THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Exiles at Home

Mobility, Exclusion and (In)visibility among Palestinians in Tel Aviv

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PhD in Social Anthropology

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2016

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own. Some ethnographic vignettes and sub-sections appear in modified form in three publications which were released at about the same time as this thesis (Hackl 2016c; Hackl 2016b; Hackl 2016a).

Signature

Date: 10 March 2016

Abstract

This thesis explores intersecting processes of inclusion and exclusion among Palestinians in Tel Aviv, a city considered to be essentially Jewish-Israeli. It looks at Palestinians from diverse backgrounds and statuses who engage with the city in search of employment, higher education, political activism, or an urban lifestyle. Although this self-consciously liberal city creates social and economic openings, unequal power relations and conflict prevail over urban civility and citizenship. The Palestinians face a paradox: the deeper their inclusion into Tel Aviv's political economy, the stronger their estrangement and the more serious their dilemmas. Because their urban inclusion is limited, mobility and constant adaptation become obligatory and eventually disempowering. As they oscillate between conflicting desires and senses of solidarity or identification, the Palestinians in Tel Aviv struggle with intersecting forms of cultural and political power. They seek individual opportunities within a political system they oppose, demand recognition of their identity and history but also seek urban anonymity as unmarked individuals. Their balancing acts resemble acrobats: they walk a tightrope between contradictory worlds, unable to reconcile both into a stable balance and simultaneously prevented from ever fully arriving at the other end. They live in exile 'at home'.

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Acknowledgments

This thesis would have no voice without the trust and support of those who informed the research behind it with stories and insights. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to this piece of work, whether directly as research participants, or indirectly through their advice and help. Conducting this research has been an intellectual and personal inspiration far beyond the conclusions presented in this thesis.

I feel particularly privileged for having had Toby Kelly and Jamie Furniss as my PhD supervisors at the University of Edinburgh. Always available, reliable and listening, their supervision provided invaluable advice and constructive critique, as well as the most encouraging environment a PhD student can hope for. The same holds true for the staff and peers at Social Anthropology in Edinburgh more generally, a place I experienced as an inspiring and very welcoming social environment. Further thanks go to my fellow PhD students for their input during our weekly 'writing-up' seminars and for the frequent sociability beyond it. I am particularly indebted to those individuals who have helped with the proofreading. I would also like to thank my office mates Anna, Eloi and Sissela for making the place where most of this thesis was written a very enjoyable one.

Moreover, my PhD thesis and the research behind it would not have been possible without the necessary financial support, which is why I owe particular gratitude to the Austrian Academy of Sciences for funding me with a generous DOC-Fellowship over a period of three years. Special thanks also go to the staff and peers at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University, who have supported and hosted me during my field research. I am particularly thankful to Dan Rabinowitz, who supervised the early phase of my project and pointed me in the right directions. I would also like to thank the members of the international PhD program Transformations in European Societies, of which I had the honour to be a member. I am grateful for the exchange this network provided and the friendships it has allowed me to build.

In addition, I would like to thank all other scholars and non-academic professionals whose support and input has greatly benefitted this thesis and the pathway that led towards its completion, among them Andre Gingrich, Irene Götz, Johannes Moser, Jacques Picard, Yehouda Shenhav, Khaled Furani, Salim Tamari, Amalia Saar, Ronen Shamir, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, Maisalon Dallashi, Erella Grassiani, Andreas Indregard, Ofer Zalzberg, Thomas Seifert, and Anna Trechsel. The latter two deserve special credit as international-desk editors of the Austrian daily Wiener Zeitung and the Sunday edition of the Swiss paper NZZ respectively. By taking me on board as their correspondent in Israel/Palestine they have given me the privileged opportunity to write for a wider audience throughout the period of my research.

The stated professional and institutional support has contributed significantly to the quality and timely completion of this thesis, but I would have hardly made it to the end without all those who were there to support me as friends and colleagues on the ground. I feel particularly grateful for the invaluable friendship and support of Rima, who has inspired me to take up this research and helped me carry it out. I would also like to say thank you to all other friends and colleagues who have helped me to stay sane and grounded during the often difficult periods of research and writing, among them Jonas Opperskalski, Monika Bolliger, Max Borowski, Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, Rachel Busbridge and Noga Malkin. I would also like to say thank you to Allison Reid for her continuous support and understanding. And last but not least, I am grateful for the unconditional support and encouragement I have received from my parents Evelin and Günter, from my brother Uwe, and the rest of this loving family.

Introduction

One late summer night in Tel Aviv, the Jewish holiday of Sukkot seemed to bring some rest to this otherwise bustling metropolis, which is called 'the city that never stops' by one of its many nicknames. It was an important Jewish holiday in the quintessential Jewish-Israeli city. However, I was invited by a Palestinian friend to hang out on the rooftop that surrounded her studio apartment. Tel Aviv's many lights cast a yellow haze onto the dark sky and except of a few passing cars it was unusually quiet. This was how the city is often imagined, I thought to myself, as a peaceful place detached from the occupation in the Palestinian territories and the tribulations of protracted conflict, which is why another of its many nicknames is simply 'the bubble'. The Palestinians are not usually considered to be within the embrace of this metaphoric bubble, but resemble the world it fends off.

At the time of this brief visit to Tel Aviv, even I did not know much about the Palestinians in Israel, who make up about 20 percent or 1.7 million of Israel's population of 8.3 million.[1] Back then, the terms 'Palestinian' and 'Israeli' still seemed to denote neatly separated spaces and people to me. This was especially true with regards to Tel Aviv, which is not considered to have a significant Palestinian-Arab presence as I was repeatedly told. The city symbolised another world for most Palestinians too, a rather hostile and foreign place. This became clear when I met two Palestinian friends for an interim farewell from Ramallah, where I had been based during an earlier research I conducted on civil resistance. During this conversation among friends, one of them criticised me for planning to explore Tel Aviv, pointing out that it was immoral to visit this city while Israel's occupation prevented them from accessing the Mediterranean coast. Before we said goodbye, they pulled out a *kuffiyeh*, the scarf that symbolises the Palestinian national struggle, and gave it to me as a present. With this symbolic item in my bag I set off to Tel Aviv, a city that henceforth appeared to me somewhat controversial; a feeling of which the scarf

[1] In its population count, Israel does not distinguish between Palestinians in Israel and those in East Jerusalem, over which Israel claims sovereignty, an act not recognised by the international community because East Jerusalem is occupied territory under international law. Excluding most of the 300.000 Palestinians in Jerusalem who are not citizens puts the number of Palestinian citizens of Israel at about 1.4 million, or close to 17 percent of the population.

would often remind me. From the city's perspective, however, it was the scarf that was controversial: when I left Israel for a trip home through Tel Aviv airport a few weeks later, I got stopped at 'security' because of the kuffiyeh, which they found among other 'suspicious' items, such as Arabic language books, in my luggage. Given that Tel Aviv seemed politically controversial to Palestinians, and an association with Palestinians generated suspicion in Tel Aviv, I wondered what it must be like to live as a Palestinian in the midst of this city.

As my Palestinian friend and I tattled about on the rooftop that very evening in Tel Aviv, the stories I learned about the way Palestinians in Tel Aviv navigated their life began to fascinate me. Different identities and places seemed to overlap and interact as she spoke about work, private life and politics; about Tel Aviv, Palestinian family and Israeli friends; work, leisure and solidarity; the past, ambitions and the future. 'But how', after all, 'do you define yourself?' I asked, prompting a hesitant and ambiguous answer: 'I am Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, a woman, and Israeli'. It all appeared to be rather complicated. Soon I adopted 'the Palestinians in Tel Aviv' as my doctoral research topic, and as my friend's self-definition suggests: their lives pose a number of intriguing riddles. David Grossman's book 'Sleeping on a Wire' (2010, 167) reflects this sense of puzzlement. After having travelled around Israel for months to speak with a diversity of Palestinian citizens, the author concludes at one point:

> Can one reach any unambiguous conclusion about the current state of the Arabs in Israel? Almost every person I meet illuminates the tangle in a different light; instead of fervor and slogans there are doubts, internal contradictions, and, especially, man's empty-handedness in the face of complex circumstances.

My research and this thesis unravel some strings of this complex net of ambiguities. On a basic level, one key issue driving this thesis is the simple questions of what it means to be a Palestinian in the quintessential Jewish-Israeli city of Tel Aviv on a daily basis. Each section of this thesis will provide its own answer, yet one can already be discerned from the original (Hebrew) title of Grossman's book: 'Present Absentees' (*Nokhahim Nifkadim*). What appears to be an oxymoron is in fact a legal category the Israeli state fashioned for Palestinians who were displaced from their

original towns and lost their property to Israel, but were still present within the boundaries of that very state; they were present but legally absent.

Some 56.000 among the 160.000 Palestinians who remained within or managed to return to Israel by 1950 were internally displaced (Molavi 2014, 9). As families lost their original villages they became 'present absentees' in new towns, sometimes only a few kilometres away from their confiscated lands. They became citizens of the very state which created, by use of compulsory displacement, expulsion and prevention of return, the forced exile of at least 700.000 Palestinians from their homeland (Morris 1989, 589). Those who remained, many of them 'present absentees', were unable to re-claim their former property or land, unable to 'go back' although formally still being there, as the Zionist movement 'unfroze' expensive Palestinian land and reinstated it under Jewish ownership and eventually under state sovereignty (Kimmerling 1983). To be a 'present-absentee' does not only stand for expropriation, but also expresses a wider contradiction: the dilemma that stands metaphorically for the predicament of the Palestinians in Israel, and even more so for the Palestinians in Tel Aviv.

Also the family of my Palestinian friend with the studio apartment in Tel Aviv was displaced from their former village of al-Lajjon. Two generations later, she was born and grew up elsewhere, but still close to that original village, before she became a student at Tel Aviv University. When my friend first came to Tel Aviv, she immersed herself into the city and worked at an Israeli company. She made Jewish friends, enjoyed going out and spending time at the beach like many other people would. Yet she had to reconcile her political ideals and familial expectations with that life in Tel Aviv. After years of straddling different worlds the bubble of 'liberal' Tel Aviv burst: what initially seemed like an overflow of opportunities and exciting anonymity turned into an experience of estrangement from Israeli society and ultimately also from herself. She had grown distant from the political activism she cherished and was no longer the person she and others expected herself to be. Indeed, any Palestinian in Tel Aviv will reach a 'breaking point after two years', according to Mohamed Jabali, a prominent cultural activist: 'two years is enough to realise that he [or she] can't blend in here.'

This thesis is about the possibilities, limitations and ambivalences of Palestinians' inclusion into the social space of Tel Aviv and their participation in its political economy. I will look at Palestinians' intricate interactions with Tel Aviv in the context of employment, higher education, leisure, as well as cultural and political activism. I am most interested in how these Palestinians negotiate their lives within this Jewish-Israeli city and how they use its opportunities, while simultaneously coping with the underlying limitations. Their everyday manoeuvring involves the balancing of their presence in Tel Aviv with competing interests, convictions and responsibilities. As we will see, their sense of identity and solidarity can contradict the requirements of this inclusion.

Most Palestinians I met in the course of my research came to Tel Aviv in search of work, higher education or an urban life. One simple answer to the question of why they do so is a lack of alternatives. Given the 'destruction of Palestinian urbanism' with the establishment of the state, which involved the displacement of major urban populations and 90 percent of Jaffa's indigenous population alone (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, 5), paired with ongoing policies of Judaizing contested territories (Yiftachel 2001), the Palestinians find no large city with distinctive Arab-Palestinian character or ownership inside Israel. This absence of a city and the absence of opportunities in most of their home areas led to two main tendencies.

The first is evident in the revival of Palestinian economic and social life in Arab towns in Israel and to some extent in Ramallah. As an industrial park in Nazareth attracts outsourcing activities of international firms, 'a liberal Arab culture blossoms' in the mixed Jewish-Arab city of Haifa (Hadid, nytimes.com, 3/1/2016)[2], where the 'Arab' middle class has been growing steadily (Kallus 2013, 100–101). Escaping estrangement and discrimination in Israel, some Palestinian citizens have even moved to Ramallah in the occupied West Bank in search of jobs, education and a more congenial environment (Hackl, IRINnews.org, 7/9/2012).[3]

However, the second major trend and the focus of this thesis are Palestinians who move into Jewish cities, towns or neighbourhoods. Within Israel, Jewish and

[2] URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/04/world/middleeast/in-israeli-city-of-haifa-a-liberal-palestinian-culture-blossoms.html
[3] URL: http://www.irinnews.org/report/96263/israel-opt-upping-sticks-and-heading-for-ramallah

Palestinian urbanites interact through a 'multi-varied web of relations' despite the fact that the state has fostered Jewish-Arab segregation (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, 2). Palestinian citizens of Israel engage with the spaces dominated by the Jewish majority quite routinely in what may be called 'counter penetration', like the thousands who moved into the Upper Nazareth (*Natzerat Illit*), which had been established as a strictly Jewish development town as part of a state plan to 'Judaize' the Galilee region (Rabinowitz 1997, 8–9). The development of ethnic relations has been fundamentally shaped by the material, territorial, political, and cultural aspects of Judaization and the Palestinians' responses to this process (Yiftachel 2006).

The Palestinians' movements into space considered to be Jewish-Israeli are often met by discrimination: in overtly racist and discriminatory practices, the Israel Lands Authority (ILA), private companies and landowners repeatedly prevented Arab citizens from buying certain properties and lands; and NGOs dedicate themselves to keeping a Jewish majority in regions with a large Arab population, such as the Galilee, claiming they have a 'right to separate' (Jpost.com, 22/2/2016).[4] A large number of Palestinians from the occupied West Bank have moved into Tel Aviv and into other Jewish towns or settlements to work for decades (Portugali 1993; Kelly 2009). They, too, may be said to 'counter penetrate' the state that occupies their land and territory, if only temporarily and under a highly regulated 'mobility regime' (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013).

Contesting Liberal Tel Aviv

In striking the balance between Palestinians' individual agency and the political, legal and economic constraints that bear down on them, this thesis faces no easy task. Most importantly, these two are not separate but analytically intertwined. While seeking to remain grounded in the complexity and ambivalence that emerges from this ethnography of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, it is nevertheless important to underline the wider context of violence, dispossession and inequality that provides the backdrop of these seemingly dispersed stories. I will do so in different parts of the text but must presently underline the extent to which any account of Palestinian

[4] URL: http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Clash-over-Arabs-moving-into-Jewish-towns-reflects-deeper-conflict-445671

relationships with Israel is also ‘a series of tragedies, of losses, of sacrifices, of pain’, to quote Edward Said from one of his last interviews (Monterescu 2015, 1).

Writing about Jaffa as a place both shared and shattered, Daniel Monterescu suggests that the city has long been a site of opposing as well as complementary cultural and social processes; and with the added dimension of power and class, this simultaneity harbours a dialectic ‘of the urban, national, and class scales of position and action that produce Jewish spaces within Arab spaces and Palestinian spaces within Israeli ones’ (2015, 6). As this thesis looks at how Palestinian spaces take shape in the quintessential ‘modern’ Israeli city, it also puts forward a critique of Israeli liberalism and its pretentious notions of equality, urban lifestyle and coexistence. More than any context of liberalism, Tel Aviv expresses particular colonial and postcolonial qualities, which include institutional and discursive colonial formations and dispersions of the Enlightenment idea that society should be organized on the basis of rational mutual understandings (Povinelli 2002, 6). Rather than inspiring indigenous subjects to relate positively to an essentialist authentic self-identity, as in the case of Australian multiculturalism, Israeli liberalism and Tel Aviv initially ‘invites’ Palestinians to identify with what is seemingly universal, civil and urban; yet as Ghassan Hage puts it in his analysis of black people in postcolonial Europe, this invitation ‘instils’ the aspiration of universality and ‘denies them this aspiration the very moment it encourages them to aspire to it and believe that they are entitled to it’; they have to ‘endure both the hope and the shattering of hope’ as part of this process (Hage 2011, 121). Moreover, it is also clear that many among them have grown so used to the shattering of hopes that they no longer attempt to aspire to it, which is why a functional approach to participation prevails: opportunities are used but the sense of belonging to the city remains one of alterity and estrangement.

Nevertheless, the point of analytical departure in this critique of liberalism is not the blunt force of exclusion and political-legal marginalisation but the very spaces of hope, opportunity and mobility that Palestinians carve out from these rotten foundations in their search for liveable lives. It is the stigma within the hybridity, the confinement within the mobility, and the burdening nature of civility which exemplify this critique by connecting the aim to its glass ceilings, the inclusion to its limits, and the citizenship to its conditionality. The history of violent dispossession

and its continuation by other means in the present time have created a particularly cunning extension of settler colonial's principle of elimination: forced expulsion, expropriation and ongoing colonisation of land are accompanied by the 'positive' extensions of the settler colonial political structure (Wolfe 2006, 388), which grants conditional citizenship and opportunities not as a way to empower but to permanently marginalise an indigenous population and exclude them from a meaningful 'home', a nation, a homeland and from fundamental rights.

The destructive nature of forced incorporation into a foreign political regime defines Palestinians' sense of political and cultural banishment to the point that they experience a condition of exile at home. Such encompassment by the State of Israel and its Jewish majority is hierarchical and 'implies that all forms of alterity which cannot be encompassed are regarded as a threat' (Sjørslev 2004, 90). The perception of Palestinians as unwanted and unwelcome 'permeates the Israeli establishment, and it is expressed in various ways' (Pappé 2011, 2). One way is such political banishment by ways of hierarchical incorporation, which also includes the rank-ordering of legitimate and illegitimate history; a history of colonialism to which some people assert a privileged relation, while others are denied their history (Wolf 2010).

The State of Israel and its non-state precursors employed a variety of legal and political means to gain and maintain power and rule, and many of them are seemingly positive but effectively disempowering. Exemplified by conditional citizenship within Israeli liberalism and limited political membership, law can fix origin and nationality in exclusive ways; it 'has the power to pull individuals to particular territories, to make them disappear from others, and even to place them outside of nations altogether, thus exiling them from "homes" in multiple senses', as Susan Bibler Coutin writes about Salvadoran exiles (Coutin 2016, 7). The Palestinians in Tel Aviv are exiles in this sense because they have been placed outside of state and nation despite never moving away. Importantly, Israel employs a combination of overtly exclusive *and* limiting inclusive measures to uphold political hegemony and an image of legitimate liberal democracy and sovereignty.

It is in the double-faced nature of Israeli liberalism – self-consciously liberal but systematically exclusive and violent – that this critique finds its anchor point.

Zionism perceives itself as 'the agent of modernization' (Wesley 2009, 193), and within Tel Aviv, as the agent of urban progress, lifestyle and liberalism. The individual accounts of some Palestinians who seek out liveable lives in Tel Aviv are only the front matter of a plot with deep roots in the settler colonial structure of oppression and exclusion. For example, as a direct result of Israel's expropriation of Palestinian land and property, the remaining 'Arabs' only own about 2.5 Percent of the land (Pappé 2011, 3). State practices in planning have long compounded the extent of Arab land-loss and continue to do so, which has led the Arab population in areas such as the Galilee to 'a sense of constant siege and threat of dispossession' (Wesley 2009, 192). This is also why many who make use of opportunities in Tel Aviv remain oriented towards their home regions, dedicated to hold onto the little land that their community has left. Through political and legal means, government programmes and policies have naturalised dispossession even if they proclaim integration. Israeli state practices divide the world into domains that distinguish between Jew and Arab, while not accepting the same distinction when Palestinians employ it to point at discrimination and in order to 'challenge the order of things' (Wesley 2013, 195).

A large variety of legal practices systematically and repeatedly discriminate against Palestinians in Israel. One example is that Palestinian partners of Israeli citizens have been expelled from their homes back into the West Bank based on official legislation. Another is that the commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba – the 1948 catastrophe – is banned in schools, curricula and from public spaces. Moreover, Jewish communities have the right to not accept Palestinians as residents, and the Palestinians' right to protest and organize remains severely limited (Pappé 2011, 1-7).

Consequently, any scholarly account of the Palestinians in Israel must underline the extent to which discrimination and dispossession dominates the lives of those who seek access to the available socio-economic alternatives. As individuals, Pappé writes, some Palestinian citizens have 'achieved real successes in the Jewish state', whether as businessmen, academics, students or lawyers; but as these successes have made the Palestinian community in Israel more self-confident, they have also become 'an even greater threat in the eyes of the Jewish community' (Ibid, 6).

Individual successes, as those among Palestinians in Tel Aviv, are then not primarily a sign of increased inclusion, equality and empowerment, but stories of success and resilience within a dismal and highly exclusive reality. One sphere where inclusion and exclusion overlap and interact against the backdrop of a dismal reality is citizenship, which enables possibilities and immersion into Tel Aviv for some Palestinians but also remains a conditional and deeply unstable privilege, the maintenance of which demands constant sacrifice.

Exiled in Citizenship

When Israel was established as a liberal settler state it could swallow the remaining Palestinian Arabs without fear of losing an overall Jewish majority thanks to the coerced flight and expulsion of some 750,000 who lived in the territory the Zionist forces captured (Robinson 2013, 70; Peteet 2007, 627). The state then extended to those indigenous Palestinians who remained within its newly imposed boundaries a discrete set of rights and duties, which the dominant Jewish settler community determined (Robinson 2013, 3). Today's Palestinian citizens of Israel are for the most part the descendants of those 150-160.000 Arabs from Palestine who had remained in or managed to return to Israel between 1948-1950 (Pappé 2011, 11; Robinson 2013, 1). There was no pre-war Zionist master-plan to expel the Arabs of Palestine before the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, which began with the coordinated attack of Arab armies; yet expulsion soon became widespread and official Israeli practice, while tens of thousands mostly well-to-do Palestinian families had already fled in anticipation of the events to come when Britain withdrew its troops (Morris 1989, 588–589). From 1948 onwards the newly declared State of Israel tried to maintain a Jewish majority and soon distinguished between Palestinians who managed to stay during the fighting and those who returned afterwards, who were subsequently considered 'illegal' (Robinson 2013, 70). Israel's policy from summer 1948 onwards was to prevent refugee's return 'at all costs' (Morris 1989, 589). The question of who would remain included in the state became essentially about who could still be excluded: the state waged a 'war on return' – an administrative, legal and military battle along the edges of Israel's territory and within the remaining Arab population centres, which were put under martial law; in these regions Israeli forces

conducted sweeps inside villages and urban neighbourhoods and expelled or detained those who did not have proper papers, causing panic to spread among those without ID's (Robinson 2013, 74–75). According to critical scholars, the remaining Palestinians became 'stateless' citizens because the medium through which their marginalised existence was maintained is citizenship itself (Molavi 2014, 5–7). Although the assertion of 'statelessness' ignores the involved privileges, however limited these may be, it indicates that citizenship effectively institutionalised exclusion through the limited incorporation of the smallest possible amount of indigenous Arabs. As part of settler-colonial 'elimination', native citizenship is one dimension in which 'settler colonialism destroys to replace' (Wolfe 2006, 388). The Palestinians' displacement and their 'replacement' became institutionalised within the framework of citizenship. Until today, Israeli citizenship is systematically stratified along ethnic and religious lines and legally highly differentiated (Yiftachel 2002), creating different kinds of citizens with varying sets of privileges. Numerous laws discriminate against Palestinian citizens in one way or another, such as the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law. It gives anyone in the world who is born Jewish the right to Israeli citizenship, while having one parent in the occupied Palestinian territories reduces Palestinians' chance for citizenship to almost zero (Kanaaneh 2009, 28).

Most of the Palestinians who remained within Israel after 1948 or managed to return soon thereafter became 'citizen strangers' (Robinson 2013, 3), a people forced into estrangement in a foreign nation-state. Settler colonialism became their exile, a condition of exile not by geographical displacement to a faraway place, but through the forced imposition of a foreign nation-state onto their homeland. Although still being on the same land, they remained oriented towards a lost or alienated indigenous home that is 'outside' and hence exiled from this surrounding nation-state, similar to what James Clifford (1994, 309) writes about dispossessed tribal people who become confined within national reserves. The Palestinians' displacement by Israel into Israel is best described as a tectonic sliding of plates that reshuffled the relationship between identity, boundaries, nation and state, as well as between past and present, in ways that are experienced as a series of unresolved tensions. Both citizenship and civility express the opposition this new nation state

created between real or national citizens (Jews) and conditional citizens outside of the nation (Arabs). By extension, this also applied a distinction between citizens and other 'men', which in turn derives from a series of divisions including those between coloniser and colonised, the occident and orient (Isin 2012, 564).

However, this incorporation also produced new cultural and political realities and possibilities, as does the Palestinians' presence in Tel Aviv. Despite the tragedy of their forced displacement, 'exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience' (Said 2001, 185). Although the average Palestinian citizen faces a matrix of 'walls and glass ceilings' that prevent integration or equality (Pappé 2011, 245), they seek to harvest social, economic and educational opportunities in the urban heartland despite these limitations. Moreover, diverse political subjectivities and powerful positions emerge from their flawed incorporation: the absenting of their indigenous political subjectivity from the surface of Tel Aviv with their simultaneous physical presence is essentially what unmasks equal citizenship and civility as biased and unattainable for them. Citizenship must then be reframed not as national or group-membership but as political subjectivity, while also recognising how juridico-political discourses of citizenship and civility 'effectively constituted differences between and amongst worlds, and then rank-ordered these differences' (Isin 2012, 568).

This re-ordering of differences also means that Palestinians in Tel Aviv are simultaneously excluded from urban citizenship or entitlement and from other Palestinians, who live as refugees in exile or under Israeli occupation. This contradiction is why Dan Rabinowitz (2001, 65) uses the label of a 'trapped minority' for Palestinians in Israel, referring to a community that is part of a larger nation that stretches across more than two states, but is entrapped as a minority within a state dominated by others. Rather than taking such entrapment as a static fact, I will employ the notion of balancing acts to indicate the activity, subjectivity and agency within and beyond such confinement. Being part and engaging with seemingly contradictory Palestinian and Israeli worlds, their experience of inclusion is always accompanied by forms of exclusion, creating much ambivalence and the need for balancing acts:

> Israel offers its Palestinian citizens participation, but often at the token level, as it defines itself as a state for the Jews. They experience it as a contradiction, simultaneously exclusionary but with a promise of inclusion, a democracy and a colonial power, offering both possibilities and their foreclosure. They manoeuvre and strategize in different ways around the restrictions the state imposes on them. (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010, 1–2)

Coming to Tel Aviv resembles one form of this manoeuvring, aiming at overcoming restrictions and inequality but also producing new forms of confinement. Although the Palestinian citizens of Israel are formally included, they are also excluded by definition and have been separated from other Palestinians, who have become refugees or live under ongoing military occupation. Looking at both Palestinian citizens and non-citizens in relation to one Israeli city, as this thesis does, should also break up the 'container' of citizenship while also acknowledging its function as a source of power and control. We will see that Palestinians from the West Bank are pushed as labourers into Israel because the occupation has undermined their own economy and state (Roy 1999), and pulled because their cheap and flexible labour is useful to Israel (Portugali 1993). The very political-economic power that robs them of citizenship and a state also pulls them into its heartland by providing selective opportunities. Although on a different scale, also for the Palestinian citizens of Israel inequality and segregation are deeply inscribed into processes of social, legal, political and economic inclusion. Their status may be differentiated by the privilege of Israeli citizenship and inclusion, which are always 'conditional' (Kanaaneh 2009, 28). One of the conditions, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a 2016-speech at the scene of a Palestinian citizens' attack at a Tel Aviv bar, is that 'you can't say you're an Israeli in your rights and a Palestinian in your obligations. Whoever wants to be an Israeli must be so all the way' (Khoury, Haaretz.com, 22/2/2016).[5]

Consequently, citizenship and inclusion are a conditional privilege because they are framed as a favour, which is only granted if one is Israeli 'all the way', and not Palestinian at all. The permanent conditionality of Palestinians' inclusion into the Israeli state and the political economy allows this state to normalise and encode settler-colonial relations, displacement and conflict within a liberal utopia. Yet this

[5] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.704699

participation is also crucial for Israel's legitimacy and power. As Nicolas Poulantzas (2000) argues, states contain the contradictory interests of the dominant and the dominated classes. Power is not simply possessed by the state, it is also obtained through the people's participation and consent (Martin 2008, 20). Citizenship behaves in similar ways as urban incorporation, fulfils a political function and is also exclusive. We will see in more detail how the liberal city of Tel Aviv encodes conflict and tension within a postcolonial urban civility and openness, which is embraced by some Palestinians, but also fraught with tension.

The Dual City: Between Exclusion and Civility

Tel Aviv is a self-consciously liberal and postcolonial urban space for the Palestinians, not least because it successfully translates a legacy of colonial power relations and conflict into urban civility and capitalism. The city's globally connected political economy also provides opportunities for Palestinians, as we will see sometimes precisely because they speak Arabic. Ong shows how neoliberal exception does not only mark out excludable subjects who are denied protections, but also involves a positive decision to include selected populations and spaces as targets of 'calculative choices and value-orientation' (Ong 2006, 5). Without doubt, the city creates social and economic possibilities unavailable elsewhere. But in order to harvest these opportunities, Palestinians face the challenge of either having to be 'civil' in Israeli terms, along the lines of Netanyahu's condition, or alternatively contesting these terms and thus considered a threat. In its original sense civility denotes duties of citizenship, but is more generally used to explain impersonal public codes of social conduct. Civility can be seen as a set of rules and behaviours that may make individuals and communities conform to a social order deemed 'civilised', including 'the dark side of the process' through which a state 'polices' or 'educates' its citizenry (Volpi 2011, 828). According to Jane Collier et al (1996) civility means that only some identities are 'sanctioned' by modern nation-states, because Bourgeoisie law has 'constituted ethnic minorities and migrants as different from and incompatible with members of the dominant culture' (18). Civility is a form of 'structural power' that shapes the social field of action as it renders some kinds of behaviour possible and others less or impossible (Wolf 2006, 223). It is as a force

that suppresses critical views and positions (Cheshire Calhoun 2000). Rather than a social lubricant that ensures good relations across difference (Sennett 2002), civility for Palestinians in Israel is a deeply ambiguous and power-related force.

Thus, their experience of Tel Aviv forms a second dimension of the same urban space. Janet Abu-Lughod (1965) called Cairo a 'dual city' in which the legacy of a colonial past is alive and operating in two different cities within one, physically juxtaposed but often socially distinct (429). Tel Aviv is a dual city on two levels: because of its second Palestinian dimension and because its liberal mask hides the deep-seated problems of ongoing conflict and settler colonialism. It has a difficult relationship with difference and history. Interestingly, Tel Aviv is a truly postcolonial space because it performs a liberal inclusive identity via colonial subjects. Israel, on the other hand, is not *post*-colonial at all – it continues to colonise Palestinian territories. However, this settler colonialism has long been 'outsourced' from Tel Aviv into the periphery of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which in turn allows Tel Aviv to be framed as a space of liberal and open exception seemingly outside of, or *post* the colonial.

A certain ability to soften cultural, ethnic or racial differences has long been ascribed to the modern city, exemplified by the struggle of atomised individuals against external urban forces in a 'many-membered-organism', as Georg Simmel (2011, 13 [1903]) suggested. The urban individual of Simmel's city gains freedom and anonymity based on intellectual distance, a freedom that is not necessarily pleasant and involves struggles (15-16). Hence Simmel understood that individual freedom can be a burden, that it has a price because individual particularity may be incompatible with standardised public order (19). Urban civility and sociability more generally create relations whereby one '"acts" as though all were equal' (Simmel and Hughes 1949, 257), creating a pressure on difference to remain hidden or unarticulated. As Elizabeth Povinelli (2002, 14) writes: 'One of the great persuasions of liberalism has been its seeming openness, its voracious encompassment. (…) The trouble is that this is not true without reserve.' Indeed, 'difference-blind' liberalism is known for claiming that it can offer neutral ground on which people of all cultures can exist (Taylor 1994, 62).

Taken together, civility, citizenship and the city all 'treat others as though they were strangers', forging a seeming social proximity that is built upon social distance, whereby 'the public geography of a city is civility institutionalized' (Sennett 2002, 264). In the (post)colonial context, however, this 'institution' has different standards for different people. One easily forgets another central element of urbanity, which is its association with the nation: an incoming colonizing Jewish-Zionist national project that has competed with an indigenous Arab one (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, 1–2). Given the centrality of Tel Aviv in the Israeli nation, Palestinian inclusion into Tel Aviv is closely related to ethno-national conflict despite the prevalence of urban liberalism.

Civility should enable Palestinians to work in and enjoy the city without being marked or feeling estranged, but it also requires them to be less visible and political as Palestinians, an identity that has an uneasy relationship with Tel Aviv. Since its foundation in 1909, Tel Aviv was imagined and built as a 'thoroughly modern metropolis' and the 'quintessential modern Jewish city' in opposition to Palestine and its former port city of Jaffa, which was degraded as dirty, noisy, overcrowded and essentially Arab (Levine 2005, 3–5). This 'First Hebrew City' exemplifies like no other the desire to 'instantiate the Jews as "a people of space"', and attitudes towards the "other" were central in the formation of this space (Mann 2006, xii–xiii).

Despite the joys of liberal urbanism, Tel Aviv also suppresses aspects of colonial history and hides ethno-national power inequality, which is why it does not account for colonized people's relationship to a postcolonial city, which necessarily includes multiple legacies, the 'unevenness of economic development under colonialism and its racialized modes of spatial organization' (Varma 2011, 14). In a similar vein, James Scott (1998) suggests that Brazil's capital city Brasilia, which is a high-modernist city, was built in negation of the land it is supposed to differ from. Its self-conception is essentially about alterity. As a realizable utopia, Brasilia made no reference to the habits, traditions, and practices of Brazil's past; transforming the character of both land and people required the 'disdain for what Brazil had been' (119). The settler-colonial project of Tel Aviv is an equally imposed project of modernity that should create a new Israel for the Jewish people, but also 'against' what had been Arab Palestine.

If public 'peace' in modern cities is also kept by an intricate and unconscious network of voluntary controls and standards among people (Scott 1998, 135), such standards of civility are not independent of the settler-colonial majority's power. The consequence for the Palestinians in Tel Aviv is similar to what Ajay Gandhi and Lotte Hoek (2012) write on heterogeneous South Asian cities, where mastering multiple registers and staying within circumscribed boundaries can be an asset: 'for those groups outside the established order – refugees, national or class enemies, religious minorities – learning to be invisible in the city's crowd is literally a matter of life and death' (8). As I will explore based on diverse examples, the Palestinians, too, face pressures to be visible and invisible in particular ways in Tel Aviv and on their way towards it, although not usually as a matter of life or death. Some of these pressures also emanate from the Palestinians' own concerns, as they use the city to transgress traditional boundaries, and may consider immersion into Tel Aviv as morally or politically problematic. Moreover, as I will explore in Chapter 3, elites who have achieved a certain standing and privilege to immerse themselves into consumerist urban culture can choose to be invisible when they want to, while the many Palestinian workers who toil in another dimension of the city are instead forced into the confinement and invisibility of the workspace.

Because this 'dual city' combines openness with recurring experiences of confinement for the Palestinians, their lives often shift between desires to assert difference and opposition on the one hand, and pragmatic considerations to be included on the other. As Povinelli (2002) suggests in *The Cunning of Recognition*, an intricate net entraps indigenous Australians' flexibility in-between essentialist difference and liberal multicultural inclusion, while a multicultural legacy of colonialism perpetuates inequality because it created impossible standards for those who want to be recognised must ascribe to. One of these standards in the Israeli case is that they must be 'Israeli all the way', as Netanyahu put it. Israeli settler colonialism is different from the Australian case, however, which moved from the erasure of indigeneity towards its recuperation in order to express its difference and independence from the mother country (Wolfe 2006, 389). In Israel and Tel Aviv, there is no space for Palestinian indigenous identity as part of postcolonial

multiculturalism. The contradictions and conflicts indigenous subjects experience are therefore particularly severe in this city.

This thesis will explore how the Palestinians must constantly balance inclusion into Jewish-Israeli economic, political and social space with sometimes conflicting sense of identification, external ascriptions and expectations. This balancing is also productive in the sense that indigenous subjects 'creatively engage the slippages, dispersions, and ambivalences of discursive and moral formations that make up their lives' (Povinelli 2002). Hence we will see that some Palestinians do not experience the ambivalences that result from their inclusion as a contradiction but succeed in straddling it.

Difference and Urban Utopia

The Palestinian-Israeli elites in Tel Aviv and those who toil at the bottom of the income-ladder have differential capacities to engage their ambivalent condition for their own benefit. Some elites embrace urban anonymity and openness, while others are reduced to the confinement of labour space. Class and legal status, among other things, mediate the relevance of their difference and its visibility in Tel Aviv. We will see that the same holds true for gender because women and gay men utilise urban anonymity in their struggles for gender-recognition and individual control; they may seek invisibility for particular gender-related reasons, adding yet another factor that influences their capacity to reconcile inclusion into Tel Aviv with Palestinian senses of identity and solidarity. How can we understand these dynamics without reverting to an essentialist understanding of identity?

A so-called 'primacy of difference' haunts theorists of urban social relations, some of whom have approached ethnic neighbourhoods as 'self-constituting places' (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2015, 18–19). A post-binary thinking would argue that identities are best seen as 'a process of multiple relationalities' linked to hierarchy and power (Glick Schiller 2012). In other words, identity and alterity are to be seen as multidimensional and power-related ascriptions of self and other (Baumann and Gingrich 2004). Identities are also made and unmade, interlinked with processes of incorporation (Wolf 2006, 210), while hegemonic values during such incorporation

also define and constitute what counts as a legitimate 'public transcript' of behaviour (Scott 1990, 14). Looking at the situational relevance of 'identity' understood in this sense, urban civility and difference are no longer separable because such civility is sameness minus suspicious kinds of difference, whereby sameness is essentially defined in Jewish-Israeli terms. Acknowledging the problem that 'if identity is everywhere, it is nowhere' (Brubaker and Cooper 2014), this thesis will look at concrete examples of how 'identity' becomes a meaningful category of internal and external identification during the Palestinians' exchange with Tel Aviv, and their mobility towards it.

We will see that sociabilities can bring people across ethnic and cultural differences together, but that such connections often emerge from interacting constraints and opportunities. As I will argue in Chapter 1, mobility and inclusion are often considered to be empowering, but in fact also entrench the very marginalisation they are supposed to overcome. It is true that urban social relations can never be reduced to one marker of group difference; and as Ghassan Hage (2014, 236) suggests, a space of commonality in which people interact despite differentiated hierarchies and racism always exists. Yet sometimes, deeper inclusion and seeming openness only widen the gap between a postcolonial city's socio-political character and the emotional map of people's identities. The Palestinians in Tel Aviv may establish social connections, but people can also suffer from the absence of a culturally familiar locale with which they identify and in which they feel 'at home' and in relative security (Wacquant 2008, 241).

What distinguishes Tel Aviv from a mixed city like Haifa is that the latter is home to 'a consciousness of proximity' whereby individuals and groups on both sides actually share elements of identity that related to the city as a locus of joint memory, affiliation, and self-identification (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2008, 198). However, Palestinians have not only literally 'built' Tel Aviv as construction workers for decades, they also form a significant *part* of the city's entrepreneurs, doctors, pharmacists, students and artists, bus drivers and waiters, customers and coffee-drinkers. Despite alterity, the city becomes meaningful to them in the sense of Nicholas De Genova (2005, 3–7), who shows that the Chicago of Mexican immigrants becomes practically and materially implicated in Mexico, a Chicago that

belongs meaningfully to Latin America although these Mexicans are ascribed a racialized category within the US social order.

Alterity also persists because the city of Tel Aviv operates as an utopia of narratives, myths and lived practices that repress Palestinian history, which is why deeper inclusion can be a constant reminder of estrangement for those incompatible with the city's 'identity'. As Ash Amin (2012) argues, while some are labelled insiders and others outsiders, there is widening gap between forced singularity and individual plurality, which can lead to contradiction: if a 'good society' is one of responsible citizens, citizenship becomes a question of duty and conformity rather than a right or entitlement, and as a consequence, 'strangers' are left with the choice of either remaining excluded or being 'domesticated'; irreconcilably different, or assimilated. Not every social relationship between Palestinians and Israelis can be reduced to this dilemma, but no such relation can be fully explained without it.

In the classic liberal approach, individual rights constitute citizenship while group rights undermine civic belonging (Lazar 2013, 9), although this opposition is no longer considered defining by liberals (Kymlicka 1995). The 'cunning' of urban liberalism in Tel Aviv, to borrow Povinelli's phrase, is that there is no civility that is not already penetrated by the ethno-national character of the ruling settler-colonial group, whether culturally, politically or linguistically through the Hebrew language. Precisely because civility tends to override their 'difference', most Palestinians struggle to identify with Tel Aviv other than as anonymous individuals. Unsurprisingly, also this city performs a particular 'identity'; the history and mythology of a city which must be disaggregated before urban space and social relations in it can be reimagined (Levine 2005, 5).

Tel Aviv's other Dimension

Tel Aviv and its representations include nationalist myths and this fantasy is inscribed into urban space and the way people relate to it. Cities and their history are always constructed 'according to the victors' record' (Rotbard 2015, 3). Already in the 1930s, Tel Aviv was advertised as the 'the city of wonders that arose on desert sands' by its Zionist founders and advocates (Azaryahu 2007, 54). Yet this wonder

looks different for Palestinians. Rotbard's book 'White City, Black City' (2015) seeks to uncover this hidden story of violence and erasure, hence 'black city', behind the façade of the UNESCO-registered architectural heritage site of the 'White City'. In order to change a city 'also the city's story needs to be changed', and some of 'the most interesting chapters in Tel Aviv's account of itself are the ones which have been left out' (Rotbard 2015, 56, 112).

When I re-settled to Tel Aviv ahead of my research, I encountered Palestinians in every possible corner of the city, in buses, restaurants, pharmacies, coffee shops, the gardeners of urban parks, and at university. Yet when I explained my research to people, they often asked: which Palestinians are you talking about? It reminded me of Yuval Portugali's note about how he suddenly spotted Palestinians 'everywhere' in the Tel Aviv of the 1980s, realizing that people were 'not only blind to all this, but that they do not want to look at it' (1993, 2). Most Palestinians in Tel Aviv inhabit another dimension of the city, experience it differently, and are treated by it as the stranger the city is to them.

Not only the world's largest travel book publisher Lonely Planet sees Tel Aviv primarily as 'modern, vibrant, and cosmopolitan'.[6] The city is widely figured as a 'bubble' outside of conflict, an oasis with sandy beaches, good nightlife and plenty of tourism, and this dimension of the city thrives through the suppression of another. The same was the case with Beirut, which was long viewed as the tourist 'gateway to the East' before the bubble burst into a bloody civil war. It was seen as a joyful place where young women went water-skiing past the Saint-Gorges while street urchins waited to sell Coca-Cola to foreigners (Fisk 2001, 70–73). Under the title 'Fantasising Israel', Yonatan Mendel (2009) reminds us that Tel Aviv is not only one hour away from a European time zone but also one hour's drive from the Gaza Strip. However, Israeli society and tourists are blinded by the ordinary and 'likeable' characteristics of the city. For most Jewish Israelis and 'even the educated and "liberal" citizens of Tel Aviv', Mendel argues, the Palestinian people are invisible as political subjects and individuals. They may be recognized by anthropologists and Israeli urbanites, yet they remain invisible and unrecognized: most Jewish Israelis

[6] URL: https://www.lonelyplanet.com/israel-and-the-palestinian-territories/mediterranean-coast/tel-aviv

recognize Arabic when they hear it, yet they do not understand it, and this phenomenon stands metaphorically for the wider problem that Palestinians are often recognized for *what* they are ('Arabs'), but rarely recognized for who they are (plural individuals). When they become visible then it is often because they are suddenly perceived as a threat, as in the manhunt for the Palestinian citizen suspected of committing the shooting attack in a Tel Aviv pub in January 2016, at which Netanyahu held his speech (Haaretz.com, 2/1/2016).[7] The Palestinians, for their part, may relate to this city but also do so by identifying 'against' Tel Aviv, which nevertheless creates a 'bond' to this place (Easthope 2009, 73). As their identity is 'reinforced in myriad positive and negative ways', one quintessential way Palestinian identity is shaped is the recurring experience of the 'border, at an airport, a checkpoint' (Khalidi 1997, 1–2). Tel Aviv acts as such a 'border' for the Palestinians.

Indeed, the experience of Palestinians in Tel Aviv is also somewhat invisible from the perspective of other Palestinians. At least this was my impression from one of the first interviews I conducted– a meeting with the political activist Sami Abu Shahade from Jaffa. Abu Shahade was a City Council member at the time of our meeting, a very friendly man well known for his skills in local leadership. After I told him about my research plans, he said in the calm but authoritative manner usual to him:

> Look, Andreas, their numbers are marginal. Most of those Arabs who are staying in Tel Aviv are different victims of our society. Either they are from the homosexual community and our society can't deal with them, or young female students who did not get married and it's hard for them to live normally in their cities and towns. So they come here. Or young people who don't have work in their areas and they come to work in Tel Aviv and live here because they work crazy hours. (…) So, you don't find a community anywhere in Tel Aviv.

He ascribed a very particular quality to the reality of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, dismissive of their relevance for scholarly inquiry. They were not part of the 'community', as if the illegitimacy of Tel Aviv rubbed off on them. What I find interesting is that both Israelis and Palestinians have had their myths about Tel Aviv, whereby the stories of the Palestinians in this city appeared to be deeply ambiguous.

[7] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.694926

Their intricate balancing acts will show that they often struggle with misrecognition on two fronts: other Palestinians judge them for being in Tel Aviv, and people in Tel Aviv judge them for being 'Arab'. They are simply not supposed to be a 'part' of the city, as much as the city should not become a 'part' of them.

When Tel Aviv celebrated its 20th anniversary with a commercial fair in 1929, the Mayor at the time, Meir Dizengoff, called the city of Tel Aviv 'a living exhibition of everything that Jewish pioneers can accomplish when they enjoy freedom of action…' (Azaryahu 2007, 45). The Arab *Filastin* newspaper not only criticised the fair for excluding Palestinian industry and the Arabic language, but also featured a commentary by a secretary of the Arab Youth Committee in Jaffa, who reportedly said that Palestinians who visited the Jewish fair were the same people who also made it their habit to visit the nightclubs of Tel Aviv in pursuit of 'foul objectives' (47). This image of Tel Aviv as a place of 'foul' joys prevails until today among many Palestinians, particularly among older generations and concerned parents of today's youths. While Tel Aviv fulfilled a dream as the 'First Hebrew City' for the Jewish settlers, the Palestinians constructed their own clear-cut boundary towards it. This mutual dissociation is interesting, because almost every other place in Israel-Palestine has a contested identity. Tel Aviv, however, instead became associated with a seemingly untouchable Jewish-Israeli 'identity'.

We will see in Chapter 5 that this is slowly changing with guided tours about the Nakba – the Palestinian 'catastrophe' of 1948 – now being organised regularly in Tel Aviv. They counter the city's 'ostensible lack of memory' (Mann 2006, xiv). The contest over defining Tel Aviv is most visible at its social and geographical boundaries, with Jaffa being its 'most important edge' (Ibid, 193). Since its founding in 1909, Tel Aviv had a problematic and ambivalent relationship with Jaffa, its mother-city that turned into a rival: it started as Jaffa's Jewish garden suburb, overshadowed it economically and demographically in the 1930s, conquered it in 1948 and annexed it in 1950, 'rendering it a dilapidated South Side and perpetuating its political and cultural otherness' (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, 11–12). The two are considered administratively one city since 1949. A spatial analysis of the city from the perspective of its margins acknowledges that contradictions and conflicts at the centre are often drawn more vividly at the urban edge (Low 2001, 45). The

Palestinians in Tel Aviv are in themselves one such 'edge', which is already reflected in their absence from official statistics:

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) counts only 17.200 'Arabs' in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, about 15.000 of these are registered residents of Jaffa; the number increases to 18.500 for the Greater Tel Aviv area. One of the letters I received by the municipality in response to a query stated that 'the number of Arab students in Tel-Aviv University is about 2,040 (out of a total of 27,950 students). *It doesn't mean that they are all registered as citizens of the city*' (my own emphasis). Most would simply remain registered as residents of their home-towns. Hence most Palestinians in Tel Aviv, whether unregistered residents, students or commuting employees, are not represented by these numbers. Because there stories are nevertheless qualitatively significant for understanding the current predicament of the Palestinians and the role of Tel Aviv for them, this dissertation will open up an ethnographic window into this seemingly marginal urban reality.

Questions

This ethnography was driven forward by a number of core issues. At the outset there was the very basic question of what Palestinians in Tel Aviv did and how their presence in this city influenced their lives and prospects. Questions of inclusion and exclusion soon emerged as central categories in my field, as I discovered that for Palestinians in Israel, being formally included comes at a high price and creates dilemmas. Becoming mobile towards Tel Aviv, the centre of Israel's economy, is one tactic by which Palestinians counter their socioeconomic marginalisation in the periphery. But faced with circular mobility and conditional inclusion, this movement also exemplifies their limbo between participation and dissociation. The lives of Palestinians in Tel Aviv required difficult balancing acts: between different places, cultural and political contexts, senses of identity or solidarity, individual desires and communal obligations. And as we will see throughout the thesis, they make certain things visible and others invisible in the course of these balancing acts: when do I speak Arabic and when not? Should I erase this post from my Facebook page before I apply for a job position? Could other Arabs in the city, maybe even someone from

my hometown, have seen me walking along the beach with my boyfriend holding hands? Should I protest or comply? Building on these various aspects, the guiding ethnographic research question behind this thesis is the following:

How do Palestinians engage with the social space and the political economy of Tel Aviv, and how do they negotiate the opportunities, dilemmas and conflicts that result from this exchange?

This general question is connected to a number of ethnographic sub-questions, which relate to the different themes that emerge from my research in the field of employment, commuting, higher education, leisure and social life, as well as cultural and political activism.

1. How do Palestinians who work, live or study in Tel Aviv negotiate the tensions they experience between different places, responsibilities, opportunities, senses of identification, and degrees of visibility and anonymity?
2. How do gender, class, tradition and individual background influence the extent to which Palestinians can immerse and participate in Tel Aviv's political economy and social life, and how do these differential backgrounds influence their balancing acts?
3. How must Palestinians adapt in order to satisfy the requirements of successful inclusion into the Israeli political economy, and how does this adaptation relate to their senses of identification and solidarity as Palestinians?
4. How do political crises and war influence the balance these Palestinians strike between politics and pragmatism?
5. What kinds of recognition and political positions do Palestinians in Tel Aviv seek individually and collectively?
6. What does Tel Aviv tell us about the Palestinians in Israel, and what do these Palestinians tell us about Tel Aviv?

These ethnographic questions are strongly related to the guiding conceptual and theoretical interests of this research, which are the myriad ways in which overlapping forms of inclusion and exclusion interact with identity, mobility, space and power in

the context of ‘exile at home’. The guiding conceptual questions, which correspond to the ethnographic questions above, are the following:

1. What enabling and disabling social, economic and political functions does liberal metropolitan space fulfil for indigenous individuals in a settler-colonial context?
2. How do inclusion and exclusion interact and constitute each other within the same set of social, economic and political relations in this context?
3. How do individuals negotiate conflicts that arise from their simultaneous entanglement with contradictory spheres of social, cultural and political action and competing senses of responsibility and belonging?
4. How do gender, class and other differences in individual background influence the role of urban space as a ground for negotiating exclusion and incorporation?
5. How does human and socio-economic mobility operate for marginalised people in this context of unequal power relations?
6. In which way do citizenship, mobility, inclusion and civility exemplify domination and exclusion rather than facilitating equality and empowerment?

I will argue that the liberal urban space of Tel Aviv enables some modes of being while disabling others. Backed by ethnographic insights across a variety of cases, I will show that civility, mobility and citizenship express the limited nature of Palestinians’ inclusion despite their role in establishing connections and facilitating opportunities. Rather than being a cosmopolitan or truly open space, Tel Aviv and the Israeli political economy more generally are defined by a strong tendency of ethno-national homogeneity, which sets severe limits to what Palestinians can achieve in it, both legally and through ongoing adaptation and altering self-representations. Once arrived, Palestinian students and employees learn to adapt to the requirements of success in the Israeli political economy, but also realise that such success is conditional while their immersion creates conflicts with their senses of identity and solidarity. As students, employees or occasional visitors, Palestinians who come to Tel Aviv from elsewhere also seek anonymity in the city, at times to avoid recognition by other Palestinians, and at times to avoid recognition by Jewish Israelis. This conditional desire for non-recognition is paralleled by the desire for

recognition among groups and individuals who articulate and communicate a marginalised position and identity via Israelis or via other Palestinians. I will explore questions of visibility as crucial elements in these dynamics of (non-)recognition. The shifting forms of visibility are contextually contingent but particularly important during times of war and political tension, and at securitised points of transition and mobility where the Palestinians are often stigmatised. Influenced by differences in class, gender and ideology, their demanding balancing acts resemble that of an acrobat on a tightrope who must constantly adjust.

Methods and the Researcher's Position in the Field

I began doing fieldwork soon after moving to Tel Aviv in autumn 2012, when I enrolled as a PhD-student at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. Over the course of my research I benefitted greatly from being at the city's university, which was also where I met some of my first research participants and where I studied Hebrew, in addition to the Arabic, which I already spoke at a workable level. Some first contacts were made chatting to students on campus and in these conversations I could make use of my controversial affiliation with Tel Aviv, which served as a bridge to talk about the political dilemmas they faced as Palestinians at an Israeli institution. The main reason for choosing Tel Aviv University was to work with Dan Rabinowitz, who supervised the project in its early phase. However, this affiliation with an Israeli university also put me in a complicated position. Despite the support and expertise I found among critical anthropologists and sociologists in Tel Aviv, other aspects of this institution were deeply problematic: Interviewing the military philosopher Yitzhak Ben-Israel for a newspaper story on Israel's weapons industry, I learned that his office was only a few steps down the stairs from the Sociology and Anthropology Department. Asked what a military philosopher did, he said that 'we define what has to be done and what not' in the army. In the context of Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territories, and military philosophers' role in legitimising it, working under the same roof as this former army general and 'Head of the Administration for the Development of Weapons' did not feel appropriate. Such and similar realisations made it eventually unsustainable for me, on a professional and ethical level, to

affiliate the thesis with this institution. At times I deliberately understated my affiliation with Tel Aviv, while at the same time benefitting from it, which led to a deepening sense of contradiction. This was the push-side of the reasons for relocating my project to the University of Edinburgh, where I could write up and release the thesis from an institutionally more neutral ground.

Despite these complications, Palestinians in Israel generally perceived my positions as that of an unaffiliated European outsider who was sympathetic to their cause. Speaking the Palestinian dialect of Arabic and some Hebrew certainly helped to connect with people in the field and follow their lives beyond formalised conversations. The fact that I had previously lived and researched in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, combined with my work in journalism, helped me to build trust. As I balanced contradictory positions and struggled with Hebrew-Arabic overlaps I began to feel in-between in ways similar to the Palestinians' own dilemmas.

I tried hard to 'become a well-known and accepted person – simultaneously "stranger and friend"'(Hannerz 2003, 31), and so I kept close contact with a number of key participants while continuing to reach out to new interesting sub-fields. The process involved a constant zooming in and out, a productive oscillating between the grassroots level and the wider political context. I compiled relevant media-clips into files and combed through emerging pools of literature. Through participation in activities, informal conversations and interviews I learned how Palestinians experienced and made sense of their presence in Tel Aviv within the context of their particular situation. These activities included public events such as demonstrations and informal meetings, as well as trips to their home-towns and hanging out with friends more generally. In the current age of digital culture my research also had to include Palestinians' social online activities. They used Facebook to share experiences and political opinions within their community, which is why I sometimes followed-up on these often heated conversations by contacting the respective individuals.

In total there were about 80 research participants, most of whom I met repeatedly and in different situations of their lives, including at the workplace, during leisure time and some in their hometowns. As for the Palestinians from the West Bank, getting to

know these workers in Tel Aviv was not always easy for a number of reasons. Those who stayed illegally without an Israeli permit were difficult to pursue, while others were simply so busy that one could only meet them during lunch breaks. I managed to follow some of them into their workplaces in Tel Aviv, and in some cases also along the way to and from their home-towns in the occupied West Bank. Being persistent seemed crucial but can certainly also cross a line as in one case, when I tried to connect to a group of workers from Hebron in the West Bank who worked as street cleaners in the city. I had chatted to their foreman, introduced myself and asked when they took their break. He was not particularly excited but told me their usual lunch time, and so I came back a few times on my bicycle. But it never seemed to fit: either they were too tired from hard work or they were on duty in another city. When I tried to follow-up on their location by phone one day, I eventually got a call back, only that it was not what I hoped for: an agitated voice kept on asking me in Arabic who I really was, and if I worked for the *Shabak* – the intelligence agency. For these workers, my persistence raised suspicion rather than praise for anthropological steadfastness. This also points to the difficult circumstances of researching dispersed individuals of marginal urban groups in the city, where the traditional story of immersion into neighbourhoods or villages does not apply, with consequences for the establishment of trust in fluctuating social environments.

Another sub-field was my research of civil society initiatives working against the Palestinian citizens' exclusion from parts of the Israeli labour market. I looked deeper into some of these 'organisational mediators' of opportunities, talking to their staff as well as their clients, some of whom opened up entirely new perspectives on my research topic. As I got to know more of my research participants better, some naturally also became friends. And along came many different activities and community events for me to attend. This involved not only protests, but also celebrations, meetings of political parties, and socialising more generally. As I got more deeply immersed a snowball began to roll and new participants were often suggested by previous ones. At the outset, interesting people and issues would often be discovered by coincidence during my excursions into the urban space of Tel Aviv, or simply by living in the city. In the immediate surroundings of my residential building in central Tel Aviv alone, I got to know numerous Palestinians who worked

in the area or spent leisure time there. More than a mere search for different Palestinians in Tel Aviv, my ethnography also involved an inquiry into different dimensions of urban space itself.

After a first open research period I decided to structure the remaining fieldwork around several conceptual sub-issues and ethnographic sub-fields. This was important to achieve two things at the same time: widening the field ethnographically along the lines of the guiding research interest and focusing these questions more strongly on particular node-points. Among these node-points were Palestinian engineers in Israel's booming high-tech industry, Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University and the political activism there, artists and cultural activists, the Palestinian LGBT-community in Tel Aviv, Palestinian workers from the West Bank and commuters more generally, as well as highly-qualified employees such as lawyers, doctors and engineers. These choices corresponded with conceptual counterparts: mobility and the distribution of opportunities, education, success, inclusion and civility, political challenges to the space of Tel Aviv and dynamic of recognition, as well as leisure, alternative culture and the arts. These diverse layers of Palestinian engagement with the city added thickness to the project and nurtured its strength, essentially because it allowed me to make a larger argument about both the city and the Palestinians therein, without at the same time losing the ethnographic ground underneath my feet.

A Note on Terminology and Scope

With Israel's establishment and subsequent policies, territorial conquest and legal classification created different categories of Palestinians: those with citizenship and without, from the West Bank with a working permit and those who are denied one, 'present absentees' and a displaced diaspora, 'Arab Israelis' and 'Palestinians'. However, Palestine and the Palestinians must not be reduced to their relationship to Israel – 'positively' as citizens or 'negatively' as non-citizens. As a way to challenge the divisions between different Palestinians, by and large a product of strategic state intervention, I speak of *Palestinians* in Tel Aviv to challenge these historically grown categories of segregation and rule. Where the distinction of citizenship is important for a specific problem, I will use the more precise term. And wherever

possible, I did take seriously people's own interpretations of their identity, whether 'Arab', 'Israeli', 'Palestinian', or all of them.

However, the term 'Israeli Arabs', or 'Arab Israelis', must be avoided. The 'Arabs' are hundreds of highly diverse groups from the Atlantic to the steppes of central Asia, while the term Arab-Israeli intentionally misrecognized the affinity with and linkage to Palestine as a territorial unit (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 43–44). At times I will use 'Arab' where I intend to refer to the ascribed category rather than the analytical term. The State of Israel tends to reject 'Palestinian' as a sense of identification for its citizens. It has subdivided these Palestinians into Druze, Bedouins, Christians, and Muslims and this 'segmentation policy' is intended to produce 'good Arabs' in opposition to 'bad Arabs' (Kanaaneh 2009, 10; Firro 1999, 4). One can go further by saying that its use of 'Arab' has a quasi-ethnic dimension, and that calling Palestinians merely 'Arabs', reduces them to the oppositional relation to Jewish-Israeli identity, which has itself been constructed in opposition to Arab identity (Shenhav 2006). Moreover, it also suggests that they are different in ways that go beyond citizenship, nationalism, and even ethnic identity – thus creating a problematic link between semi-racial characteristics and ascribed behavioural properties.

However, I also see a danger in making the opposite mistake by leaving out a particular group of Palestinians and its specificity from my discussion of wider issues. To a certain extent this might be true with regard to the Bedouins, who do not feature as a specific category in this ethnography. Although I acknowledge that the usage of this category must always be problematized to reflect the forced division of the Naqab/Negev Bedouins from other Palestinians (Yiftachel 2008, 83), I think it is equally important to demarcate the scope of my thesis by making its limitations visible. My reasons for not including the Bedouins are manifold and some are merely ethnographic, reflecting the subjective scope of my research and my personal network in the field. Another reason is that their specific situation of marginalisation and exclusion in the Negev, as well as their internal fragmentation, spatial distribution and their complicated relationship with the state, would simply go beyond the scope and focus of the thesis. For an overview of the more recent scholarship on the Bedouins see Yiftachel (2008) and Marx (2013).

Ethical Considerations

Researching among marginalised people poses ethical questions because the ethnographer becomes a mediator for the visibility of their struggles and ambiguities. Once when I told the DJ and activist Mohamed Jabali about the idea of inspiring some sort of collaborative weblog on Palestinians in Tel Aviv, he answered that the community may not yet be ready for this kind of visibility. Yet I sensed that many of my research participants talked to me not because they needed someone to show that Palestinians are taking over Tel Aviv, which would not be true. Instead, they seemed willing to share their stories and struggles because of their ambiguity and subtle tragedy, and because these stories have remained largely unexplored with respect to Tel Aviv.

Although this thesis deals with seemingly non-hazardous content, most characters will be mentioned with their first names only. This should provide a certain level of anonymity while also granting a sense of ownership over the stories and insights to the participants. However, I retained the freedom to change names or not mention them in a number of cases where the information provided may have negative consequences, or where the identity of the person would otherwise be too obvious. On the other hand, I am using the full names of those informants who spoke to me from the perspective of their official position, or in the capacity of their unique public standing in the wider context of the field. All research participants mentioned in this thesis were aware of my position as a researcher and agreed to share their stories and insights with me on the basis of this awareness.

Coming back to the earlier discussion of my affiliation with Tel Aviv University, I believe that the ethical implications of this affiliation were problematic, yet the 'ethical' is a highly political notion here. Well aware that some anthropologists consider it ethically problematic to conduct research in Israel altogether, and to be embedded in Israeli institutions all the more so, I also acknowledge the need to problematize the fragmentation of research fields by political discourses of segregation. This is why I employed the critical position of a temporary insider in Tel Aviv, which benefitted from immersion and the analytical openness towards ambivalence and contradiction that came with it.

Growing Visibility

I am aware that this research will contribute to the growing visibility of Palestinians in Tel Aviv and their ambiguous struggles, which is why I tried to stay as grounded in the ethnography as possible in shaping the argument. This is all the more important because the scholarship on Palestinians in Israel was long informed by orientalist and modernist approaches towards an insular community with traditional Arab culture that is stuck between continuity and change (e.g. Cohen 1965; Simon 1978). Ilan Pappé situates these works within an 'age of modernisation' (2011, 278), which prevailed until the late 1970s and took the Palestinians in Israel as a case study for modernization and a community in transition. Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair (2010, 7) identify two main strands of scholarship on Palestinians in Israel: scholarship shaped by Zionist priorities which looks at 'Arabs' in Israel as insular and exotic 'while masking the influence of the disciplinary state', and secondly, research that turns Palestinians into 'agentless objects' suffering from contradiction and identity-crisis.

This thesis will put emphasis on individual agency without losing the power of external forces and the state out of sight. Integrating Palestinians of varying statuses into one argument that challenges boundaries, I also aim to avoid the problem that the Palestinians in Israel were repeatedly created as a scholarly 'fragment' (Nakhleh 1977, 42). This fragmentation by scholars mirrored separation on the ground, as the State of Israel attempted to 'shrink the space around Palestinians citizens' (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010, 3), disconnecting them from Palestinians elsewhere and undermining their mutual connections and power.

Critical research in the late 1970s and early 80s, among them Elia Zureik (1979) and Ian Lustick (1980), moved away from the modernist paradigm to emphasise the extent to which the Israeli state exercised control over the Arab minority, instead of laying the blame not on Palestinians' lack of integration. According to Rabinowitz and Furani (2011), this and other anthropological scholarship on Palestinians emerged with political and epistemological changes in the 1980s, partly thanks to the rising credibility of subaltern groups making counter claims and new insights on ethnicity and nationalism (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Barth 1998). Much recent

critical scholarship indicates a growing visibility of the case, and with it the growing number of labels, among them 'trapped minority' (Rabinowitz 2001), 'citizen strangers' (Robinson 2013), 'stateless citizens' (Molavi 2014), 'present absentees' (Grossman 2010), 'forgotten Palestinians' (Pappé 2011), and the 'displaced at home' (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010).

In a similar vein, the Palestinians in Israel have received increasing attention outside of academia. Numerous local and international initiatives now seek to address their socio-economic grievances, such as the 'UK Task-Force on issues relating to Arab citizens of Israel', a coalition of organisations 'committed to the welfare of Israel and its secure and peaceful existence'. The cause of the Palestinians in Israel is increasingly internationalised too. US-President Barack Obama warned that Israeli democracy may 'start to erode' if everybody is not 'treated equally and fairly' in a reaction to anti-Arab comments by Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu ahead of the 2015-elections (Maannews.com, 22/3/2015).[8] With Israel's credibility as a party to a realistic peace process gradually disappearing, respect for its sovereignty with regard to the 'internal issue' of its minority will likely decline too. The absence of a viable process between Israel and the Palestinians strengthens the role of, and draws more attention to, its Palestinian citizens. It also makes their connection to Palestine and other Palestinians more relevant.

The 'Stand-Tall' generation of Palestinians in Israel, born in the last quarter of the 20th century, was said to have had 'unmitigated determination, self-confidence, and a sense of entitlement' (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 3). This self-confidence has also become visible as today's political leaders call Palestinian citizens of Israel an 'inseparable part of the Palestinian question and cause', as was emphasised in a gathering organised by their umbrella organisation, the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, in 2016. This gathering also inaugurated the 30th of January as the 'International Day of Solidarity for the Rights of the Palestinians in Israel'. Jamal Zahalka, member of the Israeli parliament for the nationalist party Balad, which is part of a 'United Arab List', said at the event:

> The world only looks at the West Bank and Gaza as the Palestinian question and cause, although there is the Palestinian cause inside (Israel). The world

[8] URL: http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=760036

> stands back and looks at this as an internal Israeli issue. This is not acceptable any longer…we are part of the Palestinian cause. (Arab48.com, 1/2/2016)[9]

This thesis will at times give the impression that the main issues at stake are not political because they deal with Palestinians who seek out opportunities in Tel Aviv. But as I will argue, it is precisely their seemingly apolitical inclusion within this urban space that explains why focus has shifted from the mirage of liberal equality to deeper issues of historical justice, recognition and a 'politics of indigeneity' (Jamal 2011). The ambivalence found in the stories of the Palestinians in Tel Aviv does not undermine this trend but contributes to our understanding of why 'equality' continues to fail.

Balancing Ambivalence

This growing visibility must also be met by a better understanding of the underlying ambiguity that goes beyond the level of the collective political struggle that is communicated by the public leadership. My ethnography of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, itself a controversial topic, builds on the need to explore the critical political dimensions of such ambivalence. In doing so, it looks at the interplay between resistance and other workings of power, including the distortions and compromises that arise out of this interplay (Theodossopoulos 2014, 4). Seeking to avoid a 'romance' with resistance (Abu-lughod 1990), this thesis reflects the realisation that people's agency has multiple objectives and effects, like opposing one centre of authority but supporting another, thus engendering a variety of transformative acts (Jean-Klein 2001, 90). This agency also includes the need to 'get by' and get used to a condition 'where the routine and assumptions of daily life are physically disrupted, purposefully and as part of the political program of Israeli colonialism', as Lori Allen (2008, 456–457) writes about everyday life under occupation. I argue that such 'getting by' also includes forms of inclusion and compromise, which are not really forms of resistance, but may involve challenges to power through the ingenious ways in which the weak 'make use of the strong' (DeCerteau 2011, xvii). To underline these different trajectories, I explore the many balancing acts that become necessary

[9] URL: http://goo.gl/0OmYfW

to reconcile the need for compromise with the desire to 'resist'. As Iris Jean-Klein (2001, 92) shows for the case of Palestinians during in the Intifada, seemingly contradictory elements such as daily routines on the one hand and active nationalism on the other can form a productive 'duplexity' – they do not invalidate one another.

However, researching compromises and ambivalence is not an easy endeavour. This becomes clear when Kanaaneh (2009) writes about how she was faced with Israeli academics' puzzled responses to her research on the controversial topic of Palestinians serving in the Israeli military, including answers in the style of: 'I don't know what…you're talking [about]' (9). Also the Palestinians in Tel Aviv are a morally ambiguous field of research in a region where binary approaches to social relations prevail. Those who cross boundaries are often ascribed a stigma of ambiguity, as are brokers who are simultaneously insider and outsider and possess an ambiguity that is viewed with suspicion, while also being highly instrumental to their mobility and innovative behaviour (Press 1969, 207). Indeed, research on brokerage suggests that ambiguity is essential for our understanding of the relational aspects of power (Van Klinken 2013, 137). Palestinians in Tel Aviv may not be 'brokers' in the narrow sense of the word. But the ambiguity of their condition illuminates intersecting spheres of power and agency in similar ways. As 'urban subjects' influenced or 'created' by the colonial encounter (Varma 2011, 14), the Palestinians in Tel Aviv must constantly deal with transition and translation, adapting to and contesting dominant Israeli and Palestinian logics. It was the Palestinian-Israeli artist Mira Awad who told me that her life often felt like that of an 'acrobat', a person battling the pull of gravity in different directions while walking a thin line.

Before closing this introduction with a brief summary of the individual chapters, I would like to revert to one very relevant meeting with respect to Palestinians being 'acrobats'. It was on a quiet day during the Muslim holiday of sacrifice, the Eid al-Adha, that I met the intellectual and communist activist Walid Fahoum in the city of Nazareth. Upon my introduction of the research topic and a brief exchange of amenities, Fahoum told me a story:

> I began to work in Jerusalem after finishing studying in 1976, and I would often drive up to the city of Jenin in the Israeli occupied West Bank, cross over into Afula [an Israeli city] and back into Nazareth. I used to work as a lawyer

> defending political prisoners. When I went to the occupied Palestinian territory, in order for them not to throw stones at my car because of the Israeli license plate, I fixed a kuffiyeh [a Palestinian scarf] over the front of my car. One day I went back home from Jerusalem and I forgot about the kuffiyeh as I crossed into Israel. In Palestinian territories it saved me from stones being thrown at my car, but in Israel it did the opposite. I took it down as soon as I realized. But when I was back in Nazareth, I felt as if I and the kuffiyeh were becoming schizophrenic. I felt that the scarf looked at me, asking: "where do I belong?"

The border zones between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories appear rigid and visible in the shape of fences, walls and other infrastructure. They are, however, much less obvious and visible within Israel or in and around Tel Aviv. As Palestinians make use of this city and its opportunities, questions of visibility and identification similar to those posed by Fahoum's *kuffiyeh* nevertheless surface. There are, to use Scott's (1990) phrase, many 'hidden transcripts', only that they do not always inform practices of overt resistance. The many ethnographic examples will show that for the Palestinians in Israeli space, some opinions and aspects of identity remain 'backstage', while others are put into the front region, as Goffman (1990) would put it. What interests me is why and in which situations Palestinians in Israel choose to make certain things visible and others invisible, and how these dynamics relate to the wider context of being a Palestinian in the city of Tel Aviv. Just as Fahoum thought his kuffiyeh 'looked' at him confused about where it belongs, Palestinians in Tel Aviv had to balance the contradictions between their emotional map of identity and the socio-political characteristic of the spaces they make use of. Their position is one simultaneously within and external to Israel, with consequences for how one can 'resist' without at the same time losing out. As one Palestinian proverb puts the dilemma: 'if your governor is also your oppressor, who do you complain to?'

Overview of Chapters

Looking at mobility and the Palestinians' 'coming and going', *Chapter 1* exemplifies the importance of reaching beyond the boundaries of a city when researching its myriad connections. Employing mobility as an element in processes of inclusion, the chapter looks at how Palestinians often experience commuting and transitions within

or on their way to Tel Aviv as tense and restrictive. Mobility will emerge from this chapter as a force that provides access to opportunities but essentially also becomes a disempowering form of 'mobile confinement'. One reason for Palestinian citizens of Israel to come to the city is higher education, which is why *Chapter 2* will take a closer look at the complicated social and political world of Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University. As a self-consciously liberal sphere of learning and sociability, this campus provides a buffer, but is also a ground for political activity and the first stage of their inclusion into the political economy. This inclusion, as we will see, requires compromise and adaptation. Moreover, we will explore how young students and particularly women must balance their doings in the city with familiar expectations and gender-roles, resulting in balancing acts between disconnected social worlds. *Chapter 3* will move from learning to working, looking at what 'success' and inclusion in the city's workspaces means for Palestinians with varying dispositions, privileges and class-backgrounds. It will show that only some Palestinian elites can embrace liberal urban anonymity while others are confined to the invisibility and marginality of restricted workspace. Yet even those who can enjoy Tel Aviv's openness become estranged the deeper and longer their immersion. Leaving the spaces of work and employment, *Chapter 4* will delve into the realm of leisure, enjoyment and fun. By looking at organised and spontaneous individual and communal practices and desires I will suggest that having fun in Tel Aviv involves multiple struggles for the Palestinians because these practices unsettle powerful ideas that seek to maintain the boundaries their activities transgress. As they juggle assertions of particular difference with dependence on Israeli spaces and the benefits of urban anonymity, enjoying Tel Aviv often involves complicated dynamics of in/visibility and deep ambiguity.

Aiming to theorise the political aspects of Palestinian inclusion into Tel Aviv, *Chapter 5* looks into the forms of recognition and non-recognition their incorporation produces in and against this urban space and its identity. I will build on the debate surrounding the politics of recognition and the concept of civility to suggest that liberal urban space produces a highly diverse array of claims for recognition from a variety of parties, including the desire to be unrecognized and unaffiliated. The balance individual Palestinians establish between their opportunity-oriented inclusion

into Tel Aviv and senses of political solidarity and identity is upturned during times of war and political tension, which is what *Chapter 6* will look at. It scrutinizes the collateral impact of 'crisis' on Palestinians' balancing acts against the backdrop of the Gaza-war in 2014. The second part of the chapter moves a step further in criticising the 'crisis-paradigm' by exploring how Palestinians in Tel Aviv experience recurring conflict and tension on a regular basis, with the difference that their 'crisis' is one that has become institutionalised and normalised. In addition to providing a summary of the overall argument, the *conclusion* will also locate the wider condition of Palestinians in Tel Aviv in relation to displacement, arguing that their condition is one of being 'exiled at home'. Complementing the following ethnographic insights with this perspective on exile should encourage a critical analysis of the identity-related processes by which people are included and excluded, disallowed and forced to move, while simultaneously emphasizing the forced movement of boundaries and political projects across and around people over time.

1 Coming and Going: Navigating Transitions and Bounded Mobility

Finding work and using other opportunities in the city are the main reasons for Palestinians to come to Tel Aviv, but getting there is not always so easy. Those who commute from the occupied West Bank wake up in the early morning hours to board shared taxis, cross checkpoints, and take further buses, spending hours travelling to and fro across Israel's segregating infrastructure. They can make use of employment opportunities in the city but the same mobility that facilitates their access becomes a mobile form of disempowering confinement. The following chapter is about the intersections between mobility and confinement among Palestinians in Tel Aviv. I argue that processes of inclusion and mobility do not overcome but frequently entrench unequal power relations and lead to estrangement. Movement is often fraught with tensions and experiences of exclusion here, while multi-locality and the negative effects of mobility lead to difficult dilemmas and balancing acts.

The 28 year-old Allam from the West Bank city of Nablus was a special Palestinian employee in Tel Aviv because he found a job as a programmer in a leading technology company through an Israeli non-profit organisation. Together with a handful of other selected Palestinian professionals Allam began working under a trial period of a few months, until his company decided to keep him as an employee. Working in one of Tel Aviv's office towers was a unique opportunity for the young Palestinian programmer, who had previously worked in the same field in Ramallah. What Allam was most excited about was not the modest salary but the chance to get to know people on the other side. 'I wanted to get to know this world', he said.

However, due to the nature of his temporary work permit, he was unable to stay in Tel Aviv overnight or on weekends. The permit had to be renewed every three months and sometimes every month, which meant that he would be stuck in Nablus a few times waiting for the next one to be issued. Although he would have liked to stay in Tel Aviv and familiarise himself with the city, the permit shrunk his presence in the city to the mere purpose of work. While most Israelis would have agreed that Nablus is worlds away from Tel Aviv, Allam was expected to commute between

these worlds every workday, as if he was living in Kent but working in London. Nablus-Tel Aviv is a whole different story, of course, which is why I decided to accompany Allam on his trip to Nablus and back.

Our commute began in reverse from Tel Aviv, with a bus from his office to the outskirts of the city, where we waited for a 'settler-bus' to Ariel at a major thoroughfare. Only every second of these buses which connected Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank with Israel was suitable for Allam. As a Palestinian, he was not permitted to enter Jewish settlements and one of the routes to Ariel passed through a small gated settlement called Barkan. If he boarded this bus the guards would force him to get off before it entered the settlement and he would be stuck there - a Palestinian on the 'wrong side' of the occupation.[10] Indeed, when the first bus for Ariel arrived we quickly realised that it was one Allam could not use. 'The driver is Arab, I will ask him, just to be sure', said Allam. The driver shook his head. No Palestinians allowed, it seemed, except the driver – who was a Palestinian citizen of Israel. We waited. Allam lit another cigarette and told me about his mother; that she was very scared about him being in Tel Aviv at first. 'She thought I will get off the bus and someone will hurt or kill me', said Allam. The only Israelis his mother 'knew' were the soldiers who occasionally broke into the building they live in while undertaking 'search' operations. 'And the only Palestinians the Israelis see', Allam added quickly, 'are militants or those they meet in the army. No one knows the other.'

When the right bus eventually arrived we entered and sat down in one of the front rows. A few Jewish Israeli women and men got on the bus before we crossed over into the West Bank. Driving on special roads inaccessible to most Palestinians living in the towns along it, the crossing into occupied territory was almost undiscernible. Needless to say, Allam was not on his way to Ariel: he had to get off at a junction before the settlement. It was from here that we would fetch a taxi into Nablus. Two armed soldiers shouted at us at the bus stop, saying that the taxis to Nablus depart from another spot than usual, pointing into a side street and talking in Hebrew in the

[10] Israel illegalised the use of Israeli settler-busses for Palestinians entirely at some point in October 2014, but the government decided to revoke the law soon after the decision amid fierce domestic and international criticism.

disrespectful kind of tone people in uniforms sometimes employ when speaking to their subordinates. Allam explained that they diverted us because the Jewish settlers stood at the bus stop next to where the taxis usually passed. We walked into the side street and jumped into one of the taxis, that is, a private car used as a taxi. We shared it with two other Palestinian workers, also on their way back from Israel. With open windows and under the impact of loud Arabic pop-music the driver sped along the winding roads in darkness towards Nablus, where Allam and I had dinner and visited his favourite coffee shop for *nargilah*. We discussed politics and work, the economy and his life. The next morning, we awoke early to make the journey back.

Thanks to the relaxed office hours of Tel Aviv's technology firms, Allam could leave Nablus between six and seven, while most Palestinian workers needed to get out of bed at 3 or 4 A.M. in order to make it through the checkpoint and to work in time. Allam's journey towards Tel Aviv started with a walk to the taxi station in Nablus, from where he boarded a shared taxi to Qalqiliyah, a Palestinian town at the north-western edge of the West Bank. The driver raced with up to 130 km/h along the road which was clearly built for about half that speed. Looking out of the window, one could see Palestinian workers lining up in front of the gates to Israeli settlements, places which occupy their land but also provide work. Covered in the morning haze one could even see the skyline of Tel Aviv shimmering on the horizon from these hilly roads. Midway Allam fell asleep. 'Every minute of sleep counts', he said with a smile. The several busses and taxis he took every day allowed him to claim back some of the sleep this whole situation robbed from him.

Zig-zag shaped tunnels of iron bars led into the centre of the checkpoint, where Israeli officials checked his documents and scanned his body. Above us were men who looked like assassins, dressed in plain clothes, walking back and forth through a network of metal bridges, pointing their heavy automatic rifles down on some of the waiting Palestinians every once in a while, seemingly sensing a potential source of danger in the midst of worn-out workers, women and their children. Luckily, we crossed after rush-hour and Allam's documents were fine. So the crossing did not take very long. Only on the other side we were unlucky: the full minivan to Tel Aviv drove away in front of our eyes. It would take a while for another one to fill up because they never left if not entirely full, unless one paid extra for the empty seats.

What followed was a mix of waiting and arguing, discussing and weighing options. At one moment Allam seemed to have reached an agreement with one of the drivers, immediately provoking the interference of another, who chipped in, agitatedly claiming us for his own taxi. 'Let's wait a little longer', they all said. However, Allam was in a rush, already running late for work. After about 30 minutes Allam intensified negotiations over their various offers and the argument became more severe. In a sudden turn of events, and glad to leave this mess behind, we were able to board a private mini-van that had just dropped someone off and was about to leave empty. The other drivers were outraged and cursed us and our saviour, knocking their fists at his window as he pulled out and we left the dusty and depressing site in an air-conditioned car for Tel Aviv. Allam was lucky in the sense that his company paid for some of these trips, although he always tried to be reasonable. This trip costs about 125 NIS (21 GBP), half of the daily wage of some Palestinian workers in Israel.

'You see, every minute counts here. If you just miss the full taxi it may take another hour until the next one fills up at this time of the day', Allam told me in the van. The three official busses hired to bring workers into Tel Aviv left between five and seven a.m., too early for him. And the rest of the traffic was run by informal drivers of mini-vans who are in fierce competition with one another. Shortly before we arrived in Tel Aviv, I asked Allam if he ever felt too tired and exhausted by all this so that he just decided to stay in bed in the morning. 'No, never', he said, seemingly surprised about this question. He contemplated for a few seconds and said: 'All these problems disappear and are forgotten when I enter the office in Tel Aviv.'

Disempowering Mobility and Spatial Inequality

Although Allam was a rather privileged employee from Nablus, his story shows that his mobility remains confined within the limitations of unequal power relations and leads to a highly restricted form of inclusion into Tel Aviv. It is 'motion squared', as Vigh (2009, 433) writes about social navigation, a concept that can help us to explore how 'an agent is positioned within a force field which moves him and influences his possibilities of movement'. The same employment opportunity that facilitates his

mobility into Tel Aviv leads to confinement in space and time by forbidding him from staying in the city overnight. Mobility and confinement are mutually constitutive as parts of the same set of social and economic relations. Moreover, the unequal nature of mobility connecting Palestinians to Tel Aviv is connected to their marginalisation in the city. Their mobility forms part of the city's shifting hierarchical ordering. We may consider Tel Aviv in terms of urban assemblages, which includes the connections beyond the boundaries of the city, and allows us to see how these are hierarchised through unequal relations of power, resource, and knowledge (McFarlane 2011, 667). The restricted mobility of Palestinians who come to Tel Aviv is an essential component of their marginalised status in the city.

Although inclusion is often understood to be empowering, in fact it is not necessarily a pleasant experience (Butera and Levine 2009). Mobility is similar because it has often been associated with freedom and empowerment (e.g. Urry 2007; Rapport and Dawson 1998). Yet both mobility and inclusion do not necessarily involve a pleasant experience and they may entrench the inequality and marginalisation they are supposed to overcome. The accessibility and proximity of cities and their opportunities always come at a price, such as the cost of overcoming distance and time constraints, or having to bear the cost of living in a city (Harvey 2009, 56). Indeed, social and human mobility towards a city often joins with recurring enclosures and pressures because movement is structured within the context of unequal power relations (Cunningham and Heyman 2004, 293). The idea that movement equals freedom is countered by the continuing prevalence of unequal power-relations and inequality as a defining element of forms of mobility (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Salazar and Smart 2011; Shamir 2005). As the example of Palestinians working in Tel Aviv underlines, there is an obligation of circulation in an increasing number of contemporary cases (Urry 2007, 13). Circulation becomes mandatory if most opportunities are located in a city that cannot really become a meaningful home for Palestinians, because it marginalises their language and identity in ways that fend off their attempts at urban inclusion.

This obligation to be mobile also results from the high degree of political and geographical power centralisation in the Israeli political economy, which is aided through territorial 'fracturing' of the main social and ethnic groups (Yiftachel 2001).

It also results from a history of displacement and expropriation: After 1948 Israel pursued a policy of 'population dispersion', which emptied the peripheral territories of the Arab population during the war and later re-populated it with new Jewish immigrants. These core-periphery relations are essentially between a Jewish core - where value and surplus value is produced - and a predominantly Palestinian periphery in the Galilee, the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Portugali 1993, 18). If periphery and core have an element of ethno-national differentiation, so does the mobility between them.

How inequality has been inscribed into space and human mobility is especially clear among Palestinians like Allam, who live in the occupied territories but work in Israel. Yet also the Palestinian citizens of Israel have taken part in an 'unending contest over space' and face ongoing expropriations of land and insufficient urban planning in Arab towns (Pappé 2011, 254), alongside many other forms of legal, economic, cultural and political inequalities that influence their mobility.[11] As Israeli citizens, they may not usually cross military checkpoints on their way to Tel Aviv if they commute or go back on the weekend, and they do not depend on work permits which forbid them from staying in Israel overnight. Still, one can see clearly how inequality and confinement are inscribed into transitions and mobility in both these cases in surprisingly similar ways.

If one wants to journey to Tel Aviv from the Jewish town of Kiryat Shmona - which lies 180 kilometres away at the northern tip of Israel - a seat on the direct bus line of the national carrier Egged will do it. The problem begins if one lives in an 'Arab' town like Umm al-Fahm, which does not exist on Egged's list of destinations like many other Arab localities. The town's population is larger than that of Kiryat Shmona and it is much closer to Tel Aviv, only about 80 kilometres to the North East. Yet according to residents, the few busses that do pass by often do not stop at the actual station. There are, of course, shared taxis that pick up people at the edge of town. And there is a bus to the train station of a nearby Jewish town, but it stops running at about 4 p.m. Means of transportation exist in these towns but are mostly

[11] Such inequality includes some 30 main laws that discriminate, directly or indirectly, against Palestinian citizens of Israel; income-gaps and poverty, unequal resource distribution, discrimination in the employment sector and in terms of access to employment, health and land; as well as marginalization of the Arabic language and restrictions in political participation (Adalah 2011).

unreliable and infrequent. The overwhelming majority of Arab towns in Israel do not have adequate public transportation and the disparity compared to Jewish localities is considered to be 'enormous' (Sikkuy 2014, 74). Although a government plan in 2011 went into effect to subsidise means of transport the overall infrastructure still suffers from 'enormous deficiencies' (Yashiv and Katsir 2014, 38–39), and by 2012, Jewish towns still got up to 14 times more buses than comparable Arab towns in terms of frequency (Haaretz.com, 30/11/2012).[12] In addition, the Arab localities often lack employment opportunities and industrial zones, compounding the problem of marginalisation and making mobility and commuting all the more necessary. Just like Palestinians from the West Bank are mobilised selectively across separation for the benefit of the Israeli economy, some Palestinians in Israel are mobilised towards Tel Aviv with special interventions.

Ironically, despite the wide absence of transportation in their towns, the Palestinian citizens of Israel make up a significant share of the bus drivers in Tel Aviv. These drivers all live in Arab towns with ineffective public transport. This is why the company 'Dan', which runs bus services in greater Tel Aviv, must send a shuttle service into the home-towns of some 130 to 140 Palestinians in Israel to ensure that they drive Tel Aviv's residents to work. 'There are ten of these shuttle busses between the north and Tel Aviv every day', a human resources manager at Dan told me, admitting that Jewish workers who live outside of Tel Aviv usually do not need shuttles: they simply come by bus or train. 'There is a train connection every night and they can come easily, but Arabs from their towns would not get here by public transport, they would need three or four hours. There is no good public transportation.'

[12] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/jewish-towns-get-up-to-14-times-more-buses-than-arab-counterparts-report-finds.premium-1.481550

Figure 1 – Adapted from: United Nations (un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/israel.pdf)

The selective interventions that mobilise Palestinians towards Tel Aviv only exemplify their wider marginalisation and immobility. The inscriptions of inequality in space is particularly evident here because today's Palestinians in Israel are geographically highly concentrated as figure 1 indicates; 44 percent of Palestinians in Israel (with the exception of Jerusalem) live in only 14 towns, whereby the two largest are Nazareth (66,000) and Umm el-Fahm (44,000) (Yashiv and Katsir 2014,

35). In ways directly resulting from their displacement 'at home', the remaining Palestinian population in Israel is concentrated in three main regions: the Galilee, the Triangle and the Bedouin population in the southern Negev. Concentrated in the peripheries and suffering from structural immobility, the Palestinians' capacity to mobilise towards Tel Aviv and take opportunities there is consequently limited. The concept of 'motility' expresses this connection between inequality and movement because it looks at the ways entities access and appropriate the capacity for socio-spatial mobility according to their circumstances (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004, 750). What Vigh describes as social navigation is one way of looking at how this capacity to move plays out in the details of motion 'within changeable matter', it goes beyond the meta-level perspective of unequal distribution by directing our attention to the fact that people move in social environments of actors and actants, institutions and individuals, that engage them as they move around (Vigh 2009, 420).

The Palestinian citizens' capacity to mobilise towards and permanently arrive in Tel Aviv depends on multiple factors, including their socio-economic situation, gender, class background, age, and education; but it also depends on fluid 'factors' such as their daily acts of navigating and negotiating along the way, as the example of the Palestinian Allam underlined. Overall, only very few Palestinians are able to become residents and find a permanent home in the city, which makes commuting more likely and increases the need for mobility. This coming and going follows a circular pattern similar to the failed 'arrival cities' Saunders (2011) explores around the world, where clusters of people develop in the city's cultural, political, and economic margins without the chance of establishing a sustainable and permanent home in the city. This circulatory mobility of the Palestinians also makes balancing acts between different places, responsibilities, senses of belonging and life-projects necessary; it increases the need for social navigation. We can see how the need to move leads to contradictions in the life of the software engineer Faris, for example. This Palestinian citizen of Israel commuted daily to his workplace in Tel Aviv, whereby mobility bridges distance on a geographical level but simultaneously increases the gap on a political level. This was particularly so during protests in his home-town Sakhnin:

> When I go home, there are demonstrations in my home-town [against Israel's Gaza operation], and I feel this contradiction between what I am actually

> doing, working here in Tel Aviv as a programmer, and what you believe in; and my personality becomes divided.

Faris and many other Palestinians in Tel Aviv experience a 'double-bind', a situation that lacks stability and is motivated by a desire to satisfy competing injunctions, often requiring movement and straddling across the different demands of life (Redfield 2013, 361). A double-bind requires choices between two (or more) states which are equally valued and so equally insufficient in themselves, that a self-perpetuating oscillation is engendered by any active choice between them (Wilden and Wilson 1976, 13; 363). 'A double bind entraps its victim precisely because he or she wishes to answer correctly to each injunction' (Redfield 2012, 377). The mobility between Tel Aviv and Palestinians' hometowns also leads to ambivalence because of the cultural and political distance that must often be overcome in addition to geographical distance. While carving out a meaningful life in Tel Aviv seems impossible for Palestinians who come on a temporary work permit, it is very difficult for Palestinian citizens of Israel too, which is why their presence in the city gains a largely temporary function. 'If we talk about Tel Aviv, in two years you will have the breaking point. For any Palestinian, two years is enough to understand that he can't blend in here', said Mohamed Jabali, a cultural activist who was constantly on the road himself, of which the tattered straps of his backpack seemed to be proof.

We will see throughout this thesis that sustainable urban integration remains largely unfulfilled for the Palestinians, which in turn makes mobility all the more important. The difficulty of the resulting balancing becomes particularly clear among workers from the West Bank, who suffer from fatigue and are sometimes unable to meet their families' expectations or enjoy private life, partly as a consequence of the travelling their work involves. Because of oppression and structural exclusion, they must invest much time and mobility to earn a living, which increases the tribulations of the double-bind because the demands of labour leave little room for anything else, whether that may be family or political activity.

Confined to Depoliticising Mobility

Tens of thousands of Palestinian workers make their way from the West Bank to Israel and into Jewish settlements every day.[13] The official number of Palestinians working in Israel both legally and illegally doubled in the four years prior to 2014, to about 92,000 that year (BOI 2015). Interestingly, this is due to a changed policy of the state to continue to allow all workers with permits into Israel even during times of war and violence (such as the 2014 Gaza war) – a policy that 'diminished' the 'advantage' foreign workers had over Palestinian workers (Haaretz.com, March 4, 2015).[14] It becomes clear that the inclusion of the Palestinians and their mobility are conditional. Not being political is part of the unspoken 'deal', as I learned from a group of Palestinian workers who did renovation work on a building close to my apartment. One hot summer day in June 2014 we met during their lunch break in a shaded space below the building. Somehow the conversation turned to earlier research I had done on Palestinian civil resistance in the West Bank village of Bilʿin. 'Look…', one of them said, '…those who protest in Bilʿin are tear-gassed and jailed. Those who don't can work here and make money. What would you do? This is how we have become. We think about earning our living and are left with no energy to do other stuff.' They said that political activity could easily lead to a cancellation of their working permits.

The mobility of these Palestinians into Israeli workspaces follows a principle of confinement and restriction. They are allowed to move if they restrict themselves to the narrow channel of highly regulated mobility and apolitical labour. Consequently, mobility itself turns into a major factor of their marginalisation and confinement on both ends of the bilateral movement: in Tel Aviv and in their home area. Civility is inscribed into mobility as an exclusive condition that requires their dissociation from major aspects of political and social life. How labour-related mobility serves

[13] Israel regulates permits based on quota and security screenings of individual Palestinians. In March 2014, the quota of legal working permits was 47,350, excluding those crossing into Israel without permits (B'Tselem: http://www.btselem.org/workers/20140430_international_workers_day_2014). According to the workers' rights NGO Kav La-Oved, approximately 30,000 Palestinian workers were employed in Israel by 2015, most in the field of construction, as well as many in agriculture, industry, and service jobs. An additional 30,000 are employed in the Israeli settlements (Kav La-Oved website: http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/en/areasofactivity/palestinianworkers/)

[14] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/business/.premium-1.645266

relations of domination has also been explored by Portugali (1993, 13–14; 71), who suggested that Palestinian labourers acquired the role of an 'industrial reserve army': ready to be shifted between sectors, locations, employment and unemployment, they ensure that the costs of labour do not rise because they are willing to work for less than the minimum wage; while their homes remain segregated form the workspace under Israeli occupation, the value and surplus flows into the hands of both public and private Israeli owners. Their willingness to confine themselves to disempowering mobility partly results from ongoing de-development: a structural relationship between a dominant and a subordinate economy which distorts the weaker economy's development and effectively undermines it (Roy 1999, 64–65). Part of this oppressive relationship is a whole 'architecture of occupation' (Weizman 2012), which includes checkpoints, fences and walls, segregated roads and other limitations on the mobility of Palestinians. The Palestinian labourers' mobility across this architecture of the occupation not only adds value to Israel's political economy but also underpins the power of the state, which depends – in part – on the participation and limited incorporation of those who are ruled. The time and mobility these labourers invest helps to constitute the state and its capitalist economy. Their mobility is part of what structures 'the modalities in which power is exercised' (Poulantzas 2003, 68). What Poulantzas calls 'transformations of the spatio-temporal matrices' is one technique of maintaining economic, political and ideological power. The Palestinians' restricted incorporation into the Israeli labour market underpins Israel's ideological power because it successfully institutionalised conflict and contradictions into economic relations of dependency.

The average Palestinian construction worker in Israel earns a monthly salary of 3,500 NIS, or about 586 GBP (BOI 2015). This is far below Israeli minimum wage but still much higher than what they would earn in the occupied West Bank. They are pressured to do so precisely because the Israeli occupation has made their own economy malfunction, which in turn profited Israel: Israel's policy of integrating a selected amount of Palestinian workers oriented the labour force of the West Bank (and formerly also Gaza) to semi-skilled an unskilled employment in Israel and away from local industry and agriculture, while such agriculture came to rely on Israel for income and growth (Roy 1999, 65). The mobility of Palestinian workers into Tel

Aviv is as much a product of their own efforts as it is the result of their exclusion. Their mobility is disempowering and presupposes de-politicisation. Such mobility contains the contradictions that are inherent to the Israeli state and the logics of inclusion-exclusion that underlie its rule over territory and people (Kelly 2009, 111). Mobility encodes relations of oppression and segregation within the confinement of functional labour spaces.

At one construction site of a high-rise building in central Tel Aviv I got to know another cohort of Palestinian workers. One of them took me across a makeshift stairway into the staff offices in the basement, where I met the 47 year-old Fahed from the West Bank city of Hebron. The friendly man had very crinkly and sun-tanned skin, which made him look much older than he was. He worked from Sunday to Thursday, with a usual day starting at 3am in Hebron, where he took a shared taxi to the nearby Israeli military checkpoint. Then he would wait about half an hour or more, pass the security checks and board another bus on the Israeli side towards Tel Aviv. Exemplifying the context of confinement within which such movement takes place, his working permit did not allow him to stay in Israel overnight. 'Why are you doing it?' I asked, pointing to the difficulties of such travel, which also seemed to result in fatigue and disconnection from the social life at home:

> Of course it's hard, the waiting at the checkpoint, the journey of four-five hours every day. But if you ask why, I say it's the salary. In Hebron I would earn less than half. (…) but movement also makes me tired, causes problems in my family. When I come home my child asks for help with homework but I am simply too tired. I miss out on weddings and social events. On Friday, when I come back home, I sleep all day.

The tragedy of their lives on the seam was that their existence in Tel Aviv was confined to work and the associated efforts, while the mobility necessary to get there reduced their existence at home to sleep and exhaustion. They brought me into another office-container, where I met the 30 year-old Abdallah, also from Hebron. We started to talk and suddenly, with an energetic and quick move, he took off his helmet and slammed it upside-down on the table. 'You see this helmet? This is our construction site. In here you have a mix of everything. Inside it everything goes well. But outside you have politics and you have troubles. Here, what we care about

is work.' This mirrored the other worker's comments about the need to keep a low political profile. Workspace was figured as an apolitical bubble seemingly shielding relations inside from the pollution of conflict and inequality.

Abdallah studied finance in Jordan but had difficulties finding appropriate work in the West Bank. Today he lives with the burden of constant movement, saying that 'the most we can do is to hold onto our home, to have a family and kids, to work and to bring money, and to stay there.' He added that in order to survive, you have to 'shut up and move on. It's like being a bull, you look forward, straight forward, and just move on.'

One of the few moments where the workers could get a glimpse of the city beyond their construction site was during lunch break, when I walked with them to a near-by supermarket. They did not really understand the Hebrew descriptions of items in the shop and struggled to order sliced meat from the counter. When Abdallah inspected avocados at the vegetable stand, testing them with care as one would do in a market, one female customer suddenly turned to him in the belief that he was employed in the shop. She said in Hebrew: 'What is the difference between these two types of cherry tomatoes?' Abdallah did not understand what she was saying. I told her in Hebrew that he did not work here and she turned away quickly. The whole scene made us laugh. When we walked out of the shop, an actual young supermarket employee pushed shopping carts up the ramp shouting out with a smile, '*Aaaaaash*?', in Arabic, which may be translated as 'What's Up?'. They shook hands, exchanged a few words and we walked on. 'One of our Arab friends here', said Abdallah. 'Tel Aviv is full of Arabs, you know. They are everywhere, in restaurants, shops, construction, even in the toilets. But Tel Aviv feels like Europe, doesn't it?'

We took our lunch back into the containers where other Palestinian workers and some Jewish engineers and managers joined us. One of the Jewish Israelis appeared to speak some Arabic. It was a rather cheerful and friendly atmosphere as we all stood around that plastic table, eating bread and Humus. There was a climate of mutual respect and much chatting. 'You see this, here we eat together and there are no problems', said one of the Jewish-Israeli managers, adding: 'Politics is outside. The governments, they are the problem. If you have bread, there is peace.'

The logic hidden underneath this surface of 'peace' shows a different reality. Bread brings 'peace' because the Palestinians must succumb to a world of disempowering mobility and legal-spatial confinement in order to earn their 'bread' and keep the channel open. Their hours of daily movement across a whole infrastructure of segregation are essential for maintaining the mirage of equal relations at work. Their mobility produces the disempowering double-absence that makes it easy to exploit their labour: they are confined to the workplace, vulnerable and without fundamental rights in Israel. The impact of their movement and hard labour also undermines their lives at home and by extension, any form of political activity that would endanger the permit to remain mobile towards their source of family income.

The relatively privileged case of Allam has shown, however, that the civility of workplaces also enables the establishment of trust and respect despite the underlying inequality. One day I had the chance to meet Allam and his colleague Nadav for lunch. I asked him what was special about working with a Palestinian, and he answered: 'I work with a lot of people, some from the US, some from Romania and Australia. So for me it wasn't an issue that among all these you also have someone from the West Bank.' The juxtaposition of foreigners with Palestinians was surprising, and he added that Allam was the 'politest person in the office', which exemplifies the need for Palestinians to be civil and apolitical. Similar to the previous examples of seemingly apolitical workspaces of construction sites in Tel Aviv, Nadav stated that 'if I and Allam go for one cigarette-break and talk, everything in this conflict is solved between us. (…) If he is from the West Bank, or from wherever, if he does the job it's good…' Yet also Nadav realised that inequality and exclusion lie underneath this seeming normality, when he explained: 'When we have an evening event, any sort of celebration, Allam can't join us because the permit doesn't allow him to stay. You can feel the friction, that he is not just a regular employee.'

He is forced to move back and forth and becomes confined to this disempowering mobility which leaves little space and time for anything but 'doing the job good', as his colleague emphasised. Although the significance of power inequality is downplayed, it is obvious. And yet the benefits of this opportunity outweigh the problems for Allam:

> It is a new experience for me. In the beginning, I was supposed to stay only for a few months. I came here and realised that this is something new. I saw the community and began to understand how people are thinking. I had the experience to see the other side and I took the opportunity.

The workplace becomes an incubator where 'the rules that rule us', as Allam put it, do not pollute the good intentions of people on both sides. His constant mobility and the associated temporariness of his presence are also essential for this externalisation of politics to succeed, not least because this regime of mobility undermines real inclusion. After all, he is seen to belong 'elsewhere' and is forced to remain logically outside of Tel Aviv. The confinement of forced mobility and the resulting ambiguity of his inside-outside position turn him into a perpetual guest: a polite guest hosted by an Israeli office. He remains essentially a foreigner to Tel Aviv, although in fact counter-penetrating this urban space which was imposed on his homeland by the same settler-state that occupies his home area in the West Bank.

Palestinians in the High-Tech Industry: Tele-Commuting and 'Impossible Integration'

The story of a Palestinian from the West Bank city of Nablus who works in a technology start-up in Tel Aviv is certainly not the norm, and it is likely that he would have never been able to obtain the job without the mediation of the NPO. Yet even among Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, the 'high-tech' industry is one sector where the glass-ceilings that prevent success are particularly thick. In 2013, about 1,200 Palestinian citizens of Israel worked in high-tech companies, compared to only 350 in 2008, which is an increase from 0.5% of all high tech employment to 1.5%, according to the Nazareth-based organization Tsofen. However, the inclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel into a highly competitive sector that is dominated by Jewish-Israeli employees, entrepreneurs and investors, faces multiple obstacles. This pursuit of overcoming them has followed two main trajectories. The first is the creation of work and development opportunities within Arab population areas through outsourcing. The second is the training and counselling of Arab engineers for employment in companies that are mostly located in the centre of the country, and specifically within the area of larger Tel Aviv. While the first is a form of tele-

commuting, where opportunities and the product of labour moves while employees stay put, the second involved the mobility of employees into distant work spaces.

One of the driving forces behind outsourcing software engineering into the town of Nazareth is Inas Said, the founder of Galil Software, Israel's most prominent Arab-led technology company. It took me several weeks to arrange a meeting with Said, who appeared to be extremely busy and constantly on the road. Eventually our meeting took place on the road as well; in a coffee shop inside a roadside shopping centre. 'I just had my car in the garage and when they saw my kilometres they asked me if I worked as a taxi driver', Said said with a smile after sitting down in front of me. He too was a 'nomad'.

His idea to build Galil, which effectively opened in 2008, was triggered by his own realisation that he was the only Palestinian in a company with 3000 employees and 500 engineers, while 'over 2000 Arab engineers were unemployed'. His aim was to form an 'incubator' in which a real high-tech environment could be simulated through outsourcing. It should shape a mass of engineers in a safe environment rather than providing potentially risky opportunities for a few. Such outsourcing is usually associated with sending jobs overseas and seeks to employ people who are otherwise excluded from the labour market (Gately 2014, 290). In this case, overseas is very proximate, which points to the stark inequality inscribed into labour and space. The Palestinians and their towns are at a double-periphery: geographically, and in national or minority terms as marginalised citizens. Outsourcing into Nazareth's industrial park was not only meant to create spatial proximity but also allow 'cultural familiarity', he said.

This is similar to what used to be called 'offshore data processing', where a new developing class of office workers became linked to faraway places through production and new forms of consumption associated with it; and in such a setting, work plays a central part in 'shaping people's place in the world and informing their identities' (Freeman 2000, 3). At the same time, Palestinian-Israeli engineers continue to search for jobs in greater Tel Aviv, the heart of the Israeli start-up economy, because salaries in outsourcing are lower and because not everyone likes being 'incubated'. This is why initiatives such as Tsofen, a non-profit organization promoting the integration of Palestinian citizens of Israel into the high-tech industry,

offer training and coaching programs. Smadar Nehab, an Israeli with long-term experience in California's Silicon Valley, is one of Tsofen's founders. When she came back to Israel, she was asked by the board of the company she worked for to look out for new talents in India. 'I said to myself, why India? They are in the Galilee. I was aware of the shortage of good talents in high-tech, and on the other hand, I was aware of the absence of Arabs from the workforce', says Nehab, adding that their inclusion faces a number of obstacles: 'The industry likes to be homogenous. There is a chasm between Arabs and Jews, they don't know each other. There are stereotypes, [there is] hatred.'

The Palestinians' mobility into Tel Aviv's high-tech sector is limited for a number of reasons. One is that they often lack the networks of Jewish-Israeli university graduates, many of which are forged in the army, from which Arab citizens are exempt. There is also prejudice of employers, language barriers and the problem of mobility and inclusion: commuting, or living in Tel Aviv?

According to Nehab, both are often doomed to fail, which is why she also encourages outsourcing to Nazareth. In fact she called the integration of Palestinian engineers into Israeli high-tech companies 'almost impossible'.

> The reason for doing high-tech in the [Arab areas in the] north is that it's an environment that is accepting them. The stories of Arabs who worked in high-tech companies ten years ago are very difficult; when you are the only Arab and there are [Israel] memorial days of wars, you don't stand up don't speak about it, while your own holidays are not recognized. Amman in Jordan feels closer for Arabs in Israel than Tel Aviv.

Nevertheless, many Palestinian engineers in Israel would like to work in Tel Aviv, whether by commuting or living there. One of Tsofen's former course-participants is Faris, a 35 year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel born in the Arab town of Sakhnin. His job was facilitated with the help of Tsofen. Faris preferred working in Tel Aviv over outsourcing at home because of the better salaries, but also because outsourcing tied people to the 'incubator' rather than mobilising and promoting them.

What emerges is an interesting controversy. In a meeting outside his office in Tel Aviv, Faris told me about a friend previously 'incubated'. He was about to be hired by a more promising company in the Tel Aviv area, but during the interview he

learned that Inas (Said) had told them that he was not yet ready to leave Nazareth 'because of his family and other issues related to Arab culture', Faris explained. Ironically, the benefit of proximity and cultural familiarity often cited in support of outsourcing becomes an immobilising form of confinement here. Tel Aviv is constructed as a distant impossibility although young aspiring engineers may think otherwise. Inas Said had told me earlier that Arab engineers do not succeed in Israeli companies 'because of issues relating to culture'.

Living in Tel Aviv and commuting are both difficult. Faris and his wife talked a lot about the kind of school they wanted to send their child too, realising that there are no Arabic speaking schools in Tel Aviv, which is why they do not want to live there. He also felt a general sense of estrangement from Tel Aviv's lifestyle, saying:

> In Arab culture you should have a home and buy land. I would like to build a home in Sakhnin but there is no work. And in Tel Aviv, people don't really care and don't know about the condition we Arabs live in. They care about their life, the restaurants, and the nightlife.

Inas Said and others who support outsourcing also have an interest to keep talents there. 'The goal is not to migrate into Tel Aviv, because if you do that, there is no more incentive for companies to come up north', he explained. And those who make it into Tel Aviv would eventually come back anyway. 'When they get to the point where they have to weigh their career versus heir family, they came back to us', Said seemed certain. This underlines that Tel Aviv is figured as a temporary space of opportunity which either needs a lot of mobility, in the form of daily commuting, or the eventual return trip 'home'.

There is a tension between the Palestinians' search for opportunities in Tel Aviv and their need to live close to family and community. Adeeb, a successful Arab-Christian living in Tel Aviv, told me that he would 'take people out of the ghettoes they live in into the cities, to Tel Aviv and Haifa'. According to Adeeb there must be more mobility out of Arab villages, some of which are overcrowded. Living in an apartment in an upmarket area of central Tel Aviv, Adeeb called Palestinians' obsession with land and the fear of losing more of it a 'barrier to mobility'. He juxtaposes a life 'stuck in a village' to the cities full of opportunities. Instead of taking the step into a city such as Tel Aviv, Palestinians were 'trapped' in mobility:

> (…) Trapped in circular mobility while staying in the same place; you are on the road most of the time. It makes you weak. It's a form of mobility you can't gain from. You are a doctor at Echelov hospital [in Tel Aviv] but you spend all your life in the village and half your social time at weddings. Instead of going out and meeting friends in Tel Aviv, you are tied up.

Another successful employee in Tel Aviv, a lawyer named Rani, countered this idea by saying: 'Adeeb says, "leave your village," but I ask: who is even able to do so? The wealthy and educated.' Rani thinks people would better contribute to their own community by commuting rather than relocating, which is 'mainly about time management'.

Visibly Mobile

Commuting is not only difficult because of time management, however. Faris was on public transport four hours a day on top of ten working hours. The main issue with commuting for him was not time:

> Recently on the train, there were a lot of people around me. Then my phone rang and I picked up, spoke in Arabic. They all stared at me and I felt how they went one step away from me. When I approached the guard in front of the train station while talking Arabic on the phone they always check me and ask me a few questions. If I don't (speak Arabic), they don't.

Israeli public transport is tense for Palestinians because their anonymity dissolves into crush-loaded trains or busses, often surrounded by soldiers in uniform and security personnel. Mobility is tied to their recurring stigmatisation. Members of ethno-racially stigmatized groups must often respond to stigmatization, exclusion and discrimination (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012), which also takes place during transitions and mobility. On a normal day, any Israeli experiences a number of security checks. The context of commuting changes how certain aspects of identity and alterity remain backstage in some situations and move to the front region in others; what an individual performs in this front region is an effort to give her appearance a certain quality and standard, including both moral and instrumental or practical 'standards' (Goffman 1990, 109–111). But Israeli security guards and Palestinian travellers have rather different standards, which is why tension frequently

surfaces. Similar to the Arab-Americans Bayoumi (2009) describes, Palestinians in Israel are made to experience parts of their identity as 'a problem' when they move through space.

Speaking on 9 July 2014, during the heated times of the Gaza-Conflict, Faris told me about another unsettling experience on the train. Once again he talked on the phone in Arabic. Sitting beside him was an Israeli soldier in uniform. 'He played a video on his phone loudly, a video of Michael Ben-Ari, the extremist Member of Parliament. The gun on his legs pointed towards me the whole trip', said Faris inside an open work-space in central Tel Aviv, where his office was located.

Questions of visibility and their relation to mobility also surface during other spatial transitions and not exclusively commuting. Another graduate of Tsofen's high-tech trainings was the Palestinian woman Azhar, who worked in a technology start-up in Tel Aviv when I met her. I noticed that she was wearing a golden shiny necklace that read 'Palestine' in Arabic letters. When I asked her about the reactions of her Jewish colleagues to her wearing it, she answered: 'When I go to the office, I take it off. When I leave the office, I put it on again. At work, politics don't exist.' There were several transitions on the way to and from work: between the family-house in her home-town and the train, between the train and the office. Although high-tech is often proud of its employee diversity, such diversity excludes a distinct Palestinian identity in Israel. In order to blend in, certain things are rather kept hidden, some necklaces are better taken off.

'We only take good Arabs', one landlady told a Palestinian friend of mine as we were about to sign a rental contract in Tel Aviv. And such a request for a 'good Arab' explains why Azhar may have taken off her necklace; it designates an apolitical persona to the outside without historical-political identity. Speaking about this dilemma of Palestinians' participation in Israeli workplaces, Inas Said said that 'it is a catch-22', adding: 'Their only chance to find a job is to be individualistic. If they start organizing the Israeli state will restrict them with new laws. As an Arab activist, of course I want them to have more rights. But on the other hand, I don't want to be the person causing them to lose the last opportunity they have.'

Trying to keep certain things invisible becomes part of Palestinians' inclusion into the Israeli political economy, and of the mobility that is necessary to get there. The tension surrounding questions of visibility in transition becomes particularly severe during times of war and political polarisation, as Chapter 6 will discuss in more detail. The mobility needed to make working in Tel Aviv viable for some Palestinians involved frequent commuting. Whether it is on a public train or at the doorstep of an office in Tel Aviv, the transitions involved are complicated matters for Palestinians, who carefully negotiate the visibility of their identity.

In a situation where public transport is often not available and where commuting often includes stigmatisation and tension, the private car gains a particular importance to strike this balance. Some women and gay Palestinians I knew did not only change places when they drove from Tel Aviv to their home-towns, but also changed habits and appearances. The private car provided them with a neutral space that served as a buffer zone between different worlds. Mobility in a heavily marked space such as Israel-Palestine necessarily involves multiple transitions across cultural, political and social boundaries. At times when war turns subtle discontent into Jewish-Arab conflict, Palestinian citizens of Israel who travel by car do not need to look at Israeli soldiers in busses and trains; they can speak Arabic on the phone whenever they want.

Moreover, the car becomes an important neutral zone for some women and gay Palestinians who dress and behave differently in Tel Aviv than in their home-towns. The young Palestinian gay man Mahmud[15] I met in Tel Aviv still lived with his parents in East Jerusalem, but came regularly to the city. His car became an important space for 'shapeshifting', as he explained:

> The first thing I change when I move from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv are my clothes. I can't wear everything in Jerusalem. So I change my clothes in the car. If you look into my baggage, you will find all kinds of things there. My shoes, t-shirts, pants, jackets, make-up.

Before Mahmud had a car, when he was still at university in Bethlehem and later Jerusalem, he had to ride busses almost every day, saying: 'People around me made me feel weird. Sometimes when I had to go to school I actually preferred walking

[15] Not a real name

because of this.' Sometimes when he returns home from Tel Aviv, he prefers to get back at night, 'so people don't see me'.

Pressures to be visible in particular ways can come from different sources, some related to stigmatization as a Palestinian in Israel, others resulting from the need to underperform gender-related aspects of their identity. Whatever one has to hide, these issues influence how people can and want to be visible in urban space and on their journeys. The space of Tel Aviv itself was heavily differentiated for Mahmud, who said that everyone knew that Allenby Street was a 'gay street', while he had to 'follow rules' elsewhere. Friday and Saturday were a no-go for the city's beachfront, for example, 'because there are a lot of Arabs' who might recognize him.

Beyond the Clock Tower: Jaffa's Invisible Boundaries

Because the Palestinians face discrimination, disadvantage and pressure in their mobility and pathways to inclusion in the Israeli political economy, initiatives step in to broker between them. One of these initiatives is the NGO 'Arus al-Bahr', one of several old names for the ancient city of Jaffa meaning 'The Bride of the Sea'. Arus al-Bahr assists Palestinian women living in Jaffa to find work in Tel Aviv and elsewhere nearby. Tel Aviv and Jaffa are considered administratively one city since 1949 but their relationship has been unequal ever since, while Jaffa has become a 'dilapidated South Side' (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, 12). Mobility is not only limited by such inequality here but also deeply gendered, as has been shown about commuter patterns elsewhere, such as in Egypt (Assaad and Arntz 2005). Inequality, societal norms and powerful imageries of immobility can create invisible boundaries that have significant impact on female mobility beyond the familiar neighbourhood. This section will show how this NGO becomes a mediator of mobility. It will explore how spatial mobility interacts with social mobility on the one hand and imagination on the other. The first link is reflected in the concept of motility introduced above, which encompasses interdependent elements of social and spatial mobility: access to different forms and degrees of mobility, including time; the competence to recognize and make use of access, including skills; and appropriation of a particular choice, including the option of non-action and agent's values and perception of access

(Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004, 750). This last aspect of appropriation also links mobility to the imagination, for people's ability to cross borders and boundaries is linked to the way they imagine other places and potential lives (Salazar 2011).

Arus al-Bahr is one local mediator of these intersecting fields of mobility. Its office is in a quiet neighbourhood south of Jaffa's gentrified old-town. During my first visit I met Safa Younis, the NGO's executive director and founder, who was born in Jaffa in 1975. When Israel conquered Jaffa her maternal family was forced to flee to Gaza in 1948, where they had to stay until 1967, when some of them were allowed to return. In many ways Safa is a pioneer among women in Jaffa because she attended a Jewish school in Tel Aviv at the age of 16. Such was not a usual decision at all but helped her to succeed later on at Tel Aviv University, when she started 'to live the life of a minority in Tel Aviv'. But for many of the women she tries to help, talking about working in Tel Aviv initially seems like planning their emigration to another country.

These women are mostly married with children from low socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. Many were never formally employed before. 'For most the first reaction is: "It's not for me, I am scared"', says Safa; they also feel that Jewish Israelis would not accept them as they are, 'that they will stare at us'. Those who wear a headscarf or traditional female dress know that they are discriminated in Tel Aviv's job market for that single fact. It is such fears and obstacles to employment Safa wants to overcome, 'I try to give them dreams, to help them to see their own potential.' She helps them to cross a powerful yet invisible border between Jaffa and Tel Aviv:

> A lot of women are scared to be attacked in Tel Aviv. One woman told me recently that the furthest place she would work in is the clock-tower in Jaffa [bordering Tel Aviv]. I asked her why, and she said that she heard about one woman being attacked there (…) There are also fears about being looked at, that they are not good enough in Hebrew, that they are wearing the veil and that it would be strange.

The clock-tower marks the end of their safety-zone and the beginning of a space perceived as hostile and foreign. Even Safa Younis says that Jaffa 'is not like in Tel Aviv; there we always feel like a minority and have to feel like guests, even if we are

actually from here.' But Younis also knows: 'If a woman here wants to advance, she has to go to these Jewish places in Tel Aviv. She simply has to deal with it.'

The boundaries she talks about are also gender-specific, and many of the women must deal with suspicious husbands and the extra responsibilities of having to care for children at home. One of Arus al-Bahr's earliest clients was Zahie, 39 at the time of our first meeting. Seven years earlier she ended up working in the client intake section of an insurance company in central Tel Aviv. 'Because I was wearing this', she says pointing at her headscarf, 'the only jobs I could find in Tel Aviv were on the phone; no one else would have accepted me with a *hijab* in Tel Aviv.' She did not always wear the headscarf and worked as a waitress in the Dizengoff-Center shopping mall in Tel Aviv, before getting engaged.

Stories like hers are known among the women she helps and not all of them are encouraging. She recounts one particular work-day of waitressing when her manager suddenly approached her and asked her to take off her name tag which identified her name as Arab. The reason for the move was that because of an earlier bombing outside, groups of people started to shout 'death to Arabs, death to Arabs'. It was 4 March 1996, when a suicide bomber blew himself up outside the mall, killing 13 Israelis and wounding about 130 others. Zahie did not mention this to show that having an Arabic sounding name-tag or wearing a headscarf, can be a source of insecurity and pose a threat. Such stories fuel the fears of the women Arus al-Bahr works with. Their segregation in Jaffa provides a feeling of safety and protection at the same time as it marginalises them behind a solid yet invisible boundary that defines their relationship with Tel Aviv in terms of alterity.

When Zahie eventually joined Arus al-Bahr as a project manager, she had already finished her degree in counselling at a college in Tel Aviv, telling of a more positive story: 'Jaffa is small and they know my story. I am a living proof to them for what can be done.' Zahie usually counsels women in individual or group-meetings. I met her in a coffee shop one day and from where we sat, Zahie pointed towards Jaffa's clock-tower, saying: 'This clock-tower is the border for them. Everything beyond is Tel Aviv.' She added that some women felt so insecure about Tel Aviv that she had to accompany them to the job interview, unless their husbands would do so anyway. Thus, in addition to the clock-tower analogy many of these women also face the

doubts of their husbands and families, who may be in desperate need of money, but also find it difficult to imagine them working among strangers in Jewish-Israeli Tel Aviv.

We have to be careful not to generalise about the Palestinian women of Jaffa, many of whom already work in Tel Aviv. Their problem is not fear but discrimination on the job market and bad transport. One day on the bus from Jaffa I met the young woman Heija who worked as a cleaner on Tel Aviv University campus, and her sister who studied there. Heija's daily bus route took a full hour through the mess of Tel Aviv's traffic. 'They should introduce an express bus between Jaffa and here. So many of us work here, the campus is full of Arab workers', she told me. She ended up at the cleaning company because she felt uncomfortable applying for jobs where they may reject her because of the headscarf. As for cleaning, it seemed, appearances mattered less. Her experiences with rejections are plenty and most of the time the real answer was concealed by the wording, 'we already found someone'.

According to Ami Katz, who heads the Jaffa-section of the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality: 'There is this unseen border dividing Jaffa from Tel Aviv; for any Muslim Arab woman in Jaffa, working in Tel Aviv is like working in the Antarctic.' He admits that for him and many others, such border does not really exist any longer. The municipality is trying to improve the mobility of local Palestinians in Jaffa through the opening of a youth centre for men and women between 18-35, alongside other initiatives. One of Katz's goals is to engage more of them into quality jobs, but invisible borders are difficult to deconstruct.

One of Zahie's clients, the 37-year-old Heba, was born in the Gaza Strip and lived with her husband and six children in Jaffa under the terms of a temporary residence permit, which did not allow her to work. She had been in Jaffa for 12 years at the time we met and her Hebrew was still weak. She joined Arus al-Bahr to find a better job and to gain confidence. 'I need to learn how to express myself better, how to survive in Tel Aviv', she said. Whenever she has a new job offer in Tel Aviv, she needs someone to accompany her, as she 'won't find the street' and is scared to get lost. She faces a number of challenges: legal problems, language problems, socio-economic problems, and gender-specific concerns. All of these are of course related,

and the support they receive also exposes women like Heba to alternatives beyond the confinement of the local.

Another day I meet Amar, one of Zahie's friends and a client of Arus al-Bahr. Although she graduated in tourism studies, she had been working at another company's hotline for years because the working hours fitted her parental responsibilities better. Balancing her individual aims with the responsibilities for her husband and children was an additional struggle, a struggle that most women at Arus al-Bahr face. 'This balancing takes a lot of energy from me. This is why I don't have much energy for political issues', she says. Still, political issues constantly surface for Palestinians who work in Tel Aviv.

She had just had an interview for a job at the hotline of the Israel Electric Company. According to her, there are 'only three Arab employees among more than a thousand.' One question at the interview unsettled her: 'They asked me (…) if I did the army. So I checked the box for no. But then there was a sub-question, asking 'why?' I wrote down "because I am Arab".' Mobility across the boundary does not guarantee a job, and discrimination is a real problem for Palestinians who seek work in Jewish Israeli companies.

Amar complained about the poverty that affects the Arab population in Jaffa. Meanwhile real estate agencies and investors turn much of it into luxury housing estates, bringing in an increasing crowd of wealthy Jewish residents. While for the Palestinians in Jaffa and other Arab towns and neighbourhoods, poverty and the absence of local opportunities necessitate the search for work in Tel Aviv and other towns.

One problem many Palestinian women who seek opportunities in Tel Aviv face is that they always need a 'reason' to move there. 'Mobility is a real issue, also because young Arabs are only expected to go out of town for a specific purpose', said Kheir, a Palestinian woman living in Tel Aviv. Younger women would need to justify their aspirations to live or work in Tel Aviv, and only studying is a widely accepted 'excuse' for re-locating. Safa's and Zahie's stories become examples of empowerment for Jaffa's work-seeking women, yet most young women there are not

able to move elsewhere for employment, or even higher education. One reason is a lack of socio-economic support and education. But there are others.

Living in an apartment in Tel Aviv is not easily accepted by parents of Palestinian young women who want to work or study there. Among students, the gated dormitories are generally preferred by parents with traditional social views. But working in Tel Aviv and living there is often not 'reason enough'. And this is why many end up commuting. To put it differently, their il/legitimacy to move also stems from gender-related conceptions within their family and community, and these interact with the immobilization they suffer because of inequality and discrimination. Not only the Israeli state and its political economy, but also the Palestinians themselves mediate their capacity to be mobile and the extent to which they can meaningfully stay and work in a city such as Tel Aviv. These considerations are part of the individual quest to satisfy competing aspirations and responsibilities, as I tried to explain by reference to the idea of a double-bind at the beginning. Women's constraints on geographical and social mobility are determined - in part - by social norms, responsibilities, gender roles and considerations about female safety, but these underlying factors translate into female disadvantage in the labour market (Assaad and Arntz 2005, 451). In the case of Palestinian mobility into Tel Aviv, these constraints also have an obvious dimension of ethno-national conflict and political insecurity.

Initiatives such as Arus al-Bahr do not only become mediators between a marginalized Palestinian population and Jewish-Israeli urban space; they also become cooperative spheres for the re-negotiation of boundaries and new possibilities. In workshops and trainings they reconfigure what is considered to be possible and impossible mobility; they mediate the inequality inscribed into differentiated space and seek to address the tension that accompanies employment in the workspaces of Israel. They help women to deal with the multiple binds they struggle with.

Bounded Mobility: Stigmatised and 'Suspicious'

Marg Augé (1995) describes airports and other sites of 'supermodernity' as spaces which cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity, hence the term 'non-places'. In the case of Palestinians at train stations, on public transport or in other transition points and mobility hubs, quite the opposite is true: the way mobility is regulated on the basis of stigma continuously reactivates questions of identity and is deeply relational to their history as people displaced on their homeland.

This is particularly true for Tel Aviv's international airport. 'There you are hit by reality every single time', said Kheir, a Palestinian woman living in Tel Aviv. These security screenings are different from other encounters or boundary-crossings because identity cards are checked as a matter of routine. These checks reveal their name, home-town and religious affiliation and by extension, whether or not they are 'Arab'. Some leeway for negotiation remains only in the 'buffer zone' around the airport, as became visible one day when I approached the outer entrance to the airport area with a Palestinian friend by taxi. This outer gate marked the entrance to the highway which leads to the terminals. Whilst approaching the gate, tension rose steadily because revealing her Arab home-town would lead to detailed questioning, while employing a convenient lie – 'we came from Tel Aviv' – would have eased the way, but also represented a form of submission to the regime. The crossing was always easy when we said we came from Tel Aviv, but when she and her sister once entered and said they came from Umm el-Fahm, it all ended in a long interrogation and heated argument, as my friend Rima would tell me after the incident.

Once inside the airport, the Palestinian-Arab traveller is met by immediate interrogation, especially about the relationship of those travelling together, about how they met, where, if they lived together, and so forth. Individual Palestinian citizens are often taken aside for detailed inquiries, whether upon arrival or when leaving. Single travellers are always dealt with as suspicious. These routine screenings are designed to police the mobility of those social elements that are deemed to belong to suspect social categories: a 'paradigm of suspicion' that has determined people's 'license to move', both across borders and in public spaces

within borders; and such licensing considers the degree to which people are suspected of representing threats (Shamir 2005, 201–203). It reminds Palestinians in Israel of their limited freedom to move, their vulnerability and second-class citizenship. Their identity becomes a 'problem'.

Similar security screenings have become widespread measures of regulating mobility worldwide, including discriminatory practices that single out people on the basis of their ethnic or national identities, changing the ways in which states dealt with potential threats dramatically (Hasisi and Weisburd 2011, 867). Modern states have expropriated the legitimate means and forms of movement and monopolize the authority to determine who is allowed to circulate and move within and across borders (Torpey 1998, 239; 241). States also depend on identification in determining legitimate and illegitimate movements, whereby the examination of individual stigmata serves as an essential form of such systems of identification and surveillance:

> Ultimately, passports and identity documents reveal a massive illiberality, a presumption of their bearers' guilt when called upon to identify themselves. The use of such documents by states indicates their fundamental suspicion that people will lie when asked who or what they are, and that some independent means of confirming these matters must be available if states are to sustain themselves as going concerns. (Torpey 1998, 255)

The dilemma for Palestinians in Israel lies in the fact that they make themselves 'suspicious' whether they disclose identity as 'Arabs' or they actively conceal it. Aiming to respond to the stigmas that are employed to regulate their mobility, they try to give in, show goodwill and cooperate in the hope to ease their own mobility. Given that very often when we move by plane, train or bus, we are in a hurry, trying to get through a security check quickly is a legitimate desire. If it involves suppressing anger in the face of unfair treatment, it may feel like submission. Such cooperation or subordination is generally felt to be morally problematic and cowardly. It often results in a feeling of humiliation and is no less troubling than a direct confrontation.

Palestinians also navigate through regulated points of transition or public transport with the help of 'locomotory bodily practices', which Elyachar (2011, 96) describes

in her analysis of Cairo's political economy. These practices facilitate movement around cities and get employees more easily to work, and they are often connected to status and identity. Palestinians know that some practices may ease passage while others slow it down. As Dania, a Tel Aviv University student, told me about her experience with passages:

> From what I wear, my accent, and in conversations (…) at university, the guards at the gates always think I am not Arab. But recently they began to request student cards from everyone. They always said hello and were friendly. But when they see my card and my family name, they realize I am Arab and ask me to open my bag. But before it was as if I was VIP, no one expected that I am Arab.

Not being visibly 'Arab' can enable 'VIP-status', a realisation that certainly influences the Palestinians' decision making in such situations. Moreover, it shows how mobility and bodily practices are connected to their marginalised status within the Israeli political economy. Always confronted with the option of becoming bounded by the stigmas employed to limit their mobility, Palestinians in Israel navigate between invisibility and visibility, between recognition and stigma, self and censored self. Places of transition can arouse excitement among privileged travellers who look forward to a flight or return from a long stay abroad to 'their' home country. For the Palestinians in Israel, however, the same becomes a reminder that mobility on their homeland is regulated by another people's 'country', within which they live as exiles 'at home'.

The extent to which Israel restricts mobility and exercises everyday violence via Palestinian travellers is of course much more severe in the occupied territories. As Eva Kössner (Kössner 2015) shows in her ethnography of young Palestinians from the West Bank who moved to Ramallah, 'outsmarting the system' is an essential tactic in order to keep on moving despite the many obstacles they face. For example, they did not carry pictures of family members with them during times of political tension to avoid interrogation about them, and students with 'suspicious' fields of study, such as Chemistry, avoided taking their student ID's with them. These and similar tactics allow Palestinians within Israel or under Israeli occupation, to keep on

moving to a certain extent. Unfortunately, however, the system also tends to outsmart them every once in a while.

Conclusion

Similar to the unauthorized migrants Coutin (2005) describes, the Palestinians remain 'en route' because the limited nature of their inclusion and mobility requires them to keep on moving. Questions of visibility are important on these routes: sometimes they try to conceal parts of their identity to ease movement, and at other times they are ascribed an inescapable 'Arab-ness' in ways that limit their mobility. As distinctions between persons and objects can be eroded in this process, they 'come to bear national essences' (Coutin 2007, 204), whereby every individual Palestinian can come to represent every potential Palestinian, which is why he or she remains eternally suspicious from the viewpoint of Israeli security.

The 'coming and going' of Palestinians into and out of Tel Aviv tells many interesting stories, a number of which I have explored and analysed. The first of these stories is that difficulties with the integration or inclusion of Palestinians in Tel Aviv create the need for commuting or tele-commuting. They move in search for jobs or other opportunities and thereby simultaneously challenge and entrench the inequality and marginalisation that necessitated their departure in the first place. Along the way they invest time and energy to succeed, whereby they often try to satisfy multiple desires and responsibilities. A constant act of balancing is necessary that comes at a high price. Much of what this chapter suggests relates to ways in which points of transition, public transport, and inclusion more generally are infested with tension, stigmatisation and inequality for the Palestinians. Yet it also suggests that some dilemmas and sources of circular mobility or confinement emerge from their own fears and desires to remain 'segregated' in a positive sense; with familiarity, security and co-responsibility.

On the move, these individuals learn to navigate the waters by making certain things visible and others invisible. These practices come as a response to their stigmatisation and discrimination and to the regulation of their mobility during transitions, through entry- and exit-points, public spaces, invisible borders and

various means of transport. Palestinian mobility in and towards Israel is circulatory, and it is a devil's circle: 'the more you straddle, the harder it gets', as one Palestinian student in Tel Aviv told me. Multi-locality and commuting create multiple responsibilities across different contexts and places, and movement may seem necessary to balance these different places of interest and belonging. But when movement itself becomes a source of exhaustion, confinement and marginalisation, it resembles entrapment rather than a sustainable solution.

There is no doubt that their mobility across borders and boundaries also provides access to new opportunities and reconfigures subjectivities and their relation to space. Allam's dedication to get to know the 'other side' exemplifies this, as do the women from Jaffa who took a leap beyond their familiar environment towards Tel Aviv despite immobilising fears and obstacles. This chapter explored how these processes of inclusion and the connections they forge are linked to the underlying reality of inequality, and how mobility in itself can become a disempowering force in some circumstances.

2 Between Politicisation and Civility: the Palestinian Students at Tel Aviv University

This chapter features the complicated lives of young Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University, where some 2040 Palestinian citizens of Israel studied at the time of my research. Some of them do not live there but commute, while others reside in campus dormitories or live in shared flats in Tel Aviv or further south in Jaffa. According to the social worker Rami, who supported Arab students on behalf of the university, more and more are staying in Tel Aviv even after graduation owing to a lack of employment opportunities near their home-towns. Rami believes that they can find 'everything' in Tel Aviv which makes a positive difference: 'work, life, and money. You are free!' However, as we will see, it all comes at the price of difficult compromise.

The green campus lies in the northern neighbourhood of Ramat Aviv, a quiet and upscale part of the city. The area features shared student flats and the university's dormitories, a handful of coffee-shops, a supermarket and a shopping mall, a sports centre, bank branches and a health clinic. The campus is a secure base from which the city and its southern neighbour Jaffa can be explored, and it serves as a buffer between students' youth and their active participation in the Israeli political economy. Throughout their studies, they must often balance seemingly irreconcilable responsibilities and aspirations, like the prospect of a career in Israel with engagement in political activities, the expectations of their parents with the desire to be independent and in control. While the students are the focus of this chapter, it is by no means a comprehensive analysis of Palestinian student life in Israel. Instead, it takes their experience as the starting point to discuss their inclusion in the city from the perspective of civility and difference. I will explore the experiences and balancing acts of Palestinian students in Tel Aviv as they negotiate different expectations and aspirations: the 'freedom' of a big city and tradition, individual control and communal responsibilities, as well as politics and their striving for success and acceptance in the economy. The specific life trajectories and backgrounds of the students are extremely diverse, and so I made sure to select cases

in a way that reflects the diversity of the student population in terms of gender, class, religion, political orientation, and place of origin.

The ‘freedom’ so prominently voiced earlier by the social worker Rami must be approached with caution: in order to be ‘free’ in one way the Palestinian students must often make sacrifices elsewhere. As a self-consciously liberal space, the university is also a place where a young generation of Palestinians negotiates possibilities and limitations as individuals, citizens and Palestinians. Just like workspaces become situational islands of depoliticised Jewish-Arab co-labouring in a context of inequality and conflict, the university is a ‘liberal’ space of opportunity and sociability fraught with tension and compromise.

Higher education prepares students for Israel’s political economy, inclusion into which is mediated by a ‘civilising’ process that seeks to transform the social habitus of people in the direction of a specific behaviour of reliable self-restraint (Elias 2008). Civility is widely seen as a ‘test of civic competence’ (White 2006, 446–447), which is a deeply power-related issue for the Palestinians in Israel because they only pass this ‘test’ if they carefully manage the visibility of their identity, language and solidarity. This is not to deny that parts of the University also provide a space for some critical thinking, as parts of the Sociology and Anthropology department. Yet because Palestinian students also begin to explore the labour market and other opportunities in their early student years, they slowly realise the extent to which they must adapt and compromise in order to succeed in professional life. This often happens parallel to the simultaneous politicisation on campus; a simultaneity that involves much ambivalence.

Much writing on civility understates the extent to which respect or social peace serve the rules determined by a hegemonic majority. If civility is indeed what ‘protect[s] people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each other’s company’, as Sennett (2002, 264) writes, how much distancing from themselves can members of stigmatised groups accept for such ‘enjoyment’? Sennett writes that ‘wearing a mask is the essence of civility’ in order to permit a sociability that is ‘detached from the circumstances of power, malaise, and private feeling of those who wear them’. But if civility has as its aim ‘the shielding of others from being burdened with oneself’

(Ibid), who decides what aspect of the Self constitutes a burden? Maybe civility is as much a burden for some as it is a facilitator of distanced sociability for others.

By taking up higher education, the Palestinian citizens theoretically become part of the elite and middle-class, but at the same time their upward mobility remains limited because they can never fully become civil in the Israeli way. Civility constrains freedom (Boyd 2006, 869). At the same time, however, civility also benefits a complex market society; linked to pluralism and the city, it facilitates forms of freedom and individuality and entails a 'wilful distance from intimacy' (Boyd 2006, 870). In a context of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel, where personal issues quickly become political, civility enables limited inclusion for Palestinians who learn to manage their 'difference' and carve out a pragmatic middle-way.

As an impersonal public phenomenon, civility also serves some Palestinians' interest to be anonymous in the city and free themselves from some familial and communal norms. Civility is simultaneously disabling some forms of being and enabling others, thereby also contributing to ambivalence: Palestinian female students especially may end up leading 'double lives' because they can never be fully who they are with all its plurality of visions, whether in the Palestinian town or the Israeli city. Extending civility into the realm of tradition and culture also acknowledges that culture, as well as being a complex of concrete behaviour patterns, is a set of control mechanisms (Geertz 1973). It is simultaneously a sphere of control and a source of change; it is experienced and described differently by individuals situated differently within a particular community (Volpp 2000, 110).

At 18-19 years old, new Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University are just beginning to figure out where they stand personally and politically, and many had little prior contact with the Jewish-Israeli majority. While the campus is indeed a sphere of political organising, many students are drawn to Tel Aviv University by its 'liberal' attitude and the good reputation of specific courses it offers, such as its law or business faculties. They contrast its liberal character with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem or Haifa University. Students said Jerusalem was isolating and the city too tense, while some considered Haifa to be too close to their hometowns in the Galilee and Triangle regions, where most of my research participants grew up. This liberal university space is a public place of exchange between mostly young people.

Israeli universities are one meaningful arena for the quests and challenges that define these students' place within the Palestinian fold and Israel at large, and enrolment in a university or regional college is often the first opportunity to maintain normal daily contact with Israelis (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 117). This exchange can build friendships and trust, but it can also lead to estrangement and the solidification of boundaries, not least because of the proximity such exchange facilitates.

The Hidden Curriculum

Overall, the Palestinian students are marginalised and disadvantaged within Israeli campuses, which is why initiatives have long promised to tackle some of their problems. Among them is a multi-year action plan (2010/11 - 2015/16) developed by the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) in response to policy-recommendations by the OECD, which Israel joined in 2010. The plan established a framework termed an 'holistic support system', including plans to improve guidance and preparation of Arab students for higher education, to reduce drop-out rates and to promote excellence (Ministry of Trade & Labour 2012, 102–103). However, a follow-up study by civil society groups released in 2014 still found the progress made 'depressing': while Hebrew and English dominate Israel's universities, Arabic is close to non-existent in courses, signage, services and websites (Sikkuy, Dirasat, and Van Leer 2014). Palestinian-Arab students and faculty members were alienated linguistically and culturally, robbed of a true sense of belonging and ownership in Israel's system of higher education. Accordingly, the paper offered some recommendations, among them introducing Arabic versions of university websites, campus signage and computer keyboards, as well as considering Muslim and Christian religious holidays and Arab national holidays when developing academic calendars and exam timetables. Notably, the Arab students' share of the overall student population drops from about 11 percent in undergraduate courses to 6.4 percent in master's courses and only 3.5 percent in doctoral programmes; only 1.4 percent of senior faculty members in Israeli universities are Arab (Dirasat 2013, 7). Unsurprisingly, a 2015 report based on research by the Haaretz newspaper concluded that 'Israeli Universities [are] still failing Arab students when it comes to inclusion'

(Skop, Haaretz.com, 27/9/2015).[16] Quoting Yonatan Mendel, the report speaks of a 'correlation between the low status of Arabic and the low status of Arab citizens', but acknowledges that most universities have begun to move in the right direction. It is fair to say that higher education in Israel reflects the power relationships that prevail in the wider society, which in turn reproduces and maintains stratification and deepens the cultural hegemony of the Jewish majority; hence in addition to problems with the curriculum, another 'hidden curriculum' of marginalisation influences the experience of Palestinian students (Al-Haj 2003, 366).

However, university space is also a 'microcosm representing future trends in the Palestinian community' (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 125). Tel Aviv University enables students to be politically active and to meet like-minded people, although these are spaces under Jewish-Israeli rules and ownership. According to some, an Arab university in Israel should be established. The Israeli government has sought to prevent this from happening, because, according to critics, it feared that an Arab university will turn into an arena of nationalist activity (N. Ali and Sikkuy 2013, 26). The city of Nazareth, the 'unofficial capital' of the Palestinian minority in Israel, and home to a large Christian population, has campaigned to host the first Arab university for decades.

Instead, the US-University 'Texas A&M' agreed to open a branch in Nazareth in 2013, planning to replace the existing Nazareth Academic Institute with what was labelled a 'Peace University'. It should have provided an alternative to Israeli campuses for Arab students, but the 'internationalisation' of the project would have effectively prevented Palestinian-Arab ownership. The deal with Texas A&M was struck by Israeli officials, including then President Shimon Peres, and largely excluded Palestinian-Arab officials and academics (Cook, Mondoweiss.net, 3/1/2014).[17] The real mystery is, however, that despite the involved high-level diplomacy the project was cancelled in 2015, reportedly because of legal obstacles to establish an independent foreign campus in Israel and funding problems, among other issues. Instead, Texas A&M planned to open an ocean observatory; the plan to expand educational opportunities for the Arab population in Nazareth 'remains

[16] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.677686
[17] URL: http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/international-criticism-nazareth

unrealized' (Redden, insidehighered.com, 27/8/2015).[18] This failure stands in sharp contrast to another reality, at the other extreme of solutions: Palestinians studying at 'Ariel University' deep in the occupied West Bank in a Jewish settlement. Under the absence of a functioning and publically funded Arab university, one wonders why the settlement-city Ariel gets a publically funded university while Nazareth has not.

Against all odds, Palestinians have been described as very resilient learners who place a particularly high value on education and who have long been among the best educated people in the post-colonial world (Gerner and Schrodt 1999). Some invoke 'indigenous' values, which conferred upper-class status on those who acquired the highest level of learning and professionalism, to emphasise the virtue of education among Palestinians (Abu Lughod 2000, 81). Studying as a Palestinian at an Israeli university in Tel Aviv involves a number of struggles and difficulties, and not all have to do with marginalisation. One person who has witnessed many problems unfold in the lives of students is Rami, a trained social worker who councils Arab students on behalf of Tel Aviv University. He hoped to 'lower the rate of failures, improve their grades, and decrease their feeling of estrangement.' Rami had been dealing with students' difficulties for seven years when I met him in his office in the compound of the dormitories. 'The Arab students think they already climbed Mount Everest when they arrive here, they have a strong feeling of achievement', he said, adding that thereafter, 'their way downwards starts quickly'.

While the average Jewish-Israeli fresher entered university at the age of 24, 'after the army and travelling in India', Arab students came to Tel Aviv at the age of 18; they struggle to cope with the transition from a town or village where they know others and are known, which has a familiar cultural environment and where Arabic is the language spoken, to the city of Tel Aviv where, according to Rami, 'a feeling of estrangement develops'. The aforementioned age-gap is significant because some courses, such as medicine, require students to be at least 20,[19] effectively forcing

[18] URL: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/27/what-happened-texas-ams-plan-open-branch-campus-nazareth

[19] According to TAU, the rule was introduced in 2007 'after students under 20 were found to have less depth and mental fortitude', while civil rights groups speak of discrimination, pointing out that Jewish Israelis could enrol as soldier students of military medicine at age of 18 despite the rule (Traubmann, Haaretz.com, 15/7/2007, URL: http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/tel-aviv-medicine-faculty-ups-minimum-age-to-20-1.215612).

some Arab students who are exempt from the mandatory army service to postpone their studies. Some leave and take up higher education abroad, for instance in Jordan (Ibrahim 2010, 209–210). Once on campus, 'the Arab student who reaches university spends the first two years coping with the basic problem of absorption in a university', said Majd al-Haj, the vice-president of Haifa University, in an interview, adding that the 'cultural atmosphere' at Israeli universities further alienated Arab students because it was foreign, Hebrew, and 'Western' (Shtull-Trauring, 28/6/2011, Haaretz.com).[20]

Embedded as a PhD student at TAU in the Department for Sociology and Anthropology, I also attended Hebrew language classes before and throughout my fieldwork, which were often unsettling. One day in class an American visiting student held a presentation in praise of the Israel army unit that stormed the 'Gaza-Flotilla' in 2010 and killed activists on board. Another moment of tension was when we read a Hebrew text entitled 'The Arab village in Israel', which proclaimed that Zionism modernised Arabs but neglected to mention that it was Israel's war for 'independence' and the state's policies that effectively erased hundreds of Arab villages in Palestine. When I pointed out that ambiguity in class, in Hebrew, the teacher responded dismissively by saying that 'we don't talk about politics here'. Needless to say, most of what we read in class was deeply political, as were many of the teacher's explanations, but it was politics within the Israeli 'consensus'. One example was when the teacher asked, 'what is the Hebrew word for incitement?', and after a few seconds, provided a hint: 'When Palestinian kids throw stones, they do so because of…' –she waited a few seconds, checking if students would guess it – 'incitement!' She referred to incitement by fellow Palestinians and the preaching of aggression and hatred among them. Once again I felt obliged to disturb the climate of silent affirmation by suggesting that Israeli military incursions may be 'incitement' enough for these teenagers to throw stones. A Russian-Israeli classmate turned to me, saying deprecatingly: 'you are a leftie, or what?'

These Hebrew classes at Tel Aviv University, mostly attended by *Olim Hadashim* (new immigrants), were designed not only as an introduction to the language, but as

[20] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/head-to-head-why-are-so-few-arabs-in-higher-education-1.369967

part of political and cultural socialisation that established, through the means of language, a common understanding of nationalist culture. They also established a silent agreement about classroom civility, which excluded some politics but advocated others. The Palestinian students' experiences were often similar, and their options twofold: ignore inflammatory statements but suffer in silence, or address the tension by speaking up, often as the only Palestinian in a classroom filled with Jewish Israelis. These dynamics are part of the 'hidden curriculum', the subtle but often unsettling experience of being a Palestinian at an Israeli university. Even getting into a university was itself part of the problem.

University admission generally depends on students' results in both a matriculation exam (at the end of high school) and a so-called 'psychometric' exam for higher education, which covers verbal reasoning, mathematics and English. On average, Arab students have lower matriculation exams and are more likely to fail the psychometric test than Jewish students. The latter has to do with the tests' translation from Hebrew into literary Arabic without the necessary cultural and linguistic adaptations.[21] Indeed, half of all prospective Arab students are rejected from universities because of their poor score on the psychometric exam (Dirasat 2013, 9). In Israeli higher education, the Arabic language suffers from a lack of recognition and is highly marginalised even compared to English, despite being an official national language (Amara and Mar'i 2002). Palestinian citizens' primary education is conducted in Arabic, and although most of them study Hebrew, and some even attend high schools in the Jewish-Israeli system, the experience of the first year at university is difficult to cope with.

Like many others, before coming to Tel Aviv, the Palestinian student Joudeh had applied to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and to Haifa University, but had been rejected because his 'psychometric' exam results were too low. Joudeh is an important case to consider because he commuted daily from Jerusalem in his first weeks on campus, where I met him in one of the Hebrew language classes. For weeks he had failed to find a place to stay, and so travelled between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the Israeli occupied West Bank, where he worked as a

[21] Most Hebrew speakers read their native language faster than Arab-Palestinians, who are often untrained in reading literary Arabic. URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.621044

painter of religious icons. He had Israeli citizenship; his mother was from the Israeli town of Ramleh and lived in Jerusalem, and his father was from Bethlehem and did not have Israeli citizenship. Hence Joudeh grew up in Jerusalem, where he attended the Collège de Frères, a prominent school in Palestine founded by a Catholic order in 1876. Joudeh's French was far better than his Hebrew, and so he studied French alongside Psychology at Tel Aviv University.

The problems he faced show us that there is no 'average Arab student' and that the forms of exclusion and marginalisation that haunt these young Palestinians cannot be solved through simple policy adaptations. They also result from displacement and institutionalised oppression. The dominance of Hebrew at Tel Aviv University was only one of several factors that determined Joudeh's chances of mobility across the legal and political separation his family suffered from. Joudeh's need to be fluent in Hebrew contradicted his youth as someone attending a school in occupied East Jerusalem, while his parents lived separately due to Israeli regulations; his travels between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Bethlehem were long and frequent across Israel's military infrastructure of occupation. Although incorporated into the Israeli system of higher education through his citizenship, Joudeh's problems suggest that more is needed than Arabic signage or classes. The history of displacement and ongoing forms of Israeli control over the Palestinian population are implicated within their experiences at an Israeli university, they are not 'elsewhere'. What is striking is the dedication among many students to succeed and enjoy Tel Aviv despite the odds they are facing.

The Burden of Civility

As Palestinian students in Tel Aviv attempt to align competing expectations and responsibilities, their balancing acts are made all the more difficult by compromises between political activism and their hopes for a successful career. Tel Aviv University is one arena where citizens prepare themselves for professional life and learn to adapt. At the same time it is an arena of political organising and exchange where critical positions are voiced and opinions formed. Hence the Palestinian

students must carefully balance their political visibility with their aspirations in education and employment.

The law-student Hisham from the village of Tur'an close to Nazareth struggled with this dilemma. The story begins with his own family history. Part of his family became refugees in 1948 and until today live in the West Bank. 'Why can't my cousin come here?' Hisham asked during breakfast at his apartment. His paternal family is from the former Palestinian village of Hittin close to Tiberias. The Israeli state later destroyed the village and only the mosque still stands in its place. A small number of the displaced residents of Hittin managed to remain within the newly formed state, living as Palestinian citizens of Israel in Tur'an, Nazareth, and other Arab towns.[22] This history of displacement and exile lives on with Hisham and other students on Israeli campuses, sometimes apparent, but more often silent and private. It is one reason why they want to be politically active, alongside a more imminent desire: 'I came here to lead my life alone and independently, and of course for my studies', said Hisham in his apartment, which he shared with three Arab students. 'So Tel Aviv is the right choice?' I asked, prompting another quite different part of the answer: 'Here in Tel Aviv we don't have a community like the Jews. They have celebrations and all kinds of aspects of their life they go through together. We are not part of that community. It is hard to be just human here. You are always either Arab or Jew in this place.' Not only this, students learnt to accept that to a certain extent, they should be a particular kind of 'Arab', which does not fit well with political activism.

Together with fellow activists Hisham worked against the quiescence of Palestinian history and culture on campus. Students often avoided politics at university because what they came for was education and opportunities in an Israeli political economy within which overt expressions of Palestinian identity and history are often unwelcome. Hisham said that 'Arab students come here at the age of 18, still very young and inexperienced', while 'the Jews have already been to the army and are much more self-confident, so a lot of Arabs are scared to participate in political events or articulate their opinions.'

[22] Zochrot.org, Remembering Hittin, 2007. URL: http://www.zochrot.org/en/booklet/49857

Political compromise is part of Hisham's daily life. After all, it was his sixth year of studying and his future career as a lawyer in Israel would soon begin. While in his apartment, I asked Hisham about such compromises. He nodded, stood up from the table, walked into another room and came back with a *kuffiyeh* in his hand – the quintessential Palestinian scarf. Hisham wrapped the scarf around his neck and turned to me: 'If I go to university with this kuffiyeh, everybody will look at me and think I am a terrorist. We avoid wearing such symbols. If you want to live normal in this society, you learn to hide politics.'

Hisham spearheaded Palestinian political activities for the communist party on campus, and yet he avoided wearing political symbols for the sake of career opportunities. The university is one place where Palestinians must learn to perform a particular kind of 'Arab' identity and role. Visible and organised Palestinian politics take place on the front stage of a 'play' that has many hidden transcripts to use Scott's (1990) phrase. Hisham had just applied for internship positions at law offices in Tel Aviv and pointed out, once again, that they would probably not take him if he wore a kuffiyeh: 'I also avoid posting too much political stuff on Facebook. Some things are difficult for Jews to swallow and employers check Facebook pages.'

Palestinian students learn to carefully manage the visibility of their identity, they learn to perform a particular kind of persona in specific situations. In order to succeed in the Israeli political economy they should be a 'good Arab'. In *Ambiguous Civility,* White (2006, 448) writes that 'if one of the characteristic features of modern society is the valuation of individual differences at the expense of what is held in common in social life, it is possible for the individual to experience tremendous strain as he or she negotiates their individual desires and social expectations'. And this is particularly so if this 'valuation' involves stigmatisation of some aspects of difference and the 'sanctioning' of others (Collier, Maurer, and Suarez-Navaz 1996). Interestingly, in the case of Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University, a double 'civilising' process is at play, because what makes them more accepted in the Israeli political economy comes to symbolise a distancing from some Palestinian expectations and norms. The more they seek to blend into Tel Aviv the less 'Palestinian' they can be in certain situations, which means that civility becomes a burden and increases their alienation twofold instead of reducing it. The gap between

who they are and who they are supposed to be in different Israeli and Palestinian social contexts widens.

Tel Aviv University space has a particular function in the civilising process. It is self-consciously liberal and fuses a certain openness towards diversity with Jewish-Israeli dominance, just like Tel Aviv itself. Civility in this context designates institutionalised symbolic differentiation governed by a signifying logic of discrimination and comparison: 'civility continues to authorize certain forms of conduct designated to be "civil," and others as "inappropriate," "offensive" and/or "illegitimate" in contemporary society' (White 2006, 451). Managing forms of conduct and the visibility of their political identity thus becomes part of their experience of higher education and later employment. Very much like Hisham, the psychology student Muna compromised on her identification as a Palestinian in certain contexts. On a normal day she wore a necklace with Arabic letters on it, but during her first therapy practice she had a Jewish patient and decided that she had to get rid of the 'elephant in the room', as she called it, saying: 'I didn't want to bring it up this way. They know from my accent and name that I am not Jewish anyway.'

At the same time, stigmatisation because of difference is inevitable. Many women wear a headscarf and are constantly ascribed images against their will. The psychology student Muna says that they constantly receive 'hostile looks' on the street for looking Palestinian. However, she also encountered 'the opposite' – people saying that she does not look Arab. It is an experience shared by many of the female Arab students at Tel Aviv University, who, if not fulfilling the stereotype of a covered Muslim woman, receive compliments for not looking 'Arab': 'Telling me I don't look Arab is very offensive,' says Muna. 'Everybody here is looking for your dialect, your appearance, asking: Where are you from? What is your accent? When I say I am Arab they say: "Oh, you don't look like it." I never try to hide it. I am not one of those people trying to say the right "R" in Hebrew. Sometimes I make it even more obvious spelling the Arabic "R" (in Hebrew). This is part of my identity.'

The experience of university is an important stage for these acts of social navigation because it is a buffer zone between youth and a career, a kind of testing ground. As we saw in the previous chapter, these dynamics intensify at transition points. An

example is the student Dania, who talked about the different kinds of treatment security guards at university entrances gave her depending on whether or not they knew she was 'Arab', whereby non-Arab meant 'VIP' treatment. Dania was very fond of Tel Aviv's openness, saying: 'I can walk on the street at night, no one will bother me, even if they know I am Arab.' This was different from Haifa, she explained, where the Palestinian community was visible and much larger: 'Here in Tel Aviv our numbers are still very low, which makes things easier.' This is interesting because other Palestinians would call the same phenomenon a disadvantage. The advantage is of course in the possibility to be anonymous and an unmarked individual in fleeting contact with the urban masses within the boundaries of civility.

'I am not coming here to claim the rights of my land and so on. This will take place elsewhere', said Dania about Tel Aviv, adding that the city dissolved Jewish-Arab differences on the surface and connected people from the same generation who grew up with the internet and gather around things that unite beyond difference, like fashion or other interests beyond politics. 'Here in Tel Aviv we are more open (…) there is a common denominator between us and them', she said. However, underneath this surface of openness she fears discrimination. Dania initially came to Tel Aviv to study medicine because she was scared that if she studied Public Administration or Engineering, she would have to work for Jewish companies in Tel Aviv, 'I thought they will not accept me if I am Arab'. When she saw that Jews and Arabs seemed to get along well during her first year of medicine, she realized that 'the obstacles were fewer' than she had thought. She decided to follow her ambitions and signed up for Public Administration, where she was the only Arab student on her course.

> It is unusual to see an Arab woman in Public Administration, but I realized that Tel Aviv is like New York or London, like cities where people won't look at me as an Arab, as if I was from another time or not modern. On the contrary, I will advance the interests of companies, and maybe I contribute to their diversity.

Dania had a very liberal outlook and came to understand her professional prospects under the label of 'diversity'. Because it excludes Palestinian identity, such an idea

of diversity is part of the burden of civility: Dania worried about not being valued as equal to similarly qualified Jewish colleagues by potential future employers: 'They ask: "What did you do in the army? What was your strategy in the army when this and that happened?", but we are not used to that, so we get a minus', said Dania, who had already thought about ways of becoming equally 'equal' in the future, once she has graduated and will be applying for jobs:

> Maybe I can volunteer, in something humanitarian or anything else that proves strategic thinking or shows that I belong to Israeli society. So I have to work harder by myself in order to catch up with the level of Jewish colleagues. I am working hard so my marks will be higher than theirs and so I will stand out when I am looking for a job. But there are still difficulties. Maybe I will be in the same position as the Jewish classmate, even more exceptional, even on a higher scale, of better quality; but the fear is that despite all efforts I invest, they will prefer someone who went to the army.

The real dilemma is that although Dania and many other young ambitious Palestinians in Israel are ready for compromise, they still feel that no matter how good their grades and CVs are, they will be unable to become entirely 'civil' and professionally successful. Towards the end of our conversation in a university common room, after speaking in Arabic for about an hour, Dania looked around and said that most of the students around us would find it 'strange' to hear her speak Arabic, which would fuel their prejudices. On the other hand, Dania complained: 'They praise me, saying, "You don't seem Arab". But for me that's not a compliment.'

Political Organising despite Civility

When I first met Hisham, he stood behind a vending table full of Arabic books just outside university campus. Many of the books on display had a communist background, as did Hisham. I browsed through some novels and followed fragments of a conversation between a Muslim female student and one of the vendors about Marxism's position on religion. When I asked Hisham for a book recommendation on Palestinians in Israel, I mentioned Emil Habibi's book 'The Pessoptimist'. Judging from Hisham's reaction, he didn't seem very pleased by that book, which is

a tragic and comic story about a Palestinian citizen of Israel who becomes an informant for the state. It expresses the ambiguities and compromises of their predicament. Eventually, on his recommendation, I bought 'Stronger than Oblivion' by the leading Palestinian communist Namr Murqus. Hisham was satisfied and slid the book carefully into a plastic bag.

We then talked a little bit about the meaning of his book sale within a university that treats Palestinian culture and politics as something external, as much as it keeps the Arabic language suspiciously absent from its courses, websites and curricula. Hisham's goal was to bring Arabic books to students who would not otherwise find them: 'Even Jewish professors buy them because they don't get them anywhere else', he said happily. Very much like Namr Murqus, he seemed to take part in a fight against 'oblivion'.

Hisham, the same student who did not wear a *kuffiyeh* in public, organised such political events on campus, including demonstrations. In 2013 and 2014 I joined a crowd of Palestinian students and some Jewish and international supporters who came together in front of the TAU's main entrance to commemorate the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948, the Nakba. It was a gathering demanding recognition in a highly volatile context: the so-called 'Nakba Law' granted the Finance Minister the authority to reduce the budget of state-funded bodies that openly reject Israel as a Jewish state or mark the state's 'Independence Day' as a day of mourning. The mere approval of the ceremony at the university a year earlier had unleashed a storm of discussions and arguments in the Israeli parliament (14/5/2012, Haaretz.com).[23]

For the Palestinian students at TAU, the Nakba was as much about external recognition as it was a deeply personal and emotional matter. Surrounded by a metal fence put up by the police some of the students formed the letters N-A-K-B-A as a human chain at the 2013 event, where Hisham was an organiser. Maybe so that everyone could read them, the letters were in Latin script. The fence that surrounded the protestors was a symbol of spatial confinement that simultaneously provided protection from the agitated crowds of Jewish-Israeli nationalists that stood on the other side, waving Israeli flags and denouncing the 'Nakba' as a lie. Resilient in the

[23] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israeli-students-and-mks-clash-over-controversial-nakba-day-ceremony-in-ta-university-1.430418.

face of disturbing provocations, Palestinian students went on and spoke about their family histories, many of which involved the displacement and expulsion from now destroyed villages or confiscated lands. It was well known among them that the university itself rests on land that once belonged to the Palestinian village of 'al-Sheikh Muwannis'. The area's name is still Sheikh Munis.

As the counter-protest intensified and the time permitted for the ceremony ran out, one of the Arab activists announced through a megaphone: 'Please, if you want to go somewhere, walk into university first and leave the campus from another gate in order to be secure'. Dispersion implied security while a visibly collective presence represented vulnerability. It exemplified the limited possibilities for Palestinian students on Israeli campuses to express their political identities securely. During the Second Intifada in the 2000-2001 academic year, university administrators issued a countrywide ban on demonstrations and other political events on campus, and 'the frustration of Palestinian students knew no bounds', write Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 121–122), citing a student leader at Tel Aviv University as saying:

> Our parents have been too busy preaching avoidance of political activity. They say that politics is for those who have spare times after classes, and that our time should be devoted to real work, one that creates income. It is not the implied refusal to support us economically that bothers me. I am more troubled by the failure to acknowledge that in our circumstances everything and everybody is politicized.

Commemorating the Nakba is one of the most basic and most defining expressions of Palestinian identity. Although it is allowed, it did not seem to be widely tolerated by Jewish-Israelis. As the above quote indicates, the students' parents are also involved in this 'civilising process' because they do not want their children to get in trouble. They have to balance being Palestinian and wanting a career. Palestinian students experience that there is a certain tension between collective activism, individual visibility and professional success. Their political identity often appears to be an exception that has no place in the routines of their future public lives in Israel, unless it takes place within the real and symbolic fences of confined spaces of political enactment. I believe that these seemingly contradictory activities are not in fact a

contradiction for the Palestinians themselves, they coexist whereby seemingly ambiguous elements, such as daily routines and nationalism, form a productive 'duplexity' where the one does not invalidate the other (Jean-Klein 2001, 92). Nationalism and activism exist parallel to and not in contradiction to students' attempts to have success within the Israeli system. The contradiction lies in how the Israeli political economy and society tend to simplify and annul this complexity, not in the Palestinians' subjectivity. They often manage to establish these various tactics for coping with their predicament, although they suffer from its difficulties.

The various political streams of Palestinian politics in Israel are reflected on campus, and with it the divides between them. Sometimes members of the different factions joined in the same events, but more often they argued about the details. This is particularly difficult on a general topic such as the Nakba, or protests organised in opposition to Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. The main parties on campus are Nationalist (Balad/Tajamuʿ), Communist (Hadash/Jabha) and Islamist (Iqsal, or Islamic Movement), and in some ways the differences between them reflect their national counterparts. According to Hisham, university politics are divided: 'When it comes to organizing a demo, you face problems. The Islamic Movement does not want men and women to mix, Tajamuʿ does not support that many Jews joining, (…) for us it was important that it is a Jewish-Arab event.'

What I would like to underline is that Tel Aviv University is the space where young Palestinians begin to shape their opinions precisely because they are in Israeli space. The Balad-activist Wasseem, who attended a Jewish school, told me about his own process:

> In my second year at university there was the Gaza flotilla, and after the Mavi Marmara incident we stood here at the university gate holding up signs against the murder of the Turkish activists. One of the photographs of our protest went big in one of the large media, "Walla". Friends began un-liking me on Facebook and many others started discussing with me. My (former Jewish) classmates felt that because I grew up with them I would be pro-Israeli, and not Palestinian. This was in the second year of university, and I wasn't really politically active at that time.

Earlier on, he had only joined some 'big events' on campus and went to some of the parties. But when he took a course at Tel Aviv University on the 'Jewish-Arab conflict' during his third year, things began to change:

> We were nine Arabs and nine Jews who sat together every week for two hours to work on issues of the conflict. I felt that the Jewish Israelis became a mirror for me to discover who I am, what my identity is, that I am not Israeli, but that I have a different national identity. In these three months of the course my Palestinian identity was built.

At the time of my research he was running in the campus leadership elections. Activists like Wasseem and Hisham organize events and communicate with the university and the student union about room rentals and permissions. Wasseem felt that Tel Aviv University was among the best in Israel because it accepted Arab parties' interests. But he still wanted to hold the Nakba-ceremony inside the campus rather than outside, saying: 'the university is holding three or four ceremonies per year on campus (…). We would want to be part of this university, and the university should be part of our Nakba ceremony.'

Beyond organised activism, there are the less organised forms of exchange that shape opinions and express political positions. One day I attended the end-of-term performance of the theatre-student Yara at university, where she played alongside an elderly Jewish-Israeli woman in front of a small audience of professors and colleagues. It was easy to see that she stood out from the others not only because of talent, but also because of her Palestinian background. Weeks later she performed again in front of a scholarship committee, a monologue as an interpretation of the Greek tragedy 'The Trojan Women' from Euripides. She told me that one of the committee judges suddenly began to cry as she spoke the Hebrew version of the verses 'all tortures of the East, ye gentle Greeks! Why will ye slay this innocent that seeks no wrong?' Yara said that the committee-member 'cried because of the occupation', because of the way she, as a Palestinian speaking those words in Hebrew at that very place, moved something in that room. It is fair to say that the kind of exchanges Waseem and Yara experienced in classrooms or through artwork 'move' a lot in these young people's lives.

Another sphere where the Palestinian students form visible communities is the internet, which has a particular function on campuses where visibility is such a contentious issue. One large group students formed on Facebook was titled 'I study at Tel Aviv University' (*Ana at'allam fe jaami'at Tal Abib*). Its founder later created another website and Facebook page called 'Tolab48.net,' the students of '48' – referring to Palestinians in Israel. A student at the University later set up a similar page in Arabic for Palestinian psychology students, 'Students of Psychology in Palestine', and organized an informal open day. According to Muna, the student who created the site, these pages form a community of students through information, organising and distributing job and educational opportunities and relevant news. Her page should also 'emphasise the fact that it is Palestine, creating a community for Palestinians from everywhere.' A similar page focuses on housing and provides a platform for Arab students to find flatmates or pass on apartments to others. A form of exchange is made possible without Jewish-Israeli mediators, thus creating a community of solidarity and knowledge around housing in Tel Aviv; a secure space that is needed because Palestinians are often discriminated against in the job and housing markets, or simply because they would like to live with other Palestinians and not with Jewish Israelis.

Female Students between Different Lives

Another difficulty for the Palestinian students in Tel Aviv lies in balancing their families' expectations with the 'second life' they lived in the city. One of Rami's clients, a female student from the town of Qalansuwa, approached him after she was beaten by her father who had seen a photograph of her on Facebook in which she wore pants and a short-sleeved shirt while holding a drink somewhere in Tel Aviv. Although this is an extreme case, there is always dissonance between their family house and their life in Tel Aviv, said Rami:

> They come to Tel Aviv University, where there is no surveillance, where they can do everything they want and are not allowed to do at home; here in Tel Aviv they are person X, and in the village they are person Y. If a girl has a relationship with a guy she can't just tell her parents. If she goes to clubs, she won't tell. She will dress differently.

Female students can do much to resist and go beyond tradition, but the question is whether they were willing to pay the price, said Rami, adding that 'this price includes actual killings, this is also a reality.' The female students navigate the possibilities of the urban university in parallel to the role expectations of their families or acquaintances. When they enter this new space, many are supposed to 'preserve themselves' in line with Arab tradition, a pressure Arab men are quite exempt from (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 119). Israeli-Palestinian women often need to maintain a delicate balance between power and weakness, individual determination and subordination to familial commitments; they seek to balance ideas of egalitarian individualism with their loyalty to the family (Sa'ar 2001, 734). There is a tension between values of gender equality and individual freedom on the one hand and deeply embedded cultural norms on the other (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 123). Some female students prefer to live isolated from the city and keep contact with Israelis and men to a minimum, whilst others embrace the relative freedom on campus away from their home-towns. A gendered perspective of the city also reveals that alongside the limiting aspect there is a 'liberating one' (Herzog 2009, 10).

There is a tendency among Palestinian students in Israel to also live where they study, increasingly so as to find attractive jobs in industry, commerce, or with NGOs and political work (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 125). What Herzog (2009, 5) says about women who move into 'mixed cities' is equally true for Tel Aviv: this choice enables an alternative space for Palestinian women to express their opposition – or relation more generally – to both their own society and Jewish society. The students' experience certainly varies with differences in class, family background, personality and town or city of origin. Although most Palestinian women at Tel Aviv University seemed to have middle-class backgrounds, enjoying higher education alone does not guarantee that they can make free choices, and many female graduates are conflicted over whether to remain in the city or return to their community of origin once they graduate (Herzog 2009, 16). In the case of Tel Aviv, female students are under particular pressure to return home, because of the city's image as a liberal and morally problematic place with a Jewish-Israeli character, which is perceived as

threatening Palestinian women's preservation within the lines of tradition, and as problematic in political terms too.

In Search of Control

In her last year of study, the psychology student Muna shared an apartment with her husband. They lived in southern Tel Aviv, a 'poor area' with lower rental prices. Will they move back home? I asked her during a lunch break at university.

> I think I will never go back home, although we have a house back in my village reserved for us. (…) But after living in Tel Aviv for years you can't live in the village anymore. Because you got used to free life; you reach a point where you realize that you will lose it all when you go back home. (…) I have a lot of family members and friends who don't think about going back. But some know that this is the way you have to follow. After studying here for years, they go back, get married, and find a place in the comfort zone.

Studying in Tel Aviv can change the students' perspective on the village. Yet only a few weeks later, Muna was less sure about staying in Tel Aviv, saying during another meeting on campus:

> If I had no house back home I would stay here [in Tel Aviv]…wait, no. It's hard in many ways. My parents keep on asking me: "when are you coming back, when are you settling down?" And then I find myself telling them, "next year we will finish studying and then we come back." But I know deep inside that we will never go back.

Although she is already married – the usual requirement for 'settling down' as a Palestinian woman – she is still asked when she will finally settle down. Tel Aviv is not really a welcomed residential choice from her family's viewpoint, which only increases the dilemma because living in the city also made Muna feel more distant form the life a small village. Moreover, there were no appropriate employment opportunities in the area close to the city of Acre, where the family's village al-Maghar is located, said Muna, adding that the best posts for clinical practice were around Tel Aviv, as for many other professions.

She felt 'at home' in Tel Aviv because of 'work and independence', while the village made her feel as if 'everyone gets into your underwear and minds your business'.

Although they felt isolated as 'probably the only Arabs' living in the southern Tel Aviv neighbourhood, at least they could do what they wanted. 'It is our time and our life. This is what feels like home.' Moreover, she felt uncomfortable in the village, into which she could not 'bring' her identity as she would want to. While both the village and Tel Aviv had their disadvantages, she said that the village demanded more compromises from her with regard to who she was and what she liked in life. Tel Aviv, on the other hand, allowed her to be in control:

> There are traditions I have to obey, occasions I have to attend, holidays, funerals, weddings. Being here (in Tel Aviv) allows me not to do all that. Things are under my control there. But when I am there I have no choice. This is the big thing about living here. To be independent, to control my life and do things the way I want to, being in charge of all the things I hated to do back home, which I did against my own will. I had to hide, I did not feel comfortable doing them.

This idea of being in charge is of course not specific to the Palestinians in Tel Aviv. Young people all over the world leave their parents' houses to study or work in a big city. But in Israel the rural-urban divide has an ethno-national dimension with a Jewish economic core and a largely Palestinian periphery. Yet Tel Aviv, as in the case of Muna, becomes a deeply meaningful place and thus implicated within the lives and identities of Palestinians. Moreover, studying and subsequently securing employment in cities like Tel Aviv and Jerusalem has become more common among Arab women in Israel, who may achieve 'more independence' by living there because of the distance from their home-towns and from 'surveillance' by family members and villagers (Ibrahim 2010, 210). However, the binary conception of dependence-independence juxtaposes the home-town and the city as if they were two disconnected worlds, while in fact the two overlap and interact in many ways. Such 'independence' is in fact a double-bind, the uneasy coexistence of seemingly contradictory expectations and desires.

Procrastination and Evading Return

It was meant to be a glorious day for Rima and her family when, after a few extra-years of studying for her Bachelor's degree at Tel Aviv University, her name was eventually announced by the Professor hosting the annual graduation ceremony of

her school on campus. There was excitement in the air and there were tears in her eyes; an expression of relief and joy but also of uncertainty and stress, and regrets about the late arrival of this very transition.

In the eyes of their parents, living in Tel Aviv away from 'home' was justifiable as long as she still studied. Yet studying was also a cover for other things much less 'official'. Rima started to work at an IT-company in Tel Aviv halfway through her studies. She moved into her own studio apartment, although her parents and wider family were left to believe that she still lived in the student dormitories, which is considered more appropriate for the underlying purpose of studying. In Tel Aviv, studying soon became secondary for Rima and her life shifted more towards work, where she also met new friends. Her income increased and her lifestyle changed. Simultaneously all this delayed her eventual graduation, which was of course not entirely unwanted, because graduation meant going back home or at least facing increasing pressures to do so or to settle down and marry.

Rima enjoyed the city's lifestyle but had to balance different lives and roles, the one in Tel Aviv and the other in the town her family lived. Particularly her mother acted as a constant reminder of this second world. Unintentionally, she would often make Rima feel bad for not being at home enough. Sometimes she felt like an outsider compared to her sisters and brother, who still lived at home. At times neighbours and other family members put pressure on her mother about her daughter. Once an anonymous caller threatened them over photographs she had seen of her daughter on Facebook. What was especially hard for Rima was that she could not share her life in Tel Aviv with her parents, because she would have to lie about most of it. And so there seemed to be an unspoken agreement not to talk much about the details of her life there. Her parents never came to visit during the time she lived in the studio apartment by herself, which seemed surprising to me but may have been a silent way of self-protection for both sides.

The irony is that being in Tel Aviv alienated Rima more and more from life in her home-town, while it also made her feel increasingly estranged from Tel Aviv and its lifestyle. She began to dislike its Jewish-Israeli character, the constant Hebrew speaking, the absenting of Palestinian identity in its space and the leisure

consumerism with its high expenses. Friendships she previously fostered with Jewish colleagues at work seemed increasingly superficial. She was tired of being the 'token Arab' in conversations. Realising that she had given up her political ideals for a convenient life in the 'bubble', her desire to live in a Palestinian social, political and cultural environment grew stronger.

She was pulled and pushed in different directions: postponing graduation further may have upheld the necessary 'reason' to live alone as a student, but staying in Tel Aviv also made her realise that this was not really a sustainable option either. After graduating, she moved back home for a while but eventually took up residence in Haifa, which has an increasingly visible and strong Palestinian community. Haifa was also closer to most of her family and did not have the negative image of Tel Aviv as a liberal Jewish-Israeli place of excess. This digression from university campus was meant to show how graduation marks a decisive transition for Palestinian female students. It represents a turning point where the temporariness of their presence in Tel Aviv is laid bare and their efforts to reconcile two different lives coalesce into a new difficult phase.

'Double Lives'

The difficult balancing act between two different 'lives' is particular for students but sometimes also starts before that. The Tel Aviv University student Maisalon was 15 when she went to a Jewish boarding school in Jerusalem, although she grew up in an Arab village further north. Her first encounter with Tel Aviv and Jaffa was after high school, when she decided to join a Jewish-Arab commune in Jaffa called 'Reut Sadaqa', the Hebrew and Arabic words for friendship. Her family did not really want her to live in Jaffa at the time. They wanted her to join university directly from high school: 'It was so hard for people to understand, and for me to explain, what I was doing in my life', said Maisalon. She explained her balancing acts in greater detail:

> So I started the big lie. Or maybe it is better to call it double lives rather than a big lie. Like telling everyone I live with girls and only meet girls. (…) The main reason why I did this alternative thing in Jaffa after high school was because I didn't want to go back to the village. Afterwards I tried to stay in the village and it was awful. I couldn't find any job in the north and my parents

were pushing me to study. Back in the village, at the age of 19, I was in another world without the freedom I had the years before. Every time I went back to the village, I became a different person. I needed to do the whole play with all that it involved. In the village, I couldn't go out until after 10 or 11. I could not smoke, I had to wear different clothes. Then I applied to university and started with gender studies. At that point my parents didn't care what I was studying, they just said study and go to university. They thought I won't find a job later. First I lived in the dormitories. For me, when I came to Tel Aviv, this whole experience of student life was not so new. I had it since I was 15. For more than four years I was living by myself in Jerusalem, having Jewish friends and so on. But everyone told me I should give this student experience a try, so I went to the dorms.

My roommates were two girls from Baqa [al-Gharbiyyah]. One of them was wearing the headscarf and was quite religious. The other one did not wear the scarf and was a bit better. They liked me but thought I was weird. I didn't like life in the dorms. I felt like it was much harder than in the village.

'Why?' I asked her.

In the dorms I was so afraid to be in the headlines, even in the village I felt more freedom. Also my family was known inside the village as being different. But in the dorms they didn't know me. They could say bad things about me, because my lifestyle was different, it didn't fit, like having a boyfriend, going out and coming back late from bars.

I *even* wanted to live with Arab girls after high-school. I wanted this experience, but it was a big mistake. I wanted the Arab experience because I felt I grew distant from this life. I felt like I had a problem with identity, language and belonging. But I also hated the feeling of belonging to this traditional society. I felt more comfortable being around Jewish people in the beginning. Sometimes it felt good, sometimes not. Imagine that all my Jewish friends were quite average at high school, went to the army and so on. Today, my Jewish friends are more left-wing and the others are Palestinian. So I was totally in love with the Israeli lifestyle, having this freedom of not being judged by anyone. It was simply more comfortable for me to be with Jewish people.

Although she says that her Palestinian sense of belonging was weak as a teenager, she always sensed that there was something wrong with the 'Israeli narrative'. One of the first times she began to identify more strongly as a Palestinian was at university, when she tried to learn more 'details and facts' from scholars and other resources. Politically, living amid an Israeli university and city was very challenging

and at some point she stopped having 'the usual' conversations. These issues with Jewish Israelis taken together with the double-life between city and village were difficult to balance. At the end of our conversation, I came back to the issue of the 'double-life', asking her if this was the same as being in-between?

> Yes, it never changed. It's like living a whole life in-between. And I don't know if I will go back to my village. Now I am engaged, so the situation is a bit different. But being in-between started much earlier. I remember that my grandfather, who was typically religious, didn't like me wearing a short dress even when I was very little. So my mom told me that when we are in the village, we put on a scarf but outside it was ok without. So you learn to accept this education which duplicates your life.

'How was this double-life specific during your time at university?' I asked.

> At the university dormitories it was especially hard. There, all the guys and girls bring all their stupid thoughts from the village and try to observe and surveil the others. They don't usually come over and talk to you, but I have at least two or three experiences where they did. Girls saying that I am a "Sharmuta" [a whore], or guys coming over saying similar stuff. So I tried to keep a low profile. I stayed in the dorms for one year and then I moved into an apartment in Ramat Aviv. Still with Arab girls, but it was much easier. I lived there for two years. It was without the whole scene. I could have disappeared and no one may have noticed.

This last sentence expresses the desire to be in control, to have privacy and to escape surveillance. Especially the reproduction of Palestinian traditions within the dormitories seemed to contradict and even threaten the way she imagined her life as a student in Tel Aviv; it made anonymity impossible, which is probably why Palestinian women from traditional and religious families often have no choice but to live there. The tragedy lies in the overlap of different kinds of pressure: Palestinian peers who play morality-police, and Israelis who are politically hostile.

Straddling Tel Aviv and the 'Village'

Decisions that affect all Palestinian students in Tel Aviv are whether to live in the dormitories, in a shared flat in Tel Aviv, in Jaffa, or in one's home-town. Hisham also contrasted Tel Aviv with the prospect of living in his home-town Tur'an. During

a visit to the village he complained that ‘the neighbours talk about you’. In Tel Aviv he could do whatever he wanted without anyone knowing: ‘I can’t walk with my girlfriend on the street here (in the village) and put my arm around her’. And he would certainly not wear shorts in his home-town either. Drinking in Tel Aviv was fine, but he wouldn’t do so back home: ‘In Tel Aviv, all these things are easier.’

As we walked into his parents’ house in Tur‘an, I asked him about his future house. ‘Will it be here?’ There will be no house waiting for him, although many Arab men who study at Tel Aviv University will have a house built by their family by the time they graduate. ‘If parents have land and build houses they put pressure on you to come back home after studying’, he said. And settling down in Tur’an was not really what he wanted. Also, because ‘in many Arab communities there is no work that fits your qualifications; if Tel Aviv is where your desired job is, then you obviously move here.’

The timing of my visit to Tur‘an was no coincidence, as Hisham had decided to move back home for a short while after living in shared flats in Tel Aviv for seven years. This was explained with a glance into the future, as one day when he marries, his family will need to be close by too. But it was also clear that it was only seen as a temporary retreat. For the young lawyer, the best prospects were still in Tel Aviv.

Inside their house Hisham’s mother welcomed us to sit down and a little later his father joined us. Hisham’s family supported the *Jabha*, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, an alliance with a mixed Jewish and Arab constituency that grew out of the Israeli Communist Party. We sat on leather coated chairs drinking coffee and I asked his father about the prospect of Hisham living in Tel Aviv. After clarifying that he only represented himself, the self-declared Marxist who once studied in Ukraine said:

> I didn’t have any problem with Hisham going to Tel Aviv. But there was no alternative really. Tel Aviv is also the best for law. I want him to go and see, to understand the world, to go beyond limitations. If he would find a Jewish girlfriend, it would be no problem for us, but for the community here it would be. There is no other place than Tel Aviv to work for him. He will soon be doing an internship in Tel Aviv with a respected law office. I encouraged him to do that. But in the end, it is good to come back. He will come back. Many leave to Europe, I am against emigration [*hijrah*]. It is strengthening the Jewish

> presence. (…) Tel Aviv wants to be a liberal town, [promoting] a good way of life. But we are also talking about lots of discrimination in Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv is a relevant choice mainly because there is 'no alternative'. Hisham said that although 'everyone goes to Tel Aviv', the problem was that the community at home distanced itself from what is going on there. 'We, as Muslims – I am born Muslim, but an atheist – go out here and we also drink alcohol. It is hard to share such things at home.' Tel Aviv and students' home-towns interact in interesting ways: both are central to a fulfilled life and yet they seem to contradict each other.

After my visit to Hisham's family house we drove towards Nazareth past Natzerat Illit, a town established in the midst of an Arab heartland that swallowed up part of its land (Rabinowitz 1997). A massive Israeli flag was set up at one entrance to the town, which Hisham called a 'provocation' on Arab land. About 20 percent or Natzerat Illit's residents are Arabs, many of them escaping the overcrowding and poor infrastructure in Nazareth and other neighbouring towns. The populist right-wing mayor, Shimon Gabso, would rather 'cut his hand off' than open an Arab school there (Washingtonpost.com, 20/9/2010).[24] When I met Gabso during the local elections in 2013, he told me: 'I will say it again: this town has to remain Jewish.' As we drove back later on, before I took the bus back to Tel Aviv, Hisham said that Natzerat Illit, but also Tel Aviv, reminded him that 'we are treated like a minority that immigrated here'.

In search for something that provided the familiarity of a village and the anonymity of the big city, some students move to the southern suburb of Jaffa, which had a lower cost of living and a substantial Palestinian community. Jaffa has a bookshop with Arabic literature, Palestinian theatre performances and some local coffee shops and bars where students hang out. The Arab students seemed to enjoy Jaffa because it allowed them to be more anonymous than in their home-towns while still living close to an Arab-Palestinian environment. A small coffee shop called Salmah, located not far from the flea market in a street with residential buildings, catered to the need for community *and* anonymity among students. While male and female students often sat outside the tiny place on a table, drinking beers and smoking

[24] URL: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/high-above-nazareth-an-israeli-mayor-wants-to-keep-his-city-jewish-now-and-forever/2013/09/19/1a3fd172-2157-11e3-ad1a-1a919f2ed890_story.html

cigarettes during hot summer nights, some of the local Jaffa-Palestinians walked by and glanced at the young 'outsiders' with a mix of curiosity and suspicion. Many of the local Palestinians were more religious and traditional in their views than the educated middle-class who hung out at Salmah. While relations between locals and other Palestinian citizens were generally good, one could not but notice the underlying tension. 'Arabs who move here from the north are more open, go out, and drink', said Ali, who lived in Jaffa but worked in an IT start-up in Tel Aviv. The place was an important alternative to the omnipresence of Jewish-Israeli culture and the Hebrew language.

'I think most Arab students only go out in Jaffa', said the engineering-student Wasseem. 'One of the reasons is that we don't really feel connected to bars where they only play Hebrew music. 'We don't have a single bar with Arab music in Tel Aviv.' This problem will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5 on the 'politics of leisure', but is important here because it is a particular issue among students. Wasseem called the campus-area of Ramat Aviv a 'boring ghetto' where nightlife takes place in student apartments, if at all. But going to university from Jaffa by bus can take up to an hour which is why he got himself a Vespa, which does the trip in 12 minutes.

Jaffa and its student cafés like Salmah provide a focal point for Palestinian students to meet in relative anonymity but without having to submit to Israeli culture. Most female and male TAU-students I knew who lived in Jaffa came from the Galilee or the Triangle regions in the north. They often did not know any of the families that lived around their apartments in Jaffa, but these locals often wanted to find out who *they* were. One student told me that she sometimes spoke Hebrew in groceries run by Palestinians if she did not feel like 'small-talk'. Such talk included questions by shopkeepers about where she was from and who her family was. The balance between individual control and anonymity on the one hand, and a close-knit Palestinian community on the other, was difficult to strike for these students.

The issue is of course different for female Muslim students from a very religious background, who talked with less lightness about their lives at Tel Aviv University than those who felt it provided 'freedom'. One day during the holy month of Ramadan I talked to two students from Umm el-Fahm. In order to avoid having an

actual meeting, which would have been inappropriate, I accompanied Marlen and Aishe on their walk from campus to their bus stop. Tel Aviv University did not consider Muslim holidays in its layout of the semester-calendar. Thus, the holy month of Ramadan overlapped with examinations that year, causing strain and frustration among Muslim students. Marlen and Aishe had to return home every evening for the breaking of the fast. The to and fro involved four hours on the bus travel per day. The commute made straddling exams and household responsibilities all the more difficult. This example shows clearly how discriminatory Israeli educational policies and practices interacted with familial pressures and cultural requirements in the lives of Palestinian students at Tel Aviv University. It was hard for these women to satisfy all the conflicting requirements placed on them.

'If it was a Jewish holiday, if we were Jewish, there would be no exams now. Ramadan is all about family, we have to be home', said Aishe as we walked along the pavement. Even during the *Eid al-Fitr*, the festival of breaking the fast at the end of Ramadan, they expected to have exams. Already anticipating a disaster, they set up a plan: a doctor would confirm that they were ill. 'So we don't get into trouble', said Aishe, who was wearing a headscarf and a *jalabiya*, a common Muslim female dress. This detail mattered: 'I could work if I wanted to, but no workplace of interest would accept me if I was wearing this', she said and pointed at the *jalabiya*. 'So…I don't work.' While some Palestinian students complained about 'compliments' for not looking Arab, these women faced and feared exclusion from opportunities because of their appearance.

The two shared a room in the dormitories and may have been among those Maisalon criticised as the 'guys and girls [who] bring all their stupid thoughts from the village'. The two only sometimes enjoyed restaurants or the 'Cinema City' shopping mall. 'What about the seaside boulevard and the beach?' I asked. Seemingly surprised and embarrassed by this question, Marlen answered with a clear 'no' – 'only Ramat Aviv', she added, referring to the university area. 'Guys have it so much easier', Marlen chipped in, adding that they could really enjoy the city. 'But I love studying…' she added with a smile. Did Tel Aviv change her in any sense? I asked. 'Changing me? No. Our customs are how they are. It doesn't matter if I am in Umm El-Fahm, or in Tel Aviv. I am not going to change because I am here.' Indeed, why

should she? There are no Arabic signs, books, or suitable places in Tel Aviv, she said, adding: 'As if we didn't exist.'

Facing exam-time during Ramadan must have felt like one does not 'exist'. It burdened many other Muslim students, but on the other hand, the fast also brought students on campus together. While some refrained from drinking and eating completely, others restricted their diet to cigarettes and coffee. Groups sat on the lawn or outside the library, chatting in Arabic. There was a sense of community and resilience. Fasting was difficult and the pressures of exam-time made it all the more exhausting. While some stayed home fatigued, others were stuck in Tel Aviv with exams and missed out on family time back home. For those who stayed in Tel Aviv during the week, going down to Jaffa may have been the only way to enjoy the night-time spirit of Ramadan.

No Need to Belong: a Christian Particularity

Tel Aviv University is a place where people of diverse backgrounds mix, while Christian students form a very particular case within this diversity (McGahern 2011). The psychology student Joudeh, for example, enjoyed the University and formed many friendships there, but complained that his first roommate in the dormitories was 'a very conservative Muslim', saying that their connection was not the best. Joudeh explained further:

> Jews see me through their prejudice of an Arab, Palestinians through their prejudice of a Christian. Sometimes Jews see me wearing a cross and say: 'How come you are Arab but Christian? When did you convert?' And when I say where I come from [Bethlehem], they don't believe it. But for us Christians, it's also easier to get along with Jews. We have more things in common. But every Israeli is different, depending on the country they come from. (…) With Muslims, I only get along if they are open.

There may be a tendency among Christian Palestinians to highlight their difference to religious Muslims while downplaying the distinction between the state's two national communities, the Jewish and the Palestinian (Sa'ar 1998, 216). As a religious minority within a national minority, their position is often one in-between the religious and national spectrum. Joudeh may have preferred to live with a Jewish

Israeli and not a religious Muslim, but even that would have caused another dilemma, that Jewish Israelis on campus sometimes try to tell him that he is not 'Palestinian' but Christian instead.

Another Christian student at the University was Samar. She was one of the many Palestinian citizens who had to wait two years, until she turned 20, to reach the minimum age required by the medical school in Tel Aviv. However, she loved Tel Aviv because unlike no other place until then, it allowed her to be 'individual' and 'invisible' instead of 'belonging to a group'. She contrasted the anonymity of Tel Aviv with Haifa, where everyone knows everyone, where 'you are still in the family zone'.

When I first explained my research to her, Samar chipped in, saying: 'it begins with Arabs as a minority, then you have Christian Arabs within that, and then you have women who are another minority inside these minorities. Look at me, you got it all.' She did not feel very connected to 'Palestinians' or to 'Israel', but as she explained, this lack of belonging gave her 'freedom' of not being tied to family and Arab customs. Tel Aviv, as a big and 'distant' city, allowed her to enjoy this relative independence. She believed that 'Muslims faced more limitations', which is why Tel Aviv must feel like 'real big change' for them.

Samar got used to being 'different' ever since she lived with her parents in the Druze village of *Peki'in (Al-Buqei'a)* in a Christian family in the Upper Galilee. She also attended school with mostly Druze students. The village is known for its ethnic and religious mix. Or, as she puts it, 'their identity was not very Arab'. In the school, where her mother was a teacher, Samar learned to rebel against the tendency to speak Hebrew by speaking English instead. Despite that, her Arabic has always been weaker than her Hebrew, and her knowledge of Palestinian history and politics was minimal, as she admitted. Samar explained based on her experiences in Tel Aviv:

> If I talk with an Arab girl from a Muslim village, she knows about her roots and her Palestinian history. I don't know any of that. I don't fit with Arabs. I don't feel Arab like them. I don't fit with Jews, because I am Arab. But I also feel less trapped because I have no close ties to culture. (…) I see this non-belonging as strength and not as a weakness. If life tastes like lemon, you make lemonade. Life gave me the condition that I can't fit anywhere, so I make this condition my identity. I don't look Arab or act Arab. Arabs, unless they know

> me, would assume I am not Arab. (…) So, because I don't fit, I can fit anywhere.

Tel Aviv University seemed like the right place for Samar because the city welcomed the kind of detached liberal individualism she related to. The 'bubble', as Tel Aviv is often called, enables her to avoid having to align herself politically and simultaneously creates distance from village and family life. Civility, for all its problems, is eventually also what enables a condition of not having to fit. Sennett (2002, 264) writes that civility is 'the shielding of others from being burdened with oneself', but in this case, it shields the self from being burdened with questions of belonging and politics. Belonging and collective struggles are not important to every Palestinian student at Tel Aviv University. To identify as an individualist will not shield her from discrimination as an 'Arab' on the job or housing market, but it seemed to offer relief from the burden of identification.

Conclusion

Tel Aviv University is a space where the boundaries between individuals and the wider society are shaped and reconfigured, where young Palestinians get to know themselves and others in political and pragmatic terms. Civility was employed as an analytical tool because it explains how social and political compromise becomes an integral part of the logic that regulates social and economic relations outside of campus-activism by subtracting the political 'Palestinian' dimension. I have also tried to extend the argument about civility into the realm of culture and tradition to suggest that the Palestinian students, and women in particular, must cope with overlapping fields of power and control. Civility is disabling some modes of being and identification while enabling others, which concerns their 'private' and 'public lives' via other Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. The double task of keeping the 'Palestinian' out of Tel Aviv, and 'Tel Aviv' out of the Palestinian family or town, may create what one student called a 'double life'; a private and political balancing act between too seemingly exclusive social worlds.

As I have shown, the 'hidden curriculum' of discrimination and marginalisation goes deep on Israeli campuses, Tel Aviv not being an exception. Ironically, this campus is

also where many of these young Palestinian citizens develop their political opinions as Palestinians precisely because of their inclusion within an Israeli city. As they hope to succeed in their future professions, some also feel the pressure to keep a low political profile. New female students may be concerned about keeping a low profile in the eyes of other Palestinians in the hope to avoid damaging gossip. Tel Aviv allows them to do what they would not do at home, to wear something else and behave differently, away from the watchful eyes of their family and self-declared patrons.

At Tel Aviv University, 'keeping a low profile' goes hand in hand with the fermenting of identity, consciousness and politicisation on campus. The activists and future lawyers are not two different types of people but often the same. As the story of Hisham shows, one can simultaneously become more politically active and more aware of the need to adapt in search of a professional career. Making compromises is not a form of submission but a way of coping with overlapping fields of power and control. As the Tel Aviv University student Aida put it: 'I am using their opportunities to be stronger against them.' Their strong commitment to succeed against all odds, however, often leads to the sobering realisation that as Palestinians in Israel, and even more so in Tel Aviv, they always have to make difficult personal and political compromises in order not to be compromised.

3 Lone Pursuits: In Search of Success in the 'City that Never Stops'

This chapter is about the employment-related pursuits of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, who experience different kinds of 'success' and ambivalences as they make use of the city's opportunities. Looking at low-income workers, small businesses and highly successful elites in the city, I will argue that the extent to which they can participate in Tel Aviv and profit from its social and economic opportunities is mediated by differences in ideology, class and status. At the same time, however, I will show that they all face very similar forms of ethno-national discrimination and employ very similar tactics in their pursuits of professional success. Given that their urban inclusion follows an individualist and isolating logic, some Palestinian employees in Tel Aviv feel an ambiguity about wanting to connect with other Palestinians but also dissociating from them, or wanting to immerse oneself in Tel Aviv while also feeling estranged from it. The different levels of inclusion they achieve produce different kinds of visibility, with consequences for their ability to overcome individualist urban marginalisation and form meaningful communities.

Modern cities have always been a space of both opportunity and inequality (Bayat and Biekart 2009), where inclusion and inequality are inextricably linked. Advanced marginalisation has resulted from changing patterns in employment and flawed urban inclusion in many contemporary cities (see Wacquant 2008). In this context, 'success' is no stable indicator of empowerment but a highly unstable and relative form of accomplishment influenced by class, citizenship, inequality, identity and personal dispositions. Although they all seek forms of economic and professional achievement, the stories of highly-skilled Palestinian employees in Tel Aviv are in sharp contrast to the stories of those who toil at the bottom of the city's income-ladder. In other ways, they are also strikingly similar: there is the feeling of having to make up for one's Palestinian-Arab background and manage its visibility. Well-educated and highly ambitious, some of the Palestinian students explored in the previous chapter will soon learn to 'swim against the stream like a salmon', as one Palestinian lawyer in Tel Aviv put it. This implies the idea of an uphill climb in the

face of disadvantages and discrimination, as well as the need to be unique and more competitive than others.

According to Asma Agbaria, a prominent Arab socialist politician from Jaffa and workers' rights activist, there are three kinds of Palestinian employees in Tel Aviv: Those who realize instinctively that they have no place in this country and the city, hence they simply come because they want to bring bread to their children and have no further expectations; those who are more nationalistic and think, on the basis of their political ideology, that they are not accepted and do not seek to be so; and thirdly, academics and other elites who have the privileges and resources to think and move beyond the marginalised status of their minority.

This typology suggests that professional achievements can help Palestinians to free themselves from the marginalisation they suffer as members of a stigmatised ethno-national minority. This chapter will explore how ethno-national marginalisation, class and privilege interact with 'the subtle forms of power that saturate everyday life, through experiences of time, space, and work' (Ortner 2006, 128). In *Identities: the hidden life of class*, Ortner (2006, 72–73) shows that class and ethnicity are mutually implicated, while discourses about class can remain 'hidden' behind other languages of difference, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Although her main reference in making this argument (the Jewish American Middle Class) may be a very specific one, it is clear that differences in class, privilege and legal status mediate the inclusion of Palestinians into the urban space of Tel Aviv, producing varying degrees of social participation and professional 'success'. Class differences emerging from capitalist economic rationality are closely related to ethnic differences and the externally projected 'pollution and stigma' that limits the social mobility of the marginalised.

One could even say that Palestinians inhabit a different dimension of the same city than Jewish-Israelis, and some argue that Israel encompasses two separate economies in the same space: a well-developed, advanced Jewish economy that is rapidly moving forward and an underdeveloped Arab economy (IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues) 2013, 3). Israel pledged upon joining the OECD in 2010 to reduce the economic disparity between Jewish and Arab citizens, but Israel's equality legislation is not readily enforced and discrimination exists in many sectors,

underlined by examples like the courier UPS not employing Arab drivers because they do not get security clearance to enter the airport (economist.com, 5/2/2014).[25] A study released by the Bank of Israel in 2014 found that 'Israeli Arabs' seem to be 'stuck' in a 'poverty trap' because of 'relatively low education levels, limited geographical distribution, inadequate resource allocation on the part of the public sector, and cultural differences' (Yashiv and Katsir 2014, 4). Unemployment rates are particularly high among the less educated, while the highly educated, most of whom are employed in the public sector, often work in occupations that do not fit their field of study (Ibid, 13). The study concludes that their limited participation in the labour market 'exacerbates their sense of alienation from Israeli social and political life' (93).

This study seems to imply that participation automatically results in decreasing alienation, which is certainly not always the case as we will see. Indeed, the problem is not only a lack of participation but also the tension and struggles that emerge as a result of inclusion into Tel Aviv. From the students of Tel Aviv University, who are at the beginning of their participation in the labour market, we can learn that the obstacles to finding a job are plenty, but also that they do not disappear once a job is found.

Difference as Profit and Obstacle

To support Palestinian graduates in their search for employment the non-profit organisation Kav Mashve promotes and supports Arab university graduates to increase their chances. On its website the organisation reports to have contributed to 780 placements of Arab university graduates up to 2013.[26] It was founded in 2007 by a prominent Israeli industrialist together with Israel's Manufacturers Association and has a mix of Jewish and Arab employees. I had the chance to meet Kheir Abdel Razek, Vice President of Marketing. Working on both the employee and employer side, the organisation also holds workshops with employers who emphasise what Abdel Razek calls a 'multi-cultural approach', which means teaching employers to not approach and evaluate Arab candidates in the same way they would evaluate a

[25] URL: http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2014/02/israels-arab-labour-force
[26] URL: http://www.kavmashve.org.il/english/

Jewish Israeli candidate. Citing one example, the employers are given background about why Arab employees may request a holiday for the wedding of a cousin, and why they may be more insecure in job-interviews. Their list of co-operating employers includes many internationals such as Google or IBM, but also Israeli companies like Bank Hapoalim or the online security start-up Checkpoint. The overall majority are technology companies, which are known for their celebration of diverse employee cultures.

It appears that the Palestinians' 'cultural difference' is an obstacle to their success because employers do not know how to deal with it or overtly discriminate against them. At the same time, the organisation tries to underline the profitability of this 'difference' under the label of 'Return on Investment'. Indeed, one of Kav Mashve's surveys found that Arab employees stay longer in a company than Jewish-Israeli employees. I learnt from several students that the jobs they found more easily were in the sales or service desk department of international companies, who needed Arabic speakers to converse with the Middle East region.

The Tel Aviv University student Dania experienced both the problems and benefits of being a Palestinian speaking job-seeker in Israel. We recall that Dania was the student who talked about being checked at the entrance to university, where not looking like an Arab made the guards treat Dania like a 'VIP'. She also told me about her fears that no matter how good her grades were, she would be disadvantaged as an Arab compared to equally qualified Jewish Israelis. And yet the same political economy also made use of her 'Arab-ness': one of Dania's jobs while being a student was in one of these Tel Aviv-based companies that employed Arabic speakers for their regional service desks. 'I was there for Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and so on. And a Chinese speaker was dealing with China', she explained, indicating that ironically, to be Palestinian is like being Chinese in Tel Aviv, a foreigner. Also the Palestinian Tel Aviv resident Reem told me on day: 'We only find work in jobs that are connected to speaking Arabic. I sent a lot of CVs for jobs in the last month. Only one answered, and unsurprisingly it is a customer service that needs me because I speak Arabic.'

Dania spoke passionately about the high status of multicultural 'diversity' in Tel Aviv but realised that her future office will most likely be 'Jewish', saying: 'I will

have to accept that they are different, and they have to accept that I am different.' And this difference may become a resource in one situation and a stigma in another. Dania believed that her future employers would probably not discriminate against her on the basis of her Arab background because after all, they needed 'a link between Tel Aviv, the Jewish people, and Saudi Arabia'. Based on her experience, she explained further that if an Israeli would call an Arab customer in English and said he called from Israel, 'they hang up the phone'; and if they speak in English but only disclose the name of the company but not the country, the customer's response may not be enthusiastic. 'But when I talk to them, as a Muslim speaking Arabic, they will show respect. I will say "As-Salam Aleikum," and it will bring me respect.' Dania further explained she had educated a past employer about the times and days during Ramadan when one simply cannot call up Muslim Arabs, 'these things explain why they want diversity', she said.

The Palestinian citizens of Israel may be welcome to fill the slots that fit their 'difference', but are also stigmatised because of that difference when analysed outside of these exceptions. In one of Kav Mashve's workshops they asked employers to write down what they immediately associated with the word Arab. And according to Kheir Abdel Razek, they often have a clear distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Arabs, 'and they say that they don't know how to find the good ones'. It seemed that Kav Mashve's aim is to help employers find 'good' employees while telling the graduates how they can perform as 'good Arabs'. The trainees must learn about the specific civility that is expected from them as employers and by extension, as good citizens. In Abdel Razek's words, they teach graduates how to be more self-confident because they often 'only see the glass ceiling in themselves'. A 'good Arab' is a 'civil citizen' who exercises self-restraint and exercise and respect in the face of disagreement (Cheshire Calhoun 2000, 256). In *Good Arabs*, Cohen (2011, 3) writes that in the early state, 'moderates' was the official term for Arabs who did not take nationalist positions and who accorded legitimacy to Israel's existence and its actions. The concept is rooted in the state's intention to separate Palestinians who became citizens in Israel from the Palestinians in what are today the occupied territories, creating the label 'Israeli Arab'. Civility in this context, usually seen as a social lubricant that eases tension (Sennett 2002), is a power-related tool that either

suppresses difference or welcomes it in spaces of exception where it appears profitable for those who allocate the opportunities and/or those who enjoy them. Very much like the State of Israel itself, the Israeli political economy has a dual nature: it discriminates but also gives merit to those who are moderate.

The young graduates face another obstacle because they tend to study professions with an already full labour market, according to Abdel Razek, who asks the aspiring lawyers and doctors to 'diversify' so they find jobs more easily. 'Yes, we are killing dreams', she admitted, 'but we also tell them to listen to their dreams'. What she meant is that many of those who would like to study medicine do not have grades that are good enough, scored low on the entry exam, or do not want to wait until they reach the age limit. So they end up reaching for the next-closest, like pharmacy, which causes another problem:

> 55-percent of Superpharm's pharmacists are Arab. We have more than the market needs. And that means that they work for lower salaries, because employers know there are more waiting. If you go to Superpharm on Saturday you will only see Arabs there, Arab names on the name-tags. There are more than 10.000 Arab teachers unemployed, or waiting to for a job. Many lawyers work as waiters. Accountants are also beginning to create a problem. So we give them the numbers and tell them to diversify.

Superpharm is the biggest drug-store chain in Israel with more than 6000 employees and numerous branches in Tel Aviv, and it clearly benefits from the oversupply of Palestinian citizens who do not make it into other sectors. As the graduates find it difficult to enter highly competitive areas of the economy in Tel Aviv, they often end up working elsewhere in a different field. Another problem is that most cannot imagine to live in a city such as Tel Aviv long-term, at least not with children. Hence there is a tendency among them to return back to their home-areas, where some of them follow the tradition of living in the husband's parents' home-town. It is fair to say that their balancing acts require a great amount of flexibility and adaptability.

As Sennett (1998, 9) tells us in *The Corrosion of Character*, flexibility often arouses anxiety because people do not know which risks will pay off and which paths they should pursue. Uncertainty is no longer explainable with reference to some kind of disaster or crisis, it has become 'woven into the everyday practices of a vigorous

capitalism; instability is meant to be normal' (Ibid, 31). For the Palestinians who seek jobs or a career in Tel Aviv, uncertainty and instability have many faces. Just as civility becomes a burden, so does difference; and according to Sennett, even flexibility, needed by Palestinians to navigate the maze of inclusion, can be a heavy 'burden'. In the face of multiple obstacles, the Palestinians' pursuits in Tel Aviv are often lonely struggles.

Alone Together

Being a Palestinian employee in Tel Aviv is above all a rather lonely business. It is a 'lone pursuit', to use the wording of Smith (2007), who speaks of 'defensive individualism' among poor, work-seeking black Americans. Such defensive individualism emphasised self-reliance and the importance of hard work in the face of difficulties, paralleled by an absence of networks and a climate of distrust and non-cooperation. In *The Culture of Work*, Sennett (2005, 133) says something similar when he names 'abandoned' the keyword of contemporary capitalism, because self-creation is often the only thing left in the face of lacking institutional power. Hence people are 'thrust back' on their own strategic and emotional resources. This character of neoliberal urban economy combines with other reasons for isolation among Palestinians in Tel Aviv, who tend to approach the city as a functional space and not a space of social engagement and community. Individualism is a problem if it affects those who are further away from 'the centre', because they have limited and fragile networks and are in need of support. Kav Mashve and other organisations try to provide such support, if only for a small number of highly educated Palestinians. The same isolation that expresses marginalisation is also a key factor that drives their success.

The three Palestinian 'heroes' in Rabinowitz's (1997) monograph *Overlooking Nazareth* are subordinates within the Israeli system that marginalizes Palestinians and discriminates against them, but they also subscribe to liberal core values and norms: 'The three men and their careers are champions of meritocracy, professionalism, hard work, universalistic pluralism, freedom of individual choice, representational democracy and equal opportunity' (184). In doing so they can gain

distance from collective political issues, facilitate inclusion and success, but all at a price. According to Rabinowitz (1997), 'the bidding structure of Israeli liberalism' has the ability to reduce 'big' issues to personal events, thereby flattening and depoliticizing Palestinians; 'temporary upsets in the form of inclusion and co-optation of individuals (…) could form the perfect legitimizing cover for indefinite exclusion of the Palestinians' (184).

Some Palestinians in Tel Aviv invest all their time into inclusion, they work twice as hard, and must swim 'against the stream like a salmon', in order to maximise the time and profit of their work in Tel Aviv. And they must do so as individuals. Because it is a liberal space that offers anonymity, this city allows some to detach themselves from some communal and political responsibilities, which is also a force that may facilitate their future marginalisation as a collective. There 'is an 'assumption', said the lawyer Zaki in his Tel Aviv office.

> This assumption is that it is harder to be accepted, harder to succeed for Arabs in Israel. If you accept this assumption, you will surely not break through the barrier. But if you want to go beyond this assumption, you will have to work twice as hard as others and be twice as good as the regular employee.

Breaking through the glass ceilings means working twice as hard. It is clear that Zaki did not have much patience for 'assumptions'. Like him, others had the choice over whether to feel tension and conflict or not. Whatever obstacles there are they can, in theory, be overcome. His logic is that if Palestinian individuals in Israel tried harder to put their assumptions aside and did everything they could to overcome obstacles, then the community as a whole would benefit too. Zaki is an executive at a law firm in Tel Aviv who had been living in the city for four years at the time of our first meeting. 'I wanted a place where the sky is the limit', he explained his choice. He enjoyed the urban lifestyle and sometimes attended wine workshops and wine-tastings after work, which he named as his hobby. Despite this he spent most weekends with family and friends in Haifa. Tel Aviv is a rather 'lonely city' to him with a lack of community. After all, he 'chose to be a stranger' in this lonely city because he wanted to be in a place where his difference stood out.

Almost a cliché, urban individualism and anonymity as in Simmel's idea that 'in the metropolitan crush of persons' one can feel rather lonely (Simmel 2011, 3), is in fact

highly interesting in this case. Unlike many other Palestinian workers, not being recognized as Arab was part of the privilege that came along with fluent Hebrew, wearing a suit and working in an office in central Tel Aviv. Yet at the same time, he also felt isolated in his early days in the city, which is one reason why Zaki and others formed a group of about 35 Muslim and Christian Palestinian citizens of Israel who either lived or worked in Tel Aviv.

Around 10-20 of them regularly met for a dinner to which they usually invited a guest speaker. 'The idea was to organise a group of [Arab-Palestinian] professionals who have arrived at a certain standing in the Israeli business arena and in Tel Aviv', Zaki explained, adding that the aim of the meetings was a productive exchange over how to advocate change for the benefit of 'our community'. Invited guests speakers included government ministers, members of parliament, civil society organisers and representatives of international organisations such as the OECD. Featuring some very well-known and successful people, the group was created on the basis of 'success' and high status. And they all shared an interest in contributing to the community. However, maybe quite ironically, they shared a certain reluctance to form any such community with other Palestinians in Tel Aviv beyond these meetings.

'I think a lot of Arabs in Tel Aviv just like being anonymous in the city', said Kheir, who was also part of the group and had been living in Tel Aviv for 13 years, since she graduated in the field of advertising. Originally from Nazareth, she studied in Haifa and then in Tel Aviv. We met at one of her favourite restaurants, the 'Shine', on a quiet corner not far from the beach. It was 11 A.M. and I ordered a cup of coffee. Kheir ordered a glass of 'Lambrusco' instead. 'I always have alcohol when I sit in a place like this', she said with a smile. She tells me that before she first joined the group's meetings, she hardly knew any other Arabs in the city. 'Here in Tel Aviv, we Arabs don't know each other; it's not like we have horns and recognize each other on the street.' Even when Kheir first heard about these dinners, she did not really feel like joining in the first place: 'I was a bit scared of suddenly meeting all these other Arabs.'

Kheir said that this was also the result of her particular generation: one generation before today's students at Tel Aviv University and two after her grandparents, 'who lived through the Nakba and were sure about their identity'. Her parents were born 'into the reality of Israel, scared of surveillance' during the early years of the state. They were public employees, the mother a teacher, the father in agriculture. Theirs was a particular political trajectory led by traditional leaders and the establishment, which accepted Israel's sovereignty as a necessary evil and collaborated with its authorities in the hope for more rights (Cohen 2011, 232). Kheir's father still tells her 'not to talk about this on the phone' when she talks about politics. As teenagers and young adults, she and her siblings were told not to attend political events and not to sympathise with any movement.

'My father said: when you will be older you would have black stains on you; we were neutralised and my parents were afraid to lose their house and their life, that's why they shut up', explains Kheir, adding that this was why she and her siblings learned to focus on opportunities not politics: her brother works for Ernst&Young, other siblings live in Germany and run businesses, and she has long worked in advertising. 'We grab the opportunities; we are independent and different at the same time.' As a university student, Kheir felt that other Palestinians saw her as a 'traitor' because she never participated in political activities. Tel Aviv only seemed to further this tendency. Working for 10-12 hours in a Hebrew-language environment also affected her Arabic skills. 'If you are an Israeli abroad and you meet Israelis, you speak Hebrew and you will be happy. Here, we don't always do that', she said.

All this is important to understand why blending into Tel Aviv somehow contradicts political organising and being visibly Palestinian. Overall, the Palestinians in Tel Aviv are happy to be 'anonymous together', said Kheir, explaining further: 'Arabs here see that there are a lot of other Arabs, but they ignore it. They don't really want to have a community within a community in this city. It is not what they come for.'

Some reasons for this immediately come to mind. Because their inclusion into jobs and their immersion into the city advocates apolitical individualism, being a Palestinian collective in Tel Aviv is in itself political and somewhat outside of the usual. The freedom to drink Lambrusco, even in the morning, may well be another

legitimate reason. That their group's meetings alone attract some attention becomes obvious from Kheir's description of one of these meetings:

> Once we met in a restaurant and invited [the MP] Ahmed Tibi as a guest. The waiters and the other guests stared at us, although we were in a separated backroom. When the men walked down with Tibi at the end of the meeting, chatting loudly in Arabic, walking between the tables, they attracted a lot of attention. People at this place saw 30 Arabs and probably thought: where did they come from?

A group of Palestinians attracts attention in Tel Aviv because the city is not used to it, but also because of how inclusion and civility function as a force that makes them collectively invisible when they usually go about their own business. Yet even at the workplace, the Palestinians in Tel Aviv did not always know how to approach one another when surrounded by Jewish Israelis. The medical doctor Firas from Nazareth, who had lived and worked in Tel Aviv for several years, talked about such 'strange interactions' in the hospital. He was the only Arab doctor among 30 in his section, but there was an Arab nurse and two Arab nursing interns.

> Once I stood there surrounded by Jewish doctors, the first time I met one of the new Arab nursing students. There was tension between us. We didn't talk Arabic, but I spoke Hebrew; there was this communication failure on the first day. I asked myself, why? Maybe because she has a headscarf and it confused me, because I am not used to this background. It's not natural for me. But maybe it was the setting at the hospital. I am an Arab and I am in charge. And she is an Arab nursing student, it wasn't easy. I should have talked Arabic to her from the beginning, not Hebrew. But I didn't because I thought maybe she didn't want to speak Arabic in this context surrounded by Jewish staff. So I didn't. If we would have talked Arabic from the beginning, it would have worked out better.

It seems that wherever it appears in Tel Aviv, speaking Arabic becomes a 'problem'. Palestinians in workplaces dominated by Jewish Israelis do not always want to attract too much attention to their difference, because it threatens civility. It is of course no secret among colleagues that they are 'Arabs', as they would call them. Sadly, the very act of creating intimacy around their shared identity and language becomes awkward because so much consideration and ambiguity is involved. Yet Firas talked Arabic with colleagues he already knew, the medical technicians, regularly. Thus

included usual phrases, like '*marhaba ya doctor!',* which were part of 'a close everyday relationship I could never have with a Jewish colleague', Firas explained.

There was another problem at the beginning of his job: Firas was careful not to work more than others did. He built 'a wall' around himself during his first months at work, not trusting anyone when they asked him to fulfil certain tasks, always suspecting that they would demand more work from him simply because he was Arab. So much of this tension takes place within a person's mind in their quarrelling with themselves and the contradictions their inclusion into a Jewish-Israeli place has caused.

Privileged Choices

To ordinary urbanites, the big city may symbolise freedom and hybridity. Although some Palestinians also embrace this idea, Zaki acknowledged that 'there is political tension wherever you go', because of being Israeli in a taxi driven by an Arab abroad, or as an Arab for the Jewish driver in Tel Aviv. The main difference is that Zaki thinks he can choose whether or not to feel tense: 'I chose not to feel tense wherever I go, chose to feel happy about my identity, and to profit from it.'

Also humour is a way to evade tension at the workplace. One day their manager invited all employees to celebrate Passover together in an email. Zaki, however, realised that he had fixed appointments for that day already, of which the manager knew. So he replied to the message, writing that 'because I am an Arab you don't want me at your celebration'. It was meant as a joke and was warmly received as such. 'I say everything I believe in, and my boss knows my political views. I feel confident.'

This was not always the case. In earlier employment Zaki always closed the door before making a phone call in Arabic. Only in his current office he felt that he could talk Arabic freely. Although there is no way to say this with certainty, it appears that his freedom to be visibly Palestinian and Arabic speaking is possible because of his status and success. Instead of succumbing to the 'assumption', Zaki has the choice to be unique. Someone who is unique is so also because he or she is different in one positive way or another, whereas those who stigmatise others because of their

difference annul uniqueness and replace it with simplified ascriptions of alterity. A postcolonial trend has often emphasised the hybridity among exiles and members of diasporas as a resource that transcends difference and borders (Hall 1990; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Clifford 1994). But one must first have the privilege to enjoy the position from which to celebrate such plurality of identity and the 'choice' to make it visible.

Another member of the group holding regular dinners in Tel Aviv is the lawyer Rani. I meet him in his office, which is situated on the 12th floor of a building called 'Zion tower' on Rothschild Boulevard. Just as we sit down Rani answers a call by talking Arabic at first, then a little bit of Hebrew, until he eventually switches back to Arabic. He was born and raised in the town of Taybeh in Central Israel but went to a private high-school in the mixed Jewish-Arab city of Haifa, where he got to know 'diversity' for the first time, as he says. His father was a scholar in Criminology at Tel Aviv University.

Rani is unique because he was one of very few Israeli citizens who received a scholarship to study in Jordan, just after the Jordan-Israel peace treaty was signed in 1994. He studied there for five years and after graduation, decided to submit applications to law-offices in Tel Aviv, focusing on those offices dealing with commercial and business cases. Although he thought that his chances 'were practically zero', he was hired for one main reason: 'I was swimming against the stream like a salmon.' His experience of studying in Jordan proved to be beneficial to the employer. 'They thought it was interesting. It made a good impression.' He had been working in that company for 13 years by the time we met. Since proving himself a successful lawyer, his relationship with Tel Aviv became 'more natural' and his self-confidence higher. Instead of suppressing a Palestinian-Arab background, as I argued many are expected to do to satisfy demands for civility, Zaki benefitted from it. The fact that he is Christian and comes from a good family may have had a strong influence, however.

Another member of the elite group was Adeeb, who lived in Tel Aviv permanently. He criticised that others acted as if there was always conflict between different identities, but he did not think so. 'I have many identities on many different levels.

And they don't have to contradict each other. They work together', he told me in his favourite Tel Aviv coffee shop. 'So how do you label yourself?' I asked.

'I like to say I am a Palestinian *Tel Avivi*. Identities are like Facebook pages for me. You can like any page you want (…) and you can live with it in peace.' This was quite significant, I thought to myself. It was similar to the Christian student at Tel Aviv University who saw strength in her 'non-belonging'.

About the regular dinner meetings, Adeeb said that they were not really activism but more about coming together and chatting. The place I met Adeeb was close to his home in the heart of the UNESCO-listed 'White City'. Like many other 'Tel Avivans', Adeeb loved coffee shops and spent time working, relaxing or meeting people there. As we sat down in his favourite café, the waitress served his coffee straight away without asking. 'I am here several times a day', he said with a smile. In Tel Aviv the hidden difference as a Palestinian-Arab is not always made visible. Here, Adeeb could blend in and choose from a whole set of 'Facebook-pages'.

Originally from a Christian family in Haifa, Adeeb came to Tel Aviv straight from the Technion, Haifa's prestigious university for science and technology. At the time we met he had been living in Tel Aviv for 20 years. 'There used to be an Arab here and there, but today there are many more Arabs in the city. You hear a lot of Arabic in all kinds of places', the 43 year-old said. It may have been very unusual to live in Tel Aviv as a Palestinian 20 years ago but now things were 'more open, more diverse', Adeeb said, adding: 'It used to be literally a "white city", and now it's a diverse city.'

Adeeb's work in advertising and communications has been highly successful. Interestingly, while he lives in Tel Aviv, he also works on projects with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Ramallah on communication strategies, sometimes finding himself in the position of representing the quasi-government of Palestinians. This was the case when he attended the Davos World Economic Forum with the PNA's delegation. It created some complications: 'I should say I am from Tel Aviv, but can't say it. A few times I had to shut up there.' When the former President of Israel, Shimon Peres, spoke, Adeeb wanted to talk to him as an Israeli. And when the Palestinian chief-negotiator Saeb Erekat spoke, he wanted to say

something from an Israeli perspective, but as a member of the PNA delegation, he could not talk to Erekat as an Israeli.

Although he seemed to be at ease with all these different 'identities', different contexts created different dilemmas. Immersing into liberal individualism in a city like Tel Aviv is not always possible for Palestinians, because they must either become 'good Arabs' or be marked 'suspicious'. A certain standing and privilege, and the willingness to distance oneself from a collective sense of belonging, makes this easier. Adeeb represented the PNA one day and sat in his favourite Tel Aviv coffee shop on another. Because he felt more flexible than the world outside him, Adeeb did not like essentialist conceptions of identity. He criticised Palestinians for lingering in the past, saying it was time to move on. During one dinner meeting with the other members of the group in Tel Aviv, the politician Ahmed Tibi was the invited guest speaker. Adeeb could not help but confront him by saying that 'foreign workers integrate better in Israel than Arabs'. I asked him about the discrimination and inequality Palestinians in Israel faced, about past displacement and the Nakba of 1948. Adeeb, of course, knew about all this. But it was not his way of seeing things: 'How much time passed since then? 70 years? It's time to move on…'

The fact that many of the successful Palestinians who advocate liberal individualism are Christians is no coincidence. Rabinowitz (1997, 185) found similar patterns among Palestinians' who live in Natzerat Illit, writing: 'Twice a minority - within Israel as Palestinians, within the Palestinian fold as non-Muslims - the Palestinian Christians are natural candidates for an unconditional embrace of liberalism'. Because collective Palestinian identity and nationalism already turns them into a minority within, individualism is a logical alternative. Like the student Samar put it, non-belonging can be their strength. The problem is that it is only so individually. Members of oppressed minorities who are offered the chance to develop individually may soon realise that their participation requires them to adhere to norms and values of the very system that denies their people collective rights (Rabinowitz 1997, 185; Collier, Maurer, and Suarez-Navaz 1996, 8).

The Limits of Tel Aviv

The word ‘career’ once denoted a road for carriages and became applied to labour in the sense of a lifelong channel for one’s economic pursuits (Sennett 2005, 9). Because most jobs are located in Jewish-Israeli cities like Tel Aviv, this channel is shaped zig-zag for a lot of Palestinians. Living in Tel Aviv with children usually means sending them to a Jewish school. Not living in Tel Aviv but still working there means commuting. ‘Unless we have our own schools in Arabic in Tel Aviv, things won’t get better. Once you want children, you move back to your home-area’, explained Zaki. And even Adeeb, who seemed perfectly at ease with his life in Tel Aviv, acknowledged that there are no Arab institutions or events in Tel Aviv, which is one reason why Palestinians ‘never really arrive here; eventually they go back to their towns.’

While Adeeb and Zaki lived in Tel Aviv, Rani lived in the northern town of Taybeh, with his son and his wife, who worked as a pharmacist at the Israeli company ‘Teva’. Why did Rani not move to Tel Aviv, after all?

> When I leave Taybeh every morning, I am saying: “what the hell am I doing, why this traffic-jam every day?” And when I leave Tel Aviv in the evening, I see people jogging, going shopping, and enjoying their lives, and I ask myself: “why am I not enjoying this?” But when I come home at night, it’s just like heaven. It is calmer, cleaner, my wife’s parents are there. (…) It’s not easy for us Arabs to live in Tel Aviv, especially with kids.

There was an ongoing debate between him and his wife about which school their son will be going to. A Jewish-Israeli school may have some benefits for his future career in Israel, but an Arab school avoided a problem exacerbated by the former: ‘that he will feel like a stranger’, as Rani put it, adding that pursuing a career in Tel Aviv ‘puts oneself into a serious and problematic situation’. Part of it was speaking ‘three languages within five minutes’ and ‘living different lives’ as a routine, which contributed to what he calls ‘the feeling of having a complex’.

Living in Tel Aviv also requires him to stay ‘underneath the radar’ sometimes, as for example during wars, Israeli memorial days or in situations when Jewish-Arab relations heat up. Another problem was that although he had been working in Tel Aviv since the year 2000, he often felt lonely in the ‘bubble’, calling it the ‘no-man’s

land' as far as Palestinians are concerned. Wanting to make things easier, he tried to live in Tel Aviv once. 'Being here as an Arab was hard for me and the others', which was why they all ended up going to their occasional dinner meetings.

> In Tel Aviv, you hardly meet someone from your own society on the streets. You are in a social bubble, you work in a Jewish company, and go back home at night. Working in Tel Aviv is like moving away from your society. You have Jewish friends and you go out with them, and I even have more Jewish friends here than Arabs. But you feel that it is not really the same.

Rani has a lot of self-esteem and confidence, and he tried hard to make things work, but the irony according to him is, that 'the more self-esteem you get, the more you will realize that they always look at you as an outsider, although they may see you as a friend.' One is not part of 'their' holidays, cannot have any serious relationships with Jewish women, and more, he said.

Also Kheir, the Kav Mashve Vice President, told me that the process of blending into Tel Aviv and living always felt temporary and thus never entirely satisfactory. 'It is not easy to live here, socially, or even to rent an apartment, to feel at home', she said. She recalls how she and her partner talked in Arabic at a pharmacy, where the employee asked them if they spoke Swedish. 'It's Arabic!' Kheir protested, saying that she often found it perplexing how little people in Tel Aviv knew about their language or culture. And when she gets a taxi, they sometimes ask where her 'accent' was 'from', as if she was a foreigner. If she goes out with friends, 'Jewish guys' sometimes approach her and ask about her background. 'When I say that I am Arab, they say, "No! Really?", and hardly believe it. Once Kheir did have a Jewish partner for two years but only realised at the very end that they actually 'hardly knew each other'; that they did not agree 'about the real issues'. He eventually told her that 'it would not be good for the kids'.

It is clear that Palestinians who find a job and pursue a career in Tel Aviv must deal with their inclusion causing a number of problems. Although she enjoyed the feeling of dissolving into urban anonymity, Kheir said that she had a 'split identity'. As an example, she told me that she 'loved' her Jewish friends and enjoyed going out with them, but at the same time, she often felt an irresistible urge to issue a big statement against something they said or represented. She tried to calm herself by saying that

her situation in Tel Aviv was much more privileged than that of people living in autocratic Arab states or in the occupied Palestinian territories. But life in Tel Aviv was extremely difficult to bear despite its lightness. ‘Sometimes I am trying to justify it by saying, at least we are in a better place; but it is not an acceptable thought. I simply can’t have this debate. My grandparents got scattered all over because of this state. And this is the reality.’ It is the tragedy within the privilege that makes this reality a difficult one to experience.

The Other Dimension of Tel Aviv

Unlike the linear ‘career’ channel, the word ‘job’ once meant a lump or piece of something which could be carted around; and flexibility in the ‘new capitalism’ has brought back this sense of the ‘job’ because people must increasingly do lumps of labour and pieces of work, writes Sennett (1998, 9), suggesting that this has consequences for peoples ‘character’. This second part of the chapter is more about the job in this sense than the career. It looks at Palestinians who live in a largely invisible and less privileged dimension of the ‘city that never stops’, to cite one of Tel Aviv’s many nicknames. They work long hours, have several jobs, live in overcrowded apartments or sleep on mattresses in construction sites.

While the Palestinian elite emphasised the benefits of urban anonymity and their ability to choose how to identity and be identified, the following portraits speak of dissociation and invisibility not as a matter of choice, but as a result of their tough life in the ‘underground’. They are physically present and yet absent.

The many Palestinian cleaners employed at Tel Aviv University exemplify this. I met 16 year-old Haitham during his lunch-break when he and a colleague ate their sandwiches in a common room. Haitham is from Jisr az-Zarqa, the last remaining Palestinian town on the Mediterranean coast that still exists. One day we sat on the university lawn under the shade of a tree. His skin was dark and tattooed and he had headphones hanging down from both sides of his neck, a black T-shirt and a golden wristlet on one of his arms. He was only 16, and officially, he was not allowed to work more than eight hours in a row. He did work 11 hours a day nevertheless, and the company had since told him they may have to fire him. He said that ‘Jisr is a

small town without work', and Tel Aviv was where the jobs were, adding: 'But I don't do anything here except work.' He said that a lot of young Palestinians worked on campuses and in buildings to clean, but none of them had the time or money to do anything else in the city.

Haitham did not experience 'Tel Aviv' but only a narrow segment of the city, or more precisely: another dimension of the campus, cleaning the toilets used by students and staff throughout the day. His existence in this space was reduced to labour. As a person with an identity he mostly belonged elsewhere, while his body was present in Tel Aviv.

This presence-absence is especially true for Palestinian workers from the occupied West Bank who come to Tel Aviv without a permit. Through a common acquaintance I met Ibrahim[27] at the bottom of Tel Aviv's Carmel Market, which features a mixed and rushing crowd of people. Ibrahim was from the city of Nablus and had already been working in Tel Aviv for years without a permit.

We sat down on a shaded bench in a green-space south of the market adjacent to the mosque. He seemed nervous, like a fugitive who is constantly on the watch. Public space was a mine-field for someone deemed an 'illegal infiltrator' by the Israeli authorities, and yet it was here where he wanted to meet. From where we sat, one could spot the Hassan Bek mosque, one of the few remains of the former Palestinian neighbourhood of al-Manshiyeh. Today's mosque is also a site where Palestinians find refuge from the city and in some cases, from the watchful eyes of the police.

Ibrahim had first worked in Tel Aviv seven years ago, then again a few years later and in the current period for about two years in a row. 'They caught me a few times', he said, adding that his third jail-time lasted 17 days, and another time nine days. 'I am here without a permit. Why I don't get it? They say for security reasons. But I don't know why exactly.' His job was mostly to paint walls and over the years he had made some contacts to intermediaries who call him and tell him where to go and what to do. Only every two or three weeks he went back to Nablus where his wife and six children lived. In his own words, he came to Tel Aviv for the money 'despite

[27] Not a real name

the dangers', and above all to support his family and to pay for his daughters' university fees, which he could never afford if he worked around Nablus.

During days without work or longer breaks he killed time in the mosque because he had no real place to stay in Tel Aviv. Instead, he slept in a construction site in an unfinished building with nothing else but a water-boiler and a mattress. The kettle or *kum-kum*, as he calls it in its Hebrew name, was the only belonging he did not carry in his pockets. 'I sleep on the floor on a mattress. I have no place to wash myself. I plug in my kettle and charge my phone there, that's all.' There was no radio and no television, no life other than that of labour, except of a lot of waiting and some tea and chatting with acquaintances between. Only through the informal arrangement with the people at the building site was he allowed to stay overnight. His part of the deal was to 'take care of the construction site' at night, replacing what would otherwise have to be a paid security guard. Some charged him money for sleeping there, but not all. On a very good day of work, Ibrahim made about 300-400 Shekels in Tel Aviv (50-67 GBP). On a bad day he just waits for the next phone call.

His employers are Arab and Jewish Israelis who act as middle-men between home-owners and him. Sometimes landlords asked him if he had a permit, but most of the time they avoid asking. When I asked Ibrahim if he would prefer to be a Palestinian citizen of Israel, he only says: 'they have money, and the borders are open for them, but they are closed for me. I can't go to work in a bank, or in a hotel. I am like a smuggler here.' While we sit and talk in the shaded space of the park, he often glances to the side, his gaze scanning the area around us on high alert. 'I can't walk wherever I want. I won't go to the beach, it's too risky', he said, pointing down to the shoreline. 'If I don't have work, I stay inside the mosque, where I feel safe.'

Elites chose to be invisible when they want to. But Ibrahim was forced into invisibility. His was not a celebration of liberal urban space, but a life in the underground as an urban outcast; but one who is nevertheless included through jobs. This is similar to the unauthorized migrants who must make themselves absent from the spaces they occupy, so that their 'clandestinity' becomes a hidden dimension of social reality, although it is a widely known dimension, according to Coutin (2005, 196), who suggests that this underground is 'another dimension of social reality rather than a separate place because unauthorized migrants or other legally hidden

populations nevertheless reside, take part in and move through the places they inhabit'. It is precisely their ambiguity between hidden and visible which makes these absented people valuable as a source of cheap labour. This is what he suggested by saying he felt like a 'smuggler', who is outlawed but also has beneficiaries that benefit from their invisibility.

Suddenly our conversation is interrupted by a Jewish man in orthodox clothing, who asked where the 'Intercontinental Hotel' was in Hebrew. His confusion seemed so authentic that it was probably a real request, not a check-up. The high-rising hotel was right in front of us, impossible not to see, and Ibrahim answered him in accented Hebrew: 'It is right there, look! Just walk down there and turn left and you will be there'. The man thanked us, and we looked at each other and laughed, both because of the short-sightedness of the man, and because of the implicit irony. Was it not Ibrahim who is supposed to be the 'stranger' in town? Or was it the well-dressed Jewish man?

Ibrahim used to work in Dubai and in Jordan when he was younger. 'Now I am 56 years old. I am asking myself: how much longer I can do this kind of work? All over the world, if you stay in a country for ten, twenty years, don't they give you an opportunity to stay and work normally after a while?' Sadly, this is a country established on his homeland, from which all Palestinians, whether Israeli citizens or not, have been displaced in the sense that they are all exiles 'at home'. Ibrahim is legally excluded from entering or working in Israel, while the legal dimension qualifies Palestinian citizens of Israel as included. However, they are equally confined to a largely invisible labour-underground.

Close to where I lived during field research was a prominent eatery called 'The Magician' (*HaKosem*). The place was run by a Jewish Israeli but most of the employees who worked behind the counter, in the kitchen, and served the tables were Palestinian citizens of Israel. I was surprised to learn one day that they all shared one apartment just around the corner of the Magician, about ten at a time with two or three persons per room. I often saw them walking down Dizengoff Street in their white uniforms or strolling back up after a long and exhausting shift. It was strikingly difficult to spend time with them, but what was a source of ethnographic frustration also made sense: they simply worked most of the time, and if they did not work, they

slept or stayed with their families in their home-towns. In addition, their work-life in Tel Aviv was not necessarily a source of pride they bragged about. It was an exhausting reality and necessity.

However, I eventually spent some time with the 18 year-old employee Yousef one night after his evening shift. Yousef walked over with a paper cup of coffee and we sat down on a road-side bench in the darkness of the evening in the midst of the cities flow of traffic and pedestrians, just around the corner from the 'Magician' in front of the Dizengoff shopping-mall. Yousef, being one of the youngest employees, usually cleared and wiped the tables.

'Why I came to Tel Aviv? This is where the money is. A lot of Arabs come here in order to make money. Afterwards, many try to open a place in their home town', he said self-assured. Tel Aviv was not a meaningful place, and there was no life or career to pursue there. The function of existing there was to earn enough money to learn a roper profession and set up a decent life in a Palestinian town like Umm el-Fahm.

Yousef did not have an easy life. His father died when he was young and pressures to earn money brought him to Tel Aviv for the first time at the age of 14. He worked as a cleaner in residential buildings and shopping malls, cleared the tables of Tel Aviv beach restaurants and in between worked in a factory in Umm el-Fahm. Of the 8000 Shekels (about 1320 GBP) he now earned per month, 3000 went straight to his mother, who lived in the West Bank and did not hold Israeli citizenship. For Yousef, the Israeli saying that Tel Aviv is the 'city that never stops' (*Ir le-lo hafsakah*) lacks glamour. He works up to 14 hours a day six days a week, rushing back home only during Sabbath, when the Magician closes. At the same time, Yousef complained, his employers in Tel Aviv were ignorant about Muslim holidays, including ignoring the festive end of Ramadan.

Mirroring Ibrahim's comments, Yousef felt privileged compared to Palestinians in the West Bank. And yet he also felt that he was a second-class citizen, saying: 'If I tell a Jew that I live with nine others in one apartment in Tel Aviv, they would laugh out loud. We are occupied people here. We can't move in any direction, not here and not there, without them giving us the permission.' The lawyer Zaki, who asked

Palestinians to overcome this 'assumption', may not have agreed. Essentially, Yousef did not allow himself to relate positively to Tel Aviv. 'As a Muslim, life is here is also Haram, how they are dressing, like that (…)', he told me, pointing towards a group of lightly dressed young women walking past us. Haram means 'forbidden', or taboo, and Yousef frequently used it to describe Tel Aviv and its lifestyle. 'We, as Muslims, don't like alcohol and a lot of other things happening here. If you offered me sex with a girl here, I would say no, haram! I don't pray, but I am a Muslim and I fast', he said with a serious face. Already anticipating a negative answer, I asked him if he could imagine living in Tel Aviv and raising children there one day. 'In Tel Aviv?! Of course I can't raise my kids here', he protested. 'It would be in Umm el-Fahm. I don't like getting close to people here in Tel Aviv. They all drink, they are playing around with girls; I don't like that and if I sense it, I just turn away.' His dissociation from the city also had other reasons. The bench we were sitting on was just beside the memorial of the Dizengoff Center suicide bombing, which killed 13 Israelis in 1996. 'Do you know what happened here?' Yousef asked me, pointing at the memorial saying:

'There was a suicide attack. And that is how they see us. Of course it is wrong to do that, but what I am saying is that there are people in this city who don't even talk to us Arabs. "You are Arab? Leave!" they say. They don't have any respect, they have it all, and we are below their feet', said Yousef, raising his legs and touching the sole of his shoes.

I asked him, playing devil's advocate, 'if I was Israeli, I could say: "Why do you complain if you are making a good salary in Tel Aviv?"' Yousef smirked, answering: 'I would tell you: "I work at your place and you give me money!" The people in Tel Aviv say, "Arabs, come work with us". And yes, I am working from morning to evening at your place, so give me money.' There was a clear purpose of work in exchange for money, but this had nothing to do with the wider political circumstances. A deal is a deal and he fulfilled his part.

Yousef had ideas about starting his own business and thought about learning a profession. Mohamed, one of his colleagues at the 'Magician', is a learned chef and earns much more than him, but he came back to Tel Aviv after his business in Umm el-Fahm failed. In order to get his own chance in the future, Yousef said he needed

‘every Shekel to survive’. Opening a business in Umm el-Fahm was no option, however: ‘Everything there is overcrowded, like a refugee camp. If you walk out of one house you are already inside another.’

Yousef disliked Tel Aviv but also praised it; found it taboo but was also curious. He called it one of the most developed cities in the world with a lot of progress. ‘You can see a 90 year-old riding a bicycle, others are jogging, people here live 24 hours’, he said, seeming somewhat amazed. But again, he added that ‘the hard thing about Tel Aviv is that everything is nice but also haram’. The constant increase of working hours and the time spent commuting, as well as the parallel decline of leisure time has been recorded for some time now, as in the case of ‘overworked’ Americans (Schor 1993). This is even more frustrating when the time available is useless because one must remain unseen, like Ibrahim, or because one feels estranged or even repelled by the culture of city life like Yousef. The European-style city that Jewish settlers created in Palestine had grown into a metropolis, but one that grew in cultural opposition to the local Palestinian population. Equally so today, Yousef looks at it as a foreign place with foreign customs, detaching himself from this controversial other as much as he becomes included as a labourer but has no time to do anything else.

By ways of invoking political ideology he cemented his distance from Tel Aviv further. Indeed, Yousef described Tel Aviv as an ‘occupied place’, saying that Israelis managed to always stay on the top of things, like a drop of olive oil in water (*zayy nuktat az-zeit*). But at the same time, Palestinians are all over Tel Aviv, and ‘if there were no Arabs in Tel Aviv, the city would close down. The buildings, who will build them? The restaurants, the shops, the malls – every second worker is Arab!’

At the end of our conversation, Yousef turned to his smartphone to browse through videos about Umm el-Fahm, explaining that he was a supporter of the Islamic Movement, which is led by the charismatic hardliner Sheikh Raed Salah. Yousef leans over and shows a video of Palestinian youth in the town who confront Israeli police forces with stones, then another video of a march by the Islamic Movement, and a documentary film titled ‘Here is Palestine: Umm el-Fahm’. It starts with an interactive map of ‘Palestine’ and then zooms into Umm el-Fahm. ‘You have to watch this if you want to understand what is going on here’, he said. As the film

proceeded, Yousef chipped in every now and then: ‘This is our roundabout, this is a famous lawyer, this is a demonstration…’

The Palestine he seemed to miss was absent from the city space, and the videos on *youtube.com* were a little window into a more familiar world than Tel Aviv, where he lived confined to the narrow space of 14-hour shifts and an apartment he shared with 10 others. Tel Aviv is truly the city that never stops. And although Yousef and Ibrahim are not part of how people usually narrate Tel Aviv’s story of economic success and social diversity, these Palestinians are undeniably essential to the functioning of its political economy. Moreover, their participation in it is central for the balance of power the State of Israel established, because power needs some form of participation to remain legitimate among those it rules. Yet as much as they are included, the Palestinians are also eternally peripheral to that very centre of Israel’s economy by definition. Exclusion then becomes a defining condition of their integration into Tel Aviv; their marginalisation is flawed incorporation and not its absence.

Good Arabs, Good Business

After meetings and research in the city, I often cycled back home and saw Palestinian workers from Hebron gardening in the green-spaces of the area’s boulevards. I also spotted Arab bus drivers, Palestinian waiters in coffee shops and students. I saw cleaners on motorbikes or bicycles moving from one building to another, a bucket between their legs or dangling from the handlebar. One of these was Mohamed, who happened to clean the stairway of the building I lived in.

After a few short encounters around my building, one day Mohamed and I decided to take lunch together in one of the few businesses run by a Palestinian family in the centre of Tel Aviv. It was a falafel and humus eatery on Sheinkin Street, a renowned shopping street and upscale residential area. Mohamed had two cleaning jobs: one in various residential buildings, another in an office-complex. His ‘actual’ job was working as a nurse in a hospital. He had been living in Tel Aviv for six years and grew up in Umm el-Fahm. ‘I have to work so much to pay my rent and save money’, he said. To maximise his income, he often stayed in Tel Aviv for weeks without

interruption, working almost every day. ‘Most Arabs in Tel Aviv are like me, they work, eat and sleep; that’s it, we don’t do more in this city.’ The day we met, Mohamed had not slept at all by lunch-time because he had a night-shift at the hospital and cleaned houses in the morning. He would go to bed after our lunch, only to be ready for another shift at 11 p.m.

Like any other new urbanite, Mohamed needed an apartment before he could begin working in the city, and this is where he first learned about the need to become a particular kind of person, a ‘good Arab’. When he first rented an apartment in Tel Aviv, the landlord asked him to find a Jewish friend to sign the contract instead; only after a year, ‘after the landlord got to know me’, could I sign the contract myself. ‘And now he does not want to let me go anymore.’ He managed to prove himself.

‘In Israel, a good Arab is an invisible Arab’ when it comes to his identity, writes Gideon Levy in response to prominent Arab TV-presenter Lucy Aharish accepting an invitation to light a torch on Israeli Independence Day (Levy, Haaretz.com, 12/3/2015).[28] According to Levy, the state rewards ‘good Arabs’ because they do not any longer appear Arab and do not reflect Palestinian political positions. They become Arab in a way that is civil and trustworthy, a quality that has to be proved against allegations of suspiciousness. Employers and landlords often ask for ‘good Arabs’, and Palestinian citizens of Israel realise they have a handicap to make up for.

Basic trust and respect from Jewish Israeli employers or landlords had to be earned through hard work for Mohamed. One day he secured another small room with an immediate down-payment. After the landlord realised later he was Arab, they changed the wording and decided to let him stay for a month ‘on trial’. ‘Then I painted everything fresh and invested a lot in the place, and they were impressed. At the beginning, they saw me as an Arab and concluded I am not good. Today, they love me. So it is important for me to show them that because I am Arab doesn’t mean I am not a good person.’ Mohamed tells me that in another building he lived in, one old resident never answered his greetings, not even a word of thanks after he helped him carry up the bags one day. ‘Some people you can change, some you can’t. I still try to do it, to emphasise respect and love and hope that it will change people.’

[28] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.646426

Mohamed thinks that he was influenced by his father, who ran a restaurant in the Israeli city of Ashkelon. One day he told him that he had two options in Israel: going into politics and appearing in media, or to succeed in sport or work. Mohamed went for the second option, but one wonders how success can be defined here. He is a prime example of the overworked Palestinian in Tel Aviv who has no spare time because they maximise their earnings by working multiple jobs simultaneously.

What Mohamed did to prove his trustworthiness is not so different from those who explain their success by saying they worked twice as hard as others. Influenced by the restraints of Israeli civility, Palestinians in Tel Aviv are under pressure to be 'good' in a number of ways: useful as Arabic speakers or unique in profitable ways; cheap, hard-working, flexible, and non-political, to name a few. Also Palestinian businesses in Tel Aviv need to ensure they have a 'good Arab' image.

'The Humus of the Arabs is the best', Israelis often say before they go out to eat at *Humus Lina* in the old city of Jerusalem, or *Abu Hasan* in Jaffa. Also the eatery in Sheinkin Street, where I went with Mohamed, was run by an Arab family. Futna, who led the business together with her husband, said that if you are visibly Arab in Tel Aviv, 'you are marked with an X'. Originally from Taybeh in Israel, she and her husband live in Tel Aviv with their children. Their falafel eatery has run for more than 16 years. Because they live in Tel Aviv, their children attended a Jewish school. Before I can ask more, she begins talking about Gaza, about the war, about Israel 'killing pregnant women' there, ensuring me that she is 'not with Hamas'.

On the wall hung an old photograph dated 1933, which showed a Jaffa and Palestine that has long been lost. As Futna continued her rant on Israeli politics, she spoke Arabic. It was no secret that this was an Arab business. To the contrary, it was part of its success. But sometimes, before controversial statements, Futna lowered her voice and looked around. After all, the secret life of Palestinians in Tel Aviv had a secret language, for hardly any Israelis spoke Arabic. But you never know.

While Futna complained about being marked, with an Arab 'X', it was clear that her business succeeded in turning disadvantage and stereotype into profit. While the overall majority of Palestinians in Tel Aviv worked for Jewish-Israeli employers and companies, a handful of businesses in the city were run by Arab citizens. Self-

employment certainly created a certain kind of independence for these businesses, but as is my intention to show, their formula for 'success' mirrors the general need for becoming a 'good Arab' among Palestinians in Tel Aviv.

Another of these small businesses was a grocery near the south-western corner of Rabin Square. Run by a family from the town Baqa al-Gharbiyye north of Tel Aviv, the small shop drew in customers with a good selection of fresh vegetables, home-made Tahini, and above all, good service:

> You need two things', said Abu Saleh, who ran the family business. 'You need to have one of the best shops, and it needs to have the best service. Your service has to be better than the service of Jewish competitors. You need to be better than the Jews so they come to you. 70 percent of our customers come because of the good treatment.

We sat on plastic chairs on the concrete ledge in front of their newly opened shop in Baqa. After talking to his son in Tel Aviv a few times and regularly buying from their shop, I was invited to join the family in their home-town, which was considered necessary if I wanted to understand their enterprise. Making service better than that of Jewish competitors also included making use of their Arab-ness and the associated positive images Israeli had. It included fresh vegetables, flexibility with prices, 'home-made' produce, and the option to buy things on credit by putting them on a tab. Their family made their own tahini, in a company in the city of Nablus in the West Bank. 'You greet customers and express that you welcome them, you give them whatever they need, you joke with them', said Abu Saleh, constantly greeting locals from a terrace in front of the new shop in Baqa. Running the shop in Tel Aviv was different from running the new one in Baqa, and he considered closing the one in Tel Aviv altogether.

His father first opened a shop in Tel Aviv 25 years ago, and such an endeavour required strength: 'There are strong fears about the reactions from the city, from Jewish people. The first thought of Arabs in Tel Aviv among Jews is that that he is some sort of criminal', Abu Saleh said, explaining that this was why they had to counter-balance these expectations by being particularly good and trustworthy. 'You have to impress. As an Arab in this country, you are facing a lot of questions and you constantly have to prove that you are good.'

Some 30 years ago, opening a shop in Tel Aviv made sense because of the promising profits in comparison to Baqa. But the soaring expenses of Tel Aviv have lessened the benefits for the family. Although his new shop in Baqa is ten times larger than the one in Tel Aviv, the running expenses are lower, he explained. Another difference was the cost of transport and daily commuting. Abu Saleh complained that 'Tel Aviv has become like New York, the expenses are huge.'

Abu Saleh contemplated closing down his shop in Tel Aviv, but his 22 year-old son Shadi hoped to open his own business in Tel Aviv one day. Shadi helped out and moved between Baqa and Tel Aviv since he was a young boy. Although he studied mechanical engineering, he worked a lot, driving to Tel Aviv, picking up tahini from their factory in Nablus, and buying vegetables from the town of Ramleh. Movement has defined his life ever since, and he thinks it is characteristic for his generation of Palestinians in Israel, essentially because there are few appropriate employment opportunities in his home-town and elsewhere in Arab towns.

His plan to run a business in Tel Aviv has one shortcoming: Shadi would never want to live there. Instead, he envisioned building a large house on his own land. Opening a business also seems to be an alternative to his learned profession. For the mechanical engineer in Israel many of the relevant companies are connected to the weapons industry. 'I can't work there, it is extremely hard to enter there as an Arab because of security issues', said Shadi.

After relaxing with him and his father in front of their shop in Baqa, Shadi took me on a tour through the town, which has the Israeli Separation Barrier running through its eastern part. Shadi steers the American Pick-Up car and points out some 'nice things' which have recently developed on the way, among them a new roundabout and flower-beds. We eventually reach the Separation Barrier, driving along the Israeli side of the ugly concrete wall. On the other side lies Baqa al-Sharqiyye, 'Eastern Baqa'. Shadi explains that while he can cross and visit family members on the other side, they are not allowed to come over. We come past a military checkpoint, and Shadi tries to cross, but the soldier screams at him: 'Slow down, slow down!' He rolls down the window, saying he wants to make a U-turn, much to the disapproval of the soldier, who screamed at him to 'go back' immediately. For this soldier, Palestinians are Palestinians after all, whether on this or that side of the

concrete wall. But who knows, maybe he did shop at their family's grocery in Tel Aviv one day, I think to myself, eating tahini from Nablus far behind the concrete wall.

As the day comes to an end, Shadi takes me to his favourite coffee-shop, which was a road-side café a few minutes outside of Baqa, where we sat down with a friend and smoked *nargilah*, the water-pipe. The place still had a Hebrew name written on its outer walls: *Mifgash Haverim*, 'the friends' meet-up'. As the sun set and coloured the sky in a beautiful red, we sipped tea, coffee, and Nargilah. Through the windows one could see Lebanese music-videos on a large TV screen inside. Shadi and his friends come here to relax, something they rarely do in Tel Aviv. Shadi believed in the 'good' impact their positive mindset had on Jewish Israelis and their views about Palestinian Arabs. Towards the end of a long conversation about his future, their business and the city of Tel Aviv, Shadi explained once again:

> Do you see this cup of coffee? Jewish society sees us as a small cup like this. But once they really see us and get to know us, they often realize that there is more than that. From a young age, Jews in this country learn that Arabs are something to be scared of. But I can also show them who I am, show them that I am good.

The example of this family business shows that Palestinian entrepreneurship in Israel faces a dilemma very similar to that of individual employees in search of jobs: their ethno-national difference can be beneficial as long as it fulfils external ascriptions of authenticity or particular functions for consumers or the economy; yet this narrow space of opportunity is overshadowed by the constant need to counter-balance the stigma and disadvantaged position of being a Palestinian-Arab through performances of civility or by becoming better than Jewish competitors. The opportunity and the stigma reference the same identity in equally hierarchical ways.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a glimpse into two dimensions of Palestinian employment and economic activity in Tel Aviv. One is the highly educated elite, who have the privilege to enjoy Tel Aviv and delve into urban anonymity; the second is the dimension of low-income workers, who are mostly confined to the spaces of their

labour, which I suggest is why they remain largely invisible. Whatever their status or activity, Palestinians in Tel Aviv are of course never invisible in the narrow sense of the word. By invoking invisibility I mean their absence from defining elements of the city's social and public life, as well as their absence from discourses about Tel Aviv and its spatial identity. Their invisibility is a result of the refusal of others to recognize their identity, except when it appears beneficial.

Juxtaposing these two class-related layers of participation was interesting because it showed how for Palestinians, status and success enable special forms of relating to Tel Aviv and to each other. It enables some to be different things at the same time without being reduced to one identity alone, just like one can like different Facebook pages. While some Palestinians embrace Tel Aviv as a place where sky is the limit, others reject it altogether as 'haram'. Individual background and class, together with religiosity and political opinions influence how individuals relate to Tel Aviv, which is a heavily marked space hidden behind liberal civility as a pretence. All the more interesting about this chapter is what transcends class: that Palestinians in Tel Aviv experience a process of inclusion into the Israeli political economy which isolates them and pressures them to be 'good'. They become somewhat isolated either by force or choice, depending, among other things, on their status and privileges. Those who toil at the bottom of the income ladder are isolated by force because they are left with no time or interest to participate in the space of Tel Aviv beyond work. And those who make it into highly-skilled jobs are individualist because they learnt to embrace urban anonymity and lifestyle, thereby 'choosing' not to create tension or conflict.

There is, of course, a big difference between having studied in Jordan and becoming 'unique' and valuable for a law-firm in Tel Aviv, and being included into Tel Aviv as 'cheap labour' on construction sites. While the former is based on embracing individualism as a challenge of 'swimming against the stream like a Salmon', the latter is a form of depersonalized inclusion that draws Palestinians in precisely because of their status as an oppressed collective in desperate need of work. Yet in both cases, working in Tel Aviv is a form of inclusion that is politically and culturally isolating, which is why dozens of successful Arab-Palestinians in Tel Aviv decided to hold regular meetings. Ironically, the more they utilise the Israeli

economy for individual benefit the more they are also utilised by the underlying political system which benefits from their selective inclusion. Palestinians, for the most part, do not become 'citizens' of Tel Aviv or are given any rights to make a claim to this city as a collective. They can only do so as individuals. Hence, 'in reality, in the bright city lights, the shadows cast by barriers to entry are long and sharp' (Bayat and Biekart 2009, 818).

In discussing 'good Arabs' and 'good business' we learnt that Palestinians must perform a particular public persona in order to be accepted and get access to opportunities. Part of this is not only the need to constantly compensate Jewish-Israelis for the lack of trust they have in Palestinians by being better and working harder than others, but also to employ positive clichés and orientalising images Israelis have of Arabs, such as good service, civility and politeness (abjection), flexibility (bargaining), and home-made tahini (tradition). The major compromise all Palestinians in Tel Aviv must make on their uphill climb towards success is to be not overly political in public, to remain civil in situations where opportunities are allocated. Even for those who feel at ease with their lives in Tel Aviv, inclusion has a clear limit. There is an almost melancholic 'loneliness' to the lives of some successful Palestinians in Tel Aviv, who enjoy the anonymity of the city but also realise that it comes at a high price; their Arabic becomes rusty, they feel awkward about meeting other Palestinians, they cannot stand another Israeli asking them about their 'accent'. Once thinking seriously about family and children, another question moves centre-stage: will I send my children to a Jewish school? Their lives are characterised by a series of tensions between inclusion and dissociation, between individualism and collective identity, between political opinions and their suppression. Palestinians may be absent from the official discourses about Tel Aviv, but they form a significant part of its political economy. Ironically, precisely because many of them work hard in the city's workspaces, they remain invisible and unrecognized as a constituent part of the city. And although most of these Palestinians who focus on their careers and jobs in Tel Aviv are not involved in organized activism, 'they engage in prolonged daily individual struggles that bring significant changes in their own lives and in the urban configuration' (Bayat and Biekart 2009, 823).

4 Dancing in the Shadows: The Perils and Joys of Palestinian Leisure in Tel Aviv

One January evening I crossed one of Tel Aviv's streets with Rima, a former student in the city, when she suddenly recognised friends on the other side. She and her friend Samira screamed with enthusiasm and cheerfully greeted and hugged each other. Alongside Samira, who worked as a chief nurse in one of the city's hospitals, there were three Palestinian men. Standing on the sidewalk, they were all speaking Arabic, laughing and joking around. At one point, Rima said: 'Wow! We are five Arabs here standing in the heart of Tel Aviv.' Then Samira ran onto the middle of the street, screaming 'Alahu Akbar' towards the shopping centre on the other side of the junction, more for fun than as a serious reference. 'It's like we are having a demonstration here', one of the others said, and we all laughed amid the awkward spontaneous joy that spread from this incidental meeting.

Up until now we have looked at Palestinians' engagement with Tel Aviv through work, education and mobility. It is no secret, however, that this city is also one of enjoyment and fun. As a popular saying goes: Haifa works, Jerusalem prays, but Tel Aviv plays. And this 'play' is a contentious issue: already in 1929, Palestinian activists denounced Palestinians who visited the nightclubs of Tel Aviv as people in pursuit of 'foul objectives' (Azaryahu 2007, 47). Taking part and showing interest in Tel Aviv's social life has ever since been a controversial issue for Palestinians. At the same time, the city with a self-assured modern Jewish and Zionist identity also 'buried' the presence of Arab life within its expanding boundaries (Mann 2006, xvii); it destroyed the Palestinians' own cultural legacy there. The 'joys' of Tel Aviv seem forbidden to Palestinians but at the same time they have hardly any independent cultural and leisure spaces in and around this city. In very simplified terms, they have two options: accepting the status-quo by trying to blend into the leisure spaces dominated by Jewish Israelis, or carving out distinct Palestinian opportunities for the collective practice of pleasure and fun. Either way, enjoying Tel Aviv involves struggles because it often tests the boundaries of established norms and values.

This chapter is about how Palestinians in Tel Aviv test and cross some boundaries while reconfiguring and asserting others through forms of leisure and fun. I will argue that Palestinian leisure and fun in Tel Aviv simultaneously challenges and reifies the atomisation and individualisation that results from their inclusion into the Israeli political economy. And secondly, we will see that Palestinian leisure and fun in Tel Aviv involve a recurring tension between anonymous individualism and collective activity, between group affiliation and dissociation, and this tension is exacerbated by the public nature and visibility of activities of leisure and fun, including the 'perils' of such visibility.

The Politics of Pleasure, Leisure and Fun

The realm of leisure and fun shows clearly how Palestinians negotiate intersecting fields of cultural and political power. Their carving out of independent spaces away from the Israeli mainstream often goes hand in hand with compromises, misrecognition and co-optation. This is particularly so because Palestinians, whether in Tel Aviv or in Beirut, are frequently marked in particular ways by others, which is why the fleeting spaces of urban space can be attractive escapes.

In *The Politics of Pleasure*, Laleh Khalili (2015, 2–3) writes about Palestinian refugee women who enjoy their time at Beirut's seaside boulevard that these practices of pleasure create fragile forms of conviviality and a 'public feeling' of pleasure and freedom; yet they also express their co-optation into wider mechanisms of consumerist ideology and capitalist complacency. Interestingly, Khalili writes how such public spaces of pleasure help the women to overcome the atomisation or individuation they experience at work in refugee camps, but not how atomisation can be a central element and desire in urban leisure. We will see that for Palestinians in Tel Aviv, practices of leisure and fun express collective desires but also the desire to escape the collective. In the case of the Palestinians in Tel Aviv, conviviality and atomisation are closely related desires and both involve practices that challenge dominant Israeli and/or Palestinian norms.

In *Serious Fun,* Jonsson (2001, 153–155) looks at the Mien population in Thailand to explore how fun involves power-struggles over certain expressions of identity and

culture: as the hegemony of the Thai nation-state imposed particular designs of social life on minorities, it suppresses some cultural expressions of fun and marginalises the public voice of minorities, except when they present themselves successfully as a kind of Thai. Something similar holds true for Palestinians in Tel Aviv: if they have fun visibly and collectively as Palestinians, with Arabic music and maybe even a Palestinian flag, they are likely to encounter resistance and opposition by the city or venue-owners; but if they manage to have fun in a 'civil' non-political way while immersing themselves, they can blend in. At the same time, these Israeli spaces of leisure are where individuals can cross the boundaries of their own community's traditional values, and hence a tension is created between desires to have fun as an 'invisible' individual and desires to do so as a 'visible' collective.

That public expressions of fun often challenge dominant norms is evident in *Perils of Joy*, in which Samuli Schielke (2012) discusses the Egyptian Mulid festival of Muslim 'saints'. These festivities are viewed as non-Muslim and problematic by many, which is why he suggests that the main problem lies in 'the celebration's relationship with the world of which it is part' (Schielke 2012, 4). This is why joy involves perils; it can subvert, contest or accommodate powerful ideas about how things ought to be. As Lara Deeb and Mona Harb write on leisure in South Beirut, people's experiments with new ways of practicing and experiencing the city through leisure sites also reshape their understandings or morality and geography (Deeb and Harb 2013, 10). Moral boundaries are crossed and new spaces of leisure explored, while some pleasurable practices can be a welcome escapade from the burden of identity, group-affiliation and political responsibility.

At this point it may be important to note that pleasurable practices, leisure, and fun are not exactly the same thing. 'Pleasure and leisure, despite being virtual homonyms, can reveal worlds of difference in their experience and implementation', write Simon Coleman and Tamara Kohn (2007, 1) in their introduction to the volume *The Discipline of Leisure*; here pleasure is a state of mind or body that has been achieved, while leisure indicates a specific potentiality for action and a temporality outside of work. Leisure is a highly class-differentiated category and its experience is power-related. Having the time and energy for leisure is also a question of circumstance; and in an expensive city such as Tel Aviv, also a matter of money. Fun

and pleasure, on the other hand, are experiences found everywhere. Moreover, not all pleasure and leisure is also 'fun' in the sense of playing games, joking, or social drinking, but may also include involvement in art, music, or sport, to 'particular ways of speaking, laughing, appearing, or carrying oneself'; fun includes institutionalised forms of leisure as well as a whole array of ad hoc, non-routine, and joyful pursuits (Bayat 2013, 130). Depending on the visibility of the respective activity, leisure, pleasure and fun are all fraught with tension for Palestinians in Tel Aviv because of the particular way in which liberal urban openness, Palestinian communal values and Jewish Israeli domination interact.

Palestinians in Tel Aviv may meet others in coffee shops and on the beach, organise parties, go to the cinema, or socialise with friends and siblings inside apartments. Or they may seek pleasures without fellow Palestinians. Indeed, as the introductory description of a spontaneous joyful meeting of Palestinian friends on the streets of Tel Aviv shows, such encounters can bring a feeling of lightness through the introduction of a shared language and origin into a culturally foreign space. But because individual pursuits of pleasure may violate traditional values or political commitments, unexpected encounters with fellow Palestinians can lead to trouble too. In the Palestinian context, pleasure and everyday enjoyment have always troubled the ideal form of political commitment, which is sometimes defined as austere and separate from joyful everyday practices (Jean-Klein 2001). Hence resisting pleasure can become a politically necessary act (Khalili 2015, 11), which is even more true if the space of 'pleasure' is the 'Jewish' city of Tel Aviv. Also Bayat (2013) speaks of the struggles over fun or even a 'fear of fun' in Islamism. Especially after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 parties, cinemas and expressions of fun were at the heart of the political polarisation. Let us remember Yousef, the 18 year-old employee of a central Tel Aviv falafel eatery, who was deeply curious about Tel Aviv's life but also considered most of it forbidden and sinful. The discourses about fun and leisure, and the Israeli character of Tel Aviv, affect the extent to which Palestinians feel comfortable to immerse themselves into the city's social life. This involves questions over what forms of leisure and fun are legitimate, and how visible should they be vis-à-vis Israelis or Palestinians. This city offers forms of enjoyment and leisure that may not be available in Palestinians' home-towns, such as

nightclubs, gay bars, or a vibrant beach life. But in Tel Aviv, these spaces are also marked and frequently mark them. While some Palestinians try to stay away, others seek refuge in these forms of leisure because they cannot have fun the same way elsewhere. Yet they have to negotiate their visibility in order to avoid practical and social problems public enjoyment and fun can generate.

Anonymity and the Risk of Being Recognised

Alternative forms of Palestinian leisure and fun in Israel often challenge Israeli and Arab-Palestinian social and political norms simultaneously. A whole 'alternative scene' has developed which advocates diversity of sexual orientation, ideology and new ways of living via the Palestinian context, but also insists on Palestinian particularity and unity in relation to the Jewish Israeli positions (Karkabi 2013: 326). They seek multiple forms of recognition and in Tel Aviv, most tend to use the spaces available without mounting some sort of visible struggle there. This immediately raises questions about how visible their leisure-time activities are, and what kind of anonymity or visibility they require, and when. Indeed, in some situations individuals prefer not to be recognized as Palestinians or Arabs, while other contexts reveal projects, individuals and collectives which actively seek to produce and maintain independent communities and spaces where they can be 'Palestinians' collectively instead of 'underdogs' within the Israeli fold. In the lives of most Palestinians in Tel Aviv, however, these two tendencies coexist and overlap.

As a distinct urban space with a particular cultural and political character, Tel Aviv is somewhat special in this regard. While an independent Palestinian cultural centre developed and secured spaces in the 'mixed' city of Haifa (Karkabi 2013, 315), Tel Aviv is still characterised by atomisation and spatial dispersion for most Palestinians instead of neighbourhood solidarities and communal moorings. But this also has benefits: Tel Aviv offers privacy and a certain distance from the other Palestinians. Sometimes, being unrecognized is actually the most fun.

Several Palestinians I know decided to move to Haifa after years of studying or living in Tel Aviv because they wanted a 'more Palestinian place' with a sense of community. In Haifa, Palestinians run bars, workshops, art collectives and the like.

But with the exception of Jaffa, this was hardly the case in Tel Aviv. As Mohamed Jabali, a well-known activist and DJ with regular shows in Jaffa explained:

> The role of urban space in Tel Aviv is not to be seen. We came to Tel Aviv to be anonymous, as a collective. People don't think about conquering Tel Aviv back….Many Palestinians in Tel Aviv don't want to be marked. It's the classic Israeli-Arab shit, living in Tel Aviv and avoiding being marked. Originally I also engaged with Tel Aviv as someone wanting to be anonymous.

Although most Palestinians with a desire for anonymity are also politically assertive, in some situations the risk of being recognized by others outweighs the desire to make such assertions. The spontaneous meeting between Rima, Samira and her friends took place on their way home from a music concert. Although Samira went home, the others decided to go and have dinner at a pizzeria nearby. Rima only really knew Samira, but did not know the three male friends that were with her. Like Samira, they too were gay. And soon the mutual trust that had immediately developed between these Palestinians who met was once again weighed carefully against the need for anonymity: one of the men, who worked as a personal fitness trainer in Tel Aviv, seemed familiar to Rima and eventually they both recognized each other as originally coming from the town of Umm el-Fahm. Yet Rima did not talk to him about it, and he did not make any signs towards her either. 'I did not want to scare him by saying "I know you from somewhere"', she explained later. He also decided not to talk about it despite the positive spirit in which we all had dinner together. The name he used in Tel Aviv was not the one given to him at birth, which is why Rima was confused about his identity. It was one of those names that exists in both Arabic and Hebrew, making it easier to remain anonymous and be conversant with both sides. Another gay Palestinian I knew in Tel Aviv once wanted to sign-up for a TV-show with a friend, the Israeli version of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?', but he decided not to do it. 'I was scared; you know, journalists and others will find out about me and my identity, and my parents would hear about it. That's a symbol for how little freedom I actually have.'

Their initial expression of joy over the spontaneous meeting described above invoked a sense of Palestinian togetherness, but also an undercurrent of inconvenience and feelings of distrust. Meeting someone from their home village by chance is risky for

members of the LGBT community in particular, but also for Palestinian women and men who act outside of the dominant norms of their community in Tel Aviv more generally. This became clear to me when I went to eat Sushi in central Tel Aviv with Rima on another day. As we sat down on the food-stall on one of the city's Boulevard's, we ordered two bottles of beer and looked at the menu, when Rima suddenly turned to me in shock: one of the waiters, she said, was from her home-town Umm el-Fahm. The convenient distance Tel Aviv provided to familial concerns and obligations faded away, replaced by unsettling proximity. There was only one thing that had to be done: she asked me to change her order from a bottle of beer to a bottle of water. For Palestinian women who challenge the norms of close-knit conservative towns like Umm el-Fahm, the danger of damaging gossip outweighs the momentary desire to relax and enjoy.

Meanwhile, the waiter from her home town quietly whispered into his colleague's ear while throwing a glance at us, presumably asking him for permission to take our order. He was usually tasked with preparing the sushi-rolls in the back, but he clearly recognized Rima. Although both knew exactly who each other's families were, they first pretended not to. He took our order in Hebrew, but there was an unresolved tension in the air. After a few minutes, Rima decided to 'break the ice', saying in a deliberately naïve way in Hebrew: 'Don't we know each other from somewhere?' The waiter smirked and answered in Arabic: 'Yes, we are from the same town…' Their small talk continued for about a minute, at the end of which she asked for his name. 'My name is Adam', he said rather hurried. Rima could not hide her surprise, and so he added quickly that in fact, his name was Ahmed. 'But here I am Adam.' The chitchat in Arabic continued for a few seconds, until his boss told him to stop talking Arabic and to go back to work.

Questions of recognition and anonymity are central to Palestinian leisure-time enjoyment and fun in Tel Aviv. It may not be surprising that Purim, the Jewish holiday of masquerade, is particularly well frequented by the Palestinian gay community. Putting on a 'mask' is more difficult in daily life, however. Meeting other Palestinians by coincidence may involve risks, but at the same time, simply blending into Israeli nightlife in Tel Aviv is not so much fun either. 'You will always feel different here, in your everyday life and the way how people treat you', said

Mohamed, who lived and worked in Tel Aviv as a nurse. 'I got used to being looked at here as if I was a…', and it took him a while to find the right word, 'a second-hand person'. What he referred to was his experience of not being let into a night club because he was 'Arab', a fact which selectors outside clubs can easily discern from his identity card. Reports of such discriminatory practice have also surfaced in other towns in Israel, such as Beersheba (Ynetnews.com, 06/04/13).[29]

Entering a club may be the first problem but enjoying it is another. Kheir, who lived in Tel Aviv for 13 years, found it difficult to immerse herself into urban culture because her Palestinian identity is always marked or turned into an issue. When she goes out with friends, 'Jewish guys' approach her and the conversation often turns to questions about her background, and her 'accent'. 'When I say I am Arab, they say, "really?"' It either freaks them out, or it makes them even more excited for the same reasons. Kheir was unsettled by both reactions. Enjoying nightlife as an unmarked person was rather difficult.

Mira Awad, a prominent Palestinian artist in Israel, told me that Tel Aviv is a bubble where you can rest from politics and 'the absorbed life we have'. As a Palestinian, however, she also knows that 'everything is political' in the end, even going out and having fun. This is particularly so for young Palestinian women, who benefit from engaging with Tel Aviv as they wage a 'quiet revolution of personal achievement'. Awad said that some women may want to escape to Tel Aviv to control their own lifestyle. They may ask themselves, 'what kind of lifestyle do I need? Maybe I want to go out to a pub and sit there with my friends?' The lifestyle of Tel Aviv may be 'the most allowing place in Israel' for the gay community and for women, according to Awad. However, as she added, Jewish society 'opens its arms and says, "Hey, we are not discriminating against you by gender, welcome," but then we are immediately discriminated against by nationality. You are caught in this net and you can't get out of it.' And it all creates a terrible dilemma, because what Palestinians enjoy in Tel Aviv, they do not share in 'the village they grew up in', where they are asked, 'what about marrying and what about children?' And 'these questions go on and then you get sick of it after 24 hours and you go back to Tel Aviv, where you are confronted with the nationalist prejudice, so it is never ending and that's why we

[29] URL: http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4388349,00.html

move to London and New York', said Awad. All this indicates that enjoying Tel Aviv requires yet another difficult balancing act for Palestinians and particular for women and the gay community.

Being Palestinian and Gay in Tel Aviv

Whenever I walked from central Tel Aviv southwards into the area of Florentin at night, I noticed that the lights become more dull, the buildings more desolate, and the side-streets darker and rather oblique. In one of these dark side streets, the Palestinian LGBT scene held its regular parties in a nightclub. On a mild winter night I walked towards the club with a friend rather early. Scattered groups of guys hung out in front of their cars in the narrow street, some laughing, smoking cigarettes, changing clothes, playing music from their car radio. A little later, already inside the club, a handful of young Palestinian men stood around talking in the large hall. Two of them began dancing, dressed in skirts and glitter shirts. Soon the club filled up with more guests of all ages and genders. Some ordered drinks from the bar, glancing towards the dancefloor, which slowly began to heat up. Also 'drag-queens' were among the party guests. Dressed glamorously, they attracted much attention. The music was dominated by Arabic pop and dance. At some point during the party, one of the drag queens hit the dancefloor, rising above the others on an elevated podium, after having stripped down to nothing but panties and a tight shirt. Some of the men to her feet tried to touch her. One of them lifted her down, pulled her against his body as her legs wrapped around it. He slapped her bum and eventually set her back on the ground, upon which she walked off with a smile and went back up onto the elevated dancefloor.

At this party almost everyone spoke Arabic. While this was still Tel Aviv, it was a Tel Aviv that became meaningfully implicated within Palestinian identity; an underground was formed in the shadow of the city's lights. It was the one night a month in which most of those present could be both Palestinian-Arabs *and* gays. All too often, they needed to compromise the visibility of one for the sake of the other. Not everyone was Palestinian, though. One of the party guests brought his Jewish boyfriend with him, who told me that he did not like the Arabic music. As most

Israelis he did not speak any Arabic. He had merely come to do his boyfriend a favour, he explained. It must have felt weird for him to be one of the few Jewish Israelis at a large party in a Tel Aviv nightclub. It was the feeling usually reserved for Palestinians who try to blend into the city's clubs, but realise that there is always something 'strange' about being at a place with Hebrew music.

Many of the party's guests had driven in from East Jerusalem or Arab towns in Israel for this particular event. Most did so in disguise and had to return to their villages, towns and neighbourhoods early. This is one reason why the party only lasted until about an hour before midnight. The gay Palestinian Mahmud from Jerusalem, who was introduced in Chapter 1 as the person changing clothes and make-up in his car when travelling to and from Tel Aviv, also had to be back home early. He still lived with his parents. Asked about the party, he explained:

> This party happens once a month. Just imagine, you are in stress all the time, you are hiding yourself, you are not free. And when they do this party, you can do everything there, you can share your emotions. I can't even see my friends in Jerusalem, because there are no places where we feel comfortable to sit. So we prefer to come to Tel Aviv. Here at the al-Qaws party I meet friends from Haifa, from other places all around.

Because he tends to easily 'forget' himself and time when going out in Tel Aviv, he drives home 'like crazy'. 'Then I see I am already late, my parents are calling. Then I have to change my clothes, have to take off my make-up…It's always hard to go back.'

The party was organised by Al-Qaws, a civil society organisation promoting gender diversity in Palestinian society. One of its main goals has been to develop a politically aware Palestinian LGBT community, 'communities of individuals that are able to live and celebrate all layers of their identity' (al-Qaws).[30] The group opposes the idea that Tel Aviv is a space for Arab gays to find freedom through cultural and political integration. Instead, the institutional leisure spaces of Tel Aviv are used to create a Palestinian space within which individuals can freely live out different aspects of their identity together. Such gatherings 'are about the collective sharing of

[30] URL: http://www.alqaws.org/our-projects

otherwise marginalized individual positions through self-empowering acts of pleasure' (Karkabi 2013, 318).

Palestinians who have fun in Tel Aviv are often criticised for being *Aravivim* (derived from a combination of the Hebrew words *Aravim* and *Tel Avivim*) by their brethren, while they may face prejudice by Jewish Israelis in the city because of being 'Arabs'. Palestinians in the alternative scene in Haifa use Aravivim to assert cultural authenticity over their counterparts in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and there is a clear 'dissociation of alternative Palestinians from Israeli culture' (Karkabi 2013, 317). This is also why al-Qaws seeks to reconcile being Palestinian with being LGBT, instead of figuring Israeli society as an escape from being Palestinian. This also reacts to the problem of 'pink-washing' – Israeli attempts to co-opt the Arab LGBT-community under the name of liberalism and respect for 'minorities'. Tel Aviv's vibrant gay scene, as well as the city's function as a leisure space for Palestinian gays, are used to brand Israel as a liberal democracy that respects civil rights; however, many queer Palestinians do not only engage in a struggle against homophobia within their own culture, but equally so against Israel's policies of colonization and occupation (Elia 2012, 58). The regular event in Tel Aviv expresses this duality.

But the temptation to simply blend into the Jewish scene of Tel Aviv is strong for young Palestinians in search for freedom. The well-known actor and activist Samira, who is also a section-head nurse in a Tel Aviv hospital, started off from a 'difficult and violent' home. Leaving this former home was always her dream, and so she moved to Tel Aviv as soon as she had finished her studies in Jerusalem. Blending into the city of Tel Aviv was far from easy. She did not want to connect with other Arabs during her first years. But she also felt increasingly estranged when having fun or going out within the Jewish queer community, saying: 'I realized later on that in fact I erased my identity, I was no longer myself.'

Then, one day, she and her Jewish girlfriend broke up after a two-year relationship. In search of familiarity and support, Samira went to see an old Palestinian friend. They sat together and talked, listening to Umm Kulthum, the famous Egyptian singer. 'That day I realized what I was missing all this time (before): I didn't speak Arabic', Samira remembered. And yet it was much more than her native language

she had neglected: ‘Part of being accepted to this circle of going out in Tel Aviv, of going to bars, was to constantly hide myself and my identity.’ Going to bars and having fun may be of secondary importance for many urbanites, but for Samira, it was a deeply political space within which she became co-opted, but from which he eventually broke out.

And there were other signs. The mother of her former girlfriend, as Samira recounted, once expressed fears that one night, she would wake up and strangle her daughter. This was said against the backdrop of the violent events during the Second Intifada, when a climate of suspicion, fear and hatred dominated Jewish-Arab interactions in Israel. Around the same time, Samira and others formed a new movement from the ground up. Under the name of ‘Black Laundry’, they moved beyond the assimilationist politics of the LGBT community in Israel, linking queer and feminist issues with the struggle against the occupation (Ziv 2010). This seemed necessary because gay rights in Israel were used by the government to divert attention from its violations of human rights in the occupied territories. Black Laundry also sought to go beyond the depoliticised category under which Palestinian queers and their ‘party-lifestyle’ had become subsumed. When speaking about the LGBT-scene in this section about leisure, fun and pleasure, this rather ‘serious’ perspective behind the ‘fun’ is important; not only because being gay in Tel Aviv must not be reduced to partying, but also because these political movements formed stepping stones on the way to the contemporary self-confident events and parties in Tel Aviv, where Palestinian identity does not have to be hidden.

Much earlier still, Samira would repeatedly ask herself the same question: ‘which part of yourself do you hide in the closet? Once the Arab, once the lesbian.’ Only through Black Laundry, the two parts of her became reconciled. ‘All parts of my identity were accepted’, she said, adding that Tel Aviv helped her to explore herself and her identity away from the pressures of her family. ‘Tel Aviv is mine’, Samira says today. And the confidence to go out and enjoy the city as Palestinian/lesbian is the result of a long struggle. As our conversation comes to an end and the waitress brings the bill, I notice that Samira switches from English back into Arabic, saying that she likes doing this on purpose to make a statement in Tel Aviv. ‘The cliché is that Arabs serve Jews, but I enjoy being served by *them*.’

For Samira, the political dimension constantly surfaces in her leisure time outside of work: it is in her voice when she speaks Arabic, it emerges when she buys vegetables, and it arises when Israelis around her celebrate. Not long before we met, Samira went for a leisure and shopping trip to Ramallah in the West Bank. There she entered a store for men shoes, asking the shopkeeper for a different size of a pair of shoes she liked. 'How old is *he*?' the man asked. Samira answered that in fact, the shoes were for *her*. He then asked whether she liked men's clothes too, upon which she said: 'yes, only the men I don't like'.

'I was smiling, saying that god sometimes does funny things. He got friendly and said that I am welcome in his shop whenever I come to Ramallah. I don't need to hide anything (…) it's all about decision and practice', she said. Whether it is shopping or celebrating, leisure activities and enjoyment in public space require a balancing act from Palestinian gays and lesbians. Samira and the parties of al-Qaws succeeded in reconciling two intersectional and marginalised positions – being gay *and* being Palestinian – so that they became complimentary rather than contradictory.

Mahmud, who attended the parties regularly, emphasized that this party was very important:

> So we as Arabs also enjoy our own music, we can understand the lyrics and relate to it. In a party with Jews, with Israelis, sometimes you can't share your emotions in the same way. You feel you are not at home. Israelis also have different ideas about relationships. We as Arabs are always looking for a good relationship.

Despite all this, Mahmud said he is actually on the 'Israeli side', and thinks he could become part of their society once he has lived in Tel Aviv for a while. Also others follow a similar path, which is different from Samira. Hence it is not unusual to see gay Palestinians wearing the Star of David on a necklace, or hearing them talk about liberalism and individual freedom while criticizing Palestinian nationalism. There are also other kinds of adaptation, like the fitness trainer who changed his real name into one that sounded familiar in both Hebrew and Arabic.

The gay Palestinian Ali 'went to Tel Aviv to escape the village', where his family was scared about what others may think. Saying he never felt any sense of belonging to the Palestinian community, Ali feels closely connected to the Jewish LGBT

community in Tel Aviv, most of whom are 'leftist', he said, adding that 'cultural difference to Palestinians' is the real problem for him. 'I have always been pro-Israel.' Ali does not deny that racism exists, or that blending into Tel Aviv was not hard. But he uses his gendered position to criticise everything that imposes collective belonging on individuals, emphasising the responsibility of each individual instead. 'I don't have to defend Arabs only because I am part of them. I am an individual', he said. Much later, I met up with Ali ahead of Tel Aviv's Pride Parade in 2013. Holding a large rainbow-flag and dressed rather casually, he seemed excited about this event of collective fun and pleasure, which is disliked by other members of the Palestinian LGBT-community for being too Israeli. But for Ali, the standpoint of al-Qaws is too nationalistic and too Palestinian. It takes the 'fun' out of Tel Aviv.

Irrespective of political positions, simply 'living' the city of Tel Aviv is hardly ever without tension for Palestinian LGBT's. Hussein, who I also met at the al-Qaws party, explained:

> (…) there is discrimination here (in Tel Aviv), sometimes just when I am in the bus, or when I go to the gym, or want to order something. In the beginning I didn't want to say my name out loud when ordering something. Instead of Hussein, I would say something like Hosen, which sounded more Hebrew.

Blending in and trying to be invisible is a tiring experience. Hussein's boyfriend was Jewish. 'His parents don't know about me, simply because I am Arab. I am gay and Arab, and my parents don't know I am gay', Hussein said, adding that it would be a shock for his parents to see him on the streets in Tel Aviv. He was careful and would not go to any clubs or gay parties in Haifa, which were too close to his home town and provided less privacy. Yet over time, Hussein grew more confident. Now he wants people to know he is Arab, saying that 'when you hide your identity, your environment can see that you are weak.'

Still hoping to make some sense of Purim, I once met Hussein after the festivities for brunch in a coffee shop. He walked in with his boyfriend's dog, which was 'decorated' in a pink ballet-dress to fit the occasion. The ability to show such gendered visibility was what made Tel Aviv the right place to live for him and many others who felt that they could not fully be who they were elsewhere in the country. Hussein said there was nothing problematic about Purim, that is was just a good

party. ‘All the Palestinian gays are coming to Tel Aviv. It’s a day of enjoyment, that’s all.’

Despite the merits of living a life in Tel Aviv and enjoying the city, Hussein had a longing for a life abroad. It seemed that no matter where he was – in his home town or in Tel Aviv – one part of his ‘Self’ had to be suppressed. He said that the freedom to live his sexual identity in Tel Aviv outweighed the disadvantages of living in Jewish-Israeli society, but that it was nevertheless very difficult to feel at home and at ease there.

Searching for Islands of Distinctiveness

Reconciling different needs within alternative spaces of fun and leisure is not specific to LGBT Palestinians, nor is the question of how (in)visible these spaces should be. As Mohamed Jabali, the DJ and activist, said about the alternative scene in Tel Aviv and Jaffa: ‘Some things should stay underground. We are not ready for visibility yet.’ Jabali has been a driving force behind alternative Palestinian culture in Israel and held a regular performance as a DJ of Arabic music in Jaffa’s Anna Loulou Bar. Here a mixed Arab-Jewish crowd of people ranging across the age-spectrum danced to his Arabic music and beats.

The entrance to Anna Loulou lies on a side-street in the lower part of old Jaffa. It is almost impossible to spot without knowing it beforehand. One must ring a bell in order to enter if the bouncer is not outside. The door is carefully covered in anti-noise foam pads and once indoors, one will find dull light and rough stone walls as well as a cave-like retreat in the very back. Jabali’s nights were also frequented by a regular crowd of Arab and Jewish Tel Aviv University students, many of whom lived in Jaffa, but also by local men of older age and hip youth of heterogeneous sexual orientation. Alongside hip-hop, dance and alternative Arabic music, the DJ-set occasionally released music that inspired the crowd to dance *dabkeh*, the Levantine circle folk-dance. The atmosphere intensified into the late hours with the help of many beers and plenty of *araq* (anis-spirit). The place was a hideout and retreat in many ways – it was dark, hidden and alcoholic, played Arabic music and welcomed excess.

In this space, many of the hip Palestinians who lived in Tel Aviv could have fun as 'Palestinians', without too much exposure, and without much Hebrew music or mainstream Israelis. But at the same time, not every Palestinian fit into this crowd. 'The place tried to be as inclusive as possible', said Jabali, adding that this involved a complicated mix. Sometimes one would notice a clash of generation or intention, as in the face of obtruding middle-aged men whose imagination was fired by the presence of young women, alcohol, and arousing music. Not letting selected local Palestinian men inside would seem inappropriate for a party with Arabic music. After all, the youths who lived in Jaffa, but came to live there from their home towns in the North of the country had fun in Anna Loulou too. The diversity of age, gender, origin and class was at the same time the essence and the difficulty of this place. Going to Anna Loulou seemed to include an unspoken mutual understanding that boundary-transgression and having fun was legitimate here. It was a truly special space, a place where 'Israelis and Palestinians, straights and gays, Mizrahis and Ashkenazis' could all be 'comfortable in their identities', where '"the absence of compromise" was the embodiment of acceptance' (Bizawe, Haaretz.com, 8/2/2016).[31] When the Israeli couple who originally established the place got tired of running it, some of its clients and employees banded together in 2016 and purchased the place to oversee it and ensure its continuing existence.

If we come back to the idea that enjoyment and fun are political and contested spheres, we see two main contests in this case. One contest is between the desire to have fun as 'cultural' and 'political' Palestinians versus the identity of Tel Aviv as a Hebrew speaking Jewish city. And because Tel Aviv increasingly enters Jaffa, this contest also takes place there by shaping alternative spaces of mutual acceptance. The second contest is that between a young, educated Palestinian alternative scene and the social norms and customs of the wider Palestinian community. According to Bayat (2013, 130–131), fun is a realm where individuals can break free temporarily from the disciplined constraints of daily life, from normative obligations, and from organized power. But what power do they break from?

Anna Loulou may provide an occasional hideout from the Israeli character of Tel Aviv, and a sense of ownership and acceptance in a space of leisure. Bayat writes

[31] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/.premium-1.701955

within the context of Islamist anti-fun politics, that sometimes fun is about 'the undermining of hegemony, the regime of power on which certain strands of moral and political authority rest' (Bayat 2013, 131). And in this sense, organised Palestinian spaces of fun and leisure are always positive *and* negative expressions: they assert some identities, and challenge some others; they are inclusive on one level, but exclusive on others.

Holding a distinctively Palestinian nightlife event in Tel Aviv-Jaffa asserts a challenge to traditional Palestinian values *and* evades Israeli political and cultural hegemony. Hence it creates a community-space around otherwise marginalised subject-positions and practices. Moreover, Jabali's regular DJ-nights connected a diverse array of people under an Arabic 'roof'; at the Anna Loulou, he could play music played nowhere else in the city. His regular event provided a secure and predictable communal experience for Palestinians in Tel Aviv and Jaffa while simultaneously maintaining a sense of freedom to let go. This is why the carving out of alternative spaces by Palestinians in Tel Aviv and Jaffa is essential for their ability to enjoy the city and feel at home in it.

This search for islands of distinctiveness is an ongoing struggle. According to Karkabi (2013, 319), there is 'ongoing movement of reclaiming and appropriating space' among the Palestinian alternative music scene in Israel. Karkabi describes a rave Palestinians staged in a private olive grove in the Galilee region, where people in their 20s and 30s dressed in 'hip' clothes danced to music, walked around the beautiful scenery and had fun. The scene became 'an intimate temporary home, uniting a "little tribe" that was "aiming to change the world" under the rubric of Palestinian unity (Karkabi 2013, 309). I have attended similar events in the Galilee, which suggest, together with Karkabi's ethnography, that Palestinian leisure and fun in Israel seeks to reconfigure and express collective cultural and political identity through practices of pleasure and fun. Karkabi's research covers a wider trend of blossoming Palestinian alternative culture, which found its urban base in the mixed city of Haifa. Although this trend only applies to a limited extent in Tel Aviv, it is nevertheless central to explaining the context of leisure and fun for Palestinians in Israel more generally. Karkabi frames some of these staged events as 'spatialized difference' because these underground spaces communicate a sense of similarity and

difference. Indeed, one can see that most ‘alternative’ spaces of Palestinian leisure and fun in the three big cities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa are islands geographically within, but culturally and politically outside of Israeli space. Often enough, they are literally underground, hidden away, or dependent on the goodwill of Jewish-Israeli gatekeepers. The Anna Loulou in Jaffa is only one example. With a large following on Facebook and in real-life, Jabali’s DJ-nights and other events he supported became focal points for Palestinians in Tel Aviv who depend on such events and the spaces that host them to experience a sense of ‘community’ without giving up individuality.

Locating appropriate spaces to stage music and to practice ‘politicized culture’ collectively is one of the greatest challenges the Palestinian alternative scene faces, writes Karkabi (2013, 316). Their ability to move and go to wherever something is happening is essential, and Mohamed Jabali is the best example for the need to remain mobile. He travelled between Haifa, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Jerusalem and his home-town Taybeh – between ‘urban islands’, calling himself ‘an urban nomad’, while pointing at the tattered straps of his back-pack to underpin the extent to which he was on the move between spaces of leisure and work. Jabali said he had ‘a different feeling of space’ than Jewish Israelis. Especially for Palestinians in Tel Aviv, joining organized alternative parties or cultural events often means going to Haifa or elsewhere. And this ‘leisure-nomadism’ is also a reaction to local marginalisation and part of the process that appropriates space for cultural and political purposes. Spaces of belonging and cultural familiarity are scattered like islands for Palestinians in Israel, while the much larger chunk of space between and around these islands symbolises a mainstream Israeli ‘ocean’. It is one positive feature of Tel Aviv that it allows Palestinians to retreat into this ocean when needed. But most of them also feel the need to have fun and organise joyful experiences as Palestinians on their own island.

The ‘Arab Hipster’ Debate

The Palestinian alternative scene in Israel combines a progressive view on societal values with an emphasis on Palestinian identity and history and its relation to the

wider Arab world. It is 'both nationalistic yet tolerant to difference', making it a difficult reality to establish amidst Israeli marginalization and self-protecting Palestinian traditionalism (Karkabi 2013, 314). But who are these 'alternative' Palestinians, and how should they be referred to?

When the Israeli newspaper Haaretz proclaimed the discovery of a 'new underground' among 'Arab hipsters' in 2013, some of those the people journalist Roy Arad had interviewed for this story were furious. As the Palestinian student Mai told me in a conversation about the 'hipster controversy' in Haifa one day: 'The article sounded like, "finally they are changing". We appeared like the Arabs who live here and want to be cool like Israelis. But actually we try to embrace the Arab-Palestinian inside us.' In response to criticism, the original title containing Arab hipsters was later changed to 'The New Underground: Israel's Palestinian Citizens Dance Through the Culture Clash' (Arad, Haaretz.com, 30/11/2013).[32]

According to the article, Mai 'sports a chin piercing and '60s-style hair decorations'. It featured conversations with several Palestinian cultural activists, Arab students in Jerusalem's prestigious art school Bezalel, and organisers of LGBT-parties. The 38 year-old Musa Mazarib, who is interviewed in the article as the owner of Jerusalem's 'fashionable' Albir bar, wrote a response letter, which Haaretz published. Therein he spoke of 'big disappointment' over the way the article dealt with his community: as Arabs who left their 'primitive' villages into the enlightened world of Israel with the only purpose of enjoying wild dance parties and being 'Arab hipsters'; the tone of the article only underlined the mainstream approach in Israel to the Palestinian minority, namely that they were a people from 'another planet', according to Mazarib. In a similar vein, Mai complained that long before the 'Nakba', the catastrophe of 1948 and Israel's creation, 'there was a lot of Palestinian cultural life; it was everywhere, there was theatre, and art, in Jaffa, and in Haifa. But they erased that and now they come and say: "look! You also have art."'

In becoming hipsters, they became 'news', because it went beyond the stereotype. What is long over the hill for Jewish Israelis becomes news if discovered among Palestinians, because they are supposed to be traditional. It expressed another

[32] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.560904

dilemma Palestinians in Israel and particularly in Tel Aviv face: hanging out in alternative hip bars and simply carving out their own spaces of leisure and culture is interpreted as a distancing from their Palestinian identity, and a way of becoming more Israeli. The way they see it is, however, exactly the opposite: they are finally becoming Palestinian in ways they can choose.

Referring largely to the same community of people in 2016 under the title, 'In Israeli City of Haifa, a Liberal Palestinian Culture Blossoms', a New York Times feature portrays the growing visibility and assertiveness of Palestinian cultural life in Haifa: 'They were among the many coifed, pierced and tattooed women and men who populate a slice of Haifa's social scene that resembles that of the well-heeled hipsters of Tel Aviv. But here the cool kids are Palestinians, and they have unfurled a self-consciously Arab milieu that is secular, feminist and gay-friendly' (Hadid, nytimes.com, 3/1/2016).[33] The article further quotes a women who is referred to as a patron of a hip bar called Eilka as saying that 'Haifa is a center for Arabs, like Tel Aviv is a center for Jews', which would make Haifa a comfortable place for liberal Palestinians who wanted 'not only to escape the constraints of conservative Arab communities but also to be among their own people'.

Although it first appeared to me as an interesting and very timely feature, also this article generated a fierce response by one Palestinian interviewee. In this complaint, distributed publically via Facebook, Ayed Fadel, who is cited in the article as the person who runs Kabareet, one of the bars in Haifa portrayed, wrote the following:

> I actually found this piece disturbing (…) it portrays the modern Palestinian in a "Western" image that comforts white readers and make them say, "oh, they're just like us!" Well no, we're nothing like them, in fact, we're very different and deep into the shit, and having to portray us in this image is insulting. On the other hand, I do agree our community has developed and evolved and I love going to the places mentioned in this article, they feel like home, and because they feel like home, it's disturbing the way they were illustrated. (…) About quoting me: "We want a gay couple to go to the dance floor and kiss each other, and nobody to even look at them, this is the new Palestinian society we are aiming for." Yes I did say that, but it was a whole build up for the conversation until I reached this sentence, and I was actually trying to explain

[33] URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/04/world/middleeast/in-israeli-city-of-haifa-a-liberal-palestinian-culture-blossoms.html

> how Haifa became a place where everyone can feel safe and comfortable, so I used one of the most extremist views that our society could accept.

It is no coincidence that both these articles generated very similar responses. They show that the Palestinians have grown very sensitive to external ascriptions, mainly because their complex ambivalent positions have not been translated well into brief journalistic articles. They struggle on multiple fronts at the same time: against cultural and political marginalisation in Israel, against social and religious traditionalism within their own communities, for gender-equality, diversity and historical justice, and all that within the framework of a strengthened sense of Palestinian identity and solidarity.

Compromising the Palestinian in Tel Aviv

Independent spaces of Palestinian leisure and sociability in Tel Aviv appear more fragile than those in Haifa, and the need for compromise is felt more directly here. Only Jaffa may be seen as Tel Aviv's 'little Haifa', yet even here political compromises are unavoidable. One bar that has flourished there during my research is Café Salmah, which I discussed as a hangout of students in the chapter on Tel Aviv University. This place used Arabic signs, sold Palestinian beer and t-shirts with Arabic print on them. According to the regular customer Ali, who lived in Jaffa and worked in Tel Aviv's high-tech sector, this political and cultural visibility also had a downside:

> The last owner of Salmah was too extremist. Her business failed. She made it all Palestine. So I told the new owner that if he wants to make money, Jews have to feel comfortable to come. But of course we should keep our culture and language.

It is the same dilemma that haunts individual decision making in Tel Aviv between the pragmatic choices of blending in and Palestinian assertiveness. Well gentrified, Jaffa offers plenty of bars and coffee shops with an Arabic atmosphere, but few of them are run by Palestinians, and even fewer have a clear political agenda. Salmah did so in terms of the music it played and the language it used. Its Facebook page was in Arabic and its Arabic-language logo had an English translation rather than a

Hebrew one. In the heavily marked space of highly differentiated Jaffa, such characteristics send specific signals and construct clear boundaries. They express definitions of what 'we are' and what 'we are not', but in Tel Aviv there is no alternative to dealing with Jewish Israeli institutions and the overall dominance of Israeli culture.

In addition to places like Salmah and Anna Loulou in Jaffa, there are a number of other nightlife events in Tel Aviv frequented mainly by Palestinian students. Among these are the regular Tel Aviv University student parties in a club called Levontin 7 in South Tel Aviv. One student party in 2015 was titled 'Neon Sensation Party', in which party guests could make themselves glow in the dark while dancing to house-music in a central Tel Aviv location. With ticket sales in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv, this party had more than 500 attendees on its Facebook-Page. However, its advertising had no specific reference to anything Palestinian, and the description was in English and thus more inclusive but also less marked. Hebrew and Arabic are always political in this context. English offers a third space. Being careful with Arabic signage is also a result of past experiences. Israeli owners of clubs have often been careful not to host any event dominated by Palestinians that could be interpreted as nationalist or political, and organisers of these parties know that they are treading a fine line.

One of the most prominent Palestinian music scenes within and beyond Israel is Hip-Hop. The hits of well-known groups like DAM impress through their sharp-edged political Arabic lyrics. But as Eqeiq (2010) argues, these rappers often started off with English rap and turned to Arabic in reaction to the impact of conflict, occupation and violence on identity and nationalism. Tamer Nafar, a member of DAM, decided to use Arabic to reach all Palestinian youth after 're-examining' his identity 'under the microscope' in 2001, after the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada; and the songs of these 'ghetto intellectuals' address a wide range of topics ranging from opposing Zionism, racism and the occupation, to issues of gender equality and love (Eqeiq 2010, 54–55).

I had the pleasure to join one of DAM's album release concerts, in a club in South Tel Aviv. This and concerts by other bands served as rare focal points for the Palestinians in the city. Another band on stage in Tel Aviv was System Ali, a ten-

piece hip hop outfit rapping in Arabic, Russian, Hebrew and English. These bands also attract an alternative Palestinian and Jewish crowd because they represent the social and political struggles they address. System Ali grew out of Jaffa's marginalised Ajami neighbourhood, and its Jewish and Arab musicians speak of a struggle for Jaffa and of the importance of breaking prejudice and ignorance (Shezaf, 972mag.com, 22/8/2013).[34] DAM is the most famous Palestinian hip-hop group and its three MC's grew up in a neglected neighbourhood of the Israeli city of Lyd. Very much like Jabali, they attract a large following of both Arab and Jewish fans whenever they play within Israel.

At their album release concert in a club in South Tel Aviv, there were many Palestinian citizens of Israel, but at least half of the crowd seemed to consist of Jewish Israelis and foreigners. Staging quintessential Palestinian Hip-Hop in the heart of Tel Aviv, in front of a very mixed crowd, underlined how complicated managing identity and language were in this mixed environment. Early on during their concert, the rappers of DAM appeared unsure about which language to use when talking to the crowd: Hebrew, English or Arabic? After asking the crowd who was Palestinian, foreigner and Jewish Israel, in the manner of bands who try to heat up an audience, they ended up using a mix of all three languages between the songs.

This complex mix is one that takes place under an Israeli roof, in an Israeli city, but hosted by a Palestinian band with mainly Arabic songs. Palestinian organisers in Tel Aviv depend on Israeli host spaces, and often attract an alternative Jewish and international crowd as well. People from different backgrounds have fun together through the sharing of similar political ideals and alternative culture, and often they know each other from living around Jaffa, from different places in South Tel Aviv, from university or political activism.

Despite the positive spirit of these shared Jewish-Arab spaces of leisure and fun, Palestinian culture in Tel Aviv and Jaffa suffers from dependence. The 'Seraya' theatre in Jaffa, which also hosts concerts and different events, is another focal point for Palestinian students in Tel Aviv. According to Mohamed Jabali, who served some time on the theatre's board, 'it is the only Arab cultural institution in the city,

[34] URL: http://972mag.com/every-song-is-a-fight-for-existence/77720/

but it is not independent'. Al-Seraya exists precariously *within* the so-called Arab-Hebrew Theatre. 'They have to live on peanuts', Jabali said, adding that the theatre's dependence on Israeli funding involves another problem:

> You can make an Arab theatre, be radical in your content, but then you have no support. You are at the peak of your community, politically and in terms of identity, but all this is exactly what you can't say when you sit in the ministry [to request funding]. Wherever you walk in this country as a Palestinian institution, you will step into Israeli mud. Whatever you start, you will need Israeli institutions.

The search for islands of Palestinian distinctiveness in Tel Aviv involves the careful navigating of ongoing compromise. And in any event, they are marginalised, depend on the constant efforts of volunteers and on scarce Israeli public funding. When I met Jabali another time, he had just announced his 'retirement' from the weekly DJ-sessions at the Anna Loulou bar. After three years of playing, he had enough and wanted to move on. 'It was exciting for me. But now I need to do something for my home, I want to be in financial security', he said, adding: 'You can't struggle like this all alone. If I know that the revolution will come in two months, I get into financial problems and struggle. But this revolution is not coming. And now we are losing Jaffa to Tel Aviv.'

The sobering reality is that most cultural events and parties that are officially organised in Tel Aviv are not considered appropriate by Palestinians. Talking about the so-called 'White Night', a night of live music and celebration with cultural venues remaining open until late, the Tel Aviv University student Hisham said: 'If I was in any other country, I would have participated, even without feeling a sense of belonging to the country. But I never felt any belonging to these Israeli festivities.' Some of these may provide an opportunity, once again, to blend into the masses anonymously and simply enjoy it, which is what I tried one day during the Purim holiday of masquerading. I met up with two friends, a Palestinian and a foreign journalist, committed to 'just enjoy it'. As we walked along Rothshild-Boulevard, a group of young Arabic speaking men with masks passed us, laughing and screaming euphorically. It was rather well-frequented by gay Palestinian men, who could immerse into Tel Aviv without showing their face and thus running the risk of being

discovered by the wrong people. On the other hand, many Jewish Israelis dressed as soldiers or other military-related personas. One was dressed as what seemed like an Israeli interpretation of an 'Arab' – a Kuffiyeh on the head and a target-plate hanging down from both sides of his body, connected via a string that rested on his shoulders. Others were dressed as what looked like Saudi Sheikhs. My friends and I sat down with the plan to have dinner, but we felt overwhelmed by the experience. The Palestinian friend had never been out on Purim before despite having lived in Tel Aviv for years. Although a collective expression of joy, this event had a sobering effect on us. We had pushed ourselves to 'give it a try', but ended up feeling tension between the desire to simply have fun and the simultaneous feeling that there was something utterly wrong about it.

Enjoying at Home

The role of the private home is essential for understanding the dilemmas of Palestinian leisure and enjoyment in Tel Aviv. One of these private enclaves was the apartment of three sisters who had moved to Tel Aviv from their home town Ramleh, after serious problems in their family. These included the sudden death of their mother, bankruptcy, and domestic violence. They had lived in what they called a 'palace' without electricity and heating for months after their father lost all money in a shady business deal. Leaving for Tel Aviv was a hard choice for Reem, the oldest among them. But staying was no alternative either.

The apartment they shared with a friend lay just off a busy main road that runs through the area of Ramat Gan east of central Tel Aviv. Here the early Israeli state developed a 'modern Jewish urban system' in areas of former Palestinian villages, which were depopulated in 1948 (Golan 2003, 146–147). Today's Ramat Gan marks the eastern extension of Tel Aviv's urban sprawl. Slightly cheaper than the centre, it is popular among new urban arrivals. For the three sisters, the area offered control and anonymity away from their home town, but their apartment was also a necessary refuge from the city. At home they made up their own rules and supported each other.

One evening I was invited to join them for dinner at the apartment, where they often cooked together. I quickly understood that their residential enclave was a bulwark against the challenges they faced in Tel Aviv. Renting in the city was special for Palestinians first because they often find it difficult to be accepted by Jewish landlords who are suspicious of Arabs; and secondly because of an increased need for personal, cultural and political 'privacy' in this foreign urban space. 'Tel Aviv wants to tell you that you are free, that here you can do whatever you want and you have free choice. But at the bottom line, this is not true', Reem said as we sat on the couch in the living room. Soon food was served, and Nancy, the sisters' flatmate, began preparing the *Nargileh*. This ritual was significant because it expressed a deep sense of enjoyment and relaxation, while also relating to their identification as Palestinians away from the buzz of Tel Aviv. On the other hand, smoking the pipe would be an unusual ritual in public for local young women back in Ramleh, and so Tel enabled some forms of leisure but disabled others.

Nancy stood on their balcony, incinerating the blazing charcoal by spinning it around in circular movements. When the Nargileh was set up we moved onto the balcony. Sitting around in a circle on pillows, we played cards and at one point, Reem jumped up, saying that they needed to put on the Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum whenever they played cards as a tradition. While playing we began talking about Tel Aviv and their free time in the city. Would they try to meet other Palestinians in the city when they go out, I asked. 'We always hide things from our community', said Rawaan, Reem's sister. 'It's more intense for girls. And this is not only about drinking. When other girls hear that we live here in Ramat Gan together, they are often shocked and ask if we are studying.' In fact, they were not studying but worked in various jobs. People from their home town found their lifestyle in this Israeli city as unmarried girls rather strange, a suspicion furthered by the image of Tel Aviv as a playful party-city. Relatives thought Tel Aviv is all about celebrating. Nancy, who worked in a supermarket, said that many of her friends feel like Tel Aviv is 'abroad'. Her sister always says it is too far away for her to visit. 'We have a lot of privacy here', she added.

In daily life, interactions with other Palestinians in the city often troubled them. When customers spot Nancy's name-tag, or see her wearing a T-shirt with Arabic

writing on it, they are surprised, she said: ‘They ask with a negative tone “what are you doing here? Do you study?” They always need a reason. If I say I just live here and work, they are confused.’

If other Palestinians realised she was Palestinian too, they immediately asked her all the questions she generally seeks to avoid. These included where she was from, which school she went to, her father’s name, and so forth. As Nancy explained all this, Reem chipped in: ‘They go underneath your skin these people. Here in Tel Aviv, I don’t really want to meet other Arabs.’ And yet it seemed they did, if only in the secure space of their own apartment and between family and friends. Moreover, having some debts and working hard, they did not go out much in Tel Aviv because it was also very expensive, as most spaces of leisure and fun are also capitalist consumerist spaces.

As we continued playing cards and smoking Nargileh to Arabic music, one of their friends joined. His name is Nidal, a young Palestinian who often hangs out with them. Originally from northern Israel, he came to Tel Aviv more than two years earlier to fulfil his dream of becoming a successful mechanic specialising in motorbikes. He said he was on good terms with his colleagues at the garage he had been working in, saying that he is ‘friends with everyone there’. Although he could have worked in his family’s business back home, he chose Tel Aviv, not least because he also wanted to ‘enjoy life’.

It became clear to me during this evening that for Palestinians in Tel Aviv, home plays a special role as a space of leisure. It is here where they can freely escape from the Hebrew language, speak Arabic with each other without being looked at with suspicion; where they can play Umm Kulthum as long as they wish, and just be themselves as Palestinians *and* individuals. It is chiefly about creating cultural familiarity and privacy, a sense of ownership over leisure-time and space away from those who execute dominant norms. Enjoying Tel Aviv from home for these sisters and their flatmate meant not having to play by Israeli and not by traditional Palestinian rules, and not having to worry about the risks of public visibility.

However, at one point their landlord announced that he would sell the apartment, so Reem and her sisters had to find a new home. They eventually found one in Jaffa’s

Ajami neighbourhood, an area with a significant Palestinian population. A few months into their new lease, we met in a newly opened coffee shop on Jaffa's clock-tower square. One of the main benefits of their new location seemed to be that it was 'a more Palestinian place', as Reem put it. She also took up work in Café Salmah in Jaffa, which had just re-opened and promised to create truly Palestinian space. From their private enclave in Ramat Gan, they moved into an 'exclave' – a private life that was very close to, but still disconnected from the local Palestinian population.

A few weeks later Reem already regretted some of her choices, complaining that she was not paid enough and saying that she felt humiliated by the owner's lack of respect for her work, which involved serving, cleaning and cooking. Pointing to the struggles that take place on the other side of the bar, Reem's actual tipping point was the following:

> Now he brought a second waitress, she is Jewish and 17 years old. Now I have to speak Hebrew all the time? She will serve the tables and tell me at the bar, "*Tnele shtei berot*' [give me two beers] No, enough! Why do they have to enter every single space we try to build for ourselves, why is he bringing a Jewish waitress? And one that is 17, of course she will work for the salary he proposes.

Although they seemed happy about having left Ramat Gan behind them, Reem's idealistic hopes for a truly Palestinian environment were quickly shattered. 'Palestine is just a memory, not more', she said, clearly frustrated. And there is a clear tension between their hope to not meet other random Palestinians when they lived in Ramat Gan, and the sudden desire to be in a Palestinian environment in Jaffa. The people who 'get under your skin', as Reem put it earlier, now lived around them:

One day after Reem finished her shift we met up with the others and walked to their new flat together. On the way we stopped at the Abu-Lafia sandwich store. Nadin, the youngest of the sisters, stayed with me at the eatery while the others went ahead to the apartment. When she received a text-message from her older sisters, she suddenly turned to me, saying with a smile: 'Can you go into this shop and buy [cigarette] papers for us?' She explained that because they now lived in a 'Palestinian area', they had to be careful about what they did and what others knew of them doing. Gossip about the sisters from Ramleh buying papers to roll cigarettes was not

exactly what they wanted their Arab neighbours to think. However, these things did not matter when they lived in Ramat Gan. Nadin explained:

> In Ramat Gan we were surrounded by Jewish society and no one asked us about what we do, we could do what we wanted. In Jaffa, we have to take much more care about what we do. We lower our voices on the street. Here we live in the middle of the Arab community. They are probably all wondering how these girls can live alone in an apartment. (…) Of course the atmosphere around Jaffa is nice. But being within the Arab community also means that they always look at you from one perspective, not looking at you based on who you are, but based on how you should be.

There is a sad irony to this, because it is also what makes living in the midst of Jewish-Israeli society difficult: they always look at you based on how you should be, namely not too Palestinian and rather 'civil'. Wherever they lived, they had to manage the visibility of one part of their life or another. One other day we all met on the beach for a picnic, again with Nargilah and playing cards. They sometimes enjoyed their weekends this way and the beach seemed to offer a less marked space than other places in the city. Unlike Beirut, where the 'pleasures of the beach' are mostly privatised (Khalili 2015, 7), Tel Aviv's beaches are almost entirely public. Different stretches of the beach are known to be frequented by different kinds of people, including Ultraorthodox, Gays, Tourists, Locals, Palestinian families from Jaffa, and people with dogs. Although in this sense it is a differentiated space, it also provides an open and unregulated escape from the city. There is also a new extension of the beachside boulevard, the 'Tayelet', which stretches all the way from Jaffa to the North of Tel Aviv. Once I noticed two young Palestinian girls from Jaffa sitting on the stairs of the Tayelet, chatting in Arabic and drinking 'Bacardi Breezer' in the sun. On another day I would see two other Palestinian women from Jaffa stretching and jogging along it, one of them wearing a T-Shirt saying 'Palestinian' in Arabic letters. Often one would see families from Jaffa strolling up beyond the boundaries of familiarity. Promenading originally emerged as a bourgeois sociability, but as in Beirut, in Tel Aviv it is a 'non-transgressive form of leisure' (Khalili 2015, 8), in which very different people otherwise not connected pass each other in fleeting contact. Of course, Palestinians who live under occupation without Israeli citizenship and entry permits are mostly excluded from this pleasure.

For the youngest of the three sisters, Nadin, not even the beach provided relief from the difficult aspects of life, such as being connected to contradictory cultural worlds between Ramleh and Tel Aviv. At the beach, she received repeated phone calls by a young man from her home-town, who knew her and cursed her in insulting ways. At one point, Reem took her phone and screamed at them. Later, she explained: 'The guys in Ramleh know she lives in Tel Aviv and think she is a whore because of that. They call her, insult her and think she will have sex with them.'

Hence I realised that for Nadin, enjoying Tel Aviv stood in a complicated relationship to Ramleh, her home town. During most of the week she commuted to Ramleh for work, and as the youngest child, she was still more closely connected to the family. When their mother died in a car-accident, Nadin was only 16. While her father and others in the family put the older sisters under a lot of pressure thereafter, she was spared much of the trouble but now had to straddle the two worlds she lived in. Being in Tel Aviv implied that she was an 'easy' girl who had fun in the city, which is why the young men harassed her over the phone.

One day I accompanied Nadin to Ramleh, where we had a few hours before her work began. After a stroll through town, we sat down in a local restaurant for lunch and talked. It was here in Ramleh where they lived in their old mansion for two months without electricity and heating after their father lost everything in a business deal. Nadin's position between Tel Aviv and Ramleh was complicated. The day before one of her cousins drove by her at the bus station in a taxi, saying that he wanted to talk to her. They sat in the taxi and he asked why she left the house, saying that he wanted to 'help her come back home, to reconcile with her father'.

> I said I can only reconcile alone. He said that I followed my sisters who left home and they affected me in a bad way. "You should come back to your home, people talk badly about you," he said. "And if they talk badly about you, that's bad for your family, bad for finding a husband." He said the community is watching me.

The underlying connotations are that Tel Aviv was sinful, involving transgressions and a liberal lifestyle locally associated with Jewish Israelis. Nadin was torn between multiple injunctions and desires. 'I can't decide where I want to be, I am drifting between here and there', she said. The movement between Tel Aviv and Ramleh

caused much dissonance. Initially, Nadin stayed on when her sisters left the family home, but once she finished school she too wanted to follow them to Tel Aviv, but wondered: 'How could I have left without being seen the same as my sisters, without society talking about me the same way they talked about them?' The image of Tel Aviv does not help. 'They have this idea that the one who is going to Tel Aviv moves from club to club, goes to parties and drinks alcohol 24 hours', she said.

The circumstances of their family crisis, which included large amounts of money being withheld from them by other family members and pressures to 'return', make it difficult for Nadin to even imagine a life in Ramleh. At the same time, she wages a conflict with herself whenever her sisters drink or smoke, and tries to distance herself from these things. It seemed that neither way made sense, and thus Nadin was trapped in limbo, unable to enjoy Tel Aviv and let herself go, and unable to re-integrate into Ramleh. 'I see people in Tel Aviv and see their good life and I want this kind of life for everyone, also for me. But at the same time I can't live this life, I am not part of this community.'

Conclusion

The urban space of Tel Aviv offers anonymity but disables other ways of being, also complicating the search for a true 'home' for Palestinians in the city. Even the move to a Palestinian area effectively undermined some benefits of anonymity the young women previously enjoyed. Palestinian norms and the image of Tel Aviv as a liberal Jewish city interact in ways that can bring Tel Aviv into Ramleh, and Ramleh into Tel Aviv in conflicting ways. Although only some Palestinians in Tel Aviv have the resources for leisure, even for those who appear to have the time and will to enjoy Tel Aviv these joys are fraught with tension. I have shown how questions of identification, visibility and anonymity relate to the Palestinians' practices of leisure, fun and enjoyment in this city.

Overall, enjoying Tel Aviv is not only an expression of freedom and conviviality for the Palestinians, but also a heavily marked experience that is differentiated by power-related dynamics of ethnicity, class and gender. They are related to power because something about Palestinian leisure and fun in Tel Aviv always unsettles powerful

ideas that seek to maintain the boundaries their activities transgress. As political commitment and traditional values form an ongoing contest with individual desires and the city's promise of 'freedom', public space becomes a 'minefield' where one must carefully navigate different kinds of visibility across changing social contexts.

Blending into Israeli nightlife and the city's spaces of leisure may provide temporary relief from norms and offer anonymity, but always involves the risk of being recognized by the 'wrong' people at the wrong moment. Consumption usually involves much public visibility; and even if the goods are consumed at home they need to be bought somewhere. Palestinian women in particular find it difficult to reconcile their private lives in Tel Aviv with their desire to fulfil some of the role expectations others have of them. What should be private and joyful often involves anxiety because for women, the intimate easily becomes a sphere of public interest and contestation.

What is interesting is that the cultural activism that demands recognition of Palestinian identity is also paralleled by the situational desire for the opposite: an avoidance of recognition. In some situations, the perils of visibility can outweigh the desire for familiarity. These problems also underline the multiple struggles Palestinians in Tel Aviv wage, if only in subtle ways. The case where the intersectionality of these multiple struggles is most evident was the Palestinian LGBT 'community', where some spaces enable individuals to be Palestinian *and* gay without contradiction. Although Tel Aviv offers plenty of spaces and opportunities to have fun and enjoy, Palestinians sometimes cannot enjoy them without either being stigmatised or estranged. Discovering the unknown and taking risks is often exciting. It reconfigures boundaries and solidifies others. As the saying goes, Jerusalem prays, Haifa works, and Tel Aviv plays – a play, however, which feels like a run through a maze for the Palestinians. It is fun, but they must also choose their steps very carefully.

5 The Politics of (Non)Recognition

Most Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel come to Tel Aviv in order to make use of employment or educational opportunities in this city. But they do not simply blend in and disappear in the urban crush of persons. They also challenge and reconfigure its space and ascribe meanings to it. In doing so, they may seek recognition for who they are from their surroundings and from each other, whether as individuals with plural identities and multiple senses of belonging, or as members of an indigenous ethno-national community seeking historical justice from the State of Israel and its Jewish majority. Recognition will be used in two ways here: as a political demand for the acknowledgment of Palestinians' 'existence' in historical, cultural and political terms within the space of Tel Aviv, mostly directed at Jewish Israelis, the state, and the city, but also at other Palestinians; and secondly, in the sense of individuals fears and desires of being recognized or 'evaluated' by others during their everyday life in the city, whether as Palestinians, Arabs, or alternatively, 'not recognized' as such and remaining unmarked urban individuals.

Looking at such politics of recognition and associated considerations about visibility and representation, this chapter will focus more explicitly on the 'political' than other sections of the thesis have done. Among them are artistic expressions, activism for historical justice, as well as the search for Palestinian political representation in Tel Aviv. The latter will be explored through my ethnography of the 2013 Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipal elections. We will see that the political recognition of Jaffa as a Palestinian space within the municipality is linked to the non-recognition of Palestinians in Tel Aviv as politically relevant. Secondly, I would like to open up a discussion about the diverse political stances and opinions Palestinians in Tel Aviv develop. Thereby I also challenge the idea that the political is necessarily based on collective organising and uniform identity-claims. Moreover, the example of political artists in Tel Aviv will indicate that their work challenges the exclusion of Palestinian-Arab identity from Tel Aviv but simultaneously grows from the heart of their presence in the city. I will then turn to an exploration of the 'Nakba' in Tel Aviv, looking at tours and new initiatives that seek to retrieve this Palestinian history

of displacement that has been lost in this city, thus redefining their relationship with this urban space.

The diverse individual and organised struggles for recognition and political representation naturally produce very diverse positions in exchange with the city of Tel Aviv and its southern suburb Jaffa. If there is a general argument about how Palestinians in Tel Aviv are political, I argue that it is politics through which people find strength in ambiguity and dissonance despite the irresolvable contradictions settler colonialism has inscribed into their lives. Despite their entrapment between essentialist difference and liberal inclusion, their incorporation also opens up 'a space for critical reimaginings of social life as indigenous subjects creatively engage the slippages, dispersions, and ambivalences of discursive and moral formations that make up their lives' (Povinelli 2002, 29). This chapter is about the spaces Palestinians carve out not only by escaping but also by utilising the ambivalences of their inclusion in creative and productive ways. Palestinian political activity and conscience does not only oppose Jewish-Israeli space but also grows from within its core and seeks to benefit from this exchange, hence providing an opportunity to rethink the binary opposition of inclusion versus resistance.

From Recognition to the Politics of Ambivalence

Out of simultaneous liberal urban openness and ethno-national domination, paired with much mobility and balancing, a multidimensional politics of the everyday emerges among the Palestinians in Tel Aviv. At the heart of it lies the omnipresence of ambivalence and subtle conflict as well as the Palestinians' ways of dealing with these conflicts. Their acts of balancing or negotiation in-between are best seen as intersections for the relational aspects of power. Using the 'political' as an analytical category amid such complexity is not self-evident, and anthropologists have often avoided dealing with politics in its narrow sense as a form of state government, turning the state into a distant or deferred externality of political imaginary (Spencer 2007, 46). By looking at dynamics of ambiguous recognition, including the question of what recognition Palestinians seek from the Israeli state and its Jewish citizens, I seek to explore how the larger sphere of national and state power interact with this

particular urban space and the agency of individual members of a marginalised urban minority.

A definition of the political as being rooted in ambivalence rather than strategic essentialism acknowledges that 'resistance' is paralleled and accompanied by compromises and distortions (Theodossopoulos 2014, 4). To make these slippages visible, an 'expansive definition of the political' that covers the expressive and performative aspects of such politics is necessary (Spencer 2007, 17). These are particularly important to grasp the shifting forms of representation and recognition Palestinians seek as individuals and collectively. Those with marginalised gender-identities may see more urgency in changing the traditional cultural norms of their own community than gaining full recognition as an indigenous group in Tel Aviv. More often though, Palestinians in Tel Aviv simultaneously wage individual struggles for recognition and the wider collective struggle for Palestinian rights and self-determination. The different forms of recognition they seek consequently involve overlapping fields of 'culture' and 'politics', which are not two disconnected 'things' but two perspectives on a single dynamic process (Spencer 2007, 17).

Specifying my particular understanding of the 'political' this way also answers concerns raised by Candea (2011), who warns that leaving the 'political' conceptually open-ended endangers ethnography and undermines precision. According to Candea, one can even enshrine inequality by blindly locating it everywhere because this effectively makes equality analytically impossible. Having said this, exploring the ethnographic nuances of everyday politics and dynamics of recognition also needs conceptual flexibility: the political cannot be defined too narrowly because this would figure it in opposition to the 'non-political', which ironically is in itself deeply political in Tel Aviv. Easily misguided by the very subtle acts of negotiating ambivalence and conflict in urban space, individuals' power-struggles appear disguised and have become normalised as seemingly non-political in the city. One example is the Palestinians' dispersion and mutual disconnection in Tel Aviv. At first glance this phenomenon suggests that they simply blend into urban space in an apolitical manner. A closer look, however, has revealed that such inclusion involves constant misrecognition and at times even the fear of being recognised.

Exploring these slippages between the political and the seemingly non-political, I follow Yael Navaro-Yashin's (2003, 107) invitation to look at the abnormal qualities of the 'normal' in our analysis of the political; something she did based on Northern Cyprus, which is a space largely unrecognized by the political system – a 'no man's land'. In comparison, Tel Aviv is quite the opposite of a no man's land in terms of recognition: it is over-determined as a place on the world map and at the heart of Israeli identity, economy and nation, while also being signified through the alterity most Palestinians feel towards it. The many overlapping and conflicting meanings ascribed to it indicate that social identity, of the city or a particular people in it, is constantly modified by discursive exteriors, hence preventing it from ever becoming 'fully sutured' and stable (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 111). Rather than a no man's land it is an 'everyman's land' of multiple contradictory ascriptions and representations, which is in part what makes the Palestinians' own subjectivities and their relation to this space so ambiguous and unconventional.

However, although the space of Tel Aviv is over-determined, its heterogeneity of experiences and discourses has become overshadowed by a powerful abstract identity that is essentially Jewish-Israeli, modern, liberal and supposedly fun. The marginalised critical politics underneath this dominant image of the city, which are naturally multi-facetted and at times unavailable to the consciousness of its subjects, can be accessed through the accounts that normalise it (Navaro-Yashin 2002, 15-16). The non-political character of Tel Aviv with regard to Palestinian affairs and the conflict is one such normalised account, while the Palestinians own ideas about their place in Tel Aviv often challenge this normalisation.

Given the ambivalence and complexity of Palestinian political opinions and projects in Tel Aviv, I ask what forms of recognition, if any, can grow from such ambiguous ground? As we will see below, Palestinians actively seek recognition for marginalised subject-positions by utilising *and* by challenging this space. This does not fit easily into the conventional understandings of subaltern groups' politics of recognition, the relevance of which Taylor (1994, 25) summarised the following way:

> The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can

> suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

This chapter will make clear that there may also be a desire for non-recognition as a particular kind of 'Palestinian' via Jewish-Israelis who are in powerful positions, such as security guards or employers. The question is then not between recognition 'yes' or 'no', but about recognition as what, as who, and in what social circumstance: a 'good Arab', a 'Palestinian', or an unmarked individual?

We have already seen that Palestinians in Tel Aviv sometimes seek misrecognition in situations where they simply want to enjoy the city as an unmarked person. Only that the classic politics of recognition work with an unhelpful opposition between the universal and the specific. As a by-product of citizenship, civility and liberalism, 'the appeal to universalism conceals the way in which marks of culture, race, gender, class, all work to exclude certain people from power (Spencer 2007, 8). Some Palestinians still want to escape the 'specific' for the sake of temporary inclusion in the 'universalism' of urban civility, but because the promises of recognition are 'cunning' (Povinelli 2002), even the most 'universal' characteristics of Tel Aviv lead to the inevitability of the political for the Palestinians. The universal promises of equality in civility and citizenship are only available to Palestinians in Tel Aviv at the expense of their political identity and their visibility, because what is 'universal' is in fact over-determined by forces that exclude their identity and history; their access to what is universal is limited by overlapping fields of modernity, colonialism, and Jewish-Israeli dominance.

Because of the growing disenchantment with flawed universalisms, initiatives increasingly demand recognition of the Palestinian history of displacement and destruction in Tel Aviv. Understood in this sense, their politics of recognition builds on a collective memory of exclusion, makes demands to acknowledge historical injustices, and expresses the need for Israel to take responsibility or offer an apology for those who have caused these injustices; the past must be 'confronted' if reconciliation is to remain possible (Bashir 2006, 205).

Needless to say, not every Palestinian in Tel Aviv relates to such a critical perspective. This is why speaking of cultural and political recognition on a collective level is a tricky matter if it defines a group as a unified agent, thereby robbing individuals of their plurality and agency. Indeed, culturalist identities can be ascribed as essences that are 'integral to a distinctive culture' and not merely as ways of living (Povinelli 2002, 3). Avoiding this pitfall, I argue that Palestinians in Tel Aviv navigate the spaces between their ethno-national distinctiveness and liberal openings by employing the slippages in-between creatively and productively. But as the following example will show, the mutual exclusiveness of Tel Aviv and Palestinian politics undermine the political recognition of ambivalence as a source of strength.

A Palestinian Seat in the City Council

Sami Abu Shahade is a charismatic local politician who follows the trajectory of the 'National Democratic Assembly' (Balad), the nationalist Palestinian faction within Israel that emerged under the leadership of Azmi Bishara, the man who had to choose exile over trial in Israel for allegedly passing information to the 'enemy' during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war. When I first met Abu Shahade in his office in the municipality building of Tel Aviv-Jaffa in 2012, he still held a seat in the City Council. With the elections in October 2013, when the Jaffa List he chaired lost many voters, Abu Shahade also lost his place in the municipality. Jaffa, it seemed, had lost a Palestinian representation in Jewish Tel Aviv.

On the national level, Abu Shahade supported the establishment of one democracy for all its citizens on the land of historic Palestine rather than a 'Jewish' state alongside a Palestinian one. Yet on the level of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, the separation of 'Palestine' and 'Israel' seemed clear cut: Palestinians in Tel Aviv outside of Jaffa were not on Abu Shahade's political radar. Jaffa is more commonly ascribed Palestinian history and identity, often from an orientalising perspective, while Tel Aviv is figured as its modern and Western opposite (Levine 2005). Campaigning for Palestinian voters in Jaffa meant framing their local concerns as inherently Palestinian, and the non-recognition of Palestinians in 'Jewish' Tel Aviv as a political constituency. This non-recognition also sprung from the fact that most

Palestinians in Tel Aviv are there temporarily for work or education. Many are not registered as residents, and their dispersion in urban space combined with the diversity of their backgrounds makes their interests difficult to translate into any sort of political program.

Consequently, Abu Shahade's voice spoke for Jaffa because a city counts its population based on registered residents and only residents can vote in municipal elections. 'There are not enough activists to lead the struggle in Jaffa. So how do we want to campaign in Tel Aviv?' Abu Shahade asked me after I had suggested that his list should bring the growing population of Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel in Tel Aviv to its agenda. While Balad's national ideas span all historic Palestine and challenge the separation Israel imposed on Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, 'Palestine' was parcelled neatly into local Jaffa. Tel Aviv, from the perspective of Palestinian nationalism, was outside of the political agenda. It only mattered insofar as Jaffa needed representation in Tel Aviv for the sake of Jaffa.

Abu Shahade needed some 4000 votes for one of the 31 seats in the City Council. But in 2013 the Jaffa List was voted out with less than 2000. A 'Voice for Jaffa' was their lead slogan and this voice suddenly fell silent. 'You need very low Jewish voter participation and high Arab participation', Abu Shahade would later say about the difficulty of keeping the 'Palestinian community' in Jaffa united. 'And all Arabs need to support one list. So winning is almost like a miracle.'

Palestinian Jaffa, Israeli Tel Aviv

Winning, it seemed, was also about successfully framing their concerns as the Palestinians *of* Jaffa. Interestingly, it was the opposite trend that attracted most potential votes away from this list. While Jaffa is a 'microcosm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict' for Shahade, other municipal activists argued that it is precisely not that. The defeat of the Jaffa List was mostly a result of the Arab communists' support for the platform 'City for All', a coalition of activists from different political trajectories who aim to put national politics aside for the benefit of change on the municipal level. While Shahade wanted a Palestinian representation in the council, even potentially accepting to be part of the mayor's coalition, City for All and

Jewish-Arab socialist activists defined their cause in social and economic terms and in opposition to the mayor's liberal course. National, local and class politics competed in such a way that 'a united front' of Palestinians in Jaffa did not materialise. 'So in the end, no Arab representative from Jaffa sits in the coalition', Abu Shahade lamented.

The difference between 'Palestinian Jaffa' and 'Israeli Tel Aviv' was clear-cut and framed as a power struggle, also by drawing on the history of forced displacement. 'The problem is a very small and weak community in Jaffa that is competing with the elites of Israel living in Tel Aviv', said Abu Shahade, adding that his family has lived there for at least five generations. His grandfather was a farmer south of Jaffa who served in the First World War. When the majority of Palestinians were exiled from their homes in Jaffa his grandfather would have 'died rather than leave'. The history of displacement made it impossible for Abu Shahade not to think about Jaffa-Tel Aviv through the prism of a national struggle.

Indeed, much of what marginalises Palestinians in Jaffa today can be related back to displacement. Increasingly gentrified and swallowed up by a luxury real estate market, Jaffa is also home to stark socio-economic inequality and a housing crisis. About 40 percent of the Palestinian population live in so called 'absentee properties', designating formerly Palestinian properties taken over by the Israeli state after the 1948 war. Around 500 of the 2,000 'absentee-property' homes inhabited by Palestinians in Jaffa have faced eviction orders because they were considered 'squatters' by the Israel Land Administration, the government body in charge of administering national land, which also oversees 'absentee property' (Hackl, irinnews.org, 19/5/2012).[35] In Jaffa, the poorest segment of the population live on some of the most expensive parts of land, although in often dilapidated shacks in need of restoration. When Abu Shahade calls Jaffa a 'ghetto' he invokes it as a metaphor for a besieged enclave, the last political outpost of Palestine close to ever-expanding Tel Aviv. 'Before 1948 we had our own community here, a city and an administration. Then we became a minority on our own homeland', Abu Shahade explained.

[35] URL: http://www.irinnews.org/report/95095/israel-address-inequalities-facing-arabs-says-icg

Not putting the Palestinian presence in Tel Aviv proper on the political agenda is necessary for Abu Shahade to make a stronger claim for Jaffa's particular concerns. Reducing the Palestinian presence to the space of Jaffa also allows the municipality to speak of diversity and multiculturalism in Tel Aviv without having to address the national-political issues the recognition of such presence would open up.

The tension between liberalism, Jewish-Israeli dominance, and recognizing Palestinian difference in municipal politics is also about cultural visibility. The municipality's cultural festivals and music events in Jaffa, at least those I witnessed, featured Hebrew signage and often felt clumsily misplaced and entirely ignorant of the historical conditions of that space. They orientalised the Jaffa port as a romantic place for tourism outside of the history of displacement and destruction that shaped it. As for Tel Aviv beyond Jaffa, the municipality has only rarely indicated that it recognises Arab-Palestinian identity, as for instance when advertising cultural events in Jaffa for TAU-students with Arabic-language banners. Palestinians in Jaffa have certainly organised their own events, and there is a political willingness to support some of these. And yet, I wondered why there are no Palestinian-Arab cultural events within Tel Aviv beyond Jaffa's clock-tower, a festival, a community centre, a cultural fair?

'If we open an Arab cultural centre in Ramat Aviv, what will Abu Shahade say? He will say: why didn't you open it here in Jaffa? Why did you open one so far from the Arab community here?' Ami Katz, the head of the municipality's affairs in Jaffa, told me in an interview at his office. He added that 'of course', fewer Arabs lived in Ramat Aviv or other parts of Tel Aviv than in Jaffa, or at least this is what the available numbers said: 'About numbers…there are no official numbers we can provide really, because they don't exist. We only have numbers of those who are registered residents of the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality. There are about 20.000 Arabs. Some 18.500 of them live in Jaffa, the rest in Tel Aviv.'

Knowing the 'numbers', as Abu Shahade underlined, is important to convince policy makers to do something about a cause. And for this cause, a Palestinian Jaffa needs to remain visible as a bounded space. There was no interest in a political or municipal recognition of the diverse Palestinian population of Tel Aviv. According to Abu Shahade, 'everybody wants to keep it like that', as do Palestinian politicians.

This is also because local Palestinians in Jaffa face a very different reality than most of those who come from elsewhere to Tel Aviv. Abed Shahade, the son of Sami's maternal uncle, explained why he did not believe in campaigning in Tel Aviv as a local Jaffan: 'If you want a place where people live in dignity, you need to engage the people so they find their own struggle. Leaving Jaffa and the loyalty of the people here would not be right.'

The Palestinian citizens of Israel who came down to Tel Aviv and Jaffa from the North are different, he added. They did not grow up in the 'ghetto', had better education, more opportunities and their own bars and clubs, places to which local Jaffans usually did not go to. Thus, the clear line that is drawn by Abu Shahade between Jaffa's Palestinians and Palestinians in Tel Aviv is also a line between internal Palestinian differences of status and class. Most of the Palestinians from the North he referred to are university students. Successful and educated Arab employees in Tel Aviv do not fit the image of Jaffa's marginalised Palestinians. Those who toil in the city's construction sites and work over-time as cleaners or in falafel shops may be less elite, but they are also mostly from 'elsewhere', not sharing the local Jaffans' particular situation and certainly unable to vote in Israel.

'Are Jaffa's problems a political issue in national terms?' I asked Ami Katz, the head of the municipality's affairs in Jaffa. In one way, it certainly was because Abu Shahade joined a Zionist coalition in Tel Aviv and this was something rather unusual for the Palestinian nationalist party he belonged to. This decision was controversial, but the decision behind it seemed to be based on one assumption: being in the coalition brings influence on policy making in Jaffa, being outside of it does not. Ami Katz added:

> This is a town and not Israel, not the whole country. We are not doing national policy here. We can't solve the Arab-Jewish, or the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Of course there is a national conflict and this conflict constantly infects the relations between Arabs and Jews in the city. Anything done by the city towards the people here is immediately seen as part of the Zionist plan to drive Arabs out of Jaffa. But this is not the policy.

Ami Katz is a thoughtful man and he had much respect for Abu Shahade, who also spoke fondly of him. Some forms of cooperation on the municipal level transcend the

boundaries of a national conflict. Good personal relations produce political trust and respect. Katz called Tel Aviv-Jaffa the 'most pluralistic and diverse city in Israel' and added that 'it would be a shame if we wouldn't manage to live together in this city'. Reflecting on the defeat of the Jaffa List by City for All in the 2013 elections, Katz said that 'it is courageous what Abu Shahade did. (…) It is a big loss to everyone that we do not have an Arab representation in the city council.' The dilemma is, however, that such participation is defined as being located outside of the 'conflict' and the national issues Abu Shahade invokes to explain his stance on Jaffa.

It becomes clear that political participation of Palestinians in the municipality of Tel Aviv is a form of unsatisfactory cooperation with the Zionist majority of Jewish Israeli politics. In making a political case for Jaffa's Palestinian population, this space comes to symbolise an ethno-national position rooted in local struggles which renders the presence of Palestinians in Tel Aviv apolitical and irrelevant. One form of recognition depends on the others' non-recognition, particularly because the diversity of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, their different places of origin and privileges, are a reality that is very difficult to address and frame in terms of struggle. This complexity shows the limits of both conventional politics and the politics of recognition in grasping the 'political' that is hidden underneath the skin of state, nation and conceptions of marginalised urban minorities.

Recognition without Borders

After I had spent the evening of the 2013 election-day in the 'base-camp' of the Jaffa List, I walked back up from this seaside restaurant via a narrow pathway where election posters hung scattered across the walls of adjacent buildings. There were a few old market workshops with iron shutters on both sides of the street. To my surprise, one of the workshops was still open. As I came closer I identified another 'election centre' – that of Asma Agbaria, a socialist politician and workers' rights activist who ran her own list.

In this transformed workshop, with buckets of paint lined up on wooden shelves, Agbaria sat patiently on a desk surrounded by a number of supporters. As I entered

they had just started eating the long awaited snack one of them had just delivered. Some of the men in the workshop looked bored and one of them, a middle-aged man dressed in tracksuit and slippers, let out an unmistakable sigh. 'City without borders' was the slogan of her campaign, and the subtitle read, 'all with the woman from town' – *kull ma' bint al-balad*. The word 'balad' means more than 'town' because it also signifies nation and a sense of homeland and ownership. Although Agbaria was born in Jaffa, just like Abu Shahade, her position was very different: rather than seeing Palestinian Jaffa and Jewish Tel Aviv as opposites, she hoped to break through this 'border' by making Jaffa an equal part of Tel Aviv. 'Jaffa and Tel Aviv are two cities and it is time to change this', she said.

A few months later I met Agbaria in a coffee shop in Jaffa close to where she lived. The Israeli waiter who served us was surprised to hear me speak Arabic and said in Hebrew, 'I don't really speak Arabic, never learnt it.' Agbaria suddenly burst out, turning towards me saying, 'you see, that's the problem!' After I told the waiter that I lived in Tel Aviv he suggested I move to Jaffa too, and if I did, I should take part in his Yoga classes. I kindly declined the offer, wondering about what the slogan 'city without borders' becomes in a context where Yoga replaces native languages as a tool for mutual understanding.

Speaking about her election campaign, Agbaria explained that her emphasis on class issues and not 'national' ones was often misunderstood. She tried to go beyond the dimension of Arabs or Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, looking instead at the problems affecting the marginalised on both sides of the divide. Abu Shahade sees Jaffa as a place that has been annexed by Tel Aviv and needs to rise against this powerful other from the basis of the Palestinian national struggle. Agbaria, on the other hand, talked about opening up the barriers that separate Arabs and Jews through the language of common class-struggle.

There are several other political trajectories through which the relationship between Jaffa and Tel Aviv and by extension, between Palestinians and Israel, is expressed. What I have tried to show is the ongoing process of defining and utilizing the boundaries between what is Palestinian and what is Tel Aviv. Part of this is a politics of (non-)recognition that marks out territories and policy landscapes as either Palestinian-Arab or Jewish Israeli. Tel Aviv, from the perspective of nationalist

Palestinian campaigners, is only relevant as a powerful opposite. It is not, however, signified as a space lived and experienced by Palestinians. The Palestinians in Tel Aviv remain largely 'unseen', as Agbaria admitted. What form of recognition should Palestinians in Tel Aviv seek and from whom, if their incorporation into the Israeli political economy necessitates de-politicisation and results in perpetual ambivalence?

A Political Heterotopia

The Palestinians in Israel have repeatedly been parcelled up into neat units based on distinctive camps. Ghanem (2000, 31-37) distinguishes three political and ideological streams among Palestinian citizens of Israel: 'Israeli-Arab', Communist, and Islamist, whereas Israeli-Arabs were those who did not give up their hope for integration despite existing discrimination. Another often cited division is between 'accommodationists', 'reservationists', 'oppositionists' and 'rejectionists', dividing the Palestinian population in Israel based on survey data, while also speaking quite generally about the 'distinctive features of the Arab minority' (Smooha 1989, 59). While 'accommodationists' accept the status quo and seek concessions through the political system, 'reservations' are critical of the status quo and would like to change some elements of the existing system but are willing to cooperate with state authorities; 'oppositionists' accept Israel as a state but not its Jewish-Zionist character and thus support radical change, while 'rejectionists' oppose the existence of the State of Israel and want to replace it with a Palestinian state (Peleg and Waxman 2011, 82).

However, the political reality of Palestinians in Tel Aviv binds several of these seemingly separate trajectories in a single complexity within which opposition and accommodation often go hand in hand. These people adapt to the pragmatic necessities of their professional lives and yet the same person may be politically 'opposed' to the Israeli state more generally, may in fact 'reject' it altogether if asked. Seemingly contradictory opinions and practices evolve simultaneously or alternately in a single life trajectory, and this simultaneity is exacerbated by the inclusion into Tel Aviv and its effects. This diversity of the political is nowhere clearer than in the case of two very different brothers I had the pleasure to meet.

They are Palestinian citizens of Israel who lived in Tel Aviv together. Originally from Nazareth, they grew up in a Bedouin town in the Negev desert but went to the big city for studying, work and private life.

Yazid was one of the first Tel Aviv University students I got to know during my research. The skinny young man had a passion for hip-hop and Palestinian politics. He enjoyed the freedom of living in Tel Aviv but also identified with the Palestinian struggle for statehood. His brother Ali, on the other hand, did not identify as 'Palestinian', put up an Israeli flag inside their home during 'Independence Day' and posted photos of himself with a Star of David necklace on Facebook. He was gay and to him, recognition of his individuality and gender-identity far outweighed any desire for recognition as a 'Palestinian'.

They lived in South Tel Aviv close to the Central Bus Station where rents are cheap and buildings run down. Their building was coloured grey from decay rather than paint. A wall two meters in height surrounded it and several of the bricks had already fallen out. The studio apartment they lived in was tiny: the mattress they shared covered one quarter of the room, a table with computer screens on it a second quarter, and a closet, a small couch and a kitchen corner filled up the rest of the studio.

Yazid also rapped and sought recognition for his plural lingual and personal identity this way. As we met in their place, Yazid played some of his tracks, most of them rapped in an imitation of American slang, some mixed with a bit of Hebrew and Arabic. I asked why he did not rap in Arabic. It was because he wanted to keep up a 'high standard' of music and therefore English was more challenging. One of the tracks was about honour killings in the Bedouin communities of the South, where both of them grew up, although their family was not Bedouin. Influenced by new ideas, Yazid challenged traditional norms, but based on his strong sense of Palestinian identity, he also criticised Israeli policies of discrimination and occupation.

Eventually we sat down and talked; me sitting on the couch, Yazid and his brother Ali at the table. Where is the border in their participation in Tel Aviv, I asked them. Ali, who never had a strong connection to the village they grew up in, said in

English, ‘I don’t have any borders. It’s hard to speak in Arabic’, and added in Arabic, ‘I don’t feel belonging to Arab society because I don’t have relations with the Arab community.’

While his brother Yazid still had friends in the south, Ali said *nitakti kesher*, which is Hebrew for ‘I disconnected’. He often switched into Hebrew. Both of them enjoyed living in Tel Aviv and although they related to it differently, their political positions were heavily influenced by their life in the city. As Yazid explained:

> We are originally from the north and grew up in the south. Automatically, we were far from the community and grew up in the house according to my family’s traditions, which were more northern. So when you are a young man who doesn’t have much relation to the world around you, it weakens the identity, it causes problems in the identity. Arabs in Israel have problems with their identity. The difference between him and me is that for me, the movement [to Tel Aviv] strengthened my belonging [to Palestinian identity].

Ironically, Yazid needed to move to the quintessential Israeli city to realise that he was distinctively Palestinian. He explained that much of what he had known about the conflict before moving to Tel Aviv came from Israeli television, and so he ‘sympathized more with the Jewish side’ as a teenager. Once he attended a youth ‘peace camp’, and in a break, one of the Palestinians from Jerusalem approached him criticising his lack of participation on behalf of the Palestinian side. Later he began to learn more about his identity, his ‘Arab identity’: ‘I began looking for myself. In our house we didn’t talk much about politics. I didn’t take the Palestinian identity from my family, I looked for it. This identity strengthened and my sympathy then began to grow for Arabs.’

When Ali mentions that their third brother is very different from the two of them, Yazid says that his difference was that he is ‘absolutely non-political’. I wondered what being political in Tel Aviv actually meant to them. According to Ali, ‘it means a lot’:

> When we left the house, until then, I didn’t talk about politics. And I also thought the topic is not interesting for us. When I came to Tel Aviv, it was like I had to talk about politics because I, as an Arab, was in the Jewish society. So when they talk, you have to participate. On Facebook I had Arab friends from Jaffa. They always talked about politics, and I couldn’t take part in it because I

> didn't know about these topics. So whenever we had debates, I went back to read about it or asked others to learn more.

Ali said that the same process of discovering one's political opinions and identity happens to all 'Arabs' who enter Tel Aviv University, 'They don't love politics, but politics enters their lives'. I found this particular statement very interesting against the backdrop of the flawed idea that Palestinians in Tel Aviv are non-political, that they do not fit into the framework of political claim-making. Hence I chipped in by saying: 'Some say that Arabs in Tel Aviv are just here to work or to be left alone, that they are not political.'

Ali agreed that those who come to Tel Aviv do not look for politics, but rather search for freedom, for education or work. But politics finds them. 'Tel Aviv is called the land of opportunities. People come without political consciousness, but with time, they start to ask questions and build their opinion', he added. Yazid even suggested that there were in fact more protests and political activities in Tel Aviv than in most Arab towns. Essentially, participating in Tel Aviv's spaces of leisure, education or work produces a lot of questions for young Palestinians. 'Especially if you are a student, as an Arab, you can't say "I don't know" ', said Ali. To him, Tel Aviv was difficult, 'there is no comfortable place where you just rest, you have to search for your directions'. Indeed, Yazid said:

> Tel Aviv changes them [the Palestinians] in personal, religious, and philosophical terms. These things are not possible when you are in an Arab town. Here you have everything. You like nightlife and bars, they are here. If you are more conservative you have the option to stay at home and not take part. In an Arab town you don't have this diversity and choices.

Yazid and Ali agreed that Tel Aviv changes the Palestinians who live in it; that their political opinions grow through an exchange with the city, and not only in opposition to it or in a nutshell. However, the kind of political stances they have developed since studying at Tel Aviv University are very different, which appear to be a result of the different forms of recognition that dominated their lives. Ali's main concern was recognition of his gender, which makes him a welcome target for the 'voracious encompassment' (Povinelli 2002) of liberalism. Indeed, according to Ali, the fact that Arab towns in Israel had less public transport and security was their own fault, a

cultural deficiency. ‘If you look for someone to blame, it won’t change the situation. I am an individualist. I am not looking for activism to change the world’, he said, after I asked him if Israel also had its share in responsibility. Yazid quickly added that he disagreed with Ali, saying that the situation in Arab towns was a problem of inequality: ‘Nazareth is a big town and Tel Aviv too. Look at the difference!’

‘The people who built Tel Aviv, the Jews’, said Ali, ‘had a very socialist idea of function and ideology, they built it together. Arabs build a house, see their children grow up and that’s it. Not important if the street is clean.’ Yazid, on the other hand, argued that ‘the differences between the towns are not only cultural’. Ali insisted that they were cultural because respected Arab men or elderly women would find it difficult to enter a bus with strangers. As their voices gradually became louder they switched between Arabic and English with some Hebrew words in between, one blaming inequality and Israel for Palestinian marginalisation, the other the Palestinians’ themselves as the root of their problems. To Ali, there were less gardens in Arab towns than in Tel Aviv because ‘Arabs prefer private spaces like inside their house, not in the middle of town’, while Yazid countered: ‘give the two sides the same resources from the government and if the Jews then build better things than Arabs, ok, bravo!’

Ali explained his position further by saying the following:

> First of all, the situation is how it is. You have to know how to benefit from this situation and not to be damaged by it. If you want to change the world and change the advantage of Jews over Arabs, then you may take 100 years. Discrimination is part of this world. I don’t like it, but what to do? I also have discriminatory thoughts about other people. As humans, we look at others based on their appearance, situation, and characteristics. You can’t change that. You also can’t criticize someone who says, “in my factory I don’t want to employ Arabs.” There may be others who prefer working with Arabs because Arabs are cheaper.
>
> The owner of a factory who doesn’t want to employ Arabs, yes that may be bad, but I am not going to say “you have to love me, you have to employ me.” I don’t want to work in a place that doesn’t accept me. I am not in socialism. I don’t believe there should be a law that forces this factory owner to employ me. In my opinion, he has the freedom not to employ Arabs.’

‘You said you are political, what sort of change do you seek then?’ I asked.

> The biggest problem between Arabs and Jews is based on stereotypes. Jews don’t employ Arabs maybe because they think they are lazy. Or when we look for a place to rent an apartment, maybe there is someone who thinks Arabs are noisier. One needs to change stereotypes. This is our goal. If there are more Arabs living in Tel Aviv and working around Jews, this becomes something natural. It’s a way to change the stereotype.

For Ali, the deeper he gets into Israeli society, the stronger the impact on stereotypes is, which would improve Jewish-Arab relations and counter inequality. His position is probably best described as Libertarian. However, for Yazid, ‘people won’t change at once’:

> If we talk about racism, look at the Arab towns that are close to Tel Aviv and don’t have any work opportunities themselves. So everyone has to go to the Jewish centre. So when it happens that everyone in this centre is racist, and they don’t want to employ Arabs, let’s say, how do you change things then?

Yazid and Ali, each in his own way, have developed very specific ‘politics’ since they have lived in Tel Aviv. Ali’s position holds Palestinian identity at a distance, which is certainly influenced by his gender identity and resulting difficult relationship with the Arab community; but it is also evidence that inclusion demands sacrifices, in this case non-recognition as a Palestinian. Undoubtedly, Tel Aviv as a social and political space has influenced their political ideas. Contrary to the idea that Tel Aviv is as external to Palestinian politics as Palestinians are external to Tel Aviv, one may say that the city becomes a ground for the shaping of multiple political positions that reference both, Tel Aviv and being Palestinian. The complexity of Palestinian entanglements with Tel Aviv shape a ‘heterotopia’ of the political, a real space that includes utopias which reference real sites and identities, simultaneously representing, contesting, and inverting them (Foucault 1986). A space that references Palestine and Palestinians as a counter-site, and yet one within which the very form of what and who are the ‘Palestinians’ within Israel is currently being shaped. While Ali could easily be understated as non-political, his is in fact only a different kind of political position. One which involves a distancing from one kind of ‘political’ affiliation; the ‘non-political’ space is then also one that has to be produced and is thus not outside of politics (Candea 2011, 320).

Confronting Urban Utopia

Before grasping subtle power-struggles in any given urban space, we should disaggregate the spatial 'utopia' that covers the underlying contradictions and conflicts. Foucault's (1986) idea of spatial heterotopia and concepts of relational space and its production (Lefebvre 1991) give a sense of how 'real' and tangible space becomes linked, is contested, and connected with a diversity of meanings. Foucault's utopia designates a space that performs a false analogy with 'real' social space; a performance of space that represents in a somewhat homogenous way its underlying diversity. Such 'abstract space' or 'utopia' of Tel Aviv is linked to Jewish-Israeli domination because it erased some historical conditions that gave rise to it, thereby hiding its own internal differences and imposing abstract homogeneity instead (Lefebvre 1991, 370). Tel Aviv as the 'First Hebrew City' or the 'city that never sleeps' are metaphors for space that perform a very distinct identity into which Palestinians do not seem to fit easily, which is why their presence necessarily involves struggles for recognition and over the definition of spatial identity and history. Some Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli activists in Tel Aviv have sought to re-inscribe a lost past and a silenced identity into this space, posing a political challenge to the legitimacy of its narrative. Moreover, artists and activists have challenged what they perceive as an exclusion of their political identity and history from the city's surface. The following two sub-sections will explore these challenges from the perspective of art and protest.

Palestinian Artists and Writers in Tel Aviv

The visibility of Palestinians' 'Palestinian-ness' depends on a number of factors, including their appearance and the language they speak. The Palestinian-Israeli artist Anisa Ashkar, who lived in Tel Aviv, decided to send a very particular message to the people around her: Ashkar wakes up every morning, contemplates for a while until something meaningful comes to her mind, and then writes it on her face in Arabic calligraphy, usually in black colour.

> I started doing it 14 years ago because I am Arab. They always thought I am French, or from somewhere else. In Tel Aviv, people don't get that I am Arab.

> "Are you Brazilian?" they ask. I wanted to underline that I am Arab. I wanted to have ownership over my own body.

Constantly misunderstood, she decided to reclaim her Palestinian-Arab identity via Israeli social space. She seeks recognition from Jewish Israelis who have often misrecognized her. Ashkar does not attend any organised protests, I learned. 'To survive and breathe here is political. To be an Arab artist in Israel is political. You talk about protests? My face is a demonstration', the young artist proclaimed. Ashkar's problem was not contradicting self-identification but recurring misrecognition by others. However, she admitted, 'it is also to remind myself that I am Arab, because I am constantly in Jewish or foreign space.'

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish had returned to Israel from exile, where he lived with other Palestinians under a military regime, when he famously wrote in a 1964-poem: 'Write Down, I am an Arab'. Through her embodied art work, Ashkar expressed confidence just like Darwish, who wanted to assert his Palestinian identity and show that he does not fear being identified as an Arab. Being assertive and self-confident may not be enough to feel good in Tel Aviv, however. The writer Raji Bathish retreated from Tel Aviv to Haifa because he could not bear the absence of the Arabic language and Palestinian culture in Tel Aviv. Bathish is a Palestinian poet, novelist, screenplay writer and cultural activist born in Nazareth. One of his books published in Arabic is titled, 'A Room in Tel Aviv'. Although much of the book is about a Palestinian citizen of Israel who goes abroad on a scholarship, this and other books he wrote about Tel Aviv from Tel Aviv were also meant to show that there are Palestinians there, 'that they exist', as Bathish told me, adding that his literary work deconstructs dominant norms and beliefs among Palestinians and Israelis. He likes to shock people so they recognize the gap between a usually complicated reality and often simplified ideologies. This points to a more complex form of recognition than that of Ashkar. Bathish simultaneously seeks recognition for marginalised realities from Israelis and Palestinians. Writing about a Palestinian in Tel Aviv with fluid gender identity functions as a 'shock' in two directions: as a Palestinian writing about Tel Aviv in Arabic it poses a challenge to the absence of such stories in the Israeli public, and writing as a gay Palestinian *from* Tel Aviv challenges the traditional norms of his society and Palestinians' own blindness to the

city's hidden dimensions. Indeed, some of his writing is quite provocative and explicit, involving sexualised narratives of a gay Palestinian conversing with Jewish lovers, and of individual pleasures and fears.

Tel Aviv was both a site of tension and pleasure for Bathish, who moved back to Haifa after several years in the 'Hebrew city'. What is interesting about his story is that he wanted to be a political writer in Tel Aviv, but could not surmount the implicit contradictions of writing in Arabic and being Palestinian in an Israeli city. When I met him in a well-known Palestinian café in Haifa, he told me about this struggle with the city that 'hates' the Arabic language. 'There is a filter that makes you not speak Arabic and makes you afraid of speaking Arabic; if you walk into a shopping centre, something almost physical stops you from speaking out loud', Bathish said. This is why he, like so many others, have decided to return to Haifa, where Palestinian cultural life blossoms.

In spite of all this, Bathish originally also enjoyed the anonymity and freedom Tel Aviv offered him. He began to love his own disappearance in this urban space, speaking of 'the anonymity of living like on an island', which relates to Tel Aviv's nickname 'the bubble'. But blending into Tel Aviv pushed him to do things he now finds 'particularly strange'. One of these things is 'self-orientalisation', by which he means the romanticising of Arab culture from the position of an Arab who has distanced himself from his own community and lives in an Israeli city. As Bathish put it: 'Going to Jaffa and hearing [the Egyptian singer] Umm el-Kulthum somewhere, and thinking that you just love it.'

Anonymity may have been good in one way, but this life was unsustainable for a political writer:

> It is as if Arabic is forbidden in Tel Aviv, so I couldn't be part of a cultural and literary space there because it is in Hebrew. I am part of the Palestinian writing scene. But I also need to live it day by day. But in Tel Aviv I felt exiled in my own country. Even though there are a lot of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, they are swallowed up in the urban space. They become invisible.

There is a tension between the visibility of being a writer and the invisibility as a Palestinian in 'anonymous' Tel Aviv. Because hardly anyone there reads or speaks Arabic, while bookshops do not sell Arabic books, he cannot be visible by definition.

When I asked him why it was so difficult to connect with other Arabic speaking artists in the city, he also blamed the lack of political organising among Palestinians in Tel Aviv. Instead of establishing a Palestinian political artist base in the city, the Israeli left turned him into an 'Arab representative brought along for a showcase', said Bathish, explaining what this meant: 'A few times I read in Arabic in Tel Aviv, there was translation. It was a joke: I am speaking the ancient language of Arabic, read it, in the Middle East, where the Arabic language is the main language, but no one speaks it. This is absurd.'

The Palestinian in Tel Aviv is only visible without 'problems' and well-recognised by the city's social and cultural sphere if he is not actually a Palestinian any longer. Or he becomes a token. Blending into Tel Aviv and being politically active is not impossible to straddle for Palestinians. But 'you have the will to pay the price for it', Bathish reflected on his time in Tel Aviv between 2005 and 2012. His limit marked the end of a period in which he spent much energy to 'survive' in cultural terms, in addition to the main issue: the language, the tongue, the estrangement. 'It's very hard to live in a place that is afraid of the language you think in.'

The dilemma he encountered symbolises the tension inherent to any Palestinian political project grounded in Tel Aviv. And it is similar to what is commonly ascribed to exiles, who are seen as individuals entrapped between inevitable difference and stigma on the one hand, and the inability to become part of the host country or city on the other; they suffer from a double absence that becomes a double 'impotence' (Sayad 2004; Massey 2006). Political resistance in this context may solidify the domination of which the actors are a subject at the same time as they try to free themselves from this domination (Noiriel 2006, 109). Extending Bathish's dilemma, Palestinians who critique or relate to Tel Aviv from within Tel Aviv have two options: they do it on Israeli terms in Hebrew and feel estranged, or they do so as Palestinians in Arabic, misrecognised or perceived as a threat. It is true that the contradiction of being an Arabic-language writer in Tel Aviv made him leave, but it is also obvious that his work also drew strength from the very contradiction he had to manage.

One last interesting example of political Palestinian art in Tel Aviv is the exhibition called 'effervescence', which put the spotlight on a new generation of Palestinians in

Israel's bi-national cities. Its Israeli curator Rona Sela wrote in the concept outline of the exhibition that among Palestinians in Israeli cities, a 'developing civil society, vibrant and teeming with new cultural initiatives, is striving to replace the old guard, to challenge the present and to influence the future. As Israeli institutional exclusion, segregation and erasure from public space intensifies, so too does the struggle for change.'[36]

The 'Nachum Gutman Museum' in Tel Aviv hosted the exhibition, and some criticised Rona Sela for complying with this Zionist institution instead of bringing the exhibition to a Palestinian space. But the interjection of a Palestinian perspective into the heart of Tel Aviv was precisely what made it so interesting, and it was perceived as highly political. Coverage of the exhibition spoke of 'an intifada substitute in the heart of Tel Aviv' (Haaretz.com, 1/7/2013),[37] suggesting that it represented resistance to 'the blindness and denial of the injustice against the Palestinian populace' in Israel. The exhibition interjected a political Palestinian perspective into the space of Tel Aviv, demanding recognition for a reality otherwise absent from its space. But in doing so, it also remained dependent on the limitations Israeli museums set. Rona Sela has long struggled for freedom of expression as a curator in Israel's museum landscape, where ideological considerations often undermined the quest to meet historical accuracy or contemporary reality, as told to me in a meeting. Despite its merits, the openness of Tel Aviv always comes at a price for Palestinians.

Political Protests in Tel Aviv

These artists confronted Tel Aviv but also used its space for personal reasons, or to send their artistic messages to an Israeli audience. So did organised political protests, which challenged Israeli positions and the space of Tel Aviv from within to articulate such criticism. One such protest was organised in 2014 by Balad, the Arab nationalist party in Israel to which the former City Council member Sami Abu Shahade belonged. They protested in front of Israel's Ministry of Defence against attempts by the state to draft Christian Arabs into the army. Waving Palestinian flags and

[36] URL: http://www.ronasela.com/en/details.asp?listid=63
[37] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/.premium-1.532973

chanting slogans in Arabic, and holding up signs in Arabic and Hebrew, they staged this protest strategically in front of the Ministry. It interfered with the routine of those driving or walking by, leaving some in shock, some wondering, yet others in anger. 'Die Arabs!' shouted one passer-by towards the demonstrators. Another angry man spit at them from his car window. Other verbal attacks included 'go back to Gaza' and 'be happy that you are not in Syria'. The fierce reactions point at the high price articulations of Palestinian politics had to pay in Tel Aviv. This city was not 'used' to their existence and by definition, political protest is extremely visible. This also makes it vulnerable to attacks.

Only for the Palestinians themselves, the protest was not always that visible. In the run up to a previous demonstration in the same spot, one Palestinian activist told me about her experience of trying to find it. The meeting point was announced on Facebook to be outside the Ministry of Defence, which is a large complex of buildings. Getting off at a nearby train station, she found herself walking around, looking out for signs of a protest, hoping to spot any other Palestinians. Then she finally heard someone speaking Arabic on the other side of the street. But they too had no idea where the protest was, and so they searched together until they finally spotted the organisers and their Palestinian flag. Dispersed and small in number, this demonstration must have appeared surprising and 'out of place' for any observer.

The civility of Tel Aviv's Jewish-Israeli residents was de-masked by the reactions of passers-by against this protest. It showed the dark face behind the mask of liberal openness. These ordinary residents of Tel Aviv who so fiercely fended off this Palestinian protest revealed the contradictions of the city's utopia, an urban space that is threatened by Palestinian identity if it manifests itself within its boundaries and not 'elsewhere', like in Gaza or Syria, where it ought to be. As another agitated urbanite tried to pursue the police to dissolve the protest, Awad Abdel Fatah, the General Secretary of Balad, said: 'He wonders how the police can allow us to be here. When they see a Palestinian flag in the heart of Tel Aviv, they are shocked.'

Another informal event with a political message was a Dabkeh-dance staged by a few dozen people in the heart of Tel Aviv. Titled (in Arabic) 'Palestinian Dabkeh in the middle of occupied Tel Aviv', video footage of the dance shows Palestinians and others dancing in a large circle on a street to loud Arabic Dabkeh-Music. Using a

mobile speaker, they interjected a Palestinian presence momentarily into the urban space. The dance continued for about two minutes, amid the honking of agitated taxi-drivers who impatiently waited for it to end. It eventually dissolved as quickly as it had appeared. Without a permanent political presence in Tel Aviv, as community centres, cafés or Arabic speaking events would indicate, Palestinian street politics in Tel Aviv follows a pattern of ebbs and flows. Very much like this Dabkeh flash-mob, Palestinian collective action in Tel Aviv seemingly comes from nowhere and dissolves back into dispersion. The shock-effect it creates results from the general absence of Palestinian identity and the Arabic language from the 'White City'.

Recognizing Tel Aviv's Palestinian Past

When I have written about the 'erasure' or 'silencing' of Palestinian identity in the space of Tel Aviv so far, a tangible example of how exactly such erasure might look like in space and over time may have been missing. Discovering what Palestinians refer to as the 'Nakba', the 'catastrophe' of 1948, within the boundaries of Tel Aviv, provides such an example. If one looks enough, this history is all over Tel Aviv: an old Palestinian mansion turned into a university club, a hidden graveyard in front of a beach-side Hilton Hotel, and the photographs and stories that tell of a past that was suffocated by settler-colonial modernity. Palestinian identity and its particular history within the space of Tel Aviv is what Foucault would call 'subjugated knowledges': blocs of knowledge which are present but disguised or disqualified by dominant systems of knowledge (Foucault 1980, 82). Counter its subjugation, in May 2014 the story of the Nakba in Tel Aviv even went digital: the Israeli NGO Zochrot, dedicated to promoting awareness of the Palestinian 'catastrophe' of 1948, launched the smartphone application 'iNakba' in their local office. The release event was well-timed and coincided with the cracking of fireworks outside, which marked Israel's 'Independence Day'.

What is on a map, and what is not, is always deeply political, said one of Zochrot's representatives in the crowded meeting room. iNakba should replace the bulky atlases of historic Palestine and create mobile history. Integrated into 'GoogleMaps', it allows users to discover and learn about former Palestinian villages and

neighbourhoods in real-time as they walk through space. It made the 'invisible land' visible. Users can also contribute content by sharing oral histories or photographs. The app works in Arabic, English and Hebrew. 'Maps can't be stopped by tanks', said Yousef Jabareen, a prominent scholar and lawyer, at the event. He recounted how his parents refused to talk about 'the war' when he was young. 'Now', he said, 'members of the fourth generation can discover the stories themselves.' I asked Jabareen about the role of this app for Palestinian politics of memory in Tel Aviv. 'In a city like Tel Aviv, there is a total difference between our identity and what is inscribed into the space, or the names of places', he answered. This is why so many young Palestinians in Tel Aviv, first and foremost the thousands of students, want to correct this discrepancy.

As the analysis of Amal Jamal (2011) showed, there has been a growing movement to redefine and reclaim the connection between identity and space among Palestinians in Israel. Indigenous peoples and homeland minorities raise claims that go beyond liberal notions of cultural rights, equality or distributive justice; they seek to revitalize historical, national and political rights and to revolutionize the political and cultural status quo (Jamal 2011, 2–6). Accordingly, the Nakba and its consequences for present and future have become increasingly central to Arab politics in Israel. It is the impossibility of inclusion and integration for Palestinians in Israel that has pushed politics of indigeneity centre-stage. They react to the 'cunning of recognition' by a settler-colonial liberal state, which has 'defused' their struggles and managed to 'recuperate these struggles as moments in which the future of the nation and its core institutions and values are ensured rather than shaken' (Povinelli 2002). The 'exclusive ethnic character' of the Israeli state has pushed the Palestinian citizens to reframe their struggle and reopen issues related to the Nakba (Jamal 2011, 5). Hence Palestinian politics of recognition in Israel are less about demanding civic equality or compromise but increasingly about recognition as a form of correction of past wrong-doings and their translation into a new political order in the present (Ibid, 6). At the iNakba-event, the political geographer Oren Yiftachel said that these 'politics of indigeneity' are very different from the struggle for Palestinian statehood. Instead of building a state, they seek to redefine and change the status-quo of the homeland. They change the meaning and history that is attached to space.

One way of changing the meanings of space are tours that explore the Nakba in Tel Aviv. These guided tours through the city offered an opportunity to learn about the Palestinian history of displacement against the backdrop of Tel Aviv, and to discuss the question of a possible return of refugees.

'Welcome to Sheikh Munis', said the guide during one tour Zochrot organised in conjunction with Baladna, an Arab youth organisation in Israel. As most of the participants already knew, Sheikh Munis – originally *al-Sheikh Muwannis* – was once a Palestinian village. Its former land is now home to Tel Aviv University. The only remaining mansion, called the 'Green House', was turned into a social club for university members. From there onwards, the tour traced Palestinian history throughout Tel Aviv as the group of mostly young students moved between locations of former villages in the city, among them also the former neighbourhood of al-Manshiyyah on the stretch of land between today's Jaffa and Tel Aviv.

After background information and a display of photographs on the site of the former neighbourhood, the guide invited Palestinian students to imagine the implementation of a future return of Palestinian refugees to their respective places of origin in a workshop at the seaside. Working in small groups, the participants were tasked with planning the return of Palestinian refugees to locations within Tel Aviv, equipped with flipchart paper. Their imagination was supported by Zochrot's detailed map, which marks out former Palestinian built-up areas laid over today's Tel Aviv city-map. This should also challenge the foundational myth that Tel Aviv was built 'on sand'.

While one group of participants suggested to restore the pre-1948 order and imagine return 'without Jews', most groups emphasised that any solution will need to take the status-quo into account. Discussion focused on housing, financial issues and the possibility of utilising yet unused land for the returnees' new villages, which would be fashioned based on their old ones. One group planned to extend existing houses quite simply by building more floors. Another designed an environmentally sustainable town without car traffic. 'We don't want to expel the Jews because we don't want to cause another tragedy through return', said one female participant. 'So where do you put the refugees then?' challenged another. 'We will see. But we don't want another crisis', she answered.

The group working on Sheikh Munis suggested that the 'Green House' should be turned into a museum about al-Shaykh Muwannis. Reflecting the position of talking about all this in Tel Aviv, some statements on a poster were written in Hebrew. Half-jokingly, one participant called these presenters the 'shabak group' because they used Hebrew instead of Arabic, *shabak* meaning the Israeli intelligence service. Summing up another presentation, one student closed with the mixed Arabic-Hebrew sentence 'that's it, mostly' – '*be gadol ve (Hebrew) kabir (Arabic)*'. The political goals expressed in this workshop about refugees' return did not, in fact, construct a Palestinian space outside Israel or Tel Aviv. Most students articulated Palestinian historical justice not by shaking-off the contradiction of being Hebrew-speaking Israeli citizens in Tel Aviv. Rather, their positions gained strength from their experience of and awareness about the special ambiguous place they inhabited.

Exploring the Nakba and its relevance within Tel Aviv posed a counter-narrative to how this urban space performed its identity and history. Only a few meters from where the groups sat and discussed the return of Palestinian refugees, the inscriptions outside the so-called 'Etzel-house' showed another narrative: 'Etzel House: in memory of the liberators of Jaffa'. Etzel was a unit of the Jewish Haganah, the pre-state Jewish militia. 'This was a Palestinian house and in 1948 they expelled the people from here and now they have a museum for the forces that expelled them', said the guide as we stood at the building. For the participants the 'liberators' were more like occupiers and colonisers. Standing outside this memorial site, which lies between Tel Aviv and Jaffa on the long stretch of public park that connects the two along the seashore, Zochrot's guide added: 'imagine Jaffa before 1948, it had seven newspapers, cinema and theatre, it was a centre no less than Beirut. Like Tel Aviv is a place for Israelis today, Jaffa once was for Arabs.' Here, historical justice in Tel Aviv does not mean replacing Tel Aviv or destroying it, but overcoming the 'utopia' it has become towards recognizing its history of displacement and erasure alongside the positive sides of this Mediterranean city.

A few weeks later I attended another, more extensive tour through former Palestinian areas in today's Tel Aviv. Also this tour began at the 'Green House' at university. It was led by the activist and architect Michael Yacobson and Omar al-Ghubari of Zochrot. Throughout the tour the competing narratives of what the Nakbah and its

contemporary relevance meant surfaced. At one point in a central neighbourhood called Bavli, which was once *Al-Jammasin al-Gharbi,* a complicated issue came up: many of the remaining structures of former Palestinian houses had been resettled by Jewish immigrants. Ironically, under contemporary pressure by the city's authorities and investments in real estate, they too faced threats of eviction. Yacobson said at the site, as 'you can see what they used to do to the Palestinians they are now doing to the Jews'. And it did not take long until a Palestinian participant protested, saying the two things were not the same, criticising the Israeli researcher for his 'tone' when talking about the Nakba.

Some tension remained but the bus drove on to the former village of *Summayl*, which is in the heart of Tel Aviv. It is surrounded by some of the main traffic arteries and most expensive neighbourhoods in town. Originally a mostly Arab settlement, it soon became mixed Jewish-Arab, with reportedly good relations before the Nakba. Jewish refugees then moved to the little piece of land which the former Arab residents had left in 1948 and the mosque was turned into a synagogue. Here too, the Jewish residents now faced the threat of eviction.

We walked up a stairway onto an elevated plateau hidden away from the street by altitude and plants. When I first discovered Tel Aviv I wondered what this hidden plateau was about. At that time, the settlement reminded me of the colonies of gardening shacks that are common in my home-country Austria. But these houses were solid, if small and thin-walled. Bicycles, which must have been parked there years ago, had become absorbed by the uncontrolled wild growth of bushes and grass. When the guide began to talk about the history of this strange place, one elderly woman, a local resident it seemed, walked towards the group and asked bluntly: 'which organisation?'

'Zochrot', my Palestinian friend Rima told her, upon which the woman said: 'Aha, remembering the Arabs! So because you didn't succeed in bringing the Arabs here to take this land, you are now bringing the (real estate) tycoons here. The tycoons are only another kind of Arabs', she said in an aggressive tone. My friend said that they had nothing to do with the tycoons, but that it would be nice to turn the place into a memorial site of past displacement. The woman said, now in shouting: 'We should

have built a fence around this place a long time ago. Long ago…now they are trying to expel us too.'

The woman walked back into her house, grumbling. When the group passed by her house later on, the argument between her and my friend Rima erupted once again. The woman shouted and gesticulated, but eventually began to cry, seemingly exhausted and desperate, but not yet giving up, saying: 'I don't have any problem with Arabs. That's for the government, thinking about how to kill them. But don't you live in this state too; get the services of this country? Did you go to an Israeli university?' she asked my friend, who was indeed a former student of Tel Aviv University, but said: 'It has nothing to do with services'.

'My problem with you is that you call yourself Palestinian', shouted the resident.

'So what?' Rima responded. 'This is Israel and its government is Israeli, and you are Israeli, right? And what do you get from Israel? Not much it seems, they want to expel you. So aren't we both suffering?' 'Yes…, the woman said, and both looked at each other with tears in their eyes, until we walked off to the bus which brought us to the next destination. As those who were put into the place of expelled Palestinians face eviction too, the demand for recognition of Palestinian history is complicated by the intricate events of history that shaped this space and its people since.

The next destination of the tour was a fascinating cemetery located on a hill in front of Hilton Hotel, facing the northern part of the beach boulevard. The hidden grounds are shielded off with wild-growth and plants from the public park that surrounded it. As we walked up through the park, a group of women dressed in leggings and pastel-coloured shirts enjoyed sundown aerobics on the green meadows. Tourists walked around and the Hilton rose prominently from beyond. The gate to the cemetery, which rests on land that belonged to a Palestinian family from Jaffa, was difficult to spot. 'People don't ask themselves what happened here', said Omar, the guide. He added, smiling: 'But they built Hilton Hotel here in the 60s and many of the photographs of the hotel show the graveyard.'

Much more than a public challenge to Tel Aviv's identity, these tours provide an opportunity for Palestinian citizens of Israel to retrieve their own history and sense of belonging from the shadows of urban 'utopia'. In moving through Tel Aviv they did

not only access an alternative dimension of space, but also redefined their own relationship with it by ways of inscribing an alternative past into the material present. Bringing the Nakba back into this city, and raising awareness about it, is one form of bringing a 'Palestinian voice to Tel Aviv' and to some extent involves a process of internal reconciliation between identity and space.

Conclusion

We have seen the politics of recognition also involve a deeper politics of non-recognition for Palestinians in Tel Aviv. Desires of not being recognized are widespread in a city where recognition by Jewish Israelis often means either misrecognition or stigmatisation. Secondly, the 'non-' underlines that some Palestinians in Tel Aviv may wish to escape the 'burden' of collective recognition altogether; or they seek forms of recognition that are deeply individual and in a tense relationship with collective claims for rights and representation. I would even go as far as to say that most Palestinians citizens of Israel, and particularly Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, have no particular interest in politics with regard to their involvement in Tel Aviv. To them, this city is primarily a functional space and not one of belonging, despite the activities of activists explored in this chapter. But as I have shown, it is precisely the non- and misrecognition of their presence in Tel Aviv which necessarily leads to struggles that are deeply sceptical about the promises of 'liberal' urban participation. Their seemingly apolitical inclusion is what produces experiences of the political. This problem is exemplified by the dilemma of Raji Bathish, who enjoyed losing himself in the crush of anonymous urbanites but could not survive as a Palestinian writer in Tel Aviv; it only worked as long as he put his 'needs' as a Palestinian and Arabic-speaker aside, except for being the token Arab for a liberal Jewish audience that did not even understand Arabic.

Overall, there were two ways in which I have used recognition throughout this thesis. One usage refers to a political demand for the acknowledgment of their identity, history and presence in Tel Aviv; the second refers to how individuals are recognized or 'evaluated', by whom and in what situation in their everyday life in the city. Although this chapter dealt more explicitly with the former, the latter is nonetheless

decisive. Claims for recognition move centre-stage precisely because the Palestinian citizens' inclusion into Tel Aviv remains limited and tense, mainly due to misrecognition and the need to annul parts of their identity for the sake of opportunities. The occasional desire to delve into Tel Aviv anonymously may allow privacy and leisure-time anonymity. The promise of liberal urbanism only appears to work out well for those who no longer identify as Palestinians and embrace libertarian individualism instead, as in the case of Ali. For most other Palestinians in Tel Aviv I met, the real dilemma is that the closer they come to the 'heart' of Tel Aviv, the more they must realise that it does not beat in the same rhythm as theirs. This heart tells a different history and speaks a different language than they do, yet it is always them who are made to feel 'different' in problematic ways. The specificity about the 'political' in Palestinian Tel Aviv emerges from their position of being simultaneously within and outside of this urban space, formally included and excluded. Organised protests, exhibitions and tours provide the few spaces that articulate Palestinian political identity and demand recognition in the classic sense of the term.

Disillusioned by civic equality, Palestinian citizens of Israel are also hoisting their anchor into a past that lies sunken underneath the surface of an urban utopia. They turned to recognizing themselves, often precisely because others have failed to recognize them. Widely absent from the 'numbers', downplayed as politically irrelevant deviants, and fluctuating in and out of the city, most Palestinians are seemingly absent from Tel Aviv, which is precisely why a recognition of their presence becomes a deeply political issue in the face of its ambivalence. It was my intention to show that this political heterotopia, with simultaneous compromises and demands for recognition, should be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. The 'political' among Palestinians in Tel Aviv lies in a new generation of chronically 'misrecognized' citizens who were forced to take recognition into their own hands. Being Palestinian and living in Tel Aviv is no contradiction after all. It is a position from which new forms of political identity, positions and projects have emerged and will continue to emerge.

6 The Ebbs and Flows of Crisis: War, Polarisation and the Dilemma of Recurring Conflict

It was mid-July 2014 when I sat down with Yazid in a Tel Aviv coffee shop. Another round of fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip had escalated into a full-fledged war only a few days earlier. And one of its side-effects was the toppling of the fragile balance Palestinians in Israel often established between senses of Palestinian solidarity on the one hand, and an everyday life in the midst of Jewish Israeli society on the other.

'Jewish Israelis usually don't confront me with their opinions, but now it all comes out', said Yazid, a nursing student at Tel Aviv University. Our contemplation of the ongoing events was quickly interrupted when, as was often the case during these days, the shocking sound of the city's rocket-alarm sirens penetrated every corner of urban space. The waiters hectically guided customers from the coffee shop into a nearby residential building, where we sought shelter alongside residents and passers-by. The siren's sound saturated the city, symbolised a threat and sowed fear. In silence and without uttering a word in Arabic, Yazid and I stood there waiting for the 'boom'. Some of the others joked around in Hebrew; two of them had even brought their beers into the shelter. About half-a-minute later I heard the dull sound of an explosion outside and felt the last touch of its pressure wave in my chest. As was usual in Tel Aviv, the mostly self-crafted rockets did not strike a target. The 'boom' came from the rockets' collision with an intercepting rocket fired by the 'Iron Dome', a celebrated system developed in Israel. As if it all was part of a planned choreography, the city returned back to business as usual as quickly as it had sought shelter a minute before. Those who descended from their apartments to the bottom of the stairway walked back up, checking their Smartphones for updates. The restaurant's customers returned to their tables and resumed whatever they were interrupted in doing before. And so did Yazid and I as we returned to the table we had left before, taking a sip of Coca-Cola and continuing our conversation. Something about this felt very normal, yet it was also a moment of severe interruption and a sign of an ongoing crisis.

Regular testing aside, when alarm sirens wail they usually mark a moment of crisis: an aerial attack or a fire causing havoc somewhere. Some crises, however, have become built into normality in recurring patterns. They are part of the ordinary and change how people experience it, but they are not its qualitative opposite. For the long-term Tel Aviv resident Kheir, life as a 'stranger' within the dominant Jewish-Israeli society turns into tension and conflict under the influence of war. But the real crisis of her existence within Israel also surfaces every time she is screened at the national airport and on Israeli national holidays. 'My life is in a quite secure bubble of friends', she said, 'but one encounter is often enough and reality hits you.' The 'encounters that hit' Palestinians operate in many dimensions. They can be triggered by events or social situations which bring the otherwise seething tension to a temporary boiling point. They upturn the fragile balance that contains the dilemmas and suffering of being a Palestinian in Israel within a sense of 'workable' normality.

In this chapter I want to scrutinize the collateral impact of co-called 'crisis' on Palestinians in Israel, and compare this impact to the conflict and tensions they experience as recurring, institutionalised, and less spectacular oppression and exclusion as part of what has become 'normality'. I am interested in the overlaps of tense and ordinary times and the conclusions we can draw about the exceptional from the ordinary and vice-versa.

Unmasking Normality and Crisis

Dealing with a much larger scale of violence and restrictions in direct form, Palestinians in the Occupied Territory sometimes say they 'got used to' it as they adapt and manage their lives to 'get by the occupation', writes Lori Allen (2008). Here, the occupation has inscribed crisis and violence into everyday life so that it becomes a tense normality. 'Getting used' to violence is an embodied social practice that is continual; its agency of the everyday involves 'the process of taming violence, of reincorporating the extreme and existential into the ordinary and even predictable' (Allen 2008, 476). In a similar vein, Tobias Kelly (2008, 363) tells the story of how passengers in a mini-bus to Ramallah continued talking when an Israeli helicopter above their heads fired missiles into a building only a few hundred meters away, an

event brushed aside as *ʿadi* – normal. Looking at the time of the second *intifada*, Kelly suggests that violence had become over-determined, ignoring the mundane nature of most political conflicts. Although spectacular acts dominated the news, how Palestinians experienced the *intifada* was also a story of boredom and frustration. These ordinary experiences do not exist in opposition to violence but are deeply implicated within it (353). People who continue everyday activities in the face of a military occupation invite us to reflect on the 'ordinariness of the extra ordinary' (Taussig 1984, 477), as well as 'the extraordinariness of the ordinary' (Kelly 2008, 366). This chapter will do both by unmasking both the crisis and the ordinary through an exploration of their mutual relationship.

Allen (2008, 476) locates her ethnography of Palestinians under occupation in the context of ongoing colonialism, writing that their everyday coping with the occupation exemplifies 'the many ways in which the colonized reappropriated and resignified, and sometimes resisted colonialism'. Unable to resist all the time, the colonized also 'deflect' the power of the colonizer by adapting, 'they escaped it without leaving it' (DeCerteau 2011, xiii). Crisis then becomes woven into the 'normal' of the everyday through what DeCerteau calls 'the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong', which lend a political dimension to everyday practices (xvii). Moreover, individuals faced with the dilemma of ongoing crisis must also adapt, must constantly accommodate the predicament somehow and navigate the 'minefield' that public space dominated by the colonizing state sometimes becomes.

The flare-ups in Israeli-Palestinian violence that recur every once in a while mark peaks of intensity, but they do so not as a qualitative unprecedented tipping point but as extremes of already existing problems that intensify and arise in patterns of ebb and flow. Although not referred to as crises, institutionalised nationalist rituals on Israeli memorial days, where the siren does not mark a present emergency, have similar effects on Palestinians in Tel Aviv as the collateral impact of wars. They demand adaptation and social navigation and generate fear and estrangement. Rather than fetishizing the emergency I suggest that looking at the ongoing emergence and normalisation of conflict and violence sheds light on the real 'crisis' that lurks in the long and sharp shadows of emergencies.

Most of the anthropological literature that provides a critique of the crisis-disaster paradigm does so from the perspective of humanitarianism (Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Craig Calhoun 2008; Redfield 2013; 2005). In the introduction to *Culture and Chaos*, Lubkemann (2010, 1) writes that for the inhabitants of war-torn countries in Africa, war is no longer an event that suspends 'normal' social processes, 'but has instead become *the* normal – in the sense of "expected" – context for the unfolding of social life'. One key term that supposedly distinguishes the extraordinary from the ordinary is 'crisis', yet others are 'disaster', 'emergency' and 'catastrophe'. 'The rhythm of life in contemporary societies is punctuated by disaster', write Fassin and Pandolfi (2010, 9) in their critique of humanitarian intervention. In a similar vein, Calhoun (2008, 86) speaks of an 'emergency imaginary' that has reached far beyond its conventional use, becoming the counterpoint to a global order perceived as normal; such a notion of emergency represents as sudden, unpredictable and short term what is actually 'gradually developing, predictable, and enduring clusters of events and interactions'. According to Janet Roitman (2013), the notion of 'crisis' in particular has become an imperative and a powerful border line between situations that demand intervention and others that do not; between emergencies and normalities, between the everyday on the one hand and the political or humanitarian on the other. We deal with 'crisis is a point of view, or an observation, which is itself not viewed or observed' (Roitman 2013, 13).

Although I build on this critical debate about the pitfalls of the crisis-disaster paradigm, the argument presented here also goes beyond this critique by examining how a crisis is normalised and institutionalised as part of a political process of domination, and which contradictions such 'enduring crisis' causes for those suffering from it. Crisis serves a purpose and is ritually recalled and recreated by the State of Israel, while denying the Palestinians in Israel their own legitimate crisis, a crisis that is hidden behind 'normality'. More importantly still, this chapter explores how a people who live with recurring moments of crisis and ongoing subtle tensions must navigate public space and social interactions. I will look at how their deep connection to the victims of war and destruction 'elsewhere', such as in Gaza at the heart of crisis, affects them and leads to deep ambivalence about their location in the heart of Israel.

Where crisis is mobilized as a narrative it often marks out 'moments of truth', which are often defined as turning points in history (Roitman 2013, 2–3). They are a means to reveal and define history, which is why I argue that institutionalising crisis and packaging it in ways that allow its re-enactment becomes a powerful tool for political 'truth-making'. Instead of simply looking at the shadow the Gaza-crisis cast on Palestinians in Tel Aviv, I decided to compare this seemingly exceptional event to what is recurring and rather ordinary. Crisis labels specific situations as important and in doing so, it forecloses other questions. As absurd as this may sound, defining events of emergency as 'crisis' can hide the real crisis that is only revealed in its everyday emergence. In saying so I relate to Navaro-Yashin (2003, 108–109), who writes that the actual location of political crisis can be 'the disaster that underlies a seeming pretense to normality'. It is hidden underneath strategic attempts to normalise disruptive experiences.

Continuing the previous chapter's inquiry into the political, the following will take a step further by locating the normal behind the crisis and the crisis within the normalised. I look at changes of experiences and intensity of conflict and tension in patterns already present. The Palestinian citizens of Israel are a good case for this critical discussion because they are often excluded from discussions of the 'Middle East Crisis', as much as they do not usually feature as part of the main parameters in the search for a solution to the 'Israeli-Palestinian Conflict'. It is one of Israel's achievements in Public Relations that the issues concerning the '1948-Palestinians' have widely been accepted as an internal matter, as a problem of equality and inequality concerning an 'Arab minority' within a sovereign nation-state. This legitimacy, as it will emerge, is related to the normalisation of violence and conflict and the non-recognition of Palestinians and their history. The lightness of Tel Aviv may be enjoyed by the Palestinians, but it is during the recurring experiences of conflict and tension that normality and openness shows us their ugly face behind the mask.

Similar to the 'normal', also crisis serves as a mask that fails to express the ambiguity and dissonance underneath, including the ambiguity of seeking inclusion despite non-recognition and historical injustice. If we come back to my friend Yazid, we see that this young man worked and studied in Tel Aviv. He even felt a strong

sense of belonging to this city's lifestyle. Yet he also expressed solidarity with his Palestinian brethren in the Gaza Strip when he experienced the 2014 Gaza-Conflict as a terribly tense and contradictory time in Tel Aviv. He felt dissonance between his physical location and the Israeli character of Tel Aviv, and his sense of identity and political solidarity, which intensified under the influence of heated discourse and events during war. While the hearts of most Palestinians in Israel were beating for the victims of Israeli bombardments in Gaza, most Jewish citizens around them mourned the very soldiers they disdained. The war widened the rift between being Palestinian and living in Israel because it contributed to a climate of Jewish-Arab polarization and a feeling of entrapment. After all, the 2014 Gaza-Israel Conflict included one of the most devastating Israeli military operations ever to occur in the Gaza Strip.[38] The initial flare-up in violence had begun with the kidnapping and subsequent murder of three young Israelis in June 2014. This was followed by the revenge killing of a Palestinian teenager in East Jerusalem and a massive Israeli search operation in the West Bank. By this time, Yazid had come back from his visit in the West Bank and like many other Palestinians in Israel, felt that there was something utterly wrong about another violent 'deterrence' by bombing Gaza. At the same time, and here lies the ambiguity, they were disconnected from Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and surrounded by the same Israelis that supported the bombing campaign.

The Sirens of Crisis: The 2014 Gaza-Conflict

The 'routine' of alarm sirens had only returned to Tel Aviv in November 2012, when a rocket was fired towards the city from Gaza after Israel had assassinated a senior Hamas commander. It marked the first time since the 1991 Gulf War that the city's residents had to seek shelter under the sound of the siren. During the escalation in 2014, the so-called 'Iron Dome' system intercepted most of the rockets fired towards

[38] Some 18,000 housing units were destroyed or severely damaged, leaving approximately 108,000 people homeless; Seventeen out of 32 hospitals were damaged and 45 of the 97 primary health-care facilities; 26 schools were destroyed and 122 were damaged, while 20 to 30 per cent of water and sewage networks were damaged, as was 30 to 50 per cent of household water storage capacity (ICG (International Crisis Group) 2014, 4). According to UNOCHA, 2205 Palestinians were killed during the war, including at least 1,483 civilians and 521 children, as well as 71 Israelis including 66 soldiers one security coordinator and four civilians (ochaopt.org, as of 15 October 2014).

Central Israel and thereby allowed the Tel Aviv residents a maintaining of a certain sense of normality in Tel Aviv, while heavy bombardments shattered the confined Gaza Strip further south, where any effective warning system was entirely absent.

The day I met Yazid he had just returned from a visit to the West Bank, where he stayed with friends and activists in a refugee camp for a few days. Never before had he done something like this, for usually when he entered the West Bank he did so with family members whose cars had Israeli license plates. 'This time was different', said Yazid, explaining that his travel plans were crossed by the massive Israeli search operation into Palestinian areas that followed the kidnapping of the three Israeli teenagers. 'Everything was blocked. It was the first time I experienced what it means not to be allowed to move wherever you want', said Yazid. Some of the Palestinians he met in the refugee camp were activists who 'spent some time in jail', he said, adding that 'Arabs in Israel don't face what they face, and we are not doing enough here'. The visit and the events that followed changed something in him because they shed new light on a situation he has learned to accept as normal.

Yazid opposed Israel's blockade of the Gaza-Strip and condemned its military operations there; he even sympathized with the resilience of Hamas' armed 'resistance', although he generally did not like their ideology. That he had just sought shelter from an approaching Hamas-rocket with me and Jewish Israelis outside a Tel Aviv coffee shop did not seem to contradict his position. Under the influence of the war, his balancing acts between such different positions and environments became increasingly difficult.

For instance, colleagues now more openly confronted Yazid. They told him that he should be less critical because the Israeli army also defends him as a citizen. But to him this was a foolish remark at a time when this army waged a war against Palestinians with heavy civilian casualties, bombing people he identified with. In everyday life Yazid could easily balance his solidarities and political opinions with the pragmatism of studying and working in Israeli institutions dominated by Jewish-Israelis. Now walking the line between subjectivity and performance had become more difficult, as conflict and tension became more and more intense. Yazid worked in a shop at a cinema-complex outside of Tel Aviv to support his studies. Speaking from his daily interactions, Yazid said that many Jewish Israelis now expressed

‘brutal’ views about Gaza on a running basis; that they were unable to show empathy for Palestinians in Gaza.

Yazid hardly ever talked back at work and preferred to release steam on Facebook instead. This social space offered a mixed audience of Arab and Jewish acquaintances and friends and served as a valve for heated discussion during tense times. One day one of Yazid’s colleagues posted a propaganda film about Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip, who appear to be instructed by Hamas in the use automatic rifles in the video. ‘This was a confirmation of the teaching of hatred for her [the colleague]. But then I posted a video of Jewish children playing “killing Arabs” at an exhibition of the Israeli army’, said Yazid, apparently proud of his smart counter-move. This social media space plays an important role here because most Palestinians feel unsafe in Jewish-Israeli public space during flare-ups in violence and racism. What becomes clear from this vignette is that daily interactions with Jewish citizens had generally become tense for Palestinians in Tel Aviv, and this tension must be managed through on-stage/off-stage differences in behaviours and speech. And different social circumstances allow for different forms of expression which in turn bring out tensions in varying degrees.

Also attending protests against the war had become unsafe, not least because of agitated crowds of ultra-nationalist activists with racist slogans and violent acts. They turned the streets of Tel Aviv and other cities into dangerous areas of confrontation for Palestinians and for Jewish-Israelis who opposed Israel’s military action in Gaza. One victim of their attacks was the 31 year-old Wasseem Husary. He and a friend were assaulted on the way to an anti-war protest in the mixed Arab-Jewish city of Haifa. ‘We spoke Arabic on our way to the demonstration and some guys came over, shouting “Death to Arabs”’, he told me on the phone the day after the attack, which was also reported in the media. The group assaulted them until the two managed to run away towards a crowd of protesters. The ambulance eventually arrived. But the mob tried to pull them out again. Tragedy was averted only by a brave medic who managed to close the door in time. ‘They were screaming terrible things. I think they wanted to kill us’, said Wasseem. They got away with a broken nose and injuries.

Not all confrontations took on such extreme form. And not all fears were connected to violence. But together with the anti-Arab climate and government official's provocations, these accounts of violence and racism created a feeling of vulnerability. During the Gaza War I met up with my friend Towibah, who was contemplating an application for PhD-studies at Tel Aviv University at that time. We had met several times before but this time she seemed extremely anxious and concerned. We sat down on Rothschild-Boulevard in Tel Aviv close to an office she used to work in. 'It's so bad. I feel that I can't stand the Jewish Israeli society anymore. I can't listen to them anymore. Not because of the Hebrew, but because of what they say, their conversations', Towibah said in English, not using Arabic as she would usually prefer to. 'I reached a point where I prefer to talk English instead of Arabic', she explained, adding: 'I feel I am in danger.'

Palestinians in Israel are used to managing their visibility in Jewish-Israeli environments. However, being visibly Arab had become a real safety-issue during this war, if only as a fear-factor for Towibah and other Palestinians.

As our conversation continues, Towibah looks around and points at the passing people. She says that she was generally scared that people might recognize her as an Arab, and that it has been like this since the murder of the Palestinian teenager Abu Khdeir, she explained. 'I just sleep a lot, avoiding being outside here.' Tel Aviv was not only suddenly a dangerous place in her perception. She also felt guilty for 'living here and continuing everyday life while over there in Gaza they just die'.

On one of the first Saturdays after the initial escalation was sparked by the kidnappings, I walked into a left-wing protest in Tel Aviv where a group of aggressive right-wingers physically attacked protestors after rocket-alarm sirens went off. They attacked the crowd just after the police had run for shelter. 'Death to Arabs' was also their slogan. Their rioting reached a new level when a disturbed customer of an adjacent restaurant, seemingly provoked by the chants, threw an empty beer-glass towards them. The glass smashed on the ground and enraged the group further, many of whom now stormed up into the restaurant. The far outnumbered police officers struggled to regain control over the situation, but did not seem to make any arrests. Similar rampages by Israel's extremist right recurred week after week in the shadow of the 'Gaza-crisis'. As the Israeli army shelled the Gaza

Strip and several high-level politicians voiced anti-Arab speech, the extremists waged their own ‘war’ against Arabs.

Dissonance and Ambiguity

Palestinians in Israel may have grown more distant from the Jewish mainstream and the government under the impact of this war. At the same time, however, they still studied at the same university or worked with colleagues in companies. With the intensity of the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the accompanying polarisation, the feeling of estrangement for Palestinians within Israel grew but their location remained the same. The result is an intensification of dissonance and estrangement, as well as the feeling of helplessness and guilt.

One day in July 2014 I met the 20 year-old Tel Aviv University student Aida. We agreed to sit down in one of the many central Tel Aviv bars on the bus route that connected Jaffa, where many of her friends lived, with the Tel Aviv University campus. ‘I can’t stand this duality anymore’, Aida said after we ordered a drink. She ordered it in fluent Hebrew, and it all seemed to be a suitable location for a young student. On the surface, at least: ‘my good friends are in Gaza, locked in and fearing for their lives, but the people around me support the army that bombards them’, she said after I asked how she felt during these intense days. Although her body was mostly in Tel Aviv or Jaffa, her mind and heart seemed to be mostly in the Gaza Strip. Staying updated about her friends in Gaza was paramount and so she set her smartphone on ‘high-alert’, allowing notifications for every single tweet from the people there she knew. ‘Every message on Twitter I get is a sign that they are alive’, said Aida.

The assumption that a sustainable form of blending into Tel Aviv was easy for Palestinian citizens is clearly falsified by the ‘truth’ this perspective reveals about the real ‘crisis’: not singular moments of rupture, but events that shed light on conflicts and ruptures that have become institutionalised and are ongoing. Dissonance, ‘duality’ and estrangement are part of it. Unlike many other Palestinians I talked to in Tel Aviv, Aida has always been deeply connected to the Palestinian struggle for national liberation. She was literally born into it: her maternal grandfather was Ali

Abu Mustafa, a prominent leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) who was assassinated by two rockets fired into his office in Ramallah from Israeli helicopters in 2001.[39] Aida's family moved to Ramallah after the Second Intifada in order to be 'closer to political action', she explained. Today, however, they live in the quiet Arab town of Baqa al-Gharbiyyeh. This heritage of a deeply political family-history only increased the feeling of dissonance for Aida. Especially during times of war, it made her feel guilty too.

'I keep on justifying the fact that I am in Tel Aviv these days. But you know…my grandfather was Ali Abu Mustafa. All that patriotism in my family comes from him', Aida explained. This history is not only memory because the struggles of Palestinian exile live on in Aida's life, and through the status of her mother, who at the time only had a residence permit in Israel and Jordanian citizenship. Only in 2007 had her mother discovered that she had lost Jordanian citizenship when visiting the capital Amman to renew her passport, said Aida, adding that they gave her a *laissez-passer* instead. When she tried to obtain Israeli citizenship thereafter, it was refused for reasons 'relating to my grandfather', said Aida. This background of displacement and its continuation in the present is very common for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and yet they are expected to remain civil citizens – a task often opposed to their desire to articulate, nurture, and care for their political identity and solidarity.

'These days I lost hope', said Aida. 'I felt like I don't belong here. I can't go back to school now and pretend that nothing happened, while half of my classmates may be (Israeli) reserve soldiers. It would tear me apart.' She added that many of her classmates did not talk to her because she openly defines herself as a Palestinian. In fact, she considered herself to be 'one of those people they are bombing'. On the other hand, she is somewhat bound to the daily life in Tel Aviv, the life of an Israeli citizen who studies cinema at an Israeli university and lives in student dormitories of Tel Aviv University (TAU). 'Here I feel like I am with my anger alone, alone in my room', said Aida, adding that she felt paralyzed by the entrapment in this contradictory position. Her anger also came from an inability to act amid a strong

[39] Ali Abu Mustafa only returned to the West Bank in 1999 with a political arrangement struck between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, after three decades of exile, spent mostly in the Syrian capital Damascus.

urge to do something. ‘But what can she really do?’ she asked. While she lived in Tel Aviv, Palestinians died in Gaza.

According to Hisham, another friend and TAU-student, Palestinians in Tel Aviv generally fit in well, ‘but whenever there is a war going on, like the war in Gaza, something happens and Tel Aviv becomes nervous too…and we become stronger!’ Polarization also provides an opportunity to escape ambiguity and take a clear position. However, he also felt guilty for ‘sitting at home in Tel Aviv and drinking coffee’, while some of his Jewish colleagues at university are mobilized as reserve soldiers to fight in Gaza. It was all a very difficult balancing act. And a devil’s circle, as Aida explained: ‘the more you try to straddle, the harder it gets.’

Aida felt unsafe voicing her anger on the streets of Tel Aviv, which is why she decided to ‘document things’ by sharing and posting as much as she could in the social media. In words and pictures, at least, she could release her anger and do something. This was her way to show the world ‘the second side of the story’ about the children and families of Gaza. Why did she not organise or participate in demonstrations, I asked. And it seemed she did not believe in them any longer. During one protest she attended in Haifa, the mostly Arab-Palestinian crowd was accompanied and eventually completely encircled by riot police. Aida recounted her experience of the event:

> They were herding us like sheep. I felt like I was a sheep and the police the shepherds in this narrow space. Then they separated us into two small groups. We stood there chanting in the faces of the police and to each other. Such demonstration is not an accomplishment. We went to the streets and got beaten while shouting into each other’s face.

According to Aida, any form of Palestinian protest was a courageous thing to do despite these shortcomings. And she suggested that protesting in the heart of Tel Aviv could be especially effective. Even being in Tel Aviv was itself already a form of ‘resistance’ for Aida: ‘Coming to Tel Aviv is a tool, not only to get good education, but also what comes afterwards. (…) I am here to use their language, to expose things and spread stuff in their language. In order to beat your enemy you need to speak his language.’ As a filmmaker, she wanted to document a distinct Palestinian reality, not ‘their’ reality.

Despite her strong political background, she felt vulnerable back in her classroom in Tel Aviv. She described the Jewish Israelis around her as people who talk about war from the 'other side', people who live in this country and know it is their home. 'But I live on my homeland while the country is not mine', said Aida. She then expressed support for the 'Palestinian resistance' in the Gaza Strip, saying: 'Wouldn't you fire a rocket? Everyone can understand that. But on the other hand, I talk to you while I am studying in Tel Aviv. When rockets fall at Tel Aviv, I am happy. But I am also scared that it could hit me. Rockets don't differentiate between Arabs and Jews, you know?' I could not have explained the ambiguity better.

The heavy evening traffic streamed by the roadside bar we sat in. And at some point of the conversation, I took notice of Aida's necklaces. One featured a golden charm in the shape of historic Palestine; the other a charm in the shape of 'Handala', the child-figure that has come to symbolize Palestinian displacement and the desire to return from exile. Aida constantly checked her phone for more live-updates from friends in the Gaza Strip. We sat in a bar in Tel Aviv with a drink while Israeli aerial attacks terrorized Gaza's Palestinian population no more than 80 kilometres further south. It was the unbearable lightness of Tel Aviv. But the quiet had a rough undercurrent. 'Now the conflict is much more on the surface. It was always there, but it has become more obvious', Aida explained. And this is crucial: the crisis and its impact outside of the battlefield made Israeli-Palestinian conflict more visible, outspoken, debated, and more intense through polarisation, violence and the growing importance of solidarity and identity. However, it intensified something that has already been there, seething underneath the surface at a different degree. As a paradigm for interpreting events, 'crisis' only opens the curtain to an already ongoing play that is better observed backstage in its emergence.

When War Comes to Work

Aida said that she made use of Israel's opportunities to be stronger against it. However, simply focusing on working and harvesting opportunities is not easy during times of war and political tension. The Palestinian-Israeli social worker Rima, who had previously studied, worked and lived in Tel Aviv, was counselling young Arab pupils in Haifa's public school system at the time. She shared an office with

mostly Jewish-Israeli colleagues during the 2014 Gaza-Conflict. On one particular day during Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip, colleagues suddenly asked her to donate money 'for our soldiers'. Their request was not very sensitive of her Palestinian background, and as most Jewish Israelis, they probably did not understand how one can be Palestinian and Israeli citizen at the same time. She got very angry but kept quiet because she did not want to 'make a scene' at work. This silent swallowing of the matter only increased her anger later on.

When Arab-Jewish relations become tense, the Palestinians in Israel often face an intensified dilemma in the workplace. Their professional success may depend on their ability to keep certain opinions and emotions inside, to remain tolerable and 'civil' within the Israeli mainstream. This is no distinct quality of crises-times but an ongoing problem. Indeed, something very similar happened to Rima on a 'normal' day at work. As part of the social worker's engagement with public schools, they were also the target of the Israeli army's attempt to promote their programs at school. Rima was eventually encouraged by her manager to promote the controversial national service among the Arab pupils of her school, who are not required to serve but may volunteer. Then, one day in November 2013, a group offering workshops for children with dogs came to their office. Rima naively played with the dogs until one of the trainers explained that a workshop with these dogs would be particularly important as a preparation for the army. Slowly but surely Rima began to understand. She talked about it with her Jewish-Israeli manager, who told her that he used to work with dogs in the army too. As 'an object', he told Rima, as an Israeli soldier performing the Arab 'target' during training operations. Such an 'object' wears armour and trains the dogs to attack, 'to attack Arabs; I sat there and thought to myself: if a Palestinian is an object, I am a Palestinian, so I am scared of this dog!' At least this is what she would have wanted to say in that very moment. But she did not. She swallowed it and tried to move on despite the frustration. Several months into the polarized climate following the 2014 Gaza-Conflict the tension reached a boiling point: she was asked to be involved in workshops that promote the Israeli national service in the Arab school she supported, and eventually handed in her resignation. The dissonance had become unbearable.

Following the war, a report in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz (Maltz, Haaretz.com, 7/8/2014)[40] discussed the impact on Arab workers in Jewish companies. Citing an attorney from the Nazareth-based Worker's Hotline, the article read: 'Dozens of complaints have been received in recent weeks from Arab workers who have either been fired or threatened with dismissal for expressing what she (the attorney) describes as "thoughts outside the consensus" on social media sites.' In the same piece, Smadar Nehab, the director of the NGO Tsofen, is cited as saying that high-tech companies showed less willingness to hire skilled Arab engineers, stating: 'This is not the time. Let's wait until things calm down.' The problem is that things never fully calm down in an 'ongoing crisis', and the dissonance already lies in the fact that this is an oxymoron. More recently, after a series of knife-attacks in late 2015, Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities banned the mostly Arab (but also Jewish) cleaning workers and other service employees from schools when students are present for fear of attacks (AFP, timesofisrael.com, 18/10/2015).[41] Although it applied regardless of ethnic identity, Palestinians in Israel were affected most; and it raised questions about the danger of slipping into forms of collective ethnic punishment in the future.

Some conflicts at work are indeed inevitable, but they can also be negotiated. This became evident when I talked to Faris, who worked in a start-up in Tel Aviv, about a previous position he held at an Israeli company for online security. The time he worked there coincided with the so-called Gaza-Flotilla incident, when an activist ship set for the Gaza Strip was raided by Israeli soldiers who killed nine activists on board. Such events also have repercussions at the workplace, similar to wars, as Faris explained:

> So in the company, one of my co-workers was a [Jewish-Israeli] settler from the West Bank. He sent out an e-mail to everyone calling for a demonstration in support of the settlers. In the headline of the mail it said: "All of us are Sayeret 13" [the Israeli army unit that captured the Gaza-flotilla boat and killed activists on board]

It was hard for Faris to swallow the e-mail quietly and so he replied with a message to every employee in the office, saying something along the lines of: 'I don't think

[40] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.609299
[41] URL: http://www.timesofisrael.com/discrimination-alleged-as-israeli-cities-bar-workers-from-schools/

this is the right place to discuss these things. But if it is, tell me and I can speak a lot about crimes against humanity.' Eventually, the director told both of them not to discuss such political issues at work. He then asked the 'settler' to send an apology, which he eventually did. This experience of Faris' work-life in Tel Aviv shows that these dynamics are not specific to the period of the 2014 Gaza-Conflict. What was different during wars and other political conflicts, however, were the level of intensity and the general climate of polarisation and heated emotions that resulted from the temporary crisis. Because it also triggered a number of public protests it increased the visibility of political positions and conflict, and made reactions to them all the more aggressive. The impact of these recurring wars is also long-term because people learn to live with the constant anticipation that the next escalation will follow soon. Hermez (2012, 341) explored something similar in the case of Lebanon, where people are 'constantly inundated by a discourse that claims war is going to be waged soon'. The Palestinians in Israel and those living under Israeli occupation even more so live with the constant anticipation of rupture, tension and the possibility of encountering a 'crisis'.

Protests and Segregation

One of the first protests in Tel Aviv against yet another war in Gaza took place on July 3, 2014, under the lead-slogan 'there is no solace in revenge'. Only a day earlier the 16 year-old Palestinian Mohamed Abu Khdeir from East Jerusalem had been kidnapped, beaten and burned alive, as autopsy reports would reveal later. It was a brutal act carried out in revenge for the three young Jewish Israelis who were kidnapped hitchhiking in the occupied West Bank. In light of these two killings, and in reaction to the calls for revenge that followed, several thousand activists and supporters of Israeli left-wing parties filled one of Tel Aviv's main squares. 'From inside pain and anger is rising, and a circle of revenge erupts', Dov Khenin of the communist Hadash party warned the crowd, and continued: 'But [revenge] between who? Revenging the Arabs that are doing surgery at Echelov-hospital in Tel Aviv? Or revenge on the Arab from the Galilee who is studying at Tel Aviv University?'

Hardly any Arab citizens attended the demonstrations organized by the Israeli left throughout July and August. It seemed that although demanding very similar things –

like opposing racism and bombardments of the Gaza Strip – most Palestinian and Jewish activists lived in different political spaces. This was not surprising, because being in Tel Aviv as a Palestinian meant having to carry on with daily life in the face of a rising anti-Arab climate. And the most difficult, as Dov Khenin's question shows, is that Palestinian citizens identify more strongly and directly with Palestinians elsewhere during wars, which in turn enables Israeli politicians to criticise them for 'treason' as Israeli citizens. They underline solidarity and ethno-national similarity with other Palestinians in Gaza, which allows others to say that they are 'all the same'; at the same time, they want to be distinguished as citizens who deserve equality and respect.

All this at a time when the Israeli army carried out heavy bombardments on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip just 80 kilometres further south, when they felt solidarity for Gaza while they physically were in Jewish-Israeli space. A growing climate of anti-Arab sentiment left less and less space for Jewish-Israeli conceptions of Palestinians as people who are above all equal humans. The Israeli media played an important part in forging such a climate. I would watch the ongoing live-reports on Israel's main TV-channels, where aerial attacks on 'targets' in the Gaza Strip were often shown through the black-and-white cross hairs of combat airplanes. On one channel, all reporting on the Gaza-operation would be framed by the headline 'The country under fire' (*medina tahat aesh*). This meant essentially 'our' country under fire by 'them' - but for the Palestinian citizens of Israel, there was no 'our' without ambiguity, nor was there a Gaza figured as 'them'. The vast majority of Israeli media joined the ensuing narrative in which Hamas was portrayed as an irrational force that wants to kill Israelis and destroy Israel, according to Ofer Zalzberg, a friend and Senior Analyst at the International Crisis Group. He added: 'When you reduce human beings to an ideology it dehumanises them because you don't see why they do it, or what the positive goal is they articulate. Reductionism is what eventually leads to dehumanisation.'

The then Deputy Speaker of the Israeli parliament, Moshe Feiglin, called for a mass deportation of Palestinians from Gaza to places across the world.[42] Meanwhile, the state stepped up its measures against Arab politicians, such as Hanin Zoabi, an MP for Balad, who was banned from parliament for six months on suspicion of verbally assaulting police officers at a protest, and for denying that the kidnappers of the three young Israelis were 'terrorists'. In the opinion of Mohamed Zeidan, the Chair of the High Follow-up Committee for Arab citizens of Israel, the minority's national umbrella organisation, these actions represented incitement and provocations in support of polarization and extremism. 'The behaviour we witnessed on the Jewish street is a result of this official incitement, of those in the government', Zaidan told me in August 2014. He further explained why the ensuing polarization and incitement only entrenched the Palestinian citizens' discrimination and marginalization:

> The behavior was very bad; this war was on Hamas, and Hamas is part of the Arab-Palestinian people. The violence was extensive (…) This picture, without doubts, influences how we, the Arabs inside [Israel] feel. We carry Israeli IDs and Israeli citizenship, but Israel has yet to treat us like citizens. We are besieged and our treatment of this country is as if we were strangers on our homeland. (…) We do want coexistence, but only under the condition of equality.

If joining Israeli protests has always been difficult for Palestinians, it had become increasingly so in summer 2014. The Palestinian-Israeli students at Tel Aviv University would rather engage in activities on campus, in their home-towns, or in the southern neighbourhood of Jaffa instead of going to Rabin-Square in Tel Aviv.

Generally speaking, Arab-Jewish cooperation seemed extremely difficult during the Gaza-Conflict. Ironically, the lack of cooperation came at a time when all major anti-war demonstrations underlined a 'joint' Arab-Jewish stand, suggesting that 'Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies'. This self-fulfilling prophecy remained an ideal, voiced from the Israeli illusion of normality, rather than reality. Indeed, Palestinian-Israeli cooperation was largely put on hold even by civil society networks and social

[42] Reilly, dailymail.co.uk, 4/8/2014: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2715466/Israeli-official-calls-concentration-camps-Gaza-conquest-entire-Gaza-Strip-annihilation-fighting-forces-supporters.html

movements famous for it. Among them were Combatants for Peace (CfP), which coordinated several activist networks that included Palestinians from the occupied territories alongside Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel.

'Each time there is an outbreak of violence we become more relevant, but at the same time less able to act', said Assaf Yacobovitz, one of CfP's Jewish-Israeli coordinators in Tel Aviv. This inability to act across the divide also resulted from pressures on Palestinians not to cooperate, or 'collaborate' with Israelis. This tension was felt most strongly by CfP's activists in the occupied West Bank and in Jerusalem, where some faced threats from other Palestinians around them. But also Palestinian citizens of Israel told me that cooperation and peace-activism had become impossible during the months following June 2014. 'As you probably noticed, most Jewish Israelis have recently become more and more right-wing', said Mohamed Aweida, a Palestinian citizen of Israel and a leading coordinator of CfP. He added that it has become difficult for him to speak about nonviolent cooperation at times when: 'the relation between Israel and Palestinians has become one of force; force that needs to be answered by force. I believe in it, but I can't do it anymore.'

For similar reasons, Jewish and Palestinian citizens did not join in the same political demonstrations in Tel Aviv. 'I can't attend a protest under an Israeli flag', said Sami Abu Shahade, the former member of the City Council and nationalist activist. At the site of one weekly Tel Aviv protest, the Jewish-Israeli city councillor Mickey Gitzin of the Israeli Meretz-party said that he would not want to take part in any 'Arab protest' either: 'I am Israeli and Jewish, emotionally connected to this state. I don't relate to Arab protests that speak Arabic and the language of Palestinian nationalism.' This public segregation of political action was nothing new, but it intensified under the influence of the Gaza-War. And as we have seen earlier, safety considerations and fear were major factors contributing to mutual dissociation. Abu Shahade told me about how he took his nine-year-old son and seven-year-old daughter to a cinema in Rishon Lezion, a central Israeli city. When the alarm siren suddenly went off and everyone ran towards the shelters, he decided to run the other way. As he told me the day after: 'I ran the other way to take my children out of the mall because I was afraid someone would lynch them.'

Whether the stuff of exaggerated fear or real possibility, his reaction gives us another example of how escalation can upturn the fragile balance Palestinians in Israel establish as a way to reconcile their opinions and physical location, their identity and its (non-)recognition by others. But did Palestinians in Tel Aviv not enjoy non-recognition to a certain extent? They are of course in a particular position because they have no marked Arab neighborhoods or social centres outside of Jaffa. But essentially, their ability and desire to blend in and disappear in the anonymity of the city also decreases during times of war and tension. After all, and despite the diversity of political positions, they can only swallow racism and exclusion to a certain degree. One logical consequence was that Palestinians looked out for the few safety zones of familiarity that were left in Tel Aviv-Jaffa.

Just after the protest in central Tel Aviv, I rushed down to Jaffa where another demonstration was about to be held. Jaffa still symbolised a culturally familiar space for most Palestinians in Tel Aviv. As a mixed Jewish-Arab space, Jaffa was also affected by polarization during summer 2014. Part of the problem was a decline in Jewish customers for local Arab businesses, according to Abu Shahade. Israel's right-wing foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman had previously called on Jewish citizens to boycott Arab businesses in response to a one-day general strike in mid-July, which they held in solidarity with Gaza. 'The majority of our clients are Jewish, and now they stop coming. Mr Lieberman told them so', Abu Shahade complained.

In contrast to Tel Aviv, the Palestinian identity of space – and its destruction – remained visible in Jaffa, where Arab businesses are identifiable and the Arabic language is used more commonly. The little islands left there served as the ground for political demonstration. One protest was held there on the tiny traffic-refuge that surrounds the old Ottoman clock-tower at the entrance to the Old City, right after the protest in Tel Aviv ended. A few dozen Palestinians filled the refuge alongside foreigners and a handful of Israeli activists. Eventually about a hundred protestors stood cramped together on the narrow traffic island, some lining up along the edge of the elevated square, facing the road with signs. 'Raise your voice the people in Gaza are dying', was one of their seemingly endless 'battle cries'. Watching the crowd protesting on this narrow island only deepened the impression of their marginalisation. And yet it seemed to re-activate feelings of solidarity and

togetherness, albeit the kind of togetherness Aida talked about when she invoked the metaphor of vulnerable sheep.

Many of the passing cars must have been driven by Palestinians, who honked vividly with approval. Others, more likely driven by Israelis, rushed by quickly. The overlap between solidarity and space, identity and physical location, was more balanced here than in Tel Aviv, if only at the emotional level. Soon the Israeli riot police arrived and a handful of activists attempted to walk beyond the edge of the square down onto the busy street. The police had already positioned itself in anticipation of an escalation when a fierce argument erupted between some of the elder Palestinians and younger activists, who wanted to push things further and escalate.

'They want to walk down there but it will only escalate', said one of the older men at the site, adding: 'This is not Umm el-Fahm here, it is only Jaffa.' Unlike his home-town Umm el-Fahm, a major town in the northern Arab-Triangle region, the Palestinians were vulnerable here and lacked recognition of ownership. This small refuge was what was left of the proud Palestinian port city of Jaffa. The elders successfully contained the youth's anger and the protest ended quietly as the war went on.

Beyond Protests: Hopes and Fears

Arab and Jewish activists held their protests mostly separated, but most Palestinians in Tel Aviv and Jaffa did not take part in any such protests at all. This is important to remember, especially because I criticise those perspectives on politics and crisis which only focus on the spectacular and immediately visible. This also requires a glance beyond protests, which are often seen as the main driving force behind political change. The 'protester' has even been spectacularly announced by Time magazine in 2011 as 'person of the year', overshadowing all that lies behind this most visible face of conflict and change.

Indeed, Palestinians in Tel Aviv felt the impact of war and polarisation also as an emotional challenge and through fears and hopes. One of the Palestinian-Israelis who did not take part in any protests was Maisalon, a student and then research assistant of Tel Aviv University. Like so many others, on 4 July 2014, she read the weekly

newspaper column of Sayed Kashua, the most prominent Palestinian writer in Israel. Against the backdrop of the escalating developments, Kashua announced that 'coexistence has failed' and that he was leaving to the US with his family. It had a very sobering effect for Maisalon. So much so that she wrote an article in response, an excerpt of which I include here because it beautifully describes the mood felt by many other Palestinians in Israel during those weeks of frustration and sadness:

> Dear Sayed,
>
> You broke my heart when you cried out in your weekly Haaretz column. (…) You made me want to escape out of my body and run. (…) After I read your column I was not afraid to step out of my house. I relied upon my Ashkenazi appearance to finally be of good use. I escaped to where I always do when the world is too suffocating, to a viewpoint that looks over the sea from the old city of Jaffa.
>
> (…) I preferred not to sink into sad thoughts about racism that I was walking to escape from that day, to escape all the calls of racism with which people have meticulously decorated social networks and news websites.
>
> (…) Finally I reach the hill that looks over the sea. The Hebrew and Arabic start to fade in the background and for a moment, the Jewish-Arab scene looks like a harmoniously conducted game like no other. I don't hear any word about the events of the past two weeks.
>
> (…) But then the world became cruel again. A military helicopter broke the stream of Italian conversation that was playing in my ears. I looked and speculated where it was going. Is it one of those helicopters that fly to drop bombs on Gaza? Is it reasonable that they will simply fly up there, so easily recognized from the skies of Tel Aviv? It always seemed like a demon, far far away and only present in the news.
>
> (…) Imagine, Sayed. I was thinking of a world without oppression and supremacy of one nation over another, a world where we, the Palestinians, also know how to forgive and let go of all the years of oppression. A world where we're not asked to show gratitude for a piece of paper within a blue cover (our identity card), a world where the hardships of the weak are not used to recruit traitors. A world where the generation of young Palestinians will be proud of its identity and language, a generation that can attend to better schooling, education and values. A generation that is benefited by the world and walks with their chins held high (…) A world where the police are entrusted with the

> personal safety of all citizens and do not distinguish between one murder and the other!
>
> (…) A world without Class A and Class B citizens (…). So, in contrast to you, Sayed, I decided to fight and keep dreaming of a more optimistic world where one can think differently. When it comes true, please do not stay in the U.S.!

Maisalon wanted Kashua to stay optimistic instead of giving up hope. However, the reality is probably more along the lines of Emil Habibi's famous book-title 'The Pessoptimist'. Also Maisalon admitted later on when I asked her that she was not that optimistic 'in reality'. To survive in this reality, she also had to arrange herself in one way or another with the status-quo, while at the same time being highly critical of it. Kashua left for the United States but Maisalon was still a student at Tel Aviv University, still lived in Jaffa, still faced the dilemma of living with an 'enduring crisis'.

Suffocated by the climate of fear and violence, she expressed her anger and yet when she stepped out of her house, she could do so relying on her 'Ashkenazi' appearance, a white European appearance that allows her to remain anonymous as a Palestinian. Sometimes she would speak Hebrew even in Arab shops in Jaffa, pretending to be Jewish because of the local's nosiness and frequent interference in the personal affairs of young women like her. Sometimes being invisible is a gender-specific strategy to avoid interference by other Palestinians, but during times of tension it helped her to stay under the radar of Jewish-Arab conflict. It gave her a feeling of security in a mainly Jewish Israeli city. As the prominent Palestinian-Israeli musician and actor Mira Awad put it in another article in the Haaretz newspaper: 'My head says I'm dying to get out of here, my heart says I have no other country.'

Because it is institutionalised around principles of civility and a minimum level of cooperation, conflict and crisis can be balanced with pragmatism most of the time. During these tense times this balancing also involved much frustration. It is not easy to avoid speaking Arabic for fear of attacks, not easy to rely on one's Ashkenazi-appearance, and difficult to live with the emotional consequences of keeping quiet when Jewish colleagues seek a donation for Israeli soldiers fighting other Palestinians in Gaza. However, the 'collateral' impact of the so-called crises of war and violence on Palestinians in Israel did not create a different reality; it intensified

the disaster that is already part of their everyday lives and made conflict and the discourses around it more visible.

The Sirens of Non-Crisis: Memorial Days and Other Tense Events

To understand the real disaster underneath the pretence to normality, we must move beyond a language of crisis, looking at normalisation, emergence and repetition rather than singular moments of spectacular truth. The idea of yet another 'unprecedented tipping point' can be scrutinized against the backdrop of recurring conflict and tension and their institutionalisation into normality. One way in which such institutionalisation and normalisation takes place are formalised national rituals and memorials.

Many modern nation-states designate a particular day to independence, and another to remember those who 'sacrificed their lives for the existence of the state', writes Handelman (1998, 191). In Israel, the first is Independence Day and the latter Remembrance Day, or in its long version: Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism. These rituals present the state's 'version of moral and social order' and taken together, these memorial days form 'a dramatic narrative that encodes temporality' or history (191). The two national days are ordered, not as a coincidence, sequentially in the Israeli calendar, proceeding from formal mourning to less formal and all-embracing celebration. Holocaust Memorial Day takes place before these two, thus contributing to the creation of a dramatic historic narrative from catastrophe to freedom and independence, which in turn has to be defended through the sacrifice of its people (198).

Unlike Independence Day, Remembrance Day begins with the sound of a siren that 'penetrates and simultaneously synchronizes the different worlds of everyone in the country' (Handelman 1998, 193). The memorials are 'a convenient way to unite people', as an Israeli newspaper article on the history of the siren suggests (Gilad, Haaretz.com, 12/4/2015).[43] However, it is not exactly 'everyone' in the country who is 'synchronized' or 'united' here. Palestinian citizens feel particularly estranged and excluded, are reminded of their own past and present catastrophe by these national

[43] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/features/.premium-1.651374

memorial days. Their own ‘catastrophe’ has a different history that is suppressed by these public Zionist rituals and lacks recognition precisely because it undermines the state’s narrative.

On Holocaust Memorial Day the siren wails for two minutes at 10 a.m., on Remembrance Day for the ‘fallen’, the siren wails twice, one minute the evening before and the second time is for two minutes the next morning. On these memorial days in Israel, the sirens wail not as an alarm for something dangerous that may be about to happen, but are a force that utilises a particular past and a national narrative to signify the present and those included in it or excluded from it. This is crisis and conflict institutionalised within ideology and rituals of heroic struggle and sacrifice that only count for some, while excluding others. Before turning to a detailed discussion of these sirens, Independence Day serves as a good starting point.

Another People’s Flag and Celebrations

On Independence Day the streets of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other cities in Israel are filled with partying crowds, many of them waving Israeli flags or wearing hats and other accessories coloured in Israel’s national blue and white. While Jewish Israelis celebrate their state’s inception and continuing existence, the Palestinian citizens of Israel are forced to re-live the consequences of their national catastrophe, the Nakba, through the self-absorbed mirror of the state that caused it. It is a difficult day to be a Palestinian in Israel. In May 2014, my neighbours in Tel Aviv mounted a massive flag from their balcony in preparation of the party. Later at night they would celebrate with loud music and cheerful singing, shouting ‘Thank you Eretz Israel! Thank you Eretz Israel!’ in Hebrew through a Megaphone. This kind of nationalist ecstasy is not uncommon in Tel Aviv. Seemingly entering a different dimension, I went to the launch of the ‘iNakba’ application earlier the same this evening, the event held by the NGO Zochrot which I discussed in the previous chapter. For Yazid, who joined me for a walk the same evening, the national flag symbolised his exclusion: ‘I have a problem with this flag. I simply can’t stand it. The flag is a symbol for the fact that this country does not consider me part of it, that I don’t belong to it, that it is no home. Nothing about this flag belongs to me.’ Similar to the tense times of Israeli-Palestinian violence and war, these memorial days changed the balance of things for

Palestinians in Tel Aviv. This suggests that 'crisis' is ongoing and recurring, and that it follows patterns of ebb and flow throughout the year, while some rhythms are deliberately set in 'logical' sequence to one another.

The tension flows everywhere during the 'memorial season', even at the workplace. The entrance of the cinema-complex where Yazid worked was lined with flags to both sides. 'Everything looks different during these days', he explained, adding that independence made his usual struggles only more difficult. His gay brother Ali, who we got to know earlier in the thesis, put up an Israeli flag in the tiny room they both shared in Tel Aviv, causing additional anger in Yazid. 'I told him he better remove it before I get home', he told me after his brother sent him a picture of the flag. Yazid added that the flag represented the opposite of Israeli promises to respect and tolerate Palestinians citizens if they only served in the army. 'They say in return, this country will protect you. But the flag and the national anthem don't represent me.' One morning after Israeli 'Independence Day' I met Samira, who worked as a section head nurse in a private clinic in Tel Aviv. We met at her local coffee-shop and as we sat down, she quickly lamented her lack of sleep due to her neighbours' independence party. She further explained that daily interactions also changed during these nationalist days:

> Yesterday in the supermarket I went to buy vegetables and fruits. I decided to have a light dinner. The guy at the counter said: are you going out? I looked at him and said: No, I don't go out. You don't know that Arabs don't go out and celebrate on Independence Day? He said: so you are not celebrating the existence of Israel? I said, quietly, not aggressive: I don't feel like celebrating the day on which my grandfather and my father lost a lot of land. My family became refugees in Syria, Lebanon and Jenin in the West Bank. I said it without anger, saying just that this day is painful for me. He said: you know what, you are right.

Just like times of war and violent escalation, these days bring questions to the surface which would otherwise remain more salient. On another Independence Day she and her former partner, a doctor working in the same clinic, attended an excursion with colleagues from work. After a night-shift, she arrived at the bus tired, and the first thing she heard was the bus driver wishing her a 'happy independence day'. Later on

the driver quizzed the children about nationalist issues, independence, the founding of the state and the number of Jewish citizens. Samira recounts her reaction:

> So I stood up in the back of the bus [she stands up in front of me and claps], clapping like this, saying: "Bravo, bravo! I am so happy that you give us this important information about the separation between Jewish and Arab citizens." I told my partner that I will get off the bus. But she managed to call the organizer who called the guide who told the driver not to speak of these things anymore.

This day not only brings up conflicts about history and present but also charges many Palestinians emotionally. The essence of Zionism and its catastrophic consequences lurk in every corner of Tel Aviv when flags, Hebrew chants, and collective joy and fun express Israeli nationalism. But some also encounter respect from their friends. The long-term Tel Aviv resident Kheir said that Israeli Independence Day was in fact 'Nakba Day' for her, which is why Jewish friends no longer invite her and her partner to any celebrations. 'One of my friends once told me that he put down the flags right before Independence Day because he had Arab visitors. That's very nice', she said, although it is a rare exception. And it does little to solve the real issue: 'You feel that this is not your country on these holidays. It becomes clear that you are not actually part of this whole thing.'

The Siren that 'Rules' them All

The flags on Independence Day symbolise to Palestinians visually what the siren does in sound: exclusion and the denial of Palestinian identity and history under an absence of recognition. The siren on Remembrance Day is a force that cuts deepest into space and momentarily seems to oppress every resistance to the synchronizing rhythm of ethno-nationalism. On one of these days I stood waiting at a train station in Tel Aviv, on my way to an alternative event in which both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians shared narratives of loss and mourned together. On the way to this rare event, I experienced (with less intensity) how difficult public space becomes for Palestinians on that particular day.

Although nothing to fear, I still checked the time repeatedly on the way to the station to calculate whether I would be stuck in a train when siren marks the collective

silence. I hoped the train ride would be either before, or after the mourning, but I was out of luck. A few minutes after I boarded the train the siren wailed and everyone around me stood up, as is custom during this ritual. Highly critical of this nationalist public event, I had in fact already decided not to stand up. At the same time, however, I did not want to protest visibly either, which may have provoked and disturbed the people around me. Luckily, I had already taken the necessary precautions. Although plenty of seats were empty on the train, I stood from the very beginning. Consequently, I could stand without having to stand up. The action of standing up was a statement, but already standing could hardly be seen as such?

Many Palestinians in Israel told me that they had no problem with the minute of silence on Holocaust Memorial Day. However, almost everyone I talked to detested the siren in memory of Israel's fallen citizens. In a conversation with Mira Awad after one Remembrance Day, I asked her how she experienced these days in Tel Aviv:

> There is always more tension. You speak about issues like Syria or Iran and everybody is in tension. When you say something, they feel like you are attacking their own heritage and history. (…) Everybody is so over-sensitive, but also Palestinians are over-sensitive. A million and a half Palestinians inside Israel make a big effort not to be outside when the siren goes off. On the day of the Holocaust, we may stand, no problem. We have a problem with the memorial of soldiers because we feel it is one-sided. So we don't go outside. It is painful because we don't get the same recognition. That's why I go to the mutual ceremony. I feel that the Palestinians should also get their recognition or some kind of memorial moment for them as well.

When the siren wails Jewish Israeli citizens stand up or stop their cars, step out of public transport or leave their cars to stand beside it on the motorway. This voluntary stasis is forced confinement for the Palestinians. The trouble also has to do with mobility because it is during movement on public transport that Palestinians are exposed to the ritual in a confined space that dissolves anonymity and leaves few alternatives for escape. The siren interrupts all movement temporarily, immobilising Palestinians because it destroys the flexibility of their 'acrobatic' balancing acts and undermines anonymity. A highly mobile and fluid urban space becomes momentarily one of immobility and closure. Even movement itself is considered an act of

rebellion when everything stops at the sound of the siren. To avoid having to be either a rebel or a collaborator, Palestinians often plan their day in such a manner that they can avoid being in public space when the siren goes off. Others deliberately seek shelter in a toilet seconds before, or simply stay at home. Yet others stay seated deliberately or keep on driving as a form of noticeable protest. When the student Yazid did not stand up during one siren at university one Jewish classmate asked him why he did not comply, upon which he answered that no one stood up during his own commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba of 1948. Another Palestinian in Tel Aviv I knew well found a different solution. He shared an apartment with a Jewish boyfriend, explaining: 'I didn't stand up when the siren wailed, but my boyfriend decided to go to the bathroom and commemorate there. He said, "Hussein, I know you are Arab". So it was ok that I stayed outside and didn't stand up.'

While most Palestinians share their opposition to the ceremony, there are also exceptions. The Christian Palestinian student Samar told me that she stood up when the siren wails on Holocaust Memorial Day, and if the situation requires, even on Remembrance Day. 'I stand up but I don't take it personally', she said, explaining: 'I should respect their honour and lost ones, so I stand up. I don't feel any belonging, but someone lost someone. Not standing up is disrespectful. Those who are against it lost their nation and blame Israel for it and they feel isolated. I tell them to get over it.' Even Yazid acknowledged that the ritual creates a complicated dilemma, because 'there is also this inner pressure on you to stand up'.

The siren represents the soundscape of national ideology, a very particular form of social ordering that marks one 'truth' and crisis while suppressing another. Its function is similar to Althusser's idea about ideology as a force that interpellates or hails concrete individuals as concrete subjects (Althusser 2000). The siren calls upon citizens to identify themselves, however indirectly, as subjects with a particular relationship to the ideology it represents: supportive or resistant. The role of sound as a means of political and ethical calibration as also been explored elsewhere, such as Hirschkind (2006) who looks at Islamic sermon as a means by which Islamic ethical traditions have become 'recalibrated to a modern political and technological order', also through its political incitements and as a call for citizen participation. Israel's sirens, whether on memorial days or in warning of a rocket, also send messages to

citizens and become a powerful force of communication and social ordering for the state. What connects the impact of the Gaza-Conflict with the effect these memorial days have is the experience of recurring tension between a dominant nationalist narrative, expressed through rituals, symbols and discourse, and the Palestinian identity and history it excludes and undermines. The siren is an actor of state control and spatial domination, an ordering tool that signifies solid boundaries. During these national days Palestinians experience a widening rift between subjectivity and the performed identity of and in space. When balancing is no longer an option, sometimes the only choice left is escape: into a nearby bathroom at the workplace, or to the family's Arab home-town.

The feelings of estrangement produced by anti-Arab sentiments and polarisation during times of political tension and war then have similar implications for Palestinians in Israel as memorial and national holidays. They underline in the most upfront way that 'Israel is treating us like strangers in our homeland', as Mohamed Zeidan, the Chair of the High Follow-up Committee, told me in the face of racism and war in summer 2014. How it feels to be an exile at home is nowhere more clear for Palestinians in Israel than during times of war or in the Remembrance 'season'. Eventually, it all comes down to the metaphoric realisation that they have two choices when the siren wails: standing up and being invisible as an Arab-Palestinian, thereby becoming atomised as an anonymous 'civil' supporter of the masses (but swallowing whatever internal tension one has in silence); or staying seated and thereby marking one's difference in opposition to the forces of synchronised domination (but having to deal with the troubles and evil looks that ensue). These two choices stand metaphorically for the requirements of inclusion Palestinians in Tel Aviv often face. Silencing one's distinct Palestinian identity and history is the price for benefits and opportunities, but this game can only go so far. And the pathway of resistance is also a difficult one from the contradictory position of exile at home. 'Rebelling in loneliness', as Mira Awad put it, is a feeling particularly evident for Palestinians in a city such as Tel Aviv.

Conclusion

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, 2014 was 'the year Israel's illusion of normalcy died' and then 'resurfaced, for now' (Schechter, Haaretz 26/12/2014).[44] Citing recurring and not so unusual wars, rockets, attacks, senseless deaths, and more, the article concluded that the main change that year had to offer was that the normalcy 'carefully cultivated over a decade of minimal security problems, was shattered'. Economic wealth, housing protests, innovative successes, and the OECD-membership had all suggested a sense of false normality that does not fit well with the idea of an ongoing crisis, which is apparently also perceived by a growing number of Jewish Israelis as such. The sense of normality is based on a distortion of reality, on a denial, the article further argues, quoting a well-known 2012-statement by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: 'If you subtract the Arabs and the Haredim, we are doing great'. This is exactly what memorial days do: they subtract 'the Arabs'.

This chapter was also a criticism of normality as a pretence which hides a number of problems and historical injustices. By challenging the illusionary opposite of crisis vs. normality from the perspective of Palestinians in Israel, I also hope to challenge the institutionalised 'denial mechanism' of Israel, whereby the Palestinians and their history are an external issue that is repressed rather than addressed. Israelis would probably ask: why do the Palestinian citizens care that much, if they do not want to be Israeli anyway? The answer is simple: because nationalist rituals and polarising discourse does not only articulate an Israeli identity in the positive sense, but also actively denies Palestinians recognition and public representation of their history and identity; it dominates and excludes as a force that entrenches alterity. And it is inescapable, because as a people exiled on their homeland by ways of forced incorporation, they have no alternative but to handle what the settler-colonial majority imposes on the public space they form part of.

Overall, I hope to have shown that the Gaza-conflict and the yearly national memorials have similar effects on Palestinians in Israel, but only the former would qualify as a crisis, while the latter has institutionalised such crises as part of a nation's normality-narrative. By showing the many intricate ways in which

[44] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/1.633829

Palestinians experience the effects of these critical events and times I wanted to underline that conflict and tension come and go like ebb and flow. One could even argue that the recurring violence surrounding the Gaza Strip is a semi-institutionalised crisis: its emergence is increasingly predictable and its events follow a familiar pattern; instead of addressing the actual crisis, Israel restores its 'deterrence' every once in a while through brute force, while Hamas needs to show 'resistance' to remain valid too. This may be a digression from the core of this chapter, but it shows that over time, what are commonly perceived as moments of crisis can become enduring 'crises', and they may further become institutionalised and normalised to the extent that they disappear entirely from the realm of 'crisis'. Looking at ebbs and flows of tension and polarisation, whether in the form of nationalist rituals of recurring polarisation, helps us to explore how the problems of Palestinian life in Israel change in intensify over time and with changes in context.

Veena Das (1996) shows how 'critical events' bring new modes of action into being that redefine categories and codes, whereby both the state and communities try to control, institutionalise and fix memory that becomes associated with such events. Wars and memorial days are such critical events through which memory is ordered around questions of belonging and moral-political understandings. The way in which Israel is able to centralise memory and re-enact it as crisis exemplifies its binding and centralising of power. Also Palestinians during the second Intifada encountered representations and memories of violence and death on a regular basis and as part of social life (Allen 2008, 470). Israel's soundscape of memory is specifically colonial, because the centralised power and past violence that enables its implementation as a 'sovereign' interpellation is inseparably linked to the suppression of Palestinian statehood and the incorporation of the Palestinians in Israel as citizen-strangers within that state. The siren, one may say by extension, is a continuation of colonialism by other means.

In the Palestinians' experience of ongoing crisis, intensity is a keyword because the ebbs and flows of conflict bring changing levels of tension with them. Much more than 'events', these institutionalised and recurring forms of conflict and tension create opportunity spaces for both politicisation and de-politicisation: on the one hand, conflict and polarisation can force nationalist positions and ethno-national

solidarity, but on the other, the pressure can become so high that individuals can only resign back into their unresolved ambiguous positions. Palestinians in Tel Aviv, so it seems, suffer from the ‘enduring crisis’ of dissonance that results from the simultaneous need to resist and participate. This problem is exemplified by the dilemma war, nationalist memorial days and other events create.

7 Conclusion

These pages have been about Palestinians in the city of Tel Aviv, but they have also provided one alternative story about Tel Aviv told from the perspective of the Palestinians. What, then, do the Palestinians tell us about inclusion into Tel Aviv, and what does Tel Aviv tell us about the Palestinians?

Their experience tells us that this is a relatively open and liberal urban space of social and economic opportunities, but that making use of these opportunities remains a limited form of inclusion that involves experiences of recurring conflict, tension and stigmatisation. In a confluence of ethno-national domination and urban liberal openness, civility in Tel Aviv is only a social lubricant on the surface but a burden underneath. It invites diversity and individualism but also fends off Palestinian identity and the Arabic language. As real urban inclusion and a sustainable home in this city remain unfulfilled by intersecting cultural, political and economic reasons, the Palestinians' participation in it remains largely functional and often temporary.

What Tel Aviv tells us about the Palestinians is that their urban 'citizenship' remains as conditional as their national citizenship. There is an unresolved tension between their identity and indigeneity on the one hand, and the criteria of urban civility and equal citizenship on the other. And yet they are willing to adapt and make compromises in exchange for social and economic opportunities despite multiple obstacles. In exchange with Tel Aviv, they define and reconfigure their relationship with and often against dominant Israeli *and* Palestinian political and cultural norms. Individual background, religion, class and gender influence how these struggles intersect and to which extent one can immerse oneself in Tel Aviv without the resulting conflict with Palestinian or Israeli norms and the ensuing estrangement. Whether as employees, students or activists, their engagement with Tel Aviv enables some forms of being but restricts others, with consequences for how and when individuals can be visible and in what way. Tel Aviv enables individualism, anonymity and gender-diversity, offers employment and some education while also contributing to the production of Palestinian political consciousness in exchange with this Israeli space. It is inclusion that drives many to adopt a deeply critical stance via

the State of Israel and the city's character, not the absence of participation. Because inclusion remains limited in depth and time, the city demands investments of mobility and commuting time, leading to constant compromising for the sake of opportunities, while also engendering dispersion and mutual isolation among Palestinians rather than fostering a community.

For some young Palestinian citizens, Tel Aviv may be largely empowering and inspiring despite its problems. If analysed from the perspective of the Palestinians as a collective suffering from a shared position of subordination, such individual 'empowerment' has a high price if it precludes articulations and practices of Palestinian political solidarity and identity. Inclusion into the political economy of Tel Aviv, as we have seen, demands a particular kind of civility from them – a civility that remains unattainable for the Palestinians because the same Jewish-Arab difference it smoothens continues to operate as a stigma and as their inevitable obstacle to ever becoming fully 'civil'. Contrary to the idea of civility as a positive social lubricant that enables distanced coexistence despite differences (e.g. Sennett 2002), and despite the fact that a 'weakening of states' and 'growth of civil society' has enabled improved inclusion of indigenous peoples (Kirsch 2006, 14), this thesis has argued that civility and inclusion are ambiguous double-edged processes in the (post)colonial context: they facilitate limited opportunities also by entrenching marginalisation and by overriding those subjectivities which threaten the dominant ethno-national order.

In simplified terms, inclusion and civility relate to the question of what kind of Palestinians the Israeli political economy and the city of Tel Aviv 'want'. By extension, we can also ask what the Palestinians in Israel 'want' from Tel Aviv. The problem is, however, that most Palestinians want opportunities and experiences from the city but do not really feel they can be part of Tel Aviv, as the 29 year-old Rawaan, who lived in Jaffa for several years, told me:

> The problem, the political problem is we don't want Tel Aviv. I want Jaffa to return to its old stage, how it used to be. I don't want Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv is like a settlement. But on the other hand, I want places in Arabic and Hebrew there, signs in Arabic and Hebrew. But Tel Aviv itself, as a town that rose from Palestinian lands, I don't want her. So that's the conflict. I want Tel Aviv as a city, for its urban atmosphere, but Tel Aviv as a Jewish city, I don't want. (…)

> We want urban life here and development, and freedom. But on the other hand, we don't want it at the price of sacrificing our Palestinian rights. I am happy now, yes. But it's not a solution. We all want to progress, but not at any price.

Wanting Tel Aviv is a problematic desire for the Palestinians because it symbolizes, like no other place, the triumph of urban Jewish settlement on what was once Palestine. In the absence of any process of reconciliation, the identity of Tel Aviv and Palestine coexist in dialectic tension. Wanting Jaffa back makes it very difficult to embrace Tel Aviv, and yet such return is unachievable because 'the past is a country from which we all have emigrated' (Rushdie 2010, 12). Indeed, exiles' nostalgia for the lost homeland often undermines their chances to belong in a postcolonial reality despite the fact that return remains unrealisable.

Included but Exiled

The nostalgia for the lost homeland in the past also underlines the Palestinians' condition of displacement 'at home'. Building on this realisation, I have invoked 'exile' to make sense of the particular ways in which postcolonial openness and the predicament of displacement coincide. As Kanaaneh and Nusair (2010, 1–2) indicate, it is impossible to understand the present dilemmas of Palestinians in Israel without the 'histories of contradictions' that shaped them. Exile allows us to connect these histories with contemporary phenomena. Typically, exile is a condition reserved for those who are displaced to 'elsewhere', as its original sense is punitive banishment through expulsion from a particular place (Starn 1982). But when the 'homecoming' of the Jewish diaspora brought about Palestinian exile (Peteet 2007, 627), the 150-160,000 Palestinians who managed to stay in or return to the newly formed State of Israel (Robinson 2013, 1; Pappé 2011) experienced the beginning of another kind of displacement: exile 'at home'.

This becomes clear in the most basic stories of Palestinians in Israel, such as the one told by the Tel Aviv University student Wasseem: while he was still at school, he and his classmates researched their family roots and most Jewish pupils traced their origins back to Europe, Poland, or Middle Eastern countries like Iraq; Wasseem traced his roots back to Lubia, a village depopulated in 1948 and subsequently

destroyed. Its remains in today's Israel are a short car-drive away but it is also a lost past to which return is impossible. Despite not being exiled in geographic terms, people can be in exile *from* much of what once defined their homeland. Exile can result from the forced movement of a foreign state into another people's homeland as boundaries are violently redrawn around a people and they become incorporated. This may be similar to the case of dispossessed tribal people in confined reserves described by Clifford (1994, 309). Despite still being on the same land, they are oriented towards a lost or alienated home defined as aboriginal, which is 'outside' and hence exiled from the surrounding nation-state. Much of what defines the Palestinians' collective memory and senses of belonging is equally exiled from the space of Tel Aviv, which performs a postcolonial liberal utopia as a pretence that hides the underlying relations of colonialism and displacement. Citizenship and urban civility encode these unequal power relations without transcending them.

Analysed from the perspective of a people who have become exiled on their homeland – one part through forced incorporation, the other through occupation – an analysis of Palestinian citizens and Palestinians in Tel Aviv reaches strikingly similar conclusions about how incorporation and mobility are linked to forms of exclusion that resulted from processes of displacement, including the forced movement of boundaries and people over time. Throughout this thesis, but in Chapter 1 in particular, I have explored the bounded nature of mobility for Palestinians in Tel Aviv. Although the relationship between inequality and mobility has been explored in a variety of contexts (Salazar and Smart 2011; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), I argue that displacement and postcolonial incorporation inscribe very particular limitations into the mobility of exiles if the incorporating state considers their identities and histories as a threat.

Bounded Mobility

We have seen that Palestinian mobility in and out of Tel Aviv is a means to access employment and other opportunities while simultaneously exemplifying the inequality and marginalisation that necessitated these departures in the first place. As spatial transitions are frequently fraught with tension, motion is 'squared' and

necessitates a great deal of 'social navigation' (Vigh 2009). On a structural level, inequality inhabits mobility because resources and opportunities are unequally distributed across space. This also creates an inequality of time because the Palestinian movements are often longer and harder. Tel Aviv's simultaneous inclusive-exclusive character and mobility's bounded nature contribute to circular patterns of disempowering mobility and exacerbate the Palestinians' limbo in-between places, responsibilities and social contexts. Multi-locality and commuting between culturally and politically different social contexts is hard to straddle and involves marked boundary-crossing. Their spatial and social transitions frequently involve forms of adaptation and manoeuvring directly linked to the stigmatisation of their indigenous political identities.

Their mobility is also bounded because of the recurring stigmatisation Palestinians in Israel experience as a result of the forced displacement of a foreign people and nation onto their homeland. In some way mirroring the experience of Palestinians at Tel Aviv airport, Edward Said (2000, 118) writes how security-officials singled out his mother on international travels because she only held a so-called 'Palestine-Passport' and later a 'Laissez-Passer'; stateless for a long time, she found that exile turned her into a legally liminal and inherently 'suspicious' traveller. Her displacement resulted in the stigma of being stateless most of her life, while the Palestinian citizens of Israel experience the continuation of displacement through stigmatisation precisely because of their incorporation into a state as citizens. They may have Israeli passports, but as we have seen in Chapter 1, they are immobilised as 'suspicious' at transition points, in public transport or at the airport in very similar ways; their citizenship exemplifies displacement rather than being its resolution.

Examining the case of the Palestinians in Tel Aviv through the lens of exile also brings some 'lost context' back into urban postcolonialism: the history of colonialism that 'tore away people from their homes' before they came into the metropoles of the former coloniser (Axel 2004, 28). Celebrations of unrooted cosmopolitanisms and 'free' mobility are challenged by the violence and trauma involved in displacement and the 'continuing primacy of the state in determining the nature of mobility' (Peteet 2007, 643). Thus, homelands are not simply 'lost' and this loss is not simply overcome through integration into the postcolonial urban void. As Kelly (2004, 95–

97) writes: ‘the issue confronting displaced persons is not so much that they have moved, but rather that they are unable to move unproblematically or go back to where they have come from’.

My critical perspective on Palestinians in Tel Aviv references this lost context of colonialism, which illuminates the contradictions displacement, as a forced movement of people, boundaries and nation-state, continues to inscribe into their lives. This is exemplified by the difficult ‘duality’ of simultaneously being in Tel Aviv but feeling solidarity for Gaza, which the student Aida expressed when we met during the 2014 Gaza-conflict: ‘I live on my homeland while the country is not mine’, she said, expressing a tension between identity, location and solidarity. This dissonance was caused by the forced displacement of boundaries and the partial incorporation into a foreign state with the simultaneous exclusion from a shared homeland to which they can meaningfully belong.

Urban Inclusion and its Limits

Mobility and inclusion are similar because they have long been seen as empowering (Urry 2007; Butera and Levine 2009), while immobility and exclusion are figured as their negative opposites. Viewed from the perspective of the Palestinians in Tel Aviv, they emerge as two dimensions of the same set of relations, the one analytically inseparable from the other. The bounded nature of Palestinians’ social and geographical mobility is mirrored by the limited nature of their inclusion into the political economy: from the ‘hidden curriculum’ of higher education to the need to keep a ‘low profile’, social and political compromise becomes an integral part of the logic that regulates inclusion. In one way or another, Palestinians in Tel Aviv all go through a process of gradual inclusion into the Israeli political economy during which they learn that being ‘good’ and ‘civil’ has benefits despite their political opposition.

One aspect of this inclusion is also their spatial dispersion and mutual disconnection, which often leads them to ‘rebel in loneliness’, as the musician and actor Mira Awad put it. This isolation has different levels, however. Those who toil at the bottom of the income ladder are isolated by force because they are left with no time or interest

to participate in the space of Tel Aviv beyond work. Those who made it into highly-skilled jobs appear 'individualist' and can embrace urban anonymity and lifestyle, which may in turn decrease their desire to socialise with other 'Arabs' who may deem their urban participation as transgressive or problematic. With differences in class and status, between citizens or non-citizens, the ability to participate in the social life of Tel Aviv outside of workspaces and the visibility of one's identity changes too. Yet irrespective of class or legal status, their urban inclusion for employment, education or a career often leads to a strong sense of dissonance between what they do, who they are and where they are; between practice, senses of identity or solidarity and place.

No doubt that the Palestinians and their families also benefit from working in Tel Aviv or studying at its university. Yet the more they utilise the Israeli economy for individual benefit the more they are also utilised by the underlying political system which benefits from their selective inclusion as atomised and apolitical subjects. Those who live as exiles in cities have long been figured as 'apogees' free of attachments who are positioned far away from the centre of society (Iskander and Rustom 2010, 5), a certain 'class of exile', seemingly elite, cosmopolitan, intellectual and privileged (Lumsden 1999, 31–32), signifying an escape from the nation-state into the cosmopolitan and polyglot city (Kaplan 1996, 30). This 'cosmopolitanism' of the postcolonial city looks very different in the case of Tel Aviv, where heterogeneity with respect to the Palestinians is either suppressed or penalised as stigmatised difference. They cannot enjoy Tel Aviv in the sense of Edward Said's love of New York, as a space that encouraged the changing of identity and allowed him to 'be different things' at once (Ali 2006, 119). Most young Palestinians I met in Tel Aviv tested their boundaries in one way or another against the backdrop of this urban space, but the freedom to 'be different things' is severely limited. Only very few Palestinians, mostly Christians and those of a high professional standing, can celebrate Tel Aviv as such an open fluid space. For most others, urban inclusion and mobility are paralleled by confinement, recurring stigmatisation and multiple pressures to conform. This is further complicated by intersecting Israeli and Palestinian dominant norms.

The relationship between Tel Aviv and the Palestinians' 'difference' also remains deeply problematic because displacement created an 'unsurmountable rift' between the homeland and the 'new territory' (Said 2000, 19). Urban space fails to transcend difference and power inequality with hybridity, as Stuart Hall would suggest (1990, 235), because Israeli culture and nationalism saturates civility and liberalism in such a way that it 'fends off' the identity of exiles (Said 2001, 176). The real dilemma for the Palestinians in Tel Aviv is that they hit glass-ceilings on two levels: a 'double absence' exemplified by the problem that their inclusion into Tel Aviv is limited by Palestinian and Israeli norms and sense of identification at the same time. The French-Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (1996) invoked such 'double-absence' to explain how 'exiles live in limbo between two worlds' with a double consciousness: a split 'two-ness' of being a foreigner in the home- and the host country, stuck in the false temporariness of the condition without achieving permanence (Dickson 1992, 300–301; Sayad 2004; Massey 2006). Compounding this problem, the homeland and the 'host country' coexist in tension within the very same place for the Palestinians in Tel Aviv. This tension is not tempered but even intensifies over the course of their inclusion into the city's spaces of social and economic exchange. Moreover, their double absence is also one where young Palestinians who have spent a certain amount of time in Tel Aviv face the dilemma of not wanting to return to their hometown but also not feeling at home in this Israeli city, which is why desires to escape towards Europe or elsewhere are widespread.

Unmasked Liberalism

Despite these dilemmas caused by flawed inclusion, the official solution pursued by the self-consciously liberal state still seems to be to accelerate the process of 'integration': in January 2016 the Israeli government decided to invest 15 billion shekels (2.8 billion GBP) into the development of infrastructure, industry, education and healthcare of the 'Arab population' in what was called the largest ever government plan targeting the Palestinian citizens of Israel; according to a report, 'after 68 years the State of Israel is making a determined attempt to equalize

conditions for all its citizens, Arab and Jewish' (Arens, Haaretz.com, 1/2/2016).[45] Although the investment is significant, this socio-economic plan will not automatically 'equalize conditions'. It will not resolve the foundational dilemmas and unequal power relationships Palestinians in Israel and in Tel Aviv encounter. Although it would be ignorant to deny the 'benefit' of the planned initiative, its logic remains trapped in the depoliticised framework of a self-consciously liberal state that seeks to 'equalize' relations under the assumption that more education, employment and health will lead to better 'integration' and eventually, political pacification. As I have shown, inclusion will continue to engender estrangement and discrimination for Palestinians in Israel as long as the deeper issues that resulted from their displacement at home remain unaddressed.

Answering to the introductory promise that this thesis represents a particular critique of liberalism from the Palestinian perspective on Tel Aviv, it has now become clear how the Palestinians' aspiration to be successful or unmarked urban individuals are shattered in systematic and recurring ways, and where they are not shattered, they always remain conditional. Where a collective Palestinian presence becomes visible in Tel Aviv, as in demonstrations or regular dinner meetings, the city and its people react with alterity or actively seek to fend off what constitutes some form of 'invasion' into the liberal urban utopia. Even where collective Palestinian celebrations manage to create empowering underground spaces, as in the parties of al-Qaws, their invisible and contentious status as suspicious 'Palestinian' events only exemplifies the need to manage and downscale the visibility of Palestinian-ness. The same holds true for those who organise cultural events but remain dependent on Jewish-Israeli institutions, which often pressure them to appear apolitical and non-controversial and consequently 'civil' in Israeli terms. Where individuals aspire to very ordinary goals, such as renting an apartment, entering a train station, or speaking their native language on the street, they too experience recurring stigmatisation and exclusion. If they seek to overcome such limiting and disqualifying stigmatisation, they may aspire to become trusted and respected through hard work or extraordinary efforts, which only exemplifies the degree to which universal human and urban qualities, such as access without discrimination,

[45] URL: http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.700548

often remain unattainable to them. Moreover, simply making use of public space represents a threat for many Palestinian workers who come to Tel Aviv without permits. Urban anonymity is effectively a burden of forced invisibility for the systematically excluded.

These examples are only a small segment of the evidence this thesis provides against the widespread idea that Tel Aviv is primarily an open and inclusive place. To repeat Povinelli's important realisation the seeming openness of is not true without reserve (2002, 14). This is particularly so in the context of protracted conflict and settler colonialism, where a whole history and continuing presence of violence, discrimination and systematic disempowerment trembles impatiently underneath the liberal surface of civility and urban life. Rooted in another dimension of the pretentiously 'liberal', the critical perspective on Palestinians' agency and their quest to carve out a liveable life gains its full analytical body, because the balancing within the entrapment and the effort despite the glass-ceiling come to the surface.

Balancing Acrobats

The Palestinians who come to Tel Aviv are walking on a tightrope. Whenever they lean too far into one direction, they must balance it out with a move into the other. The more they move back and forth, the more difficult the balancing becomes. Women and gay Palestinians in particular appeared to negotiate multiple and often conflicting desires and responsibilities. They often straddled two worlds and lived double-lives. 'What happens is that you begin to have two personalities. One is played out in Tel Aviv, where you are happy and can do whatever you want, and another one in the village, where you cannot do all that', as Rawaan put it, mirroring the experience of others I have discussed in relation to the phenomenon of a 'double-bind' (Redfield 2012). In fact they cannot really do 'whatever they wanted' in Tel Aviv either, because they frequently feel discriminated against for identifying as Palestinian with other Palestinians. Influenced by urban openings and simultaneous pressures to abide by cultural or political norms, Palestinians in Tel Aviv must straddle everyday pragmatism with conflicting senses of political solidarity and identity.

However, this balancing does not only involve tension and dilemmas but can also be looked at in a more positive light: it expresses their ability to accommodate and adapt to multiple and often conflicting social worlds and senses of identity/alterity. Almost like brokers, their capacity to simultaneously blend in allows them to access and temporarily become part of very different surroundings (Havik 2013, 100). In doing so they must also learn to 'manipulate' social ties, an ability long seen as a prerequisite for marginalised populations in the colonial context who seek to explore new economic or political opportunities (Wolf 1956, 1072). Much more than a mere by-product of complicated lives, their balancing acts are at the intersections of power relations between individuals, cultural and political norms and (post)colonial urban space.

Despite these overarching arguments, differences in gender, class and personality all influence how severe the need for balancing becomes in the Palestinians' lives. Put in simplified terms, we can say that the gap they straddle tends to widen the deeper their inclusion into Tel Aviv becomes. The reasons for this are that living, working and enjoying Tel Aviv can lead to a feeling of dissonance between such immersion and senses of belonging and responsibility via Palestinians. Although individually this dissonance can be handled, it is often turned into contradiction by the perceived incompatibility of their ideas and practices with the normative viewpoints others hold about them and their life. Indeed, some Palestinian women feel no contradiction between enjoying Tel Aviv, cultivating their political identity and supporting their family and people. But they are made to feel the pressure to choose sides in an 'either-or' manner. No matter how hard they try, contradictions are inscribed into their balancing acts. Equally, those with strong political views may individually be happy to find an appropriate job in Tel Aviv, but they suffer from the dissonance of having to play it safe on the one hand and wanting to be politically assertive in the face of ongoing injustice on the other. For the Palestinians, the real problem is that Tel Aviv is never really the 'bubble' it is often nicknamed. Their carefully crafted bubble constantly bursts, and as the long-term Tel Aviv resident Kheir said, 'one encounter is often enough and reality hits you'.

The Political Within

It has been one goal of this thesis to expand the idea that boundaries are not only solidified in isolation but often hardened precisely because of intensifying social exchange (see Barth 1998). I argue that indigenous people's inclusion and participation in a settler-colonial context can intensify political conflict and the construction of difference, particularly if such inclusion remains limited by constant reference to the legally enshrined categories and stigmas that have come to define the inequality between competing ethno-national groups. Growing inclusion into Jewish-Israeli space has been a driving force behind estrangement and their dismissal of liberal equality as a mirage in the service of the dominating ruling ethno-national class. The usual story told by Palestinians who have spent a few years in Tel Aviv is one of deep immersion at first, followed by gradual estrangement and frustration. Precisely because Palestinians are willing to compromise and adapt in their search for opportunities in Israel, they become very aware of the unequal power relations that define and eventually limit this participation. The political is produced in an interactional space where individuals react to the external pressures that seek to depoliticise relations through hierarchical and unequal incorporation. This is the 'cunning of inclusion', to adapt the phrasing of Povinelli (2002).

One way of challenging the absence of Palestinian identity and history in the space of Tel Aviv has been to rediscover such identity and history of displacement and pose it against the power of urban utopia, as I have shown with the help of tours about the Nakba. This also means that alongside individualisation, the interacting spheres of limited inclusion, burdening civility and missing recognition are also driving a re-politicisation of Jewish-Arab relations in Tel Aviv. This second process takes place despite their tendency to use the city primarily as a functional space of opportunities. The intricate processes of flawed inclusion and not the blunt force of exclusion is what distinguishes the analytical purchase of this ethnography for contemporary political anthropology. Moreover, I have shown that Tel Aviv inspires a very diverse array of political positions among Palestinians due to its simultaneous character of liberal openness and ethno-national domination. Ambivalence has emerged as a key aspect from my own critical take on the politics of recognition,

which presented ethnographic evidence for the parallel existence of a politics of non-recognition: the desire to remain unmarked or unrecognized in certain situations and for reasons explored throughout the thesis.

Recurring Crisis

Employing the term crisis, I have de-masked the seeming normality of public relations in Tel Aviv by looking at the impact of flare-ups in violence and intensifying political polarisation. I have argued that the Palestinians' experience of Israeli memorial days and other critical events has a similar impact as wars because it lays the reality of conflict and contradiction underneath their inclusion bare. In the shape of official Remembrance Days, Israel has institutionalised its own 'crisis' as legitimate while the Palestinians' right to mourn their history of displacement is actively undermined. Symbolised by the siren as a tool of ethno-national ordering and political domination, these events are a dividing force which invites adhering citizens to remember and upsets those who stand outside of the Israeli nation despite being in its midst. This is linked to inclusion because it is their presence in the heart of Tel Aviv, a Jewish-Israeli city, which makes these events so difficult to evade and so hard to handle for the Palestinians. It is by exposure to the limited and often tense character of inclusion that they feel their exclusion the strongest. And this exposure is not entirely voluntary, because most employment opportunities happen to be found in Israeli cities and offices while Palestinian areas are either marginalised or under military occupation. Although I have also shown that Palestinians establish good relations with Jewish-Israeli friends, colleagues or employers, it is equally important to emphasise that this fragile balance is upturned by the recurring crises that haunt their difficult lives.

My ethnographic critique of the 'crisis-paradigm' also underlined that conflict and tension can become normalised and institutionalised into enduring form, thereby hiding behind a pretence of normality. This makes the tragedy underneath the normality less visible and recognized but not necessarily less troubling. The 'collateral' impact of political conflict and violence casts a long shadow over the lives of Palestinians in Israel: their alterity towards Israel and Jewish-Israelis grows

parallel to their solidarity with fellow Palestinians, thus intensifying the dissonance between their senses of identity and solidarity and the nation-state within which they have become exiles. Something similar also effects Jewish Israelis wheneve conflict and occupation spill over into the 'bubble', as during a series of Palestinian knife and shooting attacks in 2016 which followed months of violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories in which 183 Palestinians and 28 Israelis have been killed (theGuardian.com, 9/3/2016).[46] These developments are likely to increase suspicion among Jewish Israelis towards Palestinians and by extension, deepen the dilemmas they experience between inclusion into Israeli space, pressures to be civil and invisible, and experiences of discrimination.

The Risks and Joys of Visibility

Considerations of (in)visibility form part of Palestinians' ordinary life in Israel and they become all the more important during times of political tension and the mentioned memorial days. Exemplified by the quintessential dilemma of experiencing the all-embracing siren on Israel's Remembrance Day for 'fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism', Palestinians in Tel Aviv must ask themselves: should I stop and stand up in silence, or refuse? This experience exemplifies the shifting requirements of visibility at an extreme level. One may say that this is a rather exceptional and yearly event. But the real problem is that such tension surfaces in an everyday manner, as Palestinians' fears of speaking Arabic in public transport and the anxiety they feel at transitions indicate. As a result of recurring stigmatisation in the course of mobility and inclusion, trying to remain invisible as an 'Arab' can become a silent desire in the face of perceived threats and regulated mobility. However, because such self-censorship is often perceived as a form of submission it creates feelings of guilt and leads to another dilemma: either resisting or conforming, protesting discrimination and missing a flight or shutting up and trying to forget about it? These dynamics of (in)visibility and shifting tactics in social interactions are responses to domination and simultaneously express the agency of those who must negotiate, accommodate or evade powerful forms of confinement

[46] URL: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/08/at-least-10-israelis-stabbed-tel-aviv-israel

and alterity. Indeed, visibility is one way of conceptualising how Palestinians navigate public space, transitions and social relations. This involved putting some characteristics 'backstage' and some into the front-region (Goffman 1990), at times to avoid a conflict with other Palestinians, at times to cushion against potential discrimination by Jewish Israelis such as security guards. They must manoeuvre around limitations to their mobility and cope with stigmatisation on the way, while also handling the potential risk of being recognized in the wrong moment by the wrong person. The extent to which Palestinians must be concerned with their public 'face' underlines the extent to which they are under pressure to perform and represent particular personas across different Palestinian and Israeli contexts. Their balancing acts turn them into involuntary acrobats walking a tightrope between contradictory worlds. Straddling these worlds become all the more difficult for those who simultaneously struggle for gender-equality and recognition as Palestinians, such as women and members of the Palestinian LGBT community. Dynamics of (in)visibility emerge as a central tactic by which individuals navigate through the landscape of mutually contradictory places and the conflicting norms that are attached to them.

Tel Aviv Hangover

Throughout this thesis I have given as much space as possible to the fascinating details of Palestinians' everyday lives in Tel Aviv, in all its ambivalence between recurring tension and occasional joy. This is why I would like to end with a similar anecdote. What often struck me about spending time with Palestinians in Tel Aviv was that as an Austrian non-Jew, I often fitted in more easily than they did as people indigenous to that land. I hardly ever felt that my identity as an Austrian was turned into a 'problem', although there would be strong historical reasons. Palestinian identity always seemed to be turned into a 'problem' at one point or another on a normal day in Tel Aviv. One day I walked with my friend Rima into the Dizengoff-Centre shopping mall, which had a food market on. The Israelis who served us at one food-counter spoke a few words in Russian, apparently mistaking me for being Russian. 'What language do you speak?' they asked us. Rima answered in Hebrew, saying that she was '*Araviya*', Arab; that she speaks Arabic. 'And where are you

from?' the woman turned to me, seemingly puzzled. I answered, and she turned to Rima: 'Are you Austrian too?' Although she had already explained, she said: 'I am Arab, I told you already. I am from here you know, we were here long before you came here'. The man standing beside the woman turned to her, asking: 'Are you Christian or Muslim?' We looked at each other, and slightly enraged, but controlled, Rima responded: 'Do I ask you if you are Christian or Jewish?' She was playing on the de-legitimizing rumour that many Russians who were naturalized in Israel may actually be Christians in disguise. The woman smiled a little, the man not really, and so we took our food and walked away. In this central Tel Aviv shopping centre, Rima had a difficult time explaining who she was, and when she did, it only led to a conflict and an inquiry. Although she was from 'here', she was also essentially from 'elsewhere' for these Israelis. These encounters explain why Tel Aviv causes a persistent 'hangover' for Palestinians. Yet once again, even hangovers involve a dilemma. When Rima went out to party with friends in Tel Aviv, the second Palestinian working in her office, another woman, never came along. 'For parties, I went with my friends, the other friends', she explained, adding:

> You cannot live in Tel Aviv alone, you need a group. If you live with Jews only, you have to lie to yourself. At the same time, Arabs are your support group but if you participate fully in Jewish life, Palestinians will not accept you.

So, one day Rima was very hungover in the office, saying that the other colleagues called her Palestinian friend in, who was considered to be closest to her. 'But she didn't know what to do', said Rima. 'She didn't know the codes of hangover. I simply wanted to have a piece of bread with cottage cheese.' Another friend who worked at the office eventually got her a salty pretzel. 'She knew.'

Tel Aviv always causes some sort of 'hangover' for the Palestinians, and the nausea resulting from alcohol may well be one of the lightest forms. Cultural estrangement, political nausea, frustration and a feeling of helplessness are only some of the frequent symptoms. It is in the nature of hangovers, however, that they do not make us shy away from doing again whatever caused them in the first place. And so will the Palestinians continue to come to Tel Aviv despite the pain it causes them, whether in search of work, education or an urban life. One aim of this research was

to make the many symptoms of their ‘hangover’ visible, so those who search for permanent relief will know better how to tackle some of the root causes.

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