are strip searches. They put me in isolation, this was really bad. The room was really small. You cannot go and buy food from the prison shop so you have to eat the food they give you. You cannot talk to your prisoners. You can’t go out in the yard to talk or socialise.

[How long did you spend in isolation?]

During interrogations I spent 16 days in isolation. The longest period was one month. They would send me there if they thought there was trouble. I was responsible for the PFLP prisoners. I was responsible for all the women in prison from the organization. So if there was a strike or an issue that we needed to talk to prison management about, I was the one to go to isolation. I was responsible for them, so they would put me in isolation when things happened.

[Could you tell me about the ways you organised within prison to challenge your treatment?]
When you’re in prison and you make your enemies feel as though you have not been hurt, that you are still strong, this itself is resistance. Because I was responsible for the PFLP girls, when a new girl came I was responsible for her. If she was weak or afraid I would help her, and offer support for her. We did a lot to fight the boredom, we would do carvings, or sewing or beadwork. I would read a lot. All of the books at the front of the house were the books I read in prison.

[A lot of people in the West think that Palestinian women have no political involvement, so could you explain why you think it’s important for women to be involved in political action?]

Yani, I think that each and every Palestinian is involved in politics. As we wake milk from our mother’s breast the milk is mixed with politics. I think that any occupied country, her women would have some involvement in politics. Now we’re only in one stage, the stage of conflict will pass on.

[Is there anything important that I did not ask you that you think I should know?]

We are so proud of people who come and support us. Solidarity is not the only thing we need. We need governments to stand by us. They need to understand that we don’t use weapons, we don’t have weapons, we are not terrorists as Israel would like to call us, we are only defending what is our right. We don’t have anything. We don’t have planes, we don’t have a military with big weapons, that they use to kill us, to kill our children. We only have our bodies to defend ourselves. I think that even though prison is hell, the worst thing you can go through, but we made into a good thing. We turned it around. We used to read, we made handicrafts, we used to do everything, we divided our time into so many different things. Some of the girls were illiterate when they arrived, they barely had any interest in anything and we helped them to start reading and writing. I’ll show you some of the things I made.

[Map of Palestine made of empty cigarette packets covered in cloth, prayer beads]

[Did you see that as a form of resistance to the Israelis as well?]

Yes, it is a very good, peaceful form of resistance.

This is a gift for you to remember the Palestinian people.

I studied community science at the university. I didn’t continue my studies after I was arrested. I was in second year when I was arrested. I want to go back in the fall. I registered to continue.

Things are different now. When I was a student, all the students only cared about fighting, fighting. Now all they care about is Facebook.

I am the only daughter in my family. I have one brother. I’m very sorry I didn’t serve you anything, but you saw when you came in that we are painting. For ten years my parents didn’t do anything to the house. Now that I’m out, as a result of happiness they are doing everything. My mom was really affected when I was in jail.

[You were released in the first stage right? Did they tell you long before they released you?]

I learned from the radio that I would be released, and then the next day I was told by the prison warden.

[I’m really interested in what you said about your body being a weapon]

It’s a general idea, none of us have anything else to fight with.
Interview 18
Al Wa’laja

[Can you tell me about how you came to be involved in political activism?]

I can try, but I remember myself. I can’t remember when this whole thing started. I’ve been active ever since I remember myself. I was really young during the first intifada, but I still remember details of the first intifada. Going out, demonstrating, protesting, writing on the walls, I still remember those things. I can’t remember when exactly and what happened and why, I just know that I am like this.

[So it’s part of who you are?]

I think, I think it is. Maybe somehow its connected to maybe the school that I went to, the kind of family I’m a part of, it’s also a part of who I am. I don’t really know. I think the school I went to, most of the teachers were prisoners, former prisoners, um, my father was involved, my brother was involved, yani, so maybe I don’t know where it came from or when it started, as far as I remember myself I’ve been involved.

[What do you think the most difficult aspect of the occupation is?]

Um, dehumanizing people. That’s the most difficult thing, that’s the thing I can’t handle. I’m fine with the restrictions, I can handle them I can fight them legally, I can fight back. I am a strong woman to handle whatever difficulty is there, like in life, like taking longer trips, working for less money, having to leave the country to work, demonstrating, these difficulties I can handle. As for humiliation, de-humanization, no. That’s the most difficult part, that’s the part where I feel that, when I’m humiliated, I’m not myself. I can react really differently from who I am, than from any other time. It’s not a normal reaction. That’s the thing I can’t handle, either emotionally, I can’t handle it. My reactions to it are really weird.

[Can you share with me a story about a time when you experienced this de-humanization, or when you saw it happen to someone else?]

I’ve seen it happen many times, and it happens to me on a daily basis. Especially at checkpoints and demonstrations. You know, most of them actually rely on the fact that they humiliate you and they know that they don’t have to pay for it. Nobody is going to hold them responsible, so they do it often, really often. There’s so many stories that I could write a book about it. But uh, like they will tell that ‘you’re fat’ or something like that. I stopped being angry about that a long time ago, but still they can say it. Of course they would use the word dipa which is a curse in Hebrew. And I was like ‘why are you stating a fact I know already. I have a mirror.’ Like, that’s the easiest part. the most difficult part, like for example, at Qalandia checkpoint once, they held a man, and this man was sitting there handcuffed on the floor. I couldn’t see him from far away, so I saw him when I got closer. I saw his face and I saw two soldiers with their backs to the guy and fart in his face. I lost it. I completely lost it. I jumped on the soldiers, out of the queue. I demanded that they give me their name and number, saying that they would not get out of what they just did. It took like four hours of a fight and uh, this is one of the stories. Another story, someone pulled me over outside of the tunnel and said that he needed my documents. I had a meeting, I was running to a meeting. He asked me to pull off the road so the settlers could pass by. I was like ‘how do you know that they are okay and I am not? What makes you think that I am a danger and they are not? What did you see that is so special?’ He said ‘It’s my job’ and I told him ‘Fuck your job. What did you see?’ He replied again ‘It’s my job’ So I said ‘Either you are going to tell me or I’m not pulling over.’ He told me I had to pull over. So I did, and I put my car in the middle of the road so nobody could go through. I said that either all of us go, or no one goes. I didn’t understand why he pulled me over! What did he see? What is special there? What did I say? What did I do? What is in my look? What is it? It’s racism you know. What is it called? It has a name in English! It’s called racism! I was arrested over it. Yeah, so, this happens on a daily basis. Every single day. That’s the thing that I can’t, I don’t have an answer for it, I can’t answer for it. I can’t handle it, I’m SO frustrated, I’m SO angry and I feel that I can actually commit a crime at that moment. That person was humiliating me, I feel, so many times I have this feeling that I could actually kill this person, if I had the chance. I’m not sure if someone put a knife in my hand at that time if I would stab...
them or not, but my feelings are complete anger, and hatred, I just can’t handle it. Some other times, when we are talking rationally, normally, in demonstrations, I just remembered, the other day we were demonstrating in front of the bulldozers, and one of the soldiers almost fell in front of the bulldozer, the working bulldozer. So I had to pull him away. I was like ‘Watch out! I don’t want to kill you, I don’t want you to die. I don’t care if you’re dead or alive, I just don’t want you to die here, so please, be careful.’ The man couldn’t handle himself and I didn’t know what happened, so I just reacted normally. He just nearly fell in front of this bulldozer, so I warned him. He looked at me, he didn’t understand what was going on. I mean, I’m demonstrating against him, the natural thing for him would be that I would let him fall. But for me, he’s just another human being. I can’t let him fall in front of a bulldozer, that’s insane! He looked at me like ‘What?’ And I just saw him going, he just went off. Later on a friend of mine pointed out that I had confused him. I mean, he’s a person at the end of the day, you confused him by being careful for him. Of course I was careful for him! He’s just a person. That’s when I’m a normal person. That’s when I’m normal and not humiliated, not de-humanized, when I’m dealt with as a person I’m reacting like another person. So this is, this is the most difficult part. So far, I can’t handle this. It’s been, well I can’t tell you how old I am, but it’s been a long time.

[Why do you think it’s important for Palestinians to find ways to resist the occupation]

Because it’s not a normal thing. It’s stopping us from living our lives. They’re stealing our lives basically. You can’t just watch someone else stealing your life. Even if it takes a life to stop him. You can’t. it doesn’t make sense. What makes sense is that you have to fight back for your life. This is not just an occupation, it’s a colonial occupation. Our conflict goes down to existence. Or that’s how they perceive it. It’s not the case but that’s how they see it, either us or them. So for them it’s them. For us, so far, it’s not only us, I’m not sure what will happen when we get to that point.

[You said at the beginning that you feel like you always remember being involved in resistance. How did your family support you]

They didn’t necessarily. They just didn’t stop me. By not stopping me. Haha. That’s how they supported me. But they didn’t....there was no........I can’t remember....I mean supporting.no, not really, but not stopping me, ‘you can do whatever you think is right as long as you take care’ that’s how they supported me.

[There’s a conception in the West that women in Palestine have no ability to participate in any kind of public processes and I’m wondering how you might respond to that, how do you see it yourself?]

I don’t want to generalize, but I think the mainstream in the West is dumb. I’m sorry. There is some kind of naiveté. You guys are really naive. You don’t analyze, you don’t critically look about things, you are a perfect consumer of CNN. I mean, seriously, I have never seen someone who is uncritical of what they see and hear like the West. I’ve never seen that, I’ve been all over the world and I’ve never seen this except in the West, in the First World as they call themselves. They are completely uncritical. Whatever they see in CNN is the right thing, and whatever their politicians tell them is the good thing. I really, I can’t handle it. I mean, you have a brain. Use it for change. I think that this is not a coincidence that they have this conception of women, or not just women, but of the whole Oriental. Otherwise, how would they justify their government’s actions? They have to look down on us, they have to say that we ‘can’t that we are ‘incapable’ we are ‘less smart’ that we are ‘primitive’ that we are ‘victims of religion and tradition’ they have to...., they have to see that they are better and that they can help and that’s why they are doing what they are doing. They have to justify what they are doing, and that’s how they can justify it. How else can they justify it? How else can the Americans look at the soldiers who are their children as ‘heroes’ for killing a million and a half people in Iraq and as much in Afghanistan. If they don’t see us as needing their help, how else can they justify all this money, all this killing, all these actions? How could they So they need thee kind of conceptions. They needed to justify it for themselves, everything thing that is happening to believe that they are better people. It’s easier, you don’t have to think. Now, had they thought about it, or had they read, or had they listened to someone other than CNN, then they would have seen differently. They would have seen women taking part in the first intifada, women taking men’s roles for 64 years, because we were completely uprooted form our lives, we had to start from scratch three times in a row. Three times we had to start from Scratch. 1936, 1948 and 1967. Three times. I don’t know if you know

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about the non-violent struggle that happened in 1936, that was the first civil disobedience in the history of the Middle East. It continued for 6 months and we are still recovering from it today. had we not gone through that civil disobedience in 1936 we wouldn’t have been beaten in 1948. But we were completely exhausted. The British had perfect timing when they left us the way they left us. Women were part of that. We had a women’s movement even before, in the 18th century, we had to start from the beginning every time, for three times in a row. I don’t know what Americans would do if they had to be uprooted three times and start from scratch. I see the roots of these perceptions that women are incapable, and there are some realities, but it’s just as any other women in the world. There are stronger women than others, there are smarter women than others, there are better women than others, there is this woman is smart and working and hard and active and whatever, and there are women who want to be at home. Now, if it happens in the states, it’s a matter of choice, if it happens in Palestine, we’re incapable. How does this kind of division happen? I don’t know. If a Christian lunatic goes out and shoots people, he’s a lunatic. If a Muslim lunatic goes out and shoots people, he’s a terrorist. So this terminology are used to put down certain people and lift others and this is not mine, it’s English, it’s not even Arabic, so you deal with your problems. I’m sorry.

[Haha. Thanks. That’s an excellent answer. I want you be feel like you can be perfectly candid with your answers. When I was driving in I could see the turn off for Har Gilo, maybe you could talk a little about settlement expansion and how it’s had an effect on your village]

Well, this village is actually a microcosm of Palestine. Everything happening in Palestine is happening in this village on a smaller scale. We used to be 18,000 dunams before 1948. On the eve of the war we lost 11,000. And it’s now Israel. It’s Kennedy park actually. So there’s a statue of the Kennedy family in the ruins of our village. Speaking of knowing what’s going on! So it’s a national park, the ruins of our village. The 7,000 dunams we’re left with now hold two settlements. Gilo and Har Gilo, one bypass road and finally the wall. We are left with 2,300 dunams in all. And our village people are scattered around the world as refugees. Almost 20,000 people in Amman, and the rest in every refugee camp. The minority of the minority are still here. About 2,300 people. On less than 10% of the land. And less than 10% of the people. And the settlements are expanding on our land. The idea...look, there are two things. From the wall and the settlements they are planning. It was nothing to do with Israel as the ‘promised land’ or the Jews as the ‘promised people’. God has nothing to do with this. It’s politics basically. This government of Israel is not thinking of the long term. These people are only thinking of winning the elections, that’s why they are doing what they are doing and manufacturing ‘hatred’ of Israel in every step they take. They are forcing everyone to hate them, all around the world, and then they cry to the whole world that ‘we are rejected in the region!’ Rejection is a reaction. You do something and I either accept it or reject it. Name one thing that Israel did for good in the region and I’ll give you whatever you want. One good thing that Israel did for the Middle East region. Can you name one good thing?

[Laughing, No, I can’t]

No! You can’t! Nobody can. Because it doesn’t exist. So if they don’t know that they are just digging their own graves then they can’t see further than their own noses. This is what’s really happening. The idea of the settlements and the wall is that we Palestinians have to lose our natural growth areas. We have nowhere to go. They trap us with walls and jail us with walls and then if we don’t leave because life is difficult we leave because we have nowhere to go. This is a plan. It’s an ethnic cleansing process that started from before 1948 and still continues today. The only thing that has changed is the tactics. Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East cannot afford to displace people in crowds like they did in 1948, they have to do it more sophisticated. This the idea of the settlements and the wall. And, on top of that, it stops any political solution of a Palestinian state nearby them in the near future. That’s what they want to stop. They can’t handle the idea of a Palestinian state nearby, because as soon as the wall is done the Palestinians will be divided into 4 main bastions. Gaza, North West Bank, South West Bank and Central West Bank. Everything is disconnected. The only one who controls the connection between them is Israel. What kind of political system can survive these divisions. Nobody. Nothing. There’s no chance on earth that anybody can control this kind of state. What they’re not thinking of is a one state solution. They’re stopping one solution that they hate so much and pushing it towards another solution that they’re not even considering. But we’re not going to vanish. We’re 3 million people, and we’re growing every day, and
we’re good at it! Nobody can beat us at that except the Chinese. [laughs] So, we’re not going to vanish, we’re here, something has to happen. So, I think they’re just manufacturing troubles for themselves.

[Are there other important thing that I should know that I haven’t asked you about]

I think that after the wall is built, especially for this village and other similar villages that are turning into small ghettos. These cities will be perfect to study the role of women after this happens. It will be a place of displacement, all the working force, which is mainly men will leave and go wherever they have to work and the communities will be mainly women-led communities. So women have to take the burden of the conflict again. Again and again. This is happening everywhere. It’s happening in Palestine worse than in other places because the pressure is much more sophisticated, I have to say. It’s not just making life difficult, it’s not just the lack of electricity, or the lack of water or the lack of this or that. It’s actually very sophisticated, forcing me to think. They are forcing us to think and take moves that we didn’t think we would. Because the pressure is so sophisticated our reactions are becoming more sophisticated. So yeah, I think that it is worth looking at women and their role in these communities afterward. As I told you earlier our conflict goes down to the level of existence. What they are not considering, is that around the world, everyone is telling us that we are Palestinians. Even if we don’t want it, say in Lebanon, ‘You’re a Palestinian, you’re not allowed to do this’ ‘You’re a Palestinian you’re not allowed to go there’ in Amman, ‘You’re a Palestinian, you’re not allowed to do this job.’ ‘You’re a Palestinian you’re not allowed to marry this girl’ ‘You’re a Palestinian, you’re not allowed to go to this country.’ In Egypt, ‘you’re a Palestinian, whoa! don’t go there’ in Syria ‘You’re a Palestinian don’t take part in this’ Everywhere you go in the world, everyone is reminding you who you are, even if you don’t want it. We actually exist as Palestinians for the past 64 years because people wanted to nice to Israel. If someone is doubting God, look at this. They wanted to do Israel a favor and they ended up doing us a favor and actually backfiring on Israel. Because today, all Palestinians know exactly that they are Palestinians, and they feel trapped being Palestinians just because someone wanted to do Israel a favor. Today, we all, Palestinians exist as Palestinians. Where we exist doesn’t matter. There’s about 14 million people scattered around the world knowing very well that they are Palestinians, and looking at this generation, they are even more involved than their parents or grandparents. I can’t envy them, to put it nicely. I do not envy Israelis, definitely.

[Um, I can’t think of any more questions, you’ve been brilliant]

What is your thesis? Maybe I can help more.

[I’m exploring the way Israeli state power affects the bodies of women in Palestine, by controlling the way women move, blocking freedom of movement, blocking access to medical services, killing their husbands, forcing their husbands to leave, putting their husbands into prison, and how this impacts women’s bodies....because I’m approaching it from Michel Foucault, if you know him, his concept of biopower and how power has to function on people’s bodies to work]

I can’t claim that I understand it, um do you mean physical bodies? Or institutions?

[Physical bodies of the population...maybe that’s a better way of explaining it]

Then you have to go historically, because this is a good chance to study the decision making process. In Arab states we are very traditional community. So decision making processes are in the hands of the elderly, mainly men, and women of a certain age. And women between the age of maybe 13 to 50 are completely powerless, they try to make them powerless, because this is the time that men are the most powerful. At the same time that men are the most powerful, women are disempowered, because it’s the same space they’re fighting for. So, this changed after 1948 because the structure of the family changed and the decision making structure changed. So the women’s status in the family changed from being told what to do by her in-laws or her parents, now she has her husband only, and if they don’t cooperate they can’t go on. So women’s status changed together with everything else. The pressure added a lot to the situation because now you can’t just handle uneducated women, and now women are working, and now it’s normal that a woman graduates and sits at home without working, although this used to be the normal thing to do, 20 years ago nobody would expect a woman to look for a job, and uh, yeah, so now everyone looks at her and wonders what she’s doing! ‘Move on and get your food somewhere’ Women’s
status has changed through history because of the pressure. You know I said that they have forced us to change and do things we didn’t want to do. Restriction of movement applies to men differently than to women. I’ve done things in checkpoints, that had I been a man I would have been shot a long time ago, because sometimes I just go nuts on them and I turn upside down and I just drive my car straight through. They don’t perceive us as a threat so restriction is not as strong on us. Working places prefer to hire women because they are much more likely to arrive the next morning than men. And uh, yeah, so, this whole thing affected women’s status, women’s position, in the whole society. Now in politics, it used to be much better, in the 70s..I can’t say that women were on an equal foot, but women were very much involved in the 70s, like really involved. It seems like feminism was at a peak in the 70s and 80s and it got hit back by this religious wave in the 90s. We’re still suffering from that. So yeah.

I think that women started to become more mobile because if men cannot move both of them can’t sit down. Someone has to do something. So it was easier for women at some point. Now it’s not the case, but there were a lot of times in Palestinian history that women had much more freedom of movement than men.

Women were involved in political militant activity the whole time. From Beirut to martyrs. Women do these things less than men because I think women are less violent than men. I think that’s everywhere, even in political parties, but I think it’s also physical capacity. But as well if you are violently fighting it requires you to leave the house at a certain age for a long time, which is not allowed for women. So you have to be really special, rebellious woman to take part in violent activities. Lots of factors contribute. The fact that women involved in violent action, that it changes their status...I don’t believe it. I don’t think this has anything to do with changing the status of women. I think that requires a mass movement. Or something that affects lots of women, not just one or two.

[Thank you!]
Appendix 6: Official Israeli state map
Appendix 7: Where did the 10 female suicide bombers/martyrs come from?

1 – Wafa Idris: al-Am’ari refugee camp
2 – Dareen Abu Aysheh: Beit Wazan, Nablus
3 – Ayat Akras: Dehaishe refugee camp
4 – Andaleed Takafka: Beit Fajar
5 – Hiba Daraghmeh: Tubas
6 – Hanadi Jaradat: Jenin
7 – Reem Saleh Al Riyashi: Gaza City
8 – Zainub Abu Salem: Askar refugee